

RESEARCH CONFERENCE  
2007

Session G

Waldorf 5-6

*“School leadership and learning: An Australian overview” –*

**Dr. Philip McKenzie, ACER, Professor Bill Mulford, University of Tasmania, Ms Michelle Anderson, ACER.**

The Leadership Challenge





# ***School leadership and learning: an Australian overview***

ACER Conference  
Tuesday 14 August 2007

Phillip McKenzie, Michelle Anderson (ACER)  
and  
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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

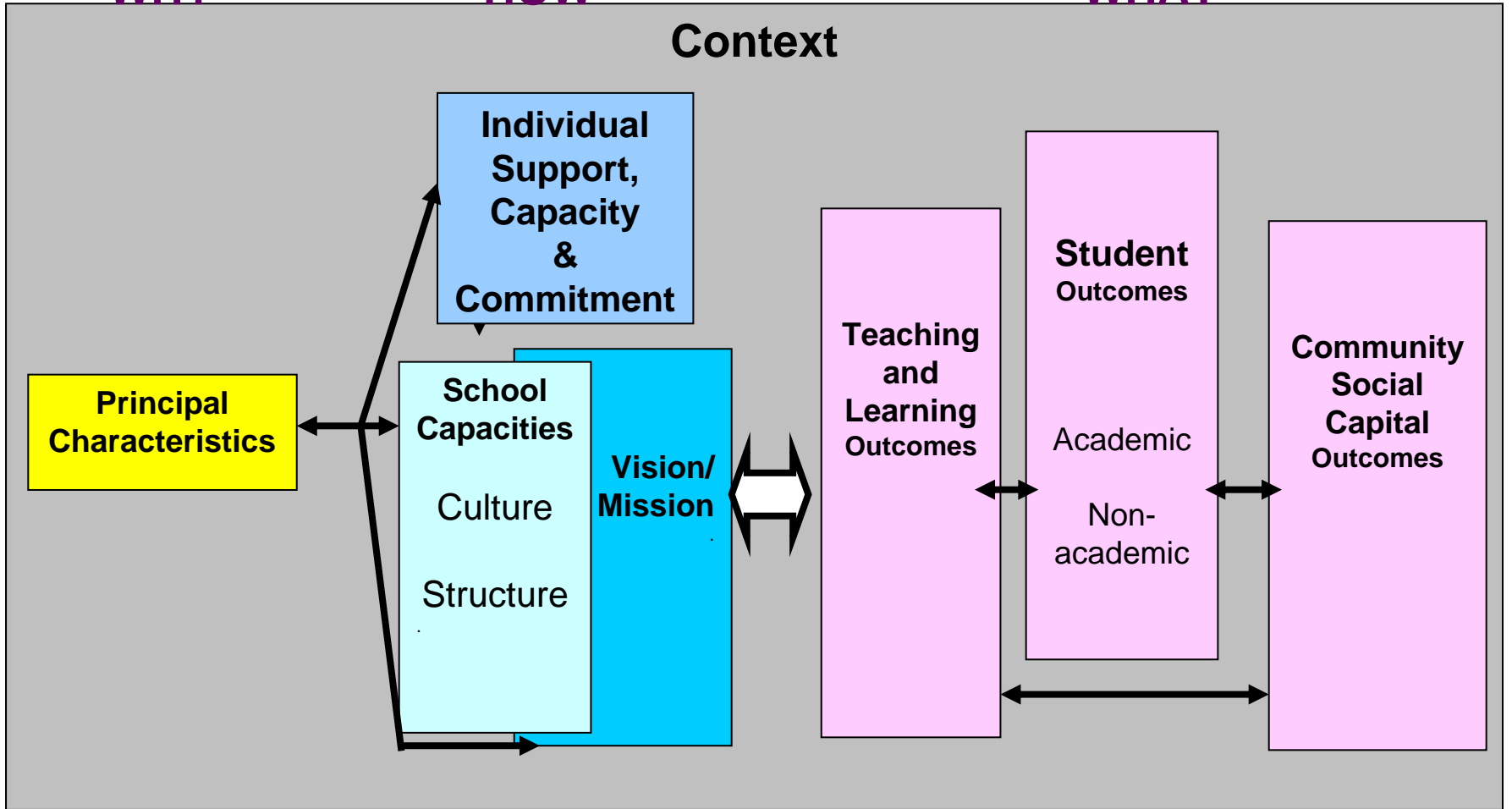


WHY

HOW

WHAT

Context





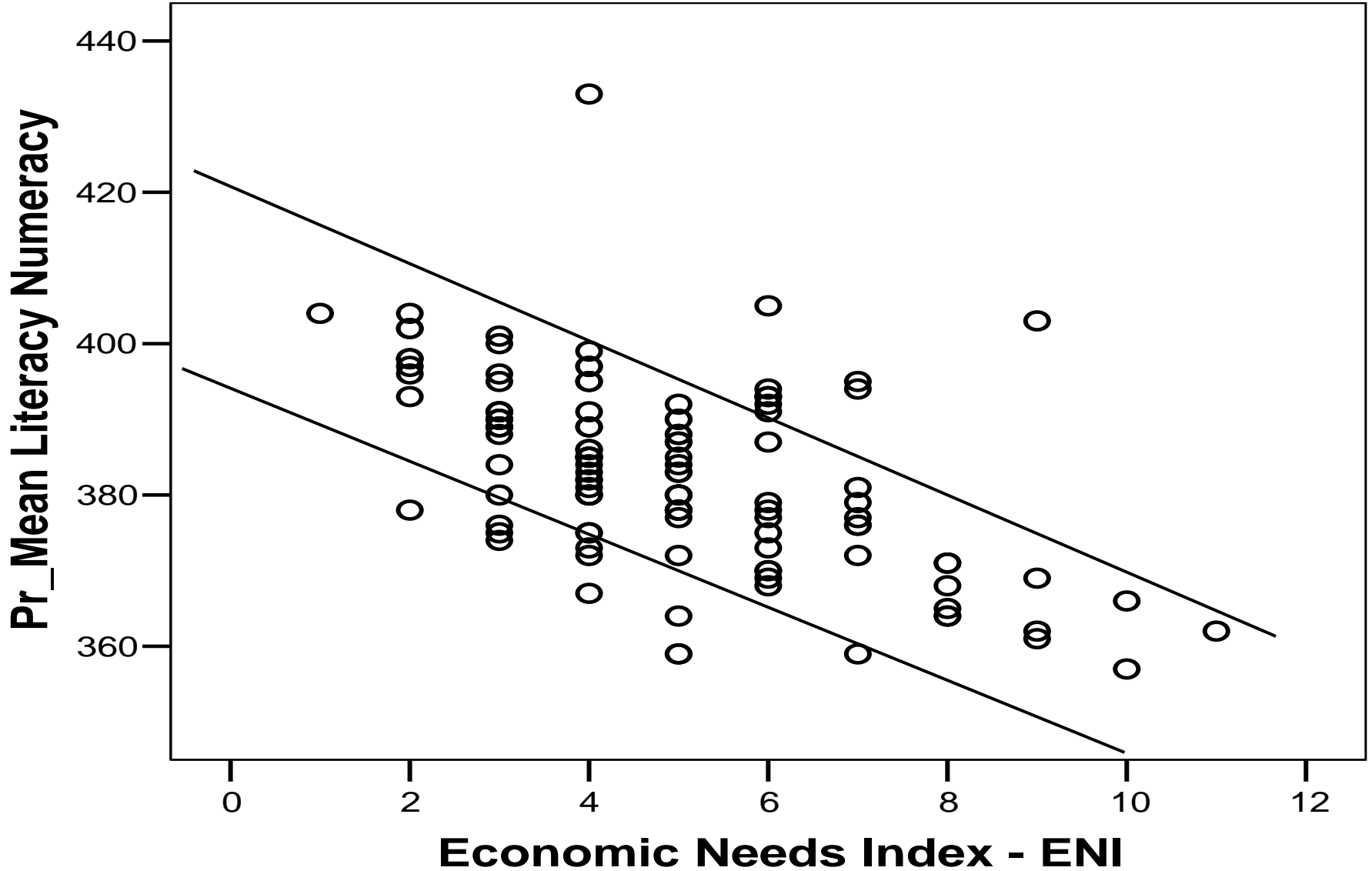
# Student success measures



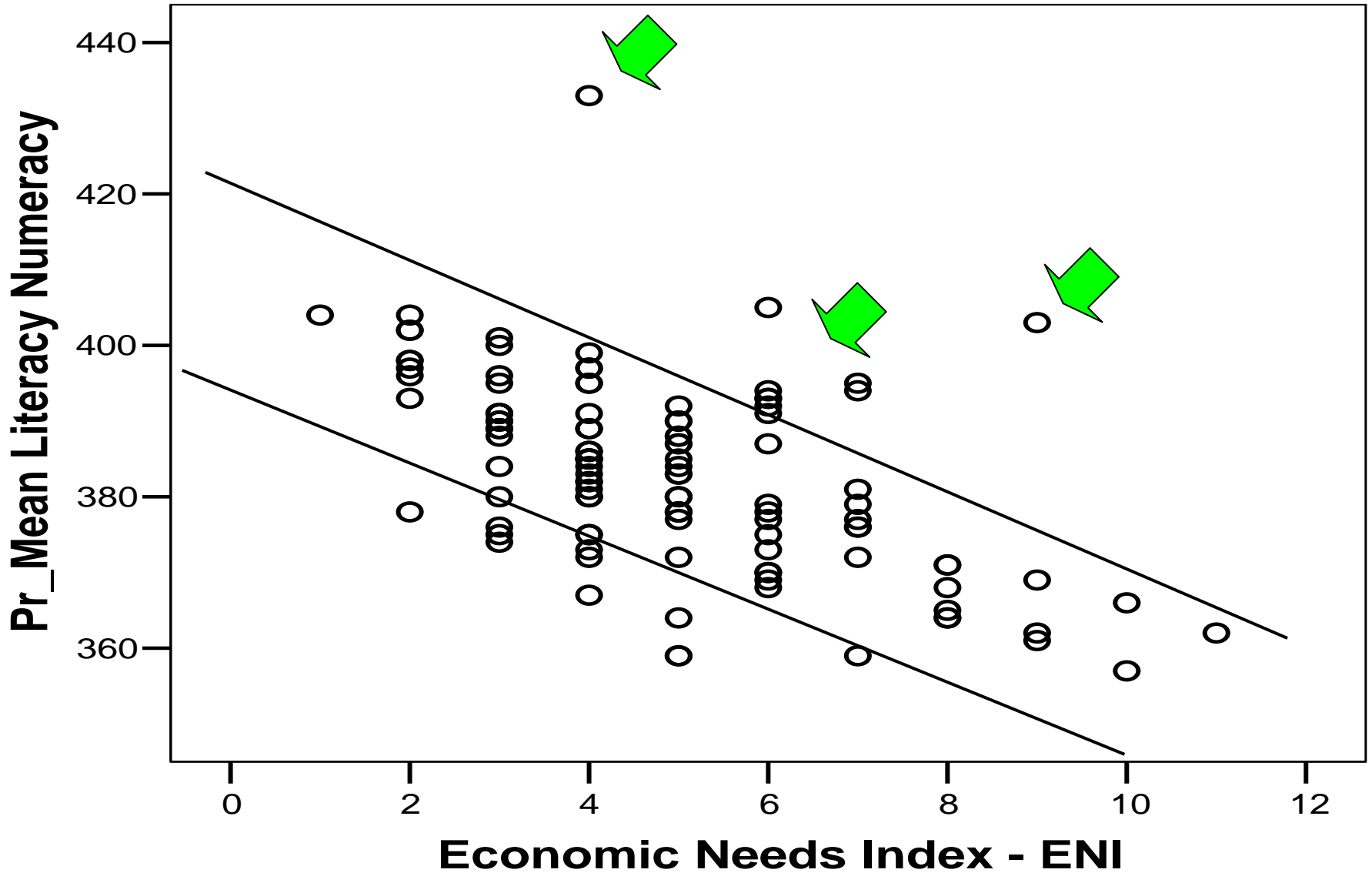
- Principal and teacher perceptions of student success in a range of areas (e.g., literate, numerate, technological, self-directed, citizenship)
- Principal and teacher perception of student social success (adjusted for needs) (e.g., democratic, listeners, negotiators, responsible & empowerment)
- Actual school literacy and numeracy test results (adjusted for needs)

# Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI

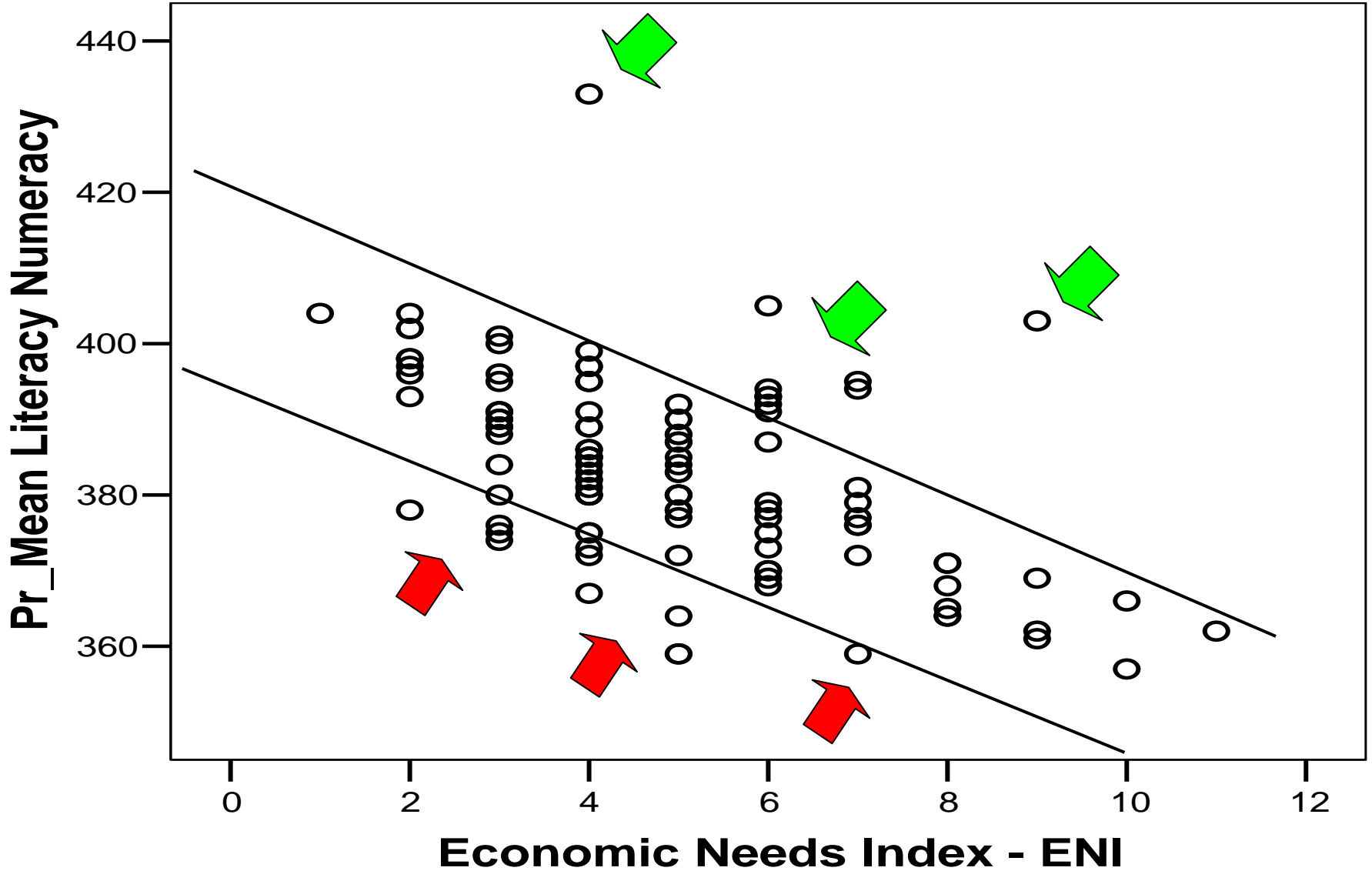
( $r = -0.56$ ,  $p = 0.01$ )



# Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI

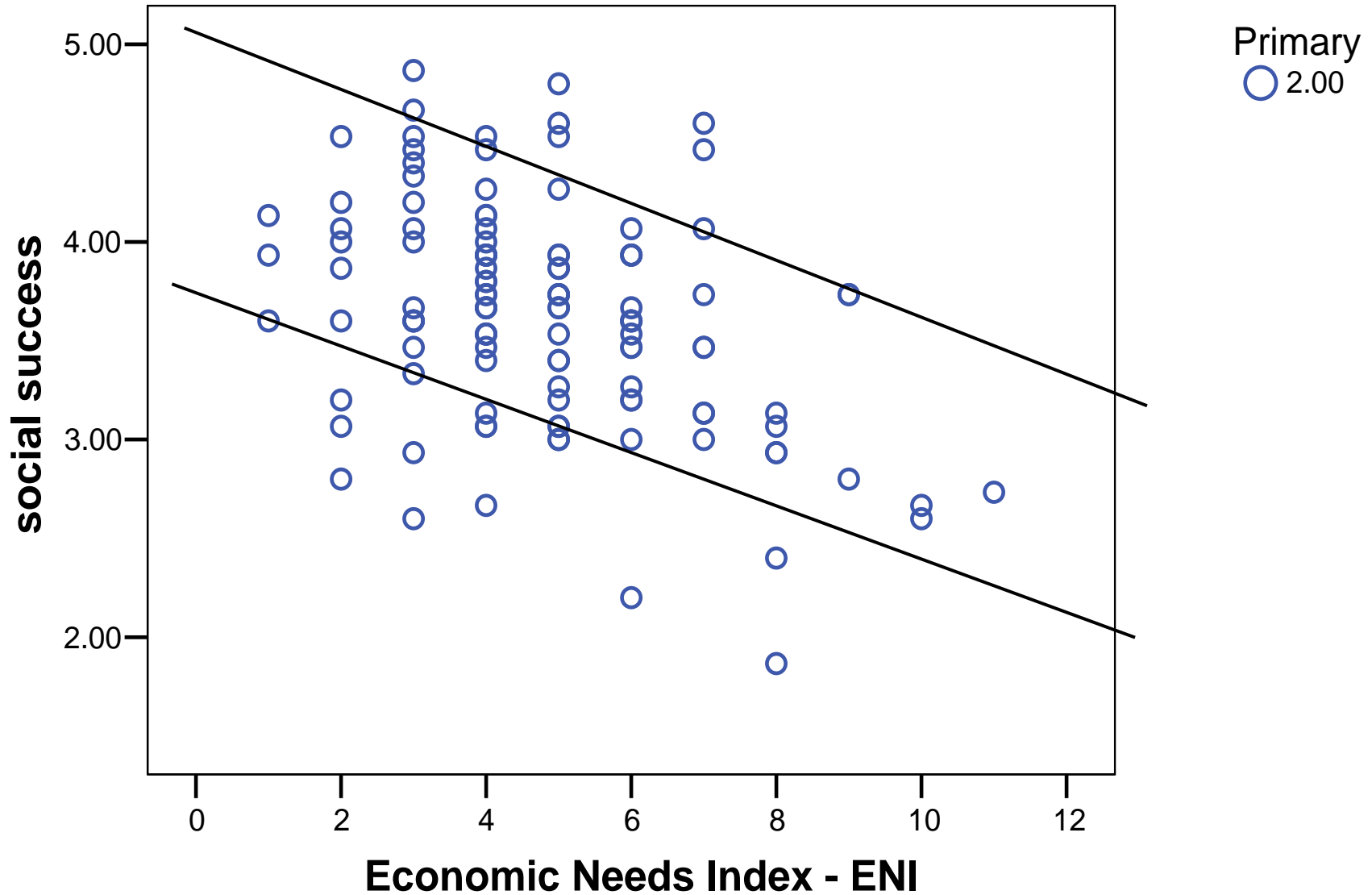


# Primary literacy/numeracy and ENI

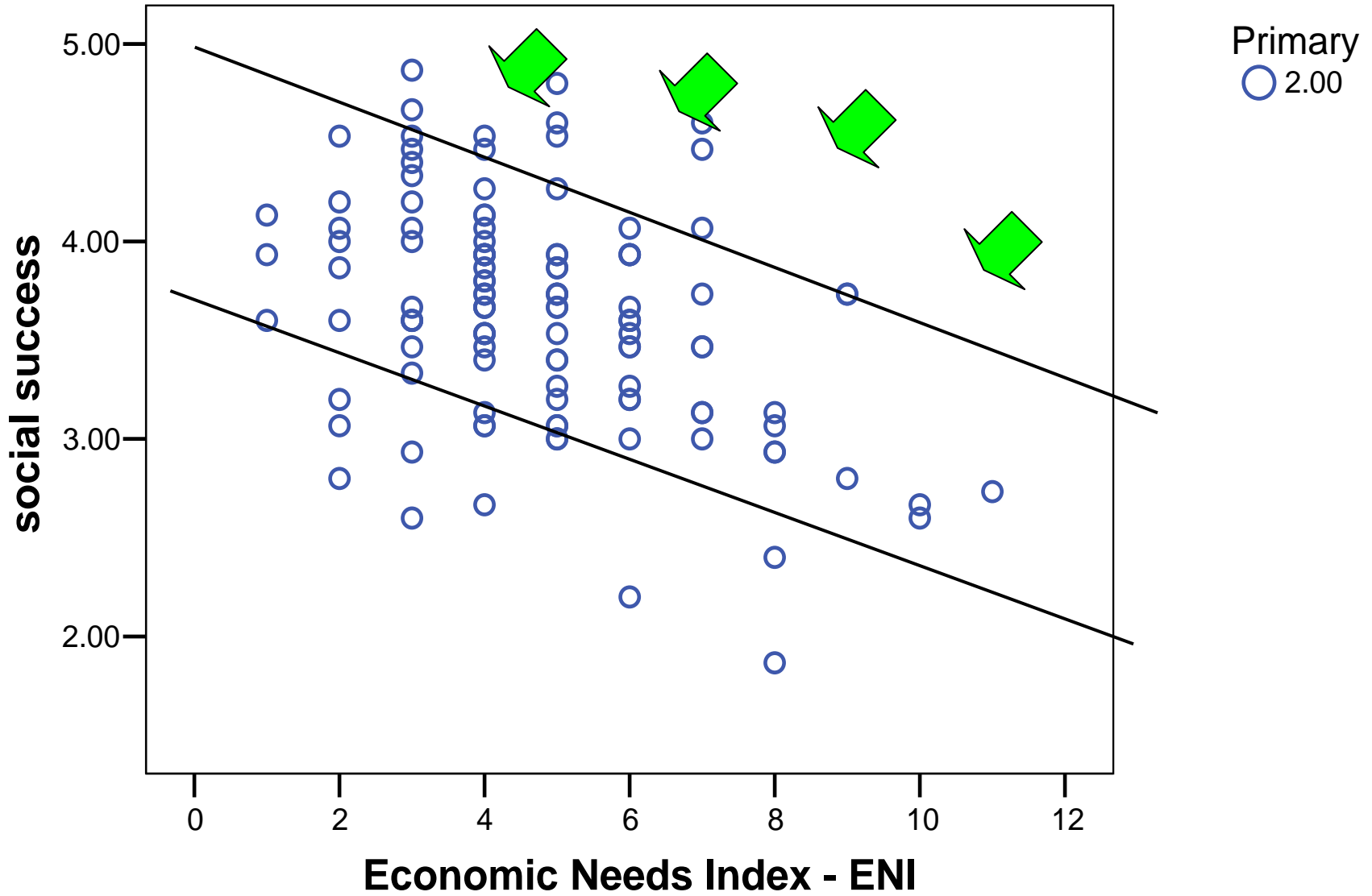


# Primary social success and ENI

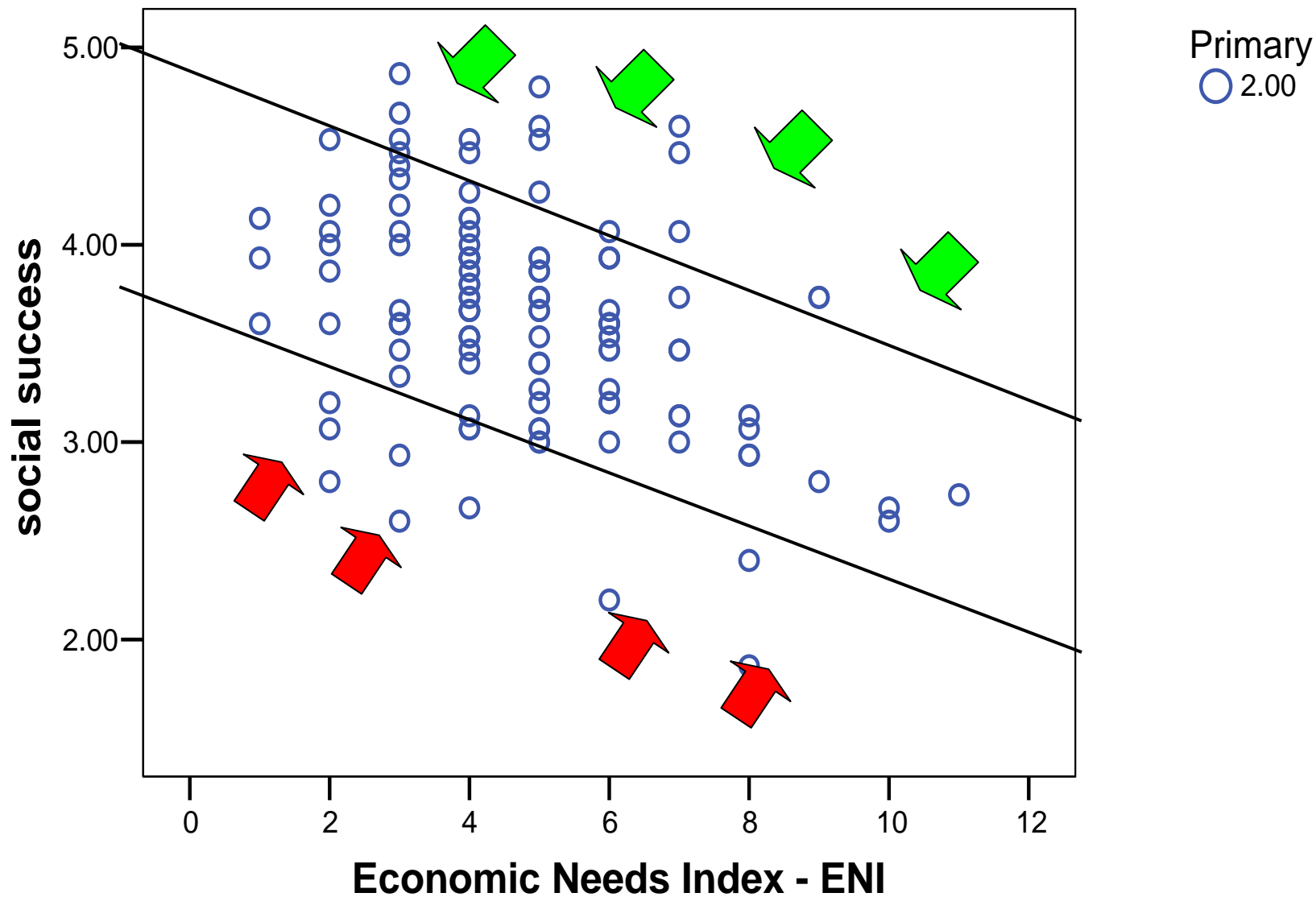
( $r = -0.37$ ,  $p = 0.01$ )



# Primary social success and ENI



# Primary social success and ENI





# Leadership characteristics

The 5P<sup>s</sup> (the high-five):

**P**rofessional

**P**rincipled

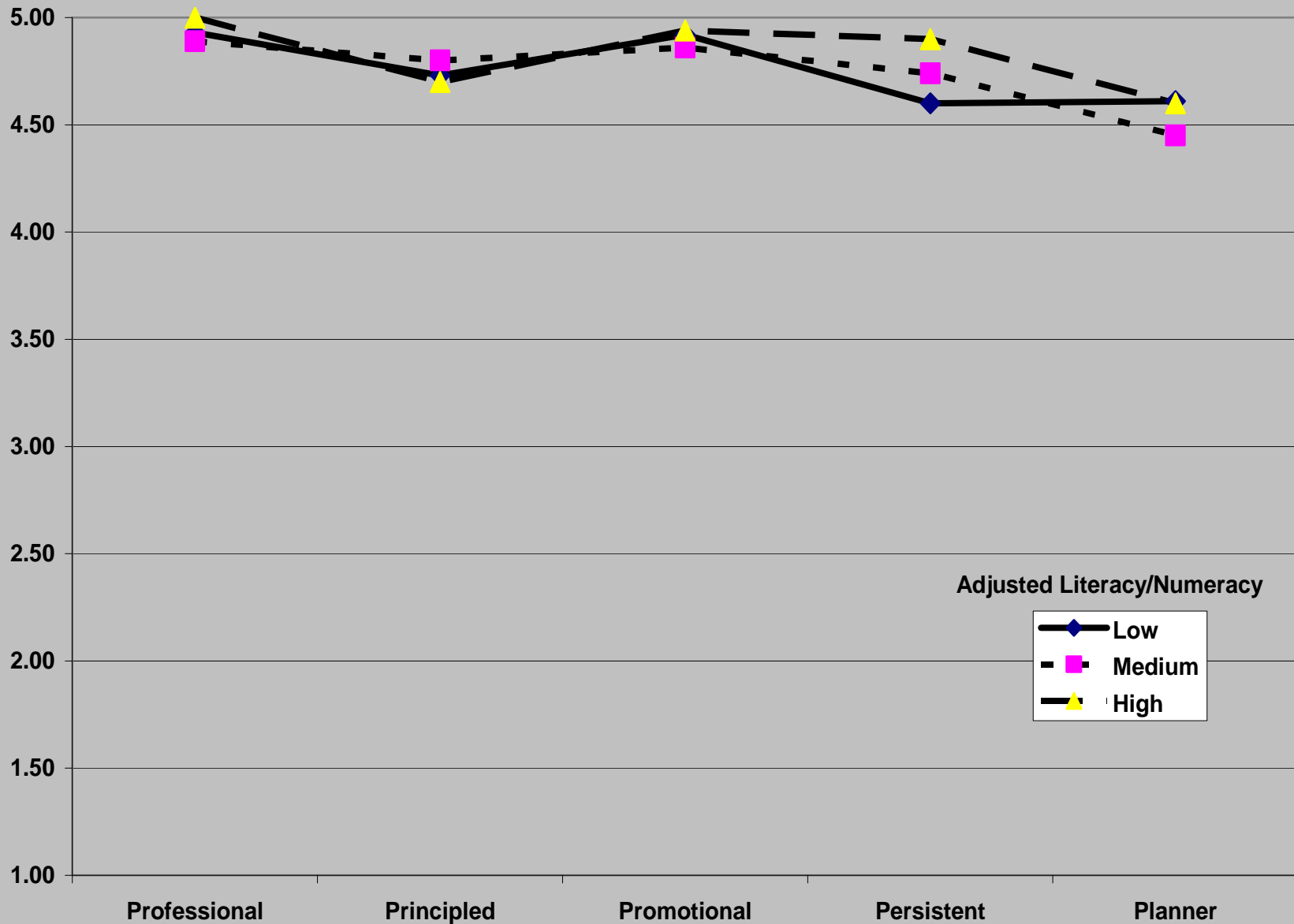
**P**romotional

**P**ersistent

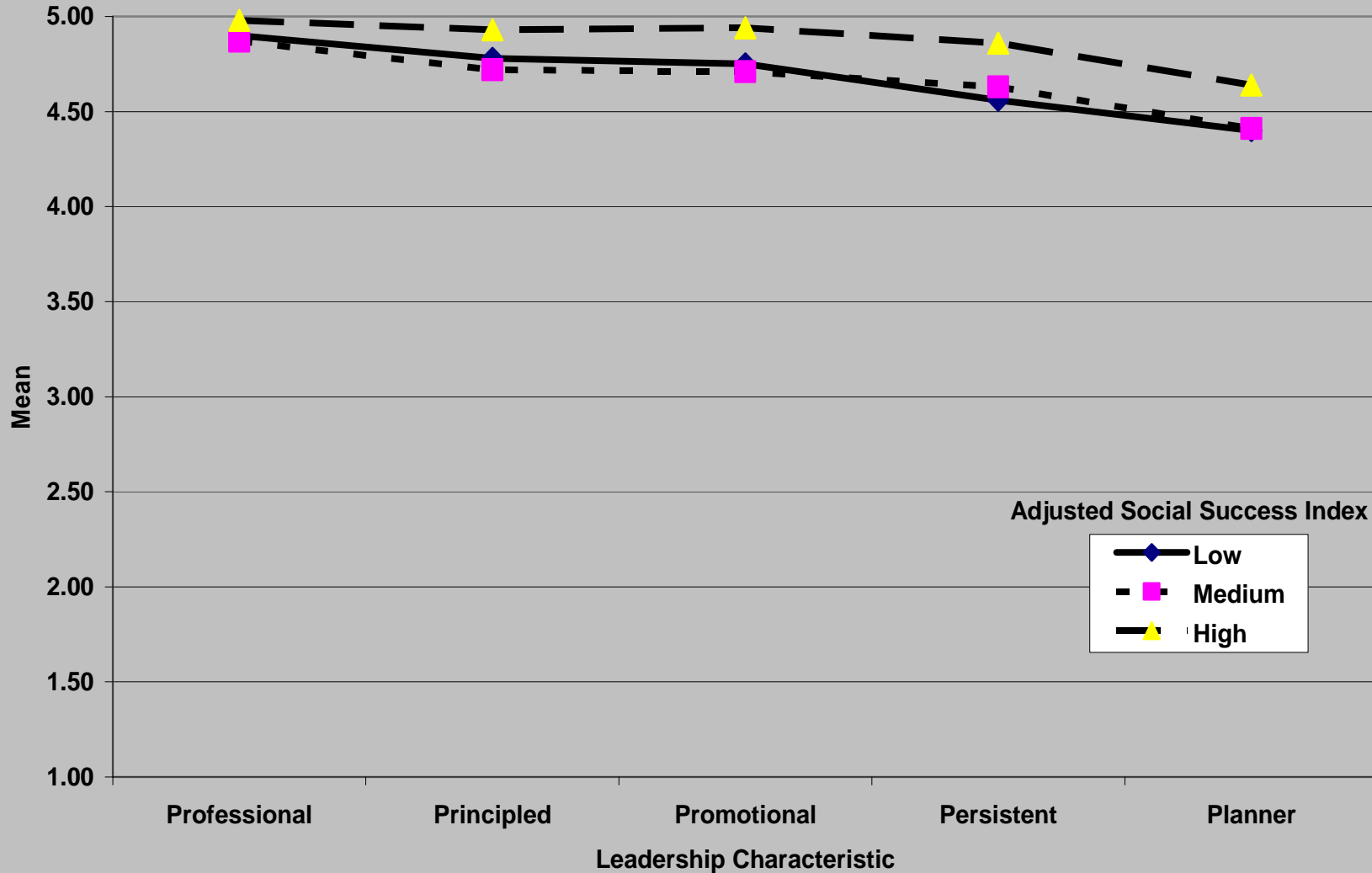
**P**lanner



# Principal characteristics and adjusted literacy/numeracy

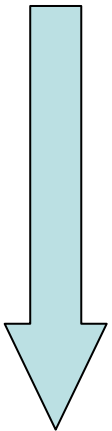


# Principal characteristics and adjusted social success



# School capacities

**TESS**elated – a mosaic working together



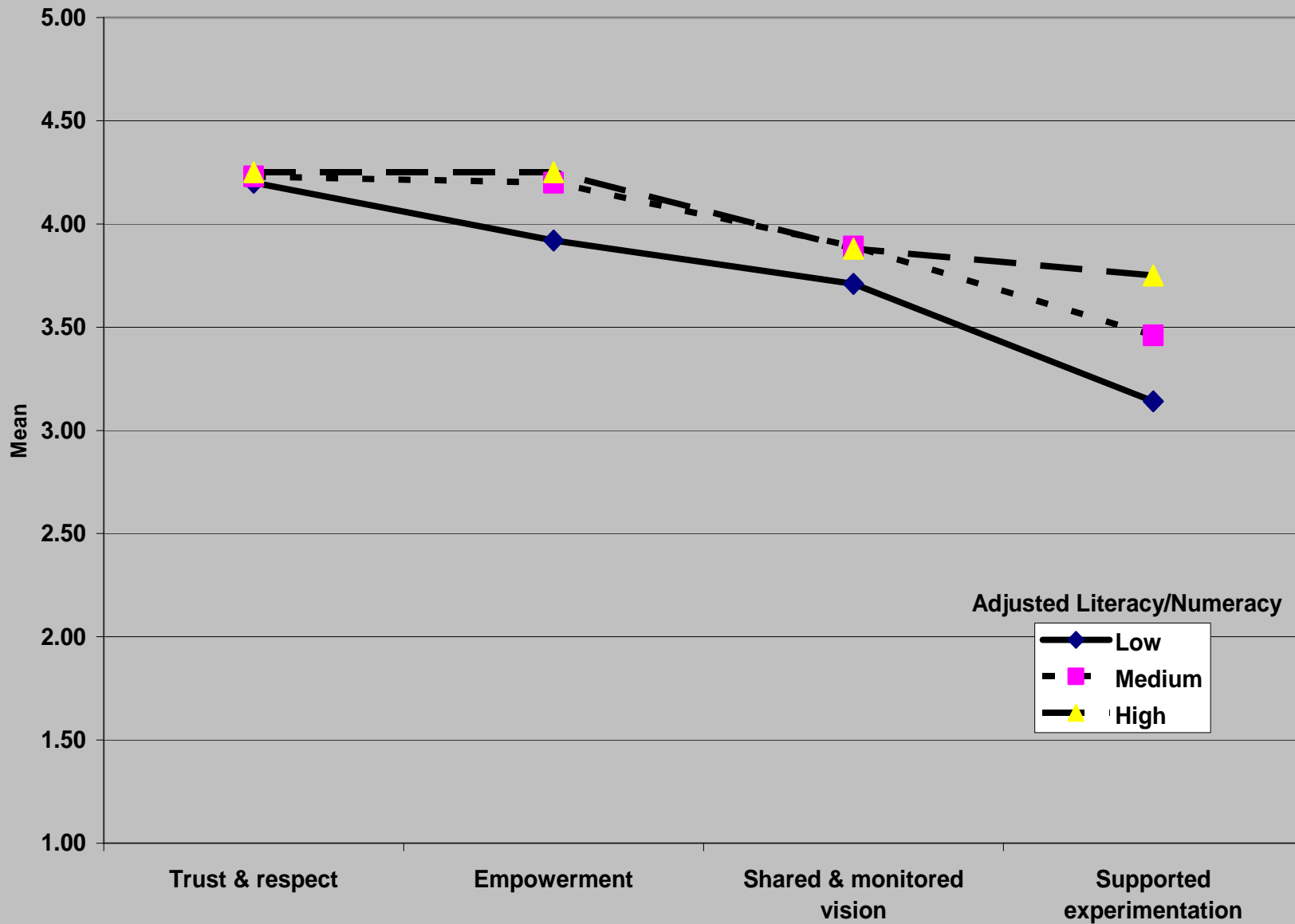
**T**rust and respect

**E**mpowerment

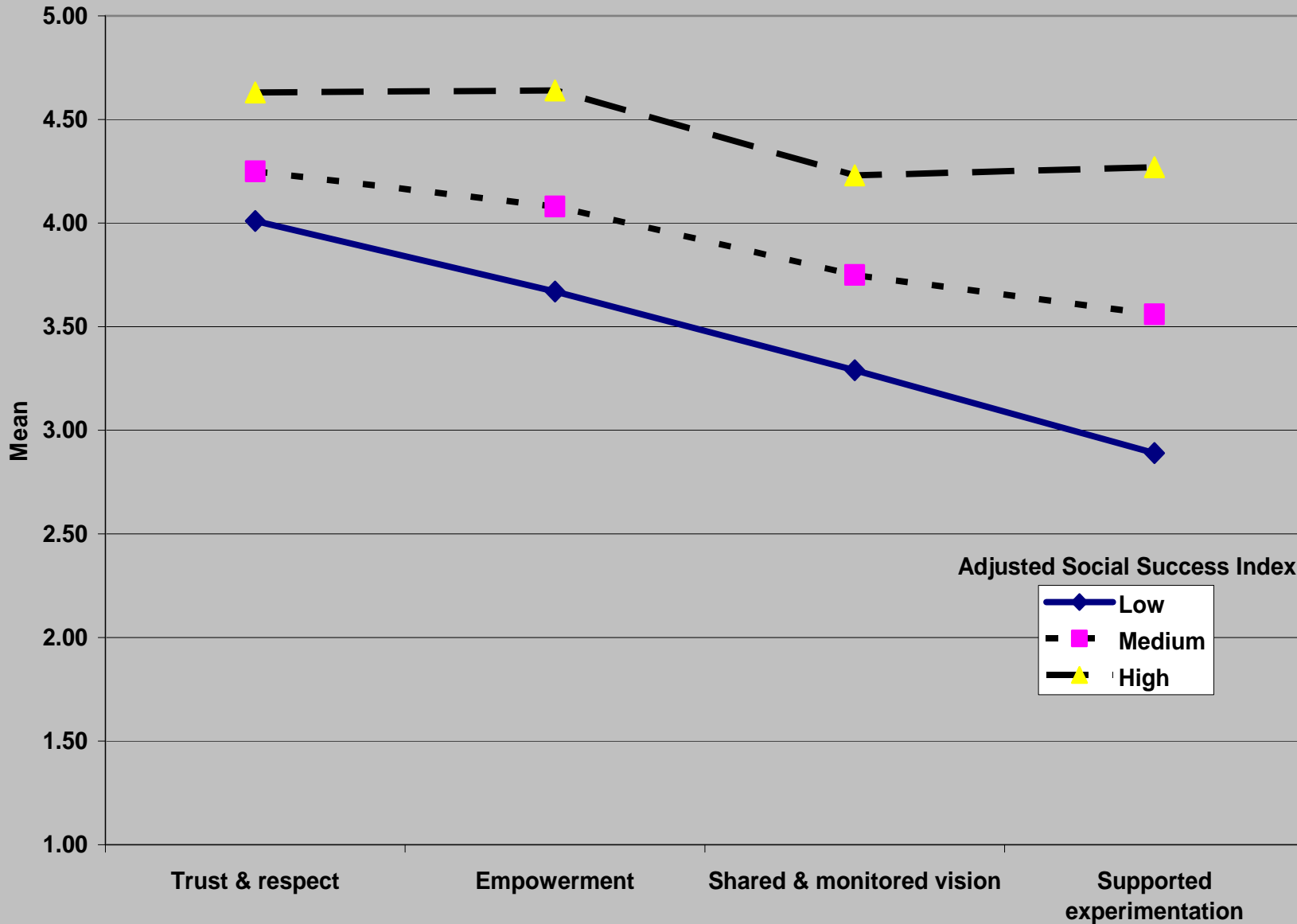
**S**hared and monitored vision

**S**upported experimentation

# School capacities and adjusted literacy/numeracy



# School capacities and adjusted social success



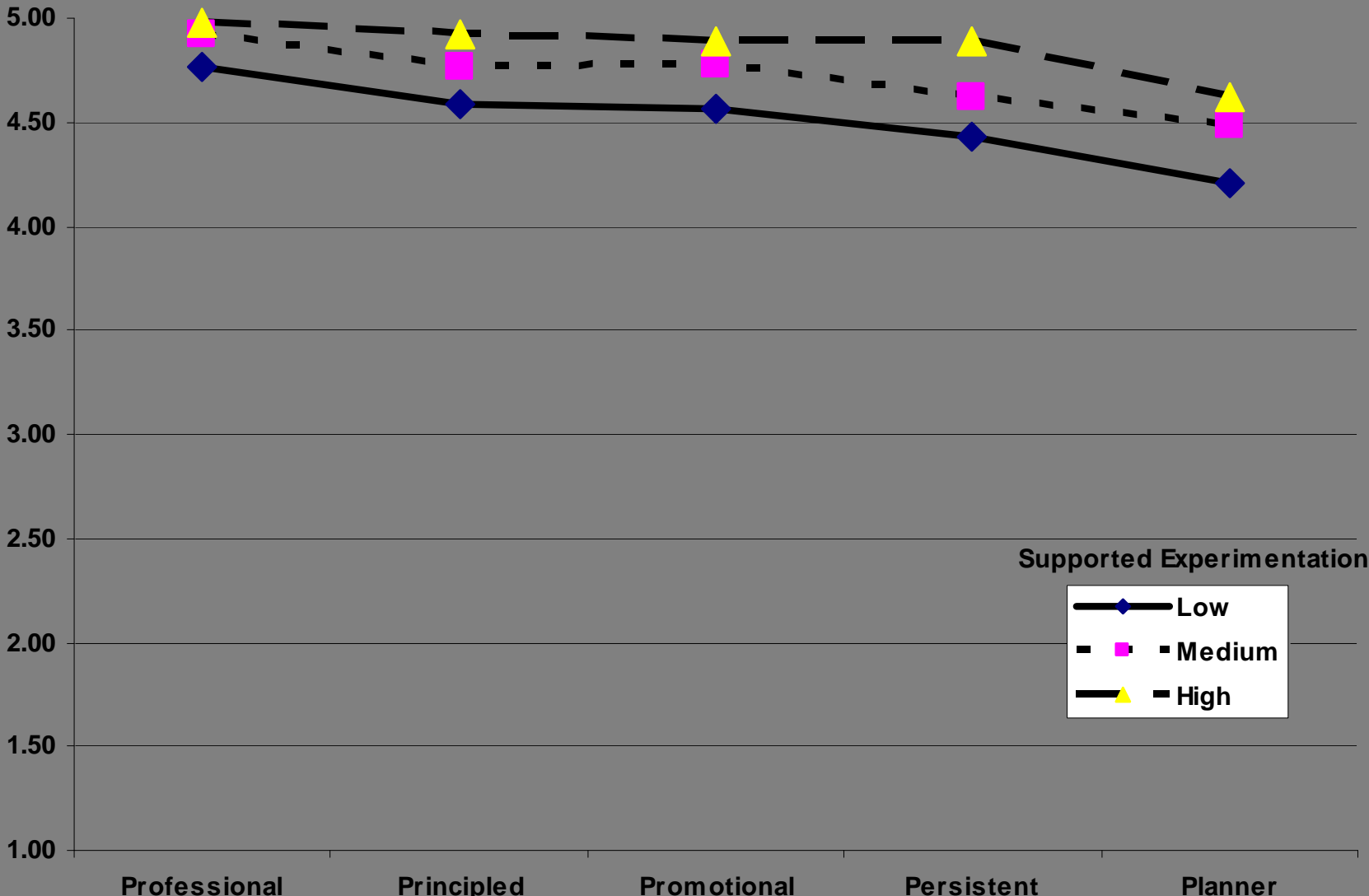


Successful leadership is indirect  
(through school capacity)  
and developmental

# Communities of professional learners



# Principal characteristics and the school capacity of supported experimentation





# 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



## **<sup>TM</sup>Daily Telegraph**

**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.**

*(2 July 2007, p. 18) Factivia Inc*



**Parent accused of school death threats (3/07/07 p. 4)**



**The West  
Australian**

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



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

**The Advertiser**

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

**The Courier-Mail**

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

Source: Factivia Inc

# Pathways to becoming a school leader in Australia

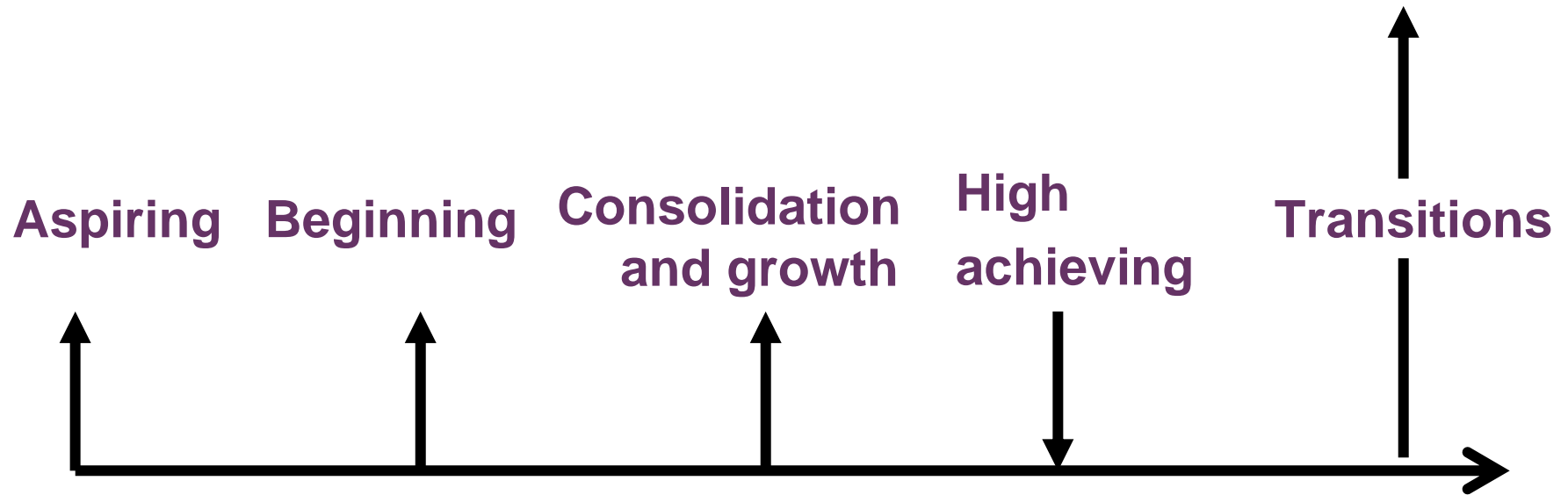


Generally, requires:

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

## From:

- Episodic
- Over emphasis on training for a role
- Detached, off-site course-based programs
- Individual learning
- Face-to-face

## To:

- Long-term or continuous
- Greater emphasis on knowing and understanding self and others
- Job-embedded with increased practicum work-place learning, learning by doing and reflecting
- Collaborative problem-solving and mentoring / coaching / peer support learning
- A mixture of e-learning and face-to-face



# 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



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**Keynote Address 4**

**Dr. Chris Sarra**

**Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, Qld.**

*“Embracing the challenge of leadership in  
Indigenous education”*

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**Minister's Address**

**Hon Bronwyn Pike MP**  
**Minister for Education, Victoria**

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**Closing Address**

**Professor Geoff Masters**

**CEO**

**Australian Council for Educational Research**

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**Lunch**

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