Leaders Lead:
Beyond the lost sandshoe

BEYOND

Leaders Lead: Strengthening the Australian school

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Beyond the lost sandshoe

ISBN 0 9578301 3 0

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Foreword

Dear colleague

Since 31 August 2001, when the national conference for *Leaders Lead: Strengthening the Australian school* was held in Adelaide, quality leadership has been on the agenda for school leaders across the country.

During 2002 a thousand school leaders participated in workshops, forums and conferences from Darwin to Launceston, from Perth to Parramatta. It was during this time that, with the help of APAPDC's Jeremy Hurley, *Leaders Lead: Beyond the lost sandshoe* developed its flavour, shape and title.

At two of the conferences, principals used almost the same words as they talked about how one of the major problems in thinking about leadership is that "there never seems to be time after I've had to deal with a parent in the office at 5.30 in the evening wanting me to find their child's sandshoe that got lost somewhere around the oval." This publication attempts to look beyond that lost sandshoe. It draws together the threads of the discussions, ideas, challenges and collegiality in a way that is intended to both interest and stimulate. The articles that are included are by a broad range of thinkers, most of whom presented talks or workshops during *Leaders Lead*. Jeremy wrote the reports from the states and territories, and, as he says, tried to "make meaning" from what he experienced for the benefit of people who weren't there.
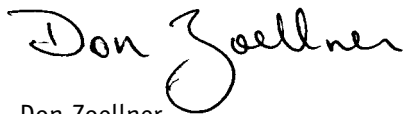
This first phase of the project has been about you, the people who are our educational leaders, and this volume is a practical and stimulating resource on educational leadership for the future.

The second phase of the project, which will continue through to the middle of 2003, recognises the importance of developing leadership capacity within the school – of succession planning. As Kathy Lacey points out in Chapter 4 of this volume:

> *The challenge of an ageing workforce coupled with a growing disenchantment with the traditional leadership culture and a demand for greater work/life balance faces many public and private sector organisations in Victoria, other Australian states and in the UK, the US and Europe. If schools and education systems are going to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality leaders in the future it is imperative that they develop and implement policies and practices for the recruitment, development and retention of high potential leaders.*

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The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council is pleased to be coordinating *Leaders Lead*. The Council is based on the premise that the common interests of principals as professionals far outweigh differences based on sector, level of schooling or state/territory location. The strength of APAPDC draws from the support of its members, the Australian Secondary Principals Association, the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, the Australian Primary Principals Association and the Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools of Australia. I thank these groups, and all principals who take part in APAPDC activities, for their continuing commitment and support.

Leaders Lead is funded by the Commonwealth government under its *Teachers for the 21st Century* initiative. Supporting quality leadership in schools is an essential ingredient in improving outcomes for our young people, and I thank the Commonwealth for recognising this in a practical way. This project is another example of the Commonwealth responding to needs identified by the unified voice of Australia's school leaders and the resultant benefit that can occur from working in partnership.

Don Zoellner
Chairperson, APAPDC

What is Leaders Lead?

The *Leaders Lead* programme is for all Australian school principals – current and aspiring: Government, Catholic and Independent, primary and secondary. It is designed and implemented by the profession, with the support of the Commonwealth Government as part of its *Teachers for the 21*[st] *Century* initiative.

Leaders Lead aims to:

☐ improve the quality of leadership in Australian schools;

☐ develop, disseminate and encourage the adoption of effective succession planning in Australian schools; and

☐ enhance networking of principals across sectors and jurisdictions.

The programme has two phases:

Phase 1 (July 2001-June 2002) consisted of a national conference of representatives of principals from around the country, along with state and territory follow-up programmes designed and conducted by principal groups.

Phase 2 (July 2002-June 2003) focuses on a topic which has received little attention over time – succession planning. It will consist of a series of roundtables and state and territory programmes. Support will also be provided for representatives of peak associations to present at international conferences and programmes.

What is Leaders Lead: Beyond the lost sandshoe?

This publication draws together the first phase of the *Leaders Lead* project. It aims to provide school leaders and those interested in quality leadership with both a snapshot of the issues and concerns that have emerged from across the country, and a resource for professional development.

The first and major part of *Leaders Lead: Beyond the lost sandshoe* consists of reports from the states and territories and articles on leadership issues by a range of educational and other thinkers.

The reports from the states and territories are not blow-by-blow accounts of what happened at each of the conferences, workshops, seminars or meetings. Instead they are written from a personal perspective – from one person's point of view – and attempt to capture the flavour and the ideas, and suggest some answers to 'but what does it mean?'

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The collection of articles on leadership issues comes from a variety of fields – from people working in schools, the media, education policy, universities and the community. What they all have in common are refreshing and sometimes challenging ideas about what quality educational leadership means. Many of the writers were involved in *Leaders Lead* during the year.

The second part of *Leaders Lead: Beyond the lost sandshoe* explores the major contemporary leadership challenges for school principals in Australia, such as accountability, middle schooling, equity and articulating and assessing professional standards. It also provides information about the support that is available for experienced, new and aspiring principals, and a list of useful contacts and references.

Part 1

Leaders Lead:

Beyond the lost sandshoe

Chapter 1

Leaders Lead - into the 21st century

Susan Boucher

Susan is Executive Officer of APAPDC.

The importance of quality leadership

It is unsurprising that a major initiative to "…increase the number of highly effective Australian schools"– *Teachers for the 21st Century: Making the Difference* (DETYA, 2000: 1) – has quality leaders as one of its components. It reflects something that is well known. Good leaders are a crucial ingredient of good schools.

Time and time again research findings from Australia and overseas identify leadership as a pivotal ingredient in effective, innovative schools. It is also something that is well understood by students, their parents and the public.

Australian principals

Historically, principals in Australia are capable and successful classroom practitioners who have built up complementary leadership and management skills. This blend provides the necessary underpinning for their credibility, performance and continued improvement in the Australian context. Principals who are successful continue to learn about and develop in these three areas – learning and teaching, leadership and management. They can only do this through a commitment to their own ongoing professional development in each of these three areas.

The development of leadership and management skills is generally progressive. Teachers move from the classroom to roles of increasing responsibility for leadership.

Principals need to make conscious efforts to ensure that their colleagues have opportunities to develop the necessary knowledge and skills as they move through their careers. Collaborative leadership approaches in schools make good sense for this reason. They also make good sense for the school – a quality leadership team working together in day to day work and further personal and collective professional development is hard to beat, in terms of both the school's overall performance and individuals' personal rewards from their work. Quality leaders lead.

Global, national and local influences

Principals' work can focus very much on day-to-day interactions – the knocks on the door, the letters, the 'lost sandshoes', faxes and e-mails that demand attention, the meetings with parents and so on – so much so that it is often difficult to find the time to rise above this to consider the larger issues of institutional direction and improvement.

The influence of jurisdictional initiatives and changes are significant. In government schools the last decade has seen major changes in formal procedures and local responsibility for school management, and every school has been touched by changes to curricular and reporting procedures. National initiatives driven by the Commonwealth and its funding arrangements continue to influence and support the work of schools.

But global trends and influences, reflected in our social, cultural and economic circumstances, are inexorable. These factors include shifts in common notions of tradition and authority, the rise of global communications, the further internationalisation of the economy, changes in work practices and organisation, and even changes in the way in which we construct identity (Thomson, 1998). These issues demand a response.

A factor that transcends all of these influences is the sense of a moral and ethical frame of reference – spiritually based or based on humanist traditions – that individual principals may rely on and refer to in their thinking and actions as leaders.

Leadership theory

Practising and aspiring school leaders now have access to a vast amount of literature on educational leadership. Indeed, the latter part of the 20th century has seen something of an explosion of writing in the area with overlapping topics including educational change and school effectiveness.

Many writers and speakers have made a significant ongoing impact on school leadership in Australia in recent years. Some, such as Steven Covey in his *Four Roles of Leadership* (1999) have addressed leadership in all kinds of organisations, with many principals finding the ideas and strategies he discusses applicable in their work.

Other thinkers have had a specific focus on school leadership and change. Through his writings and presentations Michael Fullan, for example, has developed a framework for leadership that 'can really make a difference' in educational settings. His views have resonated with those of many principals

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in this country (1994, APAPDC national satellite broadcast). Well-anchored by research and thought, Fullan's writings have an increasingly 'practical' edge. There is a focus on "leadership for change in action…what leaders would actually do in real situations of complex change" (Fullan, 1997: 97). Inevitably dilemmas and tensions exist in the kinds of complex situations in which principals find themselves. He encourages principals to see these as positive and constructive forces ("problems are our friends") and outlines a theory of practical leadership that reflects this view.

In particular, Fullan takes the view that "the emotional side of [leadership and] change has been either ignored or miscast" (Fullan, 1997: 205) and provides the means for practically orienting towards approaches that harness the emotional responses for positive impact on change.

This theme is expanded further by other authors, such as Robert Evans in *The Human Side of School Change* (2001). Evans discusses "leadership that emphasises authenticity, translating the integrity, core beliefs and natural strengths of leaders into practical strategies for problem solving" (p. xiii). He identifies *trust* as a core ingredient to be earned if leadership of people is to be truly effective.

The connections between leadership in innovation and gains in student learning are an essential study for principals. The recent *Innovative Best Practice Project*, conducted by Peter Cuttance and colleagues from around the country, involved in excess of 100 schools implementing innovative programmes to improve student learning (Cuttance *et al.*, 2001). Nine particularly successful schools were selected for further study. A conclusion drawn from this scrutiny was that:

> *School leadership development should be approached as multi-dimensional, encompassing the processes of school-wide learning, culture building and creation of school-wide pedagogy, and focusing on the mutualistic relationships of Principal-leaders and teacher-leaders in these processes (2001: 141).*

In order to define and assign developmental priorities, principals and other leaders need to be able to translate advice, guidelines and examples into a more practical form. A framework for this is the *Leaders and their Learning Competencies Framework* that was first developed by the APAPDC as part of the *Leaders and their Learning* project (APAPDC, 1994). It uses clusters of competencies to describe what principals actually do in their work, reflecting the 'multi-dimensionality' referred to by Cuttance et al.

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The *Framework* has recently been reviewed and refined, and the competencies have been consolidated in the *APAPDC educational leadership model,* as illustrated below.

The APAPDC educational leadership model

Organisational leadership and management

Has vision, and able to develop cooperatively a common purpose and future directions. Is creative and inspiring in interactions with others. Ensures smooth running, and achievement of common goals and purposes.

Curriculum and pedagogical leadership

Provides an optimal learning and teaching environment that responds to national and global trends and issues, is matched with current trends, and constantly evaluated.

Educational leadership

Optimises student learning and growth

Cultural and wise leadership

Understands and acknowledges community cultural values; acts ethically; reflects on beliefs, practice and behaviour; involves compassion, clarity and courage.

Political and community leadership

Able to negotiate with systems and sectors, parents, teachers and community members on the direction and wellbeing of the school.

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Chapter 2

Leading in an age of paradox and dilemma

Patrick Duignan

Patrick Duignan has been involved in education for almost 35 years as a teacher, deputy principal, principal and academic. At present he is Foundation Chair in Educational Leadership and Director of the Flagship in Catholic Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University. He presented an inspirational address to the NSW Leaders Lead conference.

Introduction

The findings from a recent study on leadership in contemporary frontline service organisations (SOLR Project, 2002) indicate that the most difficult challenges facing leaders present themselves as dilemmas, paradoxes or *tensions*. These tensions are usually people-centred and involve contestation of values and/or ethical contradictions.

Tensions are a part of the fabric of life in organisations. Handy (1994) suggests that such tensions are "endemic" given the complex, uncertain, and turbulent world of constant change in contemporary organisations. Leaders, he argues, are faced with tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes that are "inevitable, endemic and perpetual" (Handy, 1994). It is easy to become disoriented, confused and frustrated in such trying conditions. Handy points out that paradoxes confuse us because:

> *We are asked to live with contradictions and with simultaneous opposites...
> To live with simultaneous opposites is, at first glance, a recipe for indecision
> at best, schizophrenia at worst.*

There are no simple *either/or* solutions to such tensions and paradoxes. Often choices in such situations necessitate the consideration of seeming opposites in a *both/and* approach to decision making.

Leaders in the SOLR Project reported that they frequently had to make choices about people in situations where there were no obvious 'right' and' wrong' answers. Mostly there were degrees of 'right' on both sides. It was not a matter of choosing one side or value over another *(either/or* approach*)* but, more likely, the most effective outcomes would reflect the concerns and values of all people involved *(both/and* approach).

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Kidder (1995) makes this point well when discussing the problems for leaders and others making choices in situations where values and ethical considerations are paramount. He states:

> Tough choices typically are those that pit one right value against another. That's true in every walk of life – corporate professional, personal, civic, international, educational, religious, and the rest (p. 16).

He points out that right-versus-right values are at the heart of most difficult choices:

> The really tough choices, then, don't centre upon right versus wrong. They involve right versus right. They are genuine dilemmas precisely because each side is firmly rooted in . . . core values (p. 18).

Such dilemmas usually present tensions between competing sets of values where each can be interpreted as 'right' and justified in a given situation. Many of the tensions faced by leaders in the SOLR project fell into this category of right-versus-right. These included:

- [ ] the rights of the individual versus those of the group or community (eg the student who is disrupting the class with his/her behaviour);
- [ ] the exercise of compassion versus rigidly following the rules (eg often the rules clearly indicate a course of action but the heart calls for other approaches);
- [ ] the pressures to be loyal to colleagues/staff versus telling the truth in the interests of justice (eg being loyal to the long-serving teacher who is now performing poorly versus seeking justice for the students who are affected by this poor performance); and
- [ ] the provision of a quality service versus the efficient use of scarce resources (eg principals are often faced with competing demands for resources – supporting disadvantaged students/programmes or giving priority to the pursuit of academic excellence).

Frameworks for managing tension and paradox

There is a need for leadership and management frameworks that, according to Handy (1994), help us appreciate that "the opposites are necessary to each other" (p. 48). He advocates that we must learn to frame the confusion and find pathways through the paradoxes by understanding what is happening and by learning to be different (p. 3). We must break the bonds imposed on us by the either/or dualistic mindset.

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English (1995) prefers to regard paradox as a tension situation that is, primarily, characterised by relationship and complementarity. He recommends that leaders and managers should analyse paradox and dilemma situations, not in terms of contradiction, polarity, and either/or frames, but in terms of a *relationship* that encompasses both competition and complementarity (a *both/and* and *A and not-A* approach). They should, he says, determine as best they can, the qualities and conditions of relationships in each situation. In this way they can better understand and manage a tension situation (usually characterised by uncertainty and confusion) by building a profile of the tensions – in Handy's terms they are "framing the confusion".

By emphasising the relationship and complementarity instead of the seeming contradictions and opposites, English argues that leaders and managers have a better chance of influencing the direction and intensity of the positive side of the tension. Otherwise they will opt for the either/or approach, perhaps believing that seeming opposing forces are mutually exclusive and incompatible, thereby creating a win-lose situation. In other words they have fallen for the either/or, *A or not-A* dichotomy.

The challenges facing leaders, including principals, in contemporary service organisations are complex and multidimensional (Duignan and Collins, in press). Finding optimal resolutions to such tension situations demands mindsets and approaches based on *both/and* rather than *either/or* thinking and acting.

Leaders who have to make choices in such paradoxical situations, require more than management skills and competencies. They require creative, intuitive frameworks based on in-depth understandings of human nature and of the ethical, moral, even spiritual dimensions inherent in human interaction and choice. Above all they need sound judgment and a wisdom derived from critical reflection on the meaning of life and work. They have to be people with heart who are emotionally mature enough to develop mutually elevating and productive relationships.

Such leaders tend to be 'depthed' people with a spirituality shaped by values fine tuned by the warp and weft of life's experiences. They often have "spiritual scars and calluses on their characters" (Bogue, 1994) from having battled with the complex, perplexing dilemmas and tensions of life and work. They tend to be morally courageous and unafraid to question unfair and unjust processes and practices when conformity would be the easier path.

The tensions inherent in the leadership challenges identified in the SOLR Project call for qualities, mindsets and dispositions that help leaders form creative frameworks for choice and action that transcend competencies and

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management skills. Duignan (2002) has identified a number of the elements of such a framework when arguing for the special preparation needed for authentic educational leaders.

The framework reflects the need for a leader to be:

- *critically reflective* – capable of critically reflecting on the meaning of life, work and learning;
- *intuitively connected* – able to tap into the wisdom distilled from the warp and weft of life's experiences;
- *ethically responsible* – capable of applying ethical standards to complex and perplexing value-tense situations;
- *spiritually courageous* – has struggled with 'the meaning of life' and has the spiritual scars to show for it;
- *intellectually nimble* – has a disciplined mind; is knowledgeable and rigorous in method;
- *professionally committed* – is aware of intention, processes and outcomes;
- *managerially competent* – has knowledge, understanding, and skills in managing complex organizations;
- *strategically ready* – is a 'big picture', visionary and strategic thinker;
- *emotionally mature* – able to engage others in mutually beneficial relationships; using heart as well as head;
- *culturally sensitive* – capable of discernment with regard to differences and respond with consideration and empathy to individuals/groups; is in tune with the culture of their organisation.

Leaders need ethical and moral frameworks that help them discern what choices and actions will raise "...the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led..." (Burns, 1978:20), thus having a transforming effect on both. This is the essence of leading in an age of paradox and dilemma.

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Chapter 3

Do teachers make the best principals? -
Report from the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory branch of APAPDC hosted a dinner debate. About 100 people attended, representing school leaders from all three schooling sectors. The moderator was Peter Plummer (the CEO of NTDEET) and the speakers were a mix of school and political leaders: Kim Rowe (Principal at Taminmin High School); Grant Tambling (Deputy Leader in the Senate for the Federal National Party of Australia from 1996 – 2001); Delia Lawrie (MLA for Karama); Marion Guppy (Principal at Dripstone High School); Henry Gray (Principal at Leanyer Primary School); and Peter Allen (Commissioner of Licensing, former Education Deputy Secretary and Principal).

The debate

It was a steamy night in Darwin when many of the Northern Territory principals gathered by the water to decide whether teachers do in fact make the best school principals.

Six leaders from education and politics argued the point with a mixture of cold logic, passionate pleas, rhetorical flourishes and frivolity. In the end, on a vote of hands, the audience decided that the affirmative had won, but there was talk that self-interest had won out over the strengths of the arguments. Just before the vote was taken, one of the questions from the floor went straight to the heart of the issue:

> *You have received an application for a school principal position from someone with at least ten years experience dealing directly with thirty-plus children in a 'non-formal' education institution; has formal management qualifications and experience; has had thirty years experience with, but outside 'formal education'; relates well to children aged between five and twenty-one; and has marketing, financial, organisational and leadership skills. Would you consider them a suitable applicant?*

Although on the surface the debate was an entertainment (in the best parliamentary tradition) it raised some very serious issues that are relevant across Australia.

☐ Who says that school principals need to see themselves as inspirational and visionary educational leaders rather than simply educational managers?

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- Is the job of principal becoming untenable? Is it expecting too much of any one person, whether or not a teacher, to be skilled in all aspects of principals' responsibilities – from curriculum, teaching and learning to occupational, health and safety; from mandatory reporting to managing the budget; from being inspiring to being tough; from hiring and firing to managing mental illness; from working with the community to taking final responsibility for bullying in the school?

- How is an ageing principalship, already struggling, going to come to terms with the increasing, redefined and new demands of the position such as the emphasis on student and staff wellbeing, ICTs and community partnerships?

- How are the education sectors going to cope with the declining number of applicants for principal positions? How are they going to encourage more teachers to apply while keeping the quality teacher resource pool to work with our children?

- Is the core business of schools still teaching and learning or has it become business management?

Teachers need to trust that what they aspire to, is shared by principals.

Teachers need to know that their leader ("the head eunuch in the sacred hallowed cloisters") is on the same pathway, "walking on the wings of the same wind".

In pre-debate conversation it was agreed by a number of principals who were asked, that the one over-riding requirement of a principal is to be skilled at relationships. Not surprisingly the crux of the debate was whether a school leader has to have experienced life as a teacher to have sufficient understanding and empathy with teachers and students to do the job well. It was argued that because they have been teachers, principals have insight, perceptions about, understanding of and experience in schools, and are able to provide guidance and support for "those at the chalk-face". They have "been in the fire with the students", and are in tune with "the soul" of education. They know what actually happens in classrooms, and know how absolutely crucial teachers are to the learning and wellbeing of students. They bring with them understandings of the learning process and curriculum that only experienced educators can have, and as this is the core business of schools, school leaders have to have considerable experience in these areas.

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Let the leaders lead and the teachers teach

The other side argued that principals are in fact not necessarily the best people at relationships ("You can always tell school principals by the way they talk to you – as if you were still in the classroom"). This side of the debate identified a range of priorities for principals in the Northern Territory that appeared to be more about organisational leadership than educational leadership. There certainly was no mention of 'soul' or 'passion', and this difference of tone from both sides was apparent throughout the debate. Priorities here included getting the best for the students (academically and socially) and with measurable outcomes; organising the parents and Indigenous custodians to accept their proper accountabilities and responsibilities; stimulating, facilitating, recruiting and sometimes disciplining the best teachers for each school; and relating to immediate community expectations for students including behaviour and employability.

Participants identified the key skills that principals need to achieve these priorities – developed by "stepping outside the confines of pedagogy and into the wider world of business skills and leadership styles". These skills were the ability to:

☐ work with a school community to establish a strategic agenda that addresses complex issues relating to the school and its environment;

☐ build the school's competitive advantage in terms of its client base and the continuity of funding necessary to propel growth;

☐ manage the school organisation efficiently and effectively, particularly at the school/community interface;

☐ delegate and share leadership opportunities with the respective stakeholders of the school.

They argued that to achieve these priorities the role of school principal needed to be reconsidered and redefined. The only way that the best teachers could be kept in the classroom to teach, was by leaving the most skilled managers to manage – even though it may involve some significant changes in industrial relations.

If teachers are the only people to understand schools then it is a problem for our community at large.

In the weeks following that steamy Darwin night, it has become clear that the implications of the debate extend far beyond whether or not teachers make the best principals. Many people are saying that the principalship as we know

it is becoming, if it is not already, untenable. Regardless of who is appointed principal, it is now a fact that there are far fewer teachers wanting to be principals. If this trend continues for too long, schools will be lucky if they receive any applications at all for principal positions. If, as was evident during the debate, principals are so passionate that teachers are the best educational leaders, then there is much to be done.

From all available evidence, both empirical and anecdotal, there will have to be changes in the near future to avoid a major crisis in schools – and this crisis is threatening Catholic, Independent and Government sectors alike. The question is – who will be setting the agenda for the debate, and who will be making the decisions?

The debate was organised by Pamela Hepburn (Northern Territory Principals Council); Don Zoellner (Centralian College); Peter Moore (Shepherdson College); Daniel Zoebel (Girraaween School); David Cannon (The Essington School); and Gerard Keating (St John's College).

Chapter 4

Succession planning for school leadership

Kathy Lacey

Kathy Lacey is an educational consultant currently completing her PhD at the University of Melbourne on the factors that impact on teachers' leadership career choices. She has been involved in developing, facilitating and evaluating workplace mentoring programmes which was also the focus of her Master of Education research. Kathy has published books on performance appraisal and career planning and mentoring.

The challenge

The challenge of an ageing workforce coupled with a growing disenchantment with the traditional leadership culture and a demand for greater work/life balance, faces many public and private sector organisations in Victoria, other Australian states and in the UK, the US and Europe.

These characteristics accurately describe the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DE&T) workforce of over 40,000 teachers. They combine with the fact that 68% of these teachers are women, though only 34% of the principal-class leaders are women. 26% of teachers are over 50 years of age and only 13% are under 30. Twice as many teachers are retiring as are entering the profession.

The consequences of these workforce features pose serious challenges. How do you arrest and replace the ever growing exodus of experience, particularly at senior levels; how do you stimulate interest in undertaking leadership roles; how do you make manageable the time demands of work, and how do you ensure the effective use of our rich talent pool?

In 2000, DE&T commissioned me to conduct a major research project to better understand the factors that impact on teachers' leadership aspirations. This research comprised an extensive literature review, a survey of 2000 teachers (with a 70% response rate) and focus group interviews. The importance of succession planning at the school and system level has been a key finding from this research.

Succession planning is the deliberate and systematic effort made by organisations to recruit, develop and retain individuals with a range of leadership competencies capable of implementing current and future organisational goals (Leibman, Bruer and Maki, 1996). In the past it has been seen largely as job replacement. Succession planning now needs to include

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activities to attract, extend, and keep the best staff at all levels. It needs to recognise that younger teachers are likely to change employers and careers several times during their working life.

A review of the literature indicates that until recently there have been no examples of strategic succession planning processes for schools and/or education systems. In an attempt to remedy this situation Canavan (2001) has developed a "management process designed to facilitate leadership succession in Catholic education" (Canavan, 2001:75). These succession planning processes include strategies to link the organisation's strategic and succession plans; processes for recruitment (attracting and selecting potential leaders); development (of future and current leaders), and retention (of future and current leaders). Data from my research indicates that the Victorian government education system and individual schools also lack strategic succession plans.

Ideas for succession planning in schools

If schools and education systems are going to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality leaders in the future, it is imperative that they develop and implement policies and practices for the recruitment, development and retention of potential leaders. The following ideas are provided for school leaders for the development of a strategic succession plan that addresses the three key aspects of recruitment, development and retention.

Recruitment

Recruitment comprises two elements: attracting high quality applicants, and selection processes. In attracting applicants, the position needs to not only provide job satisfaction but just as importantly, be perceived by others as providing job satisfaction. Teachers will not apply for jobs that they perceive are stressful, traumatic, demanding or overwhelming. These are the messages that current principals convey about their job. Teachers make decisions on the appeal or otherwise of leadership positions based on the role modelled by current leaders. Processes need to be put in place that will inspire leadership aspirations.

As many teachers, particularly women, do not consider leadership roles until it is suggested to them by someone else, the identification (and development) of potential leaders needs to be formalised, rather than being left to chance.

To attract high quality applicants to leadership positions it is recommended that:

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- principals articulate and display a sense of job satisfaction – share the joys of the job
- leadership roles be demysified, particularly administrative and financial roles and responsibilities
- flexible work options be promoted at all leadership levels
- principal-class and leading teacher positions include shared leadership roles
- regional and local relocation support programmes, (including providing support for the spouse/partner needing to relocate) made more readily available.

Selection processes need to be structured such that they encourage and support the school in its attempt to locate and appoint highly qualified and appropriate applicants to leadership positions. The selection processes also need to encourage and support rather than deter leadership aspirants. This research has revealed that currently principal-class selection processes are seen as a strong disincentive to apply for promotion, particularly by women. There is a perception that selection processes do not recognise multiple career paths. It is recommended that:

- selection processes for all school leadership positions are simplified to reduce complexity, time required and stress (this key recommendation will also require systemic action)
- professional development programmes for selection processes are implemented (these programmes need to include strategies to increase the confidence and resilience of applicants)
- all leadership selection panels understand and value non-traditional career paths, and merit and equity principles.

Development

Career development of current and potential leaders is now considered to be an essential element of succession plans (Friedman, Hatch and Walker, 1998; Leibman, Bruer and Maki, 1996). However, it is not only the school's responsibility. It is the dual responsibility of both the school and the individual teacher. Career development processes need to provide opportunities to develop the leadership capabilities of potential leaders. Development opportunities also need to be provided to ensure that current leaders continue to develop the leadership capabilities that will be required to meet future organisational goals. It is recommended that schools:

- provide early leadership experiences for young teachers

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- [ ] expand and promote the opportunities for teachers at all levels to act in leadership roles, particularly assistant principals to act as principals.

Education systems and professional organisations will need to review role responsibilities and levels of administrative support for principals to ensure that there is adequate time for educational leadership.

Retention

To increase the pool of high quality applicants for leadership positions, organisations need to retain high quality employees. A shortage of teachers will inevitably lead to a shortage of potential leaders. Young teachers are more likely to change employers than their older colleagues did in the past. Succession planning strategies will need to be implemented to retain these young potential leaders (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Organisations also need to include strategies to retain experienced leaders in their succession planning processes. This research revealed that experienced principals, particularly women, have career plans that do not include remaining a principal until retirement. School systems will need to consider strategies to maintain motivation and challenge for experienced principals. Retention strategies need to maintain the attraction and challenge of leadership for future and current principals. To achieve this it is recommended that schools:

- [ ] provide early leadership experiences for young teachers
- [ ] ensure that flexible work options are promoted at all leadership levels
- [ ] pilot a range of shared leadership principal-class and leading teacher positions
- [ ] implement strategies to maintain challenge and motivation for current principals.

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Chapter 5

It can be lonely at the top - Report from Victoria

The Victorian branch of APAPDC organised a series of breakfast forums across the State. Speakers were Mr David Parkin (former AFL Coach and Educator) in Bendigo; Dr Rhonda Galbally (mycommunity.com) in Wodonga; Dr Ken Rowe (ACER researcher) in Warrnambool; Ms Kathy Lacey (researcher) in Mildura and Warragul; Christina Hindaugh (innovative agri-businesswoman) in Geelong and Ballarat; John Marsden (author) in Moonee Ponds; and Gayle Moore (consultant) in Glen Waverley.

The Victorian *Leaders Lead* programme consisted of nine breakfast meetings, from Mildura to Moonee Ponds. The Rhonda Galbally breakfast, the second of the series, was held in Wodonga. One of the notable aspects was that people from across the border had been invited as well, providing principals from neighbouring schools in New South Wales and Victoria a rare chance to get together.

Rhonda, who has a teaching background, is CEO of *ourcommunity.com.au*, an organisation set up to support individual community groups, members of community groups, peak associations, business and government, by providing the practical tools and resources they need. Her proposition is that schools are in fact community organisations, even if they don't usually see themselves as such. Not only are they community organisations, but they are a key part of the community as well, often being the hub in smaller communities. Money, however, is the key to community control, and Government schools need to take a lesson from the Independent sector in getting serious about fundraising so that they can have money that they have control over, that is additional to core funding. Schools are fortunate in that they have a 'captive' community, built up over many years, and the process of fundraising can both enhance the community that is already there, to make it stronger and more sustainable, and provide greater economic independence.

The Victorian *Leaders Lead* programme aimed to engage principals from rural, regional and metropolitan areas across the state in conversation with a wide range of leaders from inside and outside education, in convivial forums that offered only minimal disruption to the school day. The programme was structured to address a number of issues in particular.

Overcoming isolation

One of the major issues that many principals face is the feeling of isolation that can come with the job. It is not surprising that when principal professional development is evaluated, one of the strongest responses is how valuable it is to meet with others, to talk and to network. Being a leader can be lonely for even the most 'team playing' principal. The fact that the principal has, in the end, to take responsibility for the hard decisions about everything from under-performing teachers to budget allocations means that they are, in some ways and at some times, on their own. Even if they have been a teacher in the school previously, relationships with colleagues change when they take on the top job. Relationships change with the balance of power. Getting together over a meal with people in a similar situation is a valuable way of establishing and maintaining the kind of supportive professional relationships that are essential for wellbeing.

Over the course of *Leaders Lead*, principals have also identified the increasing competitiveness of schools as another significant factor in their isolation. While this was previously the case in the Independent and to some extent Catholic sectors, it is now also an issue in the Government sector. It is difficult to trust and support 'the competition', particularly when some quarters judge the success of a principal on who can get the most enrolments from a finite, and for many regions, decreasing pool. Forums such as these provide opportunities for principals from all three sectors, which are usually not competing for the same students but are facing many of the same issues, to get together.

Professional development opportunities

Being a principal in the country brings with it particular challenges, one of which is the difficulty of accessing the professional development opportunities being offered to city based colleagues. Not only are there the obvious distances to travel, and the time that this takes, but also the serious shortage of relief teachers in many small centres. While distances in Victoria are generally shorter than in most other parts of Australia, the problem is still significant for some principals. Mildura to Melbourne is a long drive and an expensive flight. Professional development that travels, reaches the people who can't afford the time or money to travel to it.

While many issues of educational leadership are the same for school principals across the country, across sectors and systems, no one would deny that there are issues that are specific to particular kinds of school communities. Young people in regional Victoria face many different issues and futures to those in

the inner city. Local forums are an opportunity for local issues to be explored, along with local solutions.

General leadership issues

The recent focus on leadership in schools is not an isolated phenomenon. There is a similar focus in the public service, in the armed forces, voluntary organisations, in the religious orders. One of the features of the Victorian forums was the number of speakers who were not from education. There were also business, sporting, agricultural and community leaders.

One of the striking discoveries that emerged from the breakfast discussions was that leadership issues are similar for people and organisations generally. The leader's task is becoming increasingly complex in an exciting, fast changing world that at times appears to be digitally, environmentally, economically, and socially out of balance and control. Questions of how to create contemporary and relevant structures that can better create and sustain positive change were a priority across the board. Many experiences and understandings can be shared, and it is always reassuring and affirming to hear that 'successful' people from a range of backgrounds have similar experiences in dealing with similar issues. An interesting aspect of the Victorian experience is the high premium that many high profile speakers put on education, and their willingness to go out of their way to speak to school principals.

One of the aims of the Victorian forums was to connect people with each other, as this is crucial to resilience and a sense of wellbeing. Having time to talk together and share stories is invaluable, and one of the best ways to do it is over a meal or drinks.

Breakfast forums offer much and demand very little of participants in terms of time, effort or money. And even principals, who always have an endless list of routines and crises to attend to, find it hard to resist the seduction of a slow, hot breakfast and a late start.

The concept for the Victorian Leaders Lead programme was developed by the APAPDC branch and organised by the Australian Principals Centre (APC).

Chapter 6

'Mentor Partners' for principals - a step forward

David Loader

David Loader was Principal of Wesley College in Melbourne until June 2002. He has been a principal for the last thirty-one years, his previous position being at Methodist Ladies College where he became famous for the introduction of laptop computers into the classroom. He is the author of The Reflective Principal*, a mentor to other principals, a speaker and a consultant (http://davidloader.com/).*

Leadership is a complex interaction between many elements including personality, skills, followers and settings. Whatever the elements, all can be influenced positively by personal mentorship. Unfortunately much leadership development is exclusively based upon giving leaders more knowledge rather than affecting the way they behave. As a result many programmes fail to help leaders perform better.

No one denies that knowledge is important, but what is specifically needed is professional development that makes principals look at themselves differently; that makes them examine their interactions with others and the effect that they have on people; and learn to do things differently and more effectively. One method for doing this is through mentoring.

Mentoring in education

Today there are financial counsellors for retirement, personal coaches for our physical health, and counsellors for our marriages, but we seem reluctant to use educational mentors in our professional lives. Principals who have used mentors have reported on their positive value not just for insight, growth and support but also for 'revitalising' and 'invigorating' professionally and personally.

A fact often forgotten even by principals is how lonely the role can be. Research reported in *PAL Penfriends* (No. 6. October 1995) cites the loneliness scores for principals as higher than that for elderly men, "reputably one of the loneliest groups in society!" A mentor relationship does reduce this feeling of isolation in a role that has no peer within the school.

An argument often used to support mentoring is that it helps identify the blind spots in our professional vision. It is unfortunately true that we all tend to miss seeing items that are so obvious to others. When a person who we respect holds a mirror up to us, we can be assisted to see not only ourselves

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differently, but also see ourselves as others see us. Since so much of what we do could be classified as relational, this fuller vision can only be beneficial.

Seeing the world more accurately is one thing, but at a deeper level a mentor can help us with the analysis and synthesis. A mentor can work with a principal to identify to what she/he gives priority and thus assist with the clarification of personal and community goals. Clarity of purpose for the principal, and also for those who work with her/him is so important. Similarly a mentor who is not caught up in the detail of running the school can help the principal stand back and identify the unique characteristics of her/his setting and community – opportunities as well as potential disasters. With such knowledge more appropriate policies and practices can be developed.

While it is in assisting with the development of the higher order thinking of analysis and synthesis that a mentor offers greatest value to the principal, the stimulus for focussed professional development of the principal is an important personal goal that yields benefits to the school community. As a result of the mentoring process the principal may learn that she/he needs greater skill in listening, more technical knowledge in finance, more advice in occupational health and safety, more curriculum knowledge or more appropriate policies to handle student behaviour.

Choosing a mentor

Principals looking for a mentor have at least two possibilities. There is the peer mentor, usually another principal, with whom a working relationship is developed, and then there is the professional mentor who makes a living from this role. If it is to be a peer mentor then it is important that both mentor and mentee are trained; have agreed on a number of important rules including confidentiality and suspended judgements; agreed on a defined task; specified goals and procedures, and developed a working trust and respect. Some principals prefer to choose a mentor from 'out of state' as there are unfortunately competitive forces at play within and between our communities. The training of peers is critical in such areas as observation, listening and recording, and this seems best done together in an informal residential setting. This allows not only for skill development, but also for the building of trust and recognition of the need for mutual confidentiality.

I have had two significant experiences with mentoring. The most recent was with a professional financial mentor who assisted me to identify what information I needed to manage the school. This involved me being able to identify the management dilemma I faced and him being able to work with the school finance staff to restructure the financial reporting so that I could more effectively and pro-actively manage the school. Now we have a set of

accounts that give us information that we can use rather than a confusing telephone book of numbers.

Peer mentoring

My other experience was in a peer mentoring programme where I had joined with a principal from interstate who ran a similar school to mine. There were many benefits, but perhaps the greatest was to help me appreciate the complexity of the task of being a principal. When one lives the role one does not see its demands. I commented on my role as an observer in the other school in my first report back session, that "so many major events happen when there is an observer in the school". My first thought was that this was just a coincidence. However on later reflection I came to the conclusion that there are many such dramatic incidents in our daily lives. Because of their frequency, we see them as normal.

So the chance to be a mentor to another is not only helpful to the recipient but also professionally rewarding to the person offering the service. It can demonstrate that there is no right way to be a successful leader. It teaches you that uncertainty and ambiguity are intrinsic to the role. Perhaps its greatest potential is as mutual support as you 'come out' together, confessing that you do not have all the answers, but that what you do bring to the role is valuable and important.

A successful principal peer mentoring programme can be a positive incentive to other school staff to try mentoring with their peers. Thus new practices may emerge and not just within the school. There is peer-to-peer mentoring between schools and this can be supported by on-line connections to other professionals and resources.

Unfortunately for most of us, our years of pre-service study are unconnected to our subsequent work, and the piecemeal scheduling of 'in-service' rarely relates to our daily challenges. We need to develop consistent, reliable, timely methods for assuring that we learn, and mentoring is one such way. While there are risks and it does take courage to open oneself fully to another discerning principal, the potential for collaborative help is worth it. With constructive feedback from a sympathetic mentor we can better navigate through the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty that is our professional role.

Chapter 7

Heart, knowledge and courage (the stuff for life!)
– Report from Tasmania

The Tasmanian branch of APAPDC held a conference in Launceston to explore and celebrate school leaders 'strengthening the Australian school'. The programme included presentations from Alan Bolton (Quality Health Australia); David Loader (Wesley College); Professor Bob Lingard (University of Queensland); and Fr Richard Leonard SJ (Australian Bishops' Catholic Film Office). A significant aspect of the conference was the dinner launch of the Brooks High School 'No Dole' programme, attended also by invited industry representatives, students and Brooks staff.

Fr Richard made the final presentation at the conference , finishing with a blessing.

Being blessed

> *"May the road rise up to meet you,*
> *May the wind be always at your back,*
> *May the sun shine warm upon your face;*
> *The rains fall soft upon your fields"*

It was extraordinary to look around at the end of the final presentation at the *Leaders Lead* conference in Launceston, and see how affected so many people were. The blessing, completely unexpected in the first place (how many times have you been blessed at a cross-sectoral principals' conference?), had been sung so beautifully that just for a minute the rules had changed. The carpet had been pulled out and many of us, as David Loader had talked about the day before, 'stumbled'. Heart, knowledge and courage. Maybe these were what the two days had actually been about, and maybe Richard Leonard SJ had summed it up, encapsulated it, by taking this serious risk, communicating deep knowledge at an emotional level, unapologetically being the priest in this secular environment. In fact, maybe Richard had actually shown us what quality leadership can be.

Heart, knowledge and courage are about being well – about wellbeing. They relate directly to what is known about the elements that together make a person resilient – the experiences of caring relationships, opportunities to participate and contribute, and high but achievable expectations. They also relate to what Bob Lingard had talked about the previous afternoon when he described the model of "productive pedagogies" that emerged from the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study. These productive pedagogies encompass intellectual quality, connectedness to the world, supportive classroom environments and the recognition of differences.

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This is not so much a report of the Tasmanian conference as an attempt to make sense of what happened – to uncover the patterns and connections within it. Why did the 'final blessing' have such an impact? And where had we gone in the previous two days that made it seem so fitting?

Heart

I have a dream – School principals, like any leaders, need to believe in a positive future for themselves, the people and the community. It is this belief, this vision, that sustains those personal resources that are needed when things start to feel too much, too hard. Principals know that being a leader can be very lonely, and that there are times when they are on their own. There is nothing better for a school than a principal with vision, but there is nothing worse than when that vision dominates all else.

Relationships – The ability to initiate and sustain good relationships is fundamental for any leader, and the crux is heart. Relationships are central to working well either alongside or together, and without the support of the majority of people, leaders will not be able to achieve change. Major change will not happen in an organisation simply by signing up one individualistic charismatic leader.

Care – School principals know that a supportive environment is basic to a learning environment. Safety is one of the basic human needs, and people learn more effectively when they feel safe. Principals do all they can to establish a culture of care in their school community. Without this it is unlikely that there will be a supportive relationship between staff and students, which is one of the essential elements in improving learning. It is also unlikely that teachers will be willing to take the risks that are needed to establish the collegiality that is necessary for an effective teacher learning community. Teachers need to have professional trust in each other to learn from each other.

Openness – Leaders are open to new ideas and new situations, because this is the way they can find solutions to what might appear to be intractable problems. Not only are they open to the unexpected, they are also willing to leave 'home' and meet their people where they are, geographically and metaphorically.

Knowledge

Learning – Leaders are also followers, the expert is also the novice, the teacher is also the learner. There is no need to fear not knowing something when there is still the opportunity to learn. Principals can learn about their

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work from each other because there are no more experienced and skilled teachers of the subject than themselves.

In touch – Educational leaders have a responsibility to be in touch with the 'hot knowledge'– the latest in educational theory and practice, and community concerns. Their teachers are active professionals, and schools are as much about staff as students. Leadership has to be about supporting good pedagogical practice.

Information – Principals need to have the best information about all the people in their school community, because with it they can make the best decisions. On the other hand they also need to understand that education cannot compensate for society.

Intellect – School principals, of all leaders, value higher order thinking, deep knowledge and deep understanding. They know that these intellectual skills are essential for themselves, their staffs and their students. It is at the core of their job. How else can they be sure that the decisions they make are correct, and possibly even more importantly, how else will they not be too sure about their decisions?

Courage

The unknown – School leaders know that they have to be brave. To reach out to the people who need to welcomed – staff, students, parents and families, communities – they sometimes have to leap into the unknown. Valuing difference among people and communities involves courage – it means working in unfamiliar ways, being out of the usual comfort zone, being the stranger in someone else's world.

Perfection – Not being perfect is difficult for many people to accept, and the more public they are, and the more responsibility they have, the harder it can be. Being able to admit a mistake, and still be willing to risk making another, is basic to moving forward. Principals have the courage to trust other people to do a good job. They also have the courage to admit that sometimes other people will actually do a better job than they will. For this reason, and also because they know that people need opportunity and experience, they commit themselves to dispersing leadership across the school.

The edge – In working for change leaders may also need to have the courage to take others to the edge – and push. Working to improve the learning outcomes of students means that school principals are unavoidably involved with change and reform and the risks and responsibilities associated with both.

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The stand – School principals need to take a stand on issues of values and ethics. Their task is to nurture in their students the search for the nature of the meaning of life. They cultivate in themselves, their staff and students, compassionate judgement and critical consumption. In other words they judge, but don't condemn, and teach others to do the same. If mass media is now the main purveyor of culture, do we have to know it (with its longing for community, its narcissism, its fascination with sexuality, money, leisure and violence) to know where our kids come from, whether we like it or despise it? We need to be players in our media marketplace where minds and hearts are won and lost. We need to be players in the world.

> *"and until we meet again,*
> *may god hold you in the hollow of her hand."*

The Tasmanian conference was organised by Terry McCarthy (Table Cape Primary School); Greg Cairnduff (Tasmanian Principals Institute); Mick Sheehan (Sorell School); Lyndsay Farrall (The Friends School); Phil Wise (Nixon Street Primary School); Bobby Court (Mount Carmel College); Prudence Francis (John Paul II School); Peter Welch (Launceston Church Grammar School) and Ivan Webb.

Chapter 8

It's what we do

Dennis Betts

Dennis Betts is Principal of Brooks High School in Launceston, Tasmania, which is nationally recognised for the quality of its programmes and its innovative and forward-thinking culture. The No Dole programme, the school's highest profile programme, has been in place for six years now and in the last three years has placed 100% of graduating students into either further education, work or training.

About Brooks High School

Brooks High School is Launceston's oldest public high school, and since its beginnings in 1948, has serviced Launceston's northern suburbs, a community best characterised as working class, with high levels of social welfare dependency, and increasing individualisation. The school itself has approximately 560 students in Years 7-10, with a small VET programme in Agricultural pursuits, and a teaching staff of 38.

Brooks has long enjoyed a reputation for innovative practice. In the 1980s it achieved prominence through the development of an organisational structure based on a sub-school model, operating independently within the total structure, in order to personalise a school population that exceeded 800.

Throughout the 1990s, Brooks High School was a pioneer in the middle school movement and was widely recognised for the success of its alternative programmes, based at its own off campus facility, which focussed on supporting young people for whom the conventional one-size-fits-all model of education was not appropriate. This has been expanded recently with the addition of another off campus facility, Spanners, which aims to develop students' interpersonal skills within an automotive workshop environment.

The No Dole programme

The school's No Dole programme has been nationally recognised as an exemplar in the area of educational learning and attitudinal change, and has produced outstanding outcomes for young people and the community as a whole. Its success is such that the programme is now being replicated in four other Australian states. Last year, the school was recognised in *The Australian* newspaper's Best Australian Schools as a school which has instituted a striking innovation with great success.

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In 2002, Brooks High School, supported with Commonwealth funding, is piloting programmes under both the Career and Transition Support Pilot programme and the Innovative and Collaborative Youth Servicing Pilot. These programmes will provide vocational learning opportunities for students throughout the East Tamar, and also establish a 'one-stop youth service centre' for young people in the northern suburbs of Launceston.

Striving for improvement

For those of us who are immersed in the daily life and community that is Brooks High School, what happens each day is nothing special. Students arrive with the expectation that they will learn something which will help them make sense of their world; teachers plan together to ensure that the students will be engaged in their learning and supported in their journey through the excitement and tribulations of adolescence. We seek to make good things happen – for students, our staff and our community.

After all, if we don't set out to provide learning opportunities that are relevant and responsive to our students' needs, if we don't ensure that there are positive learning outcomes which in the immediate context build on successes and in the long term have the potential to be liberating (in the broadest sense), if we are not cultivating partnerships within the community which create real links for our students, then we're not doing our job.

At Brooks, it's what we try to do. It takes place in a school where the culture has been long established as one which is 'pre-disposed to action', where innovative practice has and remains driven by the notion of seeking to improve what we are currently achieving, no matter whether we are students, teachers or importantly, the organisation itself.

Asking relevant questions

I call it our process of positive introspection, but that's really just a fancy way of asking ourselves how we might do things differently to achieve better outcomes for our students. In fact, asking ourselves questions is a key strategy which permeates all our decision-making, from fundamental curriculum planning and building flexible organisational structures, to maintaining our student focus or building positive relationships with business and industry.

Of course the questions must be framed within a clear understanding of what current research is telling us; the social context of our school environment; anticipated future trends; accepted good practice, and school and student data. But having said that, the 'answers' or 'the way forward', may be generated from

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any number of sources, and the processes that emerge will change shape over time, as our experience and new opportunities present themselves.

At Brooks we are fortunate that almost everyone wants to contribute to the discussion, and that we as an organisation are not willing to put up artificial barriers to prevent things happening. If the idea has merit and is likely to bring about improved outcomes for students, then we will do everything in our power to make it work. Creativity, innovation, and willingness to be adaptable and flexible are prized qualities in the general population and workforce, so why should we expect anything less of our school communities?

As I intimated at the beginning, this is what we do, and from our perspective, there are probably schools all over the nation doing exactly the same things within their local contexts, with equal or greater success.

Weaving the blanket

So how do I contribute as principal in an environment that is so rich, so diverse and so dynamic? Perhaps this is one of the more perplexing questions for leaders – how do you help to pull the threads together to weave the blanket? (note none of the 'rich tapestry' jargon – tapestries hang on walls, but blankets have a much more utilitarian purpose than mere decoration). For me, when I look back across a period of time and see what has been achieved by students, staff and our community, I feel in awe of it all, and find it amazing that I have been a part in it. It is very humbling. I also find it difficult to separate what I do that distinguishes my role from many others.

That said, my experience at Brooks in three and a half years has given me the opportunity to deepen my understanding of the role of principal in a practical manner, and also served to affirm my conviction that schools function best for young people when there is a sense of belonging at every level of the school – that everyone is a contributor and adds value to what goes on. Above the door of my office, in the main foyer of the school, is a banner proclaiming, 'Together we achieve more'.

So, for what it's worth, here are my practical tips for providing leadership which builds teams, encourages the growth of a common purpose, helps to create a sense of belonging and pride (self-respect?), and optimises learning and understanding (for students, staff and the community).

1. *Share*. Everything possible. Everyone likes to feel that they are in the loop. Exclusion breeds resentment of some sort, and individuals will make personal judgements about what is relevant and what is not. Develop processes for dissemination which don't create extra demands on people.

2. *Broaden the base of knowledge and understanding about what happens in school, and why – to include students, parents and the community as well as staff.* Everyone should be an advocate of the school, and of those in it.

3. *Be loyal to the school and the community.* As an example, I would never talk down any student, staff member or the community at large to another audience, and I encourage others to adopt the same approach. Acknowledge that there will be differences of view, and agree to resolve these matters together.

4. *Recognise the particular talents and interests of staff, and cultivate them.* Your encouragement and support will have direct benefits for students, and your personal interest will add much to the sense of communal goodwill among staff. Celebrate their successes.

5. *Select staff wisely.* I think this is one of the most important roles that a principal has. I look for people with a strong values framework, who care about young people and who see themselves as contributing to the wellbeing of the school community as members of the team. Less important are subject disciplines, organisational, or behaviour management skills, as these can be acquired through professional learning.

6. *Model efficiency, and ensure that the organisation is efficient.* Nothing causes more frustration than poor communication, mismanaged resources, clashes with timetabling and so on. Identify a staff member who thrives on detail and charge them with the responsibility for operational management.

7. *Create small learning teams within the structure, and give them real value and responsibility. Appoint senior staff as leaders of these teams.* Many of the successes achieved at Brooks in the past three years can be attributed largely to the success of these teams. Every teaching staff member belongs to one of the four teams (me too), and the key focus is directed towards the curriculum. Decisions affecting the students are primarily made by the teams (which are loosely year group based), including timetabling (especially in the middle school), collaborative planning, professional learning priorities and student wellbeing. Accountability to the students and to each other has grown since the introduction of teams.

8. *Value flexibility and diversity.* Keep reminding everyone that the needs of each individual in the school are just that, and so the school must be flexible enough to enable those needs to be accommodated. Our approach

has been to acknowledge that what happens in the day for each student is their personal curriculum, and it must suit their needs. We have to manage that. Approximately 300 of our students have individualised curriculum of some sort – extra learning support, attendance at Birribi or Spanners (our off campus facilities), work placements, involvement in elements of our No Dole programme and so on.

9. *Be accessible – to everyone.* Most of my day is spent in conversation – with students, staff, parents and community members. And lots of the conversation is listening, or asking questions, finding out what needs to happen to make things work better.

10. *Encourage and model a learning culture for staff.* As a part of the philosophy of always wanting to be better at what you do, this is a vital ingredient for organisational growth. Encourage ambition among the staff – set out to make them the most coveted group and individuals in the profession. I regularly tell the school community that other schools would kill to have the Brooks staff, and I mean it! Provide opportunities for leadership through promotions, particular roles in the school but also within the district or department (a wonderful way to recognise their worth).

11. *Care.* Enough said.

12. *Laugh, enjoy what you do, and celebrate the successes of others.* The best satisfaction of all for a principal is seeing others succeed.

So there you have it. Nothing radical, I suspect, and nothing that hasn't been said previously by some one much more articulate than me.

Time passes quickly at Brooks.

Chapter 9

Xtreme leadership – Report from South Australia

The South Australian branch of APAPDC worked with the South Australian Centre for Leaders in Education (SACLE) to organise a programme of speakers under the banner of Xtreme Leadership. Donald Horne was the first speaker.

It was paradoxical having Donald Horne as the first speaker in a series of addresses entitled *Xtreme Leadership*. How does this intellectual and civilized man, referred to in his introduction as one of Australia's national treasures and a "good citizen", mesh with a term that conjures up images of skydiving from volcanoes – of heroic risk and courage?

The paradox was heightened further as Donald talked about tolerance: how it underpins our liberal democratic society, and how there is an "absolute need for toleration to be part of civic oratory". 'Tolerance' has not had a good press over the last 20 or 30 years, precisely because it is the antithesis of anything extreme.

Donald's talk was intellectually rigorous and challenged many wide-spread assumptions. This report is a taste of the talk, and the thought and debate it sparked.

Explaining and "getting the words right"

One of the aspects of leadership that Donald talked about, that is rarely heard in discussions about educational leadership, is the "capacity of explanation to significantly influence events". Leaders in a liberal democratic society such as Australia have an enormous responsibility to influence people to "behave better", by talking to their best side. To do this, leaders must be able to talk to people, to all the people, in ways they understand and to which they can relate. And they need to be careful about how they use words. It was confronting to consider the implications of Donald's ideas.

The ability to communicate to the school community is seldom mentioned as one of the core school leadership competencies, though we all know from our own experiences that those who can communicate, generally have an enormous advantage in bringing people with them. The same applies to leaders in government, politics, sport, business and the community as it does to leaders in schools. It's a fascinating thought that the "capacity to explain" could be central to successful leadership, and it has significant implications for people who see their role as leaders rather than managers. It's noticeably absent from the usual job descriptions.

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Words are powerful because they bring meaning, but they lose their power when they are not used carefully. Donald talked in particular about 'tolerance', 'pluralism' and 'xenophobia'.

Tolerance

According to Donald 'tolerance', rather than 'respect', is the foundation of a civic society. He talked about "making tolerance part of civic oratory", and discussed the responsibility that Australian leaders have, for example, to never exploit xenophobia and to lead the way in saying to people who are expressing intolerance (eg radio shock jocks), that "you shouldn't speak like that". 'Tolerance', he said, is a better word than 'respect', 'love' or 'consensus', because it accepts difference and conflict as a normal part of social relations, assumes co-existence and is not patronising.

The word 'respect' has become so much a part of school oratory, and 'tolerance' has such overtones of long suffering endurance that what he said was uncomfortable. On reflection, though, it does become clearer that we actually don't have a society based on respect (as much as it might be the ideal), and we know this because there are people, to be quite honest, that we don't respect and probably never will. What they do can be so antithetical to our beliefs and values that we would have to compromise our integrity to respect, let alone value them. But in a liberal democratic society such as Australia, we can and must, as the Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary says, "allow the existence or occurrence of without authoritative interference... leave unmolested", in other words, tolerate them. We must accept their difference, and understand that the conflict we may always have with them is a normal and necessary part of social relations.

A tolerant society is not peaceful but assumes pluralism and disagreement, freedom of expression and association. In a liberal democratic society, and in a school community, we can expect tolerance but we can never expect respect. It's the bottom line for a functioning pluralist society, and it removes any moralistic overtones – the 'you should' that most people react to so strongly. And if we can't always respect someone else can we expect students to feel differently?

Pluralism

Australia is a society comprising people from many different ethnic cultures, but this doesn't go nearly far enough in describing the whole situation. A policy of multiculturalism encourages tolerance of ethnic cultural difference, but this is a limited understanding of the extent of the differences that exist

in Australian society, and the extent to which many people and groups are marginalised. Donald related the pre-60s attitude to Catholics as an example.

It is now widely recognised that culture refers to more than ethnicity, which takes no account, for example, of differences of class, geographic location (from urban high-rise to remote isolation), sexuality or personal abilities. And in post September 11 Australia it's become clear that it takes no account of religion. We can either widen the meaning of 'multicultural', or we can use a different, more accurate word for contemporary Australia, such as 'pluralist'.

It's an interesting and challenging thought, moving the emphasis from multiculturalism to pluralism. Imagine for a moment a school celebration of 'pluralism' rather than multiculturalism. What it could do, if done well, would be to give all the members of a school community a place. It has been done, and it was wildly popular (admittedly the production values played a part!). The examples Donald used were the opening and closing ceremonies of the Sydney Olympics, which were possibly the greatest ever celebrations of Australia – of pluralism, tolerance and co-existence.

Xenophobia

'Racism' is a word that is used so freely that it has lost its sting, and there is now nothing to replace it when and where it is most needed. It has been increasingly used over the last decade or so, at times more as a way of maintaining the moral high ground and of clinching an argument, than as an accurate description of behaviour.

Often what are named as racist behaviours indicate a fear of foreigners or strangers rather than a belief in one group's innate superiority. Xenophobia is not only a more accurate word, but it allows 'racism' to be reclaimed as the term to describe belief in the superiority of people with distinct physical characteristics, with accompanying prejudicial behaviour.

Xtreme leadership

The very essence of leadership – the ability to inspire the people around – is a powerful force that can have equally life-giving or destructive results. Just think of Adolf Hitler and Nelson Mandela. Maybe the core difference between the two, both leading in pluralist societies, is that Mandela espouses toleration of difference as part of South Africa's civic oratory while Hitler made intolerance part of Germany's. The challenge for us is to consider what this means for a school leader in terms of leading a pluralist school community, and the relationships that exist between staff, students and families.

So, what is Xtreme leadership? It is about risk and courage, but the risks that need to be taken and the courage that is required to establish and sustain a tolerant, civic society. It challenges entrenched attitudes and beliefs that come from all directions, and focuses, like the point of a laser, on the development of a society where everyone has a place in the sun.

Chapter 10

Shooting from the lip! The silver-tongued devil's guide to good communication

Kerry Cue

Kerry Cue completed her studies in Maths/Engineering at Melbourne University before working in laboratories ("a sort of Madam Curie in hotpants") and as a Maths and Chemistry teacher for 10 years. She is now a columnist, humorist and public speaker. She is the author of numerous articles and books (including Born to Whinge: An unreliable guide to parenting*), and more famously of regular newspaper columns.*

You are a leader in education. You are up to speed on modern management practices. But you don't have time to scratch yourself or in modern management terms, you don't have time to prioritise 'the Itch Issue' and rank it on the Immediate Action List. So I will get to the point.

You are a leader in eduction. You need certain skills, which according to some documents include the compassion of Mother Teresa, the vision of Martin Luther King, the creativity of Matisse (he was more subtle than Picasso), the organisation skills of Henry Ford, the leadership skills of General Schwartzkoff (or Joan of Arc if you are a history buff) and the negotiating skills of Marilyn Albright along with the patience of Mandela, the presentation of Armani and the humour of Billy Connolly.

If you can achieve this total skill lot your employment package should include a glowing halo with no mileage on the clock and your name embossed in gold on the 'Heroic Martyrs of Our Time' list. For, it must be noted, Mother Teresa was not known for her sense of humour. Henry Ford was not known for his compassion. And Marilyn Albright was not known for her tasteful suits. Moreover, no one person can be all things to all people at all times.

You wouldn't want Billy Connolly, for instance, negotiating world peace, as I suspect he'd get distracted trying to annexe Singapore to Long Island just to produce a protectorate called Singa-Long.

Yet all of these famous folk have one thing in common. They are or were great communicators. But what did they do? And how did they do it?

They utilised the three fundamental requirements for good communication namely:

1. getting attention
2. earning trust
3. coaxing feedback.

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Getting attention, or "Your hair's on fire, Sir!"

If you want to know anything about getting attention, you ask the experts in this field – the kids.

Here are just a few of the verbal techniques used by kids for getting attention:–"I'm going to throw up", "Miss, the guinea pig has escaped", "Jade put glue in my hair", "At play time, Zoe and me was sexing", "Your fly's undone, Sir", "We did that last year, Miss. And it was boring then too", "Urgh! I've sat in chewing gum, Miss. It's everywhere. Ahhhhh!!!!"

Non-verbal means used by students for getting others' attention include: the headlock, the greasy (the sneer used by girls to put down others), leaning back on a chair in class, the biro tattoo, giggle fits, the expletive-coloured greeting roared to students passing the class, the shove, the book slam (slamming books onto the desk in huffed protest), the go slow (when ordered to move desks), the rubber band, dragging a kid around the oval by their shirt front, screaming in a high pitch "Oh my God! Oh my God!" in the course of a normal conversation, purple hair and so on.

Naturally, despite their obvious efficiency, not all these methods for getting attention are useful. Getting a member of staff in a headlock may have some appeal and it would highlight the need for communication, but it is contrary to the ideals of Modern Business Management. And principals prone to getting staff in headlocks might find themselves farmed out to the Happy Valley Home for Bewildered Educators.

What these attention-seeking devices have in common, however, is speed and shock value.

And here lies the key to getting attention. Anytime. Anywhere. Be quick. Be unpredictable. Human beings are not rational. Teachers do not turn up at a staff meeting mumbling to themselves "Jolly good. I'm glad I'm at this meeting. I really need to brush up on my understanding of global literacy standards".

You can, however, get the full and undivided attention of your staff using any of the following announcements: "There will be buns at morning tea", "Head Lice Crisis Briefing", "There will be wine after the meeting", "I'll do your yard duty" and "Mr Williams will attend the meeting in drag to highlight equity issues". The latter has been done too.

You can get the full and undivided attention of the student body using similar if slightly modified principles: "Today is Miss Agostini's birthday. We're going to sing...", "This weekend The Eagles have put in a superb effort (wait for

boos to die down) and we'll sing their theme song...", "Mr Williams has a new joke (wait for groans to die down)..."

After the initial shock reaction, you can slip in all sorts of necessary communications. But to communicate any issue to anyone at any time, you must get their attention first.

Earning trust, or "We value your custom. You are 259th in line to speak to a Customer Service Officer."

When a corporation tells you via a recorded message on the phone that "they value your custom", while keeping you on hold for 20 minutes before connecting you to a service operator's voice mail, you tend to become a little cynical. It happens often. We hear the words. But the message doesn't get through because we know it's a sham. A con. As a consequence we have become cynics.

The best communicators today cut through this cynicism. The audience trusts them. How do they do this?

Firstly, good communicators are seen as real people. "Look at me. I'm real. I've got thinning hair, three kids and a mortgage. I'm a bit overweight. I have a shocking taste in ties. I love these buns."

Secondly, real people speak real words that other people understand. They don't hide behind jargon. I never use the words 'paradigm' or 'pedagogy' when talking to educators. These are words used by theorists to communicate with other theorists. In fact, I use the word 'pedadogy' when talking to teachers and it always gets a laugh!!

Finally, good communicators get to the point. At Gettysburg, one general is rumoured to have addressed the gathering for over two hours. Of course, no one can remember his name or what he said. His oration probably killed more soldiers than the battle for Gettysburg. Lincoln's address lasted four minutes and his words have resonance today.

Good communicators are brief. They don't grind their audience into a zombie-like stupor where words lose meaning.

Their message is brief. It sticks.

Coaxing feedback, or "You say 'Tomato' and we say 'Dead Horse', of course!"

Different words mean different things to different people. 'Love'. 'Art'. 'Music'. (Doof-doof. Ne.Ne. It's not music to me!) Tidy your room. (My teenage son

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thinks having a compost heap of clothes in the middle of the room is tidy.) 'Sex'. (No matter what you think about sex, you may not consider it a cure for the common cold. Yet that was the very article I found on the Internet recently. How does it work? Take two blondes and have a good lie down, I guess.) 'Fun'. 'Relaxation'. 'Education'. We all have our own interpretations of these words.

Other times, it doesn't matter what words you use, the message is just not getting through. I once sent my nine year-old daughter and a friend to catch tadpoles. I followed five minutes later. All they had to do was turn left at a corner and voila!!! They turned right, walked down a ramp and fell in the local river. Both of them. Back home, after some hysteria on my part, I demanded "Why did you turn right. I told you left." The reply? "I thought Candice was listening".

Feedback counts. All I had to do was ask "What did I say?" Focus them. Check for accuracy. I forgot about feedback. And it could have been a disaster.

One Grade 3 student told his teacher "I saw a dead rat on the way to school. I knew he was dead 'cos I pissed in his ear." "You what?" "I pissed in his ear." "What did you do, exactly?" asked his teacher. "I said 'pssst'. But he was dead."

See. Feedback counts. It adds clarity to any communication.

So there it is. You're a leader in education. But to lead you must communicate. Get their Attention. Trust. And Feedback. Then, when it comes to getting the message through, as the kids would say, "you will rock".

And that's your role/roll.

Chapter 11

The reflective principal – Report from Queensland

The Queensland branch of APAPDC organised four one-day workshops on the topic of The Reflective Principal. David Loader (author of The Reflective Principal and then Principal of Wesley College in Melbourne) presented three sessions, each followed by group discussion. Nearly 300 school leaders from all three sectors participated in the workshops that were held in Townsville, Brisbane and Rockhampton, from April 15 to 18, 2002.

On walking into the Dreamtime Cultural Centre in Rockhampton for the final leg of David Loader's *The Reflective Principal* travelling show, it became clear that it was the perfect place to wind up the Queensland *Leaders Lead* programme. Maybe what he had been working on with principals for the previous three days in Townsville and Brisbane, and now in Rockhampton, could have been called 'Principal Dreaming' – using the wisdom of experience and a vision for the future as a way of being in the present.

David presented three sessions that explored what he had discovered about leadership during his 31 years as a school principal. This is how one person heard it.

The role – leading, stumbling and following

> *It is better to have lived one day as a tiger than a thousand days as a sheep.*

Good school principals, like all good leaders are passionate, creative human beings. They have a vision for a better world for their students and are always on the lookout for ways to make this happen.

And this is a risky business for the person involved. Leaders in Australia walk a fine line, which has been drawn by generally culturally egalitarian Australians. Stepping too far one-way, the risk is getting cut down as a 'tall poppy'; step too far the other way and the risk is being scorned as a 'sheep'. "Neither a leader nor a follower be". However leadership is about both leading and following.

> *An apparently weak person who listens and takes good advice, is probably a better leader than someone who appears strong but doesn't listen.*

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Good leadership cannot always be about being in the front, as too much dependence on a leader makes an organisation vulnerable. Good leadership is also about 'followship', and principals who are skilled in both leadership and followship will help a school be sustainable. In the end though, leaders must take responsibility for what they decide. Fairy godmothers only wave their magic wands in stories like Cinderella.

> *Your vision is the alarm clock that wakes you up in the morning, and the caffeine that keeps you awake at night.*

Good leaders have to go further than simply listening to other people. They need a vision that is theirs, that comes from inside, that inspires but doesn't dominate other people. The best thing a school can have is a principal with a vision, but one of the worst can be a principal with too much. Visions also get neglected or forgotten at times ("I know I had one, and I've got no idea where I put it") and need polishing when they start to tarnish.

> *Do yourself a favour and use a balanced scorecard.*

How do principals know if they're 'successful'? How can they be fair to themselves and write the criteria for how they're assessed so that their 'big picture' – the things they know are also really important – are taken into account? A principal could put as much value on the number of students who go into the service industries as the number who do brilliantly academically or athletically. A principal could have honest exit interviews with students, parents and staff. A principal could keep data on student wellbeing and community involvement.

> *Discard the notion of a strategic plan, for that of strategic intent.*

The best solutions are often the most creative, and good leaders know that solutions are not completely predictable or known in advance. Leadership as stumbling (stumbling on, stumbling over, stumbling and finding another way) is "possibly the most advanced thinking in leadership".

The person – feeling, thinking and being

> *The cub or the lion – are you ready to 'come out'?*

Even school principals have feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability, and in the interests of wellbeing there's a powerful case for 'coming out'. Hey man, just be yourself. But as valuable as vulnerability is, will leaders suffer for being sensitive and gentle? For coming out to themselves? For accepting their own feelings of vulnerability? For feeling like the cub rather than the lion? Good leaders live with ambiguity, uncertainty and vulnerability.

We'll go with you, but if it doesn't work out you're on your own!

Leaders have the power (like the circus ringmaster, imposing but forgettable?), but having power always has consequences. Principals have to make decisions that are in the best interests of the child, above those of staff and parents. Sometimes leaders have to trust their instincts, and do the unpopular thing. They have to exercise naked power. And this makes them vulnerable. The importance of listening and explaining cannot be overestimated, but in the end leaders have to take responsibility.

The fear of something is often worse than the thing itself.

Good leaders have courage. They deal with fear by knowing that the fear of pain is often worse than the pain itself, and they focus on the possibility of a dream being realised. They must share their dream, explaining it and telling its story, to make it possible, but at times leadership can actually be seen as quite barbaric. It can involve "taking people out of superficial tranquility into anxiety, and then into a need for courage filled with faith". It goes without saying that leaders need inner resources if they are to counter the feelings of anxiety and fear they experience.

You take people to the edge. Are you going to push them? Are they going to fly?

Teaching maths is safer (not necessarily easier) than teaching physics because the answers are in the back of the book. Leadership is not 'safe', and there is no book with the answers. It's as much about not knowing something, about finding the answers, about learning, as it is about being the 'expert'. All leaders need to be comfortable with the tension between being the 'expert' and being the 'learner'.

Personal growth – burnt out, caught out, not out

Principalship is very stressful. There is far too much to do in far too many areas, and in all of this principals still take on the additional burden of being perfect. Where do school leaders find the inspiration to go back out there? How can they deal with overload and fragmentation in their role? How can they stay fresh/inspirational with students, parents and staff? How do they avoid getting caught up in their own dreams, and killing themselves?

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It can be helpful to have statements like the following to refer to when you need reassurance.

Score 1 point for each statement you can agree with:

☐ *I feel applauded and congratulated*

☐ *I jump out of bed each morning*

☐ *The principal's tasks are all manageable*

☐ *I appreciate and benefit from membership of a support group of principals*

☐ *I have plenty of time for reflection and planning in my day.*

I tried something new and innovative and it didn't work as well as I wanted.

This coupon entitles me to be free of criticism for my efforts.

For their own sakes, leaders need to make sure that their inner resources are replenished. What use will they be to others if they have nothing left? Everyone needs acknowledgement, affection and affiliation.

Finally, many have found heart in *The smaller beatitudes* by Joseph Folliet.

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves: they will have no end of fun.

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill: they will be saved a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses: they are on the way to becoming wise.

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Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen: they will learn a lot of new things.

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves too seriously: they will be valued by those about them.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown: you will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitude of others: you may be taken for a fool, but this is the price of charity.

Happy are you if you know when to hold your tongue and smile: the Gospel has begun to seep into your heart.

Blessed are they who think before acting and pray before thinking: they will avoid many blunders.

Above all...

Blessed are those who recognise the Lord in all whom they meet: the light of truth shines in their lives.

They have found true wisdom.

Chapter 12

Leading with soul: The principal as spiritual leader

Fr Chris Gleeson SJ

Fr Chris Gleeson is a Jesuit priest and was, most recently, Principal of St Ignatius' College in the Sydney suburb of Riverview. He is the former head of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA), and has presented and written about spirituality, ethics and values in education in many forums.

No list of competencies for principals would be complete without reference to spiritual leadership. It was the French philosopher, Saint-Exupéry, who wrote: "There is one great problem, only one; the rediscovery that there is a life of the spirit higher still than that of the mind, and that is the only life that can satisfy a man." More difficult to quantify than other competencies, spiritual leadership focuses on the 'big picture' aspect of the principal's work. Descriptors like 'cultural' or 'reflective' fail to do it justice. American author, Ronald Rolheiser, writes that "long before we do anything explicitly religious at all, we have to do something about the fire that burns within us. What we do with the fire, how we channel it, is our spirituality....What shapes our actions is our spirituality."

Making connections

Just as good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness – with themselves, their subjects, and their students – so the head teacher, the principal, must strive to weave a complex web of connections and meanings for a school community in the world at large. The principal with vision, as Joan Chittister OSB has pointed out, understands that the truth is always larger than the partial present. In her closing address to the 2001 NCEA Convention in America she said:

> *Immersion in the immediate, a sense of spiritual vision, the pursuit of learning, and the courage to question the seemingly unquestionable is the essence of spiritual leadership. We cannot, and should not, attempt to lead anyone anywhere unless we ourselves know where we are, where we're going, and what dangerous questions it will be necessary to ask if we really want to get there.*

Spiritual leadership, in brief, begins from the inside, from the soul.

Spiritual leadership is about helping our school communities to reflect on the present, ask the right questions, and envision a better future. It is about enabling our people to get in touch with their own souls and the soul of society. Spiritual leaders need to help their communities find the right maps, or have the courage to chart different ones, so that the people they serve do not lose their way.

Scattering a trail of words

In this respect the Aboriginal concept of songlines, about which novelist Bruce Chatwin writes in his book of the same name, provides a useful image:

> *Each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints, and... these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between the most far-flung tribes. 'A Song', Arkady said, 'was both map and direction finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across the country.'*
>
> *'And would a man on 'Walkabout' always be travelling down one of the Songlines?'*
>
> *'Yes!'*

(From *The Songlines* by Bruce Chatwin, published by Jonathan Cape. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.)

In so many ways principals scatter a trail of words – song lines, if you like – in their letters, articles, and speeches throughout the school year. These are our maps and direction finders, helping our school communities understand where we are at and whence we have come. Not only must a principal be capable of careful reflection, but he or she must also have the capacity and sometimes courage to articulate the fruits of this reflection.

View from the balcony

Professor Ron Heifetz of Harvard University speaks about the need for leaders to have a balcony in their lives if they are to understand the sometimes frenzied dance of events going on around them. Without such a balcony, leaders can easily be swept up in the dance of life and lose their perspective. Such was the fate of President Lyndon Johnson during the Vietnam War when he "got caught up in the unfamiliar dance of foreign policy and never got to the balcony...Johnson engaged in the nation's conflict without ever leading it." The balcony is a necessary vantage point for spiritual leaders from which

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they can also observe themselves and the way they listen. To interpret events, spiritual leaders need to understand their own ways of processing and distorting what they hear. Heifetz writes:

> *Learning about the tuning of one's own harpstrings, how one is inclined to resonate more with certain themes than with others, is an ongoing process...Just as leadership demands a strategy of mobilising people, it also requires a strategy of deploying and restoring one's own spiritual resources.*

Fanning the flame

In brief one might say that the ability to give meaning to life is the essence of spiritual leadership. All the research confirms what we know in our hearts – namely, that the most powerful factor protecting our students against multiple drug use, suicidal involvement and poor body image is their sense of connectedness to school, family, and religious groupings. The principal as spiritual leader must help the young person find meaning in what Postman calls the 'big stories' of transcendence which give life and hope. It was the Austrian psychologist Viktor Frankl, reflecting on his traumatic experience of surviving a German concentration camp, who quotes Nietzsche's "he who has a 'why' to live can bear with almost any 'how'". Leading with soul is providing our school communities with this 'why'– a reason to belong and a direction for our journey. Leading with soul is keeping alight our inner fire, fanning the flame, appreciating its colours and warmth, and allowing some balcony air around it to keep it alight.

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Chapter 13

The curriculum paradox

Louise Bywaters

Louise Bywaters is the initial Director of the South Australian Centre for Leaders in Education (SACLE). As a teacher, principal and superintendent, she has maintained a very strong and active involvement in teacher education and professional development. She has extensive experience in school and leadership development and is well known in Australia as an educational leadership and management consultant.

There would not be many principals I meet, who, at sometime in our conversation, have not expressed deep frustration at the widening crevasse between what they do on a moment by moment basis each day, and their deeply held professional mission to exercise high level educational leadership in their work in schools.

Professional dilemmas

"The job just isn't what it used to be!" they will say, particularly in the era of local school management. They express frustration that they are more caught up with the minutiae of school administration and organisation and less engaged with the real work of schooling: the design and delivery of quality teaching by staff and successful engagement in learning by students. There seems to be little time for the 'real work' of the principalship, the stewardship of the curriculum and the continued implementation of that curriculum through quality teaching by staff and successful learning on the part of the students.

Indeed the dilemma is one that faces school leaders all over the world, for we are living in very interesting times. We have a position in schools, in some countries still called 'head teacher' or in our case, principal, that is still selected on the basis of professional qualifications, training and experience in the design and delivery of education. The reality is that the role is now a much more complex one, demanding even higher orders skills in curriculum leadership than ever before. Principals are now required to demonstrate a new range of capabilities that enables the students they serve to learn in a locally managed, community connected school which is managed in a much more strategic and business like manner.

The paradox is that whilst principals add these new capabilities to their leadership and management repertoire, they are in danger of gradually losing

their grip on the professional knowledge that took them into their position in the first place. The curriculum theories, the foundations of child development, the art of teaching, the skills of classroom management, assessment of learning, even the tools for learning, are all undergoing such a transformation that the foundation of professional knowledge most principals carried into their role is gradually crumbling away. For many principals today, the notion of being deskilled in relation to classroom practice is a reality.

As we move into the post industrial information and technology age we are already seeing the predicability of knowledge and the stability of disciplines challenged by new epistemological thinking, new definitions of curriculum and new forms of education that will render the current paradigm redundant and inefficient. Hedley Beare (2001) draws a very interesting scenario of the learning future for Angelica, a five year old starting school, already a very capable young person, literate, computer savvy and articulate, who will demand a very different schooling experience, who will live in a very different world, who will think and learn very differently. He proposes that the models of schooling and the curriculum we offer today will be a far cry from the much more connected, self determined and constructivist model that Angelica will need. The old school room, the structures of schooling, the equipment, and particularly the curriculum itself, are becoming quaint museum pieces in our own time.

We are asking principals to reform the curriculum, restructure schooling, revolutionise pedagogy and establish new educational standards based on a new science of teaching and new understandings of the cognitive, social and emotional development of children and young people. That's a bit like building the plane while we are flying it, but that is the reality.

Professional learning

What's more, we are asking them to do this on a nearly empty tank of fuel. For most principals, unless they have sustained systematic professional learning over their career, their curriculum theory is now an amalgam of the traditionalism of our own education, the progressivism of the heady seventies, possibly coloured with a dash of Marxism and radical politics, added to the outcomes movement of the eighties. Then, flavoured with a good dose of economic rationalism and the confusion of post modernism, we have a rather messy hotch potch that now has the extra pressure of scrutiny over results and productivity, driven by intense local and global competition and local political pressures fed by the ever present economic rationalist agenda.

In their busy lives, many principals' professional learning has been rendered down to half day grabs here and there, just in time learning that might satisfy

"the urgent and the important" (Covey, 1994:37). This fails however to allow for the deep reflection on experience, the integration of new knowledge, and the capacity to challenge orthodoxy and invent new theory with their teachers, that reflects the contemporary world. Further, leaders rarely get the time to systematically explore the role of schooling in society, the culture and politics of curriculum, and the new theories of learning that drive what effective teaching practice should or could look like.

There is then, a great risk that the professional thinking and development work in relation to the curriculum will slip from the role of the principal and reside in the work of middle management. Or become hijacked by commercial or political interest groups because the profession has lost its intimate connection with the theoretical and the technical aspects of curriculum and teaching. That would see the essence of the role of educational leader in the school leak away and be replaced by an organisational manager who is unable to connect with the curriculum fundamentals that should drive all decision making in the school. For there is not a decision to be made about a budget, a building, a child or a teacher that does not require a deep understanding of the curriculum. Indeed, the critical work of school effectiveness and improvement would be disconnected from the people most responsible for that.

Today, we need a principalship with an informed and contemporary understanding of the construction of the curriculum and the cultural, political, social, economic and pedagogical drivers of that curriculum. We also need the capacity to exercise curriculum leadership as an informed, critical and creative process that leads young people into the future well armed to face the very different world they will live and work in. That means going back to the university or into sustained leadership programmes that really focus on the theory and practice of the curriculum and the consequent imperatives for leadership.

Principals need to exercise a strong voice in their communities and continually explain the work of the school and its teachers and the learning of the student in convincing and research driven ways. They and their staff need to be able to draw on a wide repertoire of curriculum resources, data about learning efficacy, appropriate and affordable teaching tools and diagnostic instruments. And these should be based on the latest research and development in education to enable educators to add value in new, effective and efficient ways. Principals need to be able to confidently account for the services that are provided and the effectiveness of those services in relation to every child who learns in their school.

So, despite the job getting busier, the role of educational leader has become even more an imperative that relies on a range of curriculum knowledge and

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skills, and a repertoire of leadership capabilities that ensure quality curriculum delivery at the school and system level.

Professional action

What does that mean then, for principals and their curriculum leadership? I suspect this means much more informed, integrated and distributed leadership that ensures that all staff are working with the same messages and the same rationale. For every decision, large and small that is made in a school, has a curriculum message underneath it, sometimes intended, other times unintended. As educational leaders, we have to be sure that everything that we do in a school is driven by a set of values and therefore operating principles that underpin the school and its work. These values drive the curriculum and classroom life for students and teachers as much as they drive behaviour management or organisation of facilities or parent education.

This implies that the school community has been engaged in a process which has actively worked on these values and operating principles collectively. The leadership of this process is fundamental to building the ethos of the school, determining how decisions will be made, and how life will be for the people who attend the school or work within in it. The process is largely driven by the educational stance taken by the leadership team, particularly the principal. This demands that we have a leadership stance (Manthey and Thompson, 1999) a well informed and reasoned educational position of how the school should be from a curriculum perspective. Without it the principal and its staff bob around the ocean of educational fads and folklore, influenced by the winds of change but unable to challenge them or use them to advantage.

This educational stance must be based on the premise that the principal is the advocate for each child or young person entrusted in his or her care. All children should be able to access and succeed in an appropriate and well founded curriculum that is continually checked for its efficacy, relevance and efficiency. This is a fundamental right of all children in our society. The curriculum is the means by which coherency, consistency, reliability and quality of learning can be accounted for. It is no longer an ad hoc random process that depends more on the luck of the draw, on which teacher a child has each year, and the level of curriculum quality control that is or is not exercised at the whole school level. Student achievement and the monitoring of individual progress must now be a relentless and vigilant process.

Teaching is now a disciplined, scientific and creative process. The great irony of this is that the era we are entering now requires greater flexibility of learning and choice by the student, less direct instruction and controlled

teaching on the part of the teacher, and a greater concentration on student planning, learning efficacy and teacher facilitation at an individual level. And this time we have the technological tools to make individualised learning and comprehensive student tracking a very real and desirable possibility. That means that teachers and their leaders must have and be competent to use a variety of technological resources and build effective communication systems intra school. They have to ensure data is easily and systematically collected and interrogated for use in the programming and planning of learning as well as the aggregation of data for school effectiveness and accountability purposes.

This warrants an assertive approach to teacher learning, and once again the principal is responsible, directly and indirectly, for the culture of learning in the school, and the teaching practices that facilitate it. Changing teaching practice is dependent on learning new ways of doing things, understanding what works and what doesn't and why, of experimenting with new theory and contributing to the collective body of knowledge from which, as a profession, we draw.

Of course, the principal cannot do this work alone or in isolation. The challenge is to build a 'leaderful' culture in schools and to continually work with the leaders in schools to ensure they have the capacity to work with staff at the micro end of the school improvement process. The aim is to ensure that there is constant working of the curriculum and teaching process at the centre of all action, the classroom, and the sharing of that in teams and faculties.

Finally, this takes me back to the need to continually examine our understanding about not only the purposes of schools, but also the purpose of the curriculum. If the curriculum really is the cultural heritage that will enable the next generation to live, work and recreate in a safe, sustainable and productive community, then we had better ensure that curriculum leadership is informed, intelligent and strategic and remains central to the leadership mission of all principals.

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Chapter 14

It's how we're wired – Report from Western Australia

The topic of the WA Leaders Lead one-day programme was 'the potential of brain based research to influence classroom practice'. The two main speakers were Dr Lorraine Hammond (from Edith Cowan University) who focussed on the implications for learning, and Gerry Cleveland (Conscious Community Solutions) who explored the implications for teaching strategies. Victoria Carlton (Director of the Perth-based International Centre for Excellence), John Woodbury (Director and Principal of Woodbury Boston Environmental School) and Glen Capelli (True Learning Centre) extended the teaching strategies by presenting three approaches to brain sensitive learning.

Brain based research

There was a level of intellectual tension underlying the *Leaders Lead* programme in Scarborough Beach, overlooking the Indian Ocean, which reflected the complexity and tensions inherent in leading learning and teaching. While there was no dispute over the validity of the brain based research that was presented, differences in the way that people interpreted and made sense of it emerged throughout the day. Is empirical evidence superior to personal experience and intuition? Is there really a 'right way' to teach? How is that last decade's 'right way' is no longer right? Is the relationship the teacher has with the students more significant than learning theory? Is the human spirit as important to learning as the human brain?

The empirical research presented by Dr Lorraine Hammond provided us with a common starting point for the day. Neuroscience has come a long way in recent decades as imaging technologies have become more sophisticated, and we now know a lot more about how the brain works and people learn. The brain we're born with is not the same as the one we die with. Our neural circuits are moulded by our lives and experiences. We know that our ability to learn particular things is not simply related to intellectual capacity.

We are ready to learn different things at different times. Apart from the dramatic neural and physical growth that happens pre two years old, young people have 'windows of opportunity' for neural growth that occur around 7, 11 and 16. Physical growth tends to be dominant around 5, 8 and 14. However, young people do mature neurologically at different times.

We learn things in different ways. Because of the effects of foetal testosterone levels, male and female brains are qualitatively different. This is most apparent in language processing, and boys have less neural 'flexibility'

for sound processing. The balance between the left and right sides of our brain also has a significant impact on our literacy development. A person with a Mensa IQ can still be dyslexic and have serious problems with reading and writing.

When it comes to building the human brain, "nature supplies the construction materials and nurture serves as the architect that puts them together". The functional organisation of the brain depends on and benefits positively from experience. 'Neural plasticity', which is critical for all aspects of learning, is enhanced with practice right through life. If the brain research suggests that 'everyone can learn' then educators need to understand how to create environments and use strategies that make that possible.

Teaching implications

Points of divergence emerged as the implications of this research on teaching strategies was explored. However, what was agreed on by all the speakers is that people are born with innate potential that is modulated by their life experiences. They have different backgrounds, needs and ways of learning that teachers need to take into account in the classroom. Between the ages of around 11 and 16 young people are in a slow period of neural development. And all people need to be engaged to learn.

Lorraine, who has a particular interest in the impact of brain based research on reading and spelling development, made a strong case for the importance of explicit teaching.

'Whole language' and constructivist approaches are based on using existing knowledge about a topic or process to make connections. This is difficult if not impossible for someone with delayed neural development. She said there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that there is a need to teach literacy prerequisite skills to all students, especially boys. "Learning to read and write is a cultural artefact and must be taught".

Part of the complexity of the learning and teaching maze is that education theorists and strategists, like people everywhere, approach issues from their particular points of view, shaped by their particular experiences. This is compounded because they're working with and caring for young people in intense environments. Teachers and educators are often passionate about what they do and how they do it. They tend to feel very strongly that they know the 'right way'. And they often do know the 'right way' for them and their students. The question whether this 'right way' can be transferred to other teachers and students, and to other social and cultural contexts, is a fascinating one that needs further exploration.

Gerry Cleveland's comment that schools "do motivation well and schedule well, but now we need to focus on how to learn" condemned the education system with faint praise. Gerry explored the implications of brain based research on learning theories, and the impact of these on teaching strategies. He referred in particular to work on:

☐ cognitive strategies – teaching the tools of thought and emotional intelligence;

☐ processing variables – multiple intelligence strategies and problem based learning; and

☐ behaviours and the brain – attribution theory and concepts of body and place.

His focus was strongly on multiple intelligences and problem based learning with its metacognitive and evaluation strategies (why are we learning this? how will I know that I've learnt it?). He quoted from David A Sousa: "If students have not found meaning by the end of a learning episode, there is little likelihood that much will be remembered".

Multiple intelligences, crayons and 'joy and glory'

The final session of the day expanded on the teaching strategies, with the three presenters talking passionately about their particular approaches to classroom practice. Victoria Carlton spoke about the importance of multiple intelligences, which she believes is "the education key to the future". It gives teachers a key to teaching students who have problems with traditional teaching. Not only does it allow all people to acknowledge that they are intelligent in one way or another, the understanding also validates a student's wish "to be a truck driver and a ballet dancer".

John Woodbury, who started and runs his own schools as a response to what he describes as "17th century child management practices" which he compared to "psychological molestation", gave an impassioned address about how he aims "to empower young people in their search for joy and glory". He referred to multiple intelligences as simply being part of being a human. John talked about how he believes humans are greater than their brains, and that education should also be about the heart and the spirit. On reflection, what he has established can be seen as a complete problem-based learning environment, but one in which collaborative processes are paramount – from decision making through to assessment.

Glen Capelli's presentation on visual brain learning ("your brain is like a box of crayons") was a wonderful example of the media being the

message. It was creative, funny and interactive, mobilising the participants and using visual learning.

So, what does it all mean for school principals as leaders of learning and teaching in their schools? It was interesting to be aware at the end of the day how inspired and enthusiastic many people were, and to try to work out how this had happened. We had been provided with new information that confirmed, with evidence, things such as: boys are at greater risk of not learning to read and write; students in the middle years need a different approach from the traditional one; and practice and creativity promote the development and health of the brain. We had also learnt some completely new things, whether it was about attribution theory or neural plasticity.

But it wasn't the research, theories or strategies that made the difference in the end. It was Maria Montessori's belief that teachers simply need to love learning, love children and be observant. It was Glen's final call for us to honour all forms of intelligences, to honour health and have humour. It was the 'joy and glory'.

The concept for the Western Australian programme was developed by Phil Ridden (St Stephen's School); Paul Doherty (Chrysalis Montessori School); Lesley Street (Ballajura Community College); David Barrass (St Michael's PS); Stephen Breen (Hollywood PS); Leonie Drew (MLC Junior School); and Pat Rodrigues (Chisholm College). John Willet (consultant) put it together under the direction of Phil Ridden.

Chapter 15

Curriculum leadership

Bruce Wilson

Bruce Wilson is the Chief Executive Officer of the Curriculum Corporation in Melbourne. He trained and worked as a journalist before teaching for 17 years. Since 1987 he has worked as a policy analyst with the Victorian State Board of Education, on curriculum projects with the Victorian School Programmes Division, and taken a leading role in the national development of statements and profiles. Bruce is a regular writer and speaker on educational matters. In June 2002 he delivered a very provocative address to the Curriculum Corporation's national conference, calling for a less crowded curriculum.

Australian education has never been in better shape. It has never before dealt with such a diversity of cultures, ethnicity and ability among its students, and it does it with no loss of effectiveness and no reduction in outcomes. Australian teachers as a group are as well-trained, hard-working, experienced, capable and focussed as they have ever been. Our schools are better resourced than ever before. And our school leaders are better trained, more aware of the range of their responsibilities and more energetic and skilled in managing them than has ever been the case previously.

But is that the general community impression of Australian schooling? I don't think so. We live in oppositional times, when nobody praises schools, not even the people who work in them; when nobody speaks for teachers; when nobody articulates the benefits of government initiatives in education, apart from the government itself.

The Australian education system

Yet each of you works in a school which is a part of one of the developed world's great achievements: a universal system of education. Think about what that means. Think about what is involved in establishing such a system from nothing, as has been done in Australia over a period of not much more than a century. If there wasn't a state and national system of education in place today, who would contemplate the cost and social disruption of establishing one?

So the **first** responsibility of principals is to speak for the great triumph that is Australian education, for its systematic and unified character, and for its capacity to meet the needs of virtually all young Australians. You should not be deflected from that task by temporary industrial, political, funding,

staffing or management problems. Keep your eyes on the big picture, the one which is a story of achievement and fulfilment by the whole system of Australian education.

Competition between schools

That is closely related to your **second** responsibility, which is to reconcile your commitment to your own school with your commitment to a system of education. The present organisation of schooling in this country, and elsewhere, is placing increasing stress on competition between schools. That is becoming as true of public schools as of private schools: we are all engaged in competition for students, for resources, for public esteem.

The future of schooling in Australia is likely to reflect an increase in competition between schools as one means of ensuring that schools are accountable for their achievements. In these circumstances, it is tempting to engage in tough competitive behaviour, to see our own school as the only school that demands our loyalty. That has been the experience where school competition has become entrenched: the most active and entrepreneurial principals become the leaders in competitive behaviour. They fall into the dog-eat-dog approach of the marketplace. They adopt whatever approaches work to increase enrolments and raise the profile of their school.

Your responsibility is to accept the challenge of a more competitive relationship, and to work to articulate the strengths and virtues of your own school, but to reconcile that with your equal commitment to a system of schooling. I include the leaders of both private and public schools in this, since when I talk about the system of education, I mean the whole structure of Australian schooling, including public and private schools, which all receive government funding and all depend on the infrastructure provided by public money.

It is a difficult balance to strike, but it is your responsibility as principals to protect the quality and articulate the benefits not only of your own school but also of the Australian system of schooling of which you are a part.

Diversity among schools

That, in turn, is related to your **third** responsibility, which is to protect and enhance the particular strengths of your school. One of the risks we now face is that as schools and systems deal with the need to do more with limited resources, and look for more efficient ways of achieving outcomes, they will adopt increasingly modernist, large-scale, homogeneous solutions. There is an irony in the fact that this homogenising direction might well be given a

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further push along by commonality in the curriculum. And if, at the same time, as I have suggested, parent choice forces schools more and more into marketing their wares and maximising their student intake, that could also push schools towards the centre and the mainstream.

We can all see the rational basis for adopting common approaches, establishing larger schools, doing things systematically and efficiently. I am clearly a supporter of greater commonality in the knowledge offered to young people. And I am a believer in parent choice.

But if the temper of the times leads to schools that are increasingly the same, what do we do about the fact that kids aren't? What do we do about working class boys? What do we do about students with special educational needs? How do we guarantee the learning entitlements of Indigenous students? How does public education, and the Catholic education system thrive, if they increasingly pick up, as they must, the marginalised, the dispossessed and the unhappy?

So when we talk about commonality, let's not assume that we are referring to anything except entitlements to learning outcomes. They are common. All students are entitled to an acceptable set of outcomes from their education, and that should not be negotiable.

But the last thing I want to see in Australian schools is either enforced or voluntary commonality in teaching styles, school organisation, class sizes, classroom organisation, resources or teacher-student interaction. In all those areas we should promote, foster, indeed insist on, diversity. That is what schools and teachers are for: to use whatever means and approaches are required to ensure that all young Australians get what they are entitled to from their schooling.

Managing schools

Fourth, you need to ensure that you act like managers. I don't want to suggest that management is all there is in your work. But the attitude of a good manager, the orientation towards taking responsibility, is just as appropriate to your educational leadership role as it is to your HR or budget management. Your role as an educational leader is to engage the staff and the clients in establishing directions for the organisation, to articulate the educational intention, to identify priorities, set out strategies for achieving them and monitor progress. The expression of management is simple, but you have to do it.

In the course of the next few years, I hope to see two significant changes to our approach to education.

Priorities for the future

First, we will move towards more national approaches to curriculum. In Australia we now have eight different curriculum structures, and eight different assessment systems. We have 17 bodies with major political, intellectual and bureaucratic responsibility for the curriculum. Those bodies employ thousands of people who work away at solving the same set of problems, as they affect this single nation. If you were constructing arrangements to develop curriculum in this nation today, is this the system you would put together?

Our curriculum arrangements look like what they are: an accommodation which met the political needs of the Federation process at the end of the 19ᵗʰ century, which was appropriate given the size of the continent and the poor communication systems. Within the decade, this infrastructure will be replaced by a single statement about what children in Australia should learn, which is not rocket science. That will be a good thing in itself, in simplifying and clarifying Australian curriculum.

Second, this will also enable us to reallocate resources to the improvement of pedagogy, which is rocket science. One in every 80 Australians is a teacher. We are part of a mass profession. It will require a dramatic improvement in the levels of support available to teachers to raise the general level of teaching to the highest possible standard. I think that is worth doing. I can't think of anything that is more worth doing. Of all the factors affecting student achievement, it is pedagogy over which we have most control. I think those resources that presently go to sustaining a complex state-based curriculum framework, and a bag of other resources as well, will go, instead, to improving teaching. In our own schools, as well, we should identify discretionary resources to direct to the improvement of teaching.

Australian principals hold in their hands the future, not only of their own schools, but of Australian education. And at the heart of your role is the requirement that you ensure that your schools provide the kind of rich, substantial education that you would want for your own children. I see that as a challenge appropriate to leaders and managers of the key institutions in society. It is a big challenge, but if the job was easy, it wouldn't be worth doing.

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Chapter 16

Detecting: A new core skill for principals

Erica McWilliam

Erica McWilliam is a professor in the School of Cultural and Language Studies (Faculty of Education) at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research has crossed from teaching and education into risk management, post-modernity, the arts and cultural studies. As well as a long list of academic publications in these fields, Professor McWilliam has written entertainingly about How to Survive Best Practice.

There's so much of it around these days that it's impossible not to step in it. Hype, star-power, motivational speakers, business gurus, self-help books written by self-made millionaires – all packaged up so that they are highly attractive to anyone wanting to 'get there from here'. Slick, seductive and simplistic, it has all the appeal of the quick fix that schooling doesn't offer.

Looking good!

In this new pick and pay supermarket for success, "If you look good you feel good, and if you feel good you can do anything" passes for a philosophy of life. While this 'philosophy' may be less than useful in accounting for the success of some of Australia's wealthiest men, nevertheless it is enthusiastically embraced by many, including the growing audience of 'look fabulous, be fabulous' entrepreneurs. In case you don't know it, these snake oil sellers are serious competition for the hearts and minds of all members of your school community.

Now it might well be that, to a baby-boomer generation, the 'look good, feel good, do anything' directive might simply be a source of guilt and/or irritation. But it can have instant appeal to a 15 year old who, as a Generation Y, may be more interested in the 'have it all now' promise of success via a lithe body (and a gold gym membership) than success via formal educational credentialing. If a 15 year old can sell legal advice on the Internet for big bucks without any formal qualifications in legal studies, why invest in formal learning – so slow, so boring, so un-now!

Firewalking

And it's not just young people who are being sucked in by 'fast capital meets New Age guru' hype. More than 100 Australian KFC (Keep Fire-walking Coals) managers recently spent a motivational team-building weekend inflicting third degree burns to the soles of their feet. In a spirit of *esprit de corps* not seen

since the days when flagellant sects scourged their way to salvation, these brave souls set out to conquer the limits of their own fears in the service of their company, by proving that they could walk across live embers without experiencing pain. Unfortunately, the soles of a number of the brave souls did not share their vision and were thus found wanting in the stoicism stakes. Now everyone is waiting to see if the souls whose sullied soles took them to hospital will sue for damages to their bodies corporate. If they do, the weekend will have been worth it. Litigation means jobs for lawyers and insurance companies, so their fire-walk experience will be productive in an economic sense. Such a wonderful example of the growing relationship between business entrepreneurs and the New Age gurus!

Now if our nation's corporate leaders do not need convincing that it is productive and purposeful to walk over hot coals, some Australians, bless their soles, do. This is an irresistible challenge to the legion of professional development consultants whose zeal for enrolling individuals in best practice seminars and workshops has reached tele-evangelical proportions. It is their job to ensure that every individual understands that he or she is in for a corporate makeover.

Of course, one makeover is not going to be enough to keep the body corporate in shape. It must be sustained by the continuous improvement treadmill, which can keep everyone enrolled in the endless exercises for excellence, and ensures that the growing army of consultants has a growing army of customers. And so our body corporate becomes leaner, meaner and cellulite-free.

Crap detection

All this may have the positive effect of shrinking the posterior, but the downside is that it is guaranteed to shrink the mind and the culture as well. And this is where the ability to engage in crap-detecting is becoming a crucial skill for all principals and indeed all teachers. It is entirely possible that some of the professional development activities that teachers and school administrators are being invited (or required) to engage in, may develop us in ways that we do not seek to be developed. Moreover, just as Third World development programmes can have the effect of *regression* rather than *progression*, so too we need to keep open the possibility that some sorts of PD may not be good for our own school communities, especially if it is built on slickness and slogans, rather than educational knowledge.

One example of regression of which I have had personal experience is a team-building workshop in which the notion of power and its role in organisational relationships was never discussed. "There is no 'I' in team" was a slogan

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designed to develop altruism and sense of community among the professional attendees. Built around this slogan were a number of dot points about the stages of the (singular) team-building process. Now there may be no 'I' in team, but there are definitely two 'I's in 'salary differential'! This fact, however, was not mentioned, let alone discussed, as we all moved seamlessly from the slick powerpoint presentation to the pop-psychology test that told us about 'our real self' as potential team members and team leaders.

I was recently invited to speak to a group of Year 12s about 'life and its possibilities'. When I arrived at the venue, I found myself to be one of two motivational speakers, the first of whom was trendy and slick, with his own special mix of comedian-meets-tele-evangelist-meets-pop-psychology appeal. As I watched in a sort of morbid fascination, I was troubled by a number of things that were going on. First, he was using a dubious form of psychological testing to help the kids 'discover' what type of person they really were. They had a choice of about five types, and these were established within about 30 minutes. I wondered about the ethics of this form of delivery of instant self-knowing – just add snake-oil and stir!

Second, it soon became clear that not one complex idea would be introduced – it was all hype and media grabs, so there was no need to struggle to understand either themselves or their relationships or the universe in general. "Just know your 'personality type', then believe you can do it, and you can!" was the message. All was upward and forward to the light! No hint of paradox or irony or complexity or uncertainty. Now I have no statistics to support what I am about to argue, but I believe that, when mindless optimism collapses like a house of cards in the lives of young people, the resultant disillusionment may be more likely to lead to depression and despair than the inculcation of a longer term diet of healthy scepticism. Scepticism – or radical doubt – is at the root of all good thinking, all good science. Mindless optimism is no substitute – it comes wrapped in barbed wire. In other words, the 'solution' to mental illness in young people is not to feed them pap but to engage them in *the pleasure of the rigour of thinking*.

So at the next offer you have to develop your students, your staff – or yourself – it might be useful to imagine that regression could be an outcome. A question for the crap-detecting leader might well be: "How might this activity be useful in developing our capacity to think?"

Chapter 17

Paradox in Parramatta – Report from New South Wales

The New South Wales branch of APAPDC held a one-day conference in Parramatta. The first session focussed on contemporary leadership issues, with keynote speakers Patrick Duignan (Australian Catholic University) and Stella Axarlis (Businesswoman, board member and prima donna). The second session included an address by Jill Newman (Eastern Fleurieu School, Middle Campus) followed by a number of workshops related to school improvement.

The nature of leadership

Leadership has become a terribly serious business. An Internet search of 'leadership' has just come up with over nine million entries, and 'educational leadership' with one and a half million. The amount of information and complexity about leadership is vast, and for people like school principals who are involved in the daily business of leading and managing schools it can be overwhelming. But one of the paradoxes about leadership that emerged at the New South Wales *Leaders Lead* conference was that leadership can also be understood very simply. Patrick Duignan summed this up when he quoted General Peter Cosgrove as saying that "leaders lift the spirits of those around them, and take responsibility for their own actions".

There was more than one paradox in Parramatta. Imagine for a moment 150 mainly middle-aged school leaders, for the most part dressed in black or grey suits, seated in rows in a hotel conference room. They have just finished listening to Patrick Duignan explore how the types of challenges that face principals in schools often present themselves as tensions – as ethical contradictions – that principals are seldom trained to resolve. The challenge is to "lead in an age of paradox and dilemma". Patrick has somehow got the whole room singing along with Joni Mitchell's "I've looked at life from both sides now".

Stella Axarlis is herself a paradox. In the first stage of her career she sang with the stars in the great opera houses of the world. In the second phase she returned home to head-up and turn around what was then a struggling engineering business. Now, in a third stage of her life, she works for the community in a number of roles. Stella is a living example of "leaders embracing life-long learning", which was also the topic of her presentation.

Underpinning both presentations were basic assumptions about the values that are important in quality leadership – the why, where and how questions.

It's clear, though seldom mentioned, that leadership is not implicitly a 'good' thing – it's not an 'innocent' word. Leaders lead different people to different places for different reasons. Adolf Hitler, to take the most obvious example, was a supremely effective leader. Leaders can lead to oblivion. School leadership, however, is different because at its core is the aim to optimise student wellbeing and learning. With all we now know about the importance of feeling connected to school, and about resilience, it becomes imperative that school leadership is grounded in values such as inclusiveness and respect. In much contemporary leadership debate, particularly (as with this conference) on educational leadership, it is assumed that leadership is about bringing people together, about ethics and justice, about honesty and integrity. Patrick used the term 'authentic leadership'. Stella talked about the most important aspect of leadership being 'to develop people'.

Making ethical decisions

Patrick talked about how the results of his research (The Service Organisations Leadership Research project) are showing that the most important challenge for school principals is not about organisational issues, but dealing with the ethical contradictions and dilemmas they face on a daily basis. Making a decision when both sides are 'right' is at the heart of difficult choices and presents a classic ethical dilemma that has to be firmly based on values. Underpinning this is the respect that leaders need to have for the people and the values at both ends of the 'simultaneous opposites'. The research also shows that principals believe the most important thing in "tiptoeing through the tension" is being true to yourself, being honest and open, and being fair in relationships with people.

Both speakers agreed that leaders need to have the courage to listen to what people think of them. As Patrick said: "You might be a legend in your own mind, but... ". Stella took a more uncompromising line, stating that "the only thing that matters is what other people think of your leadership – not what you think". She explained her approach by describing how after each first night as an opera singer she would read in the morning newspaper what the critics thought of her performance – a constant and sometimes ruthless evaluation. There's an interesting thought – a regular review, written by a panel of critics, of the principal's performance, published in the school newsletter.

Personal qualities

Leading people and organisations is undoubtedly a complex task, and leaders do need particular qualities to deal with the tension that is created between

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rules, reason and compassion. Patrick described these as intellectual capacity, the ability to intuitively connect with people and managerial competence. Stella took the 'four pillars of education' from the UN Delors Report as basic to good leadership – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. "God has a habit of giving us talents, but not developing them."

But at the heart of sustainable quality leadership is a person's inner resources to be able to deal with the relationships, the paradoxes and the dilemmas. Patrick talked about the importance of developing "a restful heart in the midst of all this confusion", because there are no right answers, and you can never be sure that you've made the right decision. We need to find what T. S. Eliot described as "the still point in the turning world". For this reason people need to work towards a framework to deal with complex, tension situations (refer also to Patrick's ideas in Chapter 2 of this volume).

Stella put it more bluntly –"if you're going home to kick the cat and abuse your partner, it's not working".

The New South Wales conference was organised by Joy Hill (Tara Anglican Jnr School); Brian Powyer (Winston Hills Public School); Alan Bowyer (Sacred Heart School Kooringal); Tom Galea (De La Salle College); Bernie Shepherd (St Mary's Senior College); Fiona Prentice (Lightning Ridge Central School); Denise Thomas (Meriden School); and Tom Croker (Metella Road Public School).

Chapter 18

Leading learning

Jenny Lewis

Jenny Lewis is Principal of Noumea Public School in New South Wales and President of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. She writes and speaks extensively on educational issues, in particular about establishing sustainable 'learning communities'.

Noumea is a disadvantaged primary school in the Mount Druitt District of NSW. Of the 560 students, 30% are Polynesian and 20% are Aboriginal. The student population is transitional with 45% of students leaving and enrolling each year. Over the last five years Noumea has gone through significant change processes that have enabled the restructuring and reculturing of the school, and the collegial creation of knowledge that has significantly changed programmes and processes. Decisions to change have been based upon mutual discussion, and the application of current learning theory and action research. The significance of the change processes reflects the teacher refocussing and reframing of long held beliefs, the building over time of a 'shared vision', and the move to a collaborative and collegial climate. As a result the school has been awarded the National Assessment Award in 1999, a state literacy award in 2000, and was identified as one of the top 25 value adding schools in numeracy in the state in 2001.

Establishing a learning platform

The re-engineering of the school in 1994-95, and the move to a culture of learning, set the basis for a supportive learning platform. Research focussed on the work of theorists who supported a collaborative, self-actualising approach to learning and behaviour. Our belief was that if students felt comfortable and safe and were beginning to experience success in terms of learning and behaviour, attitude and behaviour would improve and learning potential would accelerate. An international and national focus on outcomes based education set the scene for our initial research. Our objective was to establish a learning platform that enabled:

☐ improved teacher judgements about student learning achievement;

☐ alignment of assessment and learning experiences;

☐ a clearer focus on where students needed to improve;

☐ improved implementation of curriculum and continuity of learning experiences;

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- ☐ improved accountability through the use of a common framework and language for monitoring student learning achievement;
- ☐ teachers and administrators to monitor student outcomes to support student and school development planning, and improve school and system accountability beyond the back-to-basics movement that has seen so many teachers teaching to test expectations, and taking a minimalist approach to teaching/learning practice.

Outcomes based pedagogy

The school's decision to move to an outcomes based approach meant a significant change process for teachers, students and parents. Training and development programmes supported teachers individually and in learning teams. For some it meant a major shift in their educational platform (revolutionary) and for others it was the next logical step in their teaching journey (evolutionary). For all it has meant:

- ☐ recognising that every child can be successful and that these incremental, individual successes should be celebrated;
- ☐ moving from a model of remediation to one of prevention and continuous improvement;
- ☐ moving from an exclusive curriculum to an inclusive curriculum;
- ☐ changing the learning environment from one of fear and failure to one of trust and success.

Staff began to review current teaching practices and the way they organised learning/teaching experiences. It was recognised that the blueprint of this process, the class teaching/learning programme, was impeding progress and thus a reframing of the way we taught and the way we recorded this teaching began. A number of formats were trialled and teachers targeted the processes that best recorded teaching/learning and assessment of these experiences, and the recording, reviewing and reporting of the student outcomes. A technology-based solution was developed that enabled teachers to map learning and social outcomes on a daily basis. They are now able to retrieve this information at the click of a button to modify planning and delivery.

Building the structures to support the learning

It is now recognised that students are placed 'at risk' when they experience a significant mismatch between their circumstances and needs, and the capacity or willingness of the school to accept and respond to their social,

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emotional, and intellectual growth and development. Studies show that as the degree of mismatch increases, so too does the likelihood that students will fail to either complete their education, or more importantly, to benefit from it in a manner that ensures they have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in the next stage of their lives.

As a result of such research the Noumea community has on three occasions formally restructured the school to *improve student outcomes* and to reduce the mismatch between circumstances and need**.** Students are organised according to their social and learning outcomes. Results show that this structuring has enabled:

☐ students to feel more satisfied learning with like learners;

☐ the placing of learning friends together;

☐ the placing of 200 new enrolments per annum into learning places that best suit their learning and social needs (e.g teachers have six choices of where to place a Year 3 student);

☐ a whole school commitment to a literacy and numeracy session each day and the sharing of students for individualised learning support;

☐ more efficient tracking of student learning results;

☐ higher teacher and student expectations; and

☐ most importantly, flexible social/emotional/learning structures to best suit student needs.

Our classes are wonderful places to learn and succeed in. The positive potential for this continuous improvement in terms of improving educational outcomes and ensuring quality schooling is critical. Engaging our community in the kind of research, investigation, experimentation and evaluation required to construct and reconstruct our learning organisations is what outcomes based education is all about. The implementation of an outcomes based philosophy to our programme and processes has shifted our school from stagnation to an exciting learning environment and we continue to celebrate.

Chapter 19

All you have to do is organise it! – Report from the ACT

Keynote speakers at the ACT Leaders Lead two-day conference were Jenny Lewis, (Principal of Noumea Primary School in New South Wales and President of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders); Dr Kerryn Phelps (President of the Australian Medical Association) and Gary Russel (Human Dimensions).

Introduction

It rained hard and steadily for most of the time at Thredbo, and by the final morning there were murmurs of snow. The cold, though, was no match for the heat generated by Kerryn Phelps' keynote address and an exhausting night of 'reminiscing' on the dance floor.

It may be no coincidence that of all the *Leaders Lead* conferences, forums or workshops held around the country, this was the most focussed on the political aspects of educational leadership. It was striking how the audience was so inspired by the possibility of having more influence and control in setting the educational agenda. One of the advantages of APAPDC is that it brings together principals from all school sectors and systems, and strategic alliances such as this emerged as a strong theme throughout the conference. It was the first time in ten years that such an event had occurred.

Most of the work that has been done in developing 'Principal competencies' in the past has focussed on leading school organisations from within. For the most part it is implied that the role of school principals is to lead their schools within the confines that governments and bureaucracies construct for them'– of 'managing down'. Being able to negotiate with systems and sectors on the direction and wellbeing of the school – 'managing up' – does not usually get a guernsey, but it did at Thredbo.

Challenging leadership

Jenny Lewis spoke about the responsibility school principals have to prepare their particular students for our 'knowledge society', and she closed with a three-part challenge to the audience. School principals need to make the kids feel safe, empower the teachers, and if this means challenging the Education Department, then so be it. She foreshadowed, in a very practical way, much of what Dr Kerryn Phelps would address in 'the big picture', in particular the advice to listen to what people are concerned about.

Kerryn Phelps called her keynote address 'Challenging leadership'. She talked about the challenges leaders face in leading their own people and challenging other leaders – in particular those with political and policy power - by exploring what she believes are the keys to successful leadership. The essence of her advice was as follows.

☐ *Keep your eye on the main game*

Have clear objectives that are focussed with compassion and passion. Think only of the wisest course of action, not of convention. Know where you're aiming to go, maintaining your course over the speed bumps with your foot lightly on the accelerator, and when necessary changing your old patterns, tacking into the wind, zigzagging towards your goal.

☐ *Don't be intimidated*

Face the bullies, stand your ground, have the evidence to back you up, and remember, if all else fails, that almost without exception every bully has a boss. Get strength from your staff by involving them in administration and policy, earning and maintaining their trust. Form strategic alliances that will help you get where you want to go.

☐ *You should always aim to unite people – bringing sides together*

Good leadership is about managing conflict, knowing when it's better to tackle head-on or to finesse. Take the time and make the effort to talk to people in ways that they'll relate to and understand, and have the evidence you need to persuade them to come with you. Never underestimate the effectiveness of lobbying and the power of strategic alliances.

☐ *Address the issues that really impact on people's lives*

People are passionate about issues that really make a difference to their lives, and if you offer leadership on these issues, they'll come with you. Listen to the people and the issues will be there.

☐ *Set the agenda – define the issues for yourself*

Take control of, and pre-empt the agenda. Know exactly what it is, agree on it, and never be half-hearted about it. As Gary Russel said later, "take charge of the future".

☐ *Get the message across*

Your communication strategy has to be sharp and focussed, with canny people establishing your public presence with decisive reactions. Never let the media get a free kick. The question to ask is "what would I want to know if I was the reader or the listener?" It's critical that you take the time to explain what you're doing, where you're going and why. And go to the top. To be

successful you need to have the evidence to support your case so that you can sell your message through a strategic campaign, getting popular and then ministerial support.

Underpinning everything is the fact that leaders have to earn and maintain people's trust, with conviction, compassion and clarity.

Who has control?

Much of the talk après-ski, and in the final panel session of the conference, was about how little control many school principals feel they have over some of the things that really matter to their students, staffs and schools, particularly in the State system. Are you a public servant or a community leader? Who are you answerable to? Is it your job to make sure the Minister's not embarrassed before you worry about the kids?

It is interesting how this same topic has informally emerged across the country during the *Leaders Lead* project, along with the concern that many people have, that teaching is not treated as a serious profession.

At Thredbo, the overwhelming response at the end of the conference was the need to draw together the national principals' voices – Catholic, State and Independent - into one organisation, to enable principals throughout the country to speak with a united voice. As Kerryn said "You know what you want. All you have to do is organise it".

Solidarity forever?

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The ACT conference was convened by Judy Bull (Gordon PS), and organised by Dennis Flannery (Belconnen High School); Helen Cant (Red Hill Primary School); Rita Daniels (St Clare's College); Joanne Howard (ACT DECS); Elizabeth Moroney (St John the Apostle Primary School); Grace Dunlop (Kaleen Primary School); Bill Donovan (private consultant); Debbie Wilson (St Bedes Primary School); Chris Cameron (Forrest Primary School); Rosemary Richards (Lake Ginninderra College); Dennis Sleigh (Sts Peter and Paul Primary School); and Moira Najdecki (St Francis Xavier College).

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Chapter 20

Leading and building culture

Donald Horne

Donald Horne is one of Australia's national treasures – a wise man who has devoted his life to thinking, speaking and writing about Australia and Australian culture. It is an indication of how important he considers the roles of school leaders that he has written for Leaders Lead. A copy of An Australian Compact: What are the core values that all Australians might respect? *can be downloaded from www.adc.nsw.gov.au (click Education and History and then Australian Compact), or www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au (and click Human Society and its Environment and then Australian Compact).*

Long before there were modern education systems most human groups had arrangements for three vital activities. One was to give their members some sense of the past (even if it came only from heroic legends and supernatural myths). A second was to explain what it meant to belong to the group. The third was to provide some idea of the meanings and habits (the group 'culture') that made thought and action possible. When liberal-democratic societies developed, all three of these seemed essential parts of being a citizen.

What's the score now, in Australia? What, if anything, can teachers do about it?

So far as giving a sense of the past goes, now that teaching history has lost its once central position and there is an increasing preference for only the contemporary in literature, many students seem to have moved into a 'culture of the present'. Yet (to take only two examples) what can be understood about how things are now without some knowledge of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution? In an era when it is said that all that is certain is change, why have we very largely taken the history of change out of the curriculum? The need for leadership in restoring history to the classroom lies very largely within the education system itself.

And what about 'culture' in the sense of prevailing meanings and habits? There is a vital role here for educators to move out into the community and speak up for the value of a broad general education instead of narrow vocational training. When I was Chancellor of the University of Canberra we did a survey of what employees most wanted from graduates.

Overwhelmingly it wasn't narrow technical expertise. It was generic skills – above all, general knowledge and being able to think, and to write and to speak. These are the *sine qua non* of a knowledge society. They are also essential to the old liberal ideal that education has a value in itself, providing us with knowledge that can aid us in developing our human potential, taking us where we will. That's a good one for educators of all kinds to get behind.

Belonging to the group (or citizenship as liberal-democrats call it)

There should be no limit to opportunities for conventional 'good citizen' learning in schools, and in many other places as well – helping bring out a sense of both personal responsibility and a concern for others. Ideally, in schools, it should come by example in a school's own culture.

But how about belonging to a 'polity' – the national civic identity that defines us as Australians? Many schools do nothing about it. We engage in endless chatter about our 'national identity' (which can be fantasy) but how often do we discuss our 'civic identity' (which is *real*)? We talk a colossal amount about our economy (as if somehow it exists outside our society and is something we all serve) but hardly ever about our polity. Some countries define themselves by their polity. We prefer nostalgic character studies, done in a faded sepia.

In last year's centenary celebrations not one politician gave even a sketchy idea of the Australian polity to which we all belong; on my scoring only one said that the Australians were the first people in the world to declare themselves a nation by voting.

Why this neglect? It's because historically we grew up within a colonial version of the British civic culture and saw ourselves as its respectful heirs. We even still describe ourselves as following 'the Westminster System' – even though we differ from that system very significantly.

The Australian constitution

What can teachers do? A simple, frontal approach isn't possible – because our constitution is so 'accuracy-challenged' that it can't be taught in schools – unless teachers are prepared to stand up and run through the bits that aren't true and follow that with a list of the vital things that are left out. There would be no problem if we had a constitution like the Swedes which begins by saying that "all public power proceeds from the people", that "Swedish democracy is founded on freedom of opinion and on universal and equal suffrage", that it is to be realized through "a representative and parliamentary

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polity and through local self-government"; and then runs through the general processes of Swedish government. That can be taught in schools, but we haven't that kind of constitution.

So how can Australian students be given the idea that what most defines them as Australians is their national civic identity and its principal values? There is, in fact, an answer. It goes back to the tradition of the old playground loyalty oath honouring monarch, country, flag – and that may put some people off – but it expresses loyalty in civic values to which no one can object. It's based on the oath sworn at Australian citizenship ceremonies, but it's been rejigged so that it's a simple affirmation. Try it out:

> *I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people,*
> *whose democratic beliefs I share,*
> *whose rights and liberties I respect, and*
> *whose laws I uphold and obey.*

Read it out loud and see how it sounds.

Would there be anything wrong with placing copies of this around a school and reciting it at special events, where its themes could be picked up in speeches? Some schools might even want to use it once a week. What could be more proper than a reminder of the three essential themes of a liberal democracy: the rule of law, the upholding of liberal values, the maintenance of democratic habits. A school that had community links might think it a worthwhile endeavour to spread the news around. For an initial briefing, the booklet *An Australian Compact: What are the core values that all Australians might respect?* in its twenty pages runs through eight such values.

People are always telling teachers what to do. Here is an example of how teachers – school principals in particular – might usefully tell everybody else what to do.

Chapter 21

Leading culture

Richard Leonard

Fr Richard Leonard SJ is Director of the Australian Catholic Film Office, and has a background in film, theology and education. He is well known as a presenter of missions, retreats, lectures and workshops. He is undertaking doctoral studies at the University of Melbourne on Australian film director, Peter Weir.

Australian schools do not stand apart from our national culture. Every student given into our care, and all professionals on our staff, are called to be a participant in his or her culture as critic, shaper, receiver and translator.

If we want to lead our school communities, most especially in their pedagogical and ethical development, then we have to take seriously the national culture as it is, not as we pretend or prefer it to be. And whether we like it or not we lead educational institutions within a media saturated culture.

Schools were most comfortable when communications meant the serious and time-consuming task of researching and reading the written word in books. Communication, however, has become more democratic, the emphasis has moved from entertainment to information and cultural formation. Over the last 40 years, for all our knowledge to the contrary and excellent media education programmes in some colleges, many schools have, in practice, been in retreat from the very culture they say they want to educate and form.

Whether we like or not, the vast majority of Australians are comfortable in a media saturated culture. On average, for example, adults watch television for three hours and thirteen minutes a day. That means that by his or her seventieth birthday the average Australian has spent nine years in front of the TV. Sixty one percent of all Australian homes now have two televisions and many children start the day with the cartoons at 7.00am. In 2001 there were 92.4 million attendances at Australian cinemas.

School principals, and the teachers whom they lead, know how important the visual media is in the lives of their students. What concerns me most is that even armed with this knowledge, the media continues to be relegated in our thinking and pedagogy to be ancillary, secondary or hostile to what we are trying to achieve in our schools. We can address children at assembly and in classrooms year after year and never know or see the television they watch or the films they attend.

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We have to ask how serious our educational leadership is if, for whatever reason, we are ignorant of the media culture of our school community. The reality is that the visual media now plays a critical role in the formation of the hearts and minds of our students and the more directly we build bridges between the pedagogy we present to our students and the media world that fills up much of the rest of their lives, the more valuable our education might be to them.

The assumption that the popular media is generally 'poor' or unethical is misplaced. The highest rating programmes in Australia reveal a desire for community, for connection and wellbeing[1]. Many of the top twenty programmes last year reflected mainstream and widely held values[2]. Over the years our most popular films reveal our tastes to be optimistic, humorous and family centred[3].

This does not mean we have to approve of all the cultural changes in Australia. There have been dramatic shifts in the way sexuality is explored, presented and accessed. Our fascination for violence on television and at the cinema continues unabated. One only has to recall that the film about Australian criminal Mark 'Chopper' Read débuted at number one and remained in the top ten for weeks. Our love of sport now leads to an ever-increasing narcissistic culture, where some young people risk their lives by trying everything from steroids to bulimia to get the 'perfect' body. We spent $2.75 billion on sport last year. The dominance in the TV ratings of 'lifestyle' programmes suggests we see wealth creation and leisure as the keys to happiness.

As educators, we need to let go of our long held suspicion that all the media does is entertain. Schools have traditionally been custodians of 'high artistic' culture. We do not need to abandon that legacy, but marry it with the popular culture that is so formative of our students. The influence of media in creating and reflecting a post-modern Australian culture means there is a new language being spoken and, if we want to influence this culture for good, we have to learn its tongue. We need to discover the power of the stories that are presently capturing our students' imaginations and use them for our educational ends. We need to be conversant with the sporting and public entertainment events, music, television, Internet sites and films that appeal to them.

As leaders in education we cannot resile from our role as constructive media critics, but if that is all our students hear from us it is easy for them to be dismissive. We can also promote and use media that explore the Platonic virtues (of justice, fidelity, self-care and prudence), the Aristotelian values (of mercy and hospitality), or even the consequences of the vices (of malice,

envy, greed, sloth, lust, pride and anger). In this way we can create a context for our students in which they can assimilate and critically engage with the media culture of which they are part.

[1] Among our top rating programmes that show this: *Ground Force, Friends, Always Greener, Blue Heelers, This is your life, Harry's Practice, ER, Spin City, The Drew Carey Show, Burke's Backyard, Getaway, Better Homes and Gardens, 60 Minutes, The Great Outdoors, Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. See, www.acnielsen.com/au/en/pdf/tv.

[2] Australia's top twenty programmes for 2002 included: the Wimbledon Final, *Big Brother* (finale), *Big Brother* (final Sunday), AFL Grand Final, World Swimming Championships Day 8 [1500m final], 43rd Annual Logie Awards, *Survivor II: Australia: The final vote*, World Cup Qualifier Aust. v Uruguay, World Swimming Championships Day 6, Rugby League Grand Final, *Popstars*.

[3] The highest grossing Australian films are, in order: *Crocodile Dundee, Babe, Crocodile Dundee II, Moulin Rouge, Strictly Ballroom, The Man from Snowy River, The Dish, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Muriel's Wedding, Young Einstein, Gallipoli, The Piano, Mad Max II, Shine, Green Card, The Castle, Phar Lap, Lantana*.

[4] In 1999 there were: 800 legal and 350 illegal brothels with 12 million visitors; 250 sex shops grossing $100 million; 1.4 million phone calls were made to sex chat lines; the average weekly sales for 'soft' pornography magazines in Australia were 250,000 copies; the pornography video industry sold 2.4 million videos. See, www.eros.com.au. The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was the largest entertainment event in the country. It grossed $98.8 million for Sydney in 2001.

Chapter 22

Facing the Storm: School leadership, problem solving and the new 'Three Rs'

Gerry Cleveland

Gerry Cleveland is a former Canadian high school principal, deputy principal and teacher who divides his time between working in Western Australia and the Center for Advanced Public Safety Research at the University of New Haven. He is also a former drug squad officer and he currently teaches educators, police, and public safety officials in the USA, Canada and Australia. He has recently been elected as President of the Police Society for Problem Based Learning. (PSPBL.com) and is currently writing an instructor development course for educators in the USA to support the Problem Based Learning format. For comments, you can contact him via gcleveland@hotmail.com

Let's face it: problems are the norm in the business of people. I don't know any schools that are problem free – we all *enjoy* the same 'natural resources' of problems. If school leaders want to make a huge impact on the process of education I have a suggestion. Let's think about conflict differently. Let's do something about how parents and teachers are dealing with conflict, disagreements and disputes.

As educational leaders we need to reconceptualise the inevitable conflicts that arise every day in our schools. While the last thing we want is for our colleagues, parents and staff to think that they are working in a 'troubled' school, we need to analyse the conflict-ridden circumstances that are in some degree present in every school. We need to appreciate, and lead our staff and children to understand, that as humans we're destined to fight with one another. This has, after all, been our history for a couple of million years.

As leaders, we should at least strive to lead others to face conflict in a positive and meaningful fashion, by turning directly *towards* our problems and by seeking out and exploring issues that we have previously avoided. Have you got problem parents, drug issues, truancy problems? Great! Don't run from them, but celebrate the learning opportunities they present for your school and your community. The sooner we prepare ourselves for disputes, disagreements and conflicts, the better we will be at solving them when they do arise. The alternative is that we ignore or avoid them, and they overwhelm us.

In terms of conflict, however, what's worked before doesn't necessarily work now. It's time to re-frame our thinking about even the most basic assumptions, particularly in this time of international turmoil, finger-pointing

and preparation for battles. And the place to start is in the schoolyards and classrooms of the world. But how do we make this shift to a focus on problem solving as a learning technique? It is time to replace the Three Rs of the 80s and 90s – rejection, refusal and reward – with three new 'Rs' for the *nought-ies:*

1. *Recognition* of talents and differences;
2. *Respect* for the opinions and concerns of others; and
3. *Relevance* of what we are doing and learning to do.

Recognition, respect and relevance can be taught using the tools of social upheaval, injustices, and emotional turmoil. In this way we invite students to learn in an environment that honours them and their lives, rather than in one dictated purely by curricular demands.

Recognition

Parents and educators can turn to a variety of studies that show that what each child needs is a responsible adult actively involved in his or her life. Young people want recognition for what troubles them, what makes them unique, and what they do well. The best way to provide this recognition at school or even in our own homes, is to ensure that we acknowledge what Howard Gardner calls the *multiple intelligences*.

Many of our 'at risk' children are 'big picture' visual learners. To recognise this, schools must meet their needs in all of their classes, rather than simply using pedagogical approaches that suit the teachers. This recognition of different learning strengths becomes even more vital in areas where most students are physically, visually or musically inclined learners.

Problem based learning, a method of instruction that appeals to young people and adults alike, works well with all learners because it deals with real life complex problems that the learners truly care about solving. Its beauty also lies in its ability to cross subject boundaries and transfer subject matter from inert texts to the dynamic 'out of classroom' lives of our students and teachers.

Respect

'Respect' applies to society as a whole, but especially to our kids. It is a learned behaviour and not an inherent talent. Teachers and parents understand that if we teach kids to disagree without being disagreeable, we will, no doubt, make a better world for them and for us. But for some reason, we've assumed that someone else will do the job of teaching the fundamentals of respect to the next generation. As educational leaders we

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should do all that we can to foster the home and classroom lessons about *disagreeing well*. I suggest that we encourage parents and others to accept the job of conveying the following attitudes to their communities.

1. Let's start with the big mystery: Why are we here and what's our purpose? We are here to offer love and support and show respect to others. Mystery solved.

2. Get perspective. The world does not revolve around your troubles. Get over yourself.

3. Your community needs your support, not your scorn. If you don't like something, help fix it. If you don't want to help fix it then you give up your right to complain.

4. Say 'please', 'thank-you', and 'hello' to people.

5. News flash: Boys – strong, silent and angry are not cool. Girls – pencil-thin, fashionable and desirable are not cool. Polite, engaged and intelligent. Now, they're cool.

6. Be spiritual. Look for a higher cause or a nobler purpose. If you are angry, detached, pissed off, drug addled, or just bored, you need to look a little further than yourself for the resolution.

7. The world is not here to entertain you and keep you amused. See rule 2.

8. Stop making excuses for why things aren't working out for you. If you are not happy, stop doing what you are currently doing and try a different approach to life.

9. Be kind to the people who are closest to you. Right now is a good time to tell them you appreciate what they do for you.

10. And finally, if you want people to appreciate and respect you, appreciate and respect them. You'll be surprised at the results.

Leading people begins with helping them to understand perspective. As long as our staffs and our students only see the world from their own view point, they'll struggle with the concepts of respect and tolerance, regardless of how many wonderful policy statements our educational bureaucrats produce.

Relevance

Speaking to educators and police on a regular basis in the USA, Canada and Australia, I hear stories that are remarkably consistent: professionals who work with kids tell me that apathy is one of the greatest challenges they face when dealing with kids, parents and even teachers. It would seem that we've

avoided our community problems for so long, that we have lost the capacity to solve them. And if we do confront them, it's usually too late and the people we're supposed to be helping have lost interest. But there is hope.

Kids, parents and teachers will learn and teach actively and enthusiastically if we present them with relevant material. It's not easy and it's often contentious, but the decision whether to play it safe or to engage the learners in new opportunities ultimately becomes a question of leadership in schools and the community. Introducing emotionally laden but extremely relevant topics for discovery can overcome states of detachment and ennui – topics such as environmental degradation, racism, current wars, terrorism, civil rights, drug issues and family violence. Yes, they may lead to dispute, but better an engaged and passionate classroom climate than an obedient and bored one.

Relevance is something leaders should demand from every teacher, every lesson, everyday. Students need to know why they are learning something and how it will benefit their everyday lives. If it's relevant and concerns the 86% of their lives that they spend *away* from our schools, let them work on it *in* school. The same rule applies to parenting. The old line, "just do it because I said so" is a cheap cop out. If we encourage parents to explain the relevance of the behaviour they want from their children, we will be pleasantly surprised at the reduction in the door slamming and shouting incidents that occur in our classes and our homes.

Conclusion

"Why should I look for and even invite troubles into my school, home or office? Why should I encourage and probe problems that I may not have in my immediate sphere of influence? Won't I just be exacerbating current troubles if I do stir up a hornet's nest?"

Leaders have a choice. We can teach our kids, our students or even our employees the *literacy of conflict* and work on maintaining positive relations by using real-life, current and serious problems. Or we can continue to teach them by using hypothetical scenarios beyond the experience of our learners. If we choose the latter, we will continue to suffer from violence, isolation and dysfunction in our schools and workplaces.

I am suggesting that we take every possible opportunity to use Problem Based Learning and make *recognition, respect and relevance* the new Three Rs of this generation. If we teach these problem-solving essentials to students and families in our communities we arm them forever against the follies of violence, social conflict and emotional detachment.

Chapter 23

Leading community (or, Where else can you get a job with so much fun and get paid for it?)

John Schluter in conversation with Jeremy Hurley

John Schluter is Principal of Gilles Plains Primary School, part of the Gilles Plains Community Campus, in the northern suburbs of Adelaide. Other organisations based on the campus are the community childcare centre, the pre-school, community health outreach service, and community assistance programme (with op-shop). A neighbourhood house will be opening in the near future. The large expanse of cracked bitumen that was central to the campus has been transformed over the last two years into a community garden, providing a focus for working, learning and celebrating together.

How did the community campus come about?

The Gilles Plains Community Campus came about through a mixture of chance and planning but mainly because of some creative, forward thinking and committed individuals, particularly former Principal Neville Jarvis. Our school had over 1000 students back in the late 50s and 60s when this area was developed to settle new migrants. As the number of young children in the area dropped the school was left with empty buildings which now house the other organisations.

What are the school's demographics?

We've got 210 students from R–7, including the pre-school, and 75% of them are on school card. There are another 50 in the child-parent centre. This year 10% of the students are Aboriginal (we have a strong Aboriginal community) and 24% of the students are from non-English speaking backgrounds, mainly with no local cultural communities. We were part of the Commonwealth's disadvantaged schools programme. Our population is fairly transient, with 25% new enrolments this year and 17% transferring out. This whole area is now being redeveloped and consolidated with a mix of new and reconstructed public and private housing.

Where does your passion for working in the community come from?

Fundamentally, I believe that schools are a service industry, and as such have to serve their community. They're entirely a people business. I love working with people – the children, the staff, the families and the other agencies. Where else can you get a job with so much fun, and get paid for it?

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Tell me about the extent of your school's community involvement?

It works on a number of levels, with the children and their families, and with outside community agencies and groups. Many of the parents here didn't have good experiences at school, and so are apprehensive about having much involvement. One of the reasons we have a collaborative leadership structure (two women and two men) is so that parents – and students – have more choice about who they can talk to. We also know that we have to meet parents on common ground – you don't always get the best work happening in a meeting room. We do make an effort to get the children into the school. For example we have our breakfast club that is operated by community volunteers and some of the older students, where not only do children get to eat breakfast, but they also learn to cook and socialise – and they get to come to school for the rest of the day. You know, we celebrate when some kids simply get to school.

At the moment we liaise closely, but informally, with the other groups on the campus. Our job is to make sure that the community knows the services that are available, both directly and as referrals. We also work together on community development projects, whether it be the garden or things like reconciliation events.

We're interested in anything that impacts on children's learning, and also work with a whole range of off-campus agencies such as mental health services, Aboriginal support services, the police and Family and Youth Services.

How can this kind of community involvement become sustainable?

That is an issue, and we're working on it. This community approach has already become part of the school's ethos and culture. We want to formalise the partnerships we have so that they become an ongoing part of our and their strategic planning. But we also need a 'community facilitator' whose job would be to liase between all the agencies and departments, and to ensure that programmes are embedded in the curriculum. It's hard work keeping it going – being consistent and maintaining energy levels – but the feedback from families and students makes it worthwhile. Support from colleagues is vital, and the staff room culture needs to be open, collegial, supportive and caring.

What do you think is most important about working in the community?

One of the lessons I learnt fairly early on was from teaching in rural Aboriginal communities, and it applies as much to any other community. Being accepted is something that happens over time, as relationships develop, but it needs to be on their terms – it's their community, their

culture. You have to be open and honest, take your time, and eventually you'll all feel comfortable. People know when you're being false. I do sometimes worry that we're imposing our middle-class values on people. Is it conceit and arrogance when we think that we know the 'right way'? Whenever sensitive things come up it's so important to take the time to explain where you're coming from to parents, and not to take the moral high ground. You have to be non-judgemental. People need to feel respected to be with you.

What are the advantages for your school of the community focus?

Our situation provides a stable, consistent environment that isn't there for many of the kids and their families. We're almost at the point where we're a one-stop shop for children and family support. Public service agencies have been increasingly centralised over the last decade, but we can still offer a very accessible community referral service. Many issues surface with the students in the school setting, and having a counsellor and nurse on-site means that parents are much more likely to get help when all they have to do is walk through the garden. It's the way it should be. On the other hand, having an inter-agency approach means that we can guard against the kind of over-servicing when people get to the point of saying 'when are they going to leave us alone?' And all that's apart from the increased opportunities we have to take part in celebrations with the community.

The other really noticeable thing is that we have strong support from the community, with low vandalism rates. People tend to be watchful of the school, and report incidents to the police. It's hard to believe that a couple of years ago we were discussing whether to put two or three strands of barbed wire around the garden. We didn't put any. Everyone takes such pride in what they've now got (the children grow the vegetables) and any damage so far is minor.

How do you get and keep the rest of staff onside?

I'm very clear that wanting to improve learning outcomes is central to everything we do. You've got to be clear about your purpose and goal. Ultimately all teachers want the best for the kids, and you need to take the time, have the facts, explain really clearly and rationally, and value what people bring. The whole decision making process has to be open and involving, and people all need to have a role. This is a people business and it has to respect them. There also has to be flexibility, including with regulations and procedures, and you also have to have a good time together. Essentially it's to do with building trust, devolving responsibility and respect.

I don't want to be a leader who one day looks behind and finds no one there.

Chapter 24

Principal or principal fundraiser? Taking the lead in fundraising.

Rhonda Galbally

Dr Rhonda Galbally is Chief Executive Officer of www.ourcommunity.com.au. Ourcommunity provides practical resources and support for Australia's 700,000 community organisations in all states and territories. Her life work has been to strengthen non-profit, education and community organisations. Her dynamic leadership in creating new solutions for community organisations is consolidated by her vast experience in organisational development and management, strategic policy and programme development, capacity building, fundraising and grantmaking.

Almost every aspect of the role of principal has increased in complexity over the past decade. The role of principal as fundraiser has also become more complex – and in many ways more important than it has ever been.

The reason for the jump is simple. For all but the luckiest few, there is a widening gulf between the dreams, ideas and innovations that principals have to improve the curriculum, facilities and the options available for students, and the actual ability to be able to turn those dreams into reality – in the time frame that they want. It is a gulf that can only be bridged with funding (either monetary or in-kind support).

Principals have enough to do in the areas of curriculum, human resources, business management and marketing without also being involved in fundraising. But be involved they must, because whether in the public or private sector, no school can hope to service its school community to the best of its ability without an active fundraising strategy to access more money.

Leading from the front

So what is the role of the principal in raising this money? It is a mixture of leader and manager in leading from the front and outlining the 'vision'. It is a case of leading the discussion on strategy and setting the tone so that fundraisers know what is appropriate and inappropriate. It is also a case of outlining the vision for the school community and its needs in six months, a year, five years and ten years. It is necessary to do that so that the fundraisers are clear on the targets, and on the fundraising methods that match the targets, in terms of dollars and timing.

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Schools will differ in their community's ability to respond to fundraising and who has overall responsibility for day-to-day fundraising – a professional on staff, principal, Parents' Council or committee. All schools should have a fundraising strategy and it should be one that sits comfortably with the principal's philosophy and is also based on a clear understanding of what the school community will bear.

Principals need to lead by ensuring their fundraising strategy is balanced and integrated and that while not everyone is going to be involved in the fundraising efforts, the entire school community should be given the opportunity to contribute ideas, experiences and contacts to help with its development. Leadership will also ensure the strategy takes into account and considers such methods as:

☐ Fees and levies

☐ Grants funding options for improvements and projects

☐ Sponsorships at various levels or for various events

☐ The development of an appropriate 'Friends of' or Alumni membership structure to try and trap and then harness the financial support and network benefits from former students and parents

☐ Fundraising drives and special events or functions

☐ Capital campaigns

☐ Branded merchandise

☐ Preferred trader arrangements

☐ An integrated gifts, donation and bequests scheme.

Guidelines – not all dollars are good dollars

One of the most important issues for principals is to set the guidelines for what is appropriate for the school community and what is not. Schools can't just take money without regard to how the relationship will play within the school community and beyond. Some of the questions that need to be answered include:

☐ Are sponsors and their products and values consistent with those of the school?

☐ Are the fundraising drives priced at a level that includes rather than excludes your community?

☐ If you recommend preferred products or services, have you checked them?

□ Are your special events consistent with the school's values?

□ Are all major agreements and contracts run past the principal for signature/veto to ensure guidelines are observed?

□ Is everyone involved with fundraising aware of the guidelines and limitations?

It is for the principal to ensure that a school's brand and standing in the community in the long term is not compromised for a few short-term dollars.

Principal as relationship builder

Business and community leaders don't form relationships with schools: they form relationships with people. Real people. And while that relationship may be with your fundraisers, your major supporters, donors and sponsors should also have a relationship with the principal. People want to know if your values and your guiding philosophy for the school match theirs. It also helps when it comes to lobbying.

The other aspect that is becoming increasingly important for schools is co-operating with other schools or community groups in coming together to run complementary programmes or pool skills and competencies to apply for grants funding.

Principal as cheerleader

As with most aspects of a school community, when it comes to encouragement, motivation and calls for a greater response, people look to the principal to set the tone. The fundraising committee can push and prod but when the principal takes it on and adds her/his imprimatur, people are more likely to respond and take up the call.

Principal as executioner

One of the hardest things for anyone leading the way in fundraising is the balancing act between having respect for tradition while being flexible enough to move with the times. It is an issue facing principals in every aspect of their job and fundraising is certainly no different.

Principals need to show leadership by evaluating the fundraising performance and fundraising strategies, and making hard decisions when those methods no longer reap the benefits of the past. This can be a painful process, particularly with events or fundraising initiatives that have been on the calendar for some time. The reality is that there is only so much enthusiasm in any school

community, and if there are months of preparation going into an event that produces only a small profit – or a loss – then its future has to be addressed.

Some schools – like all community groups – are prepared to run events at a loss or tiny profit because it achieves other goals such as 'friend-raising', branding, marketing or gaining valuable publicity for the school and its programmes. If your initiatives achieve *none* of these then it may well be time to change direction.

Principals don't have to be super fundraisers. But – like the operational head of any community group – they do have to show leadership in ensuring they pull together the best possible team to lead the fundraising effort. The principal must set the tone and guidelines so that the fundraising strategy and methods sit comfortably within the values and mission of the school.

Part 2

Leaders Lead:

Beyond the lost sandshoe
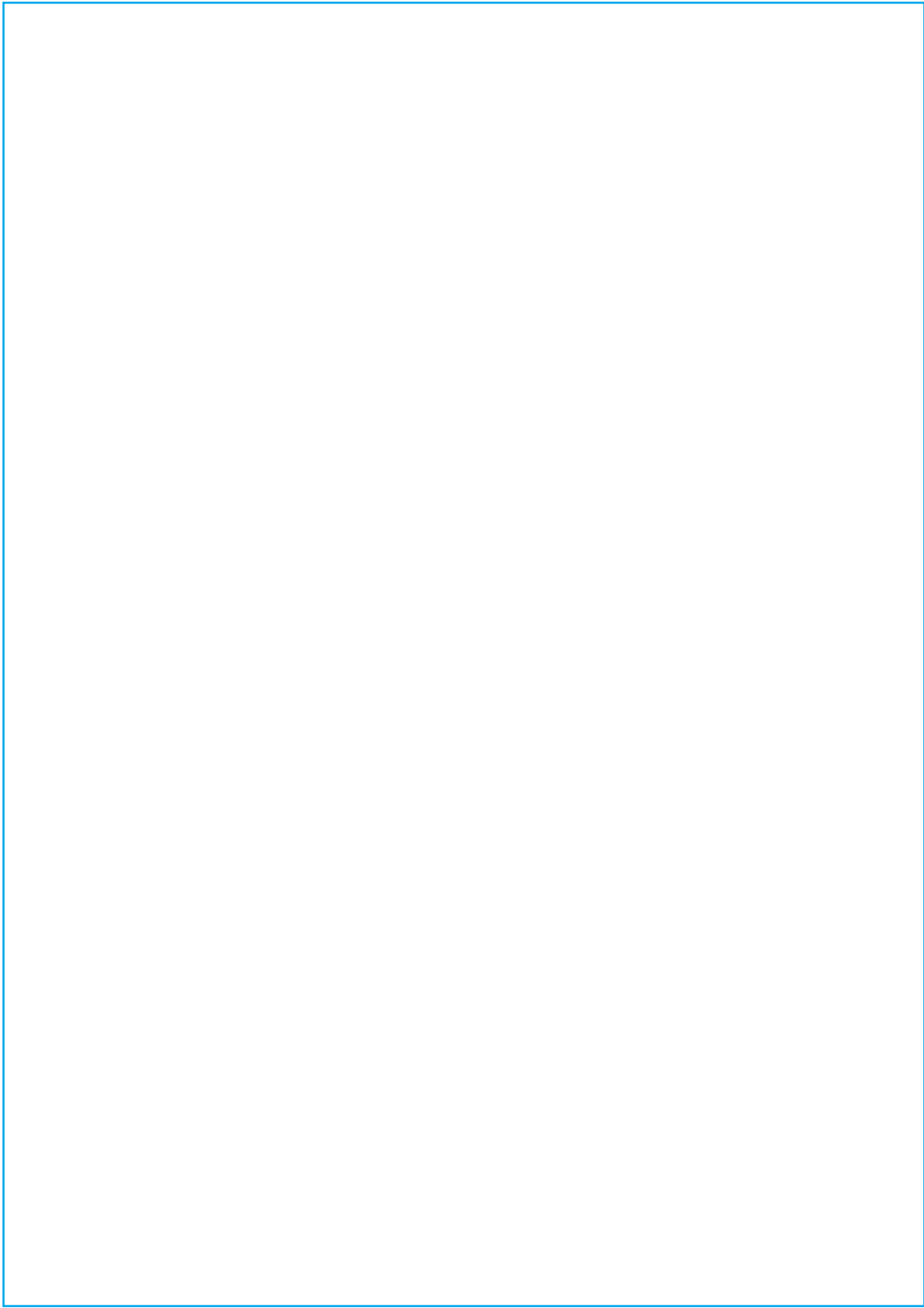
Leaders Lead: Contemporary issues for principals

During the 2001 *Leaders Lead* Conference participants were asked to identify 'key quality leadership issues that are currently confronting school principals'. Following are some of the many issues raised.

Your context

☐ What do society and parents know about what is happening in schools today, and vice versa?

☐ Can we ever make a clear distinction between social and educational issues? Should we?

☐ What can we be confident about for the future, and how do we prepare ourselves for it?

☐ How do we control and make the most of the vastly expanded information exchange (especially e-mail)? How do we effectively judge the role that ICTs should play, and organise to make that role a reality?

☐ We must maintain a global perspective and awareness, share it with our communities and search out and respond to the implications for schools.

Your responsibilities

☐ How do we effectively manage the intersection between community expectations and the transformative aspects of 'new education'?

☐ Can we be confident enough about where we sit in relation to the law, including students' rights, to be able to manage authoritatively?

☐ Principals must have an active and ongoing involvement in the accountability debate. As the most knowledgeable group involved, they must in fact lead it. We must learn to use data more effectively.

Your skills

☐ The key competency for educational leadership is interpersonal people skills/attributes. It is so important to have skills with families, counselling skills, to be the 'face of hope', supporting and offering pastoral care to all, listening and responding to the needs and concerns of families. How can we best manage the diversity of the people we deal with every day? We must start with the curriculum and teaching and learning and plan the educational leadership process and operations around that. Are we prepared for that?

- How do we best articulate, communicate and sustain a vision for the whole institutional community?
- We are dealing with an increasingly wide range of tasks – not just as educational leaders, but also as business managers. Management of resources, industrial relations and enterprise bargaining have produced a major change. How do we accommodate this? Where do we draw the line?
- How can we keep personnel issues in their rightful place?
- How do we best consolidate action and change?

The structure of your job

- How can principals achieve properly distributed leadership? Is it a matter of effective delegation?
- Is a tiered structure of leadership still the best model? Is a flatter management structure more desirable? Do structures inhibit our capacity for innovation?

Your professional development

- There is a need for leaders to take time away from their organisations to reflect and discuss, and to mentor and coach.
- We need stories about coaches, facilitation and training, reflective interview training.
- Peer-assisted leadership and networking provide us with our support and a place for reflection and working through issues.
- The value of professional networks can't be overestimated – honestly sharing problems, and supporting each other.

Your wellbeing

- How can we best maintain our personal belief systems in the face of multiple demands and adversity?
- Is a balanced and healthy lifestyle possible for principals and teachers?

Your public image

- There is an urgent need to improve the profession's media profile, credibility, and the value placed on educators as public voice. In this context the importance of collegiality and system support is paramount.

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☐ We have a political role to play in keeping the profession alive and taking a stronger stance in where we should be going and driving the larger agenda. One way we can do this is to build stronger networks.

The future of your job

☐ The role of educational leaders is increasingly complex and we can no longer ignore greater diversity in the teaching service and significant changes in teaching and learning. Educational leadership is not necessarily seen as a natural step. Often teachers make lifestyle choices. Are changes necessary to the way educational leaders are viewed and characterised?

☐ What preparations are in place for the effective succession of a new generation of school leaders? How do we work creatively to motivate others to want to be school leaders? Should this be our responsibility?

Celebrating the role

☐ We are proud to be principals. We must acknowledge and celebrate the complexities and flexibility of the role and stand up and shout for our profession.

Is this you?

Participants also reflected on the personal qualities they found necessary in their work. These included:

☐ an ability to build and maintain good relationships

☐ resilience, resourcefulness and sense of humour, authenticity, integrity, courage, being inspirational and passionate

☐ maintaining a good understanding of best practice in learning and teaching

☐ knowing what they need to know and re-evaluating what they do in the light of that

☐ an ability to cope with, direct and generate change

☐ prioritising what needs doing, communicating and making meanings, setting clear goals, delegating tasks effectively and developing staff in a host of ways, especially including team work and both personal and professional growth

☐ an ability to honestly reflect on practice and outcomes

- ☐ resolution and management of complex issues and conflict on a number of levels including political conflict
- ☐ keeping issues in perspective, particularly in relation to crisis and the un-manageability of the job
- ☐ keeping balance and buoyancy in their lives, and finally ...
- ☐ continuing to feel and impart the 'magic' of schools, of people teaching and learning, generating a community where everyone exists to learn.

Leaders Lead: Major contemporary challenges

All Australian education ministers are committed to the national goals for schooling as agreed in *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (MCEETYA, 1999). The three overarching goals relate to:

- ☐ fully developing the talents of all students
- ☐ students experiencing and achieving high standards in an expanded range of core curriculum areas, and
- ☐ schooling being socially just and contributing to social justice in a wider sense.

In order to achieve these goals at the national level, APAPDC has identified a number of major issues, priorities and challenges facing schools and school principals.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is an issue and a process that firmly entered the fabric of Australian society during the 1990s. It requires a long-term change in attitudes and practice, in particular addressing racism in all its forms. Education, in its broadest sense across the whole society, is the primary way in which reconciliation will be achieved. Society looks to schools and our young people to lead the processes of reconciliation in a spirit of true commitment to justice.

The Commonwealth's *Dare to Lead* programme, managed by the APAPDC, has been a highly effective means for creating awareness and stimulating action from school leaders in relation to Indigenous education in Australian schools. The title of the *Dare to Lead* publication (APAPDC, 2000a) illustrates the programme's commitment to reconciliation. It is called *For the attention of the principal* and is explicitly designed to be useful for *all* principals, irrespective of whether their school is made up mostly or entirely of Indigenous students, a small number of them, or has no Indigenous students. Its sub-title is *Our first priority*. This is an unequivocal statement of values from the Commonwealth and the principals of Australia.

Challenges for principals:

- ○ How do we build a dedicated commitment to reconciliation in all members of our school community?

Equity for Indigenous students

The *National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1996-2002)* (MCEETYA, 1995) outlined strategies for addressing issues in Indigenous education. In 1999 *The Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA 1999)* on national goals cemented the commitment of the ministers of education – schools should be socially just so that Indigenous students have access and opportunities such that "their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students". The national goals also expect schooling to contribute to reconciliation by ensuring that "all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from reconciliation".

The *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2000-2004*, released in 2000, identifies further efforts to achieve 'English literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australian' (DETYA, 2000). The range of the elements to be addressed is instructive of the breadth of issues in Indigenous education generally. Health, nutrition, attendance, community involvement and the level of pre-school experience are all included, along with more typical educational elements such as provision of teachers, teaching practices and assessment.

Challenges for principals:
- Many schools have just a few Indigenous students — how can we be sure their needs are recognised and met?
- Is making the school truly welcoming and sensitive enough to keep our Indigenous students attending and staying on?

Accountability

Recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on accountability in education. Accountability is now evident in a range of areas from student learning (outcomes-based curricula) to teacher and principal performance, through to physical and financial resources. There is a need for accountability on a range of levels from the individual to the group or entity (such as the faculty or school) through to systems.

Whatever the area or the scale, the focus is on outcomes, and the need is to gather information that demonstrates achievement against those outcomes. Ensuring accountability has become a significant task for educators. The aim must be to move from previous negative connotations - 'someone is checking

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up' – to view accountability as an integral and positive means for both demonstrating achievement and informing future action.

Challenges for principals:

○ How to meet the accountability needs but keep the data and analysis simple and informative.

○ How to build a culture that values and has the will and capacity to act on feedback.

Quality teaching

Quality teaching is core school business, and the Commonwealth Government is providing over $76 million through the Quality Teacher Programme to update and improve teachers' skills and help lift the status of the teaching profession.' *Leaders Lead* is one of an extensive raft of initiatives in the Quality Teacher Programme.

The Programme focuses on the renewal of teacher skills and understanding in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, information technology and vocational education in schools. It targets teachers who have completed formal training ten or more years ago, casual teachers and teachers who are re-entering the teaching profession. Provision has also been made for teachers of disadvantaged groups such as Indigenous students, students in rural and remote locations and students in urban disadvantaged schools.

Over $70 million of the Programme's funds is being distributed to education authorities in the states and territories on the basis of enrolment share to support the provision of professional development activities in the priority areas. Planning and development began last year and the activities themselves commenced during 2001 in all states and territories.

The remaining Programme funds are being used to support various national projects such as:

☐ a national quality teacher information exchange project which is collecting, reviewing and disseminating information about the professional development activities funded through the Programme;

☐ research into the linkage between teacher professional development and student learning outcomes;

☐ research into how well prepared beginning teachers are for the transition from initial training to the classroom;

☐ disseminating information about effective teaching practices for Indigenous students that have been shown to improve outcomes; and

☐ awards to recognise quality teachers.

Additional funding of $82.4 million for the Quality Teacher Programme for 2003-05 was announced in the Budget last year.

Challenges for principals:

○ How to capitalise most effectively on the resources provided through this Programme.

Innovation, the knowledge society and ICTs

There is a bipartisan acceptance of the view that Australia's future economic and social prosperity is dependent on having a population that embraces innovation and the knowledge society.

This has clear implications for all levels of education (in particular the emphases on learning about and through Information and Communication Technologies – ICTs). The *Adelaide Declaration* calls for students who are "confident, creative and productive users...[who] understand the impact of those technologies on society" (MCEETYA 1999). This encompasses much more than students simply using computers. Meeting this goal in schools creates constant pressure on resources – "how can we get enough access?" – and people – "what do we as individuals and as a staff need to learn about and do?"

There are also changes to society's values and orientations that are and will be significant if this is to be the nation's way forward. In a real sense, schools are expected to be champions, models and agents of these changes. Many people, however, have very real concerns about how these will transform schools.

Challenges for principals:

○ How to align schooling with the needs of the knowledge society.

○ How can the school play its role in the social changes around innovation and the knowledge society?

○ How to lead the school community to a point where ICTs are well exploited for their learning advantages and integral to the school's programme, given the physical and human resource implications.

○ How to work through the 'transformation of schooling' issue.

Teacher demographics and current/impending shortages

Australia has teacher shortages in some fields including - mathematics, science, technology and languages other than English – and in some locations due to isolation or school type. Retirement rates from the teaching workforce are expected to pressure the teacher labour market in the coming decade and these shortages may worsen in coming years.

Substantial effort is being invested in *recruitment* of teachers. This includes not only bringing greater numbers of young people into the profession – essentially enhancing the traditional pathway – but also recruiting mature people with experience in other professions. In either case it is necessary to ensure that the teaching profession is, and is seen to be, worthwhile, valued and rewarding. Ensuring that teaching is viewed in this way is an essential ingredient of another major emphasis needed in workforce planning in education – that of *retaining* current teachers as teachers in our schools.

Challenges for principals:

○ How can schools contribute to the twin foci of *recruitment* and *retention* of teachers?

○ How well will our schools be able to take advantage of the influx of entrants to the profession from rich and diverse backgrounds?

Middle schooling

A growing body of research points to the need for adolescents to experience school and schooling in ways that match their emotional, social and intellectual needs as adolescents. Addressing the issues of alienation and underachievement that exist for many young people in the 10-15 age group is increasingly resulting in the creation of middle schools as separate organisational entities. These represent a structural response that is unlikely to be successful without corresponding major revision of teaching and learning approaches.

Challenges for principals:

○ Do we start with the organisation or the learning?

○ What does a rigorous curriculum for the middle school look like? How is it different?

International comparisons

One side effect of globalisation has been the increased attention paid to projects and activities that enable comparison of Australian students' outcomes with those of their peers in other countries.

In the 1990s, a large scale international study, the *Third International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), assessed students aged 9, 13 and in their last year of schooling in mathematics and science in over 40 countries (Lokan *et al*. 1996, 1997). In 2000, the OECD conducted the first cycle of their Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), to assess the reading literacy, scientific literacy and mathematical literacy of 15 year olds in 32 (mainly OECD) countries. PISA will be undertaken every three years, with some new elements likely to be added to the assessment from time to time. In 2003 for example, there will be an assessment of students' problem-solving skills.

The results of such studies give a picture of whether Australian students are at, below or above the standards achieved overseas, and can provide pointers on how and where improvements can be made. The results from PISA confirm that our students are generally doing very well when compared with their international peers. Nevertheless this latest study shows that Indigenous students, children from low socio-economic backgrounds and boys (in relation to reading) are not achieving as well as other Australian students.

Challenges for principals:

○ How can we ensure that all of our students have real opportunities to achieve their potential?

○ How can findings from international assessment programmes such as these be taken up at the school level?

Literacy and numeracy

The national goals are unequivocal in setting a target for students in these core areas. "Every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level." Education Ministers have further elaborated intentions in this area through the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan which has several elements, including:

☐ initial assessment of students as early as possible in the first years of schooling;

- early intervention strategies for those students identified as having difficulties;

- development of benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and assessment and reporting of all students' achievement against these; and

- professional development for teachers, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of all students.

The *Plan* had its initial impact mainly in the primary years, but the roll-out of benchmarks and associated assessment, and acknowledgment of other issues has seen the middle years become an additional focus. The equity dimension is further emphasised by the central place that achievement in literacy and numeracy has in approaches to Indigenous education.

Challenges for principals:

- How to balance the need to assure all students reach minimal standards (benchmarks) with aspiring to excellence.

- How to give greater prominence to numeracy in the school, given the issues in mathematics/numeracy that abound (teacher confidence/skills; current practices etc.).

Civics and citizenship education

The national goals state that students should "be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life". The *Discovering Democracy* programme, funded by the Commonwealth, has been endorsed by all Ministers of Education as a key means for achieving this. Commenced in 1997 and continuing until 2004, *Discovering Democracy*:

> *is founded on a belief that civics and citizenship education is central to…maintenance of a strong and vital citizenship. To be able to act as responsible citizens throughout their lives, students need a thorough knowledge and understanding of Australia's political heritage, its democratic processes and government, its judicial system and its system of public administration and how these relate to those of other nations (Curriculum Corporation, 1997).*

The programme lays the foundation for ongoing civics and citizenship education through curriculum materials, professional development, and national activities aimed at networking and dissemination.

The refocusing of attention on civics and citizenship education has a range of curriculum implications, especially in the light of concerns about the 'crowded curriculum'. Hence, implementation is a key issue. The APAPDC has responded with its publication in 2000 of *Snapshots* (APAPDC, 2000b).

Challenges for principals:

○ Notwithstanding the support already provided, what mechanisms are in place in the school to ensure that civics and citizenship is a sustainable and dynamic part of the curriculum?

○ How can we continue to reflect issues such as multi-culturalism, environmental responsibility, reconciliation and globalisation as priorities in our approaches to civics and citizenship education?

Pathways and vocational education

The ways schools prepare students to move into their lives beyond school, and the forms that can take, have been transformed in recent years. We have seen the development of greater choice, better articulation and more flexibility, all designed to better meet students' needs.

The national goals address vocational education in several ways. At the individual level, students need to develop skills and understanding in relation to work in general, and the particular options available and appealing to them. Some elements of this are relevant throughout schooling, as are aspects of the curriculum that result in broad vocational learning.

In the years beyond compulsion, students need to have "access to vocational education and training packages as part of their senior secondary studies". The boundaries are no longer distinct. As part of the commitment to making schools socially just, all students must have access to a school education that "provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training".

Challenges for principals:

○ How well are our schools' counselling and career advice processes coping?

○ How can we keep abreast of developments?

○ What are the options and strategies for forming really productive partnerships with business?

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Articulating and assessing professional standards

Throughout Australia there is a movement to define professional standards for teachers and to use these in some way in career structuring and enhancement. This is, in part, a response to a perceived need to "enhance the status and quality of the teaching profession" (MCEETYA 1999). The MCEETYA Task Force on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership, a number of states and territories as well as some national professional associations, are currently involved in this work.

Professional standards for school principals are also on the agenda, with some recent national work being undertaken by the Australian Secondary Principals Association. Through its *Quality Teacher Programme*, the Commonwealth is supporting various activities that advance discussion and development.

There are two main aims of the developments. Firstly there is the establishment of a means for assuring the quality of teaching, and acknowledging those doing a particularly good job. Secondly, by defining the standards to which teachers and principals should aspire, there will be clarity about developmental needs. This will potentially provide greater coherence in professional development provision and uptake.

Challenges for principals:

○ How can principals remain the driving force in the development of standards for principals, their implementation and, ultimately, any assessment processes?

○ In what ways, if any, can this work on professional standards inform performance management strategies in our schools?

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Leaders Lead: Support from your associations

Principals' professional associations around the country already undertake a wide range of activities that support their members to be effective leaders of their schools.

Each of the APAPDC's four partners – the national associations – have state/territory chapters, although the actual relationships with these vary considerably. Much is done by the various groups at the national, state/territory and local levels.

Principals' associations provide members with access to a range of formal and informal networks. For some members this is the most important aspect of their involvement. The organisations often have representatives on influential committees and groups. These nominees have access to important information that they are able to share with colleagues through these networks. The networks are also the means for these representatives to conduct consultation with their peers. This kind of information flow is essential for maintaining the knowledge base that underpins quality leadership.

The discussion of initiatives below identifies broad types of support for quality leaders. It is based on input from the various associations about their various initiatives and ways of working, but generally does not identify specific programmes.

Face-to-face events and programmes

Each of the national groups has a 'flagship' conference, and there are regular conferences in the states and territories. Themes and the individual presentations address issues of concern to principals, and these conferences constitute a formal venue for sharing practice. AHISA also conducts separate targeted biennial conferences for senior staff and those responsible for pastoral care. Focussed workshops and series of workshops are the means through which specific issues are addressed. This usually occurs on a needs or opportunity basis. The professional development provided by principals' associations in relation to the GST in 2000 is a good example.

These relatively traditional forms of professional development are, of course, beset by problems common to the genre such as providing access to country people, cost, etc.

Support for new and aspiring principals

All groups take particular care of the needs of those who are new to the principalship, and to a lesser extent, those wishing to become principals.

Induction programmes, and mentoring programmes for early career principals are common. These are invariably arranged and conducted at the local (ie state/territory) level. The mentoring programmes typically result in some level of mutual learning. There are also processes through which association staff or executive members provide individual consultancy and support for members.

Concerns about a lack of suitable candidates for the principalship has seen some groups become proactive in developing programmes to support and encourage potential applicants. In some senses, this can be seen as an initial stage of collegial support that precedes *induction* (when the person first becomes a principal) and *mentoring* (in the first stages of being a principal).

Text materials

The organisations produce an array of journals, papers, handbooks and manuals that inform and guide members. The development of policies through collaborative means creates a product that is useful (the policy itself) through a process that informs, involves and engages many members. Organisation secretariats in some cases have resource collections that are available for members' use.

Internet provision of information and networking

In common with all organisations that require good communication, principals' associations have embraced the Internet in recent years. Websites are used extensively to provide information and materials to members. These can cover topics from information about professional development opportunities to association policies to particular initiatives of the relevant authority (government system, Catholic Education Office, etc.). The sites provide access to a host of relevant information through links to other websites. Most material is available to anyone, although in some cases particular private and professional information is held in a secure part of the site for 'members only'.

Either through the websites or as a separate entity, there is a range of Internet-based means for communication between members. These provide increasingly used means for discussion and sharing. There are some closed email lists for particular groups, but most of the lists and bulletin boards are open to all.

On-line conferences, piloted through the APAPDC in 1999 and 2000 and taken up more recently by other groups represent a merging of these two roles – information and interaction – of the Internet.

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Awards

Often with the assistance of outside sponsors, some of the organisations have programmes of awards for study, research or conference attendance. These represent a means of both acknowledging and promoting quality leadership.

The picture is one of a rich array of mechanisms for ongoing professional growth. Employers and other agencies also conduct a wide range of programmes to support leadership in schools. These can be programmes directed toward leadership in general or particular issues (Well-ness of Leaders, Peer Support and Appraisal, Development for Men, etc.) or programmes of leave for professional renewal, sabbatical leave and exchange programmes. There are also information and networking initiatives.

The extent to which principals gain value from the professional development programmes conducted by employers and other agencies is associated with the extent to which those directing the programmes allow them to reflect the needs and input of principals. In this context the *Leaders Lead: Strengthening the Australian school* programme can and will have a significant impact. Quality leadership in schools is on everyone's agenda. *Leaders Lead* will involve principals in discussing, learning about and sharing examples of quality leadership. The potential to guide and inform other leadership programmes and initiatives – whether being developed by professional associations or other agencies – is both substantial and irresistible.

Who would ignore the wisdom of a well-informed, committed profession?

Leaders Lead: Linking up ...

The APAPDC website

The link to *Leaders Lead* is on the front page of the APAPDC website – http://www.apapdc.edu.au. On it you will find background papers, reports, presentations and resources on quality leadership, succession planning and building leadership capacity in schools.

Contact points

APAPDC
Susan Boucher
Executive Officer
Or
Jeremy Hurley
Professional Officer

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(9 George Street)
Hindmarsh SA 5007
Phone 08 8245 9800
Fax 08 8340 7800
Email apapdc@ozemail.com.au

Peak principals associations

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)
Website: http://www.appa.asn.au/

Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA)
Website: http://www.ahisa.com.au/

Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA)
Website: http://www.aspa.asn.au/

Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools of Australia (APCSSA)
Website: http://www.apcssa.edu.au/

Leaders Lead: Some reading

Here is a set of selected resources with which many of you may be familiar. There may, however, be some new ideas. All belong in your professional library.

Bear, H. (2001) *Creating the future school.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Cuttance, P., Angus, M., Crowther, F. & Hill,P. (2001) *School Innovation: Pathway to the knowledge society.* Canberra: DETYA.

Dempster, N., Sim, C., Beere, D., Logan, L. (2000) *Teachers in Australian Schools: A Report from the 1999 National Survey.* Canberra: Australian College of Education.

Fullan, M. (1992) *Successful School Improvement.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

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Hargreaves, A., Fullan, M. (1998) *What's Worth Fighting For Out There.* New York: Teachers College Press.

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Hill, P. (2001*) What Principals need to know about teaching and learning.* IARTV Seminar Series No. 101 (March). Melbourne: IARTV.

Hopkins, D. (2000) *Teaching and Learning as the Heartland of School Improvement.* IARTV Seminar Series No. 100 (December*).* Melbourne: IARTV.

Hopkins, D. (2001) *School Improvement for Real.* London: Falmer Press.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., Steinbacj, R. (1999) *Changing Leadership for Changing Times.* Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.

McRae, D., Ainsworth, G., Groves, R., Rowland, M., Zbar, V. (2001) *PD 2000 Australia: A National Mapping of School Teacher Professional Development.* Canberra: DETYA.

Sergiovanni, T. (1998) Leadership as pedagogy, capital development and school effectiveness. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, vol. 1, issue 1, pp. 37-46.

- and websites (including Australian leadership centres)

Australian Centre for Educational Leaders www.acea.edu.au/

Australian College for Educational Research (ACER) www.acer.edu.au

Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) www.apapdc.edu.au

Australian Principals Centre www.apcentre.edu.au

Centre for Leadership and Management in Education, Griffith University www.gu.edu.au/school/ctl/clme/

Curriculum Corporation www.curriculum.edu.au

Leadership centre, Western Australia www.eddept.wa.edu.au/lc/

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/

Northern Territory DEET Strategic and Leadership Development Branch www.schools.nt.edu.au/pdb/leadership.htm

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) www.pisa.oecd.org/

School leadership development, DEET Victoria www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/pd/schlead/

School of Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University www.acu.edu.au/leadership/

South Australian Centre for Leaders in Education www.leadership.sa.edu.au/

South East Queensland Professional Development Network www.pdn.asn.au/default.html

Tasmanian Principals Institute www.discover.tased.edu.au/PI/