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Greetings From the President

As we move ahead to the latter part of another school year, I am struck by how fitting the Building Instructional Capacity theme of this issue is. I have been pleasantly surprised this year by how much the “voice” of principals is sought after in discussions around youth, education and safety.



Jameel Aziz

President, Canadian Association of Principals



I have also been pleased to see how many of our education partners from the Ministers of Education to the Canadian Teacher’s Federation are happy to engage and share knowledge and information. The learning network being established and continuing to grow is of benefit to not only our organization, members and those we serve, but all public school students and families in our great country.

The establishment of a network or a “learning community” as many of you have created is one of the key components to building instructional capacity in your school and school district. If you have a moment to catch your breath, take a look and really examine the strengths of those you work with every day, both in your school and your local area. Building the instructional capacity of those individuals is key to moving any new thinking or initiative forward or maintaining the excellence that already exists. A school leader’s job is to ensure that not only do we seek opportunities to build our own instructional capacity but that we ensure that those we work with have the same opportunities; in fact we need to insist upon it.

School leaders have to be part of creating and implementing the vision for not only their school but for the district or division we work in. Just like the thinking around voting, where we cannot complain if we do not take part in the process, we cannot lament the changes or direction around us if we are not willing and active participants in being part of the forward moving agenda.

One of the most exciting things about education is that it is rarely stagnant. With the incorporation of technologies over recent decades, the access and amount of knowledge, ideas and methods available to us are endless. There are many directions to go in and many ways to affect student improvement and success. As a leader are you helping to shape those methods or paths, or are you waiting for the next directive to instruct you as to where things are going?

Principals, need to be active and informed leaders in both their schools and the education discussions that continue to go on in learning communities, online discussions, networked groups and whatever Professional Development opportunities that are offered and engaged in.

I hope that many of you are prepared to get out of your comfort zone and try something new next year. Whether that be new reading, embracing a new technology and bring new ideologies to your school, get passionate about something and then ensure that you are sharing that with others to build their instructional capacity, as well as your own.

Have a great remainder of the school year; stay healthy, active and intellectually vibrant!
Jameel Aziz

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Editor's Comments



Spring has sprung across our great nation and we are entering the final push towards the last months of our instructional calendar. As instructional leaders, many expectations are put upon our shoulders in relation to our profession and how it relates to student learning, academic achievement, community building, and staff relationships. We need to foster and share our leadership skills and attributes to build instructional capacity in our schools, provinces and territories, and across our nation. We, as effective and innovative leaders will always make it our priority to find a link to

learning for our students and staff, which creates an effective learning community. It is essential to build healthy and sustainable relationships, tap in to human resources, and create a caring balance within our community.

Within this edition of our CAP Journal Spring Edition 2014, the articles promote the spirit of leadership development, innovative opportunities for personal and professional growth, and collaborating with our colleagues in offering many platforms of professional learning embedded within the timeframe and scope that works for all versions of principal schedules. It is imperative to note, that demands on our time, workload variations at specific high times of the year, and the overall expectations to know all curricular outcomes is limiting the immergence of effective and embedded professional learning networks. It is essential that district offices, along with local school levels, embrace the idea of embedding professional learning communities within the calendar across multiple school years.

As a unified leadership team, we all need to expand our instructional capacity by sharing knowledge and expertise with our principal and educational network at a national level. As we share and grow, we will instill a sense of culture and pride that will encompass exceptional skills sets by building instructional capacity from coast to coast. Let us share our conversations, articles, research, and stories about how we are building, networking, collaborating, engaging, and reshaping our learning environment for principals and educators nationally.

In 2014, principals and educational leaders continue to make the difference in the lives of our students, staff, and learning communities. The importance of what you do everyday continues to be the reason why our educational system continues to be one of the best in the world. Yes, you may be reading this article and wondering what is going well in your school. Take a moment, you certainly deserve it, think of the student success stories, positive staff relationships, and all the work that you do to make your community a leader in education. Now, tell your story, embrace the last few months of school, and continue to build capacity as an instructional leader for all to see. Be good to yourself!

Sincerely,
K.J. White - CAP Editor

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Canada's Outstanding Principals

A Decade of Reshaping Leadership Development

Background and Purpose

The Learning Partnership, in association with the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) initiated Canada's Outstanding Principals (COP), an annual leadership development program, to recognize, celebrate, encourage, and support principals. COP's inaugural year was 2005. COP program objectives are as follows: to engage, and to leverage learning through reflective dialogue, in a forum of collaborative deliberations about issues in education (e.g., vision and leadership, political intelligence, emotional intelligence, experiential change simulation); to act as mentors to colleagues upon return to their school environment; and to continue engagement in collaborative deliberation through the use of facilitated Internet-based collaborative tools. COP recipients become members of the COP Academy, a networked learning community of exemplary school-based administrators.

The purpose of this paper is to synthesize insights gained from COP recipients regarding the professional leadership development resulting from their selection as outstanding principals. Influential leadership development experiences and dimensions of well-designed leadership development programs provide the lens. It will use the findings to explore opportunities to build and extend exemplary leadership locally, provincially, nationally and globally.

Perspective

Studies indicate that leadership is essential to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005; Waters et al., 2003), and principals are second only to classroom teachers in impact on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al. 2010). Effective educational leadership requires intentional, deliberate and directed visioning and actions. Well-designed leadership development programs play an important role in the life-long learning of effective educational leaders.

To provide a context for this paper, there was a review and synthesis of the literature pertaining to leadership development programs for principals. Well-designed leadership development programs included the following six elements:

- designing structures to support purposeful and reciprocal iterative peer networking;
- ensuring developmental appropriateness for career stage and trajectory;
- strengthening the iterative nature of practice and theory;
- focusing on improving instructional capacity and student achievement;
- balancing job-embeddedness with a life-long commitment to continuous professional growth; and
- embedding in core transformational leadership practices.

Evidence of these elements can be found in the existing COP programs and the leadership development experiences of COP recipients. Moreover, it was important to reiterate that leadership development programs cannot exist in isolation. Several references stressed that leadership development programs must be simultaneously embedded in individual and organizational contexts (e.g., Avolio and Hannah, 2008; Fullan 2008; Fullan 2010).

Research Methodology

Mixed methodology was utilized. Data from the participants in the COP programs were generated from two sources: online survey (including demographics, several rating scales, and open-ended questions), and telephone interviews. The achieved online survey and telephone interview samples represented a reasonable representation of the COP recipient national sample.

Results: Leadership Development Program Elements

As was evident from the quantitative data, COP recipients rated their COP experiences highly in terms of the six leadership development elements investigated. When correlations were calculated between these six items, *aligning with core transformational leadership practices* items were significantly correlated with other leadership development program element items. This finding suggested that *aligning with core transformational leadership practices* best represented these six items. However, qualitative evidence was also gathered for deeper understanding of what well-designed leadership development programs looked like.

Quantitative and qualitative results, focused on leadership development program elements, were compared. Qualitative results indicated that the leadership development program element of *purposeful, reciprocal, and iterative peer networking* was the highest ranked element when most influential leadership experience reflections were combined with reflections upon what well-designed leadership programs looked like. *Aligning with core transformational leadership practices* was lowered ranked by interviewees. One possible

interpretation of this finding was that these experienced principals spent their professional learning time learning collaboratively about leadership with other principals. Another possible interpretation was that theoretical dimensions of leadership development, while important, were less urgent than learning actual “best” leadership practices from colleagues. This conclusion was supported when comparing *strengthening relationship between theory and practice* item reflections of influential leadership development experiences to reflections upon well-designed leadership characteristics from the perspective of experienced principals. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative research evidence complemented each other. The six leadership development program elements were important parts of leadership development prior to COP and continued to enhance leadership capacity above an existing skill set and to extend leadership repertoires in home contexts.

Results: COP-Specific Program Experiences

The following five COP program elements were examined: navigating navigation process; receiving COP recognition; engaging in the COP program; engaging in Internet-based networking; and engaging in COP Academy.

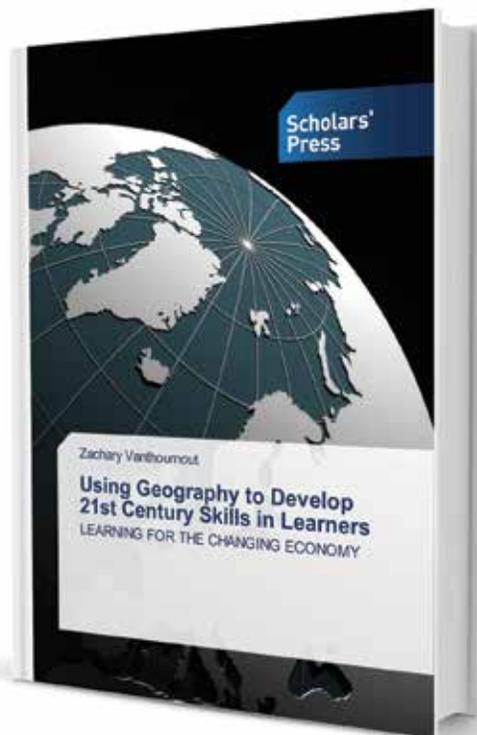
As was evident in the quantitative data, the COP program process of *engaging in the COP program* was most influential on all four core transformational leadership practices while *engaging in Internet-based networking* was least influential. However, responses to the open-ended questions contained in the online survey articulated how each COP process enhanced the leadership capacities of COP recipients.

Teaming students to maximize performance and learning!



Zachary Vanthournout

Zach Vanthournout is a second career educator in New Brunswick, Canada. He became interested in developing 21st century skills and competencies in learners when his province developed a 21C learning initiative in 2007. That interest, along with a passion for geography, evolved into this, his first publication - a product of his Masters' research.



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Outstanding Principals

During the course of several interviews, the COP program process of *navigating the nomination process* was identified as a COP experience that contributed over and above an existing skill set. The majority of interviewees were able to name something of their leadership practice that had actually changed as a result of the COP program. Moreover, the majority of interviewees were able to articulate an impact from the COP program on student achievement. Given the important role principals play in (indirectly) influencing student achievement, further examination was required to extend key elements of the COP program beyond non-COP recipients. Evidence suggested a positive influence of the COP program on principal efficacy, transformational leadership, and student achievement.

Conclusion

COP represented a national network of principals each coming from a unique context framed, in part, by provincial and territorial diversity. There was no single profile of a COP recipient

suggesting a variety of leadership development needs and experiences. COP recognition is based on a score against four characteristics: demonstrates instructional leadership; leads others to develop professional learning teams; partners with families and communities; and actions ongoing professional and personal growth initiatives. These characteristics were derived from a synthesis of two primary sources: Leithwood et al. (2004) and Waters et al. (2003). What united COP recipients and brought them together as a national network of principals was the COP recognition. Learning with, and from, these exceptional school leaders, gives us renewed confidence in the power of publicly funded education to raise achievement bars, close achievement gaps, and engage parents and their communities. COP celebrates a decade of reshaping leadership development in 2014.

AUTHOR

Dr. Scott Lowrey is an elementary school principal in Hamilton, Ontario. He received Canada's Outstanding Principals (COP) recognition in 2005, the inaugural year of the program. Scott earned his Ed.D. from OISE/University of Toronto (Educational Administration) in 2013.

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Transforming Student Learning

Through the Intermediate Student Success Network and 21st Century Teaching and Learning

Gianna Helling, Principal, St. Sebastian Catholic School, Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Student Success Learning Networks: Intermediate Teachers Planning Together To Transform Student Learning and Sustain Successful Transitions for Intermediate Students.

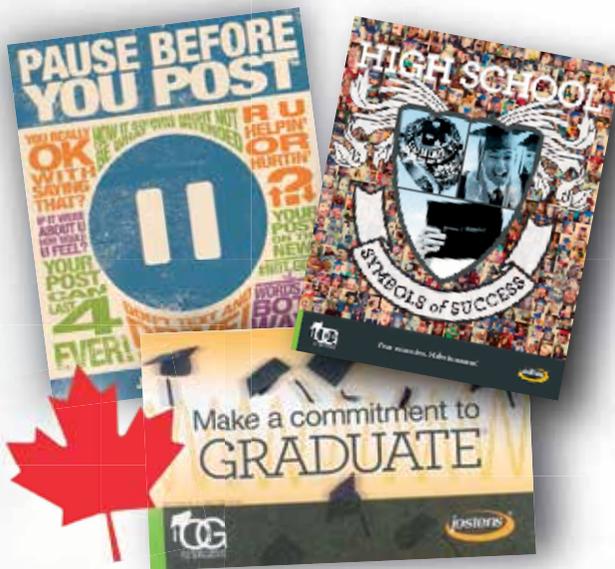
Through the Student Success Learning Networks, intermediate teachers in the Toronto Catholic District School Board are working together to create meaningful, challenging, project based lessons structured within the Inquiry Based Learning model. Using the “six rubrics of 21st century learning” adapted from the rubrics developed and tested internationally for the Innovative Teaching and Learning Research project, intermediate teachers, administrators and resource teachers are working at creating lessons that engage students through:

- Collaboration
- Knowledge construction
- Real-world problem-solving and innovation
- Skilled communication
- Self-regulation and
- The use of Information and Communication Technology for learning (TCDSB).

Students work on project based learning in elementary school and in high school easing the transition between schools. The networking between teachers in different schools and across divisions creates strong professional learning communities that are inspirational, practice distributed leadership and improve classroom effectiveness in both elementary and secondary schools (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2008, p. 142). This model builds upon and sustains best practice. This direct capacity building of teachers through Collaborative Inquiry groups (teachers across divisions and subject areas with principals) sustains and builds upon the success of each participant. Instructional rounds help to build upon each other’s practices. The Inquiry Based Learning model for students, engages students in a meaningful and personal way. Parental engagement in student learning helps sustain interest and engagement in the rich task. According to Mary Jean Gallagher, Chief Student Achievement Officer for the Ontario Ministry

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of Education, families who come into the school, know the school culture and the work of the school, thus paving the way for better student achievement and engagement. When "... professionals work side by side with parents and communities to serve the children and youth they care for" (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p.79), this partnership results in increased public confidence and more importantly builds a relationship of trust between the school and the home.

The inquiry based projects are curriculum focused, and use assessment for, as and of learning. These rich tasks are relevant to the learner's world, engage the students and are open ended -have multiple possible outcomes for success (West, 2012). **Student choice is important!** It allows for **student ownership, self-direction, and engagement.** This means students are genuinely thinking for themselves, rather than simply trying to crack the code to predict an answer/solution that has been predetermined as being correct by the teacher.

The TCDSB 21st Century Learning Design

The work of the intermediate teachers and administrators, through the Student Success Learning Networks described above, is focussed on the TCDSB 21st Century Learning Design. This guide describes each of the six rubrics stated earlier and provides an overview of definitions, key concepts and related examples, assessment charts to help determine how strongly a learning activity offers opportunities to develop a given skill and a flowchart that shows how to determine where the learning activity is on the continuum of 21st Century skills. The six rubrics are:

Collaboration – In today's interconnected world, students need to "work in teams, learn from and contribute to the learning of others" (Fullan, 2013). They need "social networking skills, and empathy in working with diverse others" (Fullan, 2013). Collaborative tasks require students to work together as interdependent team members, engage students through shared responsibility and require students to make substantive decisions together.

Knowledge Construction – Knowledge is interdisciplinary and the task requires the ability to apply knowledge to new situations and new problems. This rubric looks at students' opportunities to build deep knowledge that they can transfer and apply in practice. Knowledge construction activities require students to generate ideas and understandings that are new to them. Students can do this through interpretation, analysis, synthesis or evaluation.

Real-World Problem – Solving and Innovation- This rubric examines whether students' work involves problem-solving, and uses data or situations from the real world. The strongest learning activities for this rubric:

- Require students to work on solving real problems
- Represent innovation by requiring students to implement their ideas, designs or solutions for audiences outside the classroom.

Skilled Communication – This rubric requires students to communicate their own ideas regarding a concept or issue. Their communication must be supported with evidence and designed with a particular audience in mind.

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Self-Regulation – Activities that require long-term learning and ask students to plan, assess and revise their own work based on feedback. Learning activities that give students the opportunity to acquire self-regulation skills must last long enough for students to have the opportunity to plan their work over time, and offer visibility into clear learning goals and success criteria that students can use to plan and monitor their own work.

The uses of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for learning – Students are active users, and/ or designers of an ICT product for an authentic audience.

TCDSB21C: Learning Design – The NEXT Lesson

<http://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SchoolProgramsK12/AcademicICT/projectnext/Pages/Identifying-the-neXt-Lesson.aspx>

The challenge for the intermediate teachers and administrators from both panels and across subject areas was to design rich tasks based on the TCDSB 21C Learning Design for students using Inquiry based learning. Rich tasks must be grounded in real-world learning that is of interest to the students. These tasks are open-ended and have multiple possible outcomes for success, thus catering to different ability levels of students.

- How do we know if the task is rich (Lucy West and Lisa Walsh)?
- Does it allow for critical thinking and problem solving in conventional and/or innovative ways?
- Is this task grounded in issues relevant to students' lives?
- Does it allow for thinking across the curriculum?
- Does it involve inquiry and knowledge building?
- Will the task require substantive conversation?
- Will this task promote curiosity and creativity?
- Will this task allow students to take a critical stance?

<http://resources.curriculum.org/secretariat/leaders/lucy.html>

Student Led Learning Walks: Establishing Student Voice

A further opportunity would be the use of Student Led Learning Walks to involve parents in student learning. This process invites parents to engage “in a family learning walk led by their own child(ren). Students enthusiastically walk their families through a gallery of student work”. The parents are guided by their children in a focused and pedagogical way that “allows parents to witness the continuum of learning expectations in community” (Rossi, 2013). This process provides an opportunity for parents to participate in the curriculum in an engaging way- making learning visible for students, staff and parents in our community.

Working in communities of learners that include students, staff and parents, TCDSB school communities through the Student Success Learning Networks, are engaging students in real life learning tasks that prepare them for the complex demands of the new economy. These learning teams are co-planning across divisions to ensure that the teaching and learning in both the high schools and elementary schools, is transformative, inspiring and relevant.



AUTHOR

Gianna Helling has been a teacher and principal with Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) in Ontario for over twenty years. She has worked with administrators provincially, nationally and internationally on strategies for students at risk, secondary level literacy, and successful transitions, K-12.

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Building Instructional Capacity:

The new face of professional development

By Lyle Hamm and Kevin Cormier
University of New Brunswick - Fredericton, NB

Citation

Hamm, L. D. & Cormier, K. (2014). Building instructional capacity: The new face of professional development.

Desire2Learn (D2L) is the online Learning Management System (LMS) that the University of New Brunswick employs. As a new faculty member, I have increased my capacity as a learner and teacher using D2L to plan and deliver graduate courses. I am able to share course content through heightened online instructional strategies with my students and they in turn share with me. It is a reciprocal and inclusive inquiry-based learning experience where all graduate participants in the course have the opportunity to share and learn from each other's perspectives and teaching experiences through the D2L platform.

This online pedagogical stance parallels what Freire (1970) calls the "problem-posing method" of education (p. 80). I have found in my university practice using the online platform that "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (Freire, 1970, p. 70). The D2L dialogical process is an educational avenue that may be explored by school leaders looking for alternate ways to engage teachers and create more meaningful and sustained professional development opportunities in their schools.

Toward a more effective and sustainable PD process

In education, there are many challenges confronting teachers and administrators in schools given the current state of rapid change and accountability in our schools and communities (Goddard, 2010; Schmidt, 2010). These challenges are often juxtaposed with so many theories and arguments about how teachers should teach and run their classrooms and how schools should be managed and led by administrators. It is hard for those individuals responsible for selecting, implementing and sustaining PD activities to prioritize what is best for their teachers and schools.

With the advent of online learning management systems, it may be time to reconceptualize how schools and school districts across Canada should approach professional learning. My suggestion here is for school district leaders to consider implementing learning management systems like the D2L format into their schools for teacher professional development and there is a growing body of literature that supports this.

School Leaders and Professional Development

With the availability of computers, digital technologies and mobile devices that educators in Canada are increasingly using, educators may begin to visualize how professional development activities in Canada can be better timed and more collaborative to support teacher growth and student learning. If school districts invested financial resources in learning management systems like D2L and set frameworks that would provide on-going education with supporting resources for its professional staff, PD could be conducted in timelier, more productive, efficient and cost effective ways by educators that parallel the D2L online courses being offered in higher education institutions. Just as graduate university students are doing now, classroom teachers in schools across our country would be able to engage in online collaborative learning environments with their colleagues in the school and, more importantly perhaps, with colleagues in other schools within their own district.

Providing teachers the opportunities to learn and engage with learning management systems like D2L would increase their comfort levels to experiment with the online pedagogies and delivery in their classrooms and schools in what Furey (2010) reports as “dual mode” (p. 289) classroom practice. This is where the teacher combines face to face and online learning within the context of one classroom.

Once accustomed to this learning style, this same approach can be taken for teacher professional development. Teachers could initially meet to participate in face to face and whole group activities to learn about the topic and then take the time necessary to build their

capacity about how they will learn and discuss the PD topic through the D2L platform. This would include learning how to create online learning modules with appropriate content topics and discussion forums. From there, the teachers can explore some of the advanced tools. Educators would then be encouraged to go online through the D2L networks to read articles, perform educational tasks and then engage with their colleagues in group discussion forums at their own convenience and time. There are plenty of free resources and tutorials available online to help teachers build their knowledge of the platform at their own pace. Like graduate students, teachers will be able to learn anytime, and anywhere.

The Benefits of Continuous Online Convenient PD

Smith and Sivo (2012) found that “online teacher communities provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences beyond the classroom walls” (p. 880). The D2L format would support what Holmes (2013) describes as school teachers’ continuous professional development (CPD) “by providing opportunities for CPD that support critical inquiry with peers, at a distance and in the context of everyday teaching practice” (p. 104). This approach breaks down geographical barriers and encourages participants to engage fully with more cognitive and social presence (Holmes, 2013; Smith & Sivo, 2012). Holmes (2013) adds that “online communities support teachers to cooperate across regions and countries, without the need for physical travel. As such, they provide opportunities for cooperation that may not exist locally or may be inhibited by institutional barriers” (p. 107). For example, if a large district wished to explore the topic of literacy to increase student engagement with reading, several of that district’s schools could take part in the planning and learning process associated with the project. Once educators in a school have a basic understanding of the D2L platform, they are prepared to engage in online learning communities. My experience learning and using the D2L platform with the professional support here at the university has taught me that each week I am a little better and more confident in its multiple features that allow me to help my students produce knowledge and not just be consumers of it (Jacobs, 2012). Qiu and McDougall (2013) found several advantages for employing online discourse for teacher development. Of note, they reported that online learning communities:

1. Foster more focused and in-depth discussion among participants
2. Achieved higher quality of contributions
3. Had lower involvement from the instructor
4. Encouraged more participation and no time limit on participation
5. Provided flexible schedule and section length
6. Reduced group domination and supported shy participants
7. Exposed group members to diverse backgrounds and experiences (pp. 4-8)

This has been part of what I have assessed for myself as a very positive learning and teaching experience using the D2L system for learning. I am hopeful that teachers and leaders in the public schooling system, who incorporate online

teacher professional development, will be able to experience greater success than their traditional professional development practices may have allowed them to do. With commitment, educators can feel connected through the relationships they form on

the D2L platform and can create district, provincial, national and even international teacher networks, which otherwise, they might not do or get a chance to do in a face to face context.

Lyle Hamm is an assistant professor in Educational Administration and Leadership in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick. He teaches online Desire2Learn leadership courses in Teacher Supervision, Educational Theory, School Culture and Leadership in Culturally Diverse Schools. Lyle served as a teacher and administrator for 22 years in southern Alberta.

Kevin Cormier is an Instructional Technology Specialist and the System Administrator for Desire2Learn (Learning Management System) with the Centre for Enhanced Teaching and Learning at UNB. Kevin works closely with faculty, staff, and students to help provide a positive online learning experience. Kevin is also in charge of the D2L learning resources website.

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Hiring Effective Teachers:

A Moral and Practical Role for Today's Principals

by Drs. Nancy Maynes and Blaine E. Hatt
Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario



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Introduction

This article has four related purposes. First, it will address the role of principals in hiring effective teachers and show how this role has moral purpose. Second, it will explain conceptually and through recent research, those characteristics thought to make teachers most effective as their contributions relate to students' learning. Third, perceptions of acting principals of how they use interviews to identify teacher potential in hiring is discussed. Finally, strategies that have promise for augmenting traditional interview-based hiring will be outlined.

Hiring Teachers as a Moral Task

It is commonly accepted among school administrators that the quality of the teacher makes a difference to the learning achieved by the teacher's students. In fact, teacher behavior in the instructional context is the single most impactful factor on improved student achievement, accounting for more than 30 per cent of the differences in learning among groups of students.

During teacher hiring, principals have an interest in hiring the teacher candidates whom, in their perception, have the highest potential to be able to influence students' learning in a positive way. Effective teachers, with a focus on optimizing students' learning, will support the goals of the principal, the school jurisdiction, and the society as a whole. Effective teachers display a number of characteristics that principals feel highly confident that they can identify through traditional hiring interviews (Maynes & Hatt; 2013).

One of the characteristics that effective teachers, and potentially effective teacher candidates, will demonstrate in the teacher selection process is a sense of moral purpose. While the concept of moral purpose brings to mind religious connotations, it is used here in the sense introduced by Fullen, Hill, and Crevola (2006). Moral purpose in education has three elements. It includes the teacher's belief in 1) high standards, with 2) a commitment to learning for every student, and 3) to closing the learning gap across groups of students.

Achieving this moral purpose in Canadian classrooms requires that all teachers commit to a common vision of their task as teachers and that principals lead teachers in understanding this common vision. The vision of this moral purpose for educational improvement requires teachers who understand differentiation so that learning can be based on students' past successes, interests, and skills/learning

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profiles. Differentiation that takes account of students' successes, interests, and skills/learning profiles can personalize learning experiences for each student. This vision also requires teachers who understand the necessity for precision, focused, targeted teaching that responds to individual learning needs. Finally, this vision requires professionals who are aggressive about pursuing their own professional growth in ways that expand their understanding of how to optimize commitment to students' learning, while raising the bar on standards and closing the gap among students.

Hiring teachers who have this sense of moral purpose creates its own inherent moral challenge for principals. How can such explicit and important characteristics be "uncovered" in a hiring interview? This dilemma is exaggerated by the structure of typical teacher hiring interviews, which put candidates and hiring principals in the same room for about twenty-five minutes! This creates a context where high stakes hiring decisions need to be made under conditions that are extremely confined in ways that are likely unique to education.

Effectiveness: Focusing on Students' Learning

Principals can buttress their decisions about teacher hiring by having clear and well-conceptualized ideas about what they feel makes a teacher effective before they face the task of hiring teachers for either the system level or for their own schools. This is a difficult goal given the usual approaches used to structure teacher hiring interviews. For system level hiring (e.g., supply teacher lists or "ready to be hired" lists), principals may not have any role in determining the questions that will be asked during interviews. Such questions may be compiled by Human Resources personnel and may be standardized across the jurisdiction to address perceptions of fairness in the hiring process. Even when hiring for their own schools, principals may be subject to jurisdictional direction about hiring interviews, or they may be directed to consider specified qualifications as they hire. Ideally, principals will have the latitude to hire teachers who "fit" the needs

of the job, the values of the community, the goals of the jurisdiction, the principal's priorities, and the organization's (i.e., the school's) culture. However, in reality, details for the interview process may be so time constrained that these hiring "fits" may be given less focus than is ideal to ensure interviews with the greatest potential to identify the teachers with the most probability to influence students' learning.

In this context, a clear conception of effectiveness in teachers should be a highly valued filter for hiring practices. Recent research with principals from both elementary and secondary (including middle) schools in two school jurisdictions (Maynes & Hatt; 2013) has shown that acting principals, regardless of experience in the role and past experience with hiring teachers, agree that some characteristics are indicative of teachers who will focus their efforts on improving students' learning. This same group of principals was highly confident that they could examine these characteristics effectively in a traditional teacher interview if they were able to ask questions related to these characteristics.

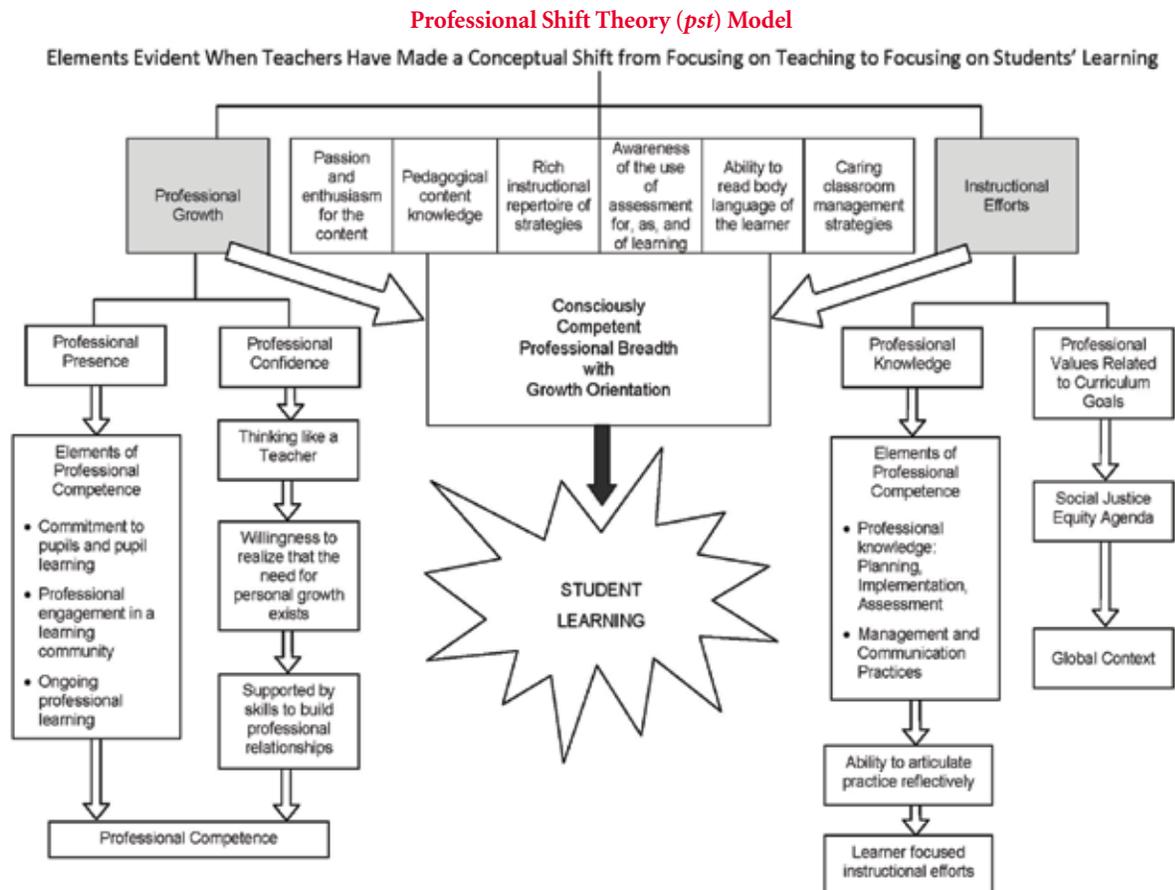
Principals in this study also demonstrated strong confidence in their ability to support each of these characteristics of effectiveness (as measured by their perception of the teacher's ability to maintain a focus on students' learning) during the early stages of their careers.

Interestingly, hiring principals expressed some sense of frustration with their system hiring roles. Their lack of contact after hiring, with teachers who are hired for system positions, left principals feeling uncertain of how effective their hiring decisions ultimately were at the classroom level.

Additionally, some principals expressed lack of confidence in the interview process as a selection vehicle for effective teachers. While secondary school principals felt very confident in the efficacy of the interview process to help them identify effective teachers, their elementary principal counterparts were much less confident. Elementary principals identified that they lacked confidence in the hiring decisions up to fifty per cent of the time. Since hiring effective teachers is both a long term and high stakes decision, it is critical that the process used for selecting the individuals with the greatest potential to support effective learning be as strong as possible.

Interviewing to Reveal Potential Effectiveness

This research has provided an initial foundation for considering ways to structure teacher hiring interviews to provide the most efficacious selection of effective teachers. The research results were based on initial agreement about some critical characteristics that participants felt were indicative of teachers who had the potential to focus on students' learning. These characteristics, and the relations among them, as identified from a previous study (Maynes & Hatt, 2012) are shown in the diagram below. This diagram is titled "Professional Shift Theory (*pst*) Model" because the model was first developed in response to an investigation of faculty of education advisors into characteristics they felt were typical of teacher candidates who were making a shift in their professional focus towards focusing on students' learning.



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Augmenting Traditional Interview Focused Hiring

In the study that is reported here, the researchers found that acting principals are confident in the characteristics they value as indicators of teachers' focus on students' learning, while being much less confident, at least among elementary principals, in the capacity of traditional teacher interviews to uncover these characteristics. Teacher hiring is a very complex process that may not be getting the preparatory attention that is required to ensure hiring of the teachers who have the potential to be most effective in the classroom. Teacher unions are very strong across Canada and they are adept at supporting teachers whose abilities in the classroom may not be found to be as effective as required to support students' learning. Removing, or even recording unfavourable evaluations, of teachers after they are hired is a difficult process, and requires fortitude, commitment, boundless amounts of time, and spotless record keeping from principals. Rather than placing principals in these inherently confrontational positions, we would serve the cause of education better if we made stronger hiring decisions to place the most effective teachers in contracted positions.

One way we can place stronger teachers in classrooms, is by making the interview one aspect of a more vibrant and challenging screening process to ensure effective hiring. Predictive hiring (Pappano, 2011) provides some guidelines for how we might consider alternative methods of screening for teachers with the most potential for positive impact on students' learning. Predictive hiring can include many stages of screening, including: a phone interview after receipt of a written application, review of a demonstration lesson taught by the teacher candidate, a face-to-face interview, a conflict problem-solving exercise (e.g., an email response to an email from an angry parent), and a student achievement data exercise (e.g., planning precision instruction to respond to the data about a student's learning). While predictive hiring stages may seem time intensive and potentially expensive, principals who have engaged in the review and supervision of ineffective teachers will recognize this process as one that has promise in terms of opening the possibility of stronger hiring practices than may be possible in the current hiring paradigm.

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Social Justice



Under the Radar:

Principals Promoting Social Justice

James Ryan & Stephanie Tuters

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Like many leaders, principals cannot do or say whatever they please. They are bound by policy, restricted by the demands of colleagues, and constrained by their professional obligations. As a consequence, principals may be challenged when organizational values clash with what they feel is right. This sometimes occurs with those who actively promote equity and social justice in their schools (Ryan, 2010; Theoharis, 2007). But it also happens to others who may oppose current policies and initiatives. These principals may find that opposition to their agendas may require them to approach their work strategically. Some may even find that they can only promote their agendas in ways that are not noticed. In this regard, they may attempt to operate away from the spotlight – under the radar.

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This article describes a study of social justice-minded principals who attempted to promote their agendas surreptitiously, that is, in discreet ways. Part of a larger project that explored the micropolitics of leadership, this study reports on interviews with 23 principals and vice principals.

The leaders in this study promoted their often-unpopular social justice agendas in strategic ways. They believed that this was necessary to help them deal with the opposition that they routinely encountered from the people with whom they worked, the policies they were required to implement and the cultures and traditions that they worked within. And so in order for leaders to successfully promote their agendas, they needed to carefully calculate their actions. Prominent among their strategies were tactics that made them less visible. Leaders approached this in two ways. First they

positioned or set themselves up in these less visible ways. Second, they favored actions that were less direct.

Positioning Themselves

Principals in the study sought to position themselves in ways that would allow them to take action on issues that were not always popular. In doing so, they tried to blend into their surroundings by keeping a low profile, projecting credibility and maintaining good relationships with their colleagues

Keeping a low profile

Perhaps the most important tactic for the principals was keeping a low profile. They employed a number of metaphors for describing this strategy. These included flying under the radar, hiding in the weeds and walking softly. Mickey (a pseudonym), for example, a principal of an inner city

elementary school, notes the importance of not drawing attention to himself. He has learned over the years that central office personnel tend to look more closely at schools with higher profiles. This sort of scrutiny can reveal things that the latter might not like. Mickey believes that these administrators are more likely to grant favors to principals that they rarely hear from. But keeping a low profile is not the only tactic that the principals employed to be perceived positively; they also felt that they needed to be seen as credible.

Projecting Credibility

Principals in the study also believed that they had to project an air of credibility if they were to deflect unwanted attention. To do this they needed to be seen as team players. One way to do this was to do their paperwork well, and on time. Jen, an elementary principal, had learned that central office personnel can deflect attention away from her social justice initiatives by either drawing attention to her inability to complete her required tasks, like doing paperwork. Others contend that it is important for colleagues to perceive that principals are competent. On the other hand, though, they had to be careful that they did not give the impression that they were “too smart.” Doing so could threaten colleagues, raise profiles and risk alienating those who would otherwise assist principals in their endeavors.

Nurturing Relationships

Principals recognized the importance of maintaining good relationships with their colleagues. They knew that they would be in a better position to promote their agendas when they got along with the people to whom they had to sell these ideas. Their colleagues would be more likely to support them and forgive them when and if they slipped up. Wilbur, for example, used a “mulligan” metaphor to describe what he can get from these sorts of relationships. Often employed by golfers, it refers to an instance when players get a second chance at a move, in this case, another try to make a shot with which they were not satisfied. In his experience, central office people with whom Wilbur has had a good relationship have been willing to overlook his mistakes or help him when he is behind in his tasks.



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“Towards this end, principals dropped hints, made subtle suggestions, and nursed ideas along without ruffling feathers and encountering ever-present resistance”.

Taking Action

Aside from their efforts to position themselves, study participants took action to promote their agendas. Many of these strategies were consistent with their positioning orientation – they sought to act in ways that did not attract too much attention. Towards this end, they aligned their priorities with others’ agendas, planted seeds and picked their hills to die on.

Aligning Priorities

Principals saw value in aligning their priorities with people in power. They believed that if their superiors realized that their own priorities coincided with the principals’, then central office people would be more likely to support the principals’ efforts. Salena, an elementary principal who sits on a number of district-wide committees, adopted this strategy. The first thing she would do after becoming a committee member would be to establish other members’ power and interests. Once she understood these, she shaped her own (social justice) initiatives to coincide with these powerful interests and then attempted to exert subtle pressure. Framing her ideas in just the right allowed her to work with, rather than against, potential resisters, avoiding unnecessary confrontations in the process.

Planting Seeds

Participants referred to another of their subtle strategies as planting seeds. Those who employed this tactic preferred to find a way to get their colleagues to consider an idea or course of action by introducing it in an indirect way. Towards this end, principals dropped hints, made subtle suggestions, and nursed ideas along without ruffling feathers and encountering ever-present resistance. By avoiding “in your face” approaches, the targets of these actions would not feel that they were being forced and pressured. The hope was that they would believe that it was their idea, or at least their choice, to accept

the idea. Ratansa, for example, a secondary administrator, made use of an opportunity at a staff meeting to raise the issue of gender. In a roundabout way, she prompted teachers to consider the matter of transgender students, something that most would not think about.

Picking a Hill to Die On

At some point, most principals will find themselves in a position that requires their direct action. When this happens, they will need to be strategic in their choice of action. When faced with this sort of situation, Rigley, an elementary school principal, says that “I am not going to argue over every little piece of minutia ... You have got to decide: is this a hill you want to die on?” Like other principals in the study, he believes that he cannot argue or fight over every issue in which he believes. In the same instance, Rigley also notes that his superiors tend to ignore “whiners.” To avoid this label, he carefully chooses to defend only those practices about which he feels most strongly. While he has no blueprint for deciding what issues he will pursue, he nevertheless regards those that involve his whole school and students as important, and as a consequence, worth defending.

Conclusion

If principals are to have any success at promoting ideals that are not always popular, like social justice, then they will have to be strategic in the way in which they go about it. One of the ways in which they can promote these agendas is to operate under the radar. Among other tactics, they can position themselves in ways that are not noticed, make sure that others recognize their credibility and maintain good relationships with their colleagues. They can also engage in subtle practices, such as planting seeds and aligning priorities with powerful others. At some point, however, when they have to take direct action, they need to be selective about what issues they pursue.

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- ESL, (Levels 2 – 5)
- Intermediate & Senior – English, Mathematics, Business, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Studies & Social Sciences
- Courses vary for each school

CTC has five campuses located in mainland China: Shanghai City (Pudong District); Nanjing; Quanzhou City (close to the sea across from Taiwan); Jinhua (close to Shanghai); Yuci.

Benefits:

Return air, private accommodation, competitive salary with some medical insurance assistance provided. This is a very unique opportunity for retired educators, beginning teachers or teachers on leave (4/5) to experience the culture and dramatic changes of China.

Apply now!

Forward resume and cover letter to:
Supervising Principal
The Canadian Trillium College,
Toronto Office:
Fax: 416 – 763 – 5225
Phone: 416 – 763 – 4121
Email: dmfolz@hotmail.com



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EDUCATE don't Ban

Chocolate fundraisers support the spirit of school food and beverage policies. Here's why...

Education works, banning doesn't.

91% of adults agree that educating children about how treats fit into a healthy lifestyle is better than banning chocolate fundraising¹.

Common sense and behavioural science support that treats are part of a healthy active lifestyle.

92% of dietitians say that people are more likely to maintain a balanced lifestyle when they don't deprive themselves of treats².

In the world of treats, chocolate is one of the healthier options.

Eaten in moderation, chocolate has many benefits. It is rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, vitamins and minerals, and contains valuable calcium and iron.

Chocolate could lower your risk for heart disease!

British Medical Journal Research: The study, involving more than 114,000 people, showed that higher consumption levels of all types of chocolate, was significantly associated with a reduced risk of cardiometabolic disorders. This beneficial association was significant for cardiovascular disease (37% reduction), diabetes (31%) and stroke (29%)³. Chocolate might be a viable instrument in the prevention of cardiometabolic disorders if consumed in moderation.

The launch of a chocolate fundraiser is an opportunity to educate kids about healthy lifestyles and World's Finest® Chocolate can help:

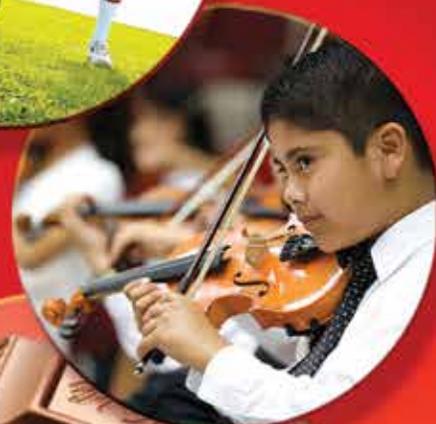
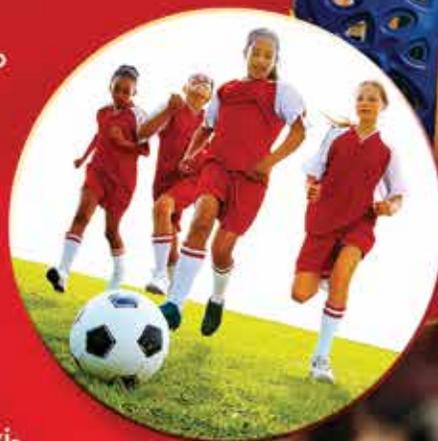
INTRODUCING



Educational material to help parents & children understand the importance of portion control and physical activity. This is available with each fundraising campaign.

A chocolate fundraiser supports active lifestyles, not unhealthy eating.

This annual or semi-annual event helps pay for school activities and equipment like playground equipment, sports equipment, bussing and school trips that support healthy, active lifestyles.



For more information call 1.800.461.1957



¹ September 2010 Ipsos Reid poll of 1300+ adults (including 500 parents of children aged 4-13).
² Survey of Nutritional Professionals. An online survey of 430 registered dietitians (201) by the Hershey Center for Health & Nutrition.
³ "British Medical Journal", chocolate consumption and cardiometabolic disorders, 7 studies, involving 114,039 people, studies up to Oct. 2010.