Recent Developments in the Field of Educational Leadership: The Challenge of Complexity

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In this "golden age" of school leadership (Anderson et al., 2007; Day & Leithwood, 2007) the field is faced with the fact that "new managerialism" which embraced managerial efficiency and effectiveness through bureaucracy and accountability as key levers for reforming schools has failed. It is argued that it is time that the professionals and educational leaders strive to ensure what happens now and in the future is what they want to happen (Gronn, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Hyman, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004a; MacBeath, 2006; Mulford, 2003a; OECD, 2006). However, overcoming the gap between dependence on, or a feeling of the inevitability of, system or school bureaucracies as the means of achieving what they want and their preferred model of seeing schools as social centres and learning organisations remains a challenge.[1]

In order to achieve greater professional control, educational leaders need to understand and be able to act on the context, organisation and leadership of the school, as well as the interrelationship among these three elements. A single input by a leader can have multiple outcomes. Success, therefore, will depend on which elements and in what sequence the educational leader chooses to spend time and attention on (Mulford, 2007b; NCSL, 2007). Recent developments in the field suggest the elements for successful educational leadership involve being contextually "literate", organisationally "savvy" and leadership "smart". To add to the complexity, successful educational leaders are the prime vehicle for linking all three elements.

This chapter draws on mainly Western literature to examine each of these elements and then the interrelationships among them.

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[1]See, for example, the OECD (2001a) scenarios for future schools and feedback from educational leaders on the most likely and preferred scenarios in the next 5–10 years (Mulford, 2007a).

Contextually "Literate"

Context matters. School leaders need to be contextually literate. A context involving rapid advances in science and technology, increased globalisation, changes in demography, including in the nature of work, and pressures on the environment argues for educational leaders achieving balances between and/or choosing between competing forces and a broadening of what counts for good schooling (Mulford, 2008).

Choices between competing forces make the most sense when they foster stability (in the form of a school's collective capacity to learn) for change, independence rather than dependence, community rather than individualism and heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Broadening what counts for good schooling needs to include excellence and equity as well as cognitive and non-cognitive (especially personal and social skills) (Mulford, 2002; Mulford and Edmunds, 2010). In such a context school leadership has been found to be intense, varied, accountable and rewarding (NCSL, 2007).

Achieving Balance and/or Choosing between Competing Forces

There are at least four sets of competing contextual pressures on schools. In what follows, these are examined under the following broader headings: continuity and constant change, dependence and independence, individualism and community, and homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Continuity and/or Constant Change

In contrast to past continuity, recent times have been witness to constant change, a stream of new movements, new programs and new directions. Unfortunately, some in education seem to be forever rushing to catch the next bandwagon that hits the scene – "unfortunately" because there is increasing evidence that many a school and school system and their children have been badly disillusioned by the galloping itinerant peddlers selling the new movements (sometimes the new and ever changing ministers of education and/or departmental officials).

The main challenge in such a situation, a world of massive and constant change, is how to foster enough internal stability in people and the organisation in which they work and study in order to encourage the pursuit of change. Stability for change, moving ahead without losing our roots, is the challenge (Peters, 1987).

It is quite incorrect to assume that a school is effective only if it is undergoing change. Change may be in an inappropriate direction, for example, towards a facade of orderly purposefulness (Sergiovanni, 1990). Change may also involve the use of inappropriate measures of success, especially when they are merely procedural illusions of effectiveness (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). The difficulty of providing output measures by which education's success can be measured has often led to the elevation in importance of "approved" management processes. These processes include program planning budgeting systems, school-based management,

charters/partnership agreements and strategic plans. Such processes contribute an illusion of effectiveness and become desired outputs in themselves, thus deceiving outside observers and many of those in schools as well. Such deception should have no place in good education.

In a changing world it might be more helpful to remember Noah's principle: One survives not by predicting rain (change) but by building arks. Amid uncertain, continually changing conditions, many schools are constructing arks comprising their collective capacity to learn; they are striving to become intelligent, or learning, organisations (Mulford, 2003c).

Dependence and/or Independence

A second fundamental issue relates to the balance between the competing factors of dependence and independence and the current imbalance favouring dependence. This situation is most easily seen in the over-dependence many of those in schools place on "leaders" outside schools, often engendered by the overconfidence of these "leaders" in their own abilities or importance.

There seem to be a lot of people who want to tell those in schools what to do. This situation is unfortunate because many of those doing the telling do not seem to want to accept responsibility for their advice, are not around long enough to take responsibility for their directions and may even seek to prevent fair and open assessment of the changes they promulgate.

We cannot avoid change; indeed we may wish to seek, embrace and even thrive on it. Education is an integral part of our society and must anticipate change as being one of the constants it will face. Whether these changes result in Frankensteins, or gentle, functional, collaborative and sustainable butterflies, depends largely on the response of those in schools. Hyman (2005), for example, who left 10 Downing Street after many years as speech writer and advisor to the prime minister to work as an assistant to the head teacher at London's Islington Green School, concludes that:

> Perhaps the biggest eye-opener for me on my journey has been how the approach I had been part of creating, to deal with 24-hour media and to demonstrate a decisive government, was entirely the wrong one for convincing frontline professionals, or indeed for ensuring successful delivery. Our approach to political strategy has been based on three things: momentum, conflict and novelty, whereas the frontline requires empowerment, partnership and consistency. (Hyman, 2005, p. 384)

Individualism and/or Community

Religious institutions no longer attract or have an impact on the young, families are dysfunctional more often than ever before, some children are malnourished, drug addiction is a scourge and many prime-time television programs can be vacuous and educationally bankrupt. It is a time when advertisers and their clients have succeeded in not only rushing children through their developmental stages into a false sense of maturity but have also managed to link identity and status to brand names,

and gang members; athletes, and narcissistic celebrities are the admired adolescent role models (Goodlad, 1994).

Although schools do have the responsibility of care for students, at the same time debate continues as to whether schools should be dealing with these broad social issues (Bernstein, 2000). It may be unreasonable to expect the schools to pick up the slack in such situations but if the home cannot and the school does not pick up the responsibility for our young then who will? Who will counter, for example, the pressure inherent in much of our "modern" society to act alone rather than with, or for, the community? We need to be reminded that change for the sake of change, including technological change, is not necessarily good; it must be tempered with wisdom, compassion and justice.

A different generation, those born from the 1980s onwards, the New Millenial Learner (NML), now populate our schools – as students and, increasingly, as staff. The NML are the first generation to grow up surrounded by digital media, and much of their activity involving peer-to-peer communication and knowledge management is mediated by these technologies (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Also called "Homo Zappiens" (Veen, 2003), this generation has made popular the less controllable "socially" oriented technologies such as blogs, wikis, tagging and instant messaging (Pedro, 2006).

In this individualistic, technology-mediated world, a skills crisis would indeed be bad enough but a values crisis would be devastating. For example, turning back the tide of a "virtual", computer-based cyberspace existence, with its stress on individualism and encouragement to dissociate oneself from an increasingly challenging world, is vital for our future survival. For, as Peck (1987) has reminded us, a community is a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace. A community is a group that "fights gracefully".

A generation that is unable to feel for others is incapable of creating the social trust that is so essential to maintain culture. And, as it is in the broader culture, so it is in schools. For example, it has been demonstrated that where teachers' trust in principals is undermined by perceptions of principal co-option of top-down system change initiatives, especially when unsupported by teachers, it results in teacher alienation and feelings of disempowerment, which can then bring teacher strategies of resistance to the fore (Bishop & Mulford, 1999).

Homogeneity and/or Heterogeneity

If you look for common denominators in successful schools, you will see that a strong indicator is to find a way to get some of the staff and students to do a radical thing, to take the initiative, to take risks. If a system is too tight for this there will be no search and no development and if there is no search and no development there is no learning.

One lesson in this context is that reductionist approaches in education, to the complexity that is the world of the teacher and the student, should not go unchallenged. Uniformity for schools and education systems in aims, in standards and in

methods of assessment is a complexity-reducing mechanism. It is far tidier to have a single set of aims for all, a single curriculum for all, a single set of standards for all and a single array of tests for all than to have locally developed approaches to school improvement.

Homogeneity of outcome for the future of our schools and society is not necessarily the highest pinnacle and attempts to reach it may have backfired in terms of student attitudes to school. International research (OECD, 2004) shows, for example, that more than a quarter of students agrees or strongly agrees that school is a place where they do not want to go. In countries such as Belgium, France and Hungary, where there is a high level of homogeneity in the education system, the proportion ranges from 35 to 42% while in countries such as Denmark, Mexico, Portugal and Sweden, where there is less homogeneity, the figure is less than 20%.

In fact, UK researchers are:

> beginning to encounter students expressing doubts about the genuineness of their school's interest in their progress and well-being as persons, as distinct from their contributions to their school's league table position. [The result is that] contract replaces community as the bond of human association. (Fielding, 1999, p. 286)

Broadening What Counts as Good Schooling

The forces and factors increasingly permeating our schools show that to achieve their purposes there is a pressing need to broaden what counts for "good" schooling. Measures of successful student achievement in a knowledge society are increasingly being seen as wider than the cognitive/academic; it is more personalised and involves achieving both excellence and equity (DfES, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004a; OECD, 2001b; World Bank, 2005). If we stress only scientific and technological knowledge, or only literacy and numeracy, we could languish in other respects, including physically, aesthetically, morally and spiritually.

Howard Gardner understood the need to broaden what counts for good schooling with his conceptualisation of multiple intelligences. His most recent work (Gardner, 2007) continues this understanding by defining the abilities that will be needed in times of vast change as his five "minds for the future"; that is, disciplinary, synthesising, creating, respectful and ethical minds. In linking this broadening of what counts for good schooling to school leadership, Leo (2007) points out that:

> a key question for school leadership is how to develop more imaginative approaches to educational assessment that illuminate how schools develop capabilities such as motivation and creativity and to ensure that these are among the outcomes of education for all students. (Leo, 2007, p. 10)

Consistent with this argument to broaden what counts is a range of impressive research using data from the British cohort study. This data base followed all children born in the United Kingdom in the first week of April 1970 and surveyed them again in 1975, 1980, 1986, 1991 and 1996. At age 10, in 1980, over 12,000 children were tested for mathematics and reading ability and the psychological attributes of

self-esteem and locus of control. The children's teachers were questioned about their behavioural attributes of conduct disorder, peer relations, attentiveness and extraversion. In 1996, at age 26, information was collected on highest qualification attained, earnings and periods of unemployment.

The author of one of these studies, Leon Feinstein, an economist, summarises his findings as follows:

> . . . attentiveness in school has been shown to be a key aspect of human capital production, also influencing female wages even conditioning on qualifications. Boys with high levels of conduct disorder are much more likely to experience unemployment but higher self-esteem will both reduce the likelihood of that unemployment lasting more than a year and, for all males, increase wages. The locus of control measure . . . is an important predictor of female wages . . . . Good peer relations are important in the labour market, particularly for girls, reducing the probability of unemployment and increasing female wages. . . . [These results] suggest strongly that more attention might be paid to the non-academic behaviour and development of children as a means of identifying future difficulties and labour market opportunities. It also suggests that schooling ought not be assessed solely on the basis of the production of reading and maths ability. (Feinstein, 2000, pp. 22, 20)

These results have been confirmed in other longitudinal research by Carneiro, Crawford, and Goodman (2006) where it was found that 7- and 11-year-old children who exhibited social maladjustment were less likely to stay on at school post-16 (after taking into account cognitive ability and other family background factors); did less well in terms of performance in higher education; were more likely to display negative adolescent outcomes, such as trouble with the police by age 16 and teenage motherhood; and even conditioning on schooling outcomes were more likely to have both lower employment probabilities and lower wages at age 33 and 42.

Carneiro and colleagues (2006) believe their findings are consistent with another research (e.g., Cunha, Heckman, Lochner, & Masterov, 2005) which shows that non-cognitive skills are more malleable than cognitive skills. This finding suggests that schools can have a greater effect on students' non-cognitive than cognitive outcomes. Cunha and colleagues (2005, p. 1) also remind us that "remediation of inadequate early investments [in such areas of social skills] is difficult and very costly".

Organisationally "Savvy"

School organisation also matters. Educational leaders need to be organisationally savvy. They need to be able to build capacity. Broadening the way schools are organised and run would see a move from the mechanistic to an organic, living system; from thin to deep democracy; from mass approaches to personalisation through participation; and from hierarchies to networks. The emphasis would very much be on social capital, learning organisations, collective teacher efficacy and communities of professional learners.

From Mechanistic to Organic, Living Systems

In her book, *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time*, Wheatley (2005) employs two competing metaphors – "organisations as machines" and "organisations as living systems" – as explanation for both organisations and leadership that differ radically in their functioning and outcomes. The "machine" metaphor encourages a view of organisation as a fixed structure of some sort, a structure consisting of parts that need to be "oiled" if they are to function together smoothly. From this view, organisations require effortful monitoring, coordination and direction by someone, typically a "leader".

Wheatley (2005, p. 4) notes that "in the past few years, ever since uncertainty became our insistent twenty-first century companion, leadership strategies have taken a great leap backward to the familiar territory of command and control". Such leadership, aiming to increase employees' certainty about their work (and increase the school's level of accountability to government and the public) is mostly transactional. This means that, in the case of school organisations, teachers are assumed to be motivated by the promise of such extrinsic, positive rewards as money and status and opposing, extrinsic, negative impacts such as school reconstitution and public shaming through the publication of league tables.

Transactional, command and control forms of leadership on the part of principals further manifest themselves in the close supervision of teachers, specification of the one best model of instruction which all teachers must use, centralised decisions about how time in the classroom is to be used together with very long lists of curriculum standards or expectations which teachers are required to cover with students. Teachers are allowed little autonomy over their work in classrooms, their voices are heard weakly, at best, in school-wide decision making and yet they are held almost entirely accountable for student achievement (Day & Leithwood, 2007).

An organic, or "living systems", metaphor encourages a view of organisation as a process, one of constant adaptation, growth and becoming that occurs naturally and inevitably in response to a strong desire for learning and survival. As Wheatley describes it:

> the process of organizing involves developing relationships from a shared sense of purpose, exchanging and creating information, learning constantly, paying attention to the results of our efforts, co-adapting, co-evolving, developing wisdom as we learn, staying clear about our purpose, being alert to changes from all directions. (Wheatley, 2005, p. 27)

A description of organisation-as-living-system bears a strong resemblance to accounts of organisational learning in schools (Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004; Silins & Mulford, 2002a), professional learning communities (Stoll et al., 2006) and the OECD (2001b, 2006) scenarios for future schools as social centres and learning organisations. The ongoing eight-country research project on successful principalship (see, for example, Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2005; the edited book by Day & Leithwood, 2007) strongly suggests that successful principals thought of their organisations as living systems, not machines.

From Thin to Deep Democracy

Furman and Shields (2003) argue that there is a need to move our schools from "thin" conceptions of democracy based in the values of classical liberalism, and its concern with the right of the individual to pursue his or her self-interest and the resolution of conflict through "democratic" majority voting, to a notion of "deep" democracy. Dewey (in Furman & Shields, 2003) saw "deep" democracy as involving respect for the worth and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions, reverence for and the proactive facilitation of free and open inquiry and critique, recognition of interdependence in working for the common good, the responsibility of individuals to participate in free and open inquiry and the importance of collective choices and actions in the interest of the common good.

Furman and Shields (2003) state that "deep" democracy needs to be practised in schools. However, as a consequence of risk of chaos and loss of control from the forces on schools, the typical pattern they perceive is that students

> are expected to conform to hierarchically imposed decisions about what they study and teach and when, what the outcomes of instruction should be, how to behave and talk, and even how they look. . . . [In fact,] learning democracy may be one of the least experiential aspects of K–12 curricula. (Furman & Shields, 2003, p. 10)

The results of a recent analysis of school principal training in the Australian State of Tasmania (Mulford, 2004) leads one to suggest that the same could be said about the adults in schools within bureaucratically designed systems. "Deep" democracy needs to be practised by them but it may be the least experienced aspect of their working world, especially when it comes to their own professional development.

Personalisation through Participation

A major debate taking place in the United Kingdom about the future shape of public services picks up on the confused organisational situation for those in schools. This debate is pitched into the chasm between the way public institutions work and how users experience them. For example, in the education sector it has been argued by Leadbeater (2004a) that efficiency measures based on new public management as reflected in:

> [t]argets, league tables and inspection regimes may have improved aspects of performance in public services. Yet the cost has been to make public services seem more machine-like, more like a production line producing standardised goods. [And, I would add, increasingly create dependence on the system.] . . . It is . . . clear that the State cannot deliver collective solutions from on high. It is too cumbersome and distant. The State can only help create public goods – such as better education – by encouraging them to emerge from within society. . . . That is, to shift from a model in which the centre controls, initiates, plans, instructs and serves, to one in which the centre governs through promoting collaborative, critical and honest self-evaluation and self-improvement. (Leadbeater, 2004a, pp. 81, 83, 90)

It is further argued (Leadbeater, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) that public services can be improved by focussing on what is called "personalisation through participation".

The "pay off" of personalisation is believed to be increased knowledge, participation, commitment, responsibility and productivity. Thus personalisation can be seen to be both a process and outcome of effective public organisations, including schools.

A personalised public service is seen as having four different meanings:

- Providing people with a more customer-friendly interface with existing services.
- Giving users more say in navigating their way through services once they have access to them.
- Giving users more direct say over how the money is spent.
- Emphasising users are not just consumers but co-designers and co-producers of a service.

As we move through these four meanings, dependent users become consumers and commissioners then co-designers, co-producers and solution assemblers. In schools, learners (students and staff) become actively and continually engaged in setting their own targets, devising their own learning plan and goals and choosing among a range of different ways to learn. As we move through these four meanings, the professional's role also changes from providing solutions for dependent users to designing environments, networks and platforms through which people can together devise their own independent and interdependent solutions. (NCSL, 2005a)

From Hierarchy to Networks

Leadbeater (2005) believes that personalised learning will only become reality when schools become much more networked, collaborating not only with other schools, but with families, community groups and other public agencies. Arguably one of the best funded and continuous school networks – The Network Learning Group (NLG) with its hub at the United Kingdom's National College for School Leadership (NCSL) – summarises its learning about the advantages of networks in comparison to traditional hierarchically designed organisations (NCSL, 2005b) as greater sharing, diversity, flexibility, creativity, risk taking, broadening of teacher expertise and learning opportunities available to pupils, and improved teaching and pupil attainment. They point out that while there is no blueprint for an effective network, it is possible to identify factors that successful networks have in common:

- Design around a compelling idea or aspirational purpose and an appropriate form and structure.
- Focus on pupil learning.
- Create new opportunities for adult learning.
- Plan and have dedicated leadership and management.

But Leadbeater (2005, p. 22) warns that the collaboration needed for effective networks "can be held back by regulation, inspection, and funding regimes that encourage schools to think of themselves as autonomous, stand-alone units". Levin (NCSL, 2005b, p. 6) agrees, pointing out that there "are inevitable tensions between the idea of learning networks, which are based on ideas of capacity building as a key to reform, and . . . reform through central policy mandate". Rusch (2005), in fact, concludes that networks cannot be controlled by the formal system. She questions the role of the system in effective school networks, identifying competing institutional scripts between what is likely to be required by networks as opposed to the system as follows:

- Structures are seen as malleable in networks but fixed and hierarchical in the system.
- Conflict is open and valued in networks while it tends to be hidden and feared in the system.
- Communication is open and unbounded in networks but controlled and closed in the system.
- Leadership tends to be fluid in networks while it is hierarchical and assigned in the system.
- Relationships are egalitarian in networks but meritocratic in the system.
- And, finally, knowledge and power based on inquiry and learning is valued in networks while expertise and knowing are valued in the system.

Social Capital and Communities of Professional Learners

Arguably, the two organisational concepts that underpin schools as social centres and learning organisations, organic systems, deep democracy, personalisation through participation, and networking are social capital and communities of professional learners.

Social Capital

The idea of social capital has enjoyed a remarkable rise to prominence. By treating social relationships as a form of capital, it proposes that they are a resource, which people can then draw on to achieve their goals. It also serves alongside other forms of capital (e.g., economic, human, cultural, identity and intellectual) as one possible resource and accepted contributor to our individual, community and national wellbeing. International bodies such as UNESCO, OECD and World Bank have engaged in extensive conceptual, empirical and policy related work in the area and a number of websites are devoted entirely to the area.[2]

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[2]For example: http://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/

What do we mean by "social capital"? The World Bank (Grootaert, Narayan, Jones, & Woolcock, 2004, p. 3) concludes that social capital "is most frequently defined in terms of the groups, networks, norms, and trust that people have available to them for productive purposes". As well as this generally accepted definition, Grootaert et al. (2004, p. 4) point out that common distinctions are made among "bonding", "bridging" and "linking" forms of social capital. "Bonding" social capital refers to "ties to people who are similar in terms of their demographic characteristics, such as family members, neighbours, close friends and work colleagues". "Bridging" social capital is also horizontal in nature but refers to "ties to people who do not share many of these characteristics". However, it continues to connect "people with more or less equal social standing". "Linking" social capital operates across power differentials and thus is seen vertical in nature. It refers to "one's ties to people in positions of authority such as representatives of public (police, political parties) and private (banks) institutions".

Knowing the definition of social capital and its different forms is helpful, but it does little to assist educational leaders with the challenges in building social capital in schools. A way through this situation is for the educational leader to see bonding social capital as that occurring among work colleagues within schools. It is the most developed area in the research literature (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; OECD, 2004; Ross, Hogaboam, & Gray, 2004; Somech, 2002; Stoll et al., 2003). Bridging social capital can be taken as that occurring between schools. This area is a recent but growing one in the research literature, especially in the area of networking (see the previous subsection) (Hopkins, NCSL, 2005b; Kanter, 1994; Leadbeater, 2005). Linking social capital can be understood as that occurring between a school and its community. While there is a long research tradition in this area it tends to be unidirectional, concentrating on what the community can do for the school, rather than the other way around (Jolly & Deloney, 1996; Kilpatrick, Johns, Mulford, Falk, & Prescott, 2001).

The research evidence is clear in its strong support for all three forms of social capital. The outcomes are impressive, not the least of which being improved student engagement, academic performance and later life chances, improved teaching and learning, reduced within school variation and retention of teachers in the profession, and increased individual and community capacity to influence their own futures.

However, the research also points to many challenges to overcome at the contextual, organisational and individual levels including the current accountability press, especially system preoccupation with a limited number of academic performance outcomes; the micro politics of schools such as contrived collegiality, groupthink and conflict avoidance; differences between policy development and its implementation; dedicated leadership; large, secondary, high-poverty schools; and professional autonomy.

Communities of Professional Learners

Where do we take this research evidence on the importance of and challenges to social capital? The way forward is to see the task as establishing communities of

professional learners (CPL) and to see it as developmental *starting* with the building of social capital. A message arising from the research is that those in schools must learn how to lose time in order to gain time. Awareness of, and skill development in, group and organisational processes is a first step towards any effective change. Instead of others trying to insert something into a school's (or community's) culture, the school, and especially its leadership, should first be trying to help that culture develop an awareness of and responsiveness to itself (Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002).

In brief, the position taken identifies three major, sequential and embedded elements in successful school reform. It takes the two elements in the definition of social capital, "groups, networks, norms, and trust" and "for productive purposes", and extends them to include a third element, learning. The first element in the sequence relates to the community, how people are communicated with and treated. Success is more likely where people act rather than are always reacting, are empowered, involved in decision making through a transparent, facilitative and supportive structure, and are trusted, respected, encouraged and valued. It is a waste of time moving to the second element until such a community is established. The second element concerns a community of professionals. A community of professionals involves shared norms and values including valuing differences and diversity, a focus on implementation and continuous enhancement of quality learning for all students, de-privatisation of practice, collaboration, and critical reflective dialogue, especially that based on performance data. However, a community of professionals can be static, continuing to do the same or similar thing well. The final element relates to the presence of a capacity for change, learning and innovation – in other words, a community of professional learners (CPL) (Mulford, 2007d).

Each element of a CPL, and each transition between them, can be facilitated by appropriate leadership and professional development. Also, each element is a prerequisite for the other; they are embedded within each other with only the emphasis changing. For example, when learning is occurring there is still a need to revisit the social community and the professional community, especially where there has been a change of personnel and/or a new governmental direction announced.

Using this analysis of bonding, bridging and linking social capital to understand the importance of, challenges to and developmental nature of CPLs can assist the educational leader in better translating the research into policy and practice. It can help him or her to do the following:

- understand better and be able to take action on the intricacies involved in moving a school, or part of a school, from where it is now to becoming truly a place of ongoing excellence and equity without those in schools being "bowled over" by the demands for change that surround them;
- target appropriate interventions to ensure more effective progression through the stages. In targeting interventions recognition will need to be given to the fact that it is a journey and that actions at one stage may be inappropriate, or even counterproductive, at another stage; and,
- support the position that a school will need to be evaluated differently depending on the stage it has reached.

Changing the organisation of and leading schools and school systems so they become CPLs will not be for the faint of heart. It will require schools and their leaders to radically rethink how they operate. As Leadbeater (2005) points out, many of the basic building blocks of traditional education – such as the school, the year group, the class, the lesson, the blackboard and the teacher standing in front of a class of 30 children – could be seen as obstacles. All the resources available for learning – teachers, parents, assistants, peers, technology, time and buildings – will have to be deployed more flexibly than in the past. School leadership in such organisations will certainly be less lonely and more collaborative and professionally interactive than ever before (NCSL, 2007).

Leadership "Smart"

Educational leadership matters (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Fullan, 2005; Hallinger, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Leithwood, in press; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2004; McREL, 2005; Silins & Mulford, 2004), is changing (Leithwood et al., 2006; NCSL, 2007) and, given the changing context and organisational response, needs to be smart. Unfortunately, in this situation the plethora of advice about "strong", adjectival, one-size-fits-all school leadership (e.g., instructional, transformational and distributed) is anachronistic. Successful educational leadership is more complex; it needs to be able to see and act on the whole, as well as on the individual elements, and the relationships among them over time (i.e., in a developmental manner). As Hargreaves and Fink (2006) point out, it is a meal not a menu, with all pieces needing to fit together in different ways at different times.

A lack of time and professional isolation are major barriers to collaborative endeavours. Donaldson (2001, p. 11) describes some major attributes of schools that contribute to what he calls a "leadership-resistant architecture" reflected in a "conspiracy of business". There is, according to Donaldson, little time for the school leader to convene people to plan, organise and follow through. Contact and the transaction of business often take place "catch-as-catch-can". Opinion setting and relationship building in schools, he argues, are mostly inaccessible and even resistant to the principal's formal attempt to guide and structure the direction of the school. Consistent with the findings from the Australian LOSO project (see the next section), it was found that the larger the school the more complex and impersonal the environment and the fewer the opportunities a principal was likely to have for individual relationship building or problem solving.

It may in fact be that "strong", visible, visionary leadership is dysfunctional. A research by Barnett, McCormick, and Conners (2001) is key in this context, showing as it does the positive effects of principals demonstrating individual concern and building relationships but the negative effects of being inspirational and visionary. While one leadership style or approach may work well for some leaders, most have a range of leadership styles.

Dinham's (2007, p. 37) research examining schools achieving outstanding educational outcomes found that "the turning-around and lifting-up processes can take

around 6–7 years to accomplish". In this situation, successful leaders adapt and adopt their leadership practice to meet the changing needs of circumstances in which they find themselves (see, for example, Hallinger, 2007; Leo, 2007). As schools develop and change, different leadership approaches will inevitably be required and different sources of leadership will be needed so that the development work keeps moving. A one-size-fits-all, adjectival style or approach to leadership, or checklists of leadership attributes, may seem superficially attractive but can often limit, restrict and distort leadership behaviour in ways that are not always conducive to school development and improvement.

On this point, it is interesting to note that proponents of instructional (Hallinger, 2005), transformational (Leithwood et al., 2006) and distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006) have, over time, moved well away from the one-size-fits-all, charismatic, heroic model of school leadership and expanded their understandings to include aspects of the context, antecedent conditions (e.g., school level, size and SES) and school mission, culture and a reinforcing structure (especially developing people, collaboration and monitoring) and instructional program. For example, Hallinger (2007) calls for an integrative model of educational leadership which links leadership to the needs of the school context, Leo (2007) focuses on the role of social context and socio-cultural factors on achievement motivation and Mulford (2003b) calls for an awareness of balance and learning.

Interrelationships among Context, Organisation and Leader: Two Models Meeting the Challenge of Complexity

The final section of this chapter outlines two models based on an Australian research that take the evolving, broader and more complex approach to educational leadership. The models are fully consistent with the advice in other sections to meet the following: achieve balance and/or choose between competing contextual forces; broaden what counts as good schooling; and broaden the way schools are organised and run, especially as social centres and learning organisations, organic, living systems, deep democracies, networks, personalisation through participation, and social capital developers through communities of professional learners.

The first is a model of successful school principalship based on the evidence from qualitative in-depth case studies of five best practice Tasmanian schools that constitute part of an eight-country exploration of successful school leadership (the Successful School Principals Project – SSPP) (see, for example: Gurr et al., 2005; Mulford, 2007b, 2007c). The second is a model of leadership for organisational learning and student outcomes (LOLSO) based on quantitative survey evidence from over 95 principals, 3,700 teachers and 5,000 15-year-old high school students in South Australia and Tasmania. Details of the samples, methodologies, related literature reviews and so on can be found elsewhere (see, for example: Silins & Mulford, 2002a, 2002b; Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002; Silins & Mulford, 2004), as can the application to policy (Mulford, 2003a, 2003d).

Successful School Principals Project (SSPP)

Findings from the SSPP case studies suggest that successful school principalship is an interactive, reciprocal and evolving process involving many players, which is influenced by and in turn influences the context in which it occurs (see Fig. 1). Further, the findings demonstrate that successful principalship is underpinned by the core values and beliefs of the principal. These values and beliefs influence the principal's decisions and actions regarding the provision of individual support and capacity building, and capacity building at the school level, including school culture and structure. The principal's core values and beliefs, together with the values and capacities of other members of the school community, feed directly into the development of a shared school vision, which shapes the teaching and learning – student and social capital outcomes of schooling. To complete the proposed model requires a process of evidence-based monitoring and critical reflection, which can lead to school maintenance, change and/or transformation. The context and the successful school principal's values form the "why" of the model; the individual support
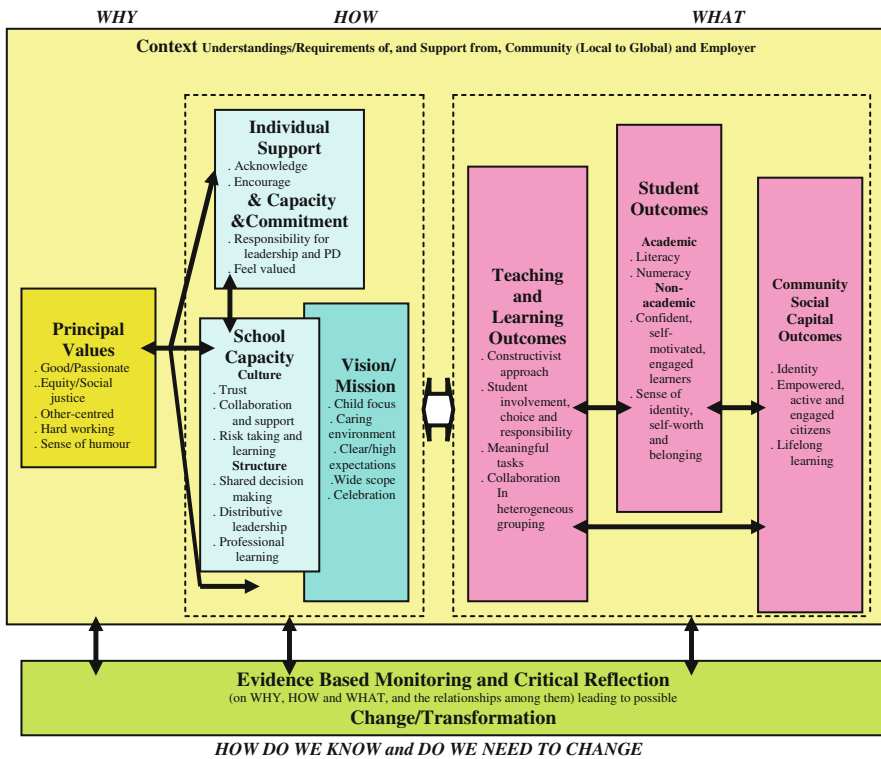

Fig. 1 SSP model

and capacity, school capacity and school vision/mission form the "how"; and the teaching and learning, student and community outcomes form the "what". The evidence-based monitoring and critical reflection on the "why", "how" and "what" and the relationship among them form the final section of the model, the "how do we know" and "do we need to change" element.

Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO)

Evidence from LOLSO surveys clearly demonstrate that leadership that makes a difference is both position based (principal) and distributive (administrative team and teachers) (see Fig. 2). Further, it was found that the principal's leadership needs to be transformational – that is, providing individual, cultural and structural support to staff; capturing a vision for the school; communicating high performance expectations and offering intellectual stimulation. However, both positional and distributive leadership are only indirectly related to student outcomes. Organisational learning (OL), involving three sequential stages of trusting and collaborative climate, shared
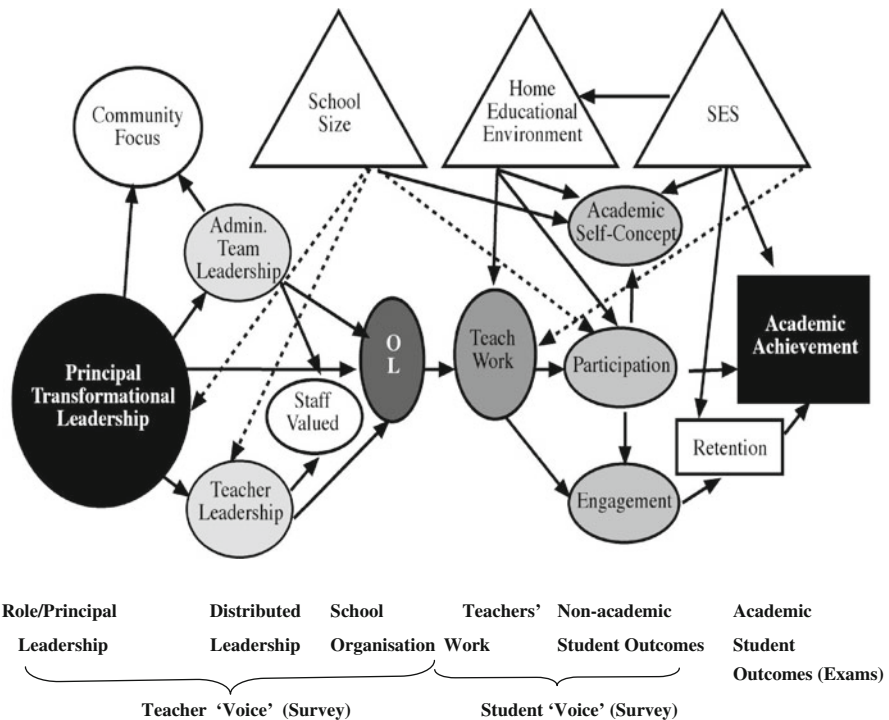

Fig. 2 LOLSO model ($\longrightarrow$ = positive and $=\text{--}\rightarrow$ negative relationship)

and monitored mission and taking initiatives and risks supported by appropriate professional development, was found to be the important intervening variable between leadership and teacher work and then student outcomes. That is, leadership contributes to OL, which in turn influences what happens in the core business of the school: teaching and learning. It influences the way students perceive that teachers organise and conduct their instruction and their educational interactions with, and expectations of, their students.

Students' positive perceptions of teachers' work directly promote their participation in school, academic self-concept and engagement with school. Student participation is directly and student engagement indirectly (through retention) related to academic achievement. The contextual variables of school size, socioeconomic status (SES) and, especially, student home educational environment make a positive or negative difference to these relationships (as indicated in Fig. 2). However, this was not the case in terms of teacher or leader gender or age, having a community focus or student academic self-concept.

Summary

As we have seen over the course of this chapter, a great deal of a school's success depends on which areas of school life the educational leader chooses to spend time and attention on. As a single input by a leader can have multiple outcomes, a leader needs to be able to see and act on the whole, as well as on the individual elements, and the relationships among them (NCSL, 2005c).

The chapter moved through evidence on three elements: context, organisation and leaders. Context related to the forces currently pressing on schools and the implications of these forces for schools and their leaders. School organisation focused on evolving models that moved beyond the outmoded and ineffective bureaucratic model to communities of professional learners. Evidence on leaders questioned whether one type of leadership fits all contexts and organisations and subsequently what it meant to be a successful leader. A great deal of promise was found in the evidence on successful leaders building school capacity and doing this in a developmental way.

To be successful on all these fronts and how they interrelate is the biggest current leadership challenge. Within this complex challenge, school leaders must be part of ongoing conversations about context and its implications for schools. Leaders need to understand and be able to act on the evolving and preferred organisational models for schools. And, leaders need to be able to understand and act on the quality evidence that is now accumulating on being a successful school leader.

With the eminent retirement of a larger-than-normal proportion of our nation's school leaders (Anderson et al., 2007), there is no better time to act on these challenges. Will education systems and, more importantly, the profession take up the challenges? And, will they actually use quality evidence (OECD, 2007), such as that provided in this handbook, in schools and school systems to enable us to move

forward? This is a plea for us to move beyond mere technical competence in school leadership. Galton (2000, p. 203) makes this point well in terms of teachers:

> By making certain techniques mandatory you run the danger of turning teachers into technicians who concentrate on the method and cease to concern themselves with ways that methods must be modified to take account of the needs of individual pupils. As we face the demands of a new century, creating a teaching profession which while technically competent was imaginatively sterile would be a recipe for disaster. (Galton, 2000, p. 203)

As it is for teachers, so it is for school leaders. (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007)

There is clearly a need to achieve better balances in our world, including between learning what the political and bureaucratic systems require of individual leaders and what practising professionals require of themselves and their colleagues. On the basis of the available research, I believe this balance can best be achieved by groups of educational leaders, or professional collectives and alliances, setting, negotiating and delivering their own agendas. This position is also consistent with the emerging priorities for successful educational leadership detailed in this review. After all, participation in context, organisation and leadership, including policy making, not only enhances efficiency in implementation, but also contributes to the creation of more pluralistic and democratic political systems (Lecomte & Smillie, 2004).

A Concluding Comment

Recent developments in the field of educational leadership demonstrate that it is more complex, nuanced and subtle than previously portrayed. It may be that we need to take models such as SSPP and LOLSO, as well more recent work by Heck and Hallinger (2009), Mulford and Edmunds (2009) and Sammons et al. (2009), further by having a set of models representing different groupings of variables and their relationships and sequences, for example for high-poverty, rural, inner city, primary and/or public schools. On the other hand, when lost in the complex, "swampy" ground of schools and their environments a simple "compass" (head roughly west, be "instructional", "transformational" and/or "distributive") may be felt to be much more helpful than the detailed road maps in linking leadership with improving learning in schools. However, in an age of "global positioning systems" and models based on quality evidence that are complex enough to come close to the reality faced by schools and are predictive in that they link leadership and student outcomes, such a simplistic response does education and its continued reform a deep disservice.

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