THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP EFFECT

JOHN MORRIS

NZEST

NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

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Contents

School leaders matter

"Their educational values, reflective strategies and leadership practices shape the internal processes and pedagogies that result in improved pupil outcomes".
— Christopher Day[1]

About the Author

John Morris served as Headmaster of Auckland Grammar School for 20 years till 2012. He was awarded a Woolf Fisher Fellowship for Outstanding Educational Leadership in 1999, and in 2013 was awarded Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year Honours' List for services to education. He recently served on the Ministerial Review for the New Zealand Teachers Council and is the Chair of the Transition Board for the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. John is on the Implementation Board for Partnership Schools, on the board of Education New Zealand and is a Commissioner for the Tertiary Education Commission. His work introducing Cambridge International Examinations to New Zealand has seen him present in Asia and the Middle East on leadership in education.

Acknowledgements

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1   Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, David Hopkins, Alma Harris, Kenneth Leithwood, Qing Gu and Eleanor Brown, *10 strong claims about successful school leadership* (NCSL, 2010).

Foreword

This desk-based research report is the first of two reports, supported by the New Zealand Education and Scholarship Trust (NZEST) in association with The New Zealand Initiative, that investigate the current major emphasis of researchers worldwide on school leadership studies.

The three reports published by NZEST/NZI in 2013 looked at teacher quality; the third report – *Teaching stars: Transforming the profession* – had a number of recommendations to raise the status of the profession, and consequently, improve the quality of teaching. The final recommendation of the report was for policymakers to be more deliberate in identifying future leaders who are 'transformers', develop more effective principal preparation programmes, and provide ongoing professional development for existing principals. These recommendations were the stimulus for this new series of two reports on school leadership. This first report focuses on the impact school leaders have on student and school improvement generally, describes how this impact translates to improved outcomes, and discusses different styles of leadership and their respective influence. The New Zealand context is also discussed, but in-depth research on this topic related to New Zealand is meagre.

The second report will outline the challenges facing school leaders in the 21st century, investigate and suggest policies to improve school leadership in New Zealand by looking at selected overseas studies, discuss the recent trend overseas for 'system' leadership, and finally outline policies to make effective school leadership sustainable.

As countries strive to reform education systems and adapt their systems to the needs of contemporary society as well as improve student results, expectations for school and school leaders are changing, and hence, school leadership is now high on education policy agendas.

The move to greater decentralisation and more individual school autonomy in decision-making, and a consequential increase in accountability, have raised the importance of school leadership. The fact that schools are generally serving more diverse student populations at the same time as being expected to lift overall student performance has led to massive changes in the various and demanding roles that principals play.

Extensive research on school leadership by Christopher Day and Kenneth Leithwood has confirmed the significance of the principal in raising student achievement:

The education research community has, at long last, produced a sufficient body of empirical evidence to persuade even the most sceptical that school leadership matters.[2]

The result of their research has been backed by the vast majority of other researchers in the field, and the result is that governments and foundations around the world are devoting unparalleled resources to developing aspiring school leaders and providing support and professional development for those already in the role. It is not a coincidence that these measures overlap with increasing pressure for state-funded schools to be more publicly accountable.

School leadership is therefore a high priority issue.

The aim of these two reports is to raise school leadership in New Zealand to a similarly significant policy issue as is currently the situation in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries because our efforts to improve education in New Zealand will not succeed until we get serious about strengthening school leadership and making it sustainable.

Fenton Whelan puts it well:

Student achievement in a school almost never exceeds the quality of its leadership and management … and improvements in performance almost never occur in the absence of good leadership … Moreover, in the absence

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2   Christopher Day and Kenneth Leithwood (eds), *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective*, Studies in Educational Leadership, Vol. 5 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), p. 1.

of good leadership, school systems will struggle to implement many of the other reforms that might improve performance in schools.[3]

This is a major challenge for New Zealand as currently, "There appears to be a near-absolute reliance on near-accidental intrinsic motivators to encourage potential leaders to become aspirant leaders".[4] On top of this, there is no policy to encourage retiring expert principals to refocus their engagement with the sector and extend their service to education.

School leadership is a complex and demanding dual role. The principal has to lead the school as an organisation on the one hand, while providing professional leadership to a group of teachers on the other. A successful principal, therefore, must first be able to balance the need for school direction while giving leeway to autonomous professionals, and second, use the structures and procedures necessary for success while creating a shared achievement-oriented culture within the school.

The centrality of school leadership to student and overall school improvement has now been well documented and well accepted. Hence, it is urgent for the New Zealand government to deliver a significant investment of money and intelligence into New Zealand's school leadership professionalisation policy to ensure expert leadership now and into the future.

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3   Fenton Whelan, <u>Lessons learned: How good policies produce better schools </u>(Fenton Whelan, 2009), pp. 77–96.

4   Reynold Macpherson, "How secondary principals view New Zealand's preparation and succession strategies: Systematic professionalization or amateurism through serial incompetence?" *Leading and Managing 15*(2) (2009), p. 56.

The New Zealand Context

New Zealand has 2,538 schools serving 760,000 students. This means there are 2,538 school leaders practising in New Zealand. Eighty-four percent of New Zealand's schools are state-funded, 13% integrated (mainly faith-based schools), and 3% private.

New Zealand's state schools are self-managing and have been since the introduction of the 'Tomorrow's Schools' legislation in 1989. This means that while principals in New Zealand have greater autonomy than principals in most other countries of the world, they also have a particularly wide-ranging remit that includes overseeing administration; ensuring the quality of teaching and learning; maintaining good relations with the school's board of trustees; and being fully involved in property, finances and HR matters. In short, New Zealand principals are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day management of everything that happens in their school.

This is a major difference between New Zealand and other OECD countries. Our devolved system requires principals to act as chief executives of their boards of trustees to support the development of policy and then take on the responsibility of implementing those policies. This includes setting the direction of the school in ways that reflect the needs and values of the local community the school serves.

In this matter, New Zealand school contexts are more varied than those of most other OECD countries:

- Almost 50% of New Zealand's schools are located in provincial or rural areas;
- 40% of New Zealand's primary schools have fewer than 100 students;
- Many primary schools have 'teaching principals';
- Many large city secondary schools have more than 2,000 students; and
- There is an increasingly diverse student population and a resultant widening range of student learning needs.

Hence, the power of context is particularly significant in New Zealand, and principals must identify, understand and meet the specific needs of their community.

This highlights the vital need for excellent principals in a self-managing system. Many principals run multimillion-dollar businesses, deal with a highly educated workforce and strong and assertive unions, and are accountable for the quality of teaching and learning – an ongoing tension between the breadth of the principal's role and its desirable focus on pedagogical leadership that is not easily overcome.

New Zealand expects a lot of its principals, yet the only prerequisite for principalship is that the applicant be a New Zealand-registered teacher. Given the vital role that principals play in New Zealand, this is a major concern along with the fact that New Zealand loses 10–15% of its principals annually, and not just because the workforce is greying, although the age of existing principals is predominantly between 55–60 years, and not many stay beyond 60.[5]

This, coupled with a worrying shortage of talented applicants for principal positions, should signal to the government the urgent need to attract principal candidates with the qualities and talents the job requires – strong, creative, effective and inspiring principals who can create an environment supportive of better teaching and learning.

The need for effective school leaders in New Zealand is more vital than ever, yet little has been done over the years to address the attrition rate of principals or to ensure uniformly strong succession planning for the next generation of principals. New Zealand is also weak in projecting forward to identify and strengthen the skill sets of aspiring principals before they become the school leaders of the future.

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5   Tom Parsons, "Principalship: The endangered species" (SPANZ, 2012), p. 28.

New Zealand is lagging behind the rest of the world in this realisation with only two principal preparation programmes operating.

The University of Auckland's 'First Time Principals Programme' is a nationwide 12-month induction programme for new principals. The programme is designed to meet the individual needs of first-time principals. It also seeks to develop the professional and personal skills and capabilities of new school leaders so they can work effectively with their colleagues and communities to further improve teaching and learning in New Zealand's schools.

Waikato University offers the 'National Aspiring Principals Programme' (NAPP). The focus of the programme is on developing adaptive, culturally responsive, and digitally literate leaders through inquiry learning and building their understanding of the research base around leadership.

It can be argued strongly that to succeed as a school leader in a highly autonomous system like New Zealand requires more than what is currently being offered by both these courses. In addition, both programmes are self-referring and do not require interviewers to judge the potential of the aspirants for school leadership.

The limitations of the current Waikato programme were identified by Eileen Piggot-Irvine and Howard Youngs in their 2011 evaluation of the course.[6] They found that participants expressed frustration that their initial needs analysis had not led to the expected individual programme tailoring, and that they needed a greater emphasis on management skills such as knowledge of employment law and school funding. Evaluators also found that the course's workshops contained little about key aspects of organisational learning such as tackling problems, dealing with conflict, working in non-defensive ways with people, and the resultant trust development.[7]

Pontso Moorosi and Tony Bush (2011) also investigated the content of leadership programmes in New Zealand and found that there were three critical areas missing from the leadership development programmes operating at that time: human resource management, financial management, and school improvement. They suggested that future leadership programmes must incorporate these three areas to ensure aspiring principals are fully versed in the responsibilities of the role.[8]

Recently, Victoria University of Wellington introduced a principal preparation programme that leads to a master's degree in secondary school leadership. This programme shows promise in that it has a larger practical component than other programmes and also covers the business side of leading a school. It also has competitive entry by interview, which should strengthen the talent entering the programme.

There are currently no programmes in New Zealand to re-energise and upskill those principals already in schools. The recent government initiative 'Investing in Educational Success' is an encouraging start to rectifying this, but more needs to be done to ensure a constant supply of innovative and inspiring school leaders.

This view is backed by research by Reynold McPherson, who argues:

NZ largely relies on education leaders "learning on the job" … [there is] a shallow and uneven access to a limited range of preparatory and succession learning opportunities for principals.[9]

Only when New Zealand has such a cohort will there be significant change and improvement in student outcomes because schools are the locus of change and principals the change agents. Change enough schools and you change the system – such is the importance of school leadership and getting the right people to become principals.

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6   Eileen Piggot-Irvine and Howard Youngs, "Aspiring principal development programme evaluation in New Zealand", *Journal of Educational Administration* 49(5) (2011).

7   Cathy Wylie, Graeme Cosslett and Jacky Burgon, *NZ principals: Autonomy at a cost* (NZCER, 2014).

8   Pontso Moorosi and Tony Bush, *School leadership development in Commonwealth countries: Learning across the boundaries.* International Studies in Educational Administration, 39(3) (2011).

9   Reynold Macpherson, "How secondary principals view New Zealand's preparation and succession strategies: Systematic professionalization or amateurism through serial incompetence?" op. cit. p. 44.

Leadership and Management

Leadership is all about organisational improvement; more specifically it is about establishing widely agreed upon and worthwhile directions for the organisation, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions … it is about direction and influence … Stability is the goal of what is often called management. Improvement is the goal of leadership.
— Kenneth Leithwood, et al.[10]

Leadership is about having a vision and articulating, ordering priorities, getting others to go with you, constantly reviewing what you are doing, and holding onto things you value. Management is about the functions, procedures, and systems by which you realise the vision.
— Christopher Day[11]

Leadership is concerned with gaining commitment to a set of values, statements of "what ought to be", which then become the heart of the culture of the school.
— Hedley Beare, Brian J. Caldwell and Ross H. Millikan[12]

Leadership is a term full of ambiguity and a range of interpretations. According to leadership guru James MacGregor Burns, it is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on Earth.[13] The large number of meanings that may be discerned in print and in everyday use is confusing, to say the least. Perhaps it is best to accept that there is no one 'correct' meaning, and that differences in definition reflect different contexts as well as different perspectives.

There has, however, been significant debate about the relative roles of leadership and management in schools. There is no argument about relative importance. Effective school leadership must involve both leadership and management. Without leadership, a school may do things in the right way but may not be doing the right things. Without the capacity and organisational power to do things right, leadership alone is worth very little and can, indeed, lead to frustration if the right ideas are developed but there is no mechanism for their effective implementation.

A well-managed school runs smoothly, efficiently and reliably. A well-led school has, in addition, a sense of direction. It knows what it should be doing, is confident of its values, has a sense of the world for which it is preparing its students, and is concerned with their welfare and progress.

Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision – its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, statistics, methods, timetables and routines – its practice is a science.
— Pat Townsend and Joan Gebhardt[14]

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10 Kenneth Leithwood, Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, Alma Harris and David Hopkins, *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning* (NCSL, 2006), p. 11.

11 Christopher Day, "Beyond transformational leadership", *Educational Leadership* 57(7) (April 2000), p. 57.

12 Hedley Beare, Brian J. Caldwell and Ross H. Millikan, *Creating an excellent school* (Routledge, 1989), p. 123.

13   James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (Harper & Row, 1978).

14 Pat Townsend and Joan Gebhardt, "Leadership and inspiring change", *Journal for Quality and Participation* 17(2) (March 1994).

However, leadership and management must go hand in hand. They are not the same thing. But they are necessarily linked and complementary. The manager's job is to plan, organise and coordinate. The leader's job is to inspire and motivate. The key thrust of leadership – improvement – and the key thrust of management – stability – have therefore a synergistic relationship because it is difficult to initiate improvement from an unstable foundation.

Table 1 highlights the different emphases of school leaders and managers.

Table 1: Different emphases of school leaders and managers

School Leaders	School Managers
Do the right thing	Do things right
Interested in effectiveness	Interested in efficiency
Innovate	Administer
Develop	Maintain
Focus on people	Focus on systems and structure
Inspire trust	Rely on control
Align people with a direction	Organise staff
Emphasise philosophy, values, shared goals	Emphasise tactics, structure and systems
Have a long-term view	Have a short-term view
Ask what and why	Ask how and when
Challenge the status quo	Accept the status quo
Focus on the future	Focus on the present
Have their eyes on the horizon	Have their eyes on the bottom line
Develop vision and strategies	Develop detailed steps and timetables
Seek change	Seek predictability and order
Take risks	Avoid risks
Inspire people to change	Motivate people to comply with standards
Use person-to-person influence	Use status to influence
Inspire others to follow	Require others to comply
Take initiative to lead	Are given a position

Source: UK's National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Programme (NCTL, 2006), pp. 2–3.

School leaders invariably combine management and leadership activities in their daily work, and therefore, leadership practice must be about both. In effect, leadership and management are at different ends of the same continuum and both are indispensable.

Review of International Literature on the Impact of School Leadership on Student and School Improvement

Whatever else is disputed about this complex area of activity known as school improvement, the centrality of leadership in the achievement of school level change remains unequivocal.
— Mel West and David Jackson[15]

Leadership has long been seen as a key ingredient in organisational effectiveness in business, politics and almost every other aspect of public life, but only recently has it become a major policy issue in education. School leadership issues have recently gravitated from the margins of school reform to an absolute, essential policy to-do.

In large measure, this has occurred because of changes to the education system centred on the introduction of more school-based management, greater autonomy for schools, and an ever-increasing responsibility placed on school leaders to safeguard and enhance the quality of education. On top of this is the recognition that the skills and knowledge children require in the 21st century are becoming more complex and the range of issues schools are expected to address is growing. Inevitably, this has led to the growth in importance of the school leader.

Given that New Zealand has one of the most autonomous state education systems in the world, the role and importance of the school leader has taken on especially great significance, more so since the introduction of 'Tomorrow's Schools' in 1989.

This focus on the importance of the school leader has spawned a vast literature on school leadership effectiveness, much of which has emanated from North America, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the Netherlands and some Scandinavian countries. In general, these studies have shown that leadership is a central factor in school quality.

Early research by Wilbur B. Brookover on this topic found leadership to be a key characteristic of school effectiveness.[16] Hedley Beare in Australia found that "outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools".[17] More recent research by Stephan Huber has proven without doubt that schools classified as successful possess competent and sound leadership: "School leaders matter, they are educationally significant; school leaders do make a difference".[18]

Other researchers on school effectiveness have found relationships between school effectiveness, outcomes and variables such as principals developing a clear shared mission and a focus on learning and teaching in the school[19] and strong purposeful leadership by the principal.[20]

Philip Hallinger and Ronald Heck have researched in depth the principal's contribution to school effectiveness and developed a framework consisting of four areas through which school leaders may influence

15 Mel West and David Jackson, *Developing school leaders: A comparative study of leader preparation programmes*, Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference (New Orleans: 1–5 April 2002).

16 Wilbur B. Brookover, *School social systems and student achievement: Schools can make a difference* (Greenwood Pub Group, 1979).

17 Hedley Beare, Brian J. Caldwell and Ross H. Millikan, *Creating an excellent school*, op. cit. p. 99.

18 Stephan Huber (1997), quoted in Stephan Huber, *Preparing school leaders for the 21st century: An international comparison of development programs in 15 countries* (London/New York: RoutledgeFalmer (Taylor&Francis), 2004).

19 Charles Teddlie and Samuel Stringfield, *Schools make a difference: Lessons learned from a 10-year study of school effects* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993); Daniel U. Levine and Lawrence W. Lezotte, *Unusually effective schools: A review and analysis of research and practice* (Madison, Wisconsin: The National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, 1990).

20 Pam Sammons, Josh Hillman and Peter Mortimore, *Key characteristics of effective schools: A review of school effectiveness research*. Report by the Institute of Education, University of London, for the Office for Standards in Education (1995).

the school system: purpose and goals, structure and social networks, people, and organisational culture.[21]

Viviane Robinson's research in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Israel, the Netherlands and Singapore identifies several key leadership practices that have a powerful impact on student achievement.[22]

Leithwood has written extensively on school leadership and its impact. In the paper *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*, he and his co-authors reviewed the literature in the context of large-scale studies based on robust empirical evidence and concluded that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning.[23]

Further research by Leithwood, et al. confirms all the above assertions and further argues that schools may not be able to achieve a successful turnaround of learner achievement in the absence of 'talented leadership', since leadership effectively unleashes the already existing talent within the school.[24]

In her paper *The effective principal*, Pamela Mendels of the Wallace Foundation in the United States has analysed 70 previous reports of the foundation on effective school leadership and highlighted the key practices of an effective principal that are integral to the process of raising student achievement.[25]

Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters and Brian A. McNulty's meta-analysis research, "School leadership that works: From research to results", outlines a framework that identifies 21 key leadership responsibilities that, if carried out effectively, will positively influence student achievement.[26]

Several of these research conclusions will be discussed in detail in this report, and while the views are just a sampling of the literature on school leadership and its impact, there is considerable commonality among researchers.

The overriding view that emerges is that leadership does matter, and significantly for New Zealand, the impact of school leadership is stronger where school autonomy is greater.

As well as New Zealand, the Netherlands is a good example of where the impact of school leadership increased from non-significant to modest as policy changes increased the influence of the principal.[27]

From all these studies, it also seems the impact of effective school leadership is, in the main, indirect, although significant. John Hattie's *Visible Learning* meta-analysis research found that leadership had an average effect size (ES) of 0.52, which is higher than the average found for all education intervention studies.[28] This suggests that leadership is indeed an important variable in school effectiveness.

Effect size (ES) is a measure that is the common currency of meta-analysis studies summarising the findings from a specific area of research. The larger the effect size, the greater is the influence of the activity. As a guide, when the effect size is:

- < 0.0 – negative impact;
- > 0.2 – no/weak impact;
- 0.2–0.4 – small, possibly significant impact;
- 0.4–0.6 – moderately significant impact; and
- > 0.6 – large, significant impact.

21 Philip Hallinger and Ronald Heck, "Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980–1995", *School Effectiveness & School Improvement* 9(2) (1998).

22 Viviane Robinson, *The impact of school leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence* (ACER, 2007).

23 Kenneth Leithwood, Alma Harris and David Hopkins, "Seven strong claims about successful school leadership" (NCSL, 2008).

24 Ibid.

25 Pamela Mendels, "The Effective Principal", *JSD* 33(1) (February 2012).

26 Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters and Brian A. McNulty, *School leadership that works: From research to results* (2005).

27 Wim van de Grift and Thoni Houtveen, "Adaptive instruction and pupil achievement", *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 10(2) (1999).

28 John Hattie, *What is the nature of evidence that makes a difference to learning?* (ACER, 2005).

This is the reason the OECD made improving school leadership and making it sustainable a priority in its education policy agenda. In fact, this policy ranked third out of 29 activities for the OECD Education Committee Programme of Work 2007–08.[29]

Whelan also states unequivocally:

Student achievement in a school almost never exceeds the quality of its leadership and management, and improvements in performance almost never occur in the absence of good leadership … because it creates … an environment in which students and teachers perform to the best of their abilities.[30]

However, it must be noted that leadership, like other factors in education, is contextual and it is therefore not valid to expect findings to apply across countries and even continents. The extent of autonomy school leaders have within the education system, their appointment and selection criteria, as well as cultural differences, makes it even less likely that one could simply import findings from one context to another without some adaptation.

Nevertheless, evidence is overwhelming that "good leadership is the same irrespective of context, and that what works is surprisingly consistent".[31]

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29   OECD, *Improving school leadership: Policy and practice in OECD countries* (2008).

30   Fenton Whelan, *Lessons learned: How good policies produce better schools,* op. cit. pp. 77–79.

31   Michael Barber, Fenton Whelan and Michael Clark, *Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future* (McKinsey, 2010), p. 3.

How Successful School Leadership Influences Student Learning

Successful heads improve pupil outcomes through who they are – their values, virtues, dispositions, attributes and competencies – as well as what they do in terms of the strategies they select and the ways in which they adapt their leadership practices to their unique context.
— *Christopher Day, et al.*[32]

While there is convincing evidence that school leaders do matter, there is unprecedented international interest in the question of *how* school leaders influence a range of student outcomes. Recent research from a range of sources, including case studies, large-scale analytical studies, surveys of school leaders, and country specific data, shows that effective school leaders make a difference in the *practices* they use and in their beliefs, attitudes and personal attributes – their *dispositions*.

Robinson has delved deeply into this issue in her *Best Evidence Synthesis* of research on the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes in New Zealand.[33] She analysed both quantitative and qualitative research and developed a robust model of dimensions and knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with how school leaders influence student achievement. The eight leadership practices/dimensions she established are:

- establishing goals and expectations;
- resourcing strategically;
- planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;
- promoting and participating in teacher learning and development;
- ensuring an orderly and supportive environment;
- creating educationally powerful connections;
- engaging in constructive problem talk; and
- selecting, developing and using smart tools.

The first five dimensions listed above were highlighted by Robinson in an earlier study as crucial in terms of the effects of leadership on students. Chart 1 expands on the top five.[34]

32 Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, David Hopkins, Alma Harris, Kenneth Leithwood, Qing Gu and Eleanor Brown, *10 strong claims about school leadership*, op. cit. p. 2.

33 Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa and Claire Lloyd, *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why Best Evidence Synthesis* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009).

34 Viviane Robinson, *The impact of school leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence* (ACER, 2007), p. 14.

Chart 1: Leadership practices derived from studies of effects of leadership on students

Leadership Practice	Meaning of Dimension
Establishing goals and expectations	Includes the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals.
Strategic resourcing	Involves aligning resource selection and allocation to priority teaching goals. Includes provision of appropriate expertise through staff recruitment.
Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	Direct involvement in the support and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and provision of formative and summative feedback to teachers. Direct oversight of curriculum through school-wide coordination across classes and year levels and alignment to school goals.
Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development	Leadership that not only promotes but directly participates with teachers in formal or informal professional learning.
Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	Protecting time for teaching and learning by reducing external pressures and interruptions and establishing an orderly and supportive environment both inside and outside classrooms.

Source: Viviane Robinson, *The impact of leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence* (ACER, 2007), p. 14.
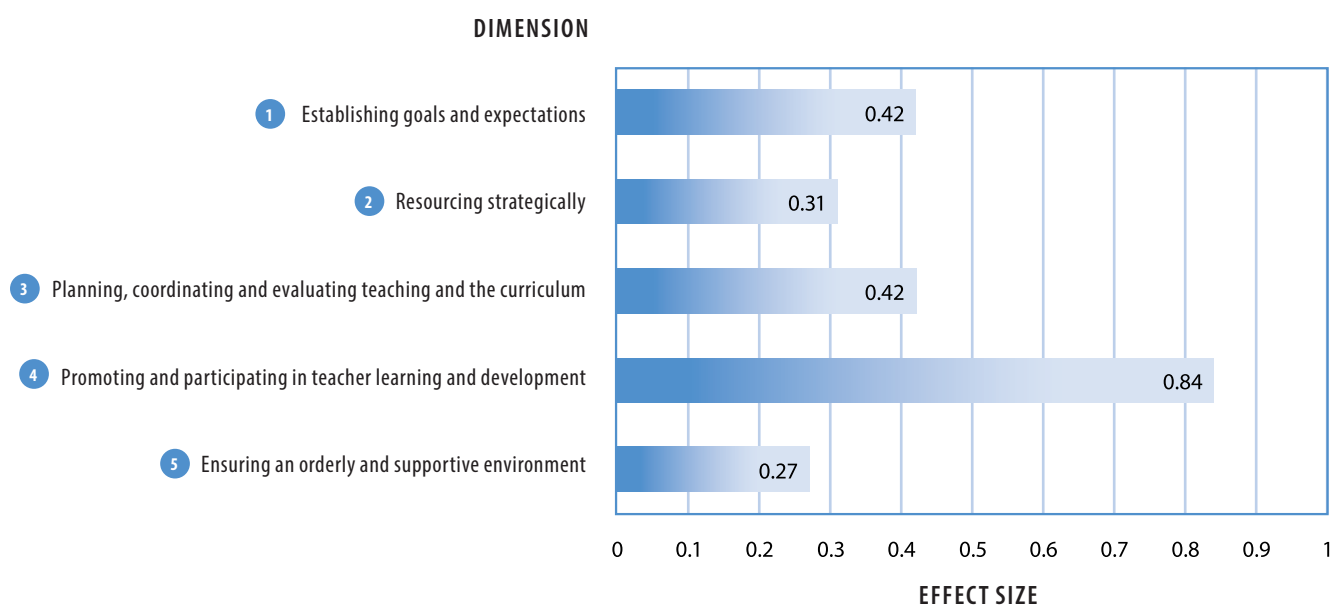
Chart 2 shows the relative importance of these same five leadership dimensions. The measure used in this exercise was effect size.

Of special note in Robinson's study is the huge impact of the principal in promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, especially compared to the other dimensions. Principals who are fully involved in this aspect are recognised as 'leading learners' in their school, and regarded and consulted as professional leaders with significant knowledge about teaching and learning.

In addition, these principals have direct, hands-on involvement with curriculum design and implementation, and develop a professional learning community within the school that supports, challenges and inquires into its own practice.[35] Robinson's belief is that this practice is a strong determinant of how influential a principal is on student outcomes.

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35 "Kiwi leadership for principals" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008), p. 19.

Chart 2: Relative impact of five leadership dimensions on student outcomes

DIMENSION

Dimension	Effect size
1 Establishing goals and expectations	0.42
2 Resourcing strategically	0.31
3 Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	0.42
4 Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development	0.84
5 Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	0.27

EFFECT SIZE

Source: Cathy Wylie, Graeme Cosslett and Jacky Burgon, *NZ principals: Autonomy at a cost* (NZCER, 2014), pp. 9–10.

Robinson's eight leadership practices need to be undertaken along with four aspects of leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions that effective principals need to possess, which are the ability to:

- ensure administrative decisions are informed by knowledge about effective pedagogy;
- analyse and solve complex problems;
- build relational trust; and
- engage in 'open-to-learning conversations'.

Robinson's thesis is backed by Harvard academic Richard Elmore, who sees educational leadership as the "guidance and direction of instructional improvement".[36] The goal of a principal goes beyond developing a cohesive culture, having strong communication channels with staff and students, and monitoring and evaluating instruction. Elmore's definition implies strongly that school leaders must do all those things in a manner that improves teaching and learning – an ambitious goal.

Using the work of Robinson and others, Ontario developed a 'Leadership Strategy' in 2009 called 'Core Leadership Capacities' (CLC), which was adopted by the Ontario Ministry of Education as a key focus for capacity building as part of Ontario's Leadership Framework. It recognised the many leadership capacities required for school and student improvement, and identified five capacities as key to making progress on the province's education goals. Chart 3 summarises these five capacities and links them to the overarching Ontario Leadership Framework.

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36 Quoted in Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa and Claire Lloyd, *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why*, op. cit. p. 68.

Chart 3: Making connections – Five core capacities and leadership framework

Core Leadership Capacity	Sample domains and related practices of the Ontario Leadership Framework		
1. Setting Goals	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Ensures the vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon by all	Fosters a commitment to equity of outcome and to closing the achievement gap	Aligns school targets with board and provincial targets
2. Aligning Resources with Priorities	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Ensures creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate technologies to achieve excellence	Ensures that learning is at the centre of planning and resource management	Makes connections to ministry goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts
3. Promoting Collaborative Learning Cultures	Building Relationships and Developing People	Developing the Organization	Leading the Instructional Program
	Acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams	Builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages with other schools to build effective learning communities	Builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages with other schools to build effective learning communities Develops professional learning communities to support school improvement
4. Using Data	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which promote and sustain school improvement	Ensures a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement, using system and school data to monitor progress	Develops and presents a coherent, understandable, accurate and transparent account of the school's performance to a range of audiences (e.g. ministry, board, parents, community)
5. Engaging in Courageous Conversations	Building Relationships and Developing People	Developing the Organization	Securing Accountability
	Encourages colleagues to take intellectual risks	Uses performance approval to foster professional growth, and challenges the thinking and learning of staff to further develop professional practice	Ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly understood, agreed to and subject to rigorous review and evaluation

Source: "Five core capacities of effective leaders", Ideas into Action: Ontario Leadership Strategy (2009), p. 7.

Stephen Dinham's research in Australia on how school leadership contributes to outstanding student outcomes concluded:

Leadership, both positional (senior managers) and distributed (key classroom teachers and HODs) [was] a major factor in the outstanding outcomes achieved by students, teachers and schools.[37]

This conclusion came from An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project (AESOP) carried out in New South Wales in Australia in 38 secondary schools covering years 7–10 between 2002 and 2007. The aim of the study was to see how school leaders acted to promote quality teaching and student achievement in individual classrooms, a difficult task given the well-known professional isolation of teachers and the equally well-known variation in teacher effectiveness.

From the analysis of data on principal leadership from the 38 site reports, seven categories of principal leadership attributes and practices contributing to exceptional educational outcomes were developed (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Seven categories of principal leadership attributes and practices
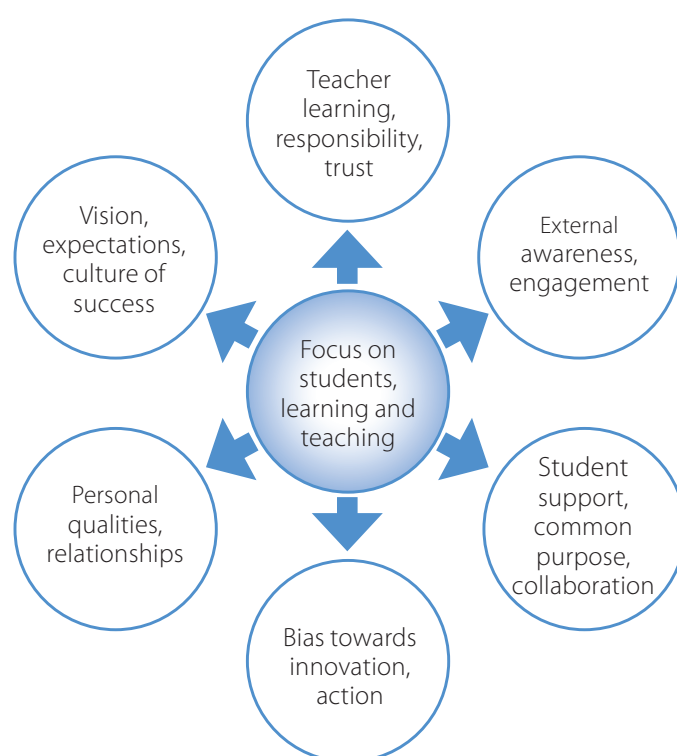
Source: Stephen Dinham, *How to get your school moving and improving* (ACER, 2008), pp. 42–43.

The overarching theme that emerges from Dinham's analysis of data pertaining to leadership in schools where exceptional outcomes were found was the belief that the central purpose and focus of the school must be teaching and learning.

These principals and their staff recognised that every effort must be made to provide an environment in which each student can experience success and academic, personal and social growth.[38]

Successful principals in this particular study were relentless in their quest for enhanced student achievement and did not become distracted by the administrative demands of the position. While Dinham makes it clear that principals were not solely, or even mainly, responsible for improved student achievement, their leadership was found to be a crucial factor in creating and sustaining an environment in which teachers can teach, students can learn, and exceptional outcomes can occur.

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37 Stephen Dinham, *How to get your school moving and improving* (ACER, 2008), p. 42.

38 Ibid. p. 57.

Hallinger and Heck have researched in depth the principals' contribution to school effectiveness and developed a framework consisting of four areas through which school leaders may influence the school system to raise student achievement.[39] They emphasise the following points:

- Principals indirectly influence school outcomes by being involved in framing, conveying and sustaining their school's purposes and goals;

- Principals support individual teachers, fostering cooperation and assisting them to work together towards the fulfilment of the school's goals;

- Principals use personal leadership activities such as responsibility, cooperation and commitment to achieve positive outcomes; and

- Organisational culture has a significant impact.

Beare strongly endorses the importance of school culture:

The best schools have developed a culture, milieu, environment, atmosphere, a "cultus corporis" which in a myriad of ways influences how well children learn … coherence like this does not emerge by chance … It comes from a collectivity of people who have derived a collective vision or picture together.[40]

Essentially, culture can be seen as a widespread agreement about norms, values and beliefs. Culture is the distinct way of life that gives meaning and order to the operation of a school. The aspects of a school's culture that are highly influential in creating cultural norms include its values; cultural heroes; sagas, myths and legends; cultural priests, rituals and ceremonies; tribal activities; and symbols and icons.

Even more constructively for a principal's impact on student achievement is the fact that the most effective principals embody a paradigm that is consistent with their school. It shows in the way the school is run, its furnishings, its rewards and punishments, the way its members are organised or controlled, who has power and influence, which members are honoured, and which behaviours are remarked upon.[41]

The role of the school leader in cultural development is potentially very powerful and fundamentally very important:

Culture is partly built and influenced through leaders – modelling and demonstrating their own values in interacting with others, making appropriate public announcements, establishing supportive reward and discipline systems, and treating and valuing students from all races and ethnicities.[42]

The principal is undoubtedly the custodian of the school culture.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of research covering effective school leadership.[43] They identified 21 responsibilities that define the role of the school leader in improving student achievement.

39 Philip Hallinger and Ronald Heck, "Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980–1995", op. cit.

40 Hedley Beare, Brian J. Caldwell and Ross H. Millikan, *Creating an excellent school*, op. cit. p. 19.

41 Ibid.

42 Clive Dimmock and Allan Walker, *Educational leadership: Culture and diversity* (London: Sage, 2005).

43 Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters and Brian A. McNulty, *School leadership that works: From research to results*, op. cit.

The 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader

- Affirmation
- Change Agent
- Contingent Rewards
- Communication
- Culture
- Discipline
- Flexibility

- Focus
- Ideals/Belief
- Input
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Involvement
- Knowledge
- Monitoring/Evaluation

- Optimizer
- Order
- Outreach
- Relationships
- Resources
- Situational Awareness
- Visibility

Source: Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters and Brian A. McNulty, *School leadership that works: From research to results* (2005), p. 4.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty also make the point that while principals can have a positive effect on student achievement, they can also have a marginal or even a negative impact. This can happen when principals concentrate on the wrong classroom practices or miscalculate the 'magnitude' of the change they intend to implement. Thus, a principal having the right focus of change is key to improving schools and increasing student achievement.

In essence, this concept of 'balanced leadership' is predicated on the notion that effective leadership means more than simply knowing what to do; it's knowing when, how and why to do it.

Effective leaders understand how to balance pushing for change while at the same time protecting aspects of culture, values and norms worth preserving. They know which policies, practices, resources and incentives to align and how to align them with organisational priorities … finally, they understand and value the people in their organisation.[44]

In the research article "10 strong claims about successful school leadership", Day and his co-authors outline their conclusion in their eight key dimensions or practices of successful leadership centred on student learning, well-being and achievement.[45] Successful leaders:

- define their values and vision to raise expectations, set direction, and build trust;
- reshape the conditions for teaching and learning;
- restructure parts of the organisation and redesign leadership roles and responsibilities;
- enrich the curriculum;
- enhance teacher quality;
- enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- build collaboration internally; and
- build strong relationships outside the school community.

Like Dinham and Robinson, Day, et al. also argue that variations in the effectiveness of leaders can often be explained by a small number of personal traits. They claim that the most successful school leaders are generally open-minded and ready to learn from others. They are flexible rather than dogmatic within a system of core values. They are persistent in their high expectations of others, and they are emotionally resilient and optimistic.

Principals who are successful in achieving improved student achievement do so not only through the *strategies and practices* they use but also through the *core values and personal qualities* they demonstrate in their daily

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44 Clive Dimmock and Allan Walker, *Educational leadership: Culture and diversity*, op. cit. p. 2.

45 Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, David Hopkins, Alma Harris, Kenneth Leithwood, Qing Gu and Eleanor Brown, *10 strong claims about school leadership*, op. cit.

interactions. These important values and qualities include a strong sense of moral responsibility and belief in equal opportunities; a belief that every student deserves the same opportunities to succeed as others; a value and respect for all people in and connected with the school; a passion for learning and achievement; and a commitment to students and staff.

Day, et al. also contend that successful school leaders in general use the same basic leadership practices. They work intuitively and from experience, tailoring their leadership strategies to their particular school's context.

Clearly, a principal's contribution to improved student learning and achievement comes from a combination and accumulation of strategies, actions and personal qualities. The influence of principals on student achievement may be indirect, but there is clear evidence of the positive effects of a principal's strategies, actions and values – for example, higher retention and attendance of staff; improvements in student attendance and behaviour; enhanced student motivation and engagement; and a better sense of responsibility for learning.

This research did show, however, that it was the principal's leadership strategies that connected most closely with improvements in aspects of teaching and learning, and consequently, improvements in student outcomes. Notably, there are some differences, as might be expected, in the strategies used by primary and secondary school principals to achieve improvement.

The most frequently cited strategies used to improve student outcomes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Strategies to improve student outcomes

Primary Principals	%	Secondary Principals	%
Encouraging use of data and research	28	Encouraging used of data and research	34
Improved assessment procedures	28	Teaching policies and practices	28
Teaching policies and practices	26	Change in school culture	21
Changes to student target-setting	20	Providing and allocating resources	20
Strategic allocation of resources	20	Improved assessment procedures	19
Providing and allocating resources	19	Monitoring of departments and teachers	16
Promoting leadership development and PLD	16	Promoting leadership development and PLD	15

Source: Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, David Hopkins, Alma Harris, Kenneth Leithwood, Qing Gu and Eleanor Brown, *10 strong claims about successful school leadership* (NCSL, 2009), p. 11.

While school leaders' dispositions are clearly an essential component of how a principal affects student outcomes, in the extensive research on educational leadership there is little or no mention of the requirement for an effective school leader to have been an effective classroom teacher. Maybe it is understood or assumed. While not all brilliant classroom teachers can be effective principals, it would be very surprising if a highly effective principal had not been an outstanding classroom practitioner.

This is because principals cannot competently and confidently lead instructional improvement without in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of curriculum and assessment matters, and expertise in at least one curriculum area. School leaders who can raise student achievement are those who have the skills, knowledge and disposition to initiate and sustain the conditions that teachers need to promote their students' learning. Only a principal who was an effective classroom teacher can know this.

Those principals who positively influence student achievement in their schools are leaders of teaching and learning. They do more than set the vision, they possess excellent communication skills, and use resources wisely.

These are important traits, but they need to be integrated and infused with specific educational knowledge and expertise. This is leadership with a concern, even a passion, for learning. Only when these generic leadership skills and dispositions are harnessed to serve education goals will school leaders have a substantial impact on student achievement.

As Robinson notes, "Educational leadership is deeply embedded in subject specific knowledge, and leaders who have such knowledge will be more confident in and capable of leading instructional improvement".[46]

There is undoubtedly room for some in-depth research on this matter.

Intellectual capacity as a key dispositional factor is also frequently overlooked in discussions on successful school leadership. In Dinham's research in Australia, however, successful principals were seen "to possess a high degree of intelligence and imagination. They are good judges of individuals, astute, and are able to balance 'big picture' issues with finer detail". Because of their strong intellect, these principals were also able to "have a good recall of the multitude of issues, facts and problems that make up the work of the principal … They understand school, departmental and community politics and have the courage to make unpopular decisions when these are in the best interests of the school".[47]

In an effort to synthesise the vast research findings on how school leaders affect student outcomes, it is pertinent to look at the research findings of Robinson, recent OECD research, and the work of Peter Lewis and Roger Murphy. Their conclusions highlight the following key messages:

- The closer school leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on students.

- School leaders need to set the direction for the learning and development of both teachers and students; to redesign the organisation's systems and structures in ways that suit its vision and tasks; to manage the learning programme; and to do all these things in a motivational, optimistic and enabling manner.

- School leadership must be responsive to its context, aware of school culture, and skilled in assessing that culture.

- The principal needs to cultivate leadership within the school and assemble a strong leadership team that models what it wants from others. Building leadership capacity at middle management level is also vital in developing school leaders of the future.

- Leadership must be 'learning-centred', flexible and respectful of the needs of individuals. Principals should aim to build strong, professional communities oriented towards effective teaching and learning, embodying norms of collegiality, collective responsibility, and shared goals with professional development, reflective practice, and quality improvement processes.[48]

- Leaders must also build trust if they hope to engender and sustain improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders who show regard for others and treat them with respect, and are seen by them as competent and having integrity, are trusted and therefore able to display 'connected' leadership dimensions: the leader as a risk-taker, influencer and supporter.

- Leaders must develop relationships with the community, including community leaders, employers, other schools, and partner agencies. In particular, principals need detailed knowledge of the importance of effective school-home connections and how to foster them when the education cultures of school and home are different.

46 Viviane Robinson, *The impact of school leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence*, op. cit. p. 70.

47 Stephen Dinham, *How to get your school moving and improving*, op. cit. p. 49.

48 OECD, *Improving school leadership: Policy and practice in OECD countries* (2008).

- School leadership should be characterised as highly professional: thoughtful, informed, ethical, reflective, responsive to feedback, and involved in continual learning. Learning is part of the re-energising process that sustains existing principals in a demanding job.[49]

Added to these key messages is the importance of the school leaders' dispositions. Ronnie Woods, in his research in the United Kingdom on successful primary school principals, looked at the dispositions and qualities that marked successful school leaders. Woods' findings identified a number of traits of these successful individuals:

- a selfless pride in the school, its people and its achievements, underpinned by a 'generosity of spirit';
- closeness to the children with a passionate commitment to teaching and learning, knowledge of what is happening at all levels, and dedication to producing well-rounded individuals;
- a respect for and sensitivity to others with a high commitment to team building and relationships;
- an optimistic view of change as a challenge;
- good at listening and encouraging others to contribute and criticise constructively in a reflective organisation; and
- a view of themselves as nothing special.[50]

How an effective school leader influences, in a positive manner, student achievement and ongoing school improvement is thus a combination of practices and strategies underpinned by the synergy of a leader's beliefs, dispositions and personal qualities.

Table 3: How an effective school leader influences student achievement and school improvement

Strategies/Practices	Dispositions/Beliefs/Qualities
Building a shared vision and sense of purpose	Resilience and persistence in achieving goals
Setting high expectations of performance	Adaptable to context and people; culturally sensitive
Designing and managing the teaching programme	Willingness to take risks and challenge accepted beliefs and practices
Establishing effective teams within school staff and cultivating leadership among staff	Self-awareness and ability to learn; high emotional intelligence and maturity
Understanding and developing people	Optimistic and enthusiastic
Protecting teachers from distractions	Strong sense of moral purpose and ethical responsibility
Establishing school routines and norms of behaviour: creating school culture	Critical reflection and a passion for improvement
Monitoring performance: focus on student achievement and teaching quality	Belief in excellence and equity
Connecting the school to parents and community	Respect, care and trust; strong interpersonal skills
Recognising and rewarding achievement	Strong intellect and excellent classroom practitioner

49 Viviane Robinson, Margie Hohepa and Claire Lloyd, *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why*, op. cit. p. 47; Peter Lewis and Roger Murphy, *Effective school leadership: A brief review summarising selected literature on the evidence for effective school leadership* (NCSL, 2008), p. 17.

50 Ronnie Woods, *Enchanted headteachers: Sustainability in primary school headship* (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's services (NCSL), 2002).

The Impact of Different Types/Styles of Leadership on Student Achievement

There remains a predominant view in much of the literature on school leadership that the right leadership style, if found, practised and implemented, will make all the difference. But there is more to leadership than just finding the right style or approach. In fact, most leaders have a range of leadership styles to meet the changing needs of circumstances in which they find themselves.

Nevertheless, Leithwood, et al. say "leadership by adjective is a growth industry"[51] and John MacBeath talks about "the alphabet soup of leadership"[52] – both hinting at the ambiguity and range of interpretations associated with different types and styles of leadership and their relative impact on student achievement.

Leithwood, et al.'s research, for example, recognises the following types of leadership:

- Instructional leadership;
- Transformational leadership;
- Moral leadership;
- Constructivist leadership;

- Servant leadership;
- Cultural leadership;
- Primal leadership; and
- Distributed leadership.

There are, of course, many more types of leadership, as evidenced in the work of MacBeath, who identifies more than 20 different styles in his research. And the search continues for the supposed 'best' leadership model.

Currently, the three foremost types of school leadership in common use are transformational leadership, instructional/pedagogical leadership, and distributed leadership. More recently, the concept of sustainable leadership as an alternative to these three has been proffered by Michael Fullan as well as by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink.

Distributed Leadership

While distributed leadership is certainly a concept very much in vogue, I prefer the term 'cultivating leadership' to describe the dissemination of leadership opportunities to talented and enthusiastic teachers who aspire to leadership roles in schools.

The term 'distributed leadership' is unfortunately characterised by confusion surrounding its definition and problems associated with its implementation. In essence, though, this concept's key message is that leadership is not concentrated or the monopoly of any one person but dispersed.

Lawrence Ingvarson and Elizabeth Kleinhenz believe that improved schooling over time requires an enhanced capacity, not just of one person but of many.[53] Peter Gronn suggests it is not only the principal's leadership that counts but also the leadership roles performed by deputy principals, substantive teachers, support staff, school boards of trustees, and students.[54]

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51   Kenneth Leithwood, Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, Alma Harris and David Hopkins, *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*, op. cit. p. 7.

52   John MacBeath, "The alphabet soup of leadership", *Inform* 2 (January 2003), p. 1.

53   Lawrence Ingvarson and Elizabeth Kleinhenz (2006), quoted in Jacky Lumby, Gary M. Crow and Petros Pashiardis (eds), *International handbook on the preparation and development of school leaders* (Routledge, 2010), p. 438.

54   Peter Gronn, "Distributed leadership", in Kenneth Leithwood and Philip Hallinger (eds), *International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management* (Springer, 2002), p. 655.

The concept of distributed leadership originated in the 1980s with the work of Thomas Sergiovanni,[55] who highlighted the virtues of an organisation's leadership 'density'.

The essential dimensions of distributed leadership are:

- seeing leadership as an outcome of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships rather than of individual action;
- having trust and openness as a basis for interpersonal relationships;
- 'letting go' by senior staff rather than simply delegating tasks;
- extending the boundaries of leadership, not just within the teaching staff but also to other communities within the school, creating a team culture throughout the school;
- not just mandating leadership into existence but growing it;
- recognising expertise rather than formal positions as the basis of leadership roles within groups; and
- seeing leadership as fluid rather than located in specific formal roles or positions, blurring the distinction between 'leaders' and 'followers'.[56]

Elmore, in his essay "Building a new structure for school leadership",[57] says school leaders must strive to create conditions for high quality instruction in every classroom, and that this should be achieved by distributing leadership among various branches that are fully accountable not only to one another and to teachers, but also to the marketplace (parents and students).

He points out that this does not mean no one is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation, but rather that school leaders must create a common culture of expectations regarding skills and knowledge, and hold individuals accountable for their contribution to the collective result.

An extension of distributed leadership is 'teacher leadership', which is seen as the development, support and nurturing of teachers who assume leadership in their schools. However, much of the literature on teacher leadership is simply teacher advocacy, bemoaning the lack of leadership opportunities for teachers and the silencing of teacher voices. Research by Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi[58] and Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke[59] found only disappointing results concerning the positive influence of teacher leadership on classrooms and students, on student engagement with schools, or on student participation within schools.

The most recent and comprehensive review of the teacher leader literature was able to locate only five empirical studies of teacher leadership effects on pupils and none reported significant effects.[60]

It does seem overall that both teacher leadership and distributed leadership qualify as movements driven much more by philosophy and democratic values than by evidence that students learn more if a larger proportion of school leaders come from non-traditional sources. While shared decision-making and collaboration (key aspects of distributed leadership) are both quite important to the success of schools, they should not be confused with leadership – they are simply sensible activities.

There are also a number of barriers to distributing leadership. There still remains the persistence of the traditional

55 Thomas Sergiovanni, "Leadership and excellence in schooling", *Educational Leadership* 41(5) (1984).

56 Nigel Bennett, Christine Wise and Philip Woods, *Distributed leadership* (Nottingham: National College for School Leadership, 2003), quoted in Bill Mulford, *The leadership challenge: Improving learning in schools* (ACER, 2007), p. 44.

57 Richard Elmore, *Building a new structure for school leadership* (The Albert Shanker Institute, Winter 2000).

58 Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi, "Transformational school leadership effects: A replication", *School Effectiveness & School Improvement* 10(4) (2000).

59 Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke, "What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship", *Review of Educational Research* 74(3) (Fall 2004).

60 Kenneth Leithwood, Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, Alma Harris and David Hopkins, *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*, op. cit. p. 9.

'hero-principal' perception; parental and community expectations of an ever-present, ever-available principal are still in evidence; and a number of legislative, accountability and resource-related barriers also limit the spread of distributed leadership as a model.

Principals can, however, facilitate opportunities for teachers to work together and help build ongoing collaborative structures that encourage teachers to take leadership roles; they can also create the environment, the time and the opportunities for leadership to arise. In effect, perhaps a more a vital role of principals is to cultivate leadership in their schools and make it sustainable.

In this regard, the comment by Leithwood, et al. is worth noting that "a followerless organisation is the same as a leaderless organisation".[61]

Sustainable Leadership

The most recent addition to the 'leadership types' debate is sustainable leadership as applied to school leadership by both Fullan[62] and Hargreaves and Fink.[63] Interestingly, while both research papers support the concept of sustainable leadership and propose that the principal acting just as an instructional leader in a school is now too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the reforms needed to lift student achievement, they differ quite markedly in their interpretation of the concept.

Fullan sees sustainable leadership as a public service with moral purpose – a commitment to raising the bar and closing the gap of student achievement, treating people with respect, and improving the environment, including in other schools. It involves a system focus through imposed short-term, standardised achievement targets.

Hargreaves and Fink, however, say Fullan has failed in his definition to outline how to achieve this sustainable leadership. They don't believe you can mandate what matters to effective practice.

They do agree that fundamental change is required to reform the institution of school leadership in the 21st century. They propose that sustainable leadership in education should be a shared responsibility that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, nor exert damage on the surrounding educational environment and school community.

Sustainable educational leaders promote and practice sustained learning … sustain others as they pursue this cause together … sustain themselves, attending to their own renewal and not sacrificing themselves too much as they serve their community … [and] stay the course, stay together, stay around, and stay alive.[64]

The key principles that seem to underpin the concept of sustainable leadership include:

▪ understanding the interconnections of systems;
▪ thinking globally and towards the future;
▪ protecting nature and people;
▪ transforming business as usual; and
▪ leading by example in one's actions.[65]

In simple terms, sustainable leadership aims to go beyond temporary gains in achievement scores to create lasting, meaningful improvements in learning.[66]

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61 Ibid. p. 11.

62 Michael Fullan, "Leadership and sustainability", *Principal Leadership* 3(4) (December 2002).

63 Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, "The seven principles of sustainable leadership", *Educational Leadership* 61(7) (2004); Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, *Sustainable leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006).

64 Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, *Sustainable leadership*, Ibid. p. 272.

65 Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, "The seven principles of sustainable leadership", op. cit.

66 Carl Glickman, *Leadership for learning: How to help teachers succeed* (Institute for Schools, Education, and Democracy (ISED), 2002); Louise Stoll, Dean Fink and Lorna Earl, *It's about learning (and it's about time): What's in it for schools?* (Routledge, 2002).

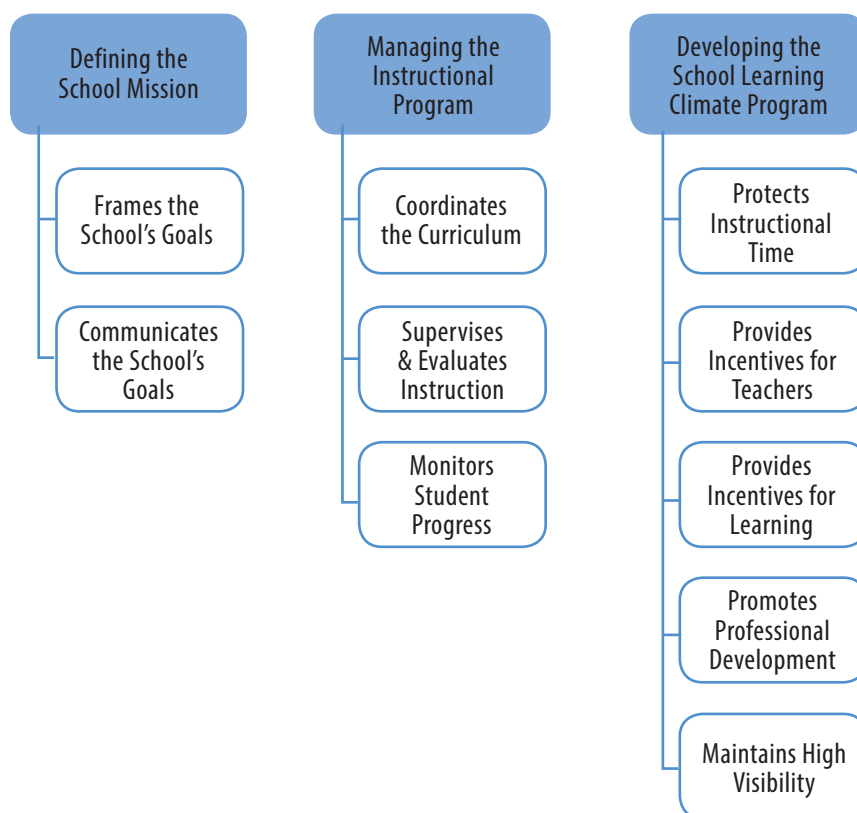# Transformational and Instructional Leadership Models: A Comparison

Instructional leadership gains much of its power by tapping the shared values of followers and building normative commitment to the mission of the school, while transformational leaders focus on shaping the culture of the school as well as the professional and instructional aspects of the organisation.
— Kenneth Leithwood[67]

Despite the recent interest in distributed and sustainable leadership, the two foremost models as measured by a number of empirical studies are instructional and transformational leadership.

The instructional school leadership model emerged in the 1980s as an outgrowth of previous research on effective schools. This research identified strong directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction by the principal as a characteristic of primary schools that were effective in teaching children in poor urban communities.[68] Chart 5 shows the key features of the instructional leadership model.

Chart 5: Instructional leadership

Source: Philip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy, "Assessing the instructional leadership behaviour of principals", *The Elementary School Journal* 86(2) (1985), pp. 217–248.

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67 Kenneth Leithwood, "Leadership for school restructuring", *Educational Administration Quarterly* 30(4) (1994), pp. 498–518.

68 Kenneth Leithwood and Deborah Montgomery, "The role of the elementary school principal in program improvement", *Review of Educational Research* 52(3) (1982).

The School Leadership Effect

In general, instructional leadership has a strong influence on students because of the focus on the quality of teachers and teaching, and it is these two variables that account for more of the within-school variance in student achievement than any other factors.

Samuel Krug's definition of instructional leadership encompasses five key components: defining a school mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an instructional climate.[69] Such a concept contains the seeds of appraisal and performance management, and the use of student performance data to encourage more effective instruction from teachers.

The growing popularity of this model became evident in its widespread adoption by most principal leadership academies in the United States, but with the advent of school restructuring there in the 1990s, the notion of transformational leadership began to overtake instructional leadership's popularity.

In part, the interest in transformational leadership was a reaction to the belief that the instructional model focused too much on the importance of the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority in the school. Additionally, there grew a feeling that the centralisation of authority was too heavy a burden for one person to carry alone. As Leithwood explains:

Transformational leadership with its notions of empowering staff and dispersed influence, is more viable than maintaining the principal as the instructional leader.[70]

The move towards transformational leadership was also a result of the restructuring movement's preoccupation with the redistribution of power and responsibility, which fostered greater interest in the empowerment of teachers and community members, including shared leadership.

The key features of transformational leadership are:

- setting directions
- building a shared vision
- fostering acceptance of group goals
- expecting high performance
- developing people
- providing individual support and consideration
- providing intellectual stimulation
- providing an appropriate model
- redesigning the organisation
- building collaborative cultures
- restructuring
- building productive relationships with families and communities
- connecting the school to its wider environment
- managing the instructional programme
- staffing the programme
- providing instructional support
- monitoring school activity
- buffering staff from distractions to their work.[71]

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69 Samuel Krug, "Instructional leadership: A constructivist perspective", *Educational Administration Quarterly* 28(3) (1992), pp. 430–443.

70 Kenneth Leithwood, "Leadership for school restructuring", op. cit.

71 Christopher Day and Kenneth Leithwood (eds), *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective*, op. cit.

A different image of the ideal school emerged from this change – flatter, more problem- than task-focused with highly permeable boundaries, less in need of control and more in need of support and capacity development.

Transformational leadership, however, tends to have a weaker impact on student achievement because of its focus on leader-follower relations rather than on improving learning and teaching. Transformational leadership stresses the stimulation and development of a collaborative culture, encourages the continual professional development of teachers involving high levels of reflection and discussion of professional practice, and expands the problem-solving capacity of the school. It provides the vision and inspiration needed to energise all members of the school community and assumes a strong sense of shared responsibility for attaining educational goals.

As Robinson concludes:

Transformational leadership theory predicts teacher attitudes and satisfaction, but, on the whole, its positive impacts on staff do not flow through to students.[72]

In the mid-1990s, scepticism emerged about the worth of transformational leadership and its impact. Gronn critiqued transformational leadership strongly, claiming there was a lack of broad-based research about this model.[73] The tenuous links between transformational leadership and organisational outcomes, and the poor understanding of how transformational leadership is learned, were also viewed as problematic for the adoption of this model in schools.

Kerry Barnett and John McCormick were also sceptical about whether transformational leadership led to changes in teaching, learning and school organisation – and whether it enhanced student learning.[74]

Supporters of the transformational leadership model, however, contend that the main outcome of this model is the increased capacity of a school to continually improve. There is some sense in this, but while this approach is necessary it is not a sufficient condition for school improvement as it lacks a specific orientation towards student learning. In David Hopkins' opinion, transformational leadership simply focuses on the wrong variables.[75]

Regardless, a decade later at the turn of the new century, favouritism changed yet again as pressures from the policy environment of schools began to push the pendulum back towards instructional leadership. Principals were once again positioned at the nexus of accountability and improvement with the clear expectation that they would function as 'instructional leaders'. The demand for principals to foster the use of more powerful methods of learning and teaching drove this change back to instructional leadership, a change to what is still the predominant model in 2014.

An Integrated Model of School Leadership?

While there is a more discernible emphasis on instructional leadership in the profession today than in the 1990s, there are still constraints around the continued expansion of this model centred on the capacity of principals to fulfil what is still seen as a rather 'heroic' role. There is a concern too that many principals do not have the necessary combination of "will and skill"[76] to carry out this type of hands-on, directive leadership, while the increasing demand on a principal's time means many of their activities are unrelated to instructional leadership.

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72 Viviane Robinson, *The impact of school leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence,* op. cit. p. 15.

73 Peter Gronn, "Greatness re-visited: The current obsession with transformational leadership", *Leading and Managing* 1(1) (1995).

74 Kerry Barnett and John McCormick, "Leadership and individual principal-teacher relationships in schools", *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40(3) (2004).

75 David Hopkins, *Instructional leadership and school improvement* (NCSL), p. 1.

76 Philip Hallinger, *Research on the practice of instructional leadership: Retrospect and prospect*, The Leadership Challenge – Improving Learning in Schools (2007), p. 3.

Thus, it could be argued that perhaps a sole focus on teaching and learning is also not a sufficient condition for school improvement. Elmore argues that any approach to school improvement must at the same time focus on the organisational conditions of the school, in particular, the approach taken to staff development and planning, as well as the way teaching and learning are conducted.[77]

In other words, is it not possible or sensible to integrate these two models to facilitate student improvement?

Hallinger's comparison table of instructional and transformative leadership models (Chart 6) suggests this is possible as the substantive similarities between the models are more significant than the differences.

Chart 6: Comparison of instructional and transformative leadership models

Instructional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Remarks on Difference and Similarities
Articulate and Communicate Clear School Goals	Clear Vision Shared Schools Goals	IL model emphasizes clarity and organizational nature of shared goals set either by the principal or by and with staff and community. TL model emphasizes linkage between personal goals and shared organisational goals.
Coordinate Curriculum Supervise and Evaluate Instruction Monitor Student Program Protect Instructional Time		No equivalent elements for these coordination and control functions in the TL model. TL model assumes "others" will carry these out as a function of their roles.
High Expectations	High Expectations	
Provide Incentive for Learners Provide Incentive for Teachers	Rewards	Similar focus on ensuring that rewards are aligned with mission of the school.
Providing Professional Development for Teachers	Intellectual Stimulation	IL model focuses on training and development aligned to school mission. TL model views personal and professional growth broadly. Need not be tightly linked to school goals.
High Visibility	Modelling	Essentially the same purposes. Principal maintains high visibility in order to model values and priorities.
	Culture-building	IL models also focuses on culture-building but subsumed within the school climate dimension.

Source: Philip Hallinger, *Research on the practice of instructional leadership: Retrospect and prospect*, The Leadership Challenge – Improving Learning in Schools (2007), p. 4.

According to Hallinger, both models would have the school leader focus on:

- creating a shared sense of purpose in the school;
- developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused on innovation and improvement of teaching and learning;

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77 David Hopkins, *Instructional leadership and school improvement*, op. cit.

- shaping the reward structure of the school;
- organising and providing a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and the continual development of staff; and
- being a visible presence in the school, modelling the desired values of the school's culture.[78]

There are differences, of course, notably the target of change with instructional leadership focused more on first order changes (top-down, technical, ameliorative responses) while second order changes require teachers to become learners, to think deeply about their practice, and to adopt new and often challenging ideas about their role in the classroom and also the extent to which the principal emphasises a coordination-and-control strategy compared to an empowerment strategy for change in the school.

In an attempt to develop an integrated model of school leadership, Hallinger believes that instructional leaders would typically set clear, time-based, academically focused goals to get the school moving in the right direction and take a more active, hands-on role in organising and coordinating instruction.[79]

But it is also true that long-term, sustained improvement will ultimately depend upon the staff assuming increasing levels of ownership over proposed changes in the school. Hence, there is the need for balance in leadership styles, and to recognise that both transformational and instructional leadership styles contribute to student and overall school improvement.

Research by Linda Lambert also concluded that the days of the lone instructional leader are most likely over because of the increasing burdens of school leadership.[80] This view is supported by Daniel Duke, et al. who contends that while instructional leadership has been an aspiration of principals for many years, the demands of the job have made this a difficult goal to realise.[81] Their study found that the time principals could actually dedicate to instructional leadership is very limited.

Research in Western Australia and Tasmania by Bill Mulford also found that principals who purport to be 'instructional principals' are perceived as doing little monitoring of teacher performance or recognising high quality teaching.[82] This is a concern given the outcome of the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study, which found that improved student outcomes occur when pedagogies are a priority of the school, within a culture of care.[83]

Taking this into account, Lambert proposed a variant called 'shared instructional leadership'. The argument is that strong transformational leadership by the principal is essential to support the commitment of teachers, and because teachers can themselves be barriers to change, transformational leaders 'invite' teachers to share leadership functions. When teachers perceive the instructional leadership behaviours of principals to be appropriate, there is increased commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate among teachers. In this way, instructional leadership can itself be transformational.

Perhaps one other factor to emerge in this debate is that all school leadership must take into account the context of the school, which is itself a source of constraints, resources and opportunities. Effective leaders of any type know instinctively how to respond to the changing needs of their context. At the same time, it is also important not to become too bogged down in context, and consequently, either fail to see the wider environment or indeed to take action. Successful school leaders maintain a broader perspective while recognising and addressing local context.

78 Philip Hallinger, *Research on the practice of instructional leadership: Retrospect and prospect*, op. cit. p. 4.

79 Richard Elmore, *Building a new structure for school leadership*, op. cit.

80 Linda Lambert, "A framework for shared leadership", *Educational leadership* 59(8) (2002).

81 Daniel L. Duke, Margaret Grogan, Pamela D. Tucker and Walter F. Heinecke (eds), *Educational leadership in an age of accountability: The Virginia experience* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003).

82 Bill Mulford, *The leadership challenge: Improving learning in schools*, op. cit.

83 Debra Hayes, et al. (2004), quoted in Bill Mulford, Ibid. p. 41.

In summary, and taking the key elements of the research into account, Hopkins has proposed an integrated model of school leadership that could combine the best of instructional and transformative leadership styles. He describes this integrated model as 'synergistic instructional leadership' and believes the following strategic actions epitomise such leadership:[84]

- an ability to articulate values and vision around student learning and achievement, and the necessary structures to promote and sustain them;
- an understanding of a range of pedagogies and their impact on student achievement and learning;
- an ability to distinguish between development and maintenance structures, activities and cultures;
- a strategic orientation, the ability to plan at least into the medium term, and an entrepreneurial bent that facilitates the exploitation of external change;
- an understanding of the nature of organisational capacity, its role in sustaining change, and how to enhance it;
- a commitment to promoting inquiry, particularly into the 'how' rather than the 'what';
- a commitment to continuing professional development and managing the teachers' life cycle; and
- an ability to engender trust and provide positive reinforcement.

The transformative style of leadership is necessary for school improvement but not sufficient, while instructional leadership is best able to create the necessary synergy between a focus on teaching and learning on the one hand and capacity building on the other. The melding of these two styles will help promote, celebrate and enhance the importance of teaching and learning and staff development, and the consequent improved student outcomes.
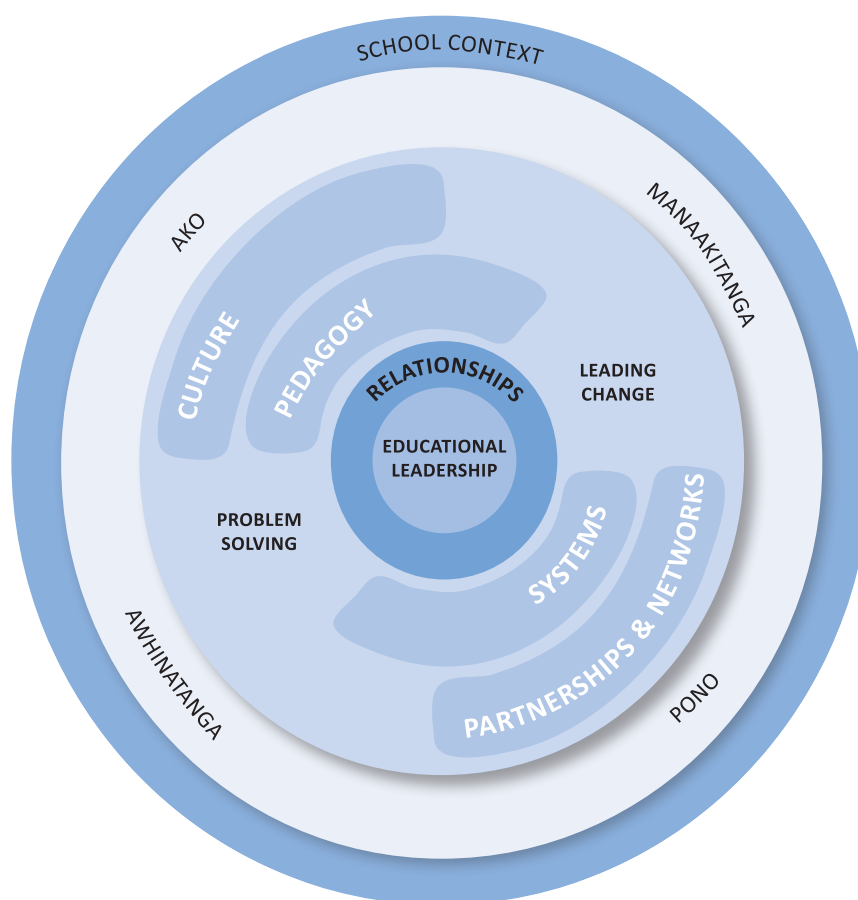
A New Zealand Leadership Model

In New Zealand, research commissioned by the Ministry of Education, "Kiwi leadership for principals", outlined a model of school leadership specific to New Zealand that set out the qualities, knowledge and skills that New Zealand principals need in the 21st century to successfully lead their schools and positively influence student achievement. The model incorporates many of the matters already raised in this report.

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84   David Hopkins, *Instructional leadership and school improvement*, op. cit. p. 5.

Chart 7: Qualities, knowledge and skills New Zealand principals need in the 21st century

Source: "Kiwi leadership for principals" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008), p. 12.

In this model, educational leadership is at the centre because the main purpose of school leaders is to lead learning so as to improve outcomes for all students, create conditions for effective teaching and learning, and develop and maintain schools as learning organisations. Building trusting and learning-focused relationships within and beyond the school is also a critical role for the principal as improved learning for all students is more likely when the principal's leadership is underpinned by effective functional and interpersonal relationships.

The model also highlights two of the key principal activities: leading change and problem-solving. Leading change requires principals to keep the focus clearly on their central vision for the school and build a collaborative learning culture that can bring the school community together around the core values that underpin the vision. Successful school leaders also need to be able to identify, analyse and solve problems that emerge in schools; such leaders see the 'big picture' and ensure others understand that the students' needs or interests are the prime consideration in the process of reaching a solution.

All school principals work within four areas of practice to lead this change and solve problems. These key areas are: culture, pedagogy, systems, and partnerships and networks.

Underpinning a principal's ability to lead the school are four educational qualities/dispositions: *ako* is a teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators' practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective; *awhinatanga* is the guidance and support provided by the principal; *pono* is the development of self-belief; and *manaakitanga* is leading with a moral purpose.[85]

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85   Ibid, pp. 12–23.

21st Century School Leadership: A New Paradigm?

New leaders are modest people. They do not hog the limelight but give credit to those around them. They are humble rather than heroic, emotionally rather than intellectually wise, possessed more of "soft" than "hard skills", people rather than system oriented, risk-taking and rule-breaking rather than managerially efficient, willing to celebrate failure as well as success.
— John MacBeath[86]

Jim Collins in his seminal study, *Good to Great*, was perhaps the first to delineate the less orthodox qualities of leaders in a range of professions. Collins' leaders were distinguished by "a paradoxical combination of personal humility and professional will".[87] This particular focus has been emphasised most recently in the work of MacBeath.

Collins' thesis is similar to the research findings of Daniel Goleman in which Goleman stresses the significance of emotional intelligence in successful leadership, in particular, trusting in intuition, an ability to recognise and use one's emotions to manage social situations, and empathy, which allows you to see yourself through the eyes of others.

Goleman recognised that while the qualities traditionally associated with leadership – such as intelligence, toughness, determination and vision – are required for success, they are insufficient. Truly effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. These so-called 'soft skills' were once considered just nice to have, but increasingly in the 21st century they are being seen as important ingredients in strong and effective leadership.

Chart 8: The five components of emotional intelligence

	Definition	Hallmarks
Self-Awareness	▪ the ability to recognise and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others	▪ self-confidence ▪ realistic self-assessment ▪ self-deprecating sense of humour
Self-Regulation	▪ the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods ▪ the propensity to suspend judgment- to think before acting	▪ trustworthiness and integrity ▪ comfort with ambiguity ▪ openness to change
Motivation	▪ a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status ▪ a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence	▪ strong drive to achieve ▪ optimism, even in the face of failure ▪ organizational commitment
Empathy	▪ the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people ▪ skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	▪ expertise in building and retaining talent ▪ cross-cultural sensitivity ▪ service to clients and customers
Social Skill	▪ proficiency in managing relationships and building networks ▪ an ability to find common ground and build rapport	▪ effectiveness in leading change ▪ persuasiveness ▪ expertise in building and leading teams

Source: Daniel Goleman, "What makes a good leader?" *Harvard Business Review* (January 1998), p. 88.

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86 John MacBeath, *Leadership: Paradoxes of leadership in an age of accountability* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005), p. 1.

87 James Collins, *Good to Great* (Random House Business, 2001).

MacBeath acknowledges the importance of Goleman's research, saying this aspect of leadership is really "a rediscovery of the fact that organisations thrive when they are human places and when they are led with humanity and integrity".[88]

MacBeath characterises this paradox of leadership in an era of accountability as a "new theology of leadership".[89] The school leaders who fit this category seek opportunities to learn and always act with integrity; they adapt to differences and are committed to making a difference; they are insightful and bring out the best in people; they seek out and use feedback, are open to criticism, and learn from their mistakes; and they have the courage to take risks. Their ability to establish and nurture valuable and positive relationships transcends any other capabilities they may possess.

In essence, these characteristics of new school leaders may well be seen as moral qualities at the very heart of what learning and schooling are all about. The educational purpose is, at its core, a moral one and schools are founded on a set of essential values – about people, about society, about learning, and about worthwhile knowledge.

The key to successful leadership is getting the values right and having the right values in order to manage the tensions and dilemmas with which leaders must live.[90]

The character of schools should, in theory and as explained by Beare and Sergiovanni, be exemplified by those in charge. Hence, schools led by these new leaders are characterised by high levels of interpersonal trust, which allows people to listen sensitively to one another without fear of challenge or being challenged, and acknowledging differences rather than settling for easy consensus. Ideas are evaluated on their merit without regard for status or hierarchy.

This view of educational leadership stresses that relationships matter and character counts. Time must be spent developing and mentoring strong, ethical leaders who understand that trusting relationships among adults, and among children and adults, will determine the success of students.

Goleman's theory and MacBeath's general support of that argument represent another addition to the literature on generic and school leadership, and is bound to encourage debate on the essential leadership qualities required by effective school principals. Goleman's argument represents a less orthodox approach to this issue, one that is diametrically opposed to the heroic stereotype, which is more typical of the literature on leadership.

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88 John MacBeath, *Leadership: Paradoxes of leadership in an age of accountability*, op. cit. p. 12.

89 Ibid, p. 2.

90 Christopher Day, Alma Harris, Mark Hadfield, Harry Tolley and John Beresford, *Leading schools in times of change* (Open University Press, 2000).

How Effective Are New Zealand Principals in Affecting Student Achievement?

Evidence of the impact of New Zealand school leaders on student achievement is meagre. The only in-depth research evidence available is baseline information from the Educational Leadership Practices (ELP) electronic survey that was developed from the 'Leadership Best Evidence' synthesis and the "Kiwi leadership for principals" work. The ELP project was intended to provide data on the quality of school leadership in New Zealand, but unfortunately, this programme is no longer a priority for the Ministry of Education, which is an unfortunate decision given the recent emphasis on educational leadership research around the world.

The ELP survey was designed to provide principals with a robust picture of how effective a school's teachers perceive the school's educational leadership to be in those key aspects that current evidence shows are most likely to have an impact on teaching and learning.

Its main purpose was formative, to support ongoing school leader and principal development, and to feed into school planning. Teachers from 282 schools were invited to participate and the high level of responses (4,716) led the report's authors to believe the findings were "pretty robust".[91]

The survey showed three areas in which experienced principals were seen by their staff as predominantly highly effective: goal setting; providing a safe and orderly environment; and principal leadership.

However, the study also revealed weaknesses in each area: in several cases, not all school goals were converted into action by principals; principals also needed to develop skills in gathering 'student voice' about their environment; and principals needed to resolve conflicts in their school earlier. Teachers were least positive about the effectiveness of their school's leaders in relation to teacher learning and development, and ensuring the success of Māori students.

School leadership was also seen as less effective in embedding values and goals in everyday practice and in using HR processes to focus on teaching and learning, but principals were often rated highly for promoting school values, having integrity, and making tough decisions when needed.

The report also concluded that experience itself is not an indicator of effective school leadership, and ongoing professional learning and development is necessary for all principals at every stage of their career.

There was also a high correlation between high ratings for principal leadership among those principals who provided opportunities for leadership learning for staff beyond their own classroom.

Overall, 7% of the EPDP principals (Experienced Principals' Development Programme) had low levels of support, 72% had medium levels of support, and 20% had high levels of support. Principal ratings were also related to size: the lower the school size, the higher the rating. Ratings were also higher in rural schools and primary schools, indicating that teacher views of school leadership effectiveness are likely to be lower where the school organisation is more complex – as it is in secondary and larger schools or where the challenges of the student population are greater – as they are in decile 1 and 2 schools and in secondary schools.

A benchmarking workshop that followed this project identified four levels of educational leadership: very few schools fell into the 'invisible leadership' category while few schools made the 'exemplary' category. The median for primary schools was 'sound' (second highest) and the median for secondary schools was 'basic' (second lowest).

This project was dropped by the Ministry of Education so there has been no follow through to enable definitive conclusions to be made, but "the current levels of educational practices do indicate there is room to

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91   Cathy Wylie and Edith Hogden, *Educational leadership practices survey baseline 2009* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010), p. vi.

develop further".[92] In addition, the authors feel "we do not know yet whether schools need to be at the high or outstandingly effective levels of educational leadership practices to affect student achievement levels"[93] and, therefore, make the changes required to raise student performance to the levels aspired to by the government.

The inconclusiveness of the research findings suggests that more detailed research is badly needed in this area of school leadership in New Zealand.

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92 Ibid. p. ix.

93 Ibid.

Concluding Thoughts

It is the combination of principals' educational values, dispositions and qualities with their strategic actions that create conditions in which effective teaching can flourish and student achievement improves.

This report has outlined and discussed a range of educational researchers' findings on the school leadership effect. While there is naturally diversity in the findings, there is also a broad general repertoire of essential educational values, personal and interpersonal qualities, dispositions, competencies, and decision-making processes as well as a core of internal and external strategic actions that all effective principals possess and use.

1. There is no one best way to lead in all situations but that in any particular situation, one approach to leadership may be more effective than another. Successful leaders tend to work in differing contexts and in different ways that take into account both their environment and personality. Being the principal of a large secondary school, for example, does require quite different capacities than being the principal of a small primary school. Hence, context is central to matters of leadership.

2. Leadership does make a difference to student achievement and is second only to classroom teaching in determining the quality of learning for students. Indeed, research suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant and frequently underestimated role in improving student learning. Leadership cannot directly overturn inadequacies in teaching but effective leadership will promote, directly and indirectly, the conditions in which effective teaching and learning can flourish.

3. Effective leaders who make a difference to student achievement take care of their own learning. Without this, there is less likelihood of overall systemic improvement. The principal must always take a proactive stance in encouraging and participating in professional learning.

4. Successful principals are passionate about teaching and learning, and are able to create a 'can do' culture within the school that affects the whole staff. The strength of belief and commitment of the leader is vital for success.

5. Effective school leaders are 'people persons'. They recognise the complementary nature of each person's contribution to the school, and they recognise that they can influence what happens in classrooms indirectly through others. They are clear in their belief that when the staff work together, the sum will be greater than the parts.

6. The key task of school leaders is to develop, with their community, a vision and purpose that are well enunciated, and shape the programme for learning and teaching as well as the policies, priorities, plans and procedures pervading the day-to-day life of the school. The vision must be compelling and communicated in a way that secures commitment among all sectors of the school. "Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic … vision grabs".[94]

7. Effective leaders cultivate other leaders in their school. With increased demands on principals, it is fallacious to think that the principal can succeed on his or her own. Developing leadership in others who work in the same way and focus on learning strengthens and deepens leadership within the school.

8. While one leadership style or approach may work well for some leaders, in practice most leaders adopt a range of leadership styles. Successful leaders "adapt and adopt their leadership practice to meet the changing needs of circumstances in which they find themselves".[95]

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94 Warren G. Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge* (HarperCollins, 1985).

95 Bill Mulford, *The leadership challenge: Improving learning in schools*, op. cit. p. 48.

9. There does seem to be a growing acceptance in the literature on this issue that even the strongest proponents of instructional, transformative, distributed and sustainable leadership are moving away from the exclusivity of the one-size-fits-all, charismatic, heroic model of school leadership. The more recent literature definitely incorporates an expanded understanding of leadership.

10. While school leadership should be, in the main, instructional, it should also be conceived as transforming, being concerned with organisational and operational potential, and motivating followers. It is proactive rather than reactive; it is constructive rather than merely responsive. A combination of effective transformational and instructional leadership positively influences staff motivation and teacher engagement, commitment and empowerment.

11. Of all the different adjectives used to define leadership style, 'instructional' leaders are perhaps best able to create that necessary synergy between a focus on teaching and learning on the one hand, and capacity building on the other. The primary focus of leadership should always be to guide instructional improvement, with everything else being secondary. Schools, after all, exist to sponsor learning and that prime purpose should infuse everything the school does.

Whatever else is disputed about this complex area of student and school improvement, the centrality of leadership in the achievement of school level change is indisputable.

Yet both in New Zealand and overseas, the quality of school leadership is regularly being questioned. On top of this, principals are facing more and more challenges in an increasingly complex school environment.

The second, and final, report of this series will therefore focus on the challenges facing school leaders and outline policies to improve the quality of school leadership now to sustain quality leadership in the future.

Appendix 1: Checklist for School Leaders

The following is a checklist[96] for school leaders, rather than a recipe or formula for success, on how principals can make a difference to student achievement. Compiled by Steve Dinham, this checklist for school leaders is a useful tool for reflection, planning, action and evaluation.

- They make students, as learners and people, the central focus of the school.
- They make teaching and learning the central purpose of the school.
- They ensure that student welfare policies and programs are integrated with and underpin academic achievement.
- They have a vision of where they want their school to go and of what they want it to be.
- They are effective communicators at all levels.
- They are able to balance the big picture with finer detail.
- They possess perspective and can prioritise.
- They place a high priority on and invest in the professional learning of themselves and others.
- They are informed, critical users of educational research.
- They continually seek to improve the quality of teaching in their school.
- They seek ways for every student to achieve and experience success.
- They act as talent spotters and coaches of talented teachers and release individual and organisational potential.
- They question and push against constraints.
- They seek benefits from imposed change.
- They are informed risk takers and encourage others to do the same.
- They have a positive attitude and seek to drive out negativity.
- They model the values they expect in others such as integrity, altruism and self-growth.
- They work for students, staff, the school and community, rather than for themselves
- They can read and respond to people and build relationships.
- They have high professional standards and expect high levels of professionalism in return.
- They possess courage and demonstrate persistence and resilience
- They build productive external alliances with parents, the community, government agencies, business and the profession.
- They entrust, empower and encourage others through distributed leadership and engage in productive team building.
- They provide timely and constructive feedback, good and bad.
- They are approachable and good listeners.
- They create an environment in which people strive to do their best and in which they are recognised for their effort and achievement.
- They emphasise and use evidence, planning and data.
- They are constantly concerned with lifting school performance; nothing is permitted to get in the way.
- They see themselves and their school as being accountable for student achievement.
- Overall, they are authoritative, being highly responsive and highly demanding of individuals, teams and groups, and above all, themselves.

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96   Stephen Dinham, *How to get your school moving and improving*, op. cit. p. 140–141.

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