EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DIALOGUES

Learning for *Leadership*

Building a school of professional practice

Michelle Anderson & Christine Cawsey

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Educational Leadership Dialogues

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Foreword

Few would argue that school leadership, and in particular principalship, has not become increasingly complex and demanding. Current leaders, and the next generation of leaders, are working in and will continue to work in complex times. Leading in these complex times in any context is a sophisticated, challenging and yet immensely rewarding art. The new millennium leaders in schools are working with different community, employer and even political expectations; differing generational ways of working; changing school populations; and perhaps even different conceptions of the purpose of schools and schooling. As a further challenge, many young, potential leaders have not been willing to sup from the overflowing leadership chalice.

It is no longer enough, if it ever was, to learn *about* leadership. Learning *for* leadership is critical if we are to meet national and international visions for effective schooling for all. There is now an imperative for current leaders to inspire leadership aspirations in others.

Schools that focus on student learning make a positive difference to student outcomes. Not surprisingly, leaders who focus on student learning make a difference. Leaders who also focus on learning for leadership act as mentors, coaches and encouragers of the next generation of leaders (regardless of the age of this next generation).

In this book, Michelle Anderson and Christine Cawsey outline the critical features of quality leadership learning for all professionals in a school. That is, from teachers aspiring to but without formal leadership roles, to highly experienced 'old-hands' at leadership.

The authors provide a realistic assessment of the contextual constraints and suggest strategies to overcome them. Michelle Anderson provides the theoretical base to learning for educational leadership that reflects current shifts in leadership learning. Christine Cawsey provides the contextual examples from the field. Together they articulate a deep understanding of the multiple dimensions of school leadership.

Throughout Part I, Michelle Anderson provides an excellent framework of current research and thinking on leadership for learning. She

clearly articulates the research behind the critical features of quality leadership learning. And she provides frameworks from the research literature to guide thinking about leadership learning, frameworks that indeed recognise the recurrent factors that work against learning for leadership processes.

In Part II, Christine Cawsey expertly weaves ideas and examples of her work from the field through the theoretical framework provided in Part I. She talks about the importance of metaphor management and weaves 'the principal as architect' metaphor throughout her part. This metaphor resonated with me.

Unlike a traditional architect who moves on at either the completion of the design or at the completion of the building stage, a principal as architect becomes an architect-in-residence. They have to live with the consequences of the design!

Just as composers can 'hear' their music when it is just dots on lines to rest of us, the architect 'sees' their building when it is just lines on paper. But unlike the composer, who only has to play the music for us to hear and appreciate their creation, an architect has to initially help others 'see' their design while it is merely lines on paper and, similarly, the principal as architect has to be able to gain commitment to the plans, visions and hopes for the future at the stage when all they have is words.

Together they build the architect's model to help us 'see' the vision.

Dr Kathy Lacey, FACEL
Director, Right Angles Consulting

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Series overview

The *Educational Leadership Dialogues* series is part of two core commitments by ACER Press, the publishing arm of the Australian Council *for* Educational Research: first, the series creates a bridge between educational research and practice; second, it provides resources that support educational leaders.

Our intention is to team up ACER researchers and experienced school principals to write a series of short, evidence-based, practical guides on topics of significance for school leaders. Subjects to be covered include performance development, leadership, school improvement, mentoring and coaching, using ICT, and management issues.

We were able to identify a number of highly successful principals known for their interest in particular areas, and team them with well-regarded ACER researchers who had conducted research and published work in those same areas. In creating these 'teams', we realised that rather than producing texts with a single, practical voice, we also had the opportunity to create a platform for a rich dialogue between practitioner and researcher. With significant areas of agreement and disagreement or difference of focus, this conversation provides a valuable framework for both school leadership (principals, aspiring principals and other school leaders) and the research and policy community (researchers, writers, government and systems people) to explore and to debate some of the critical educational issues of our time.

Brian Caldwell, in his book *Re-imagining educational leadership*, explores the idea that the basic unit of organisation in the twenty-first century is not the school, not the class, not the subject, but the individual student. Ultimately, everything that is done in education should be about individual student outcomes. In supporting, valuing and engaging the critical issues of school leadership, this series aims to contribute to precisely that goal.

Ralph Saubern
General Manager
ACER Press

About the authors

Michelle Anderson is a Senior Research Fellow at ACER. She joined ACER in 2005 after two years as a researcher with the National College for School Leadership in England. At ACER her work has included Standards for School Leadership (for Teaching Australia), the Australian Country Background Report for the OECD's Improving School Leadership Activity (for the Department of Education, Science and Training [DEST]) and Higher Education Academic Leadership Capabilities (for the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education). She is currently researching Leading Teacher leadership in a multi-campus school for her PhD with the University of London, England.

Christine Cawsey is the principal of Rooty Hill High School, a highly successful, cosmopolitan, comprehensive 7–12 school in the western suburbs of Sydney. In 2007, she was a winner in the National Awards for Quality Schooling for Excellence by a Principal. She is Deputy President of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council (NSWSPC) and a delegate to the Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA). In 2005 and 2006, she convened the Council's Sustaining Quality Schools Project, and during 2003–04, she coordinated the Role of the Principal Project. She is also a former member of the New South Wales Premier's Council for Women and received a highly commended award for meritorious service to public education for her work with women and girls in education.

Cawsey has a Masters degree in educational administration and has lectured in the Masters program at the University of Western Sydney. She is a qualified mentor and professional coach with training in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Choice Theory and Reality Therapy (CTRT). Cawsey's teaching career has been spent in western Sydney, giving her a strong perspective on the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. Her academic interests include school culture, communication, leadership development and quality teaching. She regularly presents to student and adult audiences on a range of themes and has a reputation for engaging, humorous and challenging presentations. She is also the mother of two daughters who attend public schools in New South Wales.

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I am grateful to the three research colleagues, Professor Peter Gronn, University of Glasgow, Dr Elizabeth Kleinhenz and Jenny Wilkinson, ACER, who read drafts of my section and gave me feedback on these chapters. My thanks also must go to Christine, my co-author. Our lively discussions about the content and structure of the book were intellectually stimulating and fun. Our thanks go to the ACER publishing team for bringing what was a seed of an idea for a leadership series to life, and for the opportunity to be part of it.

Michelle Anderson

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I would like to thank (I think!) the person or persons from the Australian Secondary Principals Association who thought I could write something of interest to other school leaders and nominated me for this task.

I thank the parents and students of Rooty Hill High School who have given us such great support and permission to try our ideas and strategies over the last 10 years.

I would like to thank my daughters Nadine and Francesca for putting up with my hermit-like character while I wrote this book and for making me many cups of tea.

And, finally, my thanks go to the staff at Rooty Hill High School. This is their story and I would like to thank them for trusting me to write it all down. In particular, I would like to thank Jan, Bev, Kate, Rachel and Marija for giving their time and expertise to the development of this final product.

Christine Cawsey

Part I

Michelle Anderson

1

Introduction

What kinds of school leadership are required to meet the challenges of good schooling in a knowledge society? The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2006 international activity *Improving School Leadership* is testament to and a reflection of growing interest and investment. Bill Mulford (2006) contends:

> *Children's achievement in a knowledge society is increasingly being seen as wider than the cognitive/academic, more personalised and involving both quality and equity.* (p. 7)

This vision suggests expanding definitions of what counts as good schooling to include social outcomes of schooling as well as cognitive and academic outcomes. The leadership required to meet various visions of good schooling is a source of much interest and debate. In the OECD guidelines for the *Improving School Leadership* activity, the proposition is put forward that leadership is more than just technique and timing; it is about the morally purposeful pursuit of change beyond individual achievement, to the collective commitment to challenging inequality—in its broadest sense. These sorts of visions reflect quests for shifts in what leadership is for, how it is to be enacted and who benefits.

Underlying these visions is the assumption that school leaders have a responsibility for the quality of all learning—student and teacher—in their schools. Research studies show that leadership focused on student learning does matter (e.g. Dinham 2005, Leithwood & Riehl 2003, Marzano et al. 2005). Halia Silins and Bill Mulford's (2002) research of 96 South Australian and Tasmanian secondary schools, including over 5000 students and 3700 teachers and their principals, found the important link between leadership, teachers' work and student outcomes

was a focus on the development of a culture of learning with the support of appropriate professional development. These are the hallmarks of a professional learning culture (Fleming & Kleinhenz 2007). Learning, in this sense, is viewed as a private *and* community endeavour (Fleming & Kleinhenz 2007). Principal leader practices that support a focus on learning have been found to include empowering, encouraging and supporting teachers to participate and use professional learning experiences (Dinham 2005)—the expectation being these will be of benefit to more than just the individual concerned.

In the 1980s, some may argue that an emphasis on learning was swept aside in favour of strong managerialist ideas of leadership. Important though management remains, a school leader needs to be able to demonstrate that the school has carried out its core function of ensuring that all students have learnt well. Increasingly paramount to fulfilling this function of leadership is for school systems to find the 'next generation' of school leaders. This quest has brought to the surface serious leadership problems to do with supply (e.g. replacement of vacancies, age of workforce) and attractiveness of the leadership positions (e.g. size and location of schools, negative media coverage). Most countries recognise that because of these kinds of issues there is a need to overhaul structures and programs for the preparation and ongoing learning of school leaders. In such a context, learning *for* leadership becomes more than a 'nice to have'.

School leadership and the development of the education system's capacity to support learning for leadership form the central focus of this book.

In this book, we (the authors) adopt a broad view of school leadership, supporting the notion that leadership can be dispersed within schools (such as teacher leadership) and between schools (such as co-leadership of school-to-school networks) and among different people. We recognise that school leadership encompasses a variety of leadership responsibilities, including curriculum development, community relations, and positions of authority such as principal, deputy principal and heads of department.

While the terms 'training' and 'development' have currency nationally and internationally, we have deliberately chosen to use the term 'learning' for school leaders. This is because the latter encompasses a potentially broader range of activities—both formal and informal—than the former. In the context of this book's content, the term 'learning' probably comes closer to the thinking and practice at Rooty Hill High School, which Christine Cawsey expands on in Part II.

The content for this section of the book draws and builds on my involvement in the research for two commissioned Australian Council *for* Educational Research (ACER) projects and a review of the school leadership research from my current PhD studies. The first ACER project,

commissioned by Teaching Australia, examined in detail five professional learning systems, one from Australia and four from overseas. A central component of these systems is the presence of standards for school leadership to guide professional preparation and the ongoing learning of school leaders. The second ACER project, commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), involved a major review of school leadership in Australia and the preparation of a *Country Background Report* as part of Australia's contribution to the OECD's 2006 international activity *Improving School Leadership*. The contributions of DEST, the project's National Advisory Committee and the individuals and organisations consulted for the OECD project are gratefully acknowledged. The views in this book are those of the authors and not necessarily of any other organisation or individual.

In Part I, for reasons of space I review briefly a number of issues in the field of school leadership: the changing context; the antecedents of leadership ideas and practice; who gets to lead and how; and the implications of these issues for leadership learning. I conclude with what recent research has to say on what constitutes quality learning for leadership and pose questions for possible further reflection.

In Part II, Christine Cawsey identifies the conditions under which learning for student-focused leadership can be fostered and strengthened at an individual school level: by these kinds of influences and sometimes perhaps despite them. Discussions on learning for leadership cannot disengage from such influences.

2

The changing context and expectations of school leaders

The Australian schooling context is diverse and complex. Some distinguishing features are the large number of small rural schools; a government and non-government sector, with one-third of student enrolments in the non-government sector; and projected challenges for the provision of schooling because of changes to the distribution of student enrolment, with rises, for example, in outer suburbs of major cities but declining in inner suburbs and rural areas (Anderson et al. 2007). Adding to this diversity and complexity is a policy context practised in different ways at federal, state/territory and local levels within each state and territory. There is no single school system in Australia. Issues to do with school leaders and student learning are part of a complex array of systems and sectors between federal and state/territory relations.

Policies are one factor that shapes expectations of what school leaders should know and be able to do. Tensions between state/territory and federal relations play out in different ways, such as in the ebb and flow of centralised and decentralised policy directions between and within the levels. Historically, education matters in Australia have been highly centralised at the state and territory level. However, there is some evidence, varying between states and terrorities, of greater devolution to principals, school councils or representative boards for decisions about the operation of schools and staff appointments (Anderson et al. 2007). At the same time, curriculum decisions have remained largely a centralised concern. This dynamic and challenging policy context impacts on what is expected from school leaders and how school systems configure to support leaders' learning. Not only do school leaders have to take into account policy at the local level, they also need to know how such policy interacts with decisions at national and international levels.

While policy made at one level is no guarantee of change at another level, the former may establish conditions for the latter (Fulcher 1989). One example of this interplay is Australia's *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. Three overarching goals frame a series of specific goals:

1 *Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should …* (eight subsequent goals)
2 *In terms of curriculum students should have …* (four subsequent goals)
3 *Schooling should be socially just, so that …* (six subsequent goals)

These goals, agreed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 1999, focus on the learning outcomes of students and provide a framework for national reporting on student achievement and public accountability by school education authorities. The goals reflect one example of what Mulford (2006) highlights as the quality and equity values in policy. That is, they attend to both academic and such social outcomes as student empowerment. While state/territory systems are said to be responsible for decisions pertaining to education, Mulford (2004) notes that increasingly the Australian Government exerts influence over the direction of schooling. As one example of this influence, Mulford cites the use of grants by the Australian Government to government and non-government schools. The Australian Government can use such grants, in a sense, as a performance management strategy to ensure state and territory governments align their policy decisions and activities to the National Goals.

Internationally, at an OECD Education Directorate annual meeting, Ministers of Education and/or their representatives identified three broad policy issues, which they expect will continue to present as key issues in the next three to five years:

1 Quality (e.g. individualised teaching and learning), equity (e.g. inclusion) and efficiency (e.g. autonomy, decentralisation, accountability, partnerships and leadership)
2 Lifelong learning and the employment challenge (e.g. vocational education and training and adult learning)
3 Challenges of globalisation (e.g. higher education, migration and the needs of a multicultural knowledge society)

(Mulford 2006 p. 3)

For school leaders, national and international policy issues present a context characterised by tensions of increasing complexity and greater demands for accountability. In relation to such issues, new and emerging

responsibilities for principals include: managing and monitoring curriculum development, assessment and reporting; staff selection and performance management; financial management; mission building and managing reform; managing professional learning; school accountability; and community relations and marketing. There is also an expectation that school principals are able to facilitate and work effectively with others in shared or distributed leadership models of school organisation (Ingvarson et al. 2006 p. 4).

Research has shown these changes have brought with them impacts on school leaders beyond what they should know and be able to do. Principal class workload and its impact on health and wellbeing is a recurrent theme of many studies. *The Privilege and the Price* (2004) report, commissioned by the then Victorian Department of Education and Training, is one of several studies in Australia frequently cited on this issue. Among the findings it was reported that as a group, principals and assistant principals experienced high levels of satisfaction with their job. They perceived their job was a 'way of life', which brought with it high levels of satisfaction.

With this satisfaction came also significant impacts on their home-life and health. Stress was an outcome of such factors as rising student welfare issues and perceptions of being ill-prepared to deal with these and other expectations of the role. These feelings of stress did not dissipate over time in the job—instead, they worsened. Leaders reported emphatically that they did not spend enough time on leading teaching and learning. The study indicates to developers of professional learning that what principals say they value may not be what they have time to do.

Among the responses by employers, professional associations and school leaders to these issues have been calls for more and better professional preparation programs, and greater attention to programs tailored to the needs of prospective and established school leaders. These changes have also called for more urgent attention to be given to succession issues—recruitment, preparation, ongoing learning and recognition—and to conditions of work that may increase the retention of effective leaders.

In most schools and school systems in Australia the only formal qualifications required of school leaders, including principals, are the same as those for teachers: completion of a four-year pre-service education course from a recognised institution, and registration with the appropriate state regulatory body. There are no other formal qualification requirements for becoming a principal, although many aspirant and practising principals do engage in postgraduate study and a variety of forms of professional learning. Some specific requirements for becoming a school leader are evident in some sectors. For example, in the Catholic system in Western Australia, school principals also require specific Religious Education Accreditation

and, once appointed, must continue to work towards a Masters degree in either Theology or Religious Education (Anderson et al. 2007).

But who are Australia's school leaders? What impacts on teachers' decisions to pursue or not pursue a formal school leader position? Decisions about learning for leadership will need also to take into account the changing nature of the Australian workforce as a key contextual factor.

3

The nature of the Australian school teaching workforce

Australia has an increasingly feminised teaching workforce. In 2006, Australia's teaching workforce comprised 189 582 females and 80 556 males (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 p. 21). These figures reflect a steady increase in the number of females in teaching over the past 20 years. Over the same period, the number of males in teaching has remained significantly lower than the number of females, but is fairly stable.

As an illustration, in Victoria in 2005, the percentage of female teaching staff for government schools was 69.3, for Catholic schools it was 70.1, and for Independent schools it was 62.7 (Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Reference Group 2006). These percentages indicate that in Victoria a large proportion of females held positions across the sectors in Teacher class, Leading Teacher class and Principal class (principals and assistant principals). In Victorian government schools in 2006, 63.1 per cent of staff classified as Leading Teachers were female. A much lower percentage (49 per cent) of the Principal class was female, but even this figure reflects a marked increase from earlier Victorian statistics. In 1996, only 32 per cent of the Principal class were female (Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Reference Group 2006).

These figures show that females feature strongly in the landscape of formal leaders in Victorian government schools. More broadly, however, they raise a number of questions about the nature of participation:

- What is the breakdown of females and males within the Principal class?
- What does this breakdown look like with regard to primary and secondary schools and geographic location?
- What factors impact on whether females and males choose to pursue and/or are chosen for school leadership positions?

While these kinds of questions are prompted by an examination of Victorian school data, it is probably fair to say they are relevant questions also in other state and territory education systems. The questions reflect issues about the nature, barriers and enablers to participation in school leadership. These are being tackled by a number of researchers.

Neil Cranston and colleagues' (2004) study of deputy principals in government secondary schools in Queensland found that 90 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with their role. However, only half reported an intention to seek promotion. For those who would not seek promotion:

> *the overwhelming reason ... concerned lifestyle decisions; that is, a desire to balance work (school), home and family. This was coupled with a related set of reasons, which focused on the view that the role of principal was too demanding and that there was significant accountability associated with the principalship. A smaller number indicated they were satisfied in their current role of deputy, while others valued the closer connection with the teaching and learning matters in school afforded through the deputy position.* (p. 234)

Cranston's findings resound in Kathy Lacey's (2003) study on factors impacting on the aspirations for the principalship. From over 1300 Victorian government school teachers and Principal class members, she found five key dampeners on the enthusiasm to seek a promotion to the principalship. These were: stress level of the job, time demands of the job, effect of the job on family, impact of societal problems on the role, and the inadequacy of school budgets.

Similarly, Paul Carlin and Helga Neidhart's (2004) study focused on pathways to school leadership in all Catholic primary and secondary schools in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. They found that while about 34 per cent of respondents were applying or intending to apply for a principal role, 42.2 per cent of respondents (out of 390 responses—234 female, 156 male) had not applied or did not intend to apply for the role of principal. Most of this second group were females. Lack of expertise was not a disincentive. Rather, the researchers found it was the perceived impact on personal and family life and recruitment problems as key barriers. For every male unwilling to apply there were five females. In light of such changes and impacts, addressing issues of recruitment and retention has ascended in importance in various policy arenas. A further factor will be the changing landscape of workforce ages.

The *2020 Vision* report, a follow-up report from the earlier research of the Karpin Committee, highlights how in the next 15 years or so, three very different generations are likely to be working side by side (see Table 1).

Table 1 Three generations in the workplace

Generation	Y	X	Baby Boomers
Born	1981–1997	1961–1981	1946–1961
Attributes and concerns 2005	• Entrepreneurial aspirations • Expect success • Strong social conscience • IT fluent, native speakers	• Transactionally motivated • Expect to change jobs for career advancement • Naturally collegiate • Early adopters, IT literate	• Idealistic • Highly social • Largely traditional views of corporate loyalty • IT a learned language, for some
Possible attributes and concerns 2020	• Entrepreneurial focus • Self-managed careers and lifestyles • Some 'let down' as working life fails to meet high expectations	• Moving into senior management ranks • Inclusive management styles • Challenged in managing multi-generational workforce	• Phasing down work commitment, but not retiring in the traditional sense • Potentially continuing to dominate executive and board ranks

(Adapted with permission from Nicholson & Nairn 2006 p. 7)

These groups of workers are reported to have different needs and outlooks on life. The report found that within the workplace, Generation Ys, for example,

> *tend, at least to date, to be 'high churn' employees. They choose to leave jobs, not to further their careers elsewhere but to take up voluntary work, 'downshift' their lifestyles, or continue their studies.*

(Nicholson & Nairn 2006 p. 10)

Analysis of Victorian school-leader age figures for 2006 shows that by far the greatest number of government school Principal class leaders (1282) was within the age group 50–54 years (Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Reference Group 2006). Either side of this age group were sharp falls in the numbers of serving leaders (e.g. 41 leaders within the 30–34 age group, and 503 leaders with the 55–59 age group). Compare this data with the proposition put forward in the *2020 Vision* report above and it does not take long to see that changes in the workplace are required to hold and inspire different generations of workers.

What is being witnessed is a new shape to participation in school leadership and careers. Schools will continue to evolve in response to

Australian and international forces. This in turn will require from schools a level of capacity to respond to such changing context and expectations. Capacity refers to the collective resources that a school has at its disposal to do what it has to do; it includes the skills, knowledge, experience and general wherewithal (financial, parent background and strength of community/social and cultural capital, location, reputation) that sit behind and enable the learning program (Gronn 2007). This in turn will continue, as discussed above, to impact on school leaders. Clearly, thinking and practice in school leadership preparation and ongoing learning will also need to keep pace with the changing context of school leaders and their work.

To this end, one promising development is the 2006 DEST-commissioned major study, the *Staff in Australia's School Survey*, on teacher and school leader workforces. Overall, at the present time, published data on school leaders is somewhat limited in that it either applies only to particular states and territories or is several years old. The Australian Council *for* Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned by DEST to undertake this project, supported by an Advisory Committee of representatives from government and non-government school authorities, principals' associations and university teacher education faculties. The project included a nation-wide survey of large samples of teachers and school leaders, as well as consultations with key stakeholders around Australia on longer-term national collaborative approaches to teacher and school leader workforce planning. Information was collected on vacancies and turnover in leadership positions, as well as leaders' career intentions, professional qualifications and ongoing learning. The study should help to fill a number of current information gaps about such issues.

In summary, policy and workforce changes are sets of influences that shape and are shaped by school leaders' work and learning. Historical and contemporary thinking about leadership is another. In the next chapter, the focus turns to historical and contemporary leadership concepts as another force influencing the thinking and practice of leading.

4

Concepts of leadership have tailwinds—implications for learning to lead

Learning leaders need first to have guiding conceptions of school leadership. This raises a question about the antecedents of leadership ideas.

As an established field of inquiry, educational administration has been around since the late nineteenth century (Richmon & Allison 2003). Numerous examples of ways that leadership theories can be organised and described can be found in the research literature. Examples include:

- charismatic leadership
- transformational leadership
- strategic leadership
- teacher leadership
- distributed leadership
- shared leadership
- dispersed leadership
- moral leadership
- ethical leadership, and
- situational leadership.

This array of conceptual positions is not surprising given that many other established fields such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and business have influenced the history of leadership theory. It is from this eclectic background that guiding conceptions of school leadership continue to evolve.

Two key shifts that distinguish contemporary concepts of leadership from earlier concepts feature strongly in the school leadership research. The first can be characterised as a shift in emphasis from 'management/administration to leadership'; the other a shift from 'individualism to

collectivism'. Both shifts coalesce around contemporary frameworks, such as transformational and distributed approaches to leadership. What the shifts may signal is a change in emphasis in what should constitute leadership and how and why it should be enacted.

In the 1980s, management and administration were in vogue. This was in keeping with the importing of private sector models of management to the public sector (Hatcher & Jones 1996). Over time, however, the function of leadership came to displace management/administration as the preferred focus (Gronn 2003). School leaders, particularly principals, needed to embody both functions, but management was portrayed as being associated with more routine thinking and transactions. Leadership, however, was associated with change, really difficult situations, and being more concerned with the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Some researchers have argued that a focus on forms of leadership—such as 'transformational'—paved the way for bringing back ethical and moral concerns of schooling (e.g. Greenfield 2004). Other researchers have been more sceptical about this claim, arguing that while management may have been separated from leadership, its presence, in the form of managerialist values and processes of efficiency, effectiveness and efficacy, is firmly entrenched (e.g. Bottery 2004, Simkins 2005). Most would probably agree that both management and leadership knowledge and skills are needed to run schools well. Finding the balance in light of various assertions about who leadership is for and the changing context and expectations of school leaders, is challenging. It is not surprising then to see the appeal in contemporary conceptions, such as the OECD definition of school leadership mentioned earlier.

Two examples follow of what could constitute contemporary guiding conceptions of school leadership:

> *Leadership must create conditions that value learning as both an individual and collective good … The ultimate leadership contribution is to develop leaders in the organisation who can move the organisation even further after you have left.*
>
> (Fullan 2001 pp.14–15)

> *School leadership needs to be a broad concept that is distinguished from person, role, and a discrete set of individual behaviours. It needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole, which suggests a shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community.*
>
> (Lambert 2002 p.1)

Fullan's comment draws the reader's attention to leadership being about ends *and* means, through a strong sense of moral purpose and the value of

learning. Lambert's comment emphasises that school leadership needs to come from many people, a claim informed by her research with teachers in the United States. These comments are examples, among many others, that could have been used to highlight and critique contemporary concepts of school leadership.

Consistent with international research on the function and form of school leadership, Australian researchers have also called for more holistic ideas about leadership to be realised in schools (e.g. Crowther et al. 2002, Silins & Mulford 2002). Prominent among these holistic ideas about leadership was the idea that leadership be shared or distributed across the school.

There is little agreement about the meaning of collective forms of leadership, such as 'distributed leadership' in the research literature. Indeed, some provide a word of caution with the wholesale endorsement of distributed leadership. David Hartley (2007) concludes that policy is ahead of the evidence and that while distributed leadership has currency in educational leadership, the evidence to support a direct causal relationship between pupil attainment and this form of leadership is weak. However, this way of organising leadership does denote—at the very least—a shift in mindset from earlier solo ideas (Bennett et al. 2003). Peter Gronn's (2000) analysis of the leadership literature concluded that 'leadership is more appropriately understood as a fluid and emergent, rather than fixed, phenomenon' (p. 324). In other words, leadership is not the property of one individual, but is distributed throughout the organisation. It is increasingly being seen as a group function (Dinham 2005). Some researchers prefer to use the term 'transformative', with its emphasis on whole-school or system change, to capture this notion of collective good (e.g. Shields 2004). Such views mark a shift from earlier thinking and practice of school leadership.

Earlier ideas of leadership, regardless of their theoretical origin, tended to focus on individuals who held formal leadership positions (Spillane et al. 2004). Typically, most of the school leadership literature focused on documenting what principals did to make a difference in schools. Far from diminishing the importance of such research, James Spillane's research was questioning 'the assumption that school leadership was synonymous with the principal' (p. 4)—an assumption he claimed led to researchers largely ignoring other sources of leadership in schools. Stephen Dinham (2007) notes that part of the conceptual confusion lays in the 'conflation of leaders (their attributes, knowledge and skills, i.e., entities) with leadership (the influence exercised by the functions performed by leaders, i.e., processes)' (p. 263).

With collective ideas of leadership has come a focus on teachers as leaders. A number of research studies and reviews of literature in Australia

and elsewhere take up the issue of change in relation to teacher leadership (e.g. Crowther et al. 2002, Lingard et al. 2002, Lieberman & Miller 2005). Teacher leadership is presented in the literature as a medium *of* and *for* change. An all-encompassing term, it is depicted as a reflection and representation of formal and informal leadership. It has different functions and practices, and is carved up and defined in different ways (e.g. 'parallel leadership', Crowther et al. 2002).

Whether teachers even want to be cast as leaders is a typically silent issue in the literature. Some researchers argue that teachers have always been leaders—pedagogical leaders—but whose capabilities have not been recognised (Crowther et al. 2002). Other researchers ask why does leadership need to graft onto the term 'teacher' at all? (Gunter 2005, Leithwood & Riehl 2003). These debates and questions point to varying understandings about the function and process of teacher leadership in schools.

There is still much to be understood and learnt about teacher leadership in the context of contemporary ideas of school leadership. Further research is needed on how theoretical notions of teacher leadership can come to life in different school contexts and circumstances to the benefit of all learners. Teacher leadership is one form of distribution, but so too might it be argued are the ideas and practice of 'co-leaders' and 'co-principals' in single- and multi-campus schools and across networks and clusters (Anderson et al. 2005). So, as Elizabeth Leo and Len Barton (2006) conclude from their analysis of the research and policy literature:

> *At a theoretical level, forms of distributed leadership may well be more inclusive and motivating to teachers than other experiences of leadership; however, there is limited empirical evidence to support these assumptions.* (p. 170)

Alma Harris (2004) notes researchers are partly to blame for the limited empirical evidence on distributed leadership. She argues that some research does not theorise about distributed leadership and analyse it. Instead, the research remains at a descriptive level only. Description alone may be valuable at one level, but it does not move thinking and practice to a robust body of knowledge and understanding.

5

Inclusive leadership—a spotlight on gender

Preferred forms of school leadership can be seen to exist in different stages of history (Grace 1995). However, unified language for leadership does not mean that changing ideas of it are understood or experienced in a unified way by school leaders. One issue often silent or marginalised in mainstream policy and research literature on school leadership is gender.

In her commentary on and critique of her 'journey around leadership', Amanda Sinclair (2004) noted that in Australia,

> *… the archetype [of a leader] is of the lone frontier settler who is stoic but resolute in the face of hardship. Such an image renders improbable a garrulous, emotionally expressive or more collectively oriented leader—women and many migrants from more group-based societies instantly struggle to earn respect in this context.* (p. 9)

Against entrenched 'archetypes' of leadership in society, new forms and ways of doing leadership must struggle. Sinclair's analysis does not set out to generalise about leadership. Instead, her reflections highlight how the 'archetype' of leadership becomes itself an obstacle to change. Alternative visions—Sinclair asserts—are rendered improbable. Typically, as with the example above, these forms derive from Western ideas and processes of what constitutes effective leadership (Fitzgerald 2003, Walker & Dimmock 2000). And, as Marianne Coleman (2003) argues, they are developed largely in the absence of the consideration of gender.

One might expect that the increased feminisation of the workforce and dispersed ideas of leading would pave the way for a spotlight on gender. Some authors question why it is that within educational leadership literature, gender is seemingly *not* an issue to be concerned about any more (Rusch & Marshall 2006).

In Coleman's summary of the situation in England, she asserts that gender had appeared—at best—no more than a variable in studies. Prior to 1996, female head teachers had not been surveyed as a group. Edith Rusch's (2004) review of leadership dissertations in the United States over a 25-year period concluded that little attention was given to the employment experiences of women and people of colour in schools. This issue was not lost in the writing of Australian researchers and school leaders (Blackmore 2000, Brennan 2003). Instead, Coleman writes that work on gender and women in education management and leadership 'tends to stand alone, distinct from the mainstream' (p. 326).

Consistent with this observation, Jill Blackmore (2000) noted that certain approaches to leading, most associated with women, were seen as 'add ons'. 'Person management skills were more a "fashion accessory" to "hard core" management and not valued ways of working' (p. 28). Such observations highlight how the dichotomy of 'mainstream' and 'other' is perpetuated through the politics of language and its implied hierarchy. The consequence can be a sustained belief that one is better than another. Such a dichotomous relationship of 'mainstream' and 'other' does little to advance contemporary notions of school leadership and learning for leadership, particularly when these parallel paths rarely cross.

Studies like Coleman's (2003) challenge prevailing views about leading and managing. Her research provides a space for hearing the voices of women in secondary school head-leadership positions. Coleman's survey of 670 female secondary head teachers does not advance an argument that contemporary school leadership is more than the head, and nor was this her central thesis, but it tackles the issue of inclusion in another way. Coleman's research surfaces differences and similarities in the way women perceive their leadership. Her leadership points to potential areas of engagement around difference. Her research also serves to highlight areas of discrimination in such areas as experiences of sexism at the time of appointment, and questions of credibility to lead once the women were in the position of head. This helps to illuminate barriers to realising inclusion for women in the context of school leadership. Knowing what the barriers are, as identified in the earlier discussion about school leader succession research in Australia, provides an important basis from which school systems can configure to overcome them.

Coleman makes no universal claim that women lead in one way and men in another because of gender. Indeed, she is quick to point out that an orthodox view of the 'macho style of male leadership … may be as inappropriate for men as it is for women' (p. 325). Rusch and Marshall (2006) suggest there is a need to interrogate leadership from the standpoint of both males and females.

This is the key point Coleman seeks to raise from her research: leadership is not gender free. This is a useful reminder given the changing context and expectations of school leaders and what Warren Bennis (1999) asserts about culture: that it 'is probably more devoted to preserving itself than to meeting new challenges' (p. 177). Who benefits from particular ideas about leader, leading and leadership is a question worth asking—again and again.

6

Leadership concepts—implications for leadership learning

How school leadership is conceived has implications for the professional learning of school leaders. As this and the previous sections highlight, the tone and direction of school leadership will be influenced by historical and contemporary thinking about it, and the context in which it is enacted.

No great stretch of the imagination is needed to see that professional learning for school leaders will be different, depending first on how school leadership is framed. One could imagine that the content and methods of professional learning guided by concepts within the Fullan (2001) and Lambert (2002) comments would need to be quite different from, say, this earlier example:

> *… leaders combine two talents. First, leaders have the intellectual abilities to ascertain appropriate goals for schools, to review possible alternatives, to weigh consequences, and to select appropriate solutions. However, if a solution does not work, leaders are also wise enough to complete another rational cycle and to propose another option. Leadership thus is top-down; leaders define goals and provide strategies.*
>
> (Mackenzie 1983 p. 11, in Burlingame 1986 p. 66)

Mackenzie's review of literature on effective schools identified a 'commander/control' image of an effective school leader, namely a principal, who was most probably male (e.g. Coleman 2003, Spillane et al. 2004). Contemporary views of school leadership, however, such as those conveyed by Fullan and Lambert, argue that sole reliance on 'commander/control' forms of leadership is an inappropriate way of achieving the goals of quality *and* equity in schools in changing times. Instead, Patrick Duignan and colleagues (2003, in Duignan 2004) argue:

> *Leaders in contemporary organisations require frames of reference that can assist them to manage situations of uncertainty, ambiguity and seeming contradictions and paradox.* (p. 10)

This suggests programs framed by the technical mastery of knowledge and skills alone will fall well short of such expectations. Professional learning and the tools that support school leaders' development must reflect those changes. At a practical level, debates over who leadership is for and how it is practised may cause headaches for developers of professional learning as they make decisions about their program's aims, content and methods of delivery.

The remainder of Part I looks at what the research reports as critical features of a quality professional learning infrastructure. These features are used to guide a discussion of developments and challenges in learning for leadership.

7

What constitutes quality leadership learning?

While knowledge of school leadership continues to develop, little is known about which professional learning experiences are helpful to school leaders and why (Davis et al. 2005, Leithwood et al. 2004). What counts as quality school leadership now and into the future is forcing providers to reconsider what counts as quality professional learning for leadership.

Numerous researchers have identified shifts in professional preparation and ongoing professional learning for school leaders and in who delivers such learning (Lieberman & Miller 2005, Mulford 2003, Normore 2004). Examples of these shifts in leadership learning are listed in Table 2.

Readers may wish to think about their most recent professional learning experience as a school leader. How did it compare with the shifts listed in Table 2? While these shifts have been identified, this does not mean they are uniformly applied or experienced by practitioners. Stephen Huber's (2004) research about leadership preparation in cases from 15 countries, for example, identified differences in the timing and emphasis placed on content- and work-based learning. So how can and do school systems configure to support learning for leadership in changing times? Similarly, how can and do school leaders support and configure learning for leading in his/her school?

Career continua

Education systems recognise succession planning as an issue and are developing strategies that focus on this issue in the context of overarching planning for improvement and reform. Most school systems have now developed a leadership continuum framework that traces the 'leadership journey' from aspirations through to: beginning in leadership roles,

Table 2 Shifts in leadership learning

Leadership learning from:	Leadership learning to:
Episodic	Long-term or continuous
Training for a role, with an over-emphasis on financial and administrative functions	Deeper understandings of the personal and interpersonal knowledge and skills first, before focusing on other dimensions of school leadership (e.g. educational/ instructional, organisational change)
Input of information	Mixtures of information, reflective practice
Academics delivering programs	Practitioners or practitioners in collaboration with academics delivering programs
Detached, off-site course-based programs	Job-embedded with increased practicum work-place learning, learning by doing and reflecting
Individual learning	Collaborative problem solving and mentoring/coaching/peer support learning
Face-to-face	A mixture of e-learning and face-to-face

consolidation and growth, high achievement in the role, and transitions to other roles (Anderson et al. 2007).

Continua are ways of organising an individual's learning and career pathways. The concept of career pathways challenges the assumption that 'once a leader, especially a principal, always a leader' (Mulford 2005). Leadership learning and learning about leadership do not stop by virtue of obtaining a post. Instead, they are 'part of a life-long commitment to what it means to be part of a profession' (Ingvarson et al. 2006 p. 84).

Continua are also an acknowledgement that more than 'a leader' is required to improve student learning and manage different accountability obligations. Lawrence Ingvarson and colleagues (2006) reviewed the professional learning infrastructure of five systems: Western Australia, England, the Netherlands, the United States and Scotland. They found that usually the continua were defined by three to five different stages of leadership experience—such as project leadership through to strategic leadership in the case of Scotland. Typically, the centrepiece of the

continuum is a principal preparation program (e.g. Connecticut, England, Western Australia) or programs (e.g. the Netherlands and Scotland).

Principal preparation and induction programs tend to dominate among the suite of professional learning offerings by providers. This is not surprising given the changing school leader context and recruitment and retention issues. More recent attention has also been given to aspirant school leaders. At what point, however, an individual is considered an 'aspirant' has implications for how systems and schools configure to scaffold meaningful learning experiences towards leading and managing. Is someone an aspirant when identified as such by him or her or another? Is someone an aspirant leader by virtue of the small school context? Is someone an aspirant leader because distributed notions of leadership move thinking and practice towards leading as an individual *and* collective endeavour? Notable in most of the systems reviewed was an acknowledgement and acceptance that not all school leaders are likely, or will seek, to become principals—hence the development of other programs, such as England's *Leading from the Middle*.

Concerns are being voiced not only about aspirant leadership, but also about learning for established school leaders. A small study by Vicki Stroud (2005) painted a less than satisfactory picture of professional learning provision for experienced head teachers in England. Stroud found that despite the creation of the National College for School Leadership's (NCSL) five-stage career continuum, head teachers reported that

> *they had been neglected, as they fell into the gap between the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) and retirement, even if they were selected as consultant leaders.* (p. 101)

To this end, a small-scale but claimed promising (Atelier Learning Solutions 2007) development is Teaching Australia's *Leading Australia's Schools* program for experienced principals.

The issue of whether to split and label programs for specific groups is difficult and complex. The identification and presence of such programs signal that learning for leadership must encompass and value different leaders and contexts of leading. Voices and experiences of leading that otherwise might be overlooked are acknowledged. Ideally, leadership learning programs should provide for the needs of all learners and learning styles. In practice, this is not always the case, and programs targeted at specific groups are working towards filling an important current gap in leadership learning.

Other reviews, such as Ingvarson et al. (2006), have noted a similar pattern in the emphasis and sophistication of professional learning programs for prospective and established school leaders.

In Australia, perhaps in response to changes in the workforce and context, a number of programs specifically target women, notable examples being the Victorian Department of Education's Eleanor Davis program and the Western Australian Leadership Centre's program of activities for women. More recently, attention has been paid to Indigenous leadership and leadership teams. The remainder of Part I focuses on what the research says about what to look for as critical features of quality professional learning.

8

Critical features for a professional learning infrastructure

One way to research, develop and evaluate the professional learning offered by different providers is to examine the content, methods and structural features of the professional learning (Davis et al. 2005, Mulford 2003). Collectively, these three features set out the guiding principles for professional learning.

Stephen Davis and colleagues (2005) reviewed research about leadership preparation and identified key features of effective program design. Space precludes including full descriptions of each of these features. A summary of the features most frequently identified in the literature as being essential to the development of effective school leaders follows. The three boxes summarise the content, methods and structure of quality professional learning and development, as reported by Davis and colleagues.

Content

The content of prospective and serving principal professional learning programs should be research-based and curricular coherent.

This means using research to incorporate knowledge about how school leaders can create and promote successful teaching and learning. This will include developing knowledge in such areas as collaborative decision-making strategies, distributed leadership practices, management, the development of collegial learning cultures that are change capable, and the analysis and use of data and new technologies.

> A coherent program is one where each component—goals, learning activities, assessments—are well defined, interconnected, logical and often sequential in their structure. Learning links theory and practice dynamically and is framed by adult learning principles. Activities build upon each other, undergirding the development of self-directed new knowledge and a deeper critical reflection on that knowledge. Activities encourage reflection on past experiences, linking these to newly acquired knowledge. An inquiry approach in different settings hallmarks a coherent curriculum in action.

In recent years, a notable development for guiding the professional learning of school leaders in Australia and overseas is *standards frameworks*. These frameworks attempt to spell out core leadership knowledge and skills. Debate over the purposes and principles underpinning the standards frameworks for school leadership will continue. This is where standards writers need to ask such questions as:

- *Who are the standards for?*
- *What are the features of school leaders' work that are profession-wide, and which of those pertain only to specific roles within employing authorities or schools?*
- *How will tensions between different understandings of leadership be accommodated, and who will decide this and how?*
- *How might standards create the foundation for the high-level learning and work performance expected of leaders, without the unintended consequence of dissuading people from applying for leadership positions in the first place?*

(Ingvarson et al. 2006)

The answers to these questions typically indicate that the content and methods of professional learning, guided by student-focused leadership learning, need to be quite different from leadership learning focused on management only.

Every state and territory in Australia now has some form of standards framework for school leadership (Anderson et al. 2007, Ingvarson et al. 2006). *Teaching Australia* was consulting on a proposal for national professional standards for advanced teaching and school leadership (www.teachingaustralia.edu.au).

Developed by professional associations and/or employer groups, often in conjunction with researchers, standards can provide a bridge between research and practice. They are one way to capture what is currently

known and valued about the field of school leadership. Many recent sets of standards for school leadership have an explicit focus on learning for both student and leader. Standards that relate to how-to aspects of leadership—like developing staff relationships, establishing and sustaining a vision for the school, and using expert knowledge of curriculum—are common features of these sets of standards.

Recent sets of standards for school leadership make attempts to focus on the core areas deemed crucial to leading and managing schools. Earlier versions looked more like job descriptions (Ingvarson & Anderson 2007). These versions produced long lists of everything a leader might know and do (Louden & Wildy 1999). This made it near impossible for school leaders to fulfil—let alone judge whether standards had been met. The sets of standards Ingvarson and colleagues (2006) reviewed, for example, focused first on quality student learning, and moved outwards to identify implications for what school leaders should know and be able to do. However, in Australia—as elsewhere—the processes for developing the standards vary since some sets of standards have been developed on a more empirical basis than others. Developers of recently published school leadership standards acknowledge there is a need to review the standards—possibly every three to five years—to ensure their ongoing relevance and currency (for example, Queensland DEA 2006).

At a basic level, Ingvarson and colleagues (2006) found the most common approach of linking standards to professional learning was for providers in each system to take the existing content of professional development offerings (usually a course) and map them onto the standards. For example, England's National College for School Leadership was in the process of mapping the content of its programs onto the revised standards. This is a practical way of linking existing professional learning to new or revised standards. Alternatively, some systems, such as Western Australia, are using the standards to design and develop new programs, such as the Formative Leadership Program.

A focus on formal programs is typical in the research literature on professional learning for school leaders. Leithwood and colleagues' (2004) analysis of the research led them to conclude that

> *recommendations are not based on evidence of improvements in leadership leading to greater student learning as the fundamental criterion for success. Much research is still required if we are to have confidence in our knowledge about effective leadership program characteristics.* (p. 67)

The authors point out that there is little research evidence yet as to how specific program components affect leadership performance on the job or student learning outcomes. Self-reports from candidates—and in

the case of preparation programs, the candidates' principals—tend to characterise many empirical studies (e.g. Bush & Glover 2005, Davis et al. 2005, Leithwood & Levin 2005, Menter et al. 2004). As noted earlier, weaknesses in research design, such as not being sufficiently complex to reflect the realities of school life, make it more difficult to develop a rigorous and trustworthy knowledge base.

Studies that get inside the classroom offer hope to school leaders and policy makers who seek to create and foster professional learning for school renewal. Viviane Robinson and Helen Timperley's (2007) reviewed research on teacher professional learning and development, which made an evident impact (positive or otherwise) on students and teachers. From an in-depth examination of 17 New Zealand studies the authors backward-mapped from the impacts of the professional learning to identify how leader behaviours can have a positive impact on student and teacher learning. They identified five core leadership dimensions and related practices (see Table 3).

Table 3 The role of leadership in developing effective school teaching

Effective leadership dimension	Illustrative qualities
Providing educational direction	e.g. create a discrepancy between the present and what might be possible
Ensuring strategic alignment	e.g. align resources to goals; align program decisions with what students already know and how they learn
Creating a community that learns how to improve student success	e.g. intensive focus on what teachers had taught and how students had learned; 'strong norms of collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing' (Robinson & Timperley 2007 p. 252)
Engaging in constructive problem talk	e.g. no blame approach to naming and describing problems, while at the same time encouraging commitment and ownership to solving the problem; and no blame approach to critical self- and peer-assessment of teacher and leader contributions to the problem
Selecting and developing smart tools ('all physical tools that people interact with in doing their jobs') (Robinson & Timperley 2007 p. 256)	e.g. tools will be fit-for-purpose and well designed

Studies like those of Robinson and Timperley offer important fine-grained insights into how professional learning that counts can be better designed.

Methods

Methods of professional learning for prospective and serving principals should be various, appropriate to the needs of learners, applicable in the day-to-day settings of leaders, through real and simulated experiences (particularly in the case of prospective leaders who otherwise are yet to develop an experiential base).

This may be done through a combination of the following:

Internships

Critical features of this method will include 'an intense, extended opportunity to grapple with the day-to-day demands of school administrators under the watchful eye of an expert mentor, with reflection tied to theoretical insights through related coursework' (Davis et al. 2005 p. 10).

Problem-based learning

Crucial features of this method will involve inquiry through real and complex problems and dilemmas and the use of both theoretical and practical knowledge. Through such processes, leaders' self-concept is said to develop as they challenge their own and others' attitudes and skills, try out and reflect on different leadership roles, and receive feedback through their enactment of authentic tasks and assessments.

Cohort groups

Adult learning is said to be best accomplished when shared with fellow travellers, within a structure that privileges shared authority for learning and provides opportunities for learners to collaborate and teamwork around practical issues of importance in schools.

Mentors

Key goals for mentors are to guide a mentee as he or she seeks to develop their repertoire of skills as a leader and dilemma-solving strategies and to boost self-confidence. Common practices mentors will use include modelling, coaching, weaning off support to the mentee as his or her competence increases, questioning/inquiry to promote self-reflection and improve problem-solving skills, feedback and counsel.

A feature of these methods, and the shifts in leadership learning identified earlier, is that they can place individuals in a more active relationship with respect to their professional learning. Michael Fullan (2001) describes this shift from 'acquisition' of information to its 'use' in relation to a given school context.

Active modes of learning are not only necessary for successful school leadership, but are also a potential safeguard against prospective leaders not considering new leadership roles. Active modes of learning bring a prospective leader into contact with leadership thinking and practices in an authentic way. Specific methods gaining momentum—as indicated above—include mentoring, coaching, and gathering evidence of leading and managing change in schools through some type of portfolio. A noteworthy feature of this form of learning is that it generally occurs 'in an environment that's familiar and relatively comfortable' (MacKay 2006 p. 49).

Individually, these methods have been around for a long time, although not always accessible to all school leaders. Su, Gamage and Mininberg (2003), for example, compared the professional preparation and development of school leaders in Australia and the United States. From the 102 principals and deputy principals in Australia (two-thirds from K–6 schools and one-third from secondary schools), 'fieldwork' was nearly non-existent in their pre-service training before they took on a leadership post. This would be atypical of more recent school leadership programs in Australia (e.g. Teaching Australia's *Leading Australia's Schools* program). In such programs, a school-based project and inquiry-focused school or other organisational visits are an integral part of the learning experience for participants.

Mentoring for leadership learning

A notable feature of school system responses to preparation and ongoing learning issues of school leaders is the formalisation of mentoring. Sometimes people question what the difference is between a coaching and mentoring relationship. Depending on what you read or who you listen to, the distinction may be clear-cut or fuzzy. Mentoring and coaching appear to be similar in that they both aim to support and develop a protégé (also referred to as the mentee). However, coaching tends to focus on technical skills, knowledge acquisition and implementation. Kathy Lacey (1999) suggests, as a distinguishing feature, that 'the mentor is a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher of tricks' (p. 3). Thus, while mentoring is likely to involve some of the skills of coaching, such as the use of open-ended and non-judgemental questioning, it adopts a broader focus on the growth and development of the individual.

Previously, mentoring studies have tended to focus on pre-service or beginning teachers (Dowling & Walkington 2004, Hansford et al. 2003).

Table 4 Problems encountered through mentoring

Problem experienced	For mentor	For mentee
Lack of time to meet	✓	✓
Professional expertise/personality mismatch	✓	✓
Lack of proximity to each other	✓	✓
Unrealistic expectations from the relationship	✓	✓
Perceptions of an unequal status (e.g. mentor knew it all; mentee expressed own ideas)	✓	✓
Conflicting mentor role—advice versus assessment	✓	
Emotionally draining/stressful	✓	
Colleagues feeling jealous	✓	
An added responsibility and burden	✓	
Inadequate preparation of mentor (e.g. clarity of role, skills and goals)	✓	✓

More recently, this type of learning and support has been developed and applied formally to school leaders. Typically, mentoring is configured around a one-to-one relationship. But Smith (2007) found that facilitated group peer mentoring offered an opportunity for multiple people to participate in critical feedback and receive support.

Many researchers have noted participants' improved levels of confidence as a result of participating in mentoring programs (e.g. Hansford et al. 2003). However, mentoring is not a panacea for the issues of recruitment and retention that were highlighted earlier. While mentoring may appear to be a familiar concept, in practice participants may experience a number of problems.

Brian Hansford and colleagues (2004) reviewed over 150 mentoring studies from school and tertiary settings between 1987 and 1999. In nearly all the studies, the authors identified at least one problem encountered through mentoring. As the examples drawn from their study in Table 4 show, mentors *and* mentees encountered problems.

Hansford and Ehrich (2006) identified 40 studies between 1987 and 2004 which contained mentoring outcomes. They looked specifically at formal mentoring programs for principals. Most of the studies were conducted in the United States. Despite an abundance of literature on mentoring for principals, the authors noted that minimal attempt had been made 'at identifying and isolating specific outcomes of mentoring for principals from empirical research' (pp. 36–37).

The authors noted a number of perceived beneficial outcomes in 31 of the studies. Mentees (typically newly appointed principals) identified the receipt of support/empathy/counselling, the sharing of ideas and problem solving, and professional development as their top three benefits of participating in the mentoring program. Mentors (typically serving or retired principals) cited three key benefits: collegiality and networking, professional development, and the opportunity to reflect.

Along with these perceived benefits, Hansford and Ehrich (2006) found both mentors and mentees experienced less than desirable outcomes through the mentoring relationship (Table 4). At the very least, these outcomes show how crucial having the room to mentor is and how significant selection and preparation processes are to the overall perceived success of the method. Others suggest this preparation should include sensitising mentors to the developmental needs of mentees as learners (Daresh 2007). In other words, mentors need to stay in touch with career phases that beginning colleagues were likely to follow.

Generally, a flaw in many of the research studies on mentoring was found to be their reliance on self-reports by principals. The authors acknowledged that principals involved in mentoring generally found the experience to be a positive one. However, the authors were still left questioning whether such experiences and perceived benefits necessarily translated into improved leadership for improved student learning.

While questions remain about the relationship between mentoring as a mode of leadership learning and development, and improved leadership and student learning (as could also be the case with other forms of professional learning), there is sufficient evidence to indicate what principles should underpin mentoring programs.

Mentoring Australia is the official website of the National Mentoring Association of Australia Inc (www.dsf.org.au/mentor/benchmark.htm). It outlines a core set of 15 principles for establishing and managing an

Structure

The changing context and expectations of school leaders demand a stronger focus on school-based authentic experiences and tasks. Thus professional learning programs should reflect ‘a variety of structures, collaborations and institutional arrangements’ (Davis et al. 2005 p. 12). To emerge are different combinations and collaborations among professional associations, employers, schools and universities as equal partners in the design, delivery and assessment of professional learning for leaders.

effective mentoring program. Other examples of principles can also be found in education literature (e.g. Hansford & Ehrich 2006, Lacey 1999, Smith 2007). Mentoring Australia claims that a responsible mentoring program requires, for example, regular, consistent contact between mentor and mentee, paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills, and documented criteria to define eligibility for participation in the program. Arthur Levine (2005) produced a highly critical report on the preparation of school leaders in the United States. His report criticised the content, method of delivery and the absence of research on the value that these programs added to the quality of performance in schools. The report highlighted a number of past and current alternative programs and providers, such as Chicago's Leadership Initiative for Transformation (LIFT) program that targets different administrator career stages and is sponsored by a form of consortium—a mixture of government education, principal associations and university partners. The program's content is practical in focus, covering areas such as the establishment and development of mentoring relationships, and is aligned with standards.

While generally damning in his critique of the university provision, Levine also noted that neither the university nor the new providers' approach was complete:

> *The programs of new providers are long on practice and short on theory, and the university-based programs are just the opposite.* (p. 52)

An argument for this shift in provision is that mixed modes of learning as discussed previously (work-based *in situ* learning, mentoring, coaching, shadowing and—in the United States—internships) require a mix of expertise and networks that traditional university structures and approaches may not be able to accommodate.

Australia enjoys a rich diversity of providers and collaborations for learning leadership. Professional associations, employing bodies, unions, universities and school-to-school networks are all active. A number of dedicated leadership centres in Australia exist, such as the South Australian Centre for Leaders (SACLE). Perhaps unique to Australia are the national professional association providers—Australian Council for Educational Leadership (ACEL) and Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC). Both encompass a wide membership base of school leaders, the latter a professional body owned by the four Australian peak principals' associations (Anderson et al. 2007).

The diversity of providers and collaborations presents a key challenge for the provision of learning for leadership. The diversity of providers and program offerings for school leaders is, simultaneously, a strength and an obstacle to greater coherence. The vast array of professional learning opportunities sets out to meet a diverse range of school leaders'

needs in different settings and stages of career. Equally, this increases the complexities involved in ascertaining and quantifying levels of investment in professional learning, coordinating efforts and drawing conclusions about impact (Anderson et al. 2007).

Although much has been accomplished in recent years in better preparing and supporting school leaders, the changing context and expectations of school leaders will continue to challenge how school systems can and do support learning for leadership. Anderson and colleagues (2007) conclude some significant challenges are:

1. Identifying those factors that are of central importance in the preparation of school leaders. The development and use of leadership standards frameworks can play a significant role in this regard so long as the frameworks draw on a strong evidence base and are subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
2. Striking an appropriate balance between developing capability and competency aspects to leading and managing a school, and meeting individual and school system needs.
3. Improving the research evidence in Australia about how specific program components affect school leaders' development and performance on the job, and how the benefits compare with program costs. The relatively small scale and fragmented nature of much research makes it difficult to develop knowledge and understanding of quality professional leadership learning.

Below are some questions arising from Part I for you, the reader, to think about or discuss with colleagues:

1. What do you use to guide your thinking for learning leadership? Where do students fit in this vision?
2. What are critical features of quality leadership learning for you? How do these compare with your experience of learning for leadership to date?
3. Are there recurrent factors to do with ideas and practices of leadership that work against your preferred learning for leadership process?
4. What kinds of strategies have you used, or would you use, to work towards quality learning for leadership in your school?

In Part II, Christine Cawsey adopts an insider's perspective on many of the issues raised in Part I of this book. She examines leading the development and implementation of change at Rooty Hill High School in the context of the New South Wales education system.

Part II

Christine Cawsey

1

Preface

Before you proceed, you might like to consider the way you like to read and process information from visual texts. You might wish to start at the beginning and read sequentially through these chapters as the story unfolds. You might prefer to find a chapter or section that interests you and start there. You might like to go to the back of the book to see how the story ends. Any of these should work, just as they do for learning about leadership in schools. Some leaders will start at the beginning and work systematically through; some will learn just the things they think they need; and others will start with the end in mind and then dip into the pieces needed to achieve that end. There is no one correct way—neither in these chapters, nor in the journey of school leaders.

Each chapter starts with an introduction, followed by a list of the sections within the chapter. So those readers who like to have the overview first can preview the themes of the chapter.

On the way through, vignettes and anecdotes are included in shaded boxes as examples and reflections on the content that surrounds them. As you read, you might wish to construct examples from your own leadership or school that you could use with the material in each section.

2

Building a school of professional practice

The project

School leaders live and work at the heart of the knowledge society. They accept the daily responsibility for the learning of students, teachers and the school community as Australia makes the transition to a twenty-first-century economy and society. In many ways the current generation of students is leading this change with their deep understanding of living in a networked global society. In other ways, the changing nature of Australian culture, with its demands on parents and families, has reinforced the importance of schools in developing moral and social purpose as well as academic success.

In Part I of this book, school leadership was described as much more than technique and timing; as much more than individual and positional; and as significantly more than compliance and management, formal and structured. As a practising school leader, it would be almost comfortable if leadership could be reduced to matters of technique, timing, individual skills, positional control, compliance, management, formal processes and structures. It would not, however, reflect the day-to-day reality of the complex, contradictory, intellectual, ambiguous, uncertain and professional work of teachers and school leaders.

Leadership, defined through its purpose, is focused on function. School leadership starts with learning and teaching—for both students and teachers. And, using this definition, it is possible to create significant change for both groups by focusing on:

- the core business of schools—teaching and learning, and
- the core role of schools as centres of learning for students, teachers and leaders.

Effective school leadership is focused on the work that has to be done in the school to improve learning and outcomes for all students in the school. Effective school leadership acts strategically in the retention, adoption, adaptation or creation of teaching and learning programs to address what has to be done. It does not start with structures, finances, resources or structural change, although all these things may be necessary actions to achieve the purpose. It starts with a core, compelling purpose and a genuine desire by a school community to make a difference in the lives of the young people who attend the school.

In the remainder of this chapter, and in subsequent chapters, the importance of the deep professional work of schools in building expertise in teachers and leaders is explored through the use of metaphors, practical examples and stories to illustrate each concept addressed. Throughout there is reference to the ideas outlined in Part I as well as to academic research and theory that resonates with the language and ideas of education. In particular, the text introduces the conceptual models that underpin the professional work and learning at Rooty Hill High School (subsequently 'the school')—a model that has been developed and refined by the teaching staff and the school's leaders over the last 10 years.

Chapter overview:

- ✓ *Building a school of professional practice*
- ✓ *The heart of the matter is learning*
- ✓ *The principal—architect of a culture of learning*
- ✓ *Building an understanding of teacher and school leadership*
- ✓ *Professional learning as a cultural foundation*
- ✓ *Designing for the school context*
- ✓ *The importance of perspective for principal architects*
- ✓ *Cultural and heritage issues in designing professional and leadership learning programs*
- ✓ *Leadership architecture is multi-level work*

Building a school of professional practice

One of the most exciting things happening at the school when these chapters were written was the construction of a new free standing library—a building that had come to hold great symbolic as well as practical meaning for the future of the school as a learning place. For

many years the community proposed reasons for the library to be built and eventually a need was identified by the government. An architect and project director were appointed and there was considerable consultation about what the community wanted, what the library would look like, where would be the best location, and what other infrastructure would be needed to make the project work.

After the project was approved, the designs became detailed plans and tenders were called. A builder was chosen and the project manager developed more detailed builders' plans that could be flexible but articulated directions and steps to those doing the work. These plans were constructed to build the library to reach the vision of the architect. Then contractors started to arrive, each specialised in their field, with expert knowledge and skills but without the 'big picture' of either the architect or the builder. They planned for some disruption to the school and its students, as happens with any change of this size and impact.

The foundations—including water tanks for sustainable water use in the school—were laid and the building grew piece by piece as each of the experts added their skills to the final project. Each step was costed, supervised and evaluated as the plans drew towards completion. The result was a new library, equipped and ready for twenty-first-century learning.

In creating a sustained culture of student, teacher and leadership learning at the school, the role of the principal has been like the architect. The school's deputy principals have been like the builders and, as a team with the principal, they have found ways to build the capacity of the teachers and leaders to contribute to the evolving culture of the school. The staff have been like the contractors and the students like subcontractors, although all swap roles on occasions, depending on their levels of expertise in particular aspects of the task. They perform the educational versions of each of the steps described for building the school library, but their purpose is to achieve the best they can for the students.

One inspiration in thinking this through has been the film, *Field of Dreams*. In this classic movie, the hero (played by Kevin Costner) is told 'if you build it they will come'. He goes on to build a baseball stadium in his fields and the former players—including his father—do come. At the school it was hoped that if we built a school with its focus on learning, 'they' would come—'they' would connect with what we wanted to do. Beginning with what the school community needed and with the picture of the end in mind, the school designed a professional

learning model and strategies that would build capacity quickly and sustain it by consistent application.

The school has a sense of urgency around this work because it does not have time for teachers to spend years learning their craft. This school needs students to have high-quality teachers with significant subject and pedagogical expertise if they are to achieve the kinds of student learning improvements they have set as targets. In other words, the builders and contractors need to be highly qualified, innovative in solving problems and able to achieve consistently high standards of performance. They need the capacity and willingness to learn about teaching and leadership as quickly as possible.

The end the school has had in mind for over 10 years is to make a difference in the lives of young people by ensuring each student has the opportunity to do his or her best. The school has worked to build a School of Professional Practice (Connors 2007), and to do this it has focused on student learning and teacher learning in ways that will be explained as this story unfolds.

The heart of the matter is learning

I wasn't able to be a spectator at the swimming events of the Sydney Olympics, but I did go the Pan Pacific Games held before the Olympics in the new pool at Homebush. The swimmers' times were quite amazing and seeing Thorpe, Hackett and Perkins swim in the 400-metre event was a sporting spectator's high point. When asked why the times were so fast, one factor was highlighted. The new pool was deep and this reduced friction from the sides of the pool and from the other swimmers. So the results are better in a deeper pool.

Building the deep pool is a strong metaphor for building successful educational leadership. It is not about doing everything, but doing a few high-leverage things well and deeply. It is not the 'mile wide and inch deep' approach that works in schools; it is the 'inch wide and mile deep'. So, if the research (Hattie 2003) is correct that 30–40 per cent of student success (depending on the subject) is determined by the teacher, then it is teacher expertise supported by high-quality educational and teacher leadership programs that have the greatest potential to change and improve student learning and performance.

So, if the core business in schools is teaching and learning, then the core purpose of our leadership of schools is to improve teaching and learning. Anything else is non-core business and could be done by any qualified manager. This is the heart of the matter and the matter of the heart. To quote the American educator, Lorraine Monroe (1999):

> *The heart of the matter is that requiring solid, challenging, interesting work on a par with what excellent public and private schools demand works ... Anything else is insane.* (p. 20)

In schools that have a sustained learning focus, everyone knows the purpose of teaching and leadership is directed at the core business of learning, and that teachers are expected to be experts and leaders in promoting and developing the school's success in that core business. It sounds rather simple but, of course, it is far more complex in its realisation.

It means that the school cannot be a 'Christmas tree' school (Bryk et al. 1998 pp. 441–42), with every program hanging from it incoherently like a set of mismatched Christmas decorations. It means some opportunities will not be taken because they do not align with the school's own priorities. It also means that the school's leaders need to have deeply embedded expertise in the leadership, teaching and learning frameworks of schools so they can make key leadership decisions.

I started my principalship at the school in February 1997. In January of that year, the Sydney-based *Daily Telegraph* newspaper had published an infamous article, 'The class we failed' about the HSC results of another high school in the local area. The Sydney metropolitan media was displaying an almost obsessive interest in any aspect of public schools that could be used to portray students in western Sydney as either 'victims' or 'perpetrators', a common theme for the Australian media in dealing with adolescents.

Students, teachers and parents were uneasy about the presence of journalists and photographers in the local shopping centres every day. They were also uneasy about having a new principal, after 18 years with the previous principal—a legend for his work in promoting student leadership and parent participation. This uneasiness was compounded by the fact that the new principal was the youngest member of the school's executive and was female.

However, the school community was ready for change and ready (after about six months of grieving for the previous principal) to revisit the school's values, its purpose and priorities. By the end of that year

a values platform (see page 61), a draft statement of school purpose (see below), and directions for action were well in place. Among the hardest tasks for staff and parents in that first year was being willing to let go of old aspects of the school's culture in order to start shifting to the newly agreed purpose.

The process used in that first year would underpin all future joint annual community conferences using student, parent and teacher leaders to set the directions and challenge thinking. As a result, in 2003, new thinking saw changes and improvements made that affirmed that learning was and remains the focus of everyone in the school.

Statement of School Purpose

The school is a comprehensive community school committed to student success through excellence in learning, leadership and achievement.
At this school:

- Every student will learn and achieve.
- Every student will be viewed as a growing, learning person.
- Every student will be encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and share its values.
- Every student will have a sense of community that reflects respect and understanding of others in this community and society.

In a school where student learning is the heart of the matter, leadership is for learning and the school's leaders have to be committed, skilled and persistent in creating a strong learning culture and designing learning that will embed that culture in all areas of the school's work.

The principal—architect of a culture of learning

School leadership for learning is never just about the principal, although successful, practising principals have a key role in the leadership of the school. This key role was strongly supported in the literature and research with principals that resulted in the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council (NSWSPC) *Leadership of Secondary Education* statement (2005):

> *Principals uniquely link the broader system and society with the effective ongoing delivery of quality learning for students. It is they, more than any others, who mediate between any call for changes and the classroom response. It is principals who must lead the processes of improvement and innovation and who are primarily accountable for the outcomes of these processes.* (p. 7)

In the project, the NSWSPC tried to identify what secondary school principals actually thought they did. Two questions were asked to trigger thinking:

1. What do you do day to day? The answers, repeated in many subsequent focus groups, can be summarised as 'administrivia' and 'issues management'.
2. What is the heart of your role? These answers encompassed teaching and learning, professional development of staff, envisaging, planning, ideas management, evaluating, and matters related to improving the quality of student performance.

The answers were not a surprise, nor was the fact that principals had to 'schedule time' to get to the heart of their roles. What was a surprise was the coherent view from principals in different settings, of different experience levels and with the different pathways travelled to the leadership of a secondary or central school. Principals said they wanted to lead for learning and they said they felt they had a critical role in making that happen. They were also able to identify the skills this leadership required and believed they had the skills to make a significant difference in their schools.

If the principal is a learning and leadership architect, he or she will need some highly specialised skills and understandings. These will not be just the mechanistic skills that can be learnt from books (or computers, online learning courses or compliance training). They will include high-order skills in communication, creating change in complex contexts, culture shifting and, most critically, higher-level educational and professional expertise. It is a given that they will already have an excellent understanding of their own strengths and skills as teachers and leaders and the nature of interpersonal relationship building, as well as a sound understanding of the leadership and learning strategies that work in schools.

In 2006, Neil MacNeil and Rob Cavanagh conducted research that asked teachers to rate their principals on their pedagogical leadership (that is, leadership for teaching and learning) based on rankings against 11 dimensions that the researchers identified as a scaffold for pedagogical leadership. The dimensions were:

1 Providing a moral reason and obligation to change teaching and learning practices
2 Creating a commitment to the school's vision
3 Expertise and courage in making changes to improve learning
4 Reculturing the school to focus on pedagogy
5 Engaging stakeholders, especially staff
6 Balancing administrative and pedagogical roles
7 Modelling expert pedagogical knowledge
8 Actively sharing pedagogical knowledge
9 Distributing pedagogical leadership
10 Developing a pedagogic professional community
11 Setting high pedagogical standards for students and teachers

From this list and from the interactive way pedagogical leadership is developed in schools, the role of the principal as a key agent in building leadership for a learning culture is reinforced. The skills of principals in this area have often been assumed when principals are being selected. The assumptions often include a belief that pedagogical leadership has been learnt 'somewhere along the way'. If this is not the case, there is an interesting paradox when principals become publicly accountable for the quality of their pedagogical leadership.

If improving student achievement on a range of instructional and relational measures (with all that that implies) is the major accountability of the principal, that accountability will include accountability for building the capacity and shared expertise of staff (Louden 2007) to undertake that improvement.

However, the principal as the heroic leader and 'font of all wisdom' is—if it ever was—a very unrealistic picture. Large schools, for example, are very complex places, with large numbers of staff and staff teams, various curricula, co-curricular and extracurricular programs, multimillion-dollar budgets, complex ICT systems and diverse student and parent interests. Large public schools operate in complex regulatory frameworks in response to state and federal government requirements. No one person can lead or manage every activity and, if the leadership is to focus on the core business of teaching and learning, dense and distributed leadership is both professionally ethical and conceptually wise.

Building an understanding of teacher and school leadership

If the principal is seen as an architect and school leaders as builders, there is a need for deep teacher leadership to create a culture of learning

throughout the school. There are many definitions of teacher leadership, especially in the work done by Frank Crowther and colleagues (2002) (see Part I).

Teacher leadership can be defined as professional leadership that is both an individual and group activity. As individuals, teachers lead for learning in classrooms, in student learning and in teacher learning, by modelling and sharing their teaching expertise. They accept responsibility for creating new ideas, processes and practices that will improve the school for students and teachers. As professional groups, teacher leaders have synergy. They have the capacity to reshape, redesign and rethink the ways the school works through and beyond its classroom practice.

A genuine teacher leader is an expert (Hattie 2003, Louden 2007, NSW Institute of Teachers 2004). These teachers have deep subject knowledge and understanding of how students learn; they have sophisticated skills in lesson, program and assessment design and delivery; they understand how to recognise behaviour patterns in themselves and others, and how to influence positive behaviour in groups as well as individuals; they have a deep commitment to their own professional learning and know what learning they need; they can, and do, use data to plan for classroom improvement; they are reflective and open to feedback; and they contribute to the learning of others in and beyond their own teams.

One of the most powerful conversations a principal can have with students and the community is to explain the professional and intellectual power of the staff of the school.

Do students and parents realise that each person standing around the assembly hall has a university degree, formal professional accreditation and many have higher degree qualifications? Do they realise that each of these teachers had to do well enough at school or in later life to gain entrance to a university, and this meant they were in at least the top one-third of all high school students in Australia and many were in the top 10 per cent? Do they know that the teachers at this school continue their learning throughout their careers as new professional knowledge is created? Do they know that these teachers have deep academic knowledge as well as skills in assessment, evaluation, classroom practice, professional learning, technology, and (for some humour) crowd control and events management?

Experience and recent research (Louden 2007) suggest that teacher leadership is strongest when it is distributed (dispersed, collective) leadership that is built by collegial and focused work. It is well aligned to the professional nature of the teacher workforce—a workforce of

autonomous professionals, linked by interdependent, moral and ethical coupling when working together in a particular school. Those who have not taught in a school often fail to recognise the quality of these links and the interdependent work of teachers.

Students, parents and community leaders, including local members of parliament, are often surprised when school leaders talk about the professional nature of the work done in schools and they are even more surprised to discover the sophistication of the conceptual frameworks that underpin the ongoing professional learning undertaken by teachers who want to deepen the quality of their professional practice.

School leadership is more than teacher leadership. School leadership can be provided by parents, students and administrative staff as well as teachers. In these chapters, however, school leaders are identified as those people who hold formal and/or acknowledged positions that have key responsibilities in managing and leading learning in the school. The term 'school leader' will refer to teachers who have key (though not necessarily substantive) school management or leadership roles. These are the people who will build the professional learning cultures that underpin schools of professional practice.

Professional learning as a cultural foundation

'What did you learn at school today?' This is the question parents report that they most often ask when their children get home from school. The answer is almost always 'nothing'.

Having said this, principals and school leaders need to consider what the answers would be if the same question were asked of teachers. In a school with a culture of learning, everyone should be learning, every day. For this mindset to become embedded, it needs to be recognised that teachers do not 'go to school' each day. They go to work in sophisticated, complex, intellectual organisations and, if they don't, decision makers have failed to deliver the educational organisations needed in a modern, wealthy and complex society.

All culturally significant buildings need strong foundations, as do strong learning cultures. In building a culture of leadership learning, school leaders need to recognise that professional learning for teacher leaders is only one part of the school's focus on leadership learning. All leadership learning can build the capacity of the school and its community, and effective schools have quality programs to build community capacity and leadership for students, parents and the community as well as teachers and administrative staff. However, it is the professional and leadership

learning of teachers that is most likely to build the capacity of teachers to deliver improvements in student achievement.

Leadership learning in schools involves:

- external and internal learning
- academic (research) and school-based (practice) learning
- a balance of thinking, doing, reflecting and evaluating
- elements that are formal and informal, structured and unstructured, tangible and intangible
- personal and professional growth
- personalised learning requiring deep knowledge and skill outcomes
- powerful concepts including improvement, purpose, meaning, strategy, quality and measurement.

It should also achieve professional standards at a high level and be deeply embedded in improving instructional practice.

As both an academic and practitioner it is sometimes surprising to see how little the school-based learning of teachers and leaders is valued by governments, bureaucrats and even some academics. Unlike other professions where workplace learning, learning from colleagues in the workplace and workplace evaluation are integral to the learning and leadership of the profession, school-based learning for teaching and leadership seems to have been little valued.

It is possible that if school-based learning for leadership was more widely recognised and valued in schools and systems and by government, a 'tipping point' (Gladwell 2000) could be reached where the funding of leadership learning programs would also be more focused on the school as the heart (but not the only organ) of student, teacher and leadership learning. As Gladwell says of tipping points, they are like epidemics that reach a dramatic moment when things change; they begin with little changes that have big effects and they happen quickly (p. 9).

For example, one of the most significant tipping points in New South Wales public education in recent years has been a specific grant from the state government to schools for use in teacher professional learning. The addition of this money to school budgets has enabled schools to much better address professional learning for both individual teacher and school learning. It has enabled schools to offer far greater opportunities for teachers and leaders to learn and develop expertise than would have been possible without the grant. It allows schools to personalise teacher learning to the needs of the context, the identified needs of the teachers and the learning of leaders working in that context.

As a result, this grant has been highly evaluated for the impact it is having on building teacher and leadership expertise. It has more than the

potential to be a tipping point for schools to achieve significant professional learning outcomes. It can also value school contexts as successful centres of learning for teaching and leadership in their own right.

Designing for the school context

When the principal architect is appointed, the project she or he will undertake to build a leadership learning culture will be shaped by the particular context of the school.

Context matters. This simple phrase is critical in understanding the story of any school's leadership and leadership learning programs. Every school-based program happens in a context, shaped by the school's demographics, previous experiences, teachers, leaders, resources and funds available to the school. In their controversial and challenging book, *Children of the Lucky Country?*, Fiona Stanley, Sue Richardson and Margot Prior (2005) highlight reasons why they think Australian society (and its schooling system) has turned its back on Australian children. In describing Australia's schools, they say that schools, school funding and staffing have a powerful role that can either increase or reduce the disadvantages faced by many children:

> *Given the importance of quality education for the individual child as well as for the society that awaits her, it seems indisputable that all children should begin from the same starting gate in terms of their access to good schools … where dedication by well-trained teachers has greatly benefited participation, literacy, numeracy and post-school success.* (pp. 195–96)

While the roles of principals (and other school leaders) appear to be similar (NSWSPC 2004), the leadership and learning contexts in which they work in schools differ considerably. This is well supported in the work of Hayes et al. (2006), whose research on leadership that creates learning in schools where students have significant educational disadvantage, reveals the power of the context in making the leaders.

> *Yet within the predictability of broad social patterns both within and between countries, each school makes its own history, shaped by the actions of individuals within it. In working to build schools as places of learning, the insights offered by research and experience have much to contribute but they do not provide one-size-fits-all solutions, no matter how appealing this may be … we suggest a number of points of engagement to build schools as places of learning; teacher professional activity; alignment and program coherence; and leadership.*
>
> (Hayes et al. 2006 p. 194)

Every school needs to be able to describe its context and identify the strengths and opportunities that context provides for teacher and leadership learning. Access to quality data about the school, its programs and its achievements (or lack of them) is essential in this process. School leaders need an understanding of what the data means in determining which programs, strategies and practices will work in that context, and which will need to be left for later or not adopted at all.

There is a lot of 'lip service' given to the diverse needs of different schools in achieving better results and outcomes for students, heard most often in (but not limited to) clichés like 'one size does not fit all', usually mentioned just before some new (often external to schools) policy is introduced to all schools. If these clichés are to become reality, they will need to have actions that match the reality. Indeed, one size does not fit all schools. Instead of pursuing a rigorous control agenda over schools, there needs to be recognition of the critical role that schools play in relation to improving student achievement levels and in providing high-quality workplace learning for teachers and leaders. Centralised, control agendas have the power to stifle innovation, discourage risk taking and prevent the development of expertise.

On the positive side, they also have the power to encourage deeply subversive leadership (focused on learning) of the kind so well explained by John MacBeath in the 2006 Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) William Walker Oration. MacBeath wrote:

> *There are many people who are instinctively, intuitively and consistently ethical in their conduct without any clearly thought through rationale for their behaviour. But the exercise of leadership requires more than that. It demands rational explication and justification to those who might be persuaded to follow. Intellectual subversion is restlessly and creatively discontent. It cannot accept children being short changed whether by government policies, by teachers unaccountable for their actions or by young people who settle for the mediocre … [it is] implicit in fostering a climate in which critical enquiry is simply the way we do things around here …* (2006a p. 7)

There are difficulties in leading in a specific context as school leaders battle the dilemmas of meeting the needs of their students, teachers, staff and communities while at the same time trying to 'achieve externally set targets of student and teacher performance within significant resource constraints'. It is not the task of this book to address all the issues that influence principals and other school leaders to be subversive on behalf of students and teachers. Rather, the purpose is to take a strong position for the recognition of schools as workplaces that can significantly build teacher and leadership expertise. In these schools, contextually based school

learning is an interaction of theory and practice that is informed by quality research and filtered through the sound commonsense of what will work best in a particular school.

The school described in this book is on the main western Sydney railway line and, based on socio-economic data, is almost the definition of the 'average' local, community and comprehensive 7–12 New South Wales high school. Located almost exactly halfway between Parramatta and Penrith, the school has provided high-quality, comprehensive, cosmopolitan and local public secondary education for 45 years. The school has a number of highly successful ex-students, many of whose parents still live in the community and value the school. It has three major partner primary schools, led by excellent principals and school leadership teams.

Together, the four schools (known locally as The Learning Neighbourhood) have developed exemplary collegial linkages and a highly effective transition program. The high school also accepts some non-local students, and in recent years the school has increased its enrolment of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds to 45 per cent of its enrolment of its more than 1000 students. There are significant numbers of students from Indigenous, Filipino and Islamic backgrounds in a school with students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The focus of the school is on 'learning, leadership and achievement'.

The academic performance of students has been steadily improving, especially on key measures of growth in performance (value-added) data. There is a strong emphasis on evidence-based decision making, 'connectedness', the support of vulnerable learners, and programs that recognise and extend student achievement in and beyond traditional academic measures. The school has also won a number of awards for its student leadership, parent participation and leadership programs.

In terms of its challenges, the school faces competition for local students from the local Catholic high school, selective schools and a highly successful public senior high school.

The school has a young and dynamic teaching staff, led by a talented executive team. There are significant numbers of early career teachers (including eight Generation Y teachers), and there has been a consistently high staff turnover due to promotion of teachers to higher positions in other schools—a factor that the school sees as both its strength and a source of potential threat to the sustainability of its programs.

In the context described above, the need for effective induction, professional learning and learning leadership seems to be almost mandated. What is not mandated is a vision of the school as a leader in these areas as a School of Professional Practice. The willingness of teachers and the school to try to achieve professional leadership has been a strong driving force for the allocation of resources and the commitment of funds.

Turning a potential weakness of the school into a source of strength is a theme to which I have returned many times during my time as a principal. Seeing the opportunity to create an outstanding teacher and leadership learning program was a far better response for the school than constantly complaining about staff promotion and merit transfer. In recent years, the school has had a chance to determine whether the previous years were just a serendipitous success or whether there was something happening that could inform strategies for other school contexts with high staff turnover.

In his powerful treatise on education in the United Kingdom, Peter Hyman (2005) described the differences he observed from his own experience as a speech writer for the then prime minister, Tony Blair, and his subsequent experience in the classroom.

Describing his perspective, Hyman wrote:

> *Government had to hand down policy that applied to 4000 secondary schools, yet each school was at a different stage of reform, and needed different solutions* (p. 204) *… there seemed to be an almost parallel world, under the radar of government, of dedicated public servants (Head Teachers) who were humouring government … all the time these heads and teachers knew that it was in fact their strategy and their plans that were doing the delivery.* (p. 202)

In his conclusion, Hyman suggested that effective political strategy is based on momentum, conflict and novelty, while effective school strategy is based on empowerment, partnership and consistency (p. 384). He argued (with support from Michael Barber) that government should look after hardware (capital programs and the like) and operating systems (regulatory frameworks, accreditation, qualifications and performance management systems), but that they should leave the strategies and implementation of teaching, learning and professional learning to schools. He argued for recognising both the importance of context in the design of programs and trusting the expertise of school leaders and teachers to deliver.

The importance of perspective to principal architects

As Peter Hyman (2005) shows, every person is the product of their own experience and each principal and school leader will bring his or her own views to the types of leadership learning programs that work in schools. Perspective is a major concept in architecture and, like the architect, experienced and expert school leaders are conscious of different perspectives. They try to design programs that will not only look beautiful, have solid foundations and be sustainable, but will also have the capacity for extension and enhancement into the future. They also try to balance the multiple perspectives of others with an interest in shaping the design of the leadership learning programs.

In discussing perspective, it is essential to consider the different perspectives that can influence teaching, leadership and leadership learning in schools. Governments, education departments, statutory boards and school boards, universities, professional organisations, principal organisations, teacher organisations, parent organisations, community groups, and our students all have views on education—its purposes, its curriculum, its legal and regulatory frameworks, its teachers, and what students need.

Just as critically, questions need to be asked about who should determine the locus of control for funding and decision making in relation to leadership learning. The perspective varies widely between jurisdictions and systems in terms of the level of control and influence delegated to school leaders. In New South Wales, funding and staffing of public schools is a centralised and tightly formularised process. As a result, if principals are to improve student learning and connect students to the school, the key is to build teacher and school leadership capacity using the staff and resources currently in the school.

In July 2001, I had the opportunity to visit California with three other principals from New South Wales. Bob Carr, the then premier of New South Wales, had heard an American educator, Lorraine Monroe, speak at an international conference and he felt that her ideas and the ideas being developed by California's governor, Gerry Brown, on school leadership might have lessons for schools in New South Wales. Lorraine Monroe had some interesting and uncompromising views on what had to be done to educate the children of poverty and the kinds of demanding, uncompromising leadership positions that were needed in order to make this happen in the American context.

As well as hearing Lorraine Monroe speak, we also had the opportunity to meet district leaders in Oakland and to sit in on a Master's

class at UCLA Berkeley that was preparing school administrators and principals. This summer course was fully funded and supported by a private educational foundation, a model rarely seen in Australian teacher education.

The Australian principals were required to report back to the premier on our return. This proved to be quite a challenge because the greatest lesson of the study tour was the strength and quality of the leadership and leadership preparation (at all levels) of schools in New South Wales compared with those in California. California was experiencing a critical shortage of teachers because the governor had reduced all public school class sizes to 25 and this meant—for example, in the Oakland district—that 1500 teachers had to be found before schools resumed in September. Most of those teachers were coming from outside the United States. Each of those teachers had to pass a test within two years of appointment to gain permanent work—the test required English literacy and numeracy standards equivalent to the end of Year 8 in New South Wales. The curriculum was micro-managed, uniform and textbook driven because the majority of teachers simply were not qualified or experienced enough to take professional responsibility for student learning.

This did not apply to all students or schools or teachers, of course. At its very best, the quality of curriculum and teaching, especially in Science through joint programs with NASA and Silicon Valley, was impressive. Unfortunately, this did not extend to all schools and there was a perceived de-skilling of teachers and school leaders that ran strongly counter to the culture of the schools and the system from which the Australian principals had come. Even the Master class for aspiring principals at UCLA was at the level we would expect from classroom teachers seeking their first promotion or next level of accreditation. The course work was a recipe-style program based on following a series of prescribed steps to conduct action research and use data.

This study tour was a profound experience because it affirmed, through observation and deep collegial reflection, the quality of the teaching profession and school leadership in New South Wales, and we were very happy to be able to report this to the premier.

One critical lesson from this experience was that principals and other school leaders need to be prepared to look beyond the school and system within which they work, not only to find ideas but also to ensure that the standards and expectations of the system and school continue to remain

high. A second lesson was that other systems, industries and nations have very different perspectives and cultures from the perspectives and cultures of school education in Australia. Australian educators should not need to accept that just because the idea came from 'over there' or from 'private industry' it will be better. Indeed, given the current rankings for Australia in international testing in literacy, numeracy and science for 15-year-olds, extreme caution should be exercised in adopting practices from countries that have been less successful. This should be a particular concern in relation to teacher quality—Australia's teachers have done very well to help students achieve these results. Australian schools and leaders also need to be prepared to share the ideas and activities that make our school teachers, leaders and school-based leadership learning programs among the best in the world. It is all about perspective.

Cultural and heritage issues in designing professional and leadership learning programs

As well as allowing for a range of perspectives, principal architects will want to consider the current culture in which they will be designing and the culture they hope to create. If they have experience or expertise in change programs, they will ask themselves questions about culture.

- *Do leaders create the culture of the school?*
- *Or does the school determine the ways leaders will work?*
- *Or is it some much more subtle combination of factors, a combination that might be as much about the story or the reputation of the school as it is about the reality?*

These are questions to be considered carefully in designing leadership learning programs and, like all cultural and heritage issues, they need to be considered with both intellect and emotion.

Every school has its own culture, even those schools that share aspects of culture derived from a centralised system of governance and management. Leaders manage culture and, if they don't, the culture manages them. Leaders understand that any change will change the culture and that cultures have a natural resistance to change. Leaders are aware that new activities, innovations, strategies and structures will extinguish aspects of the previous culture. They are sensitive in timing changes and they understand the importance of 'firsts'—not just first impressions but the importance of the first new rituals, activities and strategies. Leaders know that change is inevitable and they know that for the school to improve it must change.

Imagine the new school leaders paddling hard through the white water of their new roles unprepared for the iceberg ahead—an iceberg full of traditions, practices, short cuts and stories that explain why things

are done the way they are (Figure 1). It is not just leaders and teachers who need a structured induction or enculturation. Students and parents also need this enculturation if they are to be successful in the school. This is compounded in schools with a high staff turnover where students and parents are important 'holders of the culture'.

Schein's (1992) model of culture has three levels: artefacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. In *Education epidemic*, David Hargreaves (2003) talks about the need for innovation in schools and suggests that schools could innovate in three areas: culture (underlying assumptions), processes (espoused values) and activities (artefacts). Effective school leaders recognise that if you change one level, you will change the others. Leaders build capacity, capability and sustainability best when all three levels are targeted or when the strategy is so powerful at one level that it makes a desired change happen at the other levels. In fact, for success to be embedded, change has to happen at all levels, and innovation will often fail if it is only operating on one level.

In many schools, there will be a strong desire from teachers and parents to have a 'learning culture' for students. Meanwhile, there is pressure from some or all of the students (and some teachers) for a 'street culture' to dominate. This is a fine balance, and the expertise of leaders is in creating a desire in students and teachers to 'buy in' to a strong learning

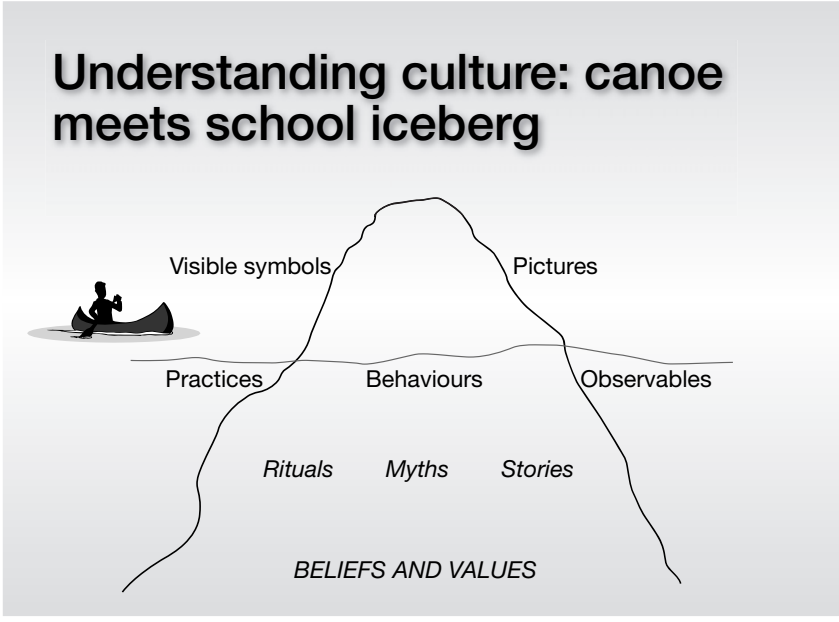


Figure 1 A schematic of Schein's levels of culture (1992) with its artefacts (above the surface), espoused values (on the waterline) and underlying assumptions (below the surface)

culture and sustain that culture in the face of many possible threats. It is not enough to build capacity in the culture if the leader then walks away before others have had the opportunity to sustain it.

Although I have had a mixed teaching background—starting with working with special needs students, then moving to teaching Economics and Business Studies, and then going on to a senior high school to teach Society and Culture—it was the last six years of teaching Society and Culture while being deputy principal in a developing senior school that reframed much of my own thinking about culture, society and the nature of knowledge as a social construction. In trying to give students a deep understanding of powerful sociological, psychological and anthropological concepts, I was learning to rethink many of my own views and values.

At the same time as I was teaching Society and Culture, I was completing a Masters degree in Educational Administration and then lecturing in Leadership Theory and Practice in the Masters program at the University of Western Sydney. I began an academic journey (which continues today) trying to understand the relationship between aspects of culture and how these can be applied to building leadership expertise in schools.

I began to question why we did things the way we did in secondary schools and what would happen if we changed them. Would a change to create a new culture extinguish aspects of the old culture we might regret losing? Was culture maintained by the teachers or could it be sustained by students, and what would we have to do to make that happen? Would there be alignment if we only changed one aspect of a program? Did the school leaders who were doing their Masters degrees understand the culture that had shaped the leadership thinking of the times in which they were working and studying?

Once I became a principal, this constant reflection and questioning became a major tool in my day-to-day work.

School leaders need to do a lot of clever thinking about how they will shape and develop a sustained learning culture in the school, and they need to recognise that the values of the school (whether articulated or not) will underpin any cultural change and the success or failure of any strategy.

To focus teaching and leadership capacity on the values of learning, school leaders can start from an ethnographic (as opposed to a procedural) view. Leaders, teachers, parents and students can reflect on the fact that a community, group, functional family, effective team, and even a gang, have the following characteristics:

- talks the same language
- values the same things
- shares common behaviours
- has set codes, norms, rules
- learns together (team learning)
- supports each individual
- has its own rituals and rites of passage
- celebrates its achievements
- has a common purpose.

Leaders need to consider how they will create an effective team (or school) where the language will be about learning, where learning is valued, learning behaviours are modelled, learning is the norm, the team learns together, learning is celebrated, and the common purpose of the team is improving learning. The examples that follow illustrate how a school can articulate its learning culture to teachers, students and parents and how, once a shared understanding is agreed, leaders can begin to move that culture forwards.

Using ideas from a number of educational, psychological and sociological perspectives, the school has defined areas in which it wishes to develop the skills of teachers, leaders and school leaders. One of the deputy principals (Powell 2006) developed the pedagogical framework below (Figure 2) that allows the school to determine the

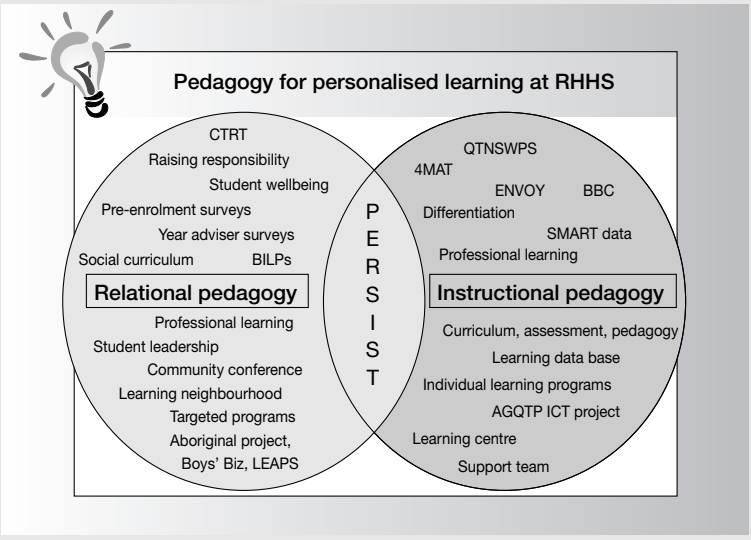


Figure 2 Capacity building programs for staff, students and the school community

School Values and Beliefs (2007)

***P**articipation and Enthusiasm*

This school fosters enthusiasm and school spirit in an environment that values the participation of students, staff, parents and the wider community.

Are you actively involved in the life of the school?

***E**xcellence*

Students and the adults who support them are expected to do their best to achieve excellence.

Have you done your best?

***R**espect and Responsibility*

Students are expected to respect the rights of others, themselves and the school in an environment of harmony and personal responsibility.

Do you respect yourself, respect others and take responsibility for your own actions?

***S**uccess*

Students, staff and parents work towards quality, success and recognition for themselves and the school.

Can you evaluate your own performance?

***I**nnovation and Creativity*

Initiative and continuous improvement are expected of individuals, teams and the school.

Can you find a better, smarter or more creative way?

***S**afety*

The school is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Have you made sure you and others are safe?

***T**eamwork and Leadership*

Individuals work together to create a harmonious, tolerant and effective school community.

Have you been an asset to the team?

'fit' of various strategies and to align any new capacity building or professional learning initiative with what is already in place in the school's learning culture.

The way we talk, value and behave reflect our way of thinking and a shared set of thinking platforms is a very powerful leadership tool. The observable characteristics listed above can be seen at the school and are articulated in the school's values platform. That platform, based around the school's motto PERSIST, is used to underpin the policies, procedures and practices of the school.

Leadership architecture is multi-level work

When a new principal architect, builder, leader or teacher comes into a school, like everyone else who is new to the school he or she sees the part of the iceberg that sits above the water (see Figure 1).

In New South Wales the first impressions often start in public schools with whether students are in uniform. Visitors and new staff will then move to the look of the school, the ways the students behave, the events that are held, the website, the promotional materials that are distributed and the way the office looks.

Hopefully, if the visitor is a new leader, he or she will also have seen the school plan, the results of students from previous years, records of staff and other artefacts, including the DVD of the Year 12 graduation. This will say a lot about the school—but it is only the beginning of a complex picture. Over the next few days, weeks, months (and sometimes years), the new leader will hear the stories of the school, will see the rituals (assemblies, meetings and celebrations), will explore myths and will engage in conversations about the espoused values.

If the new leader is an experienced leader, with expertise in a number of school contexts, he or she might try to understand the values of the school community. In some schools, those values will be stuck on the wall next to the 'Simpson poster'; in some schools the values will be in the rules, procedures and regulations; and in others they will underpin everything the school does. The latter use will make the new leader's design task much easier, especially if there is congruence between the underlying values and assumptions and the more easily observed features.

For novice leaders at any level, there is safety in policy revision and addressing matters of uniform and the observable level of school operations. Those leaders who have been well prepared with a wider range of leadership learnings, and who have a deep understanding of the

multiple levels of leadership work focused on student learning, will be far better prepared to address change and improvement, especially in key aspects of teaching and learning, than those who have not.

New leaders want to make changes—and they should, especially if there is significant improvement to be made. However, new leaders need to think those changes through because for every new initiative that changes the culture of the school, aspects of the old culture will be lost. In some cases this is a good thing, especially where those old aspects of the culture were destructive or needed to change. Some changes will be deeply distressing for people who had a lot invested in the old culture. And so, the skill of school leadership is to:

- recognise that leadership is multi-level work and that leaders have to work at all levels
- understand that structural change does not necessarily have any impact on the culture of the school, and that structural change without cultural change or cultural change without structural change is not sustainable
- identify what must be valued and kept, especially what is best in the school's teaching and learning programs
- identify areas for change that will have the most impact and will achieve the goals and plans for the school or team
- identify points of leverage where new ideas will be most likely to succeed
- identify leaders in the school who can make the changes happen, and what will get them to 'buy in'
- identify what strategies and practices will have the greatest chance of success and will contribute most to improvement
- expect changes to make changes and
- get permission to make the change.

Each school will be different, and the questions to be answered in working in a new school or in a school experiencing major demographic change will also differ. Should school leaders do something different in a different school and/or try to bring great ideas from their previous context? Do school leaders have only one picture of leadership and only one view of what needs to be done to lead a school? Are leaders prepared to talk and talk and talk until the talking starts?

The products of leadership are often called legacies, and many of the legacies of any particular school leader are established with the first things they do in the leadership role. People in the school community watch to see the values of the leader in his or her actions in those early days and to see which practices, processes and ideas the leader puts into place. Leaders starting in new positions need to know what they want to have at the end of their work, what they want to do to get there, and what they

will be when their work is done. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the leader as an architect can identify a clear picture of the project he or she wants, especially when they consider learning as the focus, and then take into account the foundations, culture, context, perspective and skills available to make the project succeed.

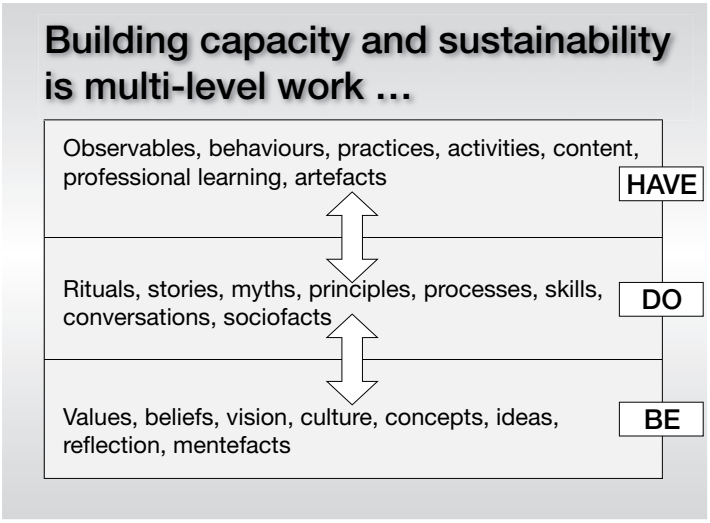


Figure 3 Leaders need to work at multiple levels to build capacity

If you could design a high-quality leadership development program to build teacher leadership and leadership capacity in the school, what would you have in place by the end of 2008?

We would have	We would be doing	We would be
All teachers committed to improving their teaching and leadership skills	Personalised professional learning and leadership plans	Confident in the quality of our program
High-quality professional learning programs with targeted leadership development experiences and learning	Evaluating and selecting those high-quality leadership development activities that aligned with the goals of our program	Selective in the allocation of time and resources for leadership development
Improved classroom practice	Implementing new professional learning and seeking ways to improve the performance of students in every class	Very pleased with our results

Figure 4 A qualitative planning tool for evaluating leadership learning in a school at multiple levels

3

Using frameworks in designing a culture of professional learning

The design brief

After the preparation and identification of the project and the factors impinging on that project, the architects then prepare their design brief. Using their vision of what they think will address the clients' needs, the context, culture and perspective, they identify the major frameworks of the design and then the building elements that will deliver that design. For principal architects and other school leaders, the major features of the design are the powerful intellectual and emotional concepts, diagnostic maps, frameworks and models used in the design of the professional learning program. The building elements discussed in this chapter include the specific model used at the school, a framework for identifying teacher learning needs, the framework provided by academic research, and the link to systemic and professional frameworks.

Chapter overview:

- ✓ *The professional practice model*
- ✓ *Identifying leaders to build the leadership learning culture*
- ✓ *The personalised planning framework—meeting teacher needs*
- ✓ *Academic frameworks: Is there quality research on building leadership capacity in schools that can be used to inform school practice?*
- ✓ *Systemic frameworks for leadership and leadership learning in schools*

The professional practice model

In 2007, Lyndsay Connors referred to some schools as 'schools of professional practice', where the presence of large numbers of early career teachers and newly appointed executive staff meant there was a deep focus on professional learning and practice as fundamental to the improvement of the school.

If the heart of the matter is learning, if the core business is teaching and learning, and if the key strategies to achieve that purpose are teacher and leadership learning, then schools need to have frameworks and models for the delivery of that learning.

Over the last 10 years, the school has been developing a model of professional practice that is multi-level, sophisticated and easily understood. The professional practice model used at the school to underpin teaching and learning is based on the type of multi-level models (discussed in the previous chapter) developed by Schein (1992) and Cambourne (1998). It is important to remember that a model is a representation of reality, not reality itself. Models are theories and ideas in diagrammatic or visual form that provide one representation or interpretation of a concept or set of ideas. A model may not be robust enough once it is tested over time with data or it may be a robust representation that will scaffold thinking and acting over time.

The models (diagnostic map) pictured in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 have been in development at the school for 10 years and are based on the notion (introduced in the previous chapter) that building teaching and leadership capacity is multi-level work. The model has been refined over time by leaders interacting with the ideas in the model and it has, to this point, provided an excellent map for strategic thinking and planning. An earlier iteration of the model was presented in a discussion of building school culture in Cawsey (2002).

The middle level is the key to linking the outer and inner levels and creating change. It is the strategic use of the explicit interaction between the levels that is critical to a deep understanding of those policies, principles and practices that will improve learning and student performance. The interaction between levels is like 'dark matter'. It cannot be seen, but it holds the universe/model together.

Using the conceptual levels (inner/bottom, middle and outer/top), the school has developed a multi-level model for analysing the strategies it will introduce and use. The overall model allows school leaders to consider the place and relationship of any new initiative.

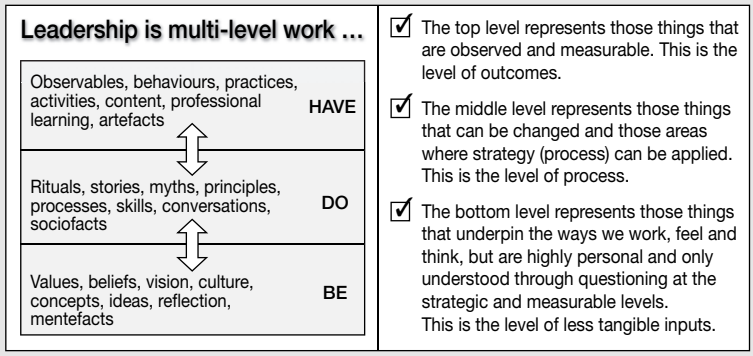


Figure 5 Tabular summary of the Rooty Hill High School model for leadership and change

When leaders in the school are examining any new strategy, they discuss where it will have the greatest impact. Will it change the practices (outer circle), for example, or will it change the espoused values—procedures, documents and processes (middle circle)—or will it have a direct impact on underlying assumptions, beliefs and values (inner circle)? Will it start with a change of practice or with a program to explore the ideas behind the initiative? Will it be coherent with other programs in its premises, principles, procedures and practices?

The middle level in Figure 6 shows some of the leadership learning strategies being used to develop teacher and leadership expertise in the school at the strategic level. These are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Like the iceberg of culture (Figure 1, page 58), the school is very aware that the outer (top) level is what is seen, measured, observed and evaluated, and the middle level and the inner (bottom) level lie well below the surface. The middle level can be accessed and studied through documents, longer-term study of the school's norms and mores and the key processes chosen. However, the model works best when the staff, students and parents understand the inner level, and the concepts in the inner level are explained, articulated and aligned. Without that alignment, pieces of the ice are likely to pop to the surface and can be heard in language like, 'we tried that in 1923' or 'we don't think that will work'.

So, if a set of ideas and concepts is being discussed in the school, there is a genuine consideration of how to 'chunk them down' to the level at which they will be introduced, connected to the needs of members of the school community and linked to the impact they will have on the

other levels. For example, when the school introduces a new leadership development activity that only targets a small group of staff, such as the Australian Government Quality Teaching Project on ICT in the classroom (introduced in 2006), it is necessary to consider the impact the project would have on a culture of inclusive leadership development. As a consequence, opportunities for mentoring, sharing and extending the program were included in the original program design.

The model is not static; the concept that there is an interaction between the levels of practice, strategy and ideas or values can be applied to almost any setting. For example, when the school revised its student wellbeing policies, it was clear from data collected each year that students, parents and staff had a good understanding of

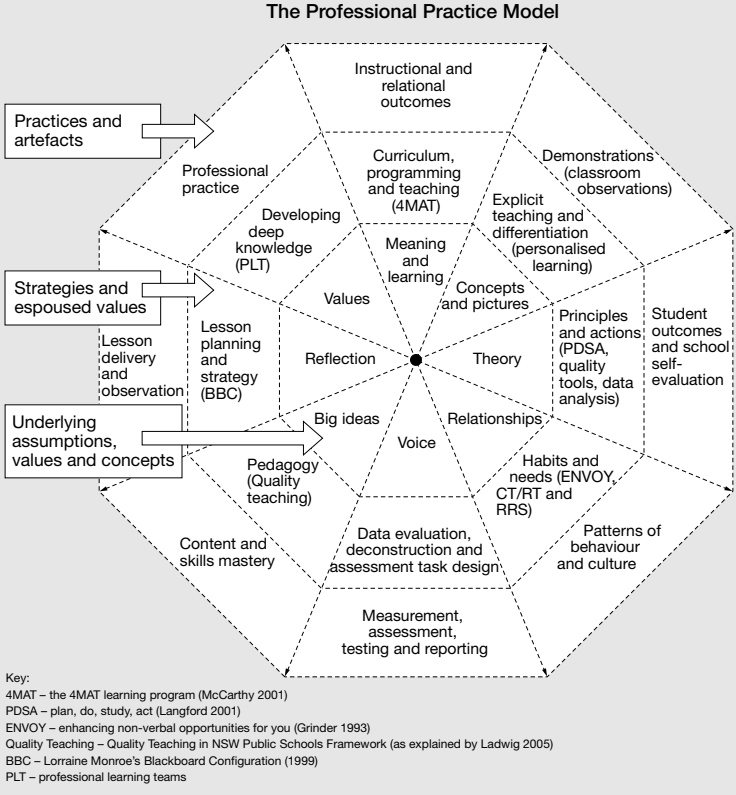


Figure 6 An integrated model of professional practice using the school's multi-level model of leadership and change (Elements in the key will be discussed in the next chapter)

the school's values (inner level). There was also a good understanding among teachers and students of the school's procedures, including Choice Theory (Glasser 1998), ENVOY (Grinder 1993) and the Raising Responsibility Scheme (Marshall 2001). Initially, there was a lot of discussion about how we would know what this looked like in practice. The answer was provided by English faculty members who devised a set of explicit criteria for quality—in work, behaviour and language—which was then shared across the school. The result was a coherent framework, easily understood, learnt and applied by students and, more importantly, new teachers and executive staff.

The model can also be applied to other frameworks, initiatives and policies to identify how the school might plan the implementation of any change in the school.

Identifying leaders to build the leadership learning culture

The learning of teachers and leaders is the single most important investment the school makes in improving the learning of students—as important as the choice of builders to the building of a new architectural structure. In designing a learning culture, the principal architect and the school leaders need to recognise the capacity of the teachers and school leaders to take that learning and construct student learning that leads to greater achievement than would have been the case without it.

Thoughtful school leaders—including principals—will want to ask whether all teachers are potential leaders, either as teacher leaders or school leaders. Leadership density increases shared teacher expertise and this has been recognised as an important factor in student achievement (Louden 2006).

This is a very important question and goes to the heart of whether leadership (and teaching) can be learnt. Observations would suggest that some teachers are more likely to be seen as leaders by students, peers and supervisors. Observation would also suggest that many leadership skills—like teaching skills—can be learnt and improved. In research on teacher career development (Cawsey 1992) and in interviews with large numbers of young teachers in schools, it was common for teachers to have had leadership experiences before entering teaching, and the vocational nature of teaching means that leadership in church and community organisations is common. In addition, many young (and not so young) teachers were school captains, prefects and captains of sporting, debating and public speaking teams while they were at school and university. Some remember

setting up their own 'classes' with toys or leading in team games, even before starting school. They enjoyed leading others and expected to use their leadership skills in the classroom and the school once they started teaching. Many secondary teachers were also academic leaders, often going on to teach subjects in which they themselves had had both significant academic success and a passionate interest.

This does not apply to all teachers and certainly some leaders come to school leadership roles without those opportunities, but they are in the minority. There are also teachers with considerable leadership potential who do not go on to significant school leadership roles and this is often for personal reasons—of health, family, culture and lifestyle.

Controversially, this often applies to some groups of overseas-trained teachers, Indigenous teachers and some cultural groups. School principals and leaders committed to building teacher leadership need to talk with these teachers to identify their strengths and interests and encourage their involvement in school leadership roles. They represent the diversity of the teaching service that is not always well represented in its leadership, and these teachers will often accept a leadership responsibility if they see this as recognition or confirmation that the principal or supervisor thinks they have the skills and ability to take on the task.

School experience suggests that schools and school leaders should not wait in providing opportunities for teachers to lead and learn to lead, but should structure the school so leadership is seen as part of the teaching role from early in a teacher's career. This is the view from one school—the development of teaching and leadership expertise should go together if the leader wishes to develop individual, professional and school capacity.

Further, in a school with a culture and reputation for developing leaders at all levels, it may be easier to become a leader than it is in schools where this is not a feature of the culture.

The personalised planning framework—meeting teacher needs

If everyone teaching and leading in a school can be seen as a potential leader, there must be reasons why this does not translate into practice. Except for the personal and professional reasons listed above, potential for leadership is present in almost all successful, experienced and expert teachers—they are displaying it daily in the classroom. School leaders need to identify potential and they need to address the skills and understandings that are necessary to nurture this potential into teacher and school leadership.

One of the main reasons teachers do not always lead and leaders do not always do well in new roles can be found in understanding what happens when people are asked to deal with new, emotional or difficult situations of the kind that emerge in school leadership all the time. If this is the first

time the person has been in that situation, their understanding of what is required to be successful may be limited by their lack of knowledge, experience or expertise. If they experience a failure at this point, some potential leaders will not be resilient enough to try again. This highlights the importance of supporting first-time leaders. There is a key responsibility for leaders to start with the current learning needs of teachers and leaders and then to extend them from their starting point in any area towards greater expertise.

To embed learning in long-term memory and ensure that patterns of behaviour can reach the habitual stage, it is essential to have working samples and opportunities for practice. New concepts, content, skills and behaviours are rarely learnt without initial examples, models and patterns being available for learners to observe and use. Some people will learn faster than others and do not appear to need to go through these steps. They are either experts in the field who can accommodate new learning quickly or they are expert learners.

Expertise is essentially different from experience and this is rarely recognised in planning leadership learning programs. However, expertise in one area does not mean expertise in all areas, and those with broad expertise across the profession and as leaders can still find areas in which they need to learn. Having said that, experts need very different kinds of learning programs, because they:

- rarely use guidelines
- use the lessons of their own experience
- prefer to choose their own learning
- have patterns to their responses to learning that reflect their ability to synthesise, create and evaluate new material for their repertoire, and
- reject learning that they believe is wrong or that fails to recognise their expertise.

Table 5 The stages of learning

Stage 1	Unconsciously unskilled	Learners don't know what they don't know.	Learners need direction.
Stage 2	Consciously unskilled	Learners know they don't know.	Learners need facilitation and guidance.
Stage 3	Consciously skilled	Learners know what they need to do and practise it.	Learners need consultation.
Stage 4	Unconsciously skilled	Skills are habitual and intuitive.	Learners need collaboration and delegation, and when expertise is achieved they need autonomy, leadership and authority.

One tool that is very useful in planning professional learning is the Stages of Competence (Learning) model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986). This stage model argues that everyone is a novice when learning a new skill. In the Stages of Learning model (Table 5), there are four stages learners must pass through with any new learning.

A short story might help explain the way this framework works.

All of us can imagine what happens when we receive a new syllabus, policy or role. We don't know what we don't know, so we read any documents very carefully (often with a highlighting pen), we go back to first principles and we follow the rules to the letter. We are focused on the content and on making sure we have done everything we are required to have done. We check with others and we break the tasks down into steps, actions and timelines.

The next time we implement the policy, we are more comfortable. We can flick back through the document, concentrating on the highlighted sections. We can see the links between actions and we start to use some planning shortcuts as we focus on the process because we know more about the content. After a few more times, we can see the policy holistically and we are more intuitive in its use. As our expertise develops, we begin to see other applications or better ways to effect the policy. We are consulted by others and we can see significant ways to change, implement or adapt the policy.

In a school with a high staff turnover, school leaders need to be very conscious of moving beyond the novice level—the level of rules and direction. The school has an exemplary induction program (coordinated by the head teacher mentor) and could easily remain on that level, constantly doing a basic induction and not working beyond that. As any learning pyramid would indicate, this is the level everyone must achieve. But there is a next level that most people should achieve and a third level that some will achieve. To significantly increase the breadth and depth of leadership for a learning culture in the school everyone needs to move beyond the 'base of the professional learning pyramid' or the school needs to shift the base of the professional learning pyramid higher (Table 5).

Personalised programs for each new staff member are mapped (not necessarily on paper), based on their level of learning in each area. Team leaders negotiate annual plans with each teacher, including professional learning plans based on their level of expertise.

Table 6 Levels of learning as explained in a school context

Level of learning	Level of expertise	Link to concerns-based adoption matrix*	Strategies for designing learning activities
Unconsciously unskilled	Novice + Graduate	Awareness – *I don't know anything about it and I'm not interested.* Information – *I don't know much about it but I'd like to know more.*	Rules, sets of points, details 'chunked-down' modelled learning # Remember
Consciously unskilled	Newer staff, advanced beginners + Competence	Personal – *I'm not really sure that I can do it. How will it affect me?* Management – *Getting organised is taking all my time.*	Guidelines, reframing, 'chunking two parts of detail together', guided learning # Understand
Consciously skilled	Experienced, competent, capable practitioners + Re-accreditation at competence	Consequence – *What will be the outcome of this? How can I improve my work to increase its effectiveness?* Collaboration – *How can I work with others to make a greater impact?*	Case studies and scenarios; move to 'chunking up' information, independent learning # Apply
Unconsciously skilled	Highly skilled practitioners + Accomplished teacher Experts + Professional leadership	Refocusing – *I know a better way than this.*	Design scenarios for different situations and apply/modify models in other situations and contexts, teaching # Analyse and evaluate Intuition, opportunities to articulate their expertise and design new situations # Create

Notes:

* The concerns-based adoption matrix (CBAM) refers to a model that locates people's concerns about adopting new initiatives on a continuum.

\# Words with # derive from Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision of Bloom's taxonomy. They suggest that these levels apply to factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge.

\+ These sub-entries refer to the four levels in the NSW Institute of Teachers (2004) *Professional Teaching Standards*.

In schools, there is a mantra of starting learning programs for students from where they 'are at'. The same applies to teachers and leaders. Newly appointed teachers and leaders need to work with their mentors, supervisors and school leaders to identify their own level of learning in key school programs. It is not unusual, for example, for a new graduate to have very current information and skills in relation to new content in a course; it is very unusual for new graduate teachers to indicate they have expertise in classroom management.

Not all teachers will reach expert in all areas. Some will actively choose to pursue their personal best, some will be happy to be competent, and others will not be able to achieve the higher levels no matter what they do because they do not have the skills. It is the combination of motivation and skills that will determine who will progress fastest, who will take longer and who will never achieve. However, the school can increase the number by creating a learning culture that reframes the level of performance for all teachers and leaders to a higher set of explicit criteria. This cannot be done informally; it needs the coherence of a commitment to a school-wide formal professional pedagogy to achieve the twin goals of building capacity and embedding sustainability.

Academic frameworks: Is there quality research on building leadership capacity in schools that can be used to inform school practice?

Academic research is a powerful learning tool for school leaders in articulating the kinds of practice that have been tested and measured. Wise school leaders make knowledge of current research trends part of their own learning plan and they make sure they undertake academic research as part of their ongoing learning. They also ensure that potential and practising school leaders have knowledge based on current research, and they use this to build the intellectual capacity of the staff. The challenge for many practising school leaders is finding quality academic research and theory that does more than apply corporate models of leadership to schools or position the personal ideologies of some academics whose educational and cultural frameworks are significantly different from those found in Australian schools.

Having said that, some current academic themes in the Australian literature (see Part I) seem to resonate well with practising school leaders as they design learning programs:

1 Coaching and mentoring models for teacher and leadership development have been well received in schools because they align with the professional coaching and mentoring roles teachers take with

students. Performance coaching and expert teaching (as defined by Hattie 2003) have much in common, especially where new skills are being learnt and individuals are reflecting on improving their own performance. Mentoring has always been a feature of successful professional induction, from the teacher who mentors pre-service colleagues to the more experienced school leader who offers advice and support to other teachers and leaders.

2 Distributed (collective) leadership theories and models have appeal in the way they recognise the professional and collegial nature of teaching relationships and the nature of schools as communities of learners. In Australian schools, school leaders are expected to be high-quality teachers with both deep educational experience and deep professional knowledge and skills. This has been a major strength of school leadership in Australia and can be contrasted with systems where school administration as a profession is separated from the teaching and educational functions of the school.

3 The literature recognises that school leadership is much more than management and is at its best when directed at learning. Practising school leaders understand that good management practices are essential for effective schools, but they have often resented systems and government policies that imply that management and regulatory practices are the only roles of school leaders. More recent research is exploring the idea that the influence of leaders in relation to learning can be seen when leaders directly involve themselves in professional learning and focus on instructional leadership (Robinson 2007).

4 The growing understanding of the purpose of leadership in different contexts and the importance of different strategies for different contexts is reassuring to practising school leaders. More will be said of this in later chapters.

5 There is recognition of the importance of the process used to develop leadership and learning. With the retirement of many of the 'baby boomers', there is the risk of loss, not only of corporate knowledge but also of the deep expertise of more experienced leaders. For school leaders working to develop less experienced teachers and leaders, the development of considered, thoughtful and balanced programs of leadership preparation, in particular, is core business. The thorough review of some of the current models operating across Australia in Part I provides valuable guidelines and ideas.

Despite the 'positives', there are also problems for practising school leaders trying to find research that suits their school in some of the academic research and writing about school leadership as outlined in Part I. Three issues are worth noting:

- managerialism
- leadership learning for a feminised workforce, and
- multi-generational leadership research.

Managerialism

In their review of research for Teaching Australia, Zammit et al. (2007 pp. 4–5) highlighted the increasing managerialism that has become a feature of the role of the principal. They suggested there were trends to increasing accountability, market regulation and marketing of schools, self-managing schools in a context of greater accountability and increased complexity in the principal's role 'with expectations that principals will perform as managers, marketers and educational leaders'. It is significant that educational leadership was the last thing on the list, when principals who see themselves as educational leaders focused on learning would say it should be the first role for every school leader and teacher in a school that hoped to make effective change in learning for its students.

From a practitioner's point of view, it is also disturbing that, on occasions, poor-quality leadership theories and programs from a corporate sector trying to 'transform itself', 'get in touch with its emotional intelligence' and find 'moral and ethical purpose' have found their way into education as some kind of 'revelation'. Had those researchers started their research in education, they would have found that these themes have long underpinned the practice of educational leadership in our schools. Successful school leaders have always valued and understood the importance of good relationships and good relational practices. In many interviews for personal and New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council (NSWSPC) research (Cawsey 1992, NSWSPC 2004, 2005) with school leaders and aspiring school leaders, some themes always emerge and they relate to 'making a difference', 'ethical purpose', 'the importance of relationships and relational culture' and 'getting to the heart of the matter'. The so-called 'new wisdoms' and 'new values' of this kind of corporate leadership and management research are not always well received in schools because those wisdoms are already embedded in the traditions of school leadership, the school's cultural practices and its values. Decision makers need to ask whether an industry underpinned by a professional workforce that sees its work as a vocation and its role as working with tomorrow's adults, already has significant reservoirs of emotional intelligence.

Leadership learning for a feminised workforce

Whether a highly feminised workforce is desirable or not is not the issue. The issue is that in a largely feminised workforce, there has been little mainstream educational literature that acknowledges this context.

Despite the knowledge of the significant number of women who are working as teachers and leaders in our schools, there has been little mainstream literature that addresses or articulates the ways in which women best develop their leadership. It is important to ask whether the culture of schools supports those women (and their male colleagues in schools) in developing their leadership, whether educational culture is different from other industries because it is highly feminised (or not), and whether the models of leadership learning promulgated by governments and systems for schools are successful for women.

Multi-generational leadership research

In addition, for those practitioners working in schools with large numbers of inexperienced teachers and executive staff, the same questions need to be asked about the learning and leadership of younger teachers and leaders, especially those from the so-called 'Gen X' and 'Gen Y' years. A lot of the information to date has been superficial, confusing and without a specific education focus. This is a major issue for many schools whose teachers and leaders span four generations, with all the complexity that then creates for designing high-quality learning.

Systemic frameworks for leadership and leadership learning in schools

There has also been some confusion for Australian school leaders in the plethora of leadership development frameworks, programs and models. Programs with long lists of competencies and tasks have often been seen by school leaders as failing to recognise the holistic nature of school leadership and are often written at the level of minimum standards, while those with clusters of capabilities have often been linked to 'ladders' or 'steps' of learning and continua that are artificially constructed. There are perceptions that externally implemented leadership learning programs and imposed system-wide standards are not resulting in quality applicants for senior positions in schools. Critically, those programs that separate academic and school experience have not always translated into long-term improvement for students, while generic models fail to address the findings of current research into the critical nature of educational leadership for schools.

In the public system in New South Wales there are several frameworks (perhaps too many) that can identify the leader's purpose. If leaders wish to develop their own teaching and learning practices or those of others, they can use the elements of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers' *Professional Teaching Standards* for competent teachers, accomplished teachers and professional leaders (NSW Institute of Teachers 2004) or

the New South Wales *Quality Teaching in New South Wales Public Schools* framework (NSW Department of Education and Training 2003a). This latter framework has had a lot of development and there are various checklists and coding activities (as explained in Ladwig 2005 pp. 70–83) that teachers and leaders can use in learning to understand the dimensions. Many prospective school leaders in New South Wales would also examine the criteria for merit selection and consider whether they could demonstrate achievement in each of those criteria based on the New South Wales *Leading and Managing the School* policy (2000).

One framework the school has used for leadership learning in recent years is the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW DET) *School Leadership Capability Framework* (2003b) developed in a 'leadership alliance' between the DET bureaucracy and the peak public school principal organisations in New South Wales. Based on detailed surveys with over 100 experienced principals, it described the key capabilities required for effective school leadership in five domains—the personal, interpersonal, organisational, strategic, and educational capabilities. Three higher-order personal professional skills—emotional intelligence, ways of thinking, and diagnostic maps—are at the centre of the model.

The school has adapted this framework into a model that helps leaders align the learning of skills against each capability (Figure 7), using the three-level approach outlined at the start of the chapter. (Note: This is an overview of the application of the model for readers who like to have the 'big picture' first. For those who would like more details of the programs listed in the boxes, please contact the school.)

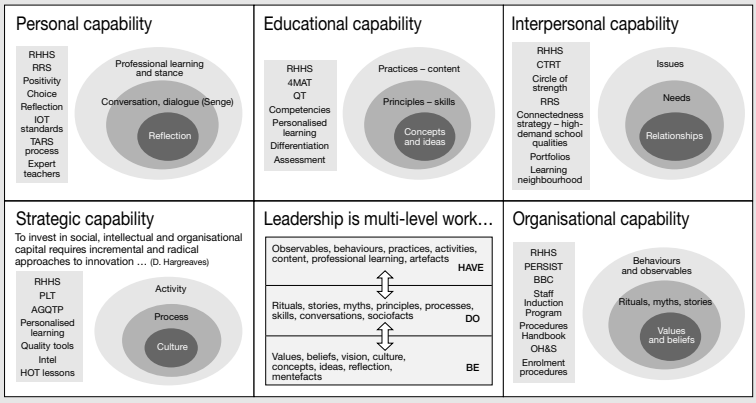


Figure 7 The multi-level work of leaders—the Rooty Hill High School articulation of the NSW DET *School Leadership Capability Framework*

There are people and organisations interested in developing learning and leadership continua, especially if the consequence is a lucrative research or course delivery contract attached to the results of the work. Some of the less ethical interest groups and academics appear to be happy to construct a crisis for which their program, curriculum, policy or model will provide the solution. This has resulted in considerable confusion, cynicism and overlap in the ideas and resources available to school leaders seeking leadership learning, leadership standards and leadership understandings and skills.

So, is there a distinctive educational leadership framework and school leadership learning continuum that is well suited to all Australian schools? Is there a distinctive body of Australian research into excellent models of leadership and leadership learning for Australian schools? I suspect this will be difficult to find for a number of reasons.

One is that much of the educational research is positioned without a distinctively Australian context or perspective, and it is pleasing to see more recent work done by Australian academics as featured in Part I. The second reason is the development of multiple models by each of the states/territories, national standards by the federal government, and models created by major professional organisations such as the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL). This has resulted in some confusion for school leaders, especially those new to their roles.

This is not to dismiss the value of looking beyond the school and beyond educational theory and research, but to recommend that all research that has implications for schools and their practices be read critically. Experienced school leaders have seen poor ideas well implemented and great ideas fail because of poor implementation. Experienced school leaders continue to have major reservations about some of the directions imposed in the past (and suggested for the future) because of failure to actually critique the consequences of the direction chosen or the ability of the people required to oversee its implementation.

Deep intellectual leadership, substantive professional conversation, reflection, and the courage to say no (as well as yes) will continue to be essential tools for successful school leadership teams in designing the leadership learning programs.

4

Strategies for building sustainable leadership learning

Once the architect has completed the design for the building, the work passes to the builders who will then prepare building plans. They will take each aspect and design more specific plans for the plumbing, concreting, electrical work, brick-and-mortar construction and finishing. The school leader does the same and translates the broad design into specific strategies to achieve that design.

It must be said that academic research, studies, school reviews and self-evaluation tools that measure teacher, leader and student performance generally realise the 'what'. Many studies have been very powerful in identifying *what* should be improved in schools, *what* needs to be done in leadership and, in some cases, *what* needs significant change. By contrast, they almost never give practising leaders and teachers the 'how' or the process for a particular school. This is what school leaders do. They design new or modify tested strategies to achieve what needs to be done in particular contexts. They provide the *how*—and this is why those with expertise (not just experience) in school leadership are so often sought by colleagues as mentors and coaches.

It is always interesting to ask experienced and expert principals whether they would have used different strategies and projects had they been in a different school context. Most say they have some strategies that they think work across different contexts, but responses are varied and they often comment on seeing something work really well in another school that would not work in theirs. The ability to identify, select, implement, evaluate and embed high-leverage change strategies has been at the heart of successful school leadership. This has been a largely unrecognised source of strength in Australian schools with their highly experienced,

qualified and professional workforces. It is also a potential weakness when school leaders, especially new leaders, are unsure about the 'how' and feel pressured to adopt the latest fashion or educational fad.

During the late 1980s and into the 1990s I had opportunities to be a consultant with the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW DET). I had roles outside the school and roles that operated from within schools. This was a different time in education in New South Wales, with a major focus on localised process consultancy, strategic planning and community engagement. There were many opportunities to learn how to design effective learning activities for adults and many resources for teachers, leaders and consultants to use. These materials came from corporate training and education and provided detailed information for the design of strategic and process responses to issues arising in the school. Leaders who were learning their craft at this time had a deep preparation for their later work as school leaders and senior leaders in the system. If there was a weakness in this work it was in the minimal use of student performance data, an area of leadership learning that has been much more important in recent years.

The big strategy of localising leadership learning underpinned the presence of leaders in schools in later years who could implement significant systemic changes (including the introduction of the new Higher School Certificate and School Certificate) with far fewer resources.

A school-wide pedagogy built around key professional learning can be the major strategy used to build the shared expertise of the teachers in a school. Like the school's strategies for literacy, numeracy and technology, it is not a 'subject' in itself but a powerful overarching strategy that operates across the school and across the often tribal boundaries created in faculties in secondary schools. At the same time, as the school-wide learning is implemented, teachers are also working independently, together in faculty teams and within professional associations to deepen their understanding and skills in subject-specific curriculum, assessment and pedagogy.

The overarching leadership learning strategy described in detail in this chapter involves:

1 the use of school-wide teacher and leadership learning in key areas related directly to developing teacher leadership in classrooms and across the school, supported by
2 developing leadership at all levels that improves teacher and student performance and sense of connectedness.

The school-wide strategy is designed to underpin and complement faculty, classroom and personalised learning as well as being a filter for externally provided learning. The specific programs described in this chapter are designed to link and integrate the best of academic and school-based practice. Six fundamental teacher learning programs and significant examples of leadership learning programs are described.

Chapter overview:

- ✓ *Choosing sustainable strategies for building leadership capacity*
- ✓ *Core professional learning programs for building teacher leadership capacity and expertise*
- ✓ *The leadership learning strategy—building leadership capacity and a learning culture*
- ✓ *What doesn't work in building leadership learning and capacity*
- ✓ *Reflections on the strategies*

Choosing sustainable strategies for building leadership capacity

Sustainability is a critical feature in the design of all new buildings in Australia, including schools. For schools, however, sustainability is not just about the physical design of spaces and uses of energy, but also the sustainability of quality teaching, quality learning and quality leadership. Some of the challenges to sustainability were discussed in Part I and each school leader needs to be able to identify potential threats to sustainability in planning any long-term program.

The following descriptors (Hargreaves & Fink 2006) provide a useful checklist for the introduction of new strategies and actions. It is a powerful tool that has been used in leadership learning and strategic planning in many schools. While addressing sustainable leadership, the descriptors apply equally well to leadership learning programs and the strategies to be used.

Sustainable leadership and leadership learning programs have:

1. Depth—sustainable leadership matters
2. Length—sustainable leadership lasts
3. Breadth—sustainable leadership spreads
4. Justice—sustainable leadership does no harm and actively improves the surrounding environment

5 Diversity—sustainable leadership builds cohesive diversity
6 Resourcefulness—sustainable leadership develops and does not deplete material and human resources
7 Conservation—sustainable leadership honours and learns from the best of the past to create an even better future.

Within this framework for sustainability, the principal architect and other school leaders will need to select powerful, high-leverage and multi-level strategies. To do this they will need to have a deep understanding of strategy and the importance of strategy that engages both the heart (emotion) and the mind (intellect). Strategy needs to both connect and perform, as shown in Figure 6 (page 68).

One challenge for leaders is in developing a common understanding of the concept of strategy itself in the school. There are difficulties in the different uses of the term in the school leadership literature, so for these chapters 'strategy' is defined as:

> *Leadership strategies and behaviours relating to the initiation, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategic actions within an educational institution, taking into consideration the unique context (past, present and future) and availability of resources, physical, financial, human.*
>
> (Eacott 2006 p. 1)

Strategic leadership is not mechanistic, nor is it the development of a three-year school plan. Strategic leadership questions the present, focuses five to seven years into the future and creates new mental models.

> *Strategy is an iterative process. It has an emergent quality that requires constant monitoring and systematic evaluation of progress. The educational leader needs to be consistently asking themselves and others, where are we now? Where to next?*
>
> (Eacott 2006 p. 2)

For successful school leaders, understanding and knowing how to use strategies that work is perhaps the most important of all skills. The ability to think strategically, manage the current while preparing for the future, advocating for change, managing improvement, allocating resources and acting with initiative to improve student learning are all critical leadership skills. It is, however, at the level of leadership learning that schools do some of their most important strategic leadership, not only in building leadership capacity for the school but also delivering sustainable learning leadership to the profession.

> *Effective leadership in the strategic domain is imperative if schools are to prosper in times of change and uncertainty. Those strong in this domain develop leadership as distributed responsibility and engender a shared sense of school identity and direction. They are strong and effective advocates for the school and public education. They can build school vision and culture, engage in strategic planning, build leadership and are effective advocates.*
>
> (NSW DET 2003b)

In choosing the overarching strategy and the programs and strategies that will best deliver it, principal architects and school leaders need to return to the lessons learnt previously. They need to consider the perspective, context, culture, frameworks and skills available to the school, and they need to determine which strategies will be:

- powerful and high-leverage in creating teacher expertise and leadership
- sustainable over the next five to ten years
- flexible enough to be modified to meet changing needs, and
- focused explicitly on improving learning.

Core professional learning programs for building teacher leadership capacity and expertise

The overarching strategy chosen at the school to develop teacher leadership was to use common professional learning related to the school's instructional and relational pedagogy over a sustained period and to involve all teachers in this learning. The school identified 'five-plus-one' key professional learning experiences, which all teaching staff (and many administrative and support staff) complete to speak the language and operate in the learning culture of the school.

These five-plus-one key learning experiences give coherence and alignment (Hayes et al. 2006 p. 199) between school, faculty and class priorities for learning. They are high-leverage learning strategies that are specifically targeted at improving the skills of individual teachers and leaders in improving student achievement. They all contain both teaching and leadership learning components. All new staff members complete these professional programs, including all newly appointed school leaders. By expecting this commitment the school builds the capacity of new teachers and administrative staff. It also builds sustainability (not maintainability) into the school's professional learning, leadership and professional learning language.

Once teachers have completed these initial professional learning experiences, they are encouraged to take their learning to the next level, to mentor others, to deliver professional learning and to lead professional learning teams. In other words, they move from learner to teacher, from teacher to teacher leader, and from novice to practitioner to expert (see Table 6, page 73). Not all teachers take the opportunity, but over 90 per cent of staff members complete at least the first level of all of these programs.

The five-plus-one programs are:

- **Lesson design and delivery:** Understanding the BBC (Blackboard Configuration)—originally designed by Lorraine Monroe (1999) and modified at the school to assist all teachers to develop much more explicit, interesting, engaging and focused lessons to a diverse range of students. Teachers who have mastered the strategy can then go on to designing lessons collaboratively and mentoring new teachers in deep lesson design and evaluation of lesson delivery. Collegial lesson study with expert, experienced and novice team members is an extension of this program.
- **ENVOY:** This is a non-verbal classroom management program based on neurolinguistic programming (and the work of Michael Grinder 1993) designed to give teachers a consistent approach to classroom management. Teachers can go on to do this course at process level and at supervisor level, and to use the skills in managing interpersonal relationships, adult group dynamics and handling difficult situations.
- **Choice Theory and Reality Therapy (CT/RT):** This is a powerful model of personal and student behaviour relationship management that is based on the concepts of internal psychology, personal responsibility, quality and choice. It is closely aligned with the school's values, purpose and philosophy. Teachers complete initial learning and can then go on to do related courses including Circle of Strength (Brierley 2003), Raising Responsibility (Marshall 2001) and higher levels of CT/RT.
- **4MAT:** This is a program that is often mistakenly thought to be just about learning styles. Instead, the 4MAT course (McCarthy 1999) gives teachers an explicit learning cycle that is focused on teaching concepts through developing programming, curriculum development, lesson activity and assessment skills. Teachers learn to 'chunk' content and skills into sequential wheels that ensure all concepts are taught. Once the explicit teaching of concepts,

content and skills is refined through this model, teachers can go on to mentor others and teach the course. At the school, the 4MAT model is linked closely to the New South Wales DET Quality Teaching Framework (2003) so that the elements of quality teaching are included in all programs.

- **Expert Teachers Project:** Based on cross-faculty professional learning teams (which also include the administrative staff), this program builds the expertise of teachers in their classrooms and as leaders in the school. Using the Quality Teaching Framework, Total Quality Management tools, process consultancy and higher-order lesson planning, this program runs each year with a different focus aimed at giving teachers and leaders a deep repertoire of teaching, assessment and process activities to use in the classroom and in leadership learning.
- **Plus One:** For New Scheme Teachers and newly appointed teachers there is a structured Induction Program conducted and supervised by the school's head teacher mentor. The program involves structured observations, mentoring, frequent meetings with supervisors and the development of a professional portfolio. Each teacher's experience in this program is personalised to develop their skills to the best level possible in preparing a quality portfolio that addresses the standards required by the New South Wales Institute of Teachers to achieve the level of professional competence. From 2008, teachers will be able to prepare for the next steps, 'Accomplished Teacher' and 'Professional Leader'. In addition, there is a leadership component for mentors and supervisors that involves working with the teacher towards their professional competence accreditation. Deep understanding of the elements and how they can be demonstrated best in the school, faculty and classroom is also a leadership learning activity.

I would like to expand on just one of these programs. Choice Theory works on a number of levels. At its most superficial, it gives teachers a set of strategies, especially questions, to use in working with students. At its next level, it recognises that people are all trying to get their needs met and that they can only take responsibility for their own actions. At its higher levels, it sets expectations for adults in the school in managing relationships and has those adults realise that they choose their own perceptions of any situation. This is very powerful for teachers and school leaders to know because, by asking, they can identify what would be needed for the person to be able to improve

or contribute to the school's programs. At its deepest level, it allows teachers and leaders to reflect on their values, beliefs and practices as a person, professional and leader, and understand the impact of these practices on others.

This is the way the school looks at all its professional and leadership learning programs. Teachers and new leaders undertake learning that will deepen their expertise and deepen their understanding beyond the observable. Inexperienced teachers and leaders often 'fake it until they make it' by copying what seems to work for others in the school. In this way they are 'enculturated' until formal learning gives them the understandings and skills to be accepted as a member of the school's learning culture.

As their understanding deepens, teachers develop their own repertoire of teaching activities, responses and actions and they reach a level of expertise where others want to adopt their work and copy their success.

The leadership learning strategy—building leadership capacity and a learning culture

Leadership learning strategies work best when they are integrated into the work of teachers and leaders, and when they integrate academic understanding, core frameworks such as the New South Wales *School Leadership Capability Framework* (SLCF) and the evidence of school practice. This type of school-based leadership learning is best when it is field-based, problem-based, done in cohort groups, uses a variety of methods and requires the use of skilled mentors (see Part I, pp. 32–35).

To be able to learn to be strategic, leaders have to have opportunities to think and act strategically—for themselves, their team, and the school and its community. Novice leaders often do not have these skills; they are learnt through experience (doing and evaluating) and formal learning (thinking and reflecting). Where a school has large numbers of novice leaders, it needs to have a strong set of quality strategic and organisational learning tools for leaders. By providing the 'processes, diagnostic maps and ways of thinking' (see Chapter 5), new and novice leaders can focus on the content of their work. Once that is mastered, they can then start to develop their own processes and strategies. It is therefore not surprising when a new team leader wants to start with revising the faculty or team handbook and procedure documents—as they do, they are learning how the school and the team work. However, if the focus of the school's leadership is teaching and learning and there is a high staff turnover, it is better for the school to have consistent policies and procedures, and for

teams and leaders to operate within that consistent framework to avoid focusing only on management and those things that can be controlled easily by novices.

This requires and encourages new and novice leaders to develop their skills in the new role, and avoids the 'lag' created by new staff. To ensure leadership is learnt consistently and effectively, the following core leadership learning programs are used at the school with leaders, and, cyclically, with all staff. It is important to note that although the programs shown in Table 7 (page 89) are now directed at the level of experience/expertise of the individual leader, when they were introduced to the school, every leader—including the principal—was a novice in some or all of the learnings.

However, instead of seeing leadership learning programs as something done each year by the school's leadership team as a whole, as would be possible in schools with little or no change in the leadership team or with a leadership team of similar levels of expertise, once a program is evaluated as contributing to the school's overall strategy it is repeated for new teachers and leaders. This ensures sustainability.

Having said that, there is a yearly rhythm to the work of the school's leaders with teachers and other leaders; much of which involves ongoing learning for leadership.

The focus concept of each term is:

- Term 1—data (Where are we at?)
  - including the analysis of student performance data, getting personalised student learning data to classroom teachers and the faculty and school annual reporting process
- Term 2—documents (What are we doing?)
  - including analysis of the school's instructional and relational domains through the annual curriculum and connectedness reviews, classroom observations and study of learning events
- Term 3—standards (How well are we doing it?)
  - including teacher and leadership assessment, interviews with prospective students, self-evaluations and major school evaluations
- Term 4—planning (What can we do better?)
  - including personal goal setting, establishing faculty/team targets and strategies for the following year

For those holding formal leadership positions in the school, there is significant learning involved in seeking ways to improve their work each year.

Some programs are more critical than others as powerful learning experiences. The most powerful integrate the use of all five dimensions of the SLCF and require leaders at all levels to work at a high level of academic, teacher and leadership expertise. Where schools can devise

Table 7 A summary of the school's leadership learning programs

SLCF Leadership Dimension	New Leaders	Competent And Experienced Leaders	Experts
EDUCATIONAL	4MAT Quality Teaching Framework	Leading professional learning teams Lesson study	Design and delivery of new initiatives in curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (both instructional and relational)
STRATEGIC	Faculty/team planning and evaluation	Use of ICT to undertake online survey development and research	
INTERPERSONAL	ENVOY Choice Theory	Teacher assessment and accreditation **Coaching and mentoring teachers**	Coaching and mentoring leaders
PERSONAL	4MAT Leadership styles and self-evaluation Stephen Covey training material	Personal understanding – MBTI, DISC Goal setting and participation in TARs process	
ORGANISATIONAL	Use of quality tools	Addressing elements of *Leading and Managing the School* (2000)	Design of new systems and processes for the school, particularly using ICT and quality tools
INTEGRATED PROGRAMS	Induction of new staff Executive conferences and professional learning sessions Action learning projects	**Formalised faculty and team planning and evaluation** **Supervision of teaching and learning programs and classrooms** **Project-based learning and collegial action research** Managing change	Designing and leading change Designing and delivering aspects of teacher and leadership learning Conference presentations **Leading professional learning teams**

leadership learning that integrates concepts, skills and understanding from a range of areas in higher-order learning experiences, there is the potential to make a significant shift in the quality of the leadership capability of the whole school. In Table 7, five of the school's most powerful leadership learning experiences have been highlighted in bold and these are explained in more detail below.

1 Formalised faculty and team planning and evaluation

In 1998, the school introduced a model of cyclical faculty/team planning and evaluation that has now evolved into a powerful tool for learning leadership at all levels of the school. Using external and internal data the school has developed 'faculty, student and team packages' that can be used to track data over a period of time. (The data analysis packages were developed by the school's deputy principal, Jan van Doorn, and are available from the school.)

In this way, a change of leader does not result in a loss of data or momentum for learning. Team leaders analyse data (often directly with the class teachers), and use it to develop annual faculty plans based on clearly established improvement targets that are measured against previous school and faculty performance.

More recently the school introduced a Personalised Learning Database that contains longitudinal student performance and achievement data for each individual student. Class teachers can access and use this data to plan units of work, lessons and explicit learning activities that are tailored to the needs of students in each class. (This personalised data program was developed by Conny Mattimore.)

Significantly school leaders, teachers and faculty teams use evidence from student performance and school evaluations to determine their own purpose. They also look at the goals of the school, the New South Wales Institute of Teachers and the New South Wales DET frameworks; and align their leadership learning to meet the requirements of successful leaders and teachers in the school. The closer this is aligned and personalised to the classroom, co-curricular and extracurricular context in which they will be working, the more quickly leaders will develop and then be able to expand their leadership beyond that initial context.

The school's senior leadership team develops the processes and proforma, so teacher leaders and school leaders can focus on the task. Once teachers can collect and analyse data, engage in evidence-based planning for the classroom using sophisticated ICT tools, and

evaluate the effectiveness of their own classroom, it is a matter of extrapolation to extend it to a larger context. These are key educational and strategic skills for leaders to develop and they are best learnt as early in a teacher's career as possible.

One widely acknowledged strength of this process for learning leadership at this school is the public sharing of the information, data and evidence. Each team leader collects the data and develops it with the team. They also share the 'story behind' each piece of data. Together, strategies are identified for the whole school as well as each team, teacher and group of students. The power of public knowledge is in both the learning for the less experienced given by those with expertise and the insights that independent observers add to the evaluation process.

The leadership skills developed in this problem, field-based learning include:

- data literacy (Earl & Katz 2006 p. 45) analysis and interpretation
- linking key sources of data
- finding patterns and messages in the data
- target design
- scenario making, including identifying possible and probable futures
- resource determination, budgeting and setting time frames.

Data can create a 'sense of urgency' (Earl & Katz 2006 p. 45) that can then be used by leaders to leverage for change in the team's or school practices. Knowing how to leverage data is a skill expert leaders use as one of their critical actions.

2 Supervision of teaching and learning programs and classrooms

To keep our conversations about the core business, the school also has a very carefully planned, negotiated and implemented system of teacher monitoring and supervision. Using mandated New South Wales DET guidelines and the BBC lesson-design process, the school has developed a cycle of professional goal setting, action and evaluation. Many faculties use action research models, especially with more experienced staff; others use more traditional supervisory practices. The school also has annual reviews of its instructional and relational pedagogy and programs.

No matter which approach is used, classroom observation and feedback are central to the whole process of building the capacity for professional leadership. Observations can be conducted by colleagues,

HIGH SCHOOL **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION RECORD**

TEACHER _____ CLASS _____ PERIOD _____

LESSON OUTCOMES/TITLE/BIG IDEA _____

OBSERVER _____ **DATE** _____

1. Not observed 2. Partially demonstrated 3. Demonstrated 4. Successfully demonstrated 5. Sophisticated demonstration

CRITERIA TO BE OBSERVED	1	2	3	4	5
1. Lesson planning (documents provided to observer before the lesson)					
Evidence of thorough lesson preparation; lesson plan shows teacher has deep knowledge of subject content, pedagogy and curriculum requirements (IOT 1)					
Lesson outcomes and overview clearly articulated to students using BBC (IOT 3)					
Lesson plan shows alignment of outcomes, content, concepts (big ideas), processes (IOT 1)					
Resources and activities chosen and managed effectively to ensure key ideas learnt					
Attention to fun, challenging, creative and enjoyable learning activities (IOT 4)					
Clear and logical lesson structure with appropriate flow, pace and timing (IOT 3)					
Differentiation based on student abilities, cultures and learning styles addressed in lesson design and delivery, including use of scaffolds and explicit teaching (IOT 2)					
2. Learning strategies/Activities observed (see over for more detail)					
Effective 'Do now' activity used to start lesson and build 'significance' (IOT 1 & 2)					
Effective, appropriate integration of literacy, numeracy and technology (IOT 1, 2 & 4)					
Range of individual, group and class teaching and learning activities used in lesson delivery showing specific knowledge of how students learn in this subject (IOT 2)					
Evidence of 'intellectual quality', clear purpose, substance, explanations (IOT 1 & 3)					
3. Management of quality learning environment					
Appropriate modelling and communication of high expectations (IOT 5)					
Clarity of presentation including ability to get and maintain attention of class (IOT 5)					
Routines (e.g. roll marking, BBC) and procedures to maintain engagement in place					
Verbal cues used for teaching and non-verbal cues for management; use of ENVOY					
Effective, minimum transitions between activities and to and from teacher (IOT 3 & 5)					
Effective management of individual and group behaviour (e.g. using CT/RT, RRS)					
Recognition and acknowledgement of student achievement (IOT 5)					
School values modelled and taught in a 'quality learning environment' where students demonstrate quality work, language and behaviour (IOT 5)					
4. Assessment and evaluation of learning					
Students complete work set and demonstrate that they are learning					
Teacher gives explicit feedback to individuals and the class during the lesson (IOT 3)					
Students reflect on learning and identify key learning outcomes achieved (IOT 3)					
Effective lesson closure, link to next lesson and homework (IOT 5)					

Comments (For additional comments please add footnotes on a separate page.)

_____

_____

_____

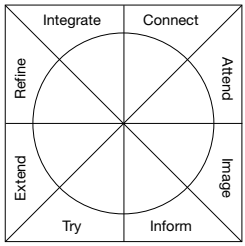
The lesson has been discussed. The teacher and observer have copies of this document. This document is for use in teacher development and evaluation and for no other purpose.

Observer's signature: _____ **Teacher's signature:** _____

Figure 8 Rooty Hill High School classroom observation record (Copies are available from the school)

The following items represent selected highlights from the lesson observed and are noted for the purpose of teacher professional development. They are not to be used for teacher assessment without the prior agreement of the teacher.

4MAT wheel
Lesson activities can be located in the following sectors:



DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY TEACHING (PEDAGOGY)					
See QTF, values and other coding sheets for descriptions of each domain, element and criteria.					
Significance of learning activities (IOT 1 & 2)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Background knowledge					
Cultural knowledge					
Knowledge integration					
Inclusivity					
Connectedness					
Narrative					
Intellectual quality and challenge (IOT 1 & 2)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Deep knowledge (teacher)					
Deep understanding (students)					
Problematic knowledge					
Higher-order thinking					
Meta-language					
Substantive communication					
Quality learning environment and support (IOT 5)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Explicit quality criteria					
Engagement					
High expectations					
Social support					
Students' self-regulation					
Student direction					
SCHOOL VALUES MODELLED AND OBSERVED DURING LESSON	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Participation and enthusiasm					
Excellence – personal best					
Respect and responsibility					
Success					
Innovation and creativity					
Safety					
Teamwork and leadership					
Evidence of quality behaviour, quality language, quality work					

Figure 8 (*continued*) Rooty Hill High School classroom observation record

mentors and supervisors and every teacher in the school is observed at least once each year. The principal sees all newly appointed teachers and all executive staff at least once per year and the deputy principals observe up to 20 lessons a year. To ensure there is consistency in these observations and that there is evidence of key school and DET frameworks in place, all observers use the school's classroom observation record as a starting point for substantive professional conversation about the school's learning frameworks (Figure 8). This record is revised annually to include modifications and additions to accommodate changing internal and departmental priorities. It incorporates all the major requirements of the school's approach to teaching and learning and is aligned with key system documents.

One key result of having close to 100 observations a year is that areas of strength and areas for development can be identified. As part of the school's evaluation of teaching in 2006, the evaluators noted that teachers should spend more professional learning time on lesson design and assessment of lessons (NSW Department of Education and Training, *Rooty Hill High School Annual Report 2006*). Lesson strategies and classroom management were identified as areas where there was greater success and consistency, especially for the least experienced teachers in the school.

Those doing the observations and evaluations have noted how much participating in the process improves their own teaching and learning. These teachers are developing critical curriculum, pedagogical and teaching leadership skills. They know what a good lesson looks like and they know how to assist other teachers to improve the quality of their lesson design and delivery. The development of expertise as a teacher leader prepares all teachers and leaders for more formal school leadership positions. There is deep knowledge of the core business of teaching and learning and deep understanding of how success looks in programs, assessment and classroom teaching.

3 Project-based learning and action research

One of the most powerful leadership learning development strategies used in the school and repeated in the work of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council is project-based learning. While having time to study and research in an academic setting is an opportunity almost all school leaders would like to have, some circumstances prevent potential or current leaders from being able to do that.

An alternative that engages both academic and school-based research is project-based learning. At the school there is a lot of

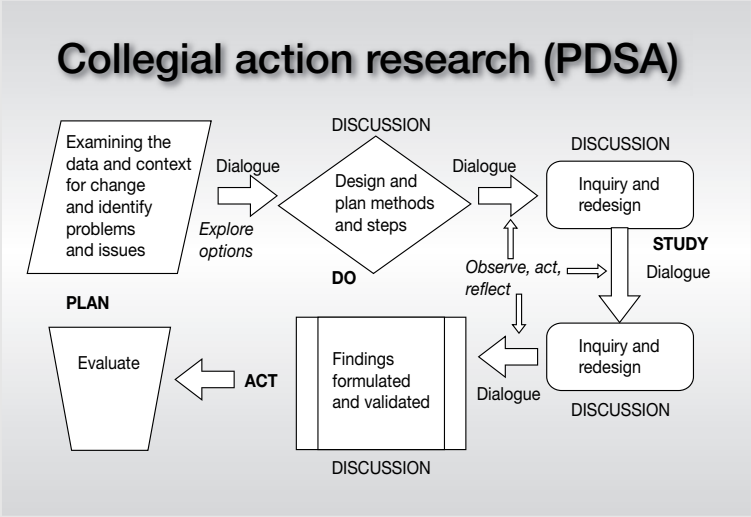


Figure 9 The collegial action research model (PDSA: plan, do, study, act) used at Rooty Hill High School (modified from Langford 2001 and Senge 1992)

evidence that real, higher-order leadership skills and understandings are learnt in working on a real problem or improvement program in the school context. The design of a piece of action research related to the implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework, the development of a portfolio, the coordination of the professional learning team program, investigating an aspect of assessment for improvement, or the redesign of the school's welfare and student leadership programs contain all the leadership elements of the New South Wales DET SLCF, and many of the elements of the higher levels of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers' *Professional Teaching Standards* (2004). Teachers are able to demonstrate leadership expertise in a range of areas and, at the same time, move the school's learning programs forward.

4 Leading professional learning teams and other opportunities to lead for learning

In a school culture where project-based learning is the norm, leadership learning is the norm. Professional learning teams build and support the learning culture because they are cross-faculty, led by teacher leaders, focused on a key aspect of teaching and learning, and are often action research-based. They are now a deeply embedded part of the professional culture at the school and have been a considerable source of school-wide leadership learning.

Educational expertise is the first and most important of the leadership capabilities teachers need to learn. School leaders need to be experts in the three messages of education—curriculum, assessment and pedagogy—before applying for formal leadership positions in schools. When staff members at the school meet together for professional learning team meetings, school development days and special focus conferences, the themes are always about learning and relationships. The focus of teacher and leadership learning is classroom practice and all teachers are expected to become leaders at the classroom and faculty level.

An extension of project-based learning is learning in a relieving capacity or in a school-created role. This is excellent preparation and learning for the next stage of leadership, and teachers from this school have had many such opportunities within the school, in other schools and in non-school positions. The school needs to support aspiring leaders and create opportunities for them to enhance their skills, learning and expertise in real work roles.

5 Coaching and mentoring

As a leader, one of the most powerful leadership development experiences I have had is being coached in leadership skills. Coaching enabled me to improve my skills in managing difficult situations and gave me the skills to manage very serious issues. As a new principal, I valued the role that one of my more experienced colleagues took as my mentor, sharing advice and expertise in a range of tasks where I needed more expertise, and especially in a range of tasks I did not even know principals were expected to do. Novices need direction and inexperienced practitioners need guidelines, guidance and advice. Mentoring can provide this. More experienced and expert leaders often benefit from performance coaching that focuses on enhancing learning for improvement.

One of the powerful strategies at Rooty Hill High School is the use of mentors, who are invited to support less experienced teachers in addition to the mentoring provided by supervisors. Each person appointed to the school in either a teaching or leadership position is ‘given’ a mentor. The mentor’s task is to be a source of context-rich information, expertise and advocacy. Mentors are not part of any evaluation or supervision process and they act as a critical friend and link. Evaluations of the model suggest that mentors also benefit from the process of mentoring as it helps them to practise their interpersonal skills, demonstrate their educational expertise and experiment with

a range of mentoring strategies. In other words, being a mentor is powerful leadership learning.

Coaching is more specialised because it requires the coach to try to avoid the very things that give the mentor role its strength—internal knowledge, the ability to give advice and the context specific knowledge. One very positive aspect of coaching is that the coach does not have to have all the job skills of the mentor—'you don't have to be a great player to be a great coach'. This means that the leader who learns to coach has the chance to learn and practise skills (such as goal setting and strategy design) that are important in the many leadership roles where the leader does not have direct experience of the specific work context of the person being coached.

The school has several trained job and performance coaches who have used their skills to coach others. The Choice Theory and ENVOY training both contain elements of coaching and help teachers working at the higher levels to learn and practise coaching skills.

One consideration in establishing coaching relationships is the confidentiality and trust required for an effective coaching relationship. As a result, where executive coaching has been used as a leadership learning strategy for formal school leaders, the school has used an external coach.

The use of external coaches, consultants, experts and programs in schools is sometimes controversial. There is sometimes a perception that only systemically or university-offered learning should be accredited. Caution is needed here because leadership learning expertise that is suited to the needs of a school seeking an innovative, personalised solution cannot always be found in schools. Even the most expert principal architects do not have all the skills in every area of leadership learning and teaching and they would be most unwise to try to return to that heroic model of teachers and leaders.

Instead, as this chapter has shown, the principal architect and other school leaders can be very powerful in slowly creating a leadership learning strategy that is balanced. It will have external and internal learning; it will have programs that integrate a range of skills; it will address a number of leadership dimensions and its processes will link powerful concepts with content and skills that can be practised in real-life settings; and it will have opportunities for reflection and evaluation.

Towards the end of Part I, a range of principles and practices for leadership learning that works were listed and explained. In a recent paper, Robert O'Brien (2007) also listed what works in professional learning, and he included:

- workplace professional learning
- use of staff experience and expertise
- integration of teacher work and learning
- professional learning as a routine practice
- group-focused professional learning.

These are all strategies that leaders can use—for themselves and in the design of programs for the school. It is also wise to try to avoid what doesn't work.

What doesn't work in building leadership learning and capacity

In preparing to build a quality learning culture, school leaders have to be alert to what has gone before and what research and practice tells us works and does not work. Experience of failed professional learning can significantly affect the response of teachers and school leaders to further learning. It is, therefore, important that teacher and leadership learning programs are successful. Robert O'Brien (2007 p. 6) suggested some 'don'ts' for professional learning that include:

- one-off external workshops
- reliance solely on external experts
- separation of training from work
- professional learning as an isolated event
- individual pursuit of professional learning at the expense of group learning.

This list will come as no surprise to school leaders, so it is surprising that some schools and departments still persist with these kinds of models for professional learning. They certainly don't build learning cultures.

Schools, teachers and leaders simply do not have time to waste on things that don't work, especially if they are to establish continuous cycles of learning and improvement for students, teachers and leaders. If the principal architect and other school leaders have a leadership learning

The School Garage Sale

One powerful activity for school leaders is to ask the school the following:

Think about our school's policies, principles, procedures and practices. To improve our leadership learning strategy what do we need to throw out? What must we keep? And what should we put in a box for later?

strategy to make change and lead to student improvement, they will need to find what will work, what will not work, and what might work but not at the present time.

Reflections on the strategies

The agreed and mandated professional learning strategies outlined above work for the context of the school. They might not be transferable to other contexts. That is not important. What is important is that school leaders (and principals in particular) design professional learning experiences for their teachers and leaders that will develop expertise in their own context. Schools must resist moving to context-free learning programs—they can be efficient but are rarely effective.

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on key strategies for teacher and leadership learning. The multiple skills that are learnt in these strategies are refined in the context of the school's day-to-day work. They reinforce the importance of the school as the key agency-building capacity for leadership in teachers and sustainability in leadership learning programs. In the end, for a principal and senior leaders committed to this kind of agenda, the 'how' is critical. Almost anyone with a research tool can tell schools what to do; only genuinely expert school leaders know how to build quality leadership. It is these leaders we need to nurture, and it is their expertise we need to share within and beyond the school.

In the next chapter, the school shares some of its powerful understandings about specific aspects of leadership learning.

5

Building leadership capacity and expertise

Once the major strategies for the building are designed and implemented, each contractor will then undertake to deliver his or her contract for a section of the building. At this point, the building of the learning culture becomes a matter of attention to finer details. For the school leader, this is the point where personalising the learning plan for each learning leader and identifying specific, core learning for leadership are required.

This chapter outlines some of the key, specific leadership learning activities and practices used at the school to ensure teachers and leaders have deeper understanding, higher-order skills and significant conceptual expertise. Expert leaders have a repertoire of understandings and skills related to the concepts and practices of leadership in their schools. The ideas shared in this chapter presume that school leaders have deep pedagogical expertise that can be demonstrated in their work in the classroom and the results of their students. It is presumed that teachers and leaders will be committed to keeping their knowledge and practice of subject-specific curriculum, assessment and pedagogy at the cutting edge. It is also presumed that these teachers and leaders will want something 'a little bit extra' in their leadership kit, some things that will separate their expertise from the skills of other leaders.

Building the wisdom of leadership is like building a jigsaw that always has some pieces missing. Just as leaders think they know all there is to know about their leadership of a school, other pieces of important learning appear. With this in mind, the concepts and skills shared in this chapter are by no means exhaustive—they are samples of some of the most valued leadership learnings from one school.

Chapter overview:

- ✓ *Expert leaders use quality tools for planning, implementing and evaluating*
- ✓ *Expert leaders get permission to lead*
- ✓ *Expert leaders understand positional and personal leadership*
- ✓ *Expert leaders ask powerful questions and have powerful conversations*
- ✓ *Expert leaders have emotional intelligence*
- ✓ *Expert leaders have clever ways of thinking*
- ✓ *Expert leaders know how to lead for change*
- ✓ *Expert leaders manage ideas*
- ✓ *Expert leaders use diagnostic maps*
- ✓ *Expert leaders walk the talk on educational leadership*
- ✓ *Expert leaders share their expertise with others*

Expert leaders use quality tools for planning, implementing and evaluating

The school has found some tools more effective for nurturing strategic leadership learning than others. The *Tool Time* book developed by David Langford (2001) and summarised in Figure 10 has been very powerful in giving teachers and aspiring leaders tools for data analysis, collecting information and thinking. The school has invested in training in the use of quality tools and has modelled the use of a variety of tools in all school community planning meetings, including staff meetings. Other process tools have been drawn from various learning sites on the Internet and from the work of a number of educational writers. Schools often have detailed lists and databases recording all the kinds of organisers, planners, and processes and activities for the classroom and do not always realise their power for leaders to use in modelling teacher and student learning. In addition, there are teacher diaries and commercial databases that have extensive sets of learning activities based on quality tools and on the work of Bellanca and Fogarty (1993) and others.

It is in implementing the processes and procedures associated with a leadership role that leaders most need strong organisational and management skills. Using the language of learning, if leadership is 'chunking up' to big ideas, concepts, synthesis and overall design, management is 'chunking down' to identify the detailed plans, structures, procedures, systems, steps and strategies that enable the purpose to be implemented. Management seen in this way is the base of the leadership

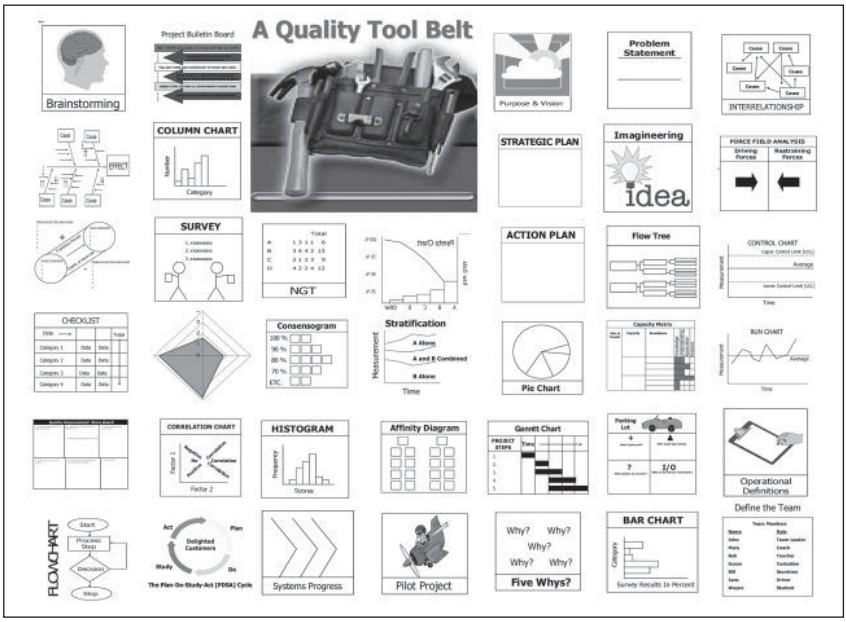


Figure 10 Quality tools for use by school and teacher leaders (Reproduced with permission from Barnes & Van Wormer 2002)

pyramid and it can also exist on its own. School leaders, like all leaders, have to be able to balance their management and leadership roles. The quality tools give leaders ways to manage information for use in planning, organising and evaluating.

The capacity matrix

An overview of the use of quality tools has already been given above. One tool, the capacity matrix, has been very powerful in the school's leadership learning as a tool to analyse work and identify the areas for further learning. If there are categories of information on two dimensions, it is possible to analyse one dimension against the other using a capacity matrix. In leadership learning at the school, the examples provided in Table 7 (page 89) and Table 8 (page 103) help school leaders evaluate their leadership work for the year by locating achievements in the appropriate box. Table 8 shows the *School Leadership Capability Framework* (SLCF) (2003b) and the *Leading and Managing the School* policy (2000). Table 9 (page 104) shows the New South Wales Institute of Teachers' *Professional Teaching Standards* (2004) for professional accomplishment. Once the matrices are completed, there is the opportunity for substantive professional conversation, reflection and planning.

Another capacity matrix was published in 2005 by the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) using

Table 8 A capacity matrix based on the dimensions of the NSW DET *School Leadership Capability Framework* (2003b) and *Leading and Managing the School* document (2000)

Dimension	Personal	Interpersonal	Organisational	Strategic	Educational
Educational leadership					
Educational programs					
Learning outcomes					
Student welfare					
Staff welfare, development and management					
School and community partnerships					
Aboriginal education					

Table 9 A capacity matrix based on Element 6 of the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* at the level of teacher accomplishment and a personal evaluation tool (modified from the work of Judy-Ann Abdini and used with her permission)

Element 6 Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice.

Aspect	Key Stage	1	2	3	4
Capacity to analyse and reflect on practice	Model effective practices for systematically analysing and reflecting on individual teaching practice in relation to student learning outcomes.				
Engagement in personal and collegial professional development	Assist colleagues to identify and implement strategies to address their professional learning needs based on the professional standards.				
	Assist colleagues to plan their professional development to enhance knowledge of subject/content and classroom skills.				
Capacity to contribute to a professional community	Model collegial practices for evaluating and sharing best practice in teaching strategies and professional knowledge and practice.				
	Create and utilise networks to support constructive professional discussion.				
	Actively utilise and maintain professional networks such as professional associations to access information that supports professional learning.				
	Build sustained contributions to developing effective teaching, curriculum and assessment practices by accessing and critiquing relevant research.				
	Assist and advise colleagues in the formation of effective school policy and practice.				

KEY: 1 = novice; 2 = advanced beginner; 3 = proficient; 4 = expert

the elements of the *L5 Leadership Frame*, and there are a number of other capacity matrices available for leadership learning. The experience of the school suggests that these can be very valuable if the school intends to use the learning products and objects that accompany the matrix, but that school-developed matrices have the power of analysing and evaluating personal and professional performance in relation to the context of that school.

Figure 11 is the work of one of the expert head teachers in the school. In trying to identify her own understanding of the SLCF so she could better mentor newly appointed head teachers, she designed a capacity matrix to help her determine what new leaders need to understand, do, model, value, initiate and implement. She brainstormed some possible answers to guide her thinking about the conversations she would have with those she was mentoring.

Expert Leaders at Rooty Hill High School — **The Clarifier** (I am a work in progress)

School Leadership Capabilities Framework	What I have to	✓	What I have to	✓	What I have to	✓	What are my values / visions?	✓	What will I need to initiate / implement?	✓
	UNDERSTAND		DO		MODEL		VALUES / VISIONS		INITIATE / IMPLEMENT	
EDUCATIONAL	* syllabus * 4MAT * Differentiating curriculum * Quality Teaching doc * Gifted and talented * Support / learning		* Incorporate into personal teaching programs * Train faculty to be able to incorporate into theirs		* Knowledge through proforma, programs, professional dialogue (public and private voice), behaviour		* How do my values / visions work with DET and RHHS visions on pedagogy? * Does this 'drive' all of your work?			
STRATEGIC	* Leading and managing the school * Institute of Teachers * Current school plan * School Leadership Capabilities Framework * Persist values * ILPs BILPs		* Incorporate into daily dialogue, management plans and staff professional development		* Model structures through ideology, management plans, personal TARs		* How have you embedded your values / vision into your faculty management plan? Are you explicit?			
ORGANISATIONAL	* Process / procedures - curriculum - welfare - assessment / reporting - programs for teachers experiencing difficulty - BOS requirements		* Systems working smoothly - HT admin - assessment / reporting - communication - discipline / welfare		* Model through being proactive about the 'ebbs and tides' of the school workload (be a step ahead of faculty)		* How do I want my faculty to run on a daily basis? * Is it clear and simple?			
INTERPERSONAL										
PERSONAL										

Figure 11 A partially completed personal matrix designed by a head teacher at the school (used with permission)

Expert leaders get permission to lead

Knowing when you have permission to lead is a critical skill for school leaders (and all leaders), and it comes from knowing oneself, knowing one's purpose and knowing one's team and context. It also comes from an explicit understanding of communication theory and practice that is part of an effective learning leadership program.

Leadership is a relationship—one that has had a changing nature in the last 50 years. The days of dogma, following the rules and respecting people in positions of authority just because the person was holding that position are long gone. In our schools, young people (both students and teachers) expect respectful, equal relationships, and they will generally only follow a person with whom they have affinity or whose credibility they respect.

From this perspective, leadership is 'the permission given by followers for the leader to work towards agreed outcomes or goals' (modified from the work of Michael Grinder 1996, 1997). It does not mean the outcomes or goals will be achieved, but there is permission to try. Leaders who have permission can do almost anything, especially when the permission is given by people who are willing 'to be fellow travellers on the journey'. School leaders need to learn how to gain permission and this means there is a need for leadership learning that develops expertise in leading and influencing adults. This interpersonal expertise is often rated the most highly in the selection criteria for employment, and anecdotes abound of those who were hired for their skills being 'fired for their personalities'.

> *Leaders strong in the interpersonal domain build highly cohesive school communities. They balance the ability to inspire and motivate with recognition of the contribution of others in developing team ethos and commitment. Communication strategies reflect a respect for individual members of the whole school community and the need to celebrate its achievements.*
>
> (NSW DET 2003b)

Some conditions help new leaders in a school to get permission. These include:

- being new so the team or school expects change even if this is also a source of potential resistance
- having sophisticated communication skills and charisma
- getting a successful change in place by working through the concerns of people
- being a recognised expert with a 'proven track record', and
- going into a school or team that already has a positive attitude to change and improvement and/or a strong commitment to the shared goals of the school.

Leaders who 'follow a legend' often have quite a different experience to those who follow someone the school or team was pleased to see go. As a novice leader, these understandings are not always clear, especially when knowledge of the school and its community may be limited. Some school and team situations are more complex than others, including those with a

high turnover of leaders, those with fixed perceptions (stereotypes) about the nature of the community or previous leaders, and those with large numbers of disengaged teachers.

Schools with a high turnover at the executive level as well as the teacher level become very good at induction programs. Often the induction involves the teachers inducting new leaders and it is not surprising that this can lead to resentment or frustration. Teachers come to expect the leader to move on in minimum time or resent the fact that leaders learn leadership in their school and then go on to put those lessons into place in another context. In these cases, timing is critical for senior leaders in the school. There needs to be a balance between induction for new teachers and leaders and progress towards developing shared expertise across the whole staff.

In contrast to the experience at schools identified as 'harder to staff', 'high demand' schools have often been advised to employ talent rather than create it. This is only possible for some schools. Others must grow their own staff expertise. It is the contrast between 'working with the staff one wants to have' and 'creating the staff one wants to have'.

With apologies to St Ignatius, I should at this point ungrammatically misquote him to say: 'Give me a teacher or leader in their first five years and they'll be mine forever.'

I can speak of this from my own early years of teaching where the influence of two powerful female teacher leaders whose understanding of language and literacy shaped my own formative thinking and informed subsequent years of lessons that had literacy and concepts at their heart. As a first-year teacher, these women showed me that every student could improve his or her overall performance if the teachers concentrated on teaching students from where they were in their learning using learning frameworks and scaffolds. Their skill was in literacy learning, but the principle applied to all learning tasks. Their expertise gave them permission to change the approach of a whole school community with the introduction of a school-wide literacy strategy, and in this task they were given permission by the formal school leadership to be innovative, take risks and design their own professional learning programs.

The early experiences teachers and leaders have in their positions are very powerful in determining their future actions and patterns of behaviour. This is one reason why it is so critical that every school provides personalised, quality teacher and leadership learning and quality induction. It is also a reason to expect—and select for—quality at the time of recruitment, because it is far cheaper for the school and system to ensure people will

be able to do the job for which they have been employed than to try to 'improve them' later.

For leaders to be allowed to pursue agreed goals related to improving learning, they need a very high level of permission. Without permission, leaders often fail; and there are many examples of a leader being placed in or appointed to a school or a team and not getting permission to lead. Where this is as a result, for example, of the conditions in the school, problems with the team, resentment of the appointment and lack of systems support, there needs to be careful reflection at all levels. The temptation in these cases is to revise or increase the structure of leadership preparation programs and to blame the leaders, the team or both. Neither of these solutions really addresses the issue at the centre of the problem—the issue of relationships.

Relationship building takes time and leaders cannot go into a position unless they know how to do this. It requires understanding of the needs of the team and the needs of the task. It requires the ability to separate when the problems are about the issues and in the system, and when they are really about needs not being met or poor relationships.

For teacher leaders it starts in the classroom, and by the time teachers are ready to lead other colleagues, they should have had clear opportunities (within or beyond the school) to undertake integrated, school-wide formal and informal professional learning in communication, group dynamics and relationship building. This should include opportunities to present or facilitate professional learning for other colleagues.

Ideally, this would be an undergraduate requirement and, in case there is any confusion with the crisis construction position often put in the media, it is not about teacher spelling, grammar or professional English. It is about a sophisticated understanding and practice of communication for the classroom and for leadership, as explained so cogently by Christine Richmond (2007) in her work over many years with teachers and school leaders.

This means that one of the first leadership learning tasks at the school is learning to understand the communication of leaders and learning how to get permission to lead. The school expects its leaders to be 'able to read the group' and be able to resolve conflict using non-coercive, positive, proactive and choice-based approaches. Every new teacher and school leader has the 'opportunity' to complete one or more of the following learning activities: Choice Theory and Reality Therapy, Raising Responsibility and ENVOY. Extensions are provided beyond these basic courses to develop the expertise of more experienced teachers and leaders and at least one whole-school professional learning day each year is focused on improving relational pedagogy.

Successful leaders understand that issues are the observable and noticeable level of a communication. Underpinning the issues are the

needs of the people, which can only be accessed by communicating well and asking questions. At the heart is the relationship. If the relationship is poor, people will be reluctant to engage and will present issues in a negative way. Good relationships meet needs and reduce the number of 'issues'.

Leaders who cannot develop professional relationships, who do not have a deep understanding of communication and who have poor interpersonal skills are not leaders. They should not be appointed to lead school teams, nor should they ever lead schools because they cannot get permission from those they are leading. The same is true of teachers: if they cannot get permission from their students to teach, they cannot teach.

Expert leaders understand positional and personal leadership

Leaders need followers or they may find themselves in the situation of turning to see who is behind and find nobody is there. Without permission, many leaders 'go to their *position*'—to power, to authority … behaviours that may further alienate the team.

Less common is the 'flight' response, but there are examples of leaders whose health, for example, fails or who transfer or move from a school because they cannot work there. These teachers and leaders often show daily signs of fear—signs that their supervisors need to recognise and address as part of their 'duty of care'. Some of these people will work hard 'to be liked' and will not put any pressure on staff to get things done because their need to belong is more important than getting the job done.

In the short term, in a crisis or in a critical incident, this kind of 'Power with a capital P' leadership has an important place. It ensures safety or compliance. In a fire, an emergency or a battle, we want a particular kind of leader. Someone needs to take charge and there have been some very good examples of this kind of heroic leadership being successful in turning around schools in a short-term crisis. This type of leadership is also needed when school teams are dealing with new, emotional or difficult issues and concepts. At these times, the leader's role is to provide safety for the group (Grinder 1998). It is not a longer-term solution for schools that want broad, distributed leadership or the development of leadership in the profession, because over the longer term it disempowers the followers—the students, the staff and the community. And it is not a longer-term position for a leader who wants to develop productive relationships in the school community because relationship building takes time and considerable skill.

As a novice principal I noticed how many decisions were referred to me. It was flattering to be considered so important and to be consulted on every minor matter. In a short time, as my skills and understandings in the school context grew, I came to see how destructive the 'Principal as Powerful and Wise Leader' model would be to developing distributed teacher leadership in this particular school. Only occasionally now do I allow myself the indulgence of going to the full power of my position and that is when we have to work through the introduction or implementation of new, emotional or difficult matters or in response to a critical incident.

One useful tool for the discussion of leadership potential is to discuss the difference between positional and personal leadership. *Positional* leadership carries authority, especially in decision making—and it is the leadership of the Teacher/Parent/Manager/Presenter and any other position that carries a formal title. It is associated with power, credibility, hierarchy and the presence of natural followers—students, children and employees. *Personal* leadership is associated with influence, confidence, approachability and the building of affinity and relationships. It is the type of leadership most newly appointed teachers have been taught that they should seek to model because it includes the roles of facilitator, consultant and the notion of the 'guide on the side'. It is the type of leadership that expert, confident, successful teachers are often perceived (by others) to have.

Sometimes the 'guide on the side' approach does not work, especially for new teachers. For example, Year 9 students are 'match fit' and they play each day. They are experts at identifying weaknesses in their teachers and exploiting them. So, the teacher who is just beginning his or her teaching and leading journey is sometimes surprised, sometimes shocked and sometimes horrified when that approach does not work.

This is the opportunity for the supervisor, mentor or school leader to discuss the value of positional leadership. Young teachers often comment on how easily teachers in their second, third or more years of teaching seem to be able to command the attention and interest of large numbers of students, and they want to know how to do it. A discussion of *positional* leadership—becoming the *teacher*, becoming the *leader* and doing the things that Teachers (with a capital T) do—can be a powerful tool in developing teaching and leadership skills.

Over time, expert leaders develop higher-order skills in communication. They learn to use the power of influence and persuasion (Cialdini 1984), rather than the power of their positions to mediate change, manage conflict and develop collegial relationships.

At the school, this discussion is included as part of the ENVOY (Grinder 1993) learning courses (see Chapter 3), and as part of discussions during the teacher's first year in the school. By the end of that year, teachers who will move quickly to leadership positions have identified themselves, but all teachers who successfully complete the year already have an understanding of their leadership potential. In the experience of the school, once teachers have more knowledge and understanding of school leadership and teacher leadership, in particular, most are willing to develop those skills concurrent with the development of their teaching skills.

Expert leaders ask powerful questions and have powerful conversations

One skill that is developed by completing training in Choice Theory is the skill of questioning. Questions for setting the scene, questions for evaluation, questions for creating options, and questions for planning and evaluating are all developed. One way successful practising school leaders demonstrate expertise is to shift their stance from telling to asking. Observations of successful leaders in schools suggest that they often start with questions and careful listening rather than citing their own concerns. In conflict, they question and gather data. In energising others, they shift the focus to others with questions.

In the steps of a typical decision-making process, there is a period of gathering data and evaluating it before the decision is made. Leaders too quick to make a decision are seen as autocratic and bossy; leaders too slow to make a decision are seen as weak and vacillating. One way to find balance in decision making is to ensure that everyone knows that powerful questioning is part of every decision, leadership learning activity and every classroom.

The following are examples of questions that can be used at the school in leadership learning programs and in personalised leadership learning.

- *You want to introduce a new initiative into the school that will require a significant commitment in time and resources. You realise you cannot do everything you have been doing, so you ask the staff, students and parents to decide what they (and you) need to stop doing.*
- *You want to highlight the strengths of the school. What is one thing our students/teachers/parents do really well? When we are gone from this school, what will be our legacy?*

- *You want to focus your school leadership team on capacity building. What do leaders do to build to capacity? Whose capacity should leaders build? How do leaders know what to do to build capacity? How do leaders build capacity? When do leaders build capacity? When do leaders not build capacity? When should leaders share and distribute the leadership? Why should leaders build capacity? Why do leaders build capacity?*
- *You want to focus on improvement. What are three things you would change about our approach to teaching and learning that would lead to improvement for our students? What do our students/teachers/leaders need to learn to do better? What's the gap between where we want to be and where we are now?*
- *You want to justify 'the next best idea'. What evidence is there that … is true? What data do we have? What research has shown that this strategy will be more effective than what we are doing now?*
- *What would this school, its teachers, leaders and administrative staff have to be like for everyone to really look forward to coming to work every day? What would it be like for each student to look forward to coming each day?*

These questions (and there are many other examples used by other leaders) can give the school leadership team a large amount of information in a short time; and if significant professional learning time is set aside for teachers (and others) to talk about their answers, they learn more about their leadership and professional skills as well. Critically, there has been quite a lot of academic research (in education, leadership and other fields) that has come up with the wrong answers because the right questions were not asked. Leaders often have to make 'high stakes' decisions. Knowing what questions to ask becomes a critical skill in the development of aspiring school leaders.

In designing questions for school professional learning, the purpose of the question needs to be considered. Is the purpose of the question to share knowledge, analyse information, test a new idea, share feelings, question assumptions, synthesise ideas, create new thinking or generate agreement? Once the purpose is clear, question construction is much easier.

Online surveys and other professional questioning tools

One powerful use of questions at the school has been the use of the Zoomerang online survey tool (http://info.zoomerang.com/). For a relatively small fee the school can design many surveys with up to 10 000 opportunities to respond. By surveying students, staff and parents using this kind of tool, the school can collect and analyse a very large amount of data. In addition, the involvement of students,

teachers and leaders in the design of surveys makes a significant contribution to developing skills in questioning, survey design and data analysis. These are academic and social research skills that school leaders need to have in their personal toolbox.

It is important to say at this point, that powerful strategies do not have to be complex. In fact, when dealing with highly complex concepts and content, simple processes are often more effective. They are certainly more time and brain efficient.

Two questioning strategies that been have used extensively to engage substantive conversations about teaching and leading at the school are the 5 Whys (Langford 2001) and Find Someone Who (Bellanca & Fogarty 1993). Both of them come from teaching and learning activities and show the link between using professional learning activities that can be used in teaching and leadership learning. Two examples are shown in Figure 12. Some readers may have seen these activities used as icebreakers with 'silly' answers. That would be a waste of a powerful tool for questioning, thinking and reflecting. The 'Find Someone Who', for example, contains elements from both the New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework and Bloom's Taxonomy. It is also important to note that it is the discussion after the activity that is critical to consolidating thinking.

A final example of the use of powerful questions comes from the actual experience of the school. In the box on the next page are three questions used to plan leadership learning in relation to the school's current strategic plan. There is no point having a plan without links to the elements that will make the plan achievable. Of course, it is not just about asking the questions; it is about using the information collected to inform decision making.

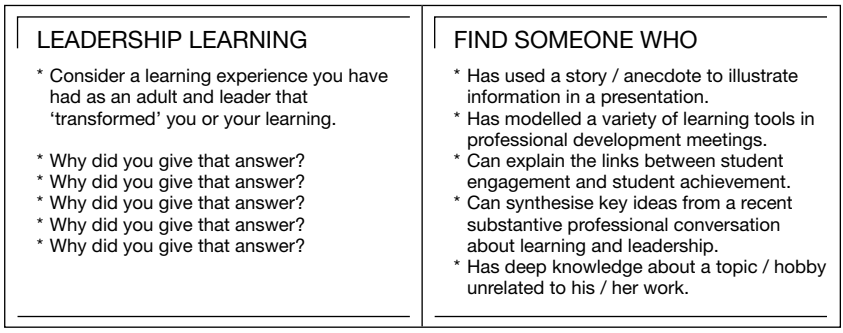


Figure 12 Two important tools for questioning and conversation in leadership development

Please consider the following scenario and targets taken from the school's strategic plan. Thinking about this:

1 What kind of leadership understandings and skills will be needed to achieve this?
2 Where are the gaps in our team and our skills?
3 What leadership learning will be needed to ensure we can deliver what we have said we will do?

SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN 2006–2008

SCENARIO

- What if by the end of 2008 the average performance of students had increased by five marks and there was strong evidence that students had generally moved up from one band to the next?
- What if the students understood what was required in external examinations and were able to analyse questions and write quality answers with correct paragraphing, grammar and spelling?
- What if students could demonstrate their ability to manage mathematical problems, no matter what subject they were doing?
- What if students could meet all the SC ICT outcomes by the end of Year 7?
- What if students worked harmoniously together in teams to be better learners and people?
- What if the student culture was calm with few suspensions and the behaviour of all students was adult, harmonious, considered, reflective and responsible?
- What if students showed discipline in their approach to school and studies?
- What if teachers understood the learning abilities, needs and interests of each of their students and used these to plan continuous improvement?
- What if teachers always started planning faculty and class programs with assessment tasks that would measure the planned outcomes and enable teachers to differentiate the curriculum and pedagogy?
- What if each student had a career plan and opportunities from Years 7–12 to develop and enhance that plan?
- What if all students knew much more about the transition from school to work or further study and were able to use that information to plan their study program and subject selections?

- What if the value of VET courses was enhanced and extended to Stage 5?
- What if parents had a lot more information about their sons and daughters as learners and how they could be partners in the learning process?
- What if our facilities and resources were better and students had access to new library facilities?

SCHOOL TARGETS

- **Performance:** Improve the average performance of students on external performance measures by up to five marks in the period 2006–2008.
- **Connectedness:** Continue to build a sense of community, interdependence and wellbeing through a strong social curriculum based on the agreed values of the school community.

Expert leaders have emotional intelligence

Three higher-order personal and professional attributes/skills underpin the New South Wales DET *School Leadership Capability Framework* (2003)—emotional intelligence, ways of thinking and diagnostic maps. These skills develop with experience in teaching, life and leadership. Applying these attributes in the school context should be learnt as early as possible in a teacher's career in schools. Collegial team planning, project-based professional learning and personalised workplace leadership experiences are critical ways these skills can be practised in a professional context.

In a presentation for the New South Wales DET School Leadership Development Unit, Chris Presland (2006) explored these three themes in the New South Wales context. Emotional intelligence (EQ) was described as 'a set of emotional attributes' including empathy, reciprocity, patience, rapport, resilience, self-understanding and suspending judgement. These attributes allow the leader to understand the position of others, engage in productive working relationships, give other people the opportunity to do things, find common ground, learn from mistakes, accept feedback and think before acting. These are essential personal qualities that provide platforms for problem solving.

It is not enough to know what one has to do to be emotionally intelligent. Teacher leaders and aspiring school leaders need to be able to demonstrate their own EQ and develop the EQ of teachers and students with whom they are working. They need tools, strategies and frameworks

within which to place their professional learning. As mentioned earlier, one of the most powerful tools used at the school to build emotional intelligence and leadership is the use of Choice Theory/Reality Therapy (Glasser 1998). By educating all staff (and students) in this responsibility model, there has been a shift in the thinking about and culture of relationships in the school.

Teachers and leaders also need the opportunity to learn more about their professional and personal values, styles and skills. In addition to all teachers completing Choice Theory and ENVOY training, leaders and potential leaders have had learning opportunities using the DISC model (a four-quadrant model of leadership and conflict resolution based on four types: Direct, Influence, Stability and Conscientious), 4MAT, MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Inventory) and Stephen Covey's 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' training materials. This does not happen every year but over a cycle that encourages informal and formal leaders to know themselves and their team members well. These kinds of learnings add to the professional bank, but also to the personal bank of skills and understandings that can be used in times of stress and conflict in leadership. By starting with knowing themselves, leaders are far better positioned to understand the behaviour patterns of others.

This is the point at which the APAPDC *L5 Frame* (2005) with its five propositions for generic leadership has been valuable. The framework and the accompanying learning materials focus on the leaders themselves and the work they will do, the qualities they will have, the skills they will demonstrate and the emotional/relational capacities they will explore.

- Leadership starts from within.
- Leadership is about influencing others.
- Leadership develops a rich learning environment.
- Leadership builds professionalism and management capability.
- Leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others.

If leaders are to develop higher-order emotional and intellectual understanding of themselves as leaders, they will engage in professional learning that is also related to learning more about their personal strengths and skills. They will demonstrate these (whether they mean to or not) in their day-to-day behaviours as leaders. They can be enhanced by substantive professional conversation, dialogue (as defined by Senge 1992 pp. 238–49) and deep professional and personal reflection. Supervisors, mentors and colleagues can be of great assistance in helping others develop their EQ by using tools like debriefing, 'holding up the mirror', coaching, 360-degree evaluation, and providing formal learning that develops personal understanding.

At the school as part of the annual process of professional goal setting and planning personalised learning plans, a selection from the following questions can be used by individuals or by supervisors and mentors to help teachers identify their goals. The questioner records the answers but does not interrupt, so that the thinking and language belongs to the person answering the questions.

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. What difference would that make?
3. What would you see, hear or feel if that happened?
4. What would you be doing or thinking that would be different?
5. What would be happening?
6. What would be the likely outcome if you were successful?
7. If you had a choice and the control in this situation, what would you want to do?
8. In thinking about your project and goals, what strategies have you tried before?
9. How well have these strategies worked in the past?
10. Were you happy with the results of the strategies?
11. What resources do you need?
12. What will you have to do? Can you do it?
13. How will you measure the success of the project or strategy you have chosen?
14. What appeals to you about this project or goal?
15. How realistic are the goals you have chosen?
16. What time frame does this goal need?
17. Why are you the best designer and leader for this project, goal or strategy?
18. What obstacles will need to be considered?
19. How will you ensure the success of this project or strategy?
20. If this project is successful, what will you think? What will you have? What will you do? What will you be?
21. If this project or strategy hits a snag, what will you do?
22. What other options would achieve the same or a better outcome?
23. How will your work benefit you? Other staff? Students? Parents? The community?

(These questions were modified for use in a school from questions developed during Choice Theory and Lead Management Training with Judy Hatswell.)

Expert leaders have clever ways of thinking

In Chris Presland's presentation (2006) he explained that the second skill underpinning the *School Leadership Capability Framework* was 'ways of thinking', which he explained as the ability to think contingently and creatively; to predict and trace the consequences of actions and options; to identify and accommodate conflicting interests; to identify core issues and anticipate difficulties; to think laterally, holistically and flexibly; to reflect on action; and to read situations and map actions accordingly.

Most schools have a series of models, scaffolds and frameworks they use consistently in induction, professional learning and evaluation. The strength of this approach is that there is coherence in the approach, not only between teams but also over time. It means that the staff and executive turnover can be high, but the 'ways we think and address the educational context of the school' can be consistently developed and teachers can learn more quickly to be experts and leaders. If a new teacher or leader is appointed to a school, there is an enculturation process that powerfully shapes their ways of thinking about the concepts, content and skills of teaching and leading. They are expected to join the 'tribe' at that school, observe its rituals and work with the tribe on learning every day. They have to share thinking with the tribe to be fully accepted, and this can be both a strength and a weakness—of leaders and the cultural norms of the school's tribes.

Schools use thinking tools as part of their day to work with students in classrooms, and many teachers have a good understanding of thinking tools, including lateral thinking, thinking strategies, Bloom's Taxonomy and the tools of Edward de Bono (2004) such as Six Thinking Hats and CoRT.

Throughout this book, the ways of thinking of the authors have been revealed in their writing. This is how it is for leaders as well. By their actions and words they demonstrate what they are thinking and the ways they are processing the information that comes to them.

As a young teacher, I was told something very valuable by a more senior colleague. He told me that my attitude didn't matter because I would be judged by how I behaved, not by what I thought. He suggested that if I wanted to get control and I yelled at students, I was sending the message that I was not in control. I listened carefully to his advice and have since tried to ensure that my behaviour and ways of thinking are aligned.

Expert leaders know how to lead for change

Whether change is incremental and evolutionary, or fundamental and revolutionary (O'Donnell 2007 p. 11), it will have an impact on the school. As change is measured by the reaction of people to it or its impact, expert leaders recognise that incremental change is more likely to be sustainable in policies, principles and practices. The decision about whether to make a major and immediate change will be determined by the circumstances of the school, as will the decision to make first-order (structural) or second-order (cultural, fundamental and transformational) changes.

At the school, there will also be the decision which level of the school's model should be changed or whether the change will affect all three. One tool for considering the processes and impact of change is shown in Figure 13. Drawn from NLP (neurolinguistic programming), the model is used to evaluate change strategies the school might implement (Grinder 1998). Leaders know that they can regulate for change (outside-in) and that this is the usual method for top-down and externally imposed change. They also know they can educate for change (inside-out) and, although this takes longer and is more complex, the result, when a leader has permission to educate, is far more powerful and effective in the longer term because it is internally driven.

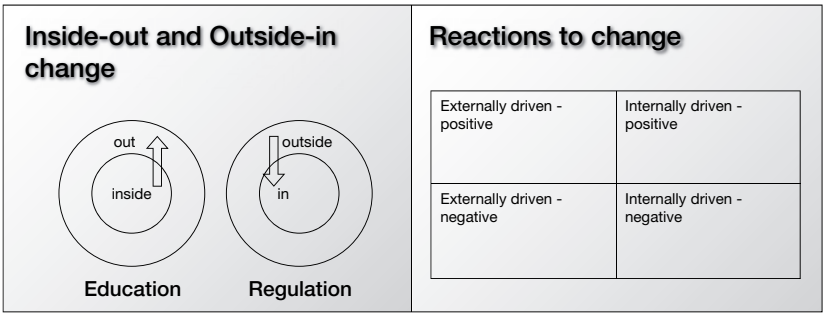


Figure 13 Ways of thinking about change

The initial implementation of any new change may need a degree of regulation, but longer term, the focus shifts to education. Initiatives and strategies should be filtered so they align with the ways of thinking and working in the school. Schools should avoid those initiatives that increase the complexity of the work we have to do. It is like buying fireworks for the school fete. Schools need 'bang for their buck'. In the busy, complex day-to-day work of the school, leaders and teachers need to 'work smarter, not harder'. This is quite a challenge when implementing some government regulations and some mandated programs!

When a new initiative is to be introduced at the school, reactions are considered and the school tries to select those initiatives that are high leverage, do not intensify workloads and will have the greatest potential for success. Leaders also consider the value of academic research and the experience of other schools with particular initiatives. Not all new initiatives are successful, but the majority are and this success creates willingness for teachers, parents and students to take risks with new initiatives because their thinking is shaped by a history of past success.

A good example at the school has been the decision by each teacher in Science to use an action research project to improve an aspect of science teaching in the school, rather than the traditional approach of conducting an evaluation and having each teacher implement the recommendations. Each action research project is evaluated and shared, with the successful change strategies then implemented across the faculty. Teachers are not just developing their research skills; they are also improving leadership for change in their day-to-day work.

Schools and school leaders with their attention on learning put 'education' before 'regulation'—for teachers, students and leaders. Education creates cognitive and emotional growth, and this means the focus of the school's leadership programs is on learning to lead, just as the focus of the teaching programs is on learning to teach and teaching to learn.

Tools for thinking about change can be very effective in thinking about leadership learning strategies as well. Leaders need to be able to identify and evaluate the strategic options that are most likely to create the greatest success without increasing the workload or diverting energy from equally important initiatives.

Expert leaders manage ideas

A particular point needs to be made about the importance of 'shared language' and 'metaphor (ideas) management'. While managers do a lot of 'issues management', leaders demonstrate 'ideas management' as part of their day-to-day repertoire. Leaders model the language and metaphors of the school and ensure that all new teachers and leaders speak the language of that school as soon as possible.

One ideas management tool that effective school leaders use well is 'flipping'. This is the skill of shaping the thinking of self and others by changing the perspective from which an idea is viewed. An example might

be the way a new mandated initiative is viewed. The immediate, sometimes visceral reaction might be to reject the imposition immediately. By taking time to pause, a school leader can use questions or suggest alternatives that could flip the perspective into ways the initiative might help the school or ways the school could use the initiative for its own purposes. Flipping can turn a negative to a positive, a threat to an opportunity, a crisis to a future change, a reaction to a response and a weakness to strength. Flipping takes the ideas and turns them, via language, into different pictures.

Another ideas management tool is the use of analogies to bring to the surface the thinking and values of others. 'This school is like our new library because …' generates a lot of ideas in an (often) amusing way. Some other favourites include an aeroplane in flight, a dream, a merry-go-round, and a computer. The activity will generate a lot of language that shows whether the group is using the same metaphors. An alternative is to use relevant photographs and have people choose one and explain why they chose it.

A third, sophisticated way ideas management can be used is to anchor to the experiences, background, values and culture of a diverse group of teachers. It involves taking the group back to their own childhood with a trigger question such as 'Can you remember the first time you were ever asked or needed to lead?' or 'Can you think about what senior high school was like in the decade when you finished school?' By tapping into the experience of others, the leader can assess the language of their ideas and anchor the discussion in the values and beliefs of those answering the questions.

One place where the leader's ability to manage metaphors is particularly useful is in the decision about which aspects of the prevailing professional language to adopt in the school and in learning leadership. Mastery of the current linguistic conventions of the profession is an indicator that the leader understands the underlying concepts, is innovative, and can take part in deep professional conversations.

Language shapes, explains and reflects thinking, so the choice of language, models, representations and stories is critical to the success of leaders in revealing and leading thinking.

Expert leaders use diagnostic maps

The third skill outlined by Chris Presland (2006) in his presentation was the skill of developing diagnostic maps. In general, this is a skill that is closely tied to the ways leaders think. In schools that comes with experience and in education we have many synonyms for this term. We call diagnostic maps scaffolds, frameworks, strategic plans, action plans, models, procedures, schemas, programs, rubrics, relational maps, analogies, mind maps, graphic organisers, metaphors, organisational charts and

problem-solving tools—and there are many more. In the Chapter 4, the school's professional practice model was explained and there have been other models, theories and maps explored throughout the text.

What separates the expert leader in a particular school context from others is that expert school leaders know what to do when the rules run out and they are faced with a new situation or dilemma. These leaders are creative in their solutions and in the ways they adapt previous models and strategies for new situations. They break new ground in the ways they work and the results they achieve, in part because of their ability to design and create new diagnostic maps.

Of the three underpinning skills in the *School Leadership Capability Framework*, this is the one that can take the longest to develop, so, in designing a leadership learning program and leadership learning activities, it is important to consider the provision of opportunities for leaders to develop their own diagnostic maps. It is far easier to adapt a diagnostic map than to create a new one. This is where the senior executive team is critical, as expert leadership creates new maps for new situations. Returning to the discussion of context, this may well be one reason why standardised, minimum level or even purpose-designed-for-one-school maps do not work in other situations. Experienced leaders know that it is rare for one school's solution to solve another school's problem.

The explicit teaching of new skills (for students and adults) starts with modelling (with the teacher in charge of the learning), followed by guided or facilitated learning (where the teacher and learner work together), followed by independent learning (where the learner is in charge). This teaching model is useful for teaching others to use diagnostic maps. Once aspiring leaders and teachers have used a series of diagnostic maps designed by others, they can then design their own in consultation with others and, when proficient, can design new maps. At the school, 'diagnostic maps' of all different types, drawn from education and corporate training, are used across the school in learning, teaching, administration and leadership.

Expert leaders walk the talk on educational leadership

At the centre of learning for school leadership is a focus on building expertise in 'leading for learning'.

> Over 10 years, the school has moved steadily towards sophisticated understanding of what it takes to get significant improvement at a classroom level. A focus on lesson design and delivery, rigorous collaborative programming and assessment task design and an evaluation culture have all helped.

The school has used the New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework (Ladwig 2005) and the work of John Hattie (2003). More recently, the work of Bill Louden (2007) has been used by the school's leaders to understand and develop learning activities for teachers seeking greater expertise.

This concentrated focus has been coordinated by the school's executive who maintain a high level of professional discourse about learning and who model the implementation of new, more targeted strategies.

The following information, for example, was the focus of an extended discussion by the school's executive. Each executive meeting starts with substantive professional conversation about aspects of the school's learning and leadership programs. In this example, there was discussion of the alignment with the school's current practices and identification of areas that would need further work. The words in bold type were identified as areas for more attention. Attention was also given to Louden's list of the things that leaders needed to do, and there was a pleasing recognition of the alignment of Louden's list with current practice in the school.

KEY QUESTIONS

Teacher expertise—What more do we need to be doing?

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION AND ACTIVITIES

Picking up on the last meeting of Term 1 that I attended, I want us to focus on what we need to do to ensure we keep our focus on the main game.

I sent you all electronic versions of the Bill Louden presentation and have paper copies for each faculty. In summary, drawing on Hattie's work and the research in which he has been involved he said:

Expert teachers have 'complex repertoires' and almost all of the following 33 elements would be seen in any one lesson:

1 High levels of participation—attention, engagement, stimulation, pleasure and consistency
2 Deep knowledge focus—environment, purpose, substance, explanations, modelling and metalanguage

3 Orchestrating the demands of the classroom—awareness, structure, flexibility, pace and transitions
4 Strong scaffolds—constant formative assessment and working from where students are at, scaffolding tasks, quality feedback, responsiveness, explicitness (of words and texts) and persistence
5 Targeted and differentiated instruction—intellectual challenge, individualisation within the full class, inclusion, variation, connection
6 Mutual respect—warmth, rapport, credibility, attention to citizenship, independence.

There are also lessons for principals and team leaders because schools can influence up to 10 per cent of the performance of students.

For leaders:

1 make good choices—what to change, what to leave alone, and only choose those things that will make a significant difference including improving the quality of feedback to students, and increasing the quality and quantity of instruction
2 have a clear focus—focus on teaching and learning, balance pressure and support, spend money on quality professional learning, and 'make a downward investment with an upward identity'
3 have an evidence-based culture using a small amount of robust data and 'if you want to measure change, don't change the measures'
4 make an absolute commitment to developing expertise at every level
5 practise coherent leadership.

Thinking of good choices, please be prepared to speak this week on the following:

- *Outcomes from SDD*
- *Report on the BBC audit—more likely to be used by expert teachers* (as a form of sophisticated lesson design) *in the school and (in its basic form) by inexperienced teachers.*

Experienced teachers less likely to use and it shows in some faculty results
- *Feedback—assessment tasks, feedback to teachers, feedback to students, formal academic warnings to students, positive commendations, report comments*
- *New version of the classroom observation record*
- *Curriculum and assessment review this term*
- *ECT (early career teacher) project.*

We also need to address ways we can improve the teaching and learning programs in response to the data in the annual report. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

For the formal leaders and those identified as teacher leaders in the school, leadership learning activities related to leadership in the educational domain go much further. Each team leader is expected to collect and analyse student performance and other student and staff data. Each team is expected to produce detailed annual plans based on a deep analysis of data at the faculty and team level. Team leaders are expected to provide leadership opportunities for other leaders in developing faculty-wide teaching, learning and assessment programs. Classroom teachers are expected to be able to analyse assessment and learning data and to use it to program for improvement.

All teachers are expected to understand and use this data in their planning, not only because it is educationally sound practice, but also because it develops great depth in the ability of teachers to use data for planning, programming, lesson design and evaluation. This is a key leadership development skill that is much better learnt by teachers in the context of teaching, rather than waiting for formal promotion.

A concept that is explored extensively with all teachers is the concept of differentiation—for student learning and for the learning of teachers and leaders. At is simplest level, this is explored through the Learning Pyramid (for students), and at its more complex levels it is explored as part of understanding the concept of competency and stages of learning (see Tables 5 and 6 on pp. 71 and 73).

Finally, teachers and school leaders are expected to continue to develop their subject-specific skills through marking, collegial networking and collaborative programming with other faculty members, in addition to the more usual forms of developing subject-based knowledge and skills.

Expert leaders share their expertise with others

The concepts discussed in this chapter have been important in creating skills in leaders at the school. They are not the only concepts and skills with which leaders are dealing, and the school has a number of additional leadership learning activities that have been developed in the school and that can be accessed by school leaders. The school also finds ways for its leaders to share their expertise, and these include the following:

- presentations at conferences in and beyond the school
- coordination of major learning events and conferences in and beyond the school
- mentoring and coaching in and beyond the school
- membership of writing teams developing leadership learning programs
- coordinating networks of teachers between schools
- coordinating leadership learning projects with other schools
- demonstrating good practice to senior leaders from other schools, systems and DET
- creating new programs for the school in teacher and leadership learning
- opportunities to relive in higher positions beyond the school
- opportunities to publish their work in professional journals and websites
- opportunities to participate in new initiatives and delegation for the responsibility of introducing that innovation into the school
- and more … as opportunities arise.

The recognition leaders receive for this work is a strong affirmation of their learning and their expertise. It encourages leaders to take their learning further, to seek new ways and keep the focus on learning. It also reflects the understanding that teaching is one of the best ways to learn—whether that is teaching school-age or adult students.

Beyond that, these opportunities also affirm the work the school has done in its efforts to create something innovative and lasting. This affirmation contributes to the ongoing sustainability of the school's focus on leadership and on the drive towards expertise in its learners, teachers and leaders.

6

The products of leadership learning

Has this school built a School of Professional Practice as designed by its principal architect, the builders of its learning culture, the strategists of its leadership learning programs and the contractors of capacity building? Has it created expertise and found ways to continue to create teacher and leadership capacity in the face of substantial threats to sustainability? If it is so, it might look like this:

At the school we have built	A school of professional practice
Underpinned by	A commitment to the school's values and learning purpose
Embedded in	A culture of learning for all
Delivered by	Sustainable learning and leadership strategies
Informed by	Building teacher and leadership capacity
To create	Expert teachers and expert leaders for the school and profession and improved student achievement

This final chapter looks at the products of creating a school of professional practice; the issues involved in measuring success, and some answers to the questions posed in Part I to see if they have been answered by the story of the school.

Chapter overview:

- ✓ *Criteria for judging the effectiveness of leadership for learning*
- ✓ *Does the data available give enough information to lend support to the value of teacher and leadership learning in the school?*
- ✓ *Ending with the beginning in mind*
- ✓ *Leadership learning as a key strategy in stupidity prevention*
- ✓ *What happens to experts?*
- ✓ *Have the questions from Part I been answered?*
- ✓ *The legacy of a learning culture*

Criteria for judging the effectiveness of leadership for learning

The school discussed in this book is certainly not the only school that has focused on student and teacher learning. Nor is it the only school (or group of schools) to develop a model for professional practice or to have a set of principles to underpin its learning leadership programs. That became obvious as this chapter was being prepared in both substantive professional conversations and in reading on the outcomes of leading for learning.

There is a strong alignment, for example, between the professional practices at the school and the formative, interrelated principles identified in the Carpe Vitam Project (MacBeath 2006b pp. 5–7). These principles are:

Principle 1 Leadership for learning has a focus on learning.

- Everyone is a learner—students, teachers, principals, schools, systems
- Learning relies on the interplay of emotional, social and cognitive processes
- The efficacy of learning is highly sensitive to context and to the differing ways people learn
- The capacity for leadership arises out of powerful learning experiences
- Opportunities to exercise leadership enhance learning

Principle 2 Leadership for learning creates and sustains conditions that favour learning.

- A culture that nurtures the learning of all members of the school community
- Opportunities for all to reflect on the nature, skills and processes of learning

- Physical and social space that stimulates and celebrates learning
- A safe and secure environment that enables students and teachers to take risks, cope with failure and respond positively to challenges
- A set of tools and strategies that enhances thinking about learning and the practices of teaching

Principle 3 Leadership for learning practice involves an explicit dialogue.

- Dialogue makes leadership for learning practice explicit, discussable and transparent
- Promotes active, collegial enquiry into the link between learning and leadership
- Achieves coherence through the sharing of values, understandings and practices
- Addresses factors that inhibit and promote learning and leadership
- Makes the link between leadership and learning a shared concern for all members of the school community
- Extends dialogue internationally though networking, both virtually and through face-to-face exchange

Principle 4 Leadership for learning practice involves sharing the leadership.

- Creating structures that invite participation in developing the school as a learning community
- Symbolising shared leadership in the day-to-day flow of activities in the school
- Encouraging all members of the school community to take the lead as appropriate to task and context
- Promoting collaborative patterns of work and activity across boundaries of role, subject and status

Principle 5 Leadership for learning implies accountability.

- Taking account of political realities and exercising informed choice as to how the school tells its own story
- Developing a shared approach to internal accountability as a precondition of accountability to external agencies
- Maintaining a focus on evidence and its congruence with the core values of the school reframing policy and practice when they conflict with core values
- Embedding a systematic approach to self-evaluation at classroom, school and community levels
- Maintaining a continuous focus on sustainability, succession and leaving a legacy

(Reproduced with permission from MacBeath 2006b)

Given that this research was conducted across international jurisdictions in a large number of schools, the list provides a comprehensive checklist to use in planning and evaluating leadership for learning. For those who have read this book sequentially, it reflects many of the elements of the leadership learning models and programs that are seen in successful learning-focused schools. Although the models and programs in the school were developed independently of the international research, they show a surprising degree of congruence with where the Carpe Diem research says schools should focus.

More recently, Viviane Robinson (2007) presented on the emerging results of the *Best evidence synthesis on educational leadership*, conducted by her team on behalf of the New Zealand Ministry of Education. In looking for research that would identify the type of leadership that would improve student outcomes, the team identified instructional leadership as having a much greater effect than other types of leadership. Further, the research analysis identified five leadership dimensions that had a measurable effect on improving student learning. These were:

1 Establishing goals and expectations related to learning
2 Strategic resourcing of learning
3 Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum
4 Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and
5 Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.

Of all these, the leadership dimension with the most significant effect (almost twice that of the others) was 'promoting and participating in teacher learning and development'.

For the school described in these chapters, these findings have been very reassuring and suggest that the school should subject its leadership learning to more rigorous research with an academic partner. It would be a very positive outcome for the school if the results of the 'trial and error' over the last 10 years to build a culture that sustains leadership and learning were able to be used by other schools as they planned for the learning of their teachers and leaders, especially in the context of a set of internationally tested principles. However, even if the wider research was not available to support the school's approach, the journey of the teachers at this school to create a model for this context would still justify the effort. Sometimes, principal architects and their teams just have to get started working towards what they think will work; they have to be prepared to take the risk.

Evaluating a school's performance against research-based principles is one way to evaluate whether the programs have achieved their purpose. Another way is to examine school data that would provide evidence for the

success of leadership learning and teacher learning activities. Schools need to collect data, not just on student performance but also on other measures that will identify patterns of success and areas for improvement.

The seven (rather dry) pieces of data listed below do not capture all the successes of the school. Rather they are a snapshot to justify an ongoing commitment to changing student experiences by focusing energy on the learning of teachers and school leaders.

The school has:

1 An exemplary professional learning program based on 'professional learning teams' that has been in place for seven years and has been widely copied. This program includes opportunities for all teachers to both participate and lead in considering the ways students learn and how to improve classroom practice.
2 Survey results from the 2003 School Self-Evaluation process indicated a strong and dispersed model of teacher leadership in the school. The school received the Director General's Award for School Achievement (Teacher Leadership) in 2004.
3 A major evaluation of teaching and learning in 2006 indicated that the school had developed a 'culture of professional practice'. This work was featured in the presentation by Lyndsay Connors at the Cornerstones Conference (September 2006) and has been acknowledged by the school's Australian Government Quality Teaching Project (AGQTP) academic partner, Tony Loughland.
4 The successful induction of between eight and 15 newly appointed teachers each year since 1997.
5 The school's practices have been widely presented at conferences and the school has regularly hosted visits by school principals, professional associations and executives from New South Wales, other states and New Zealand.
6 The appointment of teachers from the school on promotion or merit transfer in significant numbers since 1997, including: one deputy principal to principal, five head teachers to deputy principal, four head teachers successful at merit transfer, and 17 teachers promoted to head teacher positions.
7 The leadership provided by the head teachers from this school in:
    - the introduction of the new HSC from 1999–2002; six of the eight district networks were led by head teachers from this school
    - syllabus implementation for the new school certificate, with the school's PDHPE programs featured on the New South Wales

DET TaLe (teaching and learning exchange) website, and the school chosen as the school to be featured in the Students as Lifestyle Activists (SALSA) program being developed by local general practitioners and the Health Department to combat obesity

- the exemplary process of faculty evaluation and planning based on data, with head teachers invited to present regularly in other schools and at local meetings
- the regular selection of head teachers and teachers (up to five each year) as mentors to colleagues in other schools and to coordinate professional networks.

This data is very pleasing insofar as it measures the success of teachers and leaders. It also recognises the efforts of the school in providing effective and relevant leadership learning programs. There are multiple pieces of evidence that the school has created a learning culture and has built both capacity and sustainability into its professional learning and leadership learning programs.

Does the data available give enough information to lend support to the value of teacher and leadership learning in the school?

Recent studies on student performance cited earlier in this text have indicated a strong link between the teacher's work and expertise, and the performance of students. There is less evidence that leadership learning cultures and sustained professional learning programs make a significant difference. There may not be sophisticated enough measures available yet to do this, although the qualitative data held in the school is clear.

There has been a major, positive shift in student improvement data in recent years and even more evidence to demonstrate an improvement in student behaviour, relationships and a sense of connectedness. The challenge is to try to find a measurable link between the outcomes of professional learning and the achievements of students. In the story of the school, and the narratives of its successful teachers and leaders, the place of the learning culture and the focus on teacher and leadership learning are always mentioned. Is this enough?

The major task will be to find more sophisticated and explicit ways to measure the link between the focus on learning—student, teacher and leadership—and a continued improvement in student achievements. This will also be the challenge for other schools shifting their purpose to leading for learning. In these times of increasing calls for principal and school

accountability, performance management, authority and autonomy, if they are to link improvements for students and teachers to professional learning for leadership, schools will need to have strong academic partnerships and support from systems. School leaders and systems administrators need to be able to move beyond anecdotes to measures that link a school-based leadership learning program with its impact on teachers, leadership capacity, leadership sustainability, leadership performance and, critically, student performance.

The products of effective school-based leadership learning and effective leadership programs in schools could be measured at a number of points:

- the quality of the leadership learning and teaching programs (program inputs)
- the shift in the type and quality of the work of teachers undertaking the learning (teacher outcomes)
- the longitudinal performance, accreditation and promotion of those teachers (teacher outcomes) and, ultimately
- the learning and relational performance of students (student outcomes).

Academics, systems leaders and school leaders are not yet able to do this well and, in many international and some national models, fall back on external leadership programs that appear more easily examined and evaluated, rather than finding sophisticated ways to measure the impact of quality school-based learning.

Unfortunately, there also appears to be little academic research into the products of quality leadership learning programs in schools, even though there are many research questions that could be answered.

- Do structured school-based leadership learning programs increase the number of applicants for promotion?
- Do they lead to significant improvement for students?
- How do they compare to programs conducted by systems, professional organisations and academic institutions?
- Are there any approaches that are better in achieving leadership learning than those that have been used before in schools?
- Do external supervisors make any difference to the quality of leadership learning, capacity building and sustainability?
- Does performance management have any impact on improved student learning outcomes?
- If teacher leaders do not apply for school leadership positions, is this because of their circumstances or is it because the nature of and work in the role are unattractive? If that is so, how do we make school leadership attractive to the many potential leaders in our schools?
- Should we employ teachers as school leaders based on their potential, their qualifications or their experience in a leadership program, or do they need to have demonstrated achievement in teacher leadership?

While it is important to seek to define what leaders should know and be able to do, as the list above suggests there are still many questions to address. Despite this, the anecdotal and observational evidence from schools suggests that public schools in New South Wales are continuing to produce high-quality teacher leaders and school leaders and that there is some very high-quality school leadership learning happening in schools.

Ending with the beginning in mind

What is missing is a direct, explicit link that indicates teacher and leadership learning is responsible for the improvement.

> *The quality of teaching and learning provisions are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of schooling—regardless of their gender or backgrounds. Indeed, findings from the related local and international evidence-based research indicate that 'what matters most' is quality teachers and teaching, supported by strategic teacher professional development.*
>
> (Rowe 2003 p. 1)

For schools to invest in their leaders, and for systems to continue to support leadership learning programs, there must be evidence of effective leadership. There is a growing body of Australian research and data on the impact of leadership on schools, student performance and a variety of other measures. As Michelle Anderson outlined in Part I, the measures of the impact of formal school leadership on schools vary. It is thought to be important, but there is little real evidence; it is certainly not as important in the research literature as the impact of teachers.

School leaders need to argue that the body of school-based evidence is strong, especially when the impact of school leadership on the learning of teachers and teacher leadership is considered. This is not always as easy to measure as more simple data and it needs more considered research. If systems and governments are going to invest in leadership learning in schools, there will need to be ways of identifying when leadership is successful, what factors contributed to that success, and what lessons from that successful leadership can be replicated in other leadership learning and programs.

Viviane Robinson (2006) put the argument well when she argued that we would do better to start with student learning, the teaching that creates it and then the leadership that fosters that kind of teaching.

> *The starting point for such research should be our best evidence about how teachers make a difference to the achievement of their students …*

> *the next step should then be a backward mapping process which identifies the conditions that need to be developed so that teachers can make a bigger positive difference to their students … These conditions are the clues to the leadership practices that matter. Once leaders have access to that knowledge base they know what the focus of their leadership efforts needs to be if they are to improve teaching and learning.* (p. 65)

Robinson went on to conclude that leaders need:

- up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and expertise
- professional learning that is directly linked to their educational role rather than generic leadership skills and
- schools that have leadership practices that are aligned to instructional pedagogy rather than generic all-encompassing models (Robinson 2006 p. 72).

At the school, we hope that is what we have done and that the results for teachers, leaders and students reflect that.

Leadership learning as a key strategy in stupidity prevention

A few years ago at a conference in Victoria, I heard a colleague from Geelong ask a really good question. She asked that if the ultimate goal of health agencies was disease prevention, was the ultimate goal of education stupidity prevention? It is a question that provokes a considered response because it 'flips' from the normal deficit questions that are so often asked about schools and education in this country. I often wonder, when considering that Australian schools were recent silver medallists in literacy and in the top four in OECD measures of numeracy, what would have been the reaction if those achievements had been in sport?

We need to 'flip stupidity' more often. Where is the evidence that there is a crisis in the leadership of Australian schools? Where is the evidence that higher academic qualifications alone will create better leaders? Where is the evidence that performance pay will improve learning? Or summer schools with their impact on the work-life balance of the female-dominated teaching workforce? Where is the evidence that the current leadership of our schools has created a crisis in teaching and learning?

In my opinion, we continue to be confused about school leadership and leadership learning in schools. There are many fine programs in place within schools that provide practical, workplace-based and contextually sound support to the academic development of leadership for the profession.

These programs would be even stronger if the academic expertise beyond schools was focused in the school, rather than in other institutions. Our leaders (within and beyond schools) need to have the courage to abandon the deficit model, recognise sites where excellent work is being done, create centres of professional practice in schools, and decide on leadership frameworks for the learning of school leadership in Australian schools that are embedded in the cultural context of those schools.

What happens to experts?

When teachers are successful in the classroom, they are often promoted out of it into administrative roles. When school leaders and principals are successful (or at least experienced) they are often promoted to senior positions in the system or other schools. If our schools are to be centres of learning, genuine learning communities and cutting edge in innovation, expert teachers and leaders need to be in schools and they need to be recognised, valued and encouraged to use their expertise in and beyond the school.

Experience is not enough. Those who are going to lead the leaders need to be experts in designing learning for students, for teachers and for leaders. They need to have expertise in the delivery of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. They need to be able to lead and to have access to support for their work. They also need to be trusted when they seek to be innovative and take risks that those with less expertise would not be able to take successfully. They need to be freed from 'control agendas' and 'one-size-fits-all' models of supervision and operation, especially with regard to professional learning.

To return to the Jesuits, they recommend that leaders engage in a cycle of leadership in which they dream, reflect, discern and act. Experts do this. They have the experience to dream beyond what is already in place. They have deep reflective skills that enable an intuitive and explicit understanding of what will work (and what won't). They can discern the best strategies from the range on offer and they know when and how to act. They connect new ideas to those they have already put in place so that change and improvement appear seamless. They do not think they know it all.

Genuinely expert school leaders continue to create leadership learning programs that build the capacity of greater numbers of teachers to lead for the core business of teaching and learning. In what will be a major educational project for the twenty-first century, we should dream that our school leaders will be expert teachers, powerful teacher leaders and cutting-edge school leaders who will continue to create success for young Australians and their schools.

Have the questions from Part I been answered?

As this deep reflection on a long journey draws to a close, it is timely to return to the questions posed at the end of Part I:

1. What do you use to guide your thinking for learning leadership? Where do students fit in this vision?
2. What are critical features of quality leadership learning for you? How do these compare with your experience of learning for leadership to date?
3. Are there recurrent factors to do with ideas and practices of leadership that work against your preferred learning for leadership process?
4. What kinds of strategies have you used, or would you use, to work towards quality learning for leadership in your school?

For the school to answer these questions it was useful to ask some of the school's leaders to give their answers in a think-and-share process. They initially worked alone on answers then the group discussed the responses.

Their answers to the first question showed a range of thinking, including using the school's frameworks, philosophies, plans, context and data—all with students at the heart. The interaction between top-down (from the principal, leaders and teachers) and bottom-up (from the students) thinking and learning was highlighted as a 'dynamic equilibrium' that was constantly changing based on the changing needs of students and teachers.

The second question stimulated a range of answers, from the types of learning, to the importance of outcomes for students, to the need for an academic as well as practical component to learning, especially for leaders. An interesting discussion of the perception of the leaders as to the value of their experience to date highlighted the need for a continued focus on depth, and a need to really consider the areas where more learning will result in a significant improvement in personal and student performance. The leaders do not want to waste time on learning that doesn't make a difference.

It was not surprising that in answer to the third question the balance of the day-to-day management of their role was seen as a potential area for conflict. All leaders wanted to be more strategic as a leader and wanted to create time for deep reflection on all levels of learning and leadership. One leader said it was a struggle to be insistent, persistent and consistent over a long period of time, especially in keeping learning for teaching and leadership on the agenda. Another leader talked

about resistance and the fear that even 'great' professional learning did not always seem to create a shift in student performance. These will be challenges for individual leaders and the school leadership team as a whole as the school moves forward.

The final question produced a lively discussion of the kinds of programs that will build on the high-quality practice that is already associated with the group's perception of the school's practice. There was a sense that the school needs to target a more personalised leadership learning approach towards those teachers with potential for leadership. The formal leaders need to embed this into the annual teacher planning, assessment and review processes. This process should put even more data into the hands of teachers to help them determine how to improve student performance by improving their own practice. As to the leaders, they felt they needed to come to terms with strategies for their own further learning and preparation for the next phase of their careers.

It should be said that answering the questions gave the group considerable energy and a few 'ah-ha' moments. The result was a bit of rethinking of the directions the school would take in executive leadership learning for the next year. It was a powerful exercise, the results of which appear in Figure 14. In this diagram, the group has moved beyond the professional practice model used for all teachers and aimed at teacher leadership, to a framework specifically designed to include the key leadership frameworks and to show novice leaders the links between them.

This then is what expertise looks like in leadership and this is what the school has aimed to build. When school leadership is at its best, it is committed to learning—for students, teachers and for itself. It recognises the context, shifts the culture, designs the strategies, finds key learning programs and activities and rigorously evaluates its own work. It uses data from a range of sources; it is willing to be accountable for its actions and it focuses on improving the work of teachers as leaders and leaders as teachers as a moral and ethical imperative.

It does not wait for others to set directions; it designs its own and it generously shares its knowledge and skills with others. It expects government and bureaucrats to trust it and academics to want to work with it. It is determined to improve, to learn and to lead. It has a sense of humility and it needs a sense of humour. It likes working with others and it gets really excited when it sees others 'shift up a gear', ready for the next improvement, challenge or deep learning. It has the ability to see far into

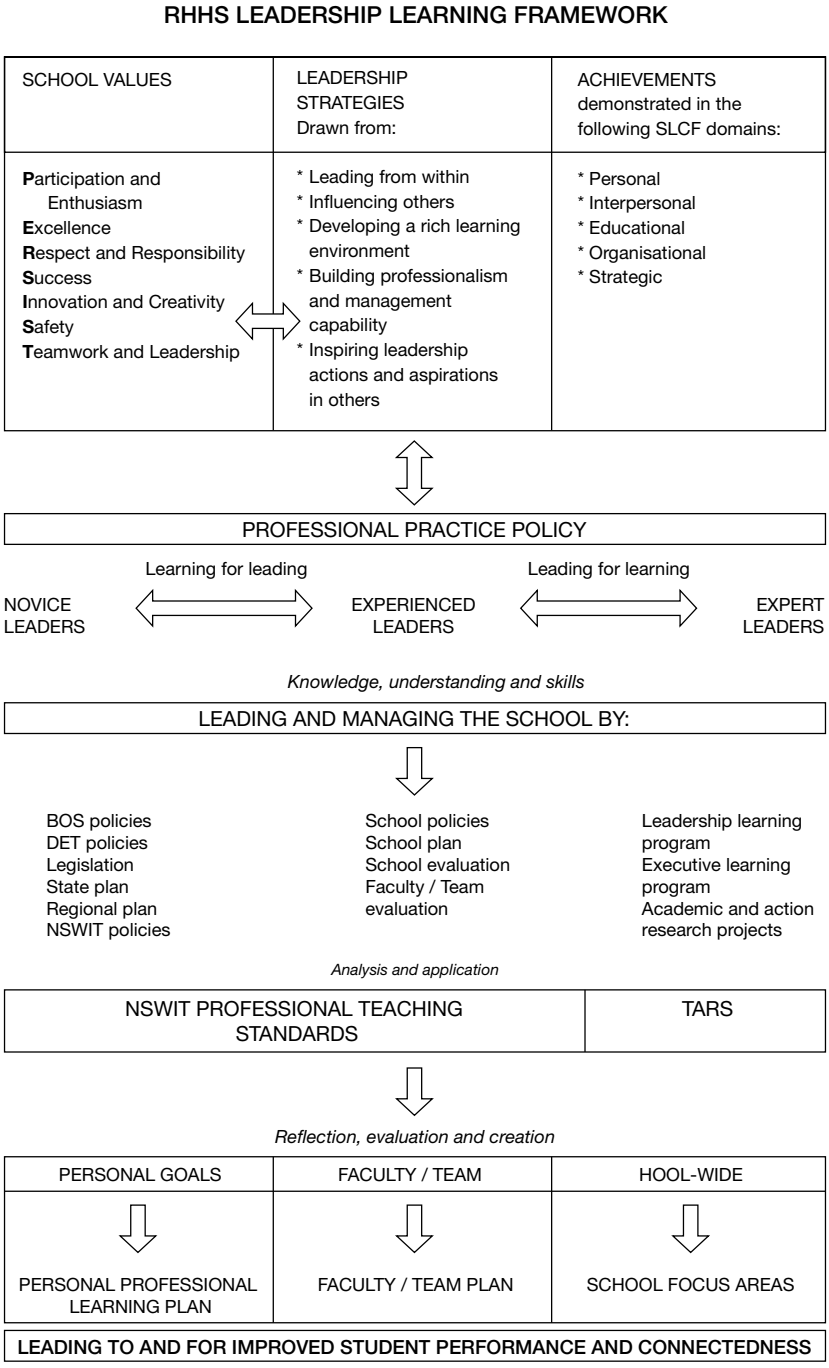


Figure 14 A work-in-progress—the RHHS leadership learning framework (Version 3 and still developing)

a possible future while living richly in the moment. It expands its capacity to create its future while it plans its legacy.

The legacy of a learning culture

After an extended period in any school, the principal architect hopes that there will be a positive legacy that can be sustained—although wise leaders recognise that new leaders in any school will want to shape their own destinies and will take the school in different, and hopefully, better directions. In recent years, the school described in this text has needed to build capacity and sustain high-quality teaching and leadership with a relatively inexperienced team. Building on the strengths of the school's culture in student leadership and parent participation, the school has now built a strong culture of professional practice. In the case of building the achievements of the school—especially those of the staff—any recognition is theirs, for the work was theirs. The architect might have designed the building, but it is the builders, contractors and artisans who create it.

As principal, I have had the privilege of having well over 200 teachers and school leaders participate with enthusiasm in the professional learning and leadership programs of the school in the last 10 years. It is their work that has made the improvements to the school's learning culture and their efforts that have built a school of professional practice. I am very grateful to all of them for making a difference in the lives of our students.

As principal, I am often asked to speak at conferences and run professional learning activities for teachers, school leaders and colleague principals. I am always delighted to accept these invitations, especially if they prove to be the opportunity for me to give voice to the importance of highly effective principals and school leaders working in schools to keep the focus of schools on learning. I usually provide a biography—which I hope is never read. The principal described in that biography has done some really great work, taken advantage of every learning and leadership opportunity she has been offered and she is deeply conscious that none of this would have been possible without a very special school context in which to work.

In March 2007, I sat with some really famous principals in the Great Hall of Parliament House, waiting to receive a national award for quality schooling for excellence by a principal. I thought then, and I said later, that no principal wins an award on their own. The award is recognition for every one of the wonderful teachers, supportive parents and fabulous young people who have been on the learning journey at

the school in the last 10 years. They are the ones who have built a sustainable school of professional practice with a persistent culture of learning, leadership and achievement. I am the one who was asked to record it.

Lao Tze said it best when he said of leaders:

> *And when we have finished our work, the 'followers' will say they did it themselves.*

That is because they *did*.

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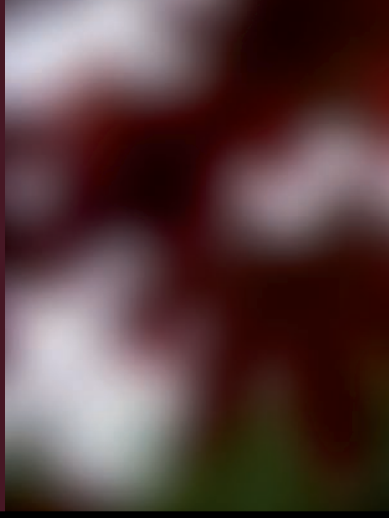

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