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Greetings From the President

I am very pleased and honoured to be undertaking the role of CAP President this year. The Board and I have some exciting plans aimed at modernizing the organization and ensuring that the work we undertake moves forward in a strategic and calculated manner.



Jameel Aziz
President, Canadian
Association of Principals



To that end, President Elect, Tina Estabrooks; Past President, Bill Tucker and I met in St. John's, Newfoundland this summer to work with some of our partner groups and begin a process of strategic plan development. This occurred during the CASA (Canadian Association of School Administrators) conference which we also attended.

On my way back to BC from St. John's, I stopped in Ottawa to take in the meetings/conference of the Canadian Teacher's Federation and meet with some of the national partner groups that we do work with throughout the year. The CTF meetings highlighted Aboriginal enhancement and working to raise the achievement and engagement of Aboriginal and Indigenous students across the country.

We anticipate that the work done on the *Role of the Principal* nationally should be ready for release before the end of the calendar year and look forward to the opportunity to discuss its findings and results.

One of my main goals as President this year is to establish more regular and detailed communication about the operations and involvement of CAP. Though many of you are aware of the organization especially during our conferences, many cannot speak to the ongoing work that we do and I believe that is due to us not providing you with enough regular and detailed contact. Organizational transparency is a continued goal of mine and I believe should be one of any organization. We will work to ensure that those of you interested in how we proceed, are informed. In addition, we will be sending out regular updates through the newsletters that come to you, through the course of the year.

Like most of you, I am proud of the work I do as a principal/school leader and the support that I can provide to students, teachers, and families. It is important to consistently advocate and voice our point of view when educational change discussions occur. By contributing our perspective we can help to ensure that one of the world's finest education systems remains so; for our students, families and communities at large.

I look forward to hearing from you and wish you my very best for continued success in your leadership role.

Jameel Aziz

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Editor's Comments



I often listen to colleagues who are weary and disenchanted by the laborious demands of leadership. The 21st Century trends require that we put down our pencils and Facebook, tweet, and blog our way to higher order and global thinking. This is a task that has us forever striving to keep our skills fresh and our global awareness current. Non-negotiable political agendas, often reactive to social demand,

impose upon our ability to maintain a clear and direct focus on the grassroots of our school goals. And, the rejuvenated social interest in student achievement that sees value in comparing our children on a global scale fosters an environment where tests scores, rather than individual student growth, gain priority. We know that this is a flawed system of measurement, yet we have no choice but to continue to employ it. These are but a few of the troubling facts faced by today's educational leaders. Somehow, within this ever-eclectic environment of responsibility, principals must keep student learning in the forefront and ensure teachers are competent, motivated, and happy. Add to this the management tasks associated with running a building and it becomes evident that educational leaders must be superhuman. Is anyone paying attention? One would hope that these growing responsibilities are being met with equalized growing support.

2013 promises to be an exciting year for the Canadian Association of Principals. A comprehensive study on the *Future of the Principals in Canada* conducted by the Alberta Teachers' Association in partnership with the Canadian Association of Principals is ready for release. This pan-Canadian research will shed light upon current trends and challenges that affect the role of our educational leaders. Couture and Yashkina, in their article *The Future of the Principals in Canada: A National Study*, describe the research process and highlight some findings. They confirm that investigation in this field is long overdue. It is our collective belief that the information gained by this work will facilitate active dialog across the nation and provide direction for CAP, provincial affiliations, boards, and government. In addition to Couture and Yashkina's review of the study, this issue of the CAP journal provides guidance, tools, and hope for leaders attempting to meet the demands of the aforementioned challenges. Enjoy and learn from the work of our Canadian scholars.

This is my final journal. I welcome KJ White, the newly elected Eastern Vice-President of CAP, who will assume the role of editor. I have truly enjoyed my tenure and look forward to my new role with the association. It is with great pride that I continue to serve such an amazing group of leaders who, regardless of the tribulations inherent in this profession, greet all learners with a smile of appreciation. Continue to love what you do and never forget its importance.

All the best,
Tina Estabrooks EDITOR

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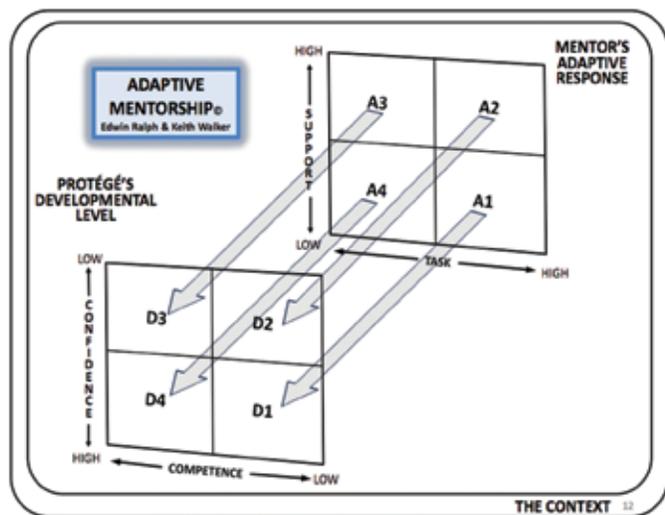
via *Adaptive Mentorship*®

The mentorship/supervision of staff-members has been a key responsibility of leaders in all professional organizations, including school-based educational administrators (Parkay, Hardcastle Stanford, Vaillancourt, Stephens, & Harris, 2014; Blanchard et al., 2010). However, instructional mentorship programs may be deficient, because participants are inadequately prepared to implement and/or sustain a clear mentorship approach (Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2009).

During the past two decades, we have developed and refined a mentoring model called *Adaptive Mentorship*® (AM) that has been shown to be useful in coaching/supervising teachers and other practitioners in their professional development. We created the model, which we formerly named *Contextual Supervision* (CS, Ralph 1998, 2004), from earlier contingency leadership and management approaches (e.g., Hersey & Blanchard, 1988; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). Personnel who applied the model have reported that it clarified their supervisory responsibilities and enhanced their mentoring practice (Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2010).

Description

Adaptive Mentorship® is a model that guides mentors/supervisors in adjusting their mentoring responses to appropriately match the task-specific development level of protégés whom they are assisting in the learning/working situation. We depict the AM model in Figure 1.



The outer border of the diagram represents the entire context within which the mentorship process is conducted, much of which is out of the control of the mentor or the protégé. However, they can manage their own behaviour. Thus, mentors can modify their mentorship action, which consist of two dimensions shown in Figure 1: (a) their “task” response (i.e., the degree of specific direction given to the protégé regarding the technical, mechanical, or procedural aspect of the latter’s performance of a specific task being learned); and (b) their “support” response (i.e., the degree of “human” or psycho/social/emotional expression they provide the protégé learning the skill-set).



Adaptive Mentorship®

By contrast, the factor over which protégés have most control is their task-specific developmental level. It likewise consists of two dimensions: their “competence” level (i.e., their actual technical ability to perform the task in question), and their “confidence” level (i.e., their degree of self-assurance, composure, psychological comfort, and security and/or safety in performing the skill-set).

The heart of the AM model is represented by the shaded arrows linking the D and A grids, which portray the mentor’s matching of one of four *typical* “A” (adaptive) responses with a similarly numbered “D” (developmental) levels characterizing the protégé’s performance of the particular skill/competency. Of course, there are many more than four positions within each grid, because there is a host of possible A/D combinations. However, for conceptual/analytical purposes, we highlighted these four combinations simply to reflect *types* within each quadrant.

Application

Implementing AM consists of three phases (Ralph & Walker, 2012, pp. 9-11).

1. Determining the protégé’s development.

First, the pair ascertains the existing development level of the protégé to perform a specific skill-set being learned at the time (e.g., classroom management). As illustrated in the “D grid,” a protégé’s task-specific level of development consists of both his/her *competence* and his/her *confidence* levels to consistently organize and manage student learning. The D1 quadrant reflects an individual with “low competence” and “high confidence” to accomplish the task (i.e., he/she does not know exactly *how* to conduct it, but is confident, willing, and eager to try). D1 often exemplifies novice teachers’ early perception of being able to work with a group of students. A protégé at D2 is low on both competence and confidence; a protégé at D3 shows higher competence and lower confidence; while a protégé at D4 is high on both dimensions for the particular skill-set.

A protégé’s developmental level may be identified by: (a) the mentor’s formal and informal observations of the protégé’s actual

performance of the skill/task; (b) the pairs’ informal conversations about the protégé’s D-level; and/or (c) the protégé’s answers to the mentor’s direct questions about his/her progress. These D-levels are: task-specific; changeable over-time; different for different skill-sets; and temporary indicators of a protégé’s stage at a specific point in time (Ralph, 1998; Ralph & Walker, 2011a, 2011b).

2. Synchronizing the mentor’s response.

Next, the mentor appropriately adjusts his/her mentorship response to *match* the existing D level of the protégé regarding the particular competency: A1 matches D1, A2 matches D2, and so on. The mentor’s “A” adaptive-response likewise consists of two dimensions: the degree of *support* the mentor provides (i.e., the psycho-emotional responses of encouragement, reinforcement, and praise to bolster the protégé as he/she attempts to develop the particular skill-set). Support consists of *genuinely* positive words and/or actions, and varies along a continuum. The other A element is *task* (i.e., the amount of direction the mentor gives the protégé regarding the technical or mechanical performance of the task). This task action also varies along a continuum ranging, for example, from one extreme of direct telling, to demonstrating, to suggesting, to questioning, up to delegating with respect to the protégé’s technique in the skill.

The key principle for mentors in correctly matching their A response with their protégé’s D levels is that: (a) the *task* aspect must be *inversely proportional* to the extent of the protégé’s *competence* level for the skill set; and (b) the extent of the mentor’s *support* must be similarly *inversely proportional* to the novice’s level of confidence for the particular task being practiced.

3. Monitoring the protégé’s development.

Subsequently, the mentorship pair continually and mutually monitor the protégé’s changing level of development, which will necessitate that the mentor simultaneously adjust his/her adaptive response to match, in *inverse* proportions,

the protégé’s changing development level(s). Because a protégé will be at different D levels for different skills, the mentor will likewise need to provide different A responses for these tasks.

Validation

The AM model has been endorsed by one of North America’s most prominent management/leadership educators, Dr. Barry Posner. He acknowledged the model’s research record, and issued a public call to scholars and practitioners in management operations and human resources to consider the model’s further application (Posner, 2004, p. 151; Ralph, 2004). Other practitioners who used AM have also affirmed its efficacy (Ralph & Walker, 2011a).

Further evidence supporting the effectiveness of Adaptive Mentorship is the record from our own investigations of its implementation (Ralph & Walker, 2010, 2011a, 2012), verifying participants’ improvement of mentoring practice and resultant protégé growth. However, the research has also identified AM’s limitations. For instance, certain participants perceived it to be inappropriate, because: it was premised on outside agencies condescendingly forcing compliance; it was portrayed as a false panacea; it ignored external factors that affected relationships; or it categorized/labeled individuals into boxes (Johansson-Fua, Sanga, Walker, & Ralph, 2011; Ralph & Walker, 2011a, 2011b).

However, the preponderance of the research results (Ralph, 1993, 1998; Ralph & Walker, 2010) has indicated that the AM model did assist mentors and protégés not only to clarify their mutual understanding of the holistic mentoring enterprise, but that it helped mentors’ replace a “one-size-fits-all” response with a more individualized approach that better met the unique developmental needs of protégés. These findings have been substantiated in our most recent AM dissemination efforts for several international groups interested in mentorship (e.g., pre-K-12 school systems, higher education settings, health-care organizations, and government and military agencies).

Overall, the accumulated research regarding Adaptive Mentorship has revealed that there has been widespread agreement that AM provides users with a useful

Adaptive Mentorship®

framework by which to conceptualize the entire mentoring enterprise, and that it provides mentors with specific guidance to promote protégé growth. In addition, its

efficacy in each situation will be dependent upon participants being first provided with a sound rationale, clear explanations, sufficient

training, ample practice, and “mentoring of the mentors,” in order to ensure AM’s effectiveness.

Invitation

We hereby extend an invitation to school administrators interested in making use of the AM model in their mentoring program to feel free to implement it and to research its results. We would be pleased to offer our assistance and/or feedback in such efforts.

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AUTHOR NOTES

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Figure 1. Adaptive Mentorship®. (The mentor matches his/her adaptive response to synchronize with the skill-specific developmental level of his/her protégé.)

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- Ralph, E., Walker, K., Wimmer, R. (Eds.). (2010). *The practicum in professional education: Canadian perspectives*. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Temeron/Detselig, and been a school principal, and has had school-district administrative experience.

Tech-Enabled Leadership: Using Social Media to Enhance School Leadership



The primary purpose of social media is to mediate how and with whom people interact. Social media can be characterized as Web 2.0 resources that emphasize active participation, connectivity, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge and ideas among users (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). These types of resources can be divided into three categories: content sharing, content creation, and community creation. Content sharing sites such as Delicious, Digg, Flickr, and YouTube facilitate the sharing of digital resources among tens of thousands of users. Content creation sites like Blogger, Google Docs, Twitter, Wikipedia and WordPress, provide a simple way to create online content and make that content easily accessible. Finally, community or social networks sites like Facebook, Google+, Linked In and Ning serve as online communities where millions of users gather to connect with new acquaintances and old. It is the ability to facilitate connectivity, collaboration and sharing that can make social media a highly valuable resource for school leaders.



Tech-Enabled Leadership vs. Tech-Savvy Leaders

While the ability to use social media can be of great benefit to the school leaders, it is imperative that these resources are used to support the essential leadership functions that affect student learning. It has become increasingly popular to idolize principals that are tech savvy and showcase them as 21st century leaders. While principals that embrace the use of technology can be seen as role models, it is paramount that these social media resources are integrated into the daily practice of principals in ways that support student learning. Tech-savvy principals may be early technology adopters using the latest tech toys as part of their personal practice, but tech-enabled leaders know how to capitalize on the affordance of technology to enable leadership actions that are open, collaborative, and distributed.

Open leadership actions go beyond simply having an 'open door' policy. Open leaders acknowledge the importance of open information sharing in enhancing organizational trust and empowerment (Li, 2010). In the pre-digital world it would have been prohibitively challenging and costly to provide all interested stakeholders with access to the vital information affecting school operations. Within the Web 2.0 world, sharing this information can be as simple as uploading the data to a shared drive or website. Providing open access to pertinent school information permits teachers, staff members, students, parents, and stakeholders to become informed contributors to the success of the school. Research has noted that the most successful school leaders are open-minded and ready to learn from others (Day et al. 2009; Leithwood, 2012), thus tech-enabled leaders take advantage of social media resources to facilitate open information sharing.

It is because the research literature has indicated that the use of collaborative management styles is significantly associated with employee job satisfaction (Kim, 1999), that tech-enabled leadership should seek to use social media resources that facilitate collaboration. In addition to improved employee job satisfaction, collaborative leadership actions can have a positive impact on student learning by building on the school's capacity for academic improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). As a consequence, researchers have concluded that more collaborative schools tend to have higher student achievement (Gruenert, 2005).

The distributed leadership framework acknowledges that leadership is stretched over the work of a number of individuals (Spillane, 2006). Without the advantages of social media, managing the distribution of leadership tasks, like decision-making, could be very daunting as it may require all contributors to the leadership task to be present at the same time and location. Tech-enabled

leaders that use social media to distribute leadership and increase participation in decision-making can expect to see greater levels of commitment to organizations goals and strategies (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

More important than simply using technology as part of their daily practice, tech-enabled leaders must seek ways to use technology in a manner that is open, collaborative, and distributed as these attributes are well suited to support the fulfillment of the essential leadership actions that support student learning. While there are a myriad of important tasks that principals perform on a daily basis research has identified a number of essential leadership activities that influence student achievement. Leadership activities that contribute to **setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, and leading the instructional program** have been found to influence student learning (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). It is because these activities are vital to school success that it is paramount for school leaders to find ways to enhance the implementation of these activities. By using a variety of social media resources to enhance these essential leadership actions, tech-enabled leaders may be able to contribute to increased student achievement.

“The leadership practices of creating high expectations and communicating the school vision and goals are actions that also contribute to ‘setting directions’.”



Setting Directions

The Ontario Leadership Framework (2012, 2008) considers activities that build a shared vision, identify specific, shared short-term goals, communicate the school vision and goals, and create high expectations as directly contributing to the essential leadership function of setting directions. The open and collaborative nature of many social media tools lend themselves to being excellent resources to support the setting of directions.

Tech-enabled leaders can use social media resources such as Google Docs or Wikis to “establish, in collaboration with staff, students, and other stakeholders, an overall sense of purpose or vision for work in their school (Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2012).” Both Google Docs and Wikis are renown for their ability to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous collaboration. Using these types of tools to facilitate the collaborative creation of school improvement plans, vision statements or action plans may be a effective way to allow teachers, staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders to contribute to the development of policies and resources that will articulate the school's organizational vision.

Without the advantage of survey tools like Google Forms, Poll Everywhere, and Survey Monkey, that provide an easy way to cast votes or solicit input, the task of identifying specific, shared short-term goals can often be a very challenging and time consuming

Social Media

activity that could require hours of meetings. These resources can be used to enhance “stakeholder engagement in goal identification” and “build consensus among students, staff, and diverse stakeholders about the school goals (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012, p. 12).”

The leadership practices of creating high expectations and communicating the school vision and goals are actions that also contribute to ‘setting directions’. The specific tasks related to these actions include making expectations known through words and actions, using different formal and informal opportunities to explain to stakeholders the overall vision and goals established for the school, and demonstrating the day to day actions that support the vision and goals (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012). Blogs and micro-blogging tools like Twitter or Tumblr are excellent communication tools that may provide an efficient way for principals to communicate their high expectations. They also provide a means to document how the school is fulfilling their goals by providing links to stories, pictures, and videos that highlight student work, innovative teaching strategies, and community partnerships as a means of demonstrating how the school’s vision and goals have become a reality. The ability for teachers, staff, students, parents, and stakeholders to comment on items posted to the school or principal’s blog or Twitter account, also provides a very effective feedback loop for school leaders to remain abreast of the school community’s reaction to specific events or endeavors, thus, enhancing a tech-enabled leader’s ability to respond the changing factors that affect the school’s direction.

Building Relationships & Developing People

Leadership activities that provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members stimulate growth in professional capacities; model the school’s values and practices; build trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and parents; and contribute to the essential action of building relationships and developing people (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012). School leaders that access the plethora of online professional development resources that are available from iTunes Edu, TeacherTube, or YouTube Edu have at their finger tips that ability to access specific resources that can provide individualized support to teachers and stimulate the professional growth of their staff. Having the principal or teachers within the school post their own videos that highlight exemplary practices to these video-sharing sites, can also serve to model the school’s values and practices.

In addition to being a dynamic communication tool, blogs and micro-blogging resources can contribute to ensuring the tech-enabled school leaders are easily accessible to teachers, staff, parents, and students, while providing a means for principals to “demonstrate respect for staff, students, and parents by listening to their ideas, being open to those ideas, and genuinely considering their value and establishing norms in the school that demonstrate appreciation for constructive debate about best practices (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012, p. 12).” These activities are key to building a trusting relationship with and among staff, students, and parents, which are essential to the success of the school.



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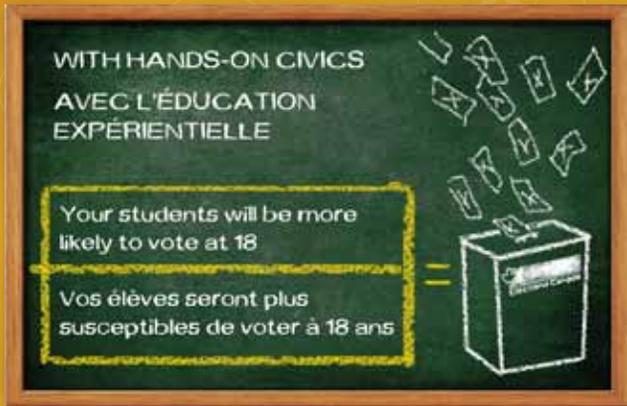
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Developing the organization

One of the essential ways in which school leadership can have a significant impact on student learning is by developing the organization (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004.; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). By building a collaborative culture, distributing leadership, structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration, building productive relationships with families and the community, and connecting the school to the wider environment principals can directly contribute to the development of the organization (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012).

Key to developing the organization is for school leaders to create opportunities to strengthen the school culture by facilitating collaborative processes (Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2008). Wikis and Google Docs are tools that were created as a means to support asynchronous and synchronous collaboration. With the assistance of these types of social media resources, tech-enabled leaders can easily facilitate the collaborative processes that ensure that they “provide regular opportunities and structures that support teachers working together on instructional improvement and establish a system for monitoring their collaborative work” and “foster open and fluent communication toward building and sustaining professional learning communities (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012, p. 12).”

Community building and social networking sites such as Facebook, Google+, Linked In, and Ning can all provide tech-enabled school leaders with a means to build “productive relationships with families and the community, while also providing a means

for the school to connect to the wider community (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012, p. 12).” Through the use of these networks, tech-enabled leaders can connect and communicate with “other experts school and district leaders, policy experts, outreach groups, organizations, and members of the educational research community” as well as “help connect families to the wider network of social services and community resources as needed (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012, p. 12).”

Leading the instructional program

Teacher quality can be considered the most powerful influence on student achievement. Thus, activities that enhance a schools’ ability to retain skilled teachers and provide instructional support can have a significant impact on school success (Leithwood, 2012). The use of innovative lesson plan sharing resources like Planboard can assist tech-enabled leaders as they seek to provide constructive feedback on lesson and unit plans, while also facilitating collaborative lesson planning. Resource sharing tools such as Cube for Teachers, Delicious, LiveBinders, Pinterest, and Scoop.it can provide an efficient means to share links to exemplary learning resources that can have a significant impact on the school’s instructional program.

The monitoring of progress in student learning and school improvement can be a herculean task in an era that showers school leaders with a deluge of data on a daily basis. New online resources like Edsby can assist in managing this data. Edsby is an online resource that blends social networking with student and school-wide data management. It can facilitate the collection and use of data pertaining

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to classroom and school conditions that are the focus of the school improvement plan, while also using multiple sources of evidence when analyzing student progress and identifying those students most in need of additional support. These tasks are all key to leading the instructional program (Institute for Education Leadership, 2012).

Conclusion

It should now be apparent that tech-enabled leadership is more than just a title to ascribe to leaders that use technology on a daily basis. In contrast to tech-savvy leaders that are often early-adopters of the latest technology resources, tech-enabled leaders are skilled at capitalizing on the affordances of technology to facilitate leadership actions that are open, collaborative, and distributed. These attributes can be seen as enhancing a school leader's ability to fulfill the essential leadership actions that have been determined to positively affect student learning. With the assistance of a variety of social media resources, tech-enabled leaders can ensure that the essential leadership actions of setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, and leading the instructional program can take place in a manner that is open, collaborative, and distributed. The benefit of this approach is that open and collaborative leadership actions can serve to increase the number of people that contribute to the school's leadership while also increasing the frequency in which these leadership actions occur. To put it simply, "the more that each [leadership action] is done, the better (Heller and Firestone, 1995, p. 84). Thus, tech-enabled leadership can result in schools that are less prone to the negative consequences of leadership changes and principal departure as the leadership actions that contribute to school success can still be performed by a number of the school's formal and informal leaders. Leadership succession research has noted that the unplanned departure of the school principal is one of the most common reasons why individual schools failed to progress when implementing initiatives intended to increase student achievement (Leithwood, Harris, A, & Hopkins, 2008).

By making it easier for members of the school community to connect and collaborate with each other, tech-enabled leadership offers the opportunity to more effectively distribute key school leadership actions. This is highly desirable as research has indicated that "schools with the highest level of student achievement attribute their success to relatively high levels of influence from all sources of leadership (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 35)." Consequently, using technology to facilitate leadership actions that are open, collaborative, and distributed can serve to bolster organizational resilience by making the organization less susceptible to internal and external disruption (Lengnick-Hall, C. A., Beck, T. E., & Lengnick-Hall, M. L., 2011; Heller and Firestone, 1995) and support the school's ability to respond to the social, political, and economic challenges that confront 21st century educational organizations.

AUTHOR

Dr. Camille Rutherford is an Associate Professor of Education at Brock University. As a former classroom teacher and university administrator her work with teacher candidates, classroom teachers, adult educators and educational leaders explores the use of technology to enhance teaching & learning and to transform leadership.

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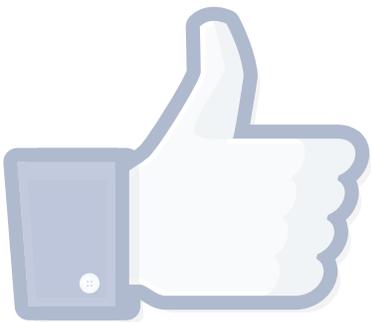
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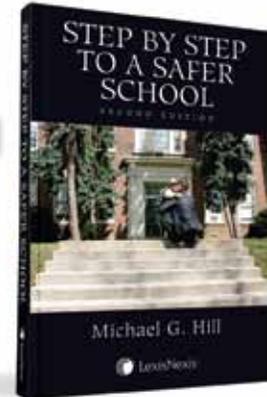


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Changing Landscapes:

The Future of the Principals in Canada

As a philosopher, computer scientist, and one of the premier designers and engineers today, Jaron Lanier worries that the youthful optimism of growing up in the sixties has given way to the cold realism of economic stagnation and social malaise. Instead, in a bold declaration against fatalism he argues “the future should be our theatre. It should be fun and wild, and force us to see everything in our present world anew (Lanier, 2013, p. 349).”

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Cover Story

It is this hopeful (some would say naïve) impulse that led to the launching of an ambitious national study on the future of the principalship in Canada. Initiated in 2012, the project began as a partnership between the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP), to identify the trends and influences that will shape the work of the principal as a school leader in the next twenty years. The purpose of the study is to examine the current conditions of

practice that both limit and enable the aspirational leadership roles of principals in the context of the future forces that will shape public education in Canada over the next two decades.

The study is based on the design framework of an ATA study, *The Future of Teaching in Alberta* (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010), which was undertaken in collaboration with researchers from the University of Calgary. That study, included collaboration with Andy Hargreaves and

Dennis Shirley, co-authors of *The Fourth Way* that provided a comprehensive global perspective to the analysis of the trends shaping teaching and learning in Alberta schools. As *The Future of Teaching* project report concluded, the current forces that will shape teaching in the next two decades (e.g. the increasing complexity of the classroom, growing economic disparity, the rise of 'big data' and accountability, and the ubiquity of technology) will also have profound impacts on the work of teachers and students.

Following the release of this report in the spring of 2011, the Association partnered with CAP in designing the first phase of a research project that would identify the current influences and trends shaping the work of principals across the country as well as the short and long term supports administrators aspired to receive in their future roles.

To provide a broad perspective in the *Future of the Principalship* study, Anna Yashkina, a researcher from OISE, undertook a comprehensive literature review that would form the themes to be explored in the focus groups across the country. The design of the questions and protocols for the cross-Canada focus groups was piloted in early spring of 2012, with the final roll-out of focus groups running to April 2013 which eventually led to over 525 participants from across Canada.

While the focus groups were facilitated and sponsored by individual member organizations of CAP, the lead researcher provided in-service to insure consistency across the country. The focus groups, ranging from 15 to 125 participants and lasting roughly 90 minutes, were supported by a facilitator who outlined the **three goals** of the broader national study objectives to participants:

1. To gather data on participants' perspectives about the future of their work as principals.
2. To provide participants with the experience of sharing their views on the current and long-term societal trends that are influencing and shaping the changing role and work of school principals.
3. To gather input on the sources of support that would enhance the work of school principals in the short and long-term.



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Cover Story

Each focus group worked through a consistent process in completing a participant's workbook as well as drawing on two resources to stimulate reflection: *Changing Landscapes in co-creating a Learning Canada* (a brochure that explores seven trends impacting education in Canada) and a student video accompanying the *Changing Landscapes* document.¹

Current and future forces shaping the work of principals - what does the research say?

Consistent with the study design, two main questions guided the review of the literature:

- i. What external changes influence the work of principals?
- ii. How do those changes influence the work of principals?

To answer the two main questions, a search of recent literature on social and educational changes and principals' role and work was undertaken in the summer, 2011. To insure coherence with Canadian

contexts, only empirical studies conducted in Canada since 2000 were considered. The search utilized both scholarly literature databases (such as ProQuest and ERIC) and government and professional literature databases available on the public websites of Ministries of Education in Canada, principal and teacher associations in Canada, other Canadian and international educational associations. Relevant information that might not be available to the public online was requested from principal and teacher associations.

This thorough and extensive search revealed obvious gaps in the existing literature. There were few relevant studies, and of these, only a small portion were of empirical nature and conducted in Canada. Applying the criteria mentioned above, 22 relevant evidence-based studies² conducted in or after 2000 in Canada were selected. These studies varied greatly in terms of their foci, geographical location, sampling and research method techniques. Despite all these differences, or maybe even thanks to all these differences, these 22 studies provided us with rich data that helped us better understand

recent changes in the principalship and make insightful conclusions that guided further investigation.

Three overall conclusions can be made from the literature review. First, more immediate changes (i.e. educational reforms in school governance, curriculum, assessment, and parental role) are perceived to have more influence on schools and principals than more global changes (i.e. socio-economic, cultural, and demographic changes) do. This finding can be explained by Levin and Riffel's (1998) observation of how people perceive change. The authors state that people in schools, as well as in many other organizations, are mainly inward directed and tend to see larger social forces only as they impinge on daily work, especially where they are seen to create problems.

Second, the literature suggests that as a result of recent educational reforms and social changes in Canada, the job of principals is perceived to have become more demanding, complex and stressful. For example, changes in school regulation have changed the way principals lead their schools by giving them more power but limiting their

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autonomy at the same time. Empowerment of school councils and heightened parent and public expectations of schools have made principals more aware of the school environment and the micro-politics that are continually at play. To add to this mix, increased accountability policies have added pressure to the principal's work. Reduction in human and financial resources has increased the time principals have to spend on clerical or administrative tasks. A dramatic rise in the number of initiatives of the pedagogical nature has resulted in principals' engagement in transformational and instructional leadership practices. Other external influences such as social and demographic changes also lead to more work and stress for principals. All of these influences have contributed to the rise of stress and the diminishment of work-life

balance. Psychiatric disorders (stress, anxiety) now account for 50% of the cases on L(ong) T(erm) D(isability)" (CPCO, 2009, p. 8). The high level of stress that is associated with the principal's job was reported as a barrier to becoming a school administrator in two studies in Ontario (CPCO, 2009; The Learning Partnership, 2008).

Finally, the literature suggests that the principal's role has become more ambiguous and contested as well. Principals are faced with a multitude of tasks every day, which makes it difficult to find time to complete them all. Also, having to take on multiple roles, defining the primary job function becomes problematic for the principal. For example, the tension between managerial and leadership functions becomes evident when school administrators indicate

that they prefer to be more engaged in instructional leadership and perform a role of 'an agent of change' (which is in line with what is currently being promoted by educational policies); but the current conditions of principals' job demand most of their time being spent on tasks of administrative nature.

Another dramatic tension in principals' work occurs around the definition of authority boundaries: while principals are expected to share their power with teachers and parents, they remain ultimately responsible for everything happening at their schools; principals' authority is also undermined by all the directives coming from the top. Finally, considering diverse and sometimes conflicting agendas of various stakeholder groups establishing school priorities contributes to the authority dilemma for principals. Similar challenges (i.e. role ambiguity, decision ambiguity, authority ambiguity, complexity dilemma, direction dilemma, and accountability dilemma) are identified in Castle and Mitchell's (2001) work.

In addition to identifying the changes in the principal's work and the forces that affect those changes, some of the reviewed studies (e.g. ATA, 2009; Castle & Mitchell, 2001; CPCO, 2004, 2009; French, n.d.) also identify supports needed to assist principals in their jobs. Some of the most often cited supports are the following:

- *Access to training/professional development/mentorship in challenging areas such as managing competing agendas, building relationships with multiple stakeholder groups and the media, balancing personal and professional lives, managing scarce resources, dealing with legal issues, dealing with conflict and difficult people;*
- *More opportunities for networking, collaboration, and professional dialogue;*
- *More support in terms of human (consultants, school administration staff) and financial resources;*
- *Clearer direction from the central office; and*
- *Fewer initiatives and more coherent and long-term initiatives.*



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Implications: a declaration against fatalism

Experts in educational change (e.g. Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009) agree that strong school leadership is needed for change to be successful. An oft-cited review of research on school leadership and school effectiveness concludes that among all school-related factors, school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that principals, who are the main source of leadership in schools (Day et al., 2010), have become a centre of attention of policy-makers across Canada. Today, Canada's principals are no longer expected to just perform administrative and managerial functions; they are also viewed as champions of change and innovation and as leaders of teaching and learning. For example, the emphasis on the multiple roles of transformational, instructional, and distributed forms of leadership is evident in recently developed leadership frameworks and performance standards in some provinces (e.g. Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia, Principal Quality Practice model in Alberta, and Ontario Leadership Framework).

With the release of the national study this fall, both the literature review and the analysis of the responses from the 525 participants in the study will make an important contribution to supporting the work of the principal and school leaders in general. One of the early findings of this study is that school administrators greatly appreciate opportunities to see beyond the immediate forces affecting their work. In the 40 focus groups across Canada a common theme was the richness of the opportunity to explore the impact of societal trends on public education among colleagues. As one focus group participant observed, "I attend a lot of meetings and surprisingly few of them see a conversation about learning, never mind the future, breaking out."

While the literature concludes that the job of principal has become more complex, demanding, conflicting, and stressful, the

initial analysis of focus groups is showing that principals remain hopeful advocates for students. The preliminary analysis of the data is signaling that these heightened expectations and multiple roles are making the job of principals more complex and challenging. The final release of the *Future of the Principals in Canada* study will hopefully be a catalyst for deliberation and advocacy in order to help principals co-create their futures and achieve their aspirations as school leaders.

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¹Both resources are available from the authors upon request

²A full list of studies and their brief descriptions will be included in the final national report



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Every book introduces situations encountered by all young players (maybe not going to the Olympics, but kids can dream, right?) and talks about things like teamwork, being a better teammate and dealing with the pressures of tryout and tournaments.

For Grades 3-6, it's about getting kids involved. Thanks to a partnership with Floorball Canada and FloorballPro, Hockey Canada has introduced a 10-lesson curriculum focusing on floorball basics, such as stickhandling, passing, shooting and game play.

Floorball is a fast and exciting game that promotes end-to-end plays with quick transitions and fluid game play. The rules stress the importance of safety and sportsmanship and are designed to limit the chance of injury without decreasing the speed or skill of the game.

The partnership focuses on using floorball as an inclusive gym-based introduction to hockey, removing barriers such as ice-time restrictions and expenses, and equipment costs (the sport does not require athletes to wear any protective equipment; only a T-shirt, shorts and athletic shoes are required).

Most important, the introduction of an elementary school program has allowed Hockey Canada to reach a community of nearly 10,000 schools in every corner of the country, while assisting teachers incorporate floorball into their physical education curriculum.

And finally, there are the high school students. With kids in school for seven or eight hours a day, local arenas sit empty in the eyes of Hockey Canada, this is wasted ice time.

That's where the Hockey Canada Skills Academy program comes in. The program, introduced in the early 2000s, combines education with hockey, giving participants an estimated 400 extra hours of training time

per year, all during school days; this is time that can be spent focusing on individual skill development.

It works in partnership with the local minor hockey associations, which will undoubtedly continue to produce outstanding athletes, and even better Canadians. The Hockey Canada Skills Academy program is a supplement to the minor hockey system and not intended to replace it.

Today, the program now includes more than 100 schools in every province and two of the three territories, impacting thousands of players.

And while it promotes a balance of education and athletics, the outcome is not to develop future professional athletes, or Rhodes scholars. It is to enhance a young player's confidence, individual playing skills, self-esteem and opportunities in both academics and athletics beyond the elementary and high school system.

Hockey is Canada's game, and young players are the future. The goal has been, and must continue to be, how to get them into the game and keep them there, and making hockey part of their everyday lives, particularly in school, is a tremendous step in the right direction.

Hockey Canada has seen fantastic buy-in from schools with all of its programs, and this will need to continue for these programs to grow and prosper, and for hockey in Canada to grow and prosper.



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GRADES 6-12

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GRADES 3-8

Introduce your students to hockey in a non threatening and fun environment. For the 2013-14 school year Hockey Canada is launching, in partnership with Floorball Canada, Floorball: An Introduction to Hockey Physical Education Curriculum.

GRADES K-2

Introduce your students to hockey through reading! Hockey Canada's Mascot has launched his first 4 books geared at young readers. Contact Hockey Canada at Puckster@hockeycanada.ca to receive copies of Puckster's First Hockey Game, Puckster's First Hockey Sweater, Puckster's First Tournament, and Puckster's First Teammate.



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The Role of the Principal

Creating a Culture of Possibility

The role of the principal in creating a culture of learning in the school is becoming an important piece of research on school improvement (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Schlechty, 2009; Slater, 2008). This case study of one new principal provides a rich, deep and intimate portrait of the learning trajectory for this new administrator as he strives to develop a culture of learning in the school. The case study was carried out over the course of his first year as a principal and included three long interviews and researcher observations at the school. The principal's reflections on his work reveal a desire to use his leadership role to cultivate a climate of possibility and hope among the students and faculty in his school.

Context: How can I Be the Change I Want to See?

Robert is a first-year principal in a small secondary school in a lower socio-economic rural community in central British Columbia. He decided early on in his term that he wanted to shift the sense of hopelessness among the students and their parents as well as some of the more senior faculty about the potential of the school to be a place for positive change, growth, and optimism. His goal was to create energy and pride among the students, teachers and the

community and he understood this was an imperative precursor to improving learning opportunities. Enrollment in the school is decreasing and he is faced with needing to develop innovative approaches to scheduling and course offerings. Recognizing the challenges that come with implementing big changes, but also seeing this as an opportunity to reach out to both students and teachers, he began the year with the vision of tapping into passion as a means to increase engagement for learning and the goal of modeling for the school community his own personal professional learning and growth.

The Change Process: "Imagining the Possibilities"

Change is seldom easy, so finding ways to engage others in the change process is an important part of leading. Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) suggest that creating opportunities for teachers to develop capital in three areas—human (talent), social (networks and collaboration), and decision-making—could be an opportunity to transform teaching through developing in teachers a sense of professionalism. Professional teachers aim for excellence in their craft in collaboration with their peers, who serve to challenge and support this growth. Collaborative learning, then, is one aspect of what it means to be a professional teacher. Within this new dynamic, change and growth are a part of the landscape when you work from a professional mindset. As will be described, this new principal was creating opportunities for teachers to develop their professional capital as he reached out to engage them in the change process in the school.

Robert spent the first few weeks preparing for school by connecting with the various teacher leaders in the school. He believed that building relationships was

going to be his biggest priority as a new administrator coming into a building that had seen little staff turnover over the years. He began with several conversations with the leaders of the professional development committee to find out the goals and interests for professional learning among the teachers. When he learned that there was an interest in developing an inquiry model of professional development he quickly harnessed the positive energy and suggested that they combine the faculty interest in inquiry with a university research group's interest in exploring collaborative professional learning. He decided to offer the staff meetings as collaborative time and would find other ways to convey administrative information through different avenues, such as e-mails, newsletters and brief information meetings before the start of school. He explained that there were two reasons for restructuring the staff meetings, "one was to focus on personal professional learning and the other was to move away from the traditional hierarchical leadership model that would have had [my Vice principal] and I always at front and centre. In my mind, this would provide an opening for informal leadership opportunities."

Robert saw the interest in professional learning as a chance to model his own commitment to professional growth and circulated his professional growth plan to all the teachers. Midway through the year, he requested feedback from his teachers on his progress to date. This placed him in a vulnerable position, but since he values lifelong learning he felt it was important to "walk the talk" as a professional learner since he was asking the teachers to join with their colleagues to do the same.

He polled the teachers early on in the year to ask about their teaching interests and to inquire into their passions. He described to them how he hoped to provide opportunities for teachers to engage in their passions as part of their teaching and that he was going to try



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New Possibilities

to tap into these passions as he worked with them to develop new courses and new ways of scheduling their courses. What started as a list of teacher interests turned into a “passion block” in a tentative new schedule where teachers are developing courses for students that tap into both student interest and teacher passion.

The premise behind these initiatives is that teachers and students need to be more deeply engaged in their learning to maximize their learning experiences. He hopes that this engagement will elicit energy and enthusiasm

for teaching and learning and will resonate with discussions he has had with the teachers about “the importance of modeling our own commitment to lifelong learning” for the students.

As part of his exploration into innovative scheduling the principal began a series of field trips to other schools in the province. He used part of his budget for the expenses, such as release time, gas and food and a hotel room for one night for small groups of teachers. He noted how these trips provided the kind of social bonding that is missing from the daily tasks of teaching and enabled small groups of teachers to be exposed to new ideas and then dream of ways that they might create innovative and engaging course offerings for their own students. He sent out invitations to as many teachers as possible and was able to accommodate a large range of teachers by the end of the third trip. The teachers were asked to share their learning and discoveries with others in staff meetings and to continue conversations about the ideas that were sparked on these trips.

By the middle of the second term, Robert reflected that he was beginning to think of his leadership as “possibility-based” leadership. He was trying to create a sense of “what if” among the teachers and to invite them into the conversation and actions around creating a school where student and teacher engagement was the focus for cultivating a learning culture in the school. This role of opening the possibilities for others was not without challenges. He noted that there were still teachers who refused to participate in the collaborative

inquiry learning teams' project, who resisted conversations about change and innovation, and others who balked at his suggestion that they try teaching new courses. He recognized their fear of change, but was adamant that, as a school, they needed to shift to reflect both the changing nature of

learning to incorporate a more personalized and student-centered approach, but also the need to offer quality education to a steadily declining student population. He finds support for his challenges among

a small group of administrator colleagues who meet monthly for a beer and conversation about their work. He feels supported in his role by his vice-principal and many of the teachers on staff who are excited about the possibilities of what they are creating together. He also notes that the support of his family and his involvement in his own interests outside the school is one way of restoring his energy and sustaining his own passion and engagement. He does reflect on the delicate balance between work and maintaining an outside life, but is not sure how he can sustain the balance as the pressures at work mount.

The Take-Away: What Can We Learn from Robert?

The stories from this principal provide important insights into how to support practicing administrators for cultivating the kinds of learning cultures we need for education in the 21st Century:

- Talking to teachers about what they love, live for, and laugh about is essential for getting to know teachers as people and that these relationships are critical for positive change in schools;
- Innovation and change are dynamic and emergent processes, so principals need to include many people in the conversations and create opportunities for teachers to develop a vision that can be shared by all. It isn't always the principal that needs to be the leader.
- Principals need to consistently convey the message that they are promoting: Be the model of what you want to see in your teachers.

“Innovation and change are dynamic and emergent processes, so principals need to include many people in the conversations and create opportunities for teachers to develop a vision that can be shared by all.”

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New Possibilities

Robert's experience raises several questions about the ongoing work to develop professional learning cultures in schools. Research tells us that developing learning communities among teachers is important and that this will create the kind of learning spark needed for improving schools (Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009), but how do we support principals to do the brave and difficult work of crafting learning cultures in schools?

How do principals support teachers who are hesitant to become learners? How do we ensure teacher autonomy for learning and still ensure that school and student learning goals are being met? How do we support principals to engage in the kind of professional learning and collaborative inquiry that we ask of teachers?

As a new principal, Robert could let the demands and challenges of his new position overwhelm him. Instead, he has used his

work as a living laboratory for learning. By investigating the possibilities among and within his staff, he has learned to open a new conversation of possibility and hopefulness among the teachers and the students.

AUTHOR

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Effective Principals: A Focus on Working *Smarter* Not Harder?

Successful school communities are carefully developed over several years, and often by many individuals in leadership roles, with the goal of *student success* being the focal point of everyone's efforts. But how does your own personal touch, as a principal/school leader, make all the difference? Plan with the end in mind, yes. But, in our experience, there are certain essential elements of leadership that nurture the potential for success across everyday aspects of contemporary school life. These elements are: 1) Vision (and, specifically, *personal vision*); 2) Personal/Professional Skills & Abilities; 3) Effective Leadership Skills; 4) Abilities to Promote and Build Cohesive School Communities; and 5) Consistent Monitoring of 'Indicators of Success'.

In preparing this piece, we found ourselves asking the question, "When did it *ever* make sense for the principal to do it all on his/her own?" We believe having a clear sense of vision and working as part of a team offers both teachers and principals critical support in school leadership roles and assists in not only surviving but *thriving* in, "permanent white-water" (an image of school leadership that is so often prevalent today).

Current, critical thinking offers much more to those leaders who choose, and are open to, "working smarter, not harder." We will present five key elements we have found essential to both our work as effective school leaders, and in our work related to the ongoing development of effective school leaders. A brief discussion of each of the key elements is accompanied by **ACTION/REFLECTION** prompts that you might also find helpful in your own work.

1. VISION (PERSONAL VISION)

Vision, a fundamental element of school leadership, is especially important in terms of building capacity to energize both ourselves and others. As a leader, think about **HOW** you will achieve your goals. How do you articulate your own *personal* vision? What activities, and what factors do you see contributing to your personal vision being accomplished?

Explore your responses to the following Action/Reflection prompts. (You might also find it insightful to record responses over time in a journal/sketchbook, and/or in a variety of leadership roles/situations/contexts).

VISION STATEMENTS: AS A LEADER ...

I WANT TO INSPIRE PEOPLE TO....

I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR....

I WANT TO BE A LEADER WHO....

I WANT TO SHARE MY BELIEF(S) THAT....

It is vital to remember that the ways we 'see' ourselves working as leaders, and the ways we are 'seen' by those we work with, often benefit from a 'reality' check. While sharing a common vision has been shown to assist in bringing about necessary organizational change, as well as sustaining and maintaining change (Fullan, 1993), such 'clarity of vision' is not always shared. **Have you, as principal, and your staff checked YOUR vision lately?** You might consider using the activity shown below yourself, as well as in meetings with your teachers (e.g., with grade level teams, divisional teams, departmental leaders), with groups of parents, and perhaps even with student leaders and staff.



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Have You Checked Your Vision Lately?
 adapted from School Team Innovator, NSDC, September, 1996

<p>1. Describe the School and Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do we serve? • What are the characteristics of our students and their families? • What innovative academic programs do we offer? • What unique services do we provide? 	<p>2. Team Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strengths do we bring to the school? • What roles do we represent? • What are our responsibilities?
<p><i>Create a symbol or graphic that represents your vision for our school</i></p> 	
<p>3. Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key goals for the school? • What results can be attributed to the work of the school improvement team? 	<p>4. Inventory of Change Efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes have been initiated in the last three years? • What changes are we currently working on?

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this activity with mixed groups, grade level teams, department teams, or groups of parents. You will need chart paper, masking tape, and markers.

1. Project the instrument for all to see.
2. Hang chart paper on the wall so that each group has a place to write. Begin with question 1.
3. Instruct each group to continue until they have provided responses in all four areas.
4. Ask a representative from each group to present their responses.
5. Reassemble the whole group.
6. Ask a representative from each group to present their responses.
7. Close with these discussion questions: How are our visions similar? Different? Is having a common vision important for our school? Do we need more information before we update our vision? What should we do next?

By promoting discussion of this nature with all the various members of a school community, we have found our school teams more able to discern similarities and differences present (or absent) in the collective 'vision', and eager to discuss the pros and cons of having a 'common' school vision. In our experience, principals are thus able to gain valuable information and rich insights that contribute to generating "Next Steps" in the planning and implementing of future successful school initiatives.

Such discussions may also lead to re-focusing everyone's attention on the current vision of your school building held by you and your staff – as well as in the broader community. For example, consider responses to the following **Action/Reflections**:

- Whether housed in a new or an older building, how is (or 'could') your school become a valued asset to the community, one that they can cherish and participate in during regular school hours, and before/after hours as a community resource center?
- How does the actual school facility, and its design, contribute to building a positive atmosphere for engagement with the community?

Effective Principals

- How do students get involved with the facility so that they take pride in helping to keep it clean, tidy, and well maintained? (For example, “Leave only footprints and take only pictures”, and living in harmony with their community as much as possible?)

As the principal do you regularly confer with caretaking and maintenance staff, and maintain an ‘open-door’ attitude with support staff? (How do you capitalize on the daily information support staff have about needs/uses of the facilities, and innovative ideas they may have for changes and improvements for smoother operations?)

Finally, when students look back in their adult years, what will they say that you as a leader and **all** your school staff did for them to help them learn and grow? What will be the best aspects in their memories? This is where schools, and visionary school leadership, do *not* change!

2. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL SKILLS & ABILITIES

Reasonable expectations, routines, and positive experiences must be established and maintained in an effective school culture where all students and staff can grow. In our experience, it pays to be a fair, firm, kind, and credible leader – but above all, it is the intensity with which you connect that really matters. As principals, it is essential to be articulate in summarizing the achievements of the members of our school community; it is also essential to be willing to be decisive after inviting, accepting, and collating input and advice. Over time, we found an enormously important part of an effective leader’s role is the shaping of collaborative solutions. Combined with knowledge, excitement, and enthusiasm, these are essential characteristics critical to school leaders who are “working smarter”.

Action/Reflections:

- Have you considered using a “Tribes” philosophy to involve all parties in respecting what each has to offer for the good of the whole school?
- Have you considered introducing approaches to promoting understanding, and informative dialogue among staff members around *who* they are actually working *with*? (e.g., the “True Colours” inventory/activities)
- Do you regard input from all ‘stakeholders’ as necessary in meeting the long-term needs of all students? (How do/will you manage this?)
- Do you allow time for individuals and groups in the community to function?
- Have you tried creating new and innovative ways to ‘cover’ classes for staff while they share their specific area of expertise with others?

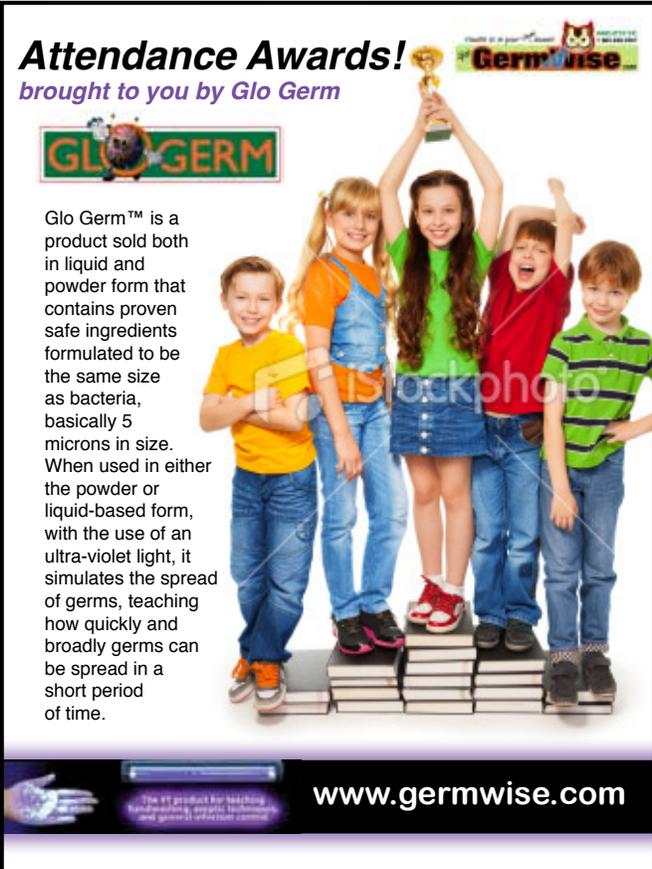
Communication with all stakeholders is critical. But, again, as a principal, it is how meaningful you make those contacts that really counts. For example, try to glean something from each exchange that might contribute to the ‘shared vision’ or ‘school plan’, and publicize/celebrate the source whenever possible (rather than,

unwittingly or otherwise, implying that you are the “all knowing” leader, and source of *all* the great ideas!)

Try one or more of the following strategies to strengthen and facilitate frequent communications with others across your school community:

- A “Friday Flyer” or “Monday Memo” for information items (print and/or electronic)
- Monday morning meetings, sharing information items for the week ahead, led by Teacher Leaders
- Electronic school Newsletters, available on the intra/internet
- Staff meetings include $\frac{3}{4}$ time spent in Professional Development
- Principal and Vice-Principal on recess duty schedule (visibility)
- Coffee clutch socials
- Seasonal after hours events (golf, parties, music, theatre, etc)
- Cover classes so teachers can attend a workshop or pursue one of their goals

While as school leaders it is often all too easy for us to become immersed in ‘operations’, it is also extremely important to keep uppermost in mind the ‘clientele’ for whom we are ultimately responsible: our students. The ways in which a principal/school leader encourages and oversees ways in which students are actively (and consistently) involved in curriculum/programs, demonstrating success in learning throughout the school building, school spirit, school teams... to name but a few, will once again characterize the leader who is working “smarter and not harder”:



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Feature

Students need to learn to take pride in their own accomplishments and the accomplishments of others. Here are some of the ideas we have found worked consistently well over time in our efforts to **include students** in the planning and operation of the whole school and its programs:

- *Inclusion of Student Council Executive, Club Presidents, Activity Chairs, Trip Conveners, and other relevant roles that give importance and opportunity to individuals so that they can be involved in decision-making processes, and practice leadership skills.*
- *Facilitation of opportunities for student role-playing to match world experiences beyond the school context. For example, promote drama, co-curricula clubs, outdoor activities, cooperative education, field trips, meetings, in-class leadership and other experiential learning activities.*
- *Availability of peer support groups through coaching, mentoring, cheerleading, or counseling. These all offer vehicles for students to become proud of their accomplishments (both personal and academic), and proud of their activities in the school community. Time and supervision will be needed to facilitate student involvement, before, during, and after school hours. With your staff, give consideration to how you can make this happen when, for example, constructing timetables and school goals.*
- *Ongoing provision of opportunities to showcase and celebrate accomplishments of individuals so they may take pride in their efforts, and so the school community can also recognize their achievements.*

3. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

“A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops... for a teacher teaches more by what he is than by what he says.”
(Henry B. Adams)

In our experience, as is often the case with all teams, a school team is, realistically, only as strong as its weakest link. Successful, contemporary school leaders must create an atmosphere that energizes learning activities across the whole school and across all aspects of the curriculum. As a leader, you must also be willing and able to go “on stage” and share your personality as well as your knowledge and expertise. School leaders who are also ‘team players’ will actively provide the forum or stage to act out the development of learning for all.

We have found that demonstrated enthusiasm for learning and teaching, combined with a personality that consistently seeks to engage students, staff, parents, and other members of the school community, are essential factors in school leadership success. Knowledge and expertise here is critical. For example, lead teachers, department heads, and other teacher leaders need to be selected carefully for their abilities to be team players and respected leaders, and thus individuals who are willing to share knowledge and expertise with their colleagues.

4. PROMOTING AND BUILDING COHESIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Effective leaders continually seek out and hire teachers who can become major contributors to the school program *as a whole*, not just to their own classroom program. Remember that the team needs many diverse kinds of people... detail people, ‘big picture’ people, worker bees, leaders, followers, academics, artists, musicians, athletes, scientists, but all need to be educators with one common goal: that of supporting student success in their school community. The school leader acts as a coordinator and a cheerleader. You must bring members of your school community together and help them understand, and have empathy for, other members of the team and their goals/vision/strengths and needs. Above all, be prepared to cherish and acknowledge the abilities of individuals in the teams you build around you.

Dynamic climates for teaching and learning where advice and input from others is welcomed and encouraged, most often promote all kinds of potential for student success and the building of a common ‘vision’. As a principal, we believe “working smarter” involves being comfortable with surrounding yourself with (and *utilizing*) the knowledge and expertise of others. In this way, your own leadership will be enriched, relationships will thrive, and many sources of contributions to school teams/committees/working groups may be validated and enhanced.

Action/Reflections:

It may be helpful for principals to reflect on the following in terms of thinking about how, as a school leader, you currently work at *fostering relationships* with others:

- Do I invite others’ ideas and act on them?

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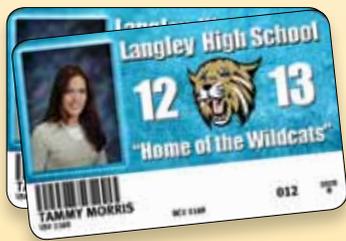


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Effective Principals

- Do I listen more and talk less? Or do I talk more and listen less?
- Do I talk with people rather than at them?
- Do I understand the power of non-verbal messages?
- Do I demonstrate trust? Patience? Empathy? (e.g. for the viewpoints of others?)
- Am I consistent in the ways I treat people?
- Do I care enough to confront constructively?
- Do we *celebrate* successes, meaningfully and often?

5. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

As you and your school community (staff, students, and parents et al), begin to see enactment of some of the indicators of success included in your school plan (and, perhaps, as a result of discussions around a common 'vision'), what kinds of qualitative and quantitative data can be gathered about the success and *collective* efforts of your school community? Consider gathering data on what you have learned about the following (selecting areas most relevant to your specific purposes and direction as a school leader):

- participation of *all* stakeholders?
- happy, active, motivated and engaged school community members?
- staff team involvement in all aspects of planning?
- positive school climate – conducive to both learning and appropriate behaviours?
- effective communication links?
- active, engaged student leaders?
- academic achievements and respectable test scores?
- positive community responses and participation in specific activities?
- feedback received? next steps?

Data on Indicators of Success, when gathered and analyzed, will also enable you and members of your school community to continue setting new goals and directions as a result of the accomplishments indicated in the data.

In conclusion, there is really nothing very new in the ideas shared here. Simply, we want to emphasize the benefits of stepping beyond traditional notions of school leadership, to include serious consideration of personal vision, participatory leadership, and the *ongoing* development of leadership skills through reflective practice - as suggested in ideas threaded throughout the five key elements presented here. Our own vision of developing school leaders is one of highly collaborative leadership styles: i.e., leadership essentially characterized by vision, pragmatics, and the frequent incidence of *shared* decision-making processes. Such leadership first begins with articulating, and actualizing personal/professional vision: What is *your* vision of developing your work as an effective principal who works smarter, not harder?

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The Unacknowledged Role: Principals' and Micropolitics

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Principals have many roles. One of the least acknowledged is their role in navigating the internal politics of their schools, districts, and communities. Scholars refer to this area of organizational life as “micropolitics.” Doing micropolitical work is a challenging, poorly understood, yet vitally important part of what principals do. Principals need to be able to maneuver within this micropolitical arena if they are to do their jobs, much less survive in them. This requires that they understand how school organizations really work and use this knowledge to strategically achieve their goals. Those who are unable or unwilling to engage these activities will find it difficult to do their work.

This article describes micropolitical strategies that principals can employ to accomplish their educational goals. These strategies are based on interviews with 45 principals. These interviews were part of a larger study on leadership and micropolitics. These principals told us that it is important to know their school communities, develop and maintain relationships, be prepared to employ persuasive tactics, work within their organizations, and be strategic. This article describes these strategies.

Knowing the school community

Knowing the school community is important. It is vital for principals to understand school cultures, community dynamics and the wider system idiosyncrasies. But it is not always easy to understand how these things work. This is because organizations have many norms that are not written down in regulations or

policies. As such, they are often taken for granted. Not everyone has a solid grasp of these not-always-visible ways of doing things. Those who do, though, will be better able to figure out what they need to do to promote their goals than those who do not.

A key element in understanding school communities requires that principals come to know, or know about, the people who work in the system—teachers, parents, and central office people—and their values and priorities. Principals who we talked to believed that an important part of their micropolitical work is getting to know “the players.” Do they like to profile themselves? Are they preoccupied with their career paths? Do they like to look good in front of others? Knowing the answers to these and other questions can help principals understand what is important to these individuals, or in the words of one of the principals, “what makes them tick.” This knowledge can help principals figure out what to do. One principal in our study sought to align her

equity goals with school district priorities. She believed that she had a better chance of succeeding with her equity initiatives if she could match her goals with the board’s desire to look good publicly.

Principals in the study spoke about the ways in which they acquired knowledge of their school communities. These included listening, interacting with people, and moving around. One strategy for learning more about the school district and the important and powerful players is to sit on board-wide committees. Another practice is moving between schools and school districts. The diversity among locales can help principals to better understand district dynamics. It is also important to get to know the school community. In order to do this, principals said that they needed to listen to what parents, students, and educators had to say. This involved making themselves available, inviting people to talk, and sending out surveys.

Feature

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

Relationships are vital. They are the key to successfully moving principals' agendas along. The kinds of relationships that administrators have with others will vary considerably, however. They will depend on such things as where the administrators and the others are located in the organization, the kind of power that they are able to wield, the relationships administrators feel comfortable with, and the nature of the issues in question, among other things. Whatever the particulars of the relationships, the people with whom administrators deal will be more likely to be open to various overtures, requests, and new initiatives if they have good working relationships with them.

The principals in our study spoke of establishing relationships based on trust, care, and respect. One principal spoke of treating his staff like a second family. He maintained that he needed to show that he cared about them before he could introduce

his ideas about equity. Another principal spoke about establishing good working relationships with school personal who worked outside of the school. She noted that when you do favours for people, they will remember you when the time comes to ask them for something. Principals also spoke of forging alliances with like-minded others. They felt that it was important to seek out people with similar values because it was easier to promote unpopular policies and initiatives when others also supported them.

Persuading Others

Because some colleagues or community members may not support their views, principals will often find themselves in the position of having to persuade others to go along with their initiatives. As such, they will have to employ various strategies to convince school or community members of the value of particular programs or prompt central office administrators to support a policy initiative or give them much-needed

resources. In our research, principals mentioned a number of such strategies. These included circulating information, trying different kinds of prompting, leading guided discussions, questioning, provoking and employing various arguments.

Principals in the study also provided information to their school communities. Not only did they supply academic articles and student performance data for educators to consider, they also employed stories, videos, and peoples' experiences to get their teachers, parents, and students to buy into their ideas. Principals had a number of strategies for conveying messages to their school communities and central office people. Most preferred to let others reach their own conclusions about the issues that were presented to them. They were careful not to preach, believing that they could get their messages across more effectively by providing people with information in ways that allowed them to come to their own conclusions. They were also careful to use language appropriate for the particular

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contexts of their work. Many found that the most powerful argument for their preferred initiatives was one that emphasized the value for students.

Being Strategic

Principals also talked about other ways in which they put their knowledge of organizations into practice. These strategies go hand in hand with the relationships they had established and their efforts at persuasion. Administrators spoke of how their persistence, planning, experimentation, honesty, patience, aggression, play acting, and quiet advocacy served them as they promoted their equity agendas. However, they knew that they could not use these and other strategies in every situation. Rather, these principals acknowledged that they had to size up situations before they acted on them. One principal maintained that she needed to be selective about the kinds of things she put her efforts into. She thought it best not to go after everything because

she felt that she would easily wear out her welcome in the circles that counted. Another principal considered a number of factors before deciding to act. These included the history of the issue, who was involved at the time, whether she could read the situation, and how much could she ‘push’. She also recognized that there were situations where she needed to pull back.

Most principals learned how to act strategically through their experience. Some were more prepared to learn than others. In this study, it was obvious that the more experienced principals were more tuned into their political environments and had a more acute sense of what to do to get their desired ends. Mary was one of the principals who learned a great deal over the years, most of it from experience. Much of this learning, she maintained, came from her mistakes. She said:

Well, I’ve made a lot of mistakes over the years. And when you’re a risk taker or when you just want to learn, you won’t be stopped. You know, I’ve been hit around the head a lot by systems and people in system positions. And I guess, I’m one of those people, and I hope most of the profession is, where you reflect on that and you figure out ‘What just happened there?’

Working Within the System

Many principals said that in order to promote their agendas, they needed to work “within the system.” Those whose preferred goals that were unpopular with system people, not consistent with system priorities or may challenge current system policies and practices, found that they had greater success when working within accepted system conventions. To get the trust and respect from the central office, they tried as much as possible not to ruffle feathers and to stay on the positive side of people. One way of doing this was to make sure that their paperwork was always submitted on time. Only when they had gained the trust and respect of those to whom they reported, did they feel that they could have any success in broaching topics, like equity, that may not be one of the district’s priorities.

A few principals maintained that they had to go outside of the organization to put

pressure on decision makers. Sometimes this worked, and sometimes it did not. What usually did not work, though, was directly and openly challenging superiors. When principals engaged in these tactics they risked losing any currency that they had with others. Gerald, for example, has not been successful in his efforts to promote his vision or obtain resources at the district level. A very principled individual, he was reluctant to play political games, preferring to follow his conscience and voice his opinion, regardless of the circumstances. His proclivity to speak his mind, however, cost him. He said that over the years he has gradually withdrawn from involvement because he realized that people were not listening to him. In the end, he paid a price for his outspokenness, both in his career and his personal life.

Conclusion

The work of principals is difficult. Understanding a multitude of union contracts, putting into practice district priorities, conforming to provincial policies and mandates, dealing with personnel issues, meeting with parents, knowing the local community, promoting student achievement and well being, and coping with 70-hour work-weeks can be challenging at the best of times. In order to be able to successfully deal with these and the many other challenges they face, principals would do well to acknowledge the political realities of their jobs. This requires finding time to understand their organizations and putting this knowledge to strategic use. Failure to do so can make life in the principal’s office even more difficult than it needs to be.

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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 450 registered dietitians (RD) by the Hershey Center for Health & Nutrition.
3. "British Medical Journal", chocolate consumption and cardiometabolic disorders, 7 studies, involving 114,009 people, studies up to Oct. 2010.