Session G

“School leadership and learning: An Australian overview” –
Dr. Philip McKenzie, ACER, Professor Bill Mulford, University of Tasmania, Ms Michelle Anderson, ACER.
School leadership and learning: an Australian overview

ACER Conference
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Leadership for Learning Research Group
Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania

Australian Council for Educational Research
Purposes of OECD Improving School Leadership Activity

- Why is the OECD interested in school leadership?
- What are the benefits of cross-national work?
- Two strands: analytical and case study
- 20 countries participating (17 OECD and 3 non-OECD)
OECD Concept of School Leadership

The OECD defines school leadership as:

- encompassing a variety of leader responsibilities

- leaders in formal positions of authority within a school, with a particular focus on principals, deputy principals and heads of curriculum
Role of the Country Background Report

- Describe and analyse:
  -- national context of school leadership in Australia
  -- leaders’ roles & responsibilities
  -- supply & demand trends
  -- key policy initiatives and their effects
  -- major policy challenges & issues

- In order to:
  1. Facilitate cross-national analysis
  2. Provide an accessible report of school leadership in Australia
  3. Provide a ‘state of the art’ review of school leadership issues for use in Australia
The Team

- Michelle Anderson
- Peter Gronn (Monash University)
- Bill Mulford (University of Tasmania)
- Phillip McKenzie
- Lawrence Ingvarson
- Andrew Jackson
- Elizabeth Kleinhenz
- Nick Thornton
Support and facilitation of CBR development

- DEST National Advisory Committee
- National Leadership Network
- Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC)
- ACER educational leadership group
Structure of the Country Background Report

Chapters:

1. The national context of schooling
2. Features of the school system
3. School governance and leadership
4. Enhancing learning and school leadership
5. The attractiveness of school leaders’ roles
6. Professional learning of school leaders
7. Conclusion
Features of the Australian system

- Diverse forms of school governance
- A large number of small schools
- Overall, high degree of decentralisation of decision making within an increasingly strong accountability framework
- Increasing emphasis on educational leadership, not just management
- Concerns about lack of clarity of leaders’ roles and inadequate support
How does leadership influence student learning?

- A wide range of factors involved, not one-size-fits all leadership

- It does matter which school a student attends and how that school is organised and led

- What is important is which areas (and when) leadership chooses to spend time and attention
As a single input by leadership can have multiple outcomes, they need to be able to see the whole as well as the individual elements and the relationships among them over time.
The relationship between leadership and student outcomes

- Leadership is indirectly related to student outcomes

- The important variable that links leadership, teachers’ work and student outcomes is: school capacity/organisational learning/communities of professional learners (which are developmental)
Leadership is a challenging area of work that needs ongoing support in Australia.
Example of Australian school leadership research:

Successful School Principals Project (SSPP)

Bill Mulford
Professor and Director
Leadership for Learning Research Group
Faculty of Education
University of Tasmania
Leaders need to be able to see the whole as well as the individual elements and the relationships among them.
Model of Successful School Principalship

Context

Principal Characteristics

School Capacities
- Culture
- Structure

Vision/Mission

Individual Support, Capacity & Commitment

Teaching and Learning Outcomes
- Academic
- Non-academic

Student Outcomes

Community Social Capital Outcomes

Evidence Based Monitoring and Critical Reflection

WHY

HOW

WHAT
Student success measures

- Principal and teacher perceptions of student success in a range of areas (e.g., literate, numerate, technological, self-directed, citizenship)

- Principal and teacher perception of student social success (adjusted for needs) (e.g., democratic, listeners, negotiators, responsible & empowerment)

- Actual school literacy and numeracy test results (adjusted for needs)
Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI

\( r = -0.56, \ p 0.01 \)
Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI

Economic Needs Index - ENI
Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI
Primary social success and ENI

$(r = -0.37, p 0.01)$
Primary social success and ENI

Economic Needs Index - ENI

Primary

2.00
Primary social success and ENI

![Graph showing the relationship between primary social success and Economic Needs Index (ENI). The graph includes data points and a trend line.](image)
Leadership characteristics

The 5Ps (the high-five):

- Professional
- Principled
- Promotional
- Persistent
- Planner
Principal characteristics and adjusted literacy/numeracy

Adjusted Literacy/Numeracy

Professional Principled Promotional Persistent Planner

Low Medium High
Principal characteristics and adjusted social success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Characteristic</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Planner</td>
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Adjusted Social Success Index

- Low
- Medium
- High
School capacities

**TESS**elated – a mosaic working together

**T**rust and respect

**E**mpowerment

**S**hared and monitored vision

**S**upported experimentation
School capacities and adjusted literacy/numeracy

Adjusted Literacy/Numeracy

- Low
- Medium
- High

Trust & respect
Empowerment
Shared & monitored vision
Supported experimentation

Mean

Low
Medium
High
School capacities and adjusted social success

![Graph showing the relationship between school capacities and adjusted social success. The x-axis represents different capacities such as Trust & respect, Empowerment, Shared & monitored vision, and Supported experimentation. The y-axis represents the Mean Adjusted Social Success Index, ranging from 1.00 to 5.00. Different levels of capacity are indicated by different colors: Low (blue), Medium (purple), and High (yellow).]
Successful leadership is indirect (through school capacity) and developmental
Communities of professional learners

I. COMMUNITY (+PD)
- Shared/monitored mission

II. COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONALS (+PD)
- Taking initiatives and risks, supported experimentation

III. COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNERS (+PD)
- How people are treated - trust, communication, respect, collaboration, empowerment
Principal characteristics and the school capacity of supported experimentation

Supported Experimentation

- Low
- Medium
- High

Professional | Principled | Promotional | Persistent | Planner

1.00 | 1.50 | 2.00 | 2.50 | 3.00 | 3.50 | 4.00 | 4.50 | 5.00
How can leaders be supported in focusing on student learning?

- Characteristics of the school leadership workforce in Australia
- Attractiveness of leadership positions
- Pathways to school leadership
- Responses by employers, professional associations and school leaders
Finding and keeping the next generation of leaders

Over the next four years NSW will lose up to 20,000 of its most experienced classroom teachers – about 40 per cent of the public school workforce -- through retirements or resignations.

Education chiefs are well aware of the looming crisis and have been working to ensure the 740,000 students in our public primary and secondary schools do not suffer.

... thousands of replacement teachers were unlikely to last more than five years because of the pressures of the job.
Parent accused of school death threats (3/07/07 p. 4)

Principals to get help as violence increases (20/06/07, p. 5)

Head pain brought on by changing times (25/06/07, p. 4)

FUNDING Budget cuts will take their toll School principals `scared' to object (22/06/07, p.9)

Teacher Dearth makes subject list academic (5/06/07, p. 9)

Source: Factivia Inc
Pathways to becoming a school leader in Australia

Generally, requires:

1. a four-year undergraduate qualification*
2. registration as a teacher with a regulatory authority
3. evidence of good teaching and school-wide leadership and management

*In some sectors there are specific requirements for becoming a school leader.
Framing learning along some form of career phase continuum

(Extract from school leadership framework, March 2006, National school leadership invitational conference)
## Shifts in leadership learning

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<tr>
<td>• Episodic</td>
<td>• Long-term or continuous</td>
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<td>• Over emphasis on training for a role</td>
<td>• Greater emphasis on knowing and understanding self and others</td>
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<td>• Detached, off-site course-based programs</td>
<td>• Job-embedded with increased practicum work-place learning, learning by doing and reflecting</td>
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<td>• Individual learning</td>
<td>• Collaborative problem-solving and mentoring / coaching / peer support learning</td>
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<td>• Face-to-face</td>
<td>• A mixture of e-learning and face-to-face</td>
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Challenges

1. Research is small-scale and localised
2. Focus has mainly been on the principalship and formal leadership roles
3. Little attention to cost and impact of different leadership policies and strategies – especially in regard to student outcomes
School leadership and learning: an Australian overview

Phillip McKenzie, Bill Mulford (UTAS), Michelle Anderson

Australian Council for Educational Research
Keynote Address 4

Dr. Chris Sarra
Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, Qld.

“Embracing the challenge of leadership in Indigenous education”
Minister’s Address

Hon Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Education, Victoria
Lunch