Chapter 12
Leadership for Learning in Diverse Settings: School Leaders Setting the Agenda in Australia and New Zealand

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12.1 Introduction

After 40 years of research, policy and practice changes, educational effectiveness and school improvement research has become an influential, though contested, set of understandings about schools and how they might impact on the lives of their students. The initial 'black box' model, which quantified inputs (resources and prior achievements) and outputs (achievement attained) without really considering what happened within the black box of school processes, has become increasingly more sophisticated, with value adding, multi-level modelling, growth curve modelling and quasi experimental research attempting to account for the complexity of student learning. One thing that has been consistent, from the early work on school effectiveness by Weber (1971), Edmonds (1978, 1979), Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston (1979), Reynolds (1982) and Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, and Ecob (1988) and on school leadership by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Sergiovanni (1987) to the more recent work of Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), MacBeath and Dempster (2009), MacBeath (2010), Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009), Day et al. (2010) and Townsend and MacBeath (2011), is that the important inter-relationships between leadership and student learning have been confirmed over and over again.

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While leadership has widely been treated as synonymous with headteachers or principals (e.g. Townsend & MacBeath, 2011), researchers have in recent years, widened the compass to examine student leadership (Mitra, 2007), teacher leadership (Barth, 1999; Little, 1990; Wenner & Campbell, 2017), district or local authority leadership (Waters & Marzano, 2007) and government or system leadership (Hopkins, 2010; Southworth, 2005), each being identified as helping to increase the level of student achievement within schools. There has also been a plethora of leadership types, hierarchical or transactional (Silins, 1994), transformational (Leithwood & Janzti, 2000), shared (Lambert, 2002), distributed (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, 2004), moral (Sergiovanni, 1992), ethical (Starratt, 2004), and democratic (Møller, 2002; Starratt, 2001), among others, that have found their way into the educational literature.

12.2   Leadership for Learning

It could be argued that the research has identified several shifts in the way leadership is applied in schools: from the concept of a principal being *the* school leader (that is, in a *position* of leadership) to one where leadership is seen as an *activity*, one that is not just the domain of the principal, but others as well; from one of leadership being the responsibility of a single person who oversees everything to one where people work together to ensure that requirements are covered; and from one of leadership as requiring generic skills (and so principals can be equally successful regardless of the school they work in) to one of leadership being context and purpose specific. The term instructional leadership is still seen as being a dominant form of school leadership spanning many countries, but in recent times a new terminology has been used for the leadership of schools, one called *Leadership for Learning*, which has been used for more than a decade in the United Kingdom (see, for example MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Townsend & MacBeath, 2011). However, Hallinger and Murphy, who began using the term instructional leadership in the mid-1980s, have both recently, and separately, used the term leadership for learning in their writing (see Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Hallinger & Heck (2010, p. 657) argued

> In recent years, the phrase 'leadership for learning' has gained international currency (MacBeath et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). In our view, this approach to school leadership represents a blend of two earlier leadership conceptualizations: instructional leadership and transformational leadership.

Murphy too, has recently used the term 'leadership for learning' (Murphy et al., 2007, p. 179):

> This type of leadership can best be labeled 'leadership for learning', 'instructionally focused leadership' or 'leadership for school improvement.' The touchstones for this type of leadership include the ability of leaders (a) to stay consistently focused on the right stuff - the core technology of schooling, or learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment and (b) to

make all the other dimensions of schooling (e.g. administration, organization, finance) work in the service of a more robust core technology and improved student learning.

However, MacBeath & Townsend (2011, pp. 1249–1250) argue that terminology IS important and that the difference between instructional leadership and leadership for learning, is that the focus of instructional leadership is on leadership and the focus of leadership for learning is on learning. They argue:

> Whereas much of the instructional leadership literature reduces learning to 'outcomes', leadership for learning embraces a much wider, developmental view of learning. Nor is its focus exclusively on student achievement. It sees things through a wide-angle lens, embracing professional, organisational and leadership learning. It understands the vitality of their interconnections and the climate they create for exploration, inquiry and creativity. Its concern is for of all those who are part of a learning community.

This is not the place to argue the case for one or the other in detail, but we wish to simply point out that such is the complexity of school leadership that even those that have been researching it for decades have not yet come to full agreement about what it means. Perhaps the most challenging task of leadership is to address continuing social inequalities common to all countries but manifested in different ways and with differing consequences. The historic triumvirate of gender, class and race remain to a greater or lesser extent, playing out in distinctive forms in relation to the socio-economic factors and the role and potency of schools in addressing them. As Enomoto (1997) describes them, schools are 'nested communities', not only internally but within local neighbourhoods, within local administrations/authorities or districts, states and countries, but also increasingly within the global competitive policy environment (also see Hallinger's discussion of the multiple contexts that influence school leadership; Hallinger, 2018).

With the nature of education changing, as more responsibility is placed at the school level, the role of the school leader has expanded and become more complex to the point where Townsend (2016) argued that leading a school in the twenty-first Century is akin to having to drive a car in the fast lane (to keep up) but needing to do it carefully to ensure that all of the passengers arrive safely. Part of the rapidly changing environment that school leaders are now facing is increasing diversity within and across schools. As Hopkins, Harris, and Jackson (2010) argue, schools at different stages of growth require different types of leadership and recognizing the context in which the school works is one of the key issues for any new leader of a school. This chapter explores some of the issues related to leading in diverse contexts, but also tries to establish some common ground for leaders, regardless of the school in which they might work. The chapter starts by considering what successful leadership looks like in Australia and New Zealand and then considers two case studies, one from each country, where successful leadership practices have been fostered and developed.

12.3 Successful School Leadership in Australasia

A focus on notions of leadership and school success is a relatively recent phenomenon in Australia and New Zealand. For the Australia context, reviews such as Gurr, (2009) and Gurr and Drysdale (2016) describe this history. In the 1960–1970s the focus was on supervision; a good school had good staff, which the principal helped to create (Bassett, Crane, & Walker, 1967). In the 1980s and 1990s there was a focus on school effectiveness and instructional leadership, in an effort to improve teaching and learning, and indirectly, student outcomes (e.g. Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1989; Duignan et al., 1985). From the 2000s, whilst there has been a focus on leadership and school effectiveness in terms of improving student learning outcomes, there has been research on the broader concept of school success, and the complexity of leading schools in a rapidly changing environment (Duignan & Gurr, 2007). There is also evidence that successful middle-level leadership can foster a range of positive outcomes that go beyond improving teaching and learning (e.g. Dinham, 2007; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). It has become clear that principal leadership, and leadership more broadly, contribute to success and effectiveness. In this section we report on continuing work in this area through consideration of findings from Australian and New Zealand research as part of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP).

The ISSPP has been actively researching the work of successful principals since its construction in 2001 (www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp/). Stimulated by the success of an earlier study (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000), Day wanted to explore on a large scale the characteristics and practices of principals leading successful schools, and so assembled a group comprising researchers from seven countries: Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Norway, and Sweden. This group agreed to conduct multiple perspective case studies focused on the leadership of principals in successful schools. Principals were selected using evidence of student achievement beyond expectations on state or national tests, principals' exemplary reputations in the community and/or school system, and other indicators of success that were country and site-specific (such as school review/inspection reports); once in the schools, the evidence of success indicated a broad array of student and school outcomes (see Gurr, 2015). Each case involved individual interviews with the principal, senior staff and other teachers (6–8), school council/board members (2), and group interviews (two parent and two student groups), as well as an analysis of relevant documents. Later cases also included observation.

The project began because at the time what was known about principal leadership relied too much on studies that only used principals as the data source, and too much of the literature was derived from studies in North America and the United Kingdom. Gathering the opinions of others in the schools (school board members, teachers, parents and students), and doing this across several countries, was a way to extend and enhance knowledge of the contribution of principals to school success. The project continues today with active research groups in 23 countries, producing more

than 100 case studies, and nearly as many papers, book chapters and books published, with four project books, and seven special journal issues in English, as well as books and journals in Spanish, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish.

In Australia, fourteen initial case studies were conducted in the states of Victoria and Tasmania between 2003 and 2005 (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2005, 2006). The five case studies in Tasmania were conducted under the leadership of Bill Mulford, and nine cases from Victoria were conducted under the supervision of David Gurr and Lawrie Drysdale. Schools included government, Catholic and independent schools, from the primary, secondary and special school sectors. Three of the schools in Victoria were subsequently revisited to explore the sustainability of success (Goode, 2017). In recent times, the focus was on exploring leadership in schools that have histories of underperformance, but which are on an improvement journey. Two cases were completed on schools in communities with high educational advantage, and one case was in a school with low educational advantage (Gurr, Drysdale, Longmuir, & McCrohan, 2018a, 2018b; Longmuir, 2017).

Led by Ross Notman, New Zealand has contributed thirteen cases to the ISSPP including one specialist school, one early childhood centre, one intermediate school, six primary schools and four secondary schools. The early childhood example is the only one in all of the ISSPP cases. Findings from an initial five cases were published in Notman and Henry (2009) and Notman (2012), and a further seven cases were published in a ten-case edited book Notman (2011a), and one additional case can be found in Notman (2014).

From the Australian and New Zealand cases it seems that principals were contextually aware of their environment and shared a set of values and beliefs, personal qualities and had a range of practices or interventions that contributed to success. We can identify common features of successful school principals centred on: values and beliefs; personal qualities and skills; interventions/practices that lead to success; and, capacity building. The first three features (values, qualities and skills) are to do with principal identity. These are personal qualities and characteristics attributed by participants to the principal that shaped their perception of positive leadership which enabled the principals to influence and have impact. The other aspects are more to do with what principals do – their practices and interventions. In the end, their ability to be successful (and effective) is a combination of their personal factors and their behaviours within the school and broader context in which they are operating. Successful school leaders interact within a particular school context to deliver strategic interventions aimed at improving student outcomes.

12.3.1 Principal Contribution

Principals made a difference and contributed to success by being a positive influence on the quality of education in the school (Gurr et al., 2006). The contribution was manifest in aspects such as improving the image of the school, setting new direction

through a common vision, establishing high expectations, building school capacity (especially in regard to staff development), re-organising the school, and focusing on improving teaching and learning. Notman (2011b) described how New Zealand principals articulated an overarching vision and communicated this clearly to the school/centre community. They employed strategies that focussed on cultural change such as being culturally responsive to demographic changes in the school community and using an ethic of care to promote a positive culture. An acute contextual awareness (both internal and external), resulted in a strong sense of advocacy for students and the school community. In most cases across the two countries, school communities identified the principal as the 'engine room' of school improvement and change. School communities were able to identify milestones and achievements attributable to the principal.

12.3.2   Values

Sergiovanni (1991) noted that style itself is less important than what the principal stands for, believes in and communicates to others. This was clearly one of the key findings from the Australian case studies. Initially we categorised this as the principal's personal philosophy (Gurr & Drysdale, 2007). Subsequently we have defined them as values and beliefs (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). The successful leaders were able to clearly articulate their values and were observed to act in accordance with their values. The values were perceived on multiple levels. For example, they expressed core values, such as respect for others, fairness, trustworthiness and responsibility. But they also had universal values, such as social justice, dignity and freedom, empathy for the less well off, compassion and tolerance. Other levels included professional values and beliefs (service to staff, acceptance of diversity, accepting constructive feedback from others, maintaining confidentiality) and social and political values (respect for life and the environment; respect for minority rights; respect for the law).

12.3.3   Qualities and Skills

Gurr et al. (2006) found that particular personal qualities and characteristics seemed important for the success of the leadership of principals, and Belchetz and Leithwood (2007) noted these features were important, not so much for what leaders do, but for how they do it. Gurr et al. (2006) highlighted traits such as passion, optimism, enthusiasm, persistence, determination and assertiveness. The leaders were people-centred, good at developing relationships, modeling appropriate behavior, and establishing relational trust. They could articulate their core beliefs and values and demonstrate these through their actions. Critical self-reflection, and personal resiliency were important elements of their successful practice (see

Notman, 2012, for a detailed discussion of the interpersonal factors that contributed to leadership success).

12.3.4 Interventions/Practices

Values, qualities and skills are only part of the equation. Who they are is important, but significantly what they do and how they do it also determines their success. The principals acted purposefully and strategically. They engaged in a series of interventions that reflected the contexts and the needs of their schools. Gurr et al. (2006) identified personal, professional, organisational and community capacity building to be common interventions in all the Australian case studies, and these have been included in all the major models describing the ISSPP research (e.g. Drysdale & Gurr, 2011; Gurr, 2015). Notman (2011b) described how principals promoted teacher quality through recruiting, inducting, developing and motivating teaching staff; and built individual capacity among staff through professional development and use of distributed leadership practices. Notman (2011b) used pedagogical leadership to describe the core focus of the work of the New Zealand principals. Aspects included in this were a vision for teaching and learning that aims to increase student achievement, an orientation to the possibilities and opportunities rather than limitations of government curriculum mandates, fostering staff collaboration through stimulating learning conversations amongst staff, encouraging explicit sharing of pedagogical strategies and the use of assessment data to guide student learning programs. In the early childhood and primary settings, building school-parent partnerships to support children's learning was also considered.

While the major focus of these case studies was the principal, an important finding was that leadership was cast more broadly. Many of the principals empowered staff and embraced shared decision making and shared leadership in ways that supported distributed leadership approaches. In many cases there was a close and positive relationship between the principal and the assistant principal/s.

12.3.5 A Model of Successful School Leadership

Figure 12.1 shows a model that has been constructed from consideration of various models produced by groups within the ISSPP and description of the various models is provided in Gurr (2015).

The model shown in Fig. 12.1 has a division between the why, how and what of successful schools articulated by Mulford and Johns (2004), and the use of impact levels from Gurr et al. (2003), moving from the least direct on learning outcomes (level 3, wider context), to level 2 (leadership and management), and then level 1 (teaching and learning) which, of course, directly impacts on student outcomes. The use of impact levels is helpful in locating the mainly indirect impact on student
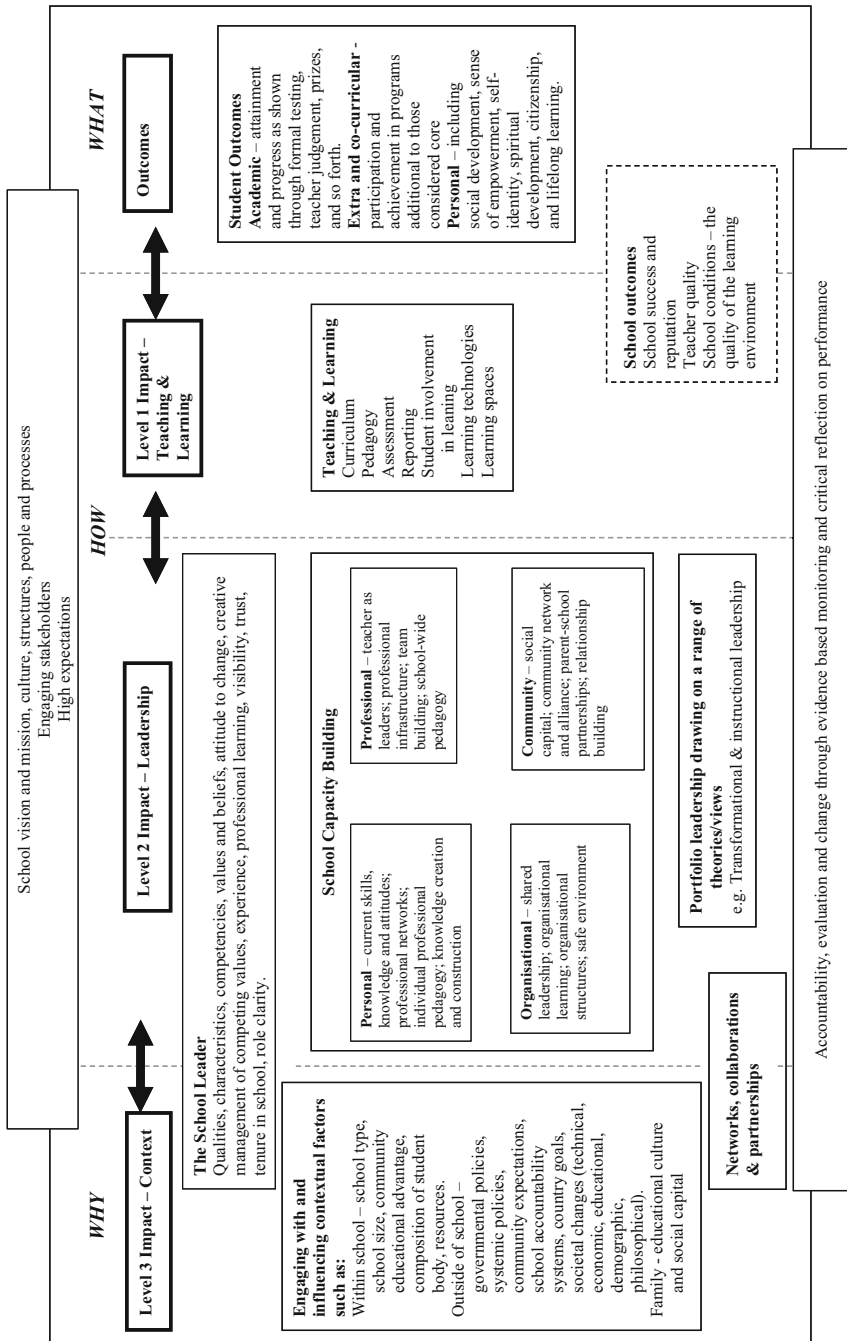
WHY

HOW

WHAT

School vision and mission, culture, structures, people and processes
Engaging stakeholders
High expectations

Level 3 Impact – Context

Level 2 Impact – Leadership

Level 1 Impact – Teaching & Learning

Outcomes

The School Leader
Qualities, characteristics, competencies, values and beliefs, attitude to change, creative management of competing values, experience, professional learning, visibility, trust, tenure in school, role clarity.

Engaging with and influencing contextual factors such as:
Within school – school type, school size, community educational advantage, composition of student body, resources.
Outside of school – governmental policies, systemic policies, community expectations, school accountability systems, country goals, societal changes (technical, economic, educational, demographic, philosophical).
Family - educational culture and social capital

Networks, collaborations & partnerships

School Capacity Building

Personal – current skills, knowledge and attitudes; professional networks; individual professional pedagogy; knowledge creation and construction

Professional – teacher as leaders; professional infrastructure; team building; school-wide pedagogy

Organisational – shared leadership; organisational learning; organisational structures; safe environment

Community – social capital; community network and alliance; parent-school partnerships; relationship building

Portfolio leadership drawing on a range of theories/views
e.g. Transformational & instructional leadership

Teaching & Learning
Curriculum
Pedagogy
Assessment
Reporting
Student involvement in learning
Learning technologies
Learning spaces

School outcomes
School success and reputation
Teacher quality
School conditions – the quality of the learning environment

Student Outcomes
Academic – attainment and progress as shown through formal testing, teacher judgement, prizes, and so forth.
Extra and co-curricular - participation and achievement in programs additional to those considered core
Personal – including social development, sense of empowerment, self-identity, spiritual development, citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Accountability, evaluation and change through evidence based monitoring and critical reflection on performance

Fig. 12.1 The International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP) model of successful school leadership from Gurr (2015)

learning of principal leadership across levels three and two, and the more direct impact of middle level leaders across levels two and one. The context description in level three describes the school, family and external contexts that leaders need to respond to and influence. Networks, collaborations and partnerships are located across levels three and two. Level two has an emphasis on the capacity building of teachers and other adults in the school, has detail about the characteristics and practices of school leaders, and encourages a portfolio approach to using leadership styles. At level 1 there is clarity about teaching and learning, with this including student involvement in learning, and the nature and quality of the spaces and technologies that support teaching and learning. Outcomes include broad descriptions of student learning outcomes, and also includes school outcomes. Use of evidence based monitoring and critical reflection remains across all levels. Across the levels there are elements describing the use of evidence based monitoring and critical reflection, the general nature of the school (the shared vision and mission, and culture of the school and the structure, people and processes that make this), the engagement of stakeholders within and outside the school, and the promotion of high expectations for all.

12.4 Australia: Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL)

The Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL) project emerged in 2009 as a response to the Australian federal government's concern about a gap in reading achievement demonstrated in successive results from the Program for Student Assessment (PISA) studies. These results prompted the then Labor government to establish a series of projects under the "Closing the Gap" program. The Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL) Pilot Project was an idea developed by the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) (Dempster et al., 2017) and established a partnership that included the Department of Education and Children's Services, the Australian Primary Principals Association, three universities, and the state, Catholic and Independent school authorities from four states, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory (Dempster et al., 2012). Sixty principals, from those four states completed the program of professional learning in 2010. Since the pilot program, the PALL professional learning activity has been offered in every state of Australia.

The program was based on the research evidence from a range of studies showing that principals' leadership can impact student achievement (e.g., Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006) together with a body of research indicating that the quality of school leadership (particularly distributed leadership and leadership for learning; e.g. MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), and well-designed professional learning and targeted support programs (Hord, 1997; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009) are vital in progressing students' reading improvement. Linked to this view of leadership were government reviews of reading and literacy

(e.g. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2000; Rose, 2006; Rowe, 2005) that argued that secure knowledge and skills in five components of phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge (alphabet and phonics), vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency, were pivotal for reading acquisition, and that how teachers design and structure their reading programs can have a significant impact. Routman (2014, p. 1) made the point that "teachers must be leaders, and principals must know literacy [because] without a synergy between literacy and leadership and a committed, joint effort by teachers and principals, fragile achievement gains do not hold." An acceptance of these principles suggests that to improve reading performance in schools, school leaders need to have not only leadership knowledge and skills but also an understanding of how students learn to read and knowledge of ways in which teachers might be supported in this key learning area.

From the research identified above five positions emerged that were adopted for the development and implementation of the PALL program, namely:

- That the role of the principal (and leadership team) is absolutely critical for the improvement of student learning by establishing a clear moral purpose within the school.
- That high levels of learning improvements will occur if leadership is shared with others in the school.
- That there are certain specific factors (the BIG 6) that must be given explicit attention by teachers if students are to learn to read well.
- That for improvement to occur, interventions must be planned and implemented. A school cannot expect improvement by continuing to do what it has always done.
- That for school leaders to undertake learning improvements successfully, they will need support to improve their own learning and to implement appropriate strategies.

The PALL program is essentially a 2-year program of learning and implementation. The first year consists of the learning and planning phase during five one day modules over the course of a school year. During this year a specific plan for reading intervention is developed, to be implemented in the second year. The professional learning was designed to provide school leaders with the needed content knowledge about the six key areas of reading (the BIG 6) – oral language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letter-and-sound knowledge, comprehension and fluency - together with an understanding of strategies of distributed leadership that would see teachers, as well as leaders, leading interventions in reading. The five PALL positions were used to create a Leadership for Learning Blueprint (LfLB) that became a central feature of the PALL program, one that could be used by school leaders to implement change back in schools. The modules were as follows:

Module 1: Leadership for learning – What does this mean?
Module 2: What leaders need to know about learning to read
Module 3: Leading reading data gathering and analysis

Module 4: Designing, implementing and monitoring literacy interventions
Module 5: Evaluating and reporting on reading interventions

Module 1 introduced one of the key elements of the program, the Leadership for Learning Blueprint (LfLB), one synthesised to connect leadership to learning. The LfLB is illustrated in Fig. 12.2 below.

At the centre of leaders' work is their commitment to the *moral purpose* of improving the lives of students through learning. To do this rests on a commitment to focused professional conversations or "*disciplined dialogue*", always stimulated by *strong evidence* of what students can or cannot do, so that what they need to learn next is well informed. Surrounding this central core is a commitment to *active professional learning* by school leaders and members of staff, an understanding that *shared leadership* is essential in schools and that all structures and processes should be organized accordingly. When this is undertaken, a clear commitment to *a well-planned reading program with teaching and learning carefully coordinated and monitored* is essential, as is a concentration on creating helpful and *supportive conditions* for students' learning, by developing the physical, cultural, social and emotional learning environment through strategic resourcing. The last of the dimensions refers to the importance of making *connections beyond the school*: with families, their communities, and with other agencies which may make different but necessary contributions to improvements in learning. All of these dimensions combine to make up a complex agenda for leaders and teachers who want to make a difference to the lives of learners in the contexts in which they work.

Subsequent modules provided the evidence-base in support of the BIG 6 by highlighting the research endorsing the need to include ongoing quality teaching of the six elements of reading (module 2), consideration of the use of formal and
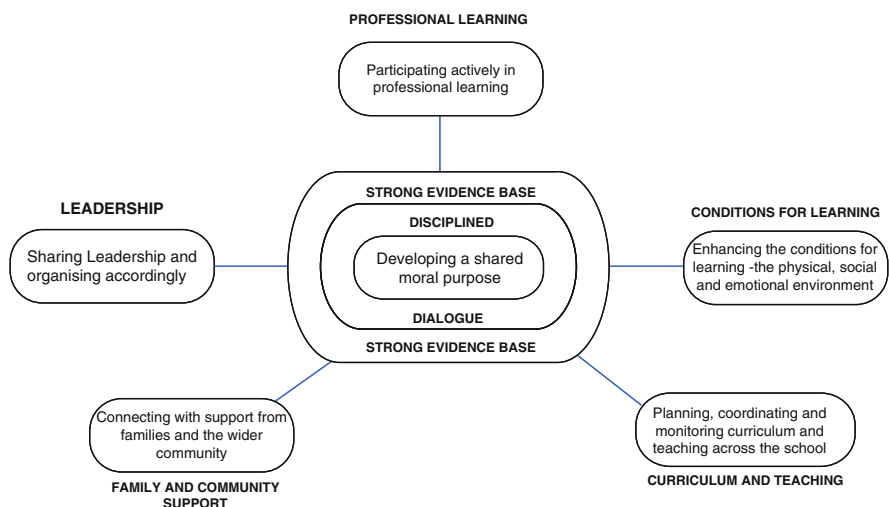

Fig. 12.2 The Leadership for Learning Blueprint (LfLB)

informal assessment processes and the logic of having whole-of-school agreements about what was assessed and when and how this diagnostic information could be shared with students, families, and colleagues (module 3), the need for planning interventions to ensure that specific concerns identified through these processes were addressed (module 4) and school-based evaluation of the interventions as a means for reporting progress and making decisions about future steps (module 5). Between each of the modules, identified literacy advisers would work with school leaders to provide support and encouragement to use the skills, tools and knowledge from the modules, adapted in ways to suit the particular context of their school. PALL has expanded over time to include different types of schools and school contexts, and a wider variety of school leaders. Since 2010, more than 2000 school leaders from around Australia have been involved in PALL.

12.4.1   PALL Research

Alongside the professional learning activity, there have been numerous research studies related to the implementation of the PALL program, to identify its efficacy and to look at its effect on leader and teacher behaviours as they relate to the teaching of reading (Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA), 2013; Dempster et al., 2012; Dempster, Johnson, & Stevens, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014; Townsend, Dempster, Johnson, Bayetto, & Stevens, 2015a; Townsend, Wilkinson, & Stevens, 2015b; Townsend, 2017). The results of the first six of these studies were compiled into the book Leadership and Literacy: Principals, Partnerships and Pathways to Improvement (Dempster et al., 2017). The data collected over the years has been drawn from both quantitative and qualitative sources. The most consistently used piece of quantitative data collection has been the Personal Leadership Profile (PLP). It contains 36 statements related to the elements identified in the Leadership for Learning Blueprint. Participants in the PALL program were asked to complete the PLP in module 1, and in a number of different studies, were also asked to complete it again in module 5. In each instance, where the data has been collected twice, they indicate there has been a growth (near or above 20%) in the school leaders' perceptions of their ability to lead their schools in ways that will support improvements in reading (for details see Figure 8.2 in Dempster et al., 2012, and Table 1, Townsend, 2018). Qualitative data was collected in various ways, such as interviews with participants or literacy advisers, collection and analysis of schools' intervention plans and through case studies of schools that were implementing an intervention during the second year of the program. Data collected from the case study schools included interviews with school leaders, teachers and parents, student surveys of their attitudes towards reading, reading achievement data and samples of changes in student work over the course of the year.

12.4.2   Results from the Data

Student Learning. As the 2 years of the PALL program was not sufficient time to establish whole school trends in student achievement, determinations about the impact of the PALL program on educational effectiveness looked at some broader parameters, such as student engagement, changes in pedagogical and assessment practices, how the school encouraged a positive climate, and so on, as it applied to reading. Dempster et al. (2017, p. 169) reported:

> . . .increases in student achievement in reading were recorded; in every report, changed teaching practices (particularly increased knowledge about diagnostic data sources and increased ability to interrogate data for individual students as well as for whole classes and whole schools).

> They also argued there was:

> . . .evidence of shifts in teaching practices in many schools in remarkably diverse contexts across six states and one territory. . . [and] also demonstrated how these changed teaching and assessment practices have improved the conditions for learning for thousands of students across Australia.

There was substantial data collected over the seven studies to indicate that the five PALL positions described above could be ratified by the research data. What follows is a brief overview of the findings from the collective research on each.

Moral Purpose. Data collected over the course of the PALL research program of seven studies included participants responses to the Personal Leadership Profile taken at the beginning and at the end of the professional learning, conversations with Literacy Advisers and with PALL participants and others in the case study activities. It was clear that a great deal of attention was paid to the moral purpose of leadership as described by a focus on the purposes, goals and expectations related to reading. In the Pilot program, more than 1500 conversations addressed these issues which resulted in a clear improvement over time for principals' perceptions of their ability to promote factors associated with moral purpose, setting high expectations, collaboratively building vision and setting directions, seeing that goals are embedded in school and classroom routines, and ensuring consensus on goals.

In addition to the quantitative data related to moral purpose, numerous responses from the case study research also suggested a strong focus on the development of moral purpose. Dempster et al. (2017, pp. 178–79) summed up the implications of these findings.

> First, reconnecting with the moral purpose of schools becomes tangible when it is linked with a learning priority as foundational as reading. . . Second, finding ways to embed the goal of reading improvement in classroom practice at every year level should be a constant demand to which all members of staff are able to respond. Third . . . Principals need to develop a deep understanding of the capabilities of their teachers in order to ensure that all are able to play their part in the pursuit of reading improvement.

Of particular interest for this element of the Blueprint is the Principals as Literacy Leaders in Indigenous Communities (PALLIC) study (Johnson et al., 2014) which

included seven case studies, as these studies helped to identify the important role of context within diverse school communities. In the case of PALLIC, the *PALLIC professional development has created awareness and has raised the profile of Indigenous staff at the school and increased their confidence in their work*, and the term "both ways leadership" was used to recognise the explicit recognition that a school needed Indigenous Leadership Partners (ILPs), where the leadership partner was both embraced by the principal and accepted by the indigenous community. One of the contextual complexities came from each of the PALLIC schools having its own terminology for Indigenous leadership partners. Indigenous Leaders were referred to as Partners (ILPs), Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs). In one PALLIC school an ILP had her own desk in the principal's office and the principal even said . . .*She [the ILP] is the Aboriginal version of me*, and another principal reported *the Indigenous leaders are just as important as the principal.* Some schools had up to three ILPs and others could not get any. This was further complicated by the fact that in many indigenous schools, staff turnover, and leader turnover, was much higher than in other schools, but people believed that the "both ways leadership" could overcome this problem. In one case, as reported in Dempster et al. (2017, p. 87),

> . . .the principal indicated how the ILPs had embraced the PALLIC Program, recommended it to the community and worked alongside the teachers to implement improvement strategies. The principal was unclear how the two ILPs had been able to sell PALLIC's idea to their community, but was nevertheless somewhat confident that if he, as principal, were to leave, the two ILPs would promote the continuation of the PALLIC Program to a future leadership team.

This particular study helped to show that the context in which leaders work to improve literacy, the students, the families and the community, needs to be considered, respected and involved if success is to be achieved.

Shared Leadership. It is clear from the data collected that there were many examples of shared leadership being undertaken and that those involved in the PALL program had higher levels of confidence in doing this after completing the PALL program. The position taken on shared leadership implies the acceptance of the need for leadership depth and breadth – depth within the school and breadth beyond its boundaries. PALL research interviews are replete with terms such as "same page", "common language", "team work", "team planning", "professional conversations", "agreed strategies and solutions", "trust in each other", "collective responsibility" and so on. All of these terms point indisputably to leadership as a shared activity within the school when the goal is reading improvement. In contrast, the collective research uncovered only a small number of concerted efforts to move outside the gates of a single school. However, when and where this occurred, with pre-schools, other child agencies and with pre-school parents directly, the value to principals and teachers was reported enthusiastically, which suggests that more schools might benefit from attempts to encourage families to be more involved. The PALL Learning in Families Together (LIFT) program offered in Tasmania from 2017, and its associated research, might assist us to better understand how schools might encourage this partnership further.

Dempster et al. (2017, p. 181–2) sum up by saying

> ...we can say with certainty that most principals and teachers expanded their capacity to share leadership within their schools, thus seeing leadership as activity, not position. In many schools, leadership depth was increased amongst teachers from the early childhood years to those in the upper school, with structural arrangements in place to ensure that communities of practice took responsibility for the implementation of agreed strategies and planned interventions in reading.

Learning to read. The PALL studies overall revealed an unevenness of principals' and teachers' knowledge about reading, which reemphasized the important role that principals need to take but also the need to share leadership of this important foundational activity. However, the case study data showed numerous instances of school leaders' and teachers' willingness to learn and also to take responsibility for leading student learning to higher levels.

Dempster et al. (2017, pp. 183–4) identify five messages from the data collected for this position:

1. school principals need to have a high level of understanding about what it means to teach reading if they are to lead staff in their schools to strengthen student satisfaction and achievement;
2. teachers require targeted professional development in specific methodologies for teaching the fundamentals of reading, dependent on capabilities, over an extended period of time;
3. interventions in the teaching of reading should be based on robust evidence about students' capabilities in learning to read and teachers' knowledge about the explicit teaching of known areas of student needs;
4. knowledge about the cultural and social context for the teaching of reading should take account of student data and conditions for learning in particular schools and communities; and
5. a strengths-based approach to engaging parents and community members in the teaching and support of reading is likely to result in a more productive take up than the more familiar deficit alternative.

A major implication is that there is a clear need for national and state administrators to reconsider a national strategy to support professional learning for the teaching of reading. It is also clear that still more must be done to engage parents and members of the community in supporting children's reading.

Taking an intervention approach. Taking an intervention approach brought together a number of elements of the LfLB, using strong evidence to make decisions, then focusing on how to resource, and change, the conditions for learning, the curriculum, teaching practices and family engagement. A growing confidence in each of these areas was demonstrated by the increase in positive responses to the Personal Leadership Profiles of PALL participants, especially in relation to the element seeking to improve parent and community support.

The PALL research showed that that successful interventions in reading have been based on sound qualitative and quantitative evidence. While some schools had previously been using evidence to guide their teaching and learning programs, they

had not necessarily used it consistently or strategically. PALL engendered sharper and more purposeful data collection and analysis, and the ability to then use disciplined dialogue in ways that enabled planning for improvement and future decision-making about student learning. Many schools mentioned the use of a whole-school approach as making a significant contribution. Consistent literacy practices, such as dedicated literacy blocks and the use of a common language right across the school were common. However, one of the main findings is that changing teaching practices takes both time and support and that schools systems need to allow time for changes to be embedded rather than demanding instant results.

Leadership support. Leadership support for literacy improvement comes in many forms and the PALL research highlighted the importance of some of them. There was a constant reference from school leaders across the studies of the need for leaders to have the knowledge required to make the changes necessary for improved literacy results. The PALL program itself was one of these forms of support, providing school leaders with BOTH what they needed to know to support strong reading outcomes in their schools AND ways in which the leadership of this effort might be shared by teachers and others in the school. They were provided with evidence-based knowledge about the BIG 6 and the need for, and strategies to support, the development of a shared moral purpose as it applied to literacy through improved data collection and use in a disciplined way. The literacy advisers also played a critical role in the process, providing ongoing support for the building of knowledge and skill over the program's life. A clear implication is that focused professional development for principals can have a substantial impact on how schools approach their leadership of school improvement. A second implication is that the ongoing use of mentors, particularly for new principals might heighten growth within schools when specific goals are being identified by systems or by local authorities.

The value of PALL. Dempster et al. (2017, p. 191) argue that the research data, collected now over 7 years, suggest four themes that emerge from the program:

1. *Enhanced leadership for learning expertise;*
2. *Leadership partnerships and learning pathways;*
3. *The power of blended leadership learning programs; and*
4. *The need to rethink parent engagement.*

From the first of these, the data suggest that those involved in the program experienced a heightened competence, and confidence, to implement approaches to improving literacy in their schools. The second theme encompasses the PALL position that leadership is an activity, not one that is solely defined by the position one holds. What the research has found is that the vast majority of leaders are willing and supportive of sharing leadership of activities related to the improvement of literacy and that the majority of teachers are willing to take on these leadership actions as well. The third theme draws attention to the value of ensuring that leadership at its best is connected to the daily work of the school. Generic leadership actions, when specifically applied to student learning and with the focus of having research-validated knowledge about literacy, raises the profile of the literacy

development activity right across the school. Blending generic leadership with knowledge of reading enables school leaders to work side by side with teachers as they work out ways to support their students' needs to become more literate. Finally, the fourth theme clearly focuses on one of the critical issues that has yet to be solved, how schools can engage parents in the activity of supporting their child's learning. It is historically hard to engage parents in this, for many reasons, some school-based and some home-based. However, it is clear that for parents, families and communities, especially those in disadvantaged circumstances, home-based support to assist their children to learn would be welcomed. Dempster et al. (2017, p. 191) report:

> A clear need revealed in our research is that although parents have relevant talents, their knowledge of schools and the learning that is taking place in them is often lacking when juxtaposed with "disengaged parents" data. Understanding this finding, the approach taken must be strengths based if the ultimate goal is for parent- and community-led engagement initiatives to become a reality.

The ultimate test of PALL will come later, when we start to see data from the schools that have been involved in the PALL research over time, particularly from schools where PALL, and the BIG 6 approach, has been given time to embed itself into the culture of the school. Early findings suggest there are significant improvements (Townsend, 2017).

As Dempster et al. (2017, p. 193) conclude:

> ...as we start to see data on students' enjoyment of reading, their reading habits in their spare time at school and at home, and the confidence of their parents in supporting their children's reading. If we are able to see these things, we are also likely to see positive changes in student reading performance on whatever measure is employed. Although this was not the primary purpose of PALL, it is a result to which we aspire.

The work of PALL continues, with professional learning and research being conducted in both Tasmania and South Australia. From the original base of 60 primary principals from disadvantaged communities, PALL has grown and expanded its reach to secondary and early childhood leaders and has developed programs specifically aimed at Indigenous communities, the middle years and for schools wishing to encourage greater engagement with families. Further quantitative data from participants and teachers from their schools and more longitudinal case studies will help us to further refine our understanding of how school leaders translate their learning, about leadership and literacy, into strategic programs within their schools, in ways that will support teachers to improve student engagement, involvement and learning, ultimately to see them improve their achievement in this critical area of human development.

12.5   New Zealand: Improving Contexts for Learning for Maori Students

Achievement disparities between specific groups of students in New Zealand education continue, over time, to be of concern. Of particular concern, as in many other countries internationally, is the achievement of Indigenous students. New Zealand's Indigenous Māori students do not do as well in the education system as do other students. The Office of the Auditor-General consistently reports that Māori students do not remain in schooling as long as other students nor are they achieving as highly (Auditor-General, 2012, 2013). In 2016, across all ethnicity groupings, Māori students were the lowest proportion of students remaining at school to age 17 (70.9%). This compares with a retention rate of 85.4% for European students (Ministry of Education, 2018a). Māori are also over-represented in our national stand-down[1] and exclusion[2] figures. In 2016, the age-standardised stand-down rate for Māori (37.3 stand-downs per 1000) was 2.4 times as high as Pākehā (students of the colonial settlers) (15.7 stand-downs per 1000). In the same year, the Ministry of Education reported that the age-standardised exclusion rate for Māori (3.0 exclusions per 1000) was 3.4 times as high as for Pākehā (0.9 exclusions per 1000) (Ministry of Education, 2018b).

Despite many initiatives to raise Māori student achievement, English-medium schooling continues to return lower achievement rates for Māori than for European students (Udahemuka, 2016). In 2016, 66% of Māori students left school with NCEA[3] Level 2 or above compared to 84% of European students (Ministry of Education, 2018c).

International measures confirm this picture. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing across the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries continues to show New Zealand's education system as one that, in terms of education outcomes, achieves high levels of achievement for many students but not for all (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, 2007, 2010). From the 2012 PISA survey, while New Zealand achievement overall was above the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science, the achievement of Māori students was both below the New Zealand average and the OECD average (May, Cowles, & Lamy, 2013).

PISA describes the New Zealand situation, where some students do well but there is a large gap between high and low achievers, as being one of high quality and low equity. Descriptions of high quality and low equity education systems, driven by deficit-oriented approaches, are familiar to educators across the world (Sleeter, 2011). The learners disproportionately underserved in New Zealand's secondary

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[1] Formal removal of a student through a stand-down from school for a period of up to 5 school days.

[2] Where an enrolment of a student aged under 16 is terminated, with a requirement that the student enrols elsewhere.

[3] National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the official secondary school qualification in New Zealand.

schools continue to be Māori and sadly the marginalisation of this group of students is neither a recent phenomenon nor is it confined to education (Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014). Māori students leave school with lower qualifications and fewer life choices for their own futures and for the future well-being of New Zealand as a whole.

12.5.1 The New Zealand Policy Response: Ka Hikitia

Charged with improving Māori student experiences in the education system, the Ministry of Education launched Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008). This strategy challenged educators to collaboratively focus on making the difference by ensuring that Māori students, "in their early years and first years of secondary school are present, engaged and achieving, and strong relationships with educators, whānau (family) and iwi (community) are supporting them to excel" (p. 5). The term Ka Hikitia, defined as a means to "'step up', 'lift up', or 'lengthen one's stride'" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 10), was positioned as "a call to action" (p. 11) in order to step up "the performance of the education system to ensure Māori [students] are enjoying education success as Māori" (p. 10). Within this strategy was a challenge to schools, education centres, educators, communities and the education system itself to step up so as to more effectively ensure the potential of its Māori learners. In so doing, the Ministry of Education recognised the need for an extensive change in positioning, expectations and practices across the entire education sector, "[i]t is about a shift in thinking and behaviour, a change in attitudes and expectations" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4). The Ka Hikitia policy was refreshed in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Expectations and Responses. In 2013, under a working title of Building on Success, the Ministry of Education (2013b) sought a response that would generate equity by building in-school leader and teacher capability to embed what works for Māori learners within classrooms, leadership, school governance and school-wide practices. Within the contextual landscape of the re-launch of Ka Hikitia and the growing sense of urgency around Māori student achievement, the resulting initiative should also bring together the learnings from over a decade of discrete and varied research and professional learning and development initiatives addressing aspects of school life that impacted on Māori students' school experiences and their achievement (Ministry of Education, 2013b).

The new initiative Kia Eke Panuku (Building on Success) undertook to use an inquiry, evidence-based approach that would be responsive to each individual school and would aim to accelerate and lift the levels of achievement and education success of Māori students as Māori. Kia Eke Panuku focussed on strengthening Māori students' participation and achievement and thus their potential and future as productive citizens at a family and tribal level and at the level of New Zealand and the global community. The model focused on what schools' leadership, teachers, and

in turn Māori students and their families, could do in response to the strengths and/or challenges identified from within the range of contexts and settings in which they each engaged. As such, the aim was that schools would become inextricably connected through Māori students to their homes and communities (Alton-Lee, Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Working more effectively with Māori communities would enable schools to benefit from the funds of cultural knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and expertise that continues to be marginalised and under-utilised by many schools. Critical theories were used alongside kaupapa Māori theories[4] in support of the more effective inclusion of Māori and other marginalised students (Berryman, Nevin, SooHoo, & Ford, 2015).

Shared agenda and moral purpose. Central to Kia Eke Panuku was the agenda of secondary schools giving life to Ka Hikitia and addressing the aspirations of Māori communities by supporting Māori students to pursue their potential. Positioning as partners within the Treaty of Waitangi[5] called on leaders to confront and address the major imbalances of power and privilege that existed as a result of their shared history, either as Māori, or descendants of the colonisers of Aotearoa, or as economic migrants. It also required the acknowledgement and critical reflection of the historical and continuingly destructive impact that loss of land, loss of language, loss of rangatiratanga (self-determination) and loss of mana (ascribed personal prestige and power), continues to have on the wellbeing and success of Māori today. Seeking power-sharing relationships between Treaty partners in the field of educational professional learning and development was therefore essential to avoiding the imposition of yet more inadequate education theories that position Māori epistemologies and world-views at the margins of educational policy and practice rather than at the centre (Smith, 1999).

Leadership was shared with others. School principals were asked to enlist the support of leaders and teachers from across the school to develop a Strategic Change Leadership team. In some cases, this team included senior Māori students and people from their home communities. Some people within these teams described strategic change leaders as:

> A group of people who can lead this new way of being. We're leveraging off multiple voices, groups of people, both inside and outside the school, who've got a vested interest in raising Māori student achievement.

> We have people from different spaces and places. We've got many views coming in and that makes the learning a lot richer and a lot stronger.

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[4]Kaupapa Māori research is done by Māori, with Māori and about Māori

[5]The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, signed by Māori tribal leaders and British Government representatives mandated a partnership relationship and established British governance in return for Māori tribal ownership and protection of their land interests and cultural treasures. However, the sovereignty guaranteed to Māori was increasingly ignored, with dire consequences for Māori cultural, social and economic wellbeing, well into the twentieth century.

There's a different dynamic when you've got different voices, and voices that may have not necessarily been heard that much before, around the table. It certainly changes the conversations.

The specific factors attended to in Kia Eke Panuku. The Strategic Change Leadership Team Co-Constructed an Entry Point to Align with the Individual School Evidence of Māori Students' Engagement and Achievement As Well as Other Related, Contextual Factors. This Initial Profiling Process Was Based on the Following Five Inter-Related Dimensions that Became the Hallmark of Kia Eke Panuku

1. Leadership
2. Evidence-based inquiry
3. Culturally responsive and relational contexts for learning
4. Educationally powerful connections amongst schools, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, and
5. Literacy, numeracy and Māori language across the curriculum.

Support to improve learning. Kia Eke Panuku facilitators worked with Strategic Change Leadership teams to develop individualized action plans. Together they worked across these dimensions towards critical and sustainable change within the school. Their work was about developing and growing the 'skill and the will' within school personnel, to improve outcomes for Māori students. Ultimately the goal was to provide in-school capability along with fit for purpose tools and resources thus removing the need for external support and facilitation (Berryman, Eley, Ford & Egan, Berryman, Eley, Ford, & Egan, 2016).

Planning to do things differently requires learning, unlearning, relearning. In the work with schools, an essential part of planning to do things differently, required unlearning (Wink, 2011) or disrupting much of the embedded discourses and beliefs that formed the status quo (Apple, 2013) about Māori students and their home communities. Unlearning was an essential precursor to relearning and learning more emancipatory discourses of potential and social justice. Leaders and teachers began to question what they were doing and how this might contribute to or resist the current hegemony in their schools and then out into society. This created contexts where new discourses began to exemplify the dynamic interplay between the critical principles of conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis (Freire, 1972; Smith, 2003)

Evidence of outcomes for Māori learners, alongside evidence of current leadership and/or classroom practices, informed new theorising and practices (*conscientisation*) towards the creation of more socially just learning contexts. Leaders and teachers could then decide what practices were most effective and therefore needed to be sustained; what practices were ineffective and needed to be discontinued; and what practices needed to change in order to become more effective for Māori learners. These practices were understood within Freire's (1972) concept of *resistance*. Leaders and teachers then implemented and reflected on the changes that would lead to accelerating improved outcomes for *Māori learners as Māori* in order to bring about *transformative praxis*.

Leadership discussions. As discussed by members of a school's strategic change leadership team, relevant evidence and ongoing critical reflections informed the continuing clarification of the focus and implementation of the school's strategic action plan:

> It's using evidence as a lens through which people can critically reflect on the influence of their current practice for Māori leaners.

> The important thing about Kia Eke Panuku action plans were that they were iterative documents, and because people were discovering new things as they progressed they should be constantly changing. As a new revelation comes up or a new set of data presents itself, there's a part of this action plan that we didn't know about before, and it's not reflected in it, so we need to change it. These action plans were living documents, quite fluid. They were not being completely changed all the time but they were being modified and tweaked as new realisations or new layers of understanding revealed themselves to the strategic change leadership team.

Through the process of making links between evidence of practice (what was observed) and theory (what we understand about this in terms of effective pedagogy) participants were able to deepen their own understandings about culturally responsive and relational pedagogy. Deepening understandings of the kinds of sustainable change required across the Kia Eke Panuku dimensions are exemplified in the voices of these leaders who are reflecting upon their own agency to bring about the reform in their own school. They first understood that the reform needed to engage across multiple contexts:

> To manage a change like this you actually need both elements; you need the structural element, which is the way the school conceives its goals and its priorities and its leadership and how it does things, but you also need what happens inside the classrooms.

Another leader talked about how this involved learning and helping others to be learners on this journey as well:

> If you think that you've got no room to grow, then it's time to quit. There's always room for improvement and fine-tuning. Shadow coaching will provide a really good opportunity for people to extend themselves.

Others talked about the need to challenge deficit theorising and focus on one's own professional agency to bring about the reform:

> I certainly was very upfront about challenging deficit theorising and repositioning ourselves over time; in our heads and in our hearts... to be agentic as professionals.

> We have to ensure that the sense of direction of the organisation is very clear and the leader's job is to define it and articulate it. Repeatedly.

> I would expect if this approach to changing teaching practice has got integrity and we apply it sincerely, it will speak for itself and the teachers who experience it will experience and see changes themselves and will tell other teachers about it and others will be drawn into this mahi (work) . . . as time goes by we expect more and more people to get involved in it.

While this belief in the integrity of this work to draw others in was very humbling, there was increasing evidence to suggest that other school leaders were beginning to

share similar sentiments. However, school leaders are unlikely to do this on their own or without sector imperative and support to do so.

12.5.2 Critical Leadership Leading Transformative Reform

Through the introduction of Kia Eke Panuku in 94 secondary schools, some very pleasing early results emerged. However, the results could not be attributed to either the policy mandate to bring about the change, or to a new set of skills or strategies provided to school personnel. While the good intentions of policy-makers, school leaders and teachers, and a number of discrete interventions aimed at *fixing the Māori student problem*, may be necessary conditions for change, they were not in themselves sufficient.

A desire and a policy mandate for change (the *will* of reform) is an essential prerequisite but is not sufficient on its own. Essential but also insufficient on their own are effective professional learning and development programmes in schools that support leaders and teachers to improve their practices around Māori student experiences (the *skill* of reform). Combined, these will make a difference for many of the students lucky enough to be in those schools and in the classrooms of teachers who are committed to the policy for the reform.

However, for sustained systemic change, a further critical factor was required – widespread ownership of the personal and the public responsibility to use power, privilege, and position within schools to promote social justice and enlightenment for the benefit, not only of individuals and the organisation, but of society as a whole (Quantz, Rogers & Dantley, Quantz, Rogers, & Dantley, 1991; Shields, 2010). Fullan (2003, 2007) refers to leadership for sustainability as public service with a moral purpose. Deep, sustainable change that truly leads to Māori students enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori requires *will* (school leaders deliberate engagement with the policy mandate), *skill* (school leaders and teachers learning from the research and professional development about what works for Māori) underpinned by a relentless *moral imperative* for change (Berryman et al., 2016; Berryman & Eley, 2017).

Beyond the will (the mandate to change) and the skills of school leaders and personnel, the driver for reform rests with leaders who embrace the moral imperative to be the agents for change and who underpin their leadership with a refusal to tolerate a status quo that includes disparity for groups of students within their school, in this case Māori. This ensures that the work is led with a real sense of urgency and with courage to persist with the shared agenda by reframing the situation so that new emancipatory possibilities can be revealed. In many Kia Eke Panuku schools, *critical* leadership such as this had begun to give life to Ka Hikitia. Leaders such as these demonstrated on a daily basis:

- the courage to persist with a vision for Māori students enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori despite what society and history would portray as the 'norm'
- the ability to reframe the situation in order to see new realities and possibilities – that is to learn, unlearn and relearn all aspects of practices and beliefs within a school
- a sense of urgency – the belief that things must change for the students we have in front of us today, tomorrow and into the future.

Given that cohorts of schools entered Kia Eke Panuku one third at a time, with the final cohort not starting till the second year, the time frame was insufficient for deeply embedded reform to take place. All too soon, when funding stopped, the initiative in many schools was halted because new institutions and practices had not had time to become embedded. None-the-less, like the following leader, many leaders had begun to understand their own agency in this work and had begun to get at the heart of the matter:

> You've got to get right down into those deep layers of who you are, of what you're doing and the impact it's having on others. Within strategic change leadership teams and within the face-to-face sessions that we have, there is a space for people to feel comfortable enough for them to start peeling back some of those layers. Don't need that one, don't need that one, oh now that one's a bit challenging, that's going to hurt a bit so I'm going to sit back for a while, just listen. And as they grow in confidence, so they're able to really get to the heart of it. And that's where Māori students are, at the heart of it.

12.6   Discussion

This chapter has described the qualities and characteristics of principals that are regarded as being successful and who lead successful schools, and then provided two examples of how leadership makes a difference: to literacy development and to Māori learning in mainstream schooling. It provides a compelling argument for the positive connection between leadership and learning.

Both the international study and the country studies identified common elements that support successful leadership, even though they might use different terminology and operate within different contexts. The development of vision is talked about in the ISSPP and could be considered the equivalent to developing a shared moral purpose identified in both the Australian and New Zealand case studies; the leadership skills and qualities discussed by the ISSPP are reflected in the support for shared leadership in Australia and critical leadership in New Zealand; and the need to build capacity identified in the ISSPP is reflected by the implementation of the Leadership for Learning Blueprint of PALL and the use of Ka Hikitia in Kia Eke Panuku in New Zealand. In each case intervention is identified as the pathway to focus the will, skill and shared moral purpose of leaders, as the factors that respond to the evidence, circumstances and context in which the school finds itself.

We know that context does matter in terms of educational success (e.g. Teese & Polesel, 2003), and that context is important for how leadership is expressed (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu & Brown, Day et al., 2010; Gurr, 2014; Maran & Pascual, 2018; Schwarz & Brauckmann, 2015), but the evidence within this chapter suggests that leadership can adaptively respond to context and not be subservient to it. The research on successful principals indicates that they seem to be able to adapt, use and influence context to foster success. In reviewing ISSPP contributions from several countries new to the ISSPP, Drysdale (2011) found that whilst context did impact on what successful leaders did across different country contexts, they were found to be adaptive and reflective, and able to learn from their practice and experience to ensure school success. Early in the story of the ISSPP, Day (2005, p. 581) noted the principals demonstrated the ability to:

> ...not be confined by the contexts in which they work. They do not comply, subvert, or overtly oppose. Rather they actively mediate and moderate within a set of core values and practices which transcend narrowly conceived improvement agendas.

The interplay between context and leadership is complex however. Within the ISSPP there are cases of principals who have changed school contexts, not altered their leadership substantially, and still been successful leaders (e.g. Gurr, 2007). Within the one system, there are examples of principals who have operated in the same policy environment, yet their change interventions/practices are very different with some embracing continuous and often rapid change, and others more circumspect (Drysdale, Goode, & Gurr, 2009, 2011; Goode, 2017; Gurr et al., 2018a, 2018b; Longmuir, 2017). Sometimes the context means that leadership for success becomes a long and difficult path as shown by the New Zealand initiatives to improve the education of Māori students. In Australia, we see principals who have been successful principals in the past, finding themselves struggling to make the impact they would like when they have taken on the challenge of improving a struggling school in challenging circumstances (Gurr, Drysdale, Clarke, & Wildy, 2014; Gurr et al., 2018a, 2018b). Yet, the Australian literacy leadership example showed how common understandings and practices could be used to produce positive outcomes in a range of contexts. Within the ISSPP, the well-articulated general leadership dimensions of setting direction, developing people, developing the school and managing the instructional program (e.g. Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006), are evident across the cases; they are not sufficient in all contexts, but they do provide guidance on practices that can be applied usefully in all contexts.

12.7 Conclusion

Context can be perceived on many levels, but effective and successful principals are able to make sense of the complex forces that make up their environment. Our research shows that they are not held captive by their context, but work successfully

with the challenges, opportunities and threats that are presented. In some cases, in this chapter, the leaders were able to overcome significant barriers to bring about positive change, despite the context.

What can our examples from Australian and New Zealand research projects tell us about leadership for learning? We can identify five characteristics, and one over-arching factor, that contribute to our understanding of leadership for learning.

First, leadership for learning needs to be broadly defined (MacBeath & Townsend, 2011). It encompasses many aspects which require untangling to understand both the explicit and more subtle dimensions. It can be defined as any activity or action designed to promote growth in student learning. It is the planning, organising, developing, implementing and measuring that goes on the support learning in the school.

Second, leadership for learning is learning for all. It is assumed that leadership for learning focuses on student learning, but this requires learning at all levels: organisational learning, professional learning, individual learning and community learning. Importantly, principals are leaders *in* and *of* learning. This necessitates a sound understanding of pedagogy as evidenced by our examples.

Third, defining what is student learning is also important, be it traditional forms of achievement such as performance in academic areas, or more authentic outcomes (Newman et al., 1996) such as social competence, community values and citizenship. We have examples of both these perspectives with PALL focused on literacy learning and the Maori and ISSPP taking a broader perspective of student success.

The fourth lesson is that leaders have a skill set and personal characteristics that help them to navigate the terrain and influence others to achieve vision for a better future. These skills and qualities are not predictive of success but the leaders in our examples certainly have acquired them and use them to full advantage. However, there are some common factors, such as vision, values, capacity building and strategic interventions, key practices that are characteristic of leaders of learning.

Finally, leadership for learning is not the act of a single person. Leadership is shared or distributed. While there are many leadership styles and approaches that reflect different situations, the principals in our cases empower, engage and enable others to share responsibility in the quest for improved student learning. Leadership for learning is inclusive.

The over-arching factor, one that must be taken into account in order to approach successful leadership as it relates to these five characteristics is the understanding that, as discussed previously, context matters. How much it matters is complex. It takes in factors of geography, demography, economics, culture, community and language. The language we use to work within our context is critical for, as Williams (1972) shows us, even within the same country, and even when we might speak the same national language, the nuances of language are important. Some countries don't have a word for leadership and other countries use the same word for both leadership and administration. Successful principals learn the language of the community they work in and reach out to bridge cultural and other differences that might exist within the school and the school system, which always reflects the dominant community, with the local community, which in many cases might have a very

different view of the world. To do so involves respect, invitation and support. This is particularly the case when working with diverse and often disadvantaged communities and students. This has been highlighted in all three examples in this chapter as an unending commitment to developing a strong, shared, underlying moral purpose for education, one that considers a positive educational outcome for every single student, both in single schools and across education systems, as being the sole measure of success.

Over time we have moved from using the term school effectiveness, where the principal was seen as the key agent for successful student achievement, through classroom effectiveness, which gave priority to the work of teachers, and we are now using the term educational effectiveness, which reflects the complex interactions that lead to the vision of success for all students. As Creemers and Kyriakides (2012) argue, the interactions between student, teacher, school leaders and families, on the one hand and classroom, school, education system and community, on the other, are dynamic and fluid. A dynamic approach to school improvement is required if we are to achieve both quality and equity in education. All need to play a role if equity is to be achieved.

Whether we are looking for curriculum or system reform, contexts for effecting positive change for those students who we continue to fail or marginalise throughout our education systems, remain our biggest challenge. This requires leadership that is also prepared to engage with challenging and changing the deeply entrenched, unconscious and conscious bias in schools and society at large. These emerging discourses continue to reinforce a particular deficit view of groups and an ongoing status quo of underachievement. Contexts such as these require leadership to be both critical and political. Furthermore, until leaders have a determined and urgent focus on these students, the depth of our moral purpose may yet to be fully realised.

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