

Willing to Lead

Human Leadership: Developing People



Every child,
every
opportunity



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Written by Brenda Beatty and Philip Riley, Faculty of
Education, Monash University for the Department of
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Foreword

'If relationships improve, schools get better', Michael Fullan

The case stories that make up this publication are written by participants in the Department's Human Leadership: Developing People program.

These are the voices of school leaders who have identified human leadership as an area for growth. In these personal and professional reflections they recount their efforts to sustain their own and others' wellbeing, to develop individual and collective capacity, and to act with courage to address behaviours that adversely impact on a healthy learning environment.

Research tells us that educators who believe in their individual capacity to influence student learning will make the effort required to improve their practice. The Department's investment in developing the human leadership capability of its workforce recognises that our schools require leaders who can influence and sustain the confidence and commitment of those who have the most direct impact on student learning.

These stories provide evidence that this investment is having an impact. Participants are describing how they are better able to communicate high expectations and to support their colleagues to meet these expectations by creating the conditions which enable them to collaborate effectively. They are also demonstrating an increased capacity to develop strong relationships and to engage in the critical conversations essential to effecting school improvement.

The role of school leaders is to create a stimulating and secure environment in which teachers and students feel safe to explore ideas and trial new approaches in order to learn. The Victorian school system, through programs such as this, is providing a secure professional learning environment in which educators are encouraged to expand their knowledge base, and to critically reflect on their leadership practice.

These insights and anecdotes are more than a 'good read'. These stories are a powerful tool for sharing learning with other practitioners – 'teachers teaching teachers' as one participant has described it. Enjoy the learning!



Darrell Fraser
Deputy Secretary
Office for Government School Education

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Case Authors

Teachers and leaders from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) involved in the Human Leadership: Developing People program – organised and conducted in 2007 by Monash University's Program Director, Dr Brenda Beatty, with project managers Ms Carol Brown and Ms Anne Savige, and a delivery team including Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski, Mr Jeremy Hurley, Dr Philip Riley, Associate Professor Len Cairns, Professor Ken Leithwood, Ms Sandra Dean, Professor Andy Hargreaves, Mr Cliff Downey, Dr Andrea Gallant, Dr Angela Lewis and Professor Carl Glickman – examined their professional practice, conducted a Human Leadership: Developing People project, explored further learning through online book study groups over a seven-month period, and concluded the program with a case writing that formed the basis of this publication.

Case authors remain anonymous to protect their confidentiality and that of the people in their stories. We are most grateful for their contributions.

Contributors



Dr Brenda Beatty

Recently awarded a fellowship with the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, Dr Brenda Beatty is designer and director of Monash's highly regarded Master in School Leadership and Human Leadership: Developing People programs, created for DEECD. Born in Canada, Brenda is a doctoral graduate of OISE University of Toronto where she studied with Professor Andy Hargreaves. Her doctoral dissertation *Emotion Matters in Educational Leadership: Examining the Unexamined* won the Thomas B. Greenfield award for best Canadian doctoral dissertation of the year in educational administration. Brenda does keynote speaking, lectures, conducts research and writes about the emotions of leadership, leadership development, school improvement, creating collaborative cultures, organisational change, student sense of connectedness and wellbeing at school and the use of interactive web-based technologies to support the development of professional learning communities. Her work as an international scholar and keynote speaker has been well received in China, Ireland, England, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Italy and throughout Australia. Recent publications include a chapter in Professor Brent Davies' edited volume, *The Essentials of School Leadership* and a book co-authored with Professor Ken Leithwood, *Leading with Teacher Emotions in Mind*.



Dr Philip Riley

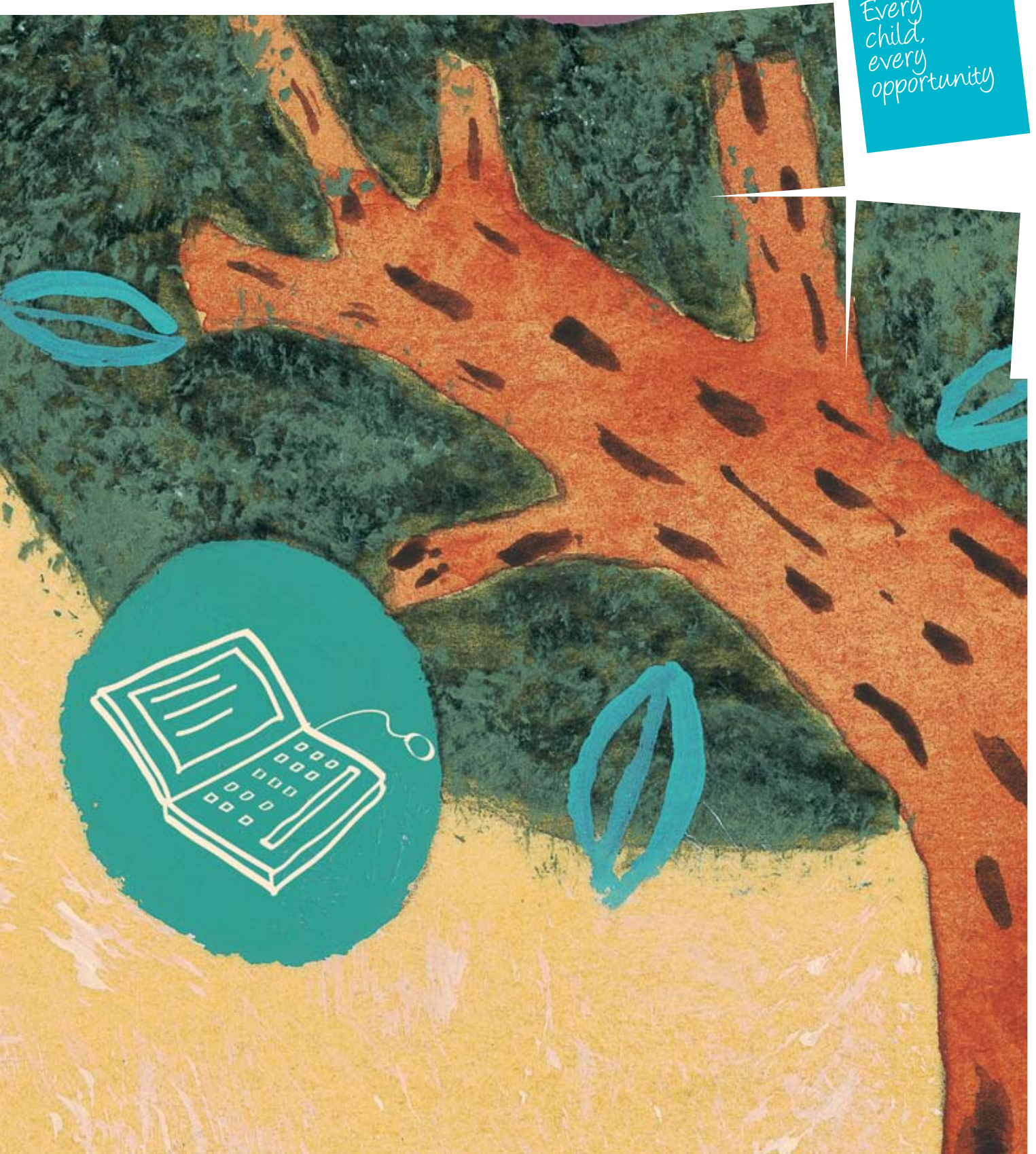
Dr Philip Riley has had a long career in schools, teaching every level from Grade 2 to VCE, and spending the last four years of his school career as deputy principal and acting principal. While continuing to teach full time, Phil trained as a psychologist, believing his teacher training left out or skimmed over important information he needed to perform his role. Phil spent two and a half years at La Trobe University teaching mathematics, educational philosophy, person-centred teaching and counselling skills, holistic education, and psychology, mainly to pre-service primary and secondary teachers. He joined Monash University's Faculty of Education in 2006, teaching in the Master in School Leadership and the Master in Organisational Leadership programs. Phil's PhD research formed the basis of the *Mentoring Matters: Training Mentors for Victorian Government School Leaders* program, delivered by Monash University on behalf of DEECD. He is also involved in the *Leading Professional Learning*, *Leading for Student Learning* and *Human Leadership: Developing People* programs. Phil has presented his work on attachment theory in education at international education and psychology conferences and has been published in handbooks of education and scholarly journals. He also works as a consultant in schools undergoing change processes, experiencing difficulties with HR, classroom discipline, and leadership coaching. He is a registered psychologist.

Chapter One

An Introduction to Developing
Human Leadership

Brenda Beatty

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An Introduction to Developing Human Leadership

Brenda Beatty

...The trickiest part of leadership is inherently this human domain, perhaps as much because it has been neglected for so long as for any other reason.

In Thomas Sergiovanni's (1984) conceptualisation of leadership, human leadership is one of five forces, the others being technical, cultural, symbolic and educational. This human leadership domain or force is acknowledged by the Victorian Government School System's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) as really a dimension of every aspect of leadership.

Thus, whether planning a timetable, or hiring staff members, or collaborating with principal class colleagues, or leading teachers in improving their practice, or guiding children, or collaborating with parents or community and industry partners, human leadership is involved.

An effective leader in human leadership 'demonstrates the ability to foster a safe, purposeful and inclusive learning environment, and a capacity to develop constructive and respectful relationships with staff, students, parents and other stakeholders'. (Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders 2007, p. 6).

It is not until recently that this dimension – the human and humane – became explicit in the discourse of educational leadership or 'educational administration', as it is often called in other countries. Indeed, the trickiest part of leadership is inherently this human domain, perhaps as much because it has been neglected for so long as for any other reason. Ideally, in time, human leadership will become second nature, so that programs like these are no longer needed. In the meantime, we are learning how best to broach this subject and support learning leaders in developing their capabilities in this area.

In this publication we will share some of the learnings that we and our participants have experienced in association with the inaugural offering of the Human Leadership: Developing People program. We hope you enjoy learning along with us as we provide some insights from our 2007 experiences.

Program design

The program has been designed with a transformational learning experience in mind. It commences with an initial residential three-day intensive:

- guest speakers
- discussion time
- group learning and presentations
- book study groups
- Human Leadership: Developing People project development.

Online learning groups

Learning groups were formed during the introductory days. These groups met online in a purpose-built discussion space, designed to support continued collaborative learning with a focus on the text provided for each group. For the purposes of organisation and collaboration, leadership of each group's book study was shared with rotation of the moderator role. On the final day participants returned for a challenging keynote presentation that invited them to collaborate again as they re-examined their practices and adjusted their leadership sights for the future. Each book study group presented a collection of their most valued learnings experienced together in their online discussions.

All participants were provided with a copy of *The Wounded Leader: How Real Leadership Emerges in Times of Crisis* by Richard Ackerman and Pat Maslin-Ostrowski. Pat Maslin-Ostrowski also provided the opening keynote address.

The following is a bibliography of the set of texts provided with those whose authors also presented in the program noted with an asterisk ‘*’:

*Ackerman, R. H. & Maslin-Ostrowski, P. 2002, *The Wounded Leader: How Real Leadership Emerges in Times of Crisis*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Barth, R. S. 2004, *Learning by Heart*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Blase, J. & Blase, J. 2001, *Empowering Teachers: What Successful Principals Do*, (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. 2002, *Reframing the Path to School Leadership: A Guide for Teachers and Principals*, Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

*Dean, S. 2001, *Hearts and Minds: A Public School Miracle*, Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Press.

*Davies, B. (Ed.) 2005, *The Essentials of School Leadership*, Thousand Oaks: Paul Chapman Publishing/Corwin Press.

*Glickman, C. 2003, *Holding Sacred Ground*, San Francisco CA: John Wiley and Sons.

*Glickman, C. D., Ross-Gordon, J. M. & Gordon, S. P. 2004, *Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (6th ed.), Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

*Hargreaves, A. & Fink, D. 2006, *Sustainable Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Roberts, S. & Pruitt, E. 2003, *Schools as Professional Learning Communities*, Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press.

Tracking the impact of the program with participants

Participants who attended and were fully engaged in the program’s elements were very enthusiastic. It was a great example of the old adage that you get out of something what you put into it! Two of the participants from the 2007 program were delighted to make a presentation about their experiences to the 2008 program participants. Some sample participant responses follow:

My understanding of leadership has expanded enormously and my desire to learn more has been awakened. My project is about developing teachers’ classroom teaching capacity – skills I’ve developed in Human Leadership have helped with this. I’ve developed a much wider range of professional relationships with my colleagues at my school by practising Human Leadership skills that came out of the conference.

The program was the best PD I have ever done!

The interactive sessions with the international educators were GREAT! The folder of resources and the books were also very helpful.

I always knew it was important [to have the ability to sustain my own wellbeing] but now feel it is validated.

The study group has worked brilliantly for our group – discussing texts but also how the texts resonate in our leadership lives and challenges.

Our shared stories definitely kept us going. The online stuff led to very worthwhile discussion/evaluation. We rock!

The aspects of the program that have had the most positive impact on me are the:

- importance of self-management and work/life balance
- writing of a project plan that acted as a framework for my goals and targets during the year
- literature and presentation focused on the importance of human leadership
- writing of a case story that allowed me to reflect on my leadership journey this year

The corresponding effects have been:

- ensuring I self-manage and provide myself with time for exercise and rest
- a consistent direction to my decisions and actions throughout the year
- a reaffirmation of my belief in human leadership being the foundation of all other leadership domains
- an opportunity to celebrate the improvement achieved throughout this year.

Gems/nuggets appeared throughout the entire program. I found my ability to draw parallels with aspects of the program and my workplace circumstances provided many worthwhile opportunities to improve aspects of my school's operation... We have made great progress as a result of this program. As far as PD programs go this has been one of the more enjoyable and relevant that I have attended.

Taking the time to read and reflect on the texts has been great. It has motivated me to find new material to read and relate to my own working setting. The dialogue with colleagues in the program has been good and I'm in tune with various principles discussed in the course.

Fantastic interactive presentations.

Human Leadership: Developing People projects

During the intervening months, between the introductory intensive three-day residential and the final day, participants applied their learning in their schools through the implementation of their Human Leadership: Developing People projects. They tracked their own progress, documented it in a progress summary report, and used these notes as a resource for preparing their case stories.

In addition to the case stories – a sampling of which we will share with you in Chapters Two and Four of this book – each participant who received a Certificate of Achievement from DEECD for their work in this program also framed a Human Leadership project proposal, and filed a summary of their progress report. A collection of some of the Human Leadership: Developing People project topics can be found in Appendix 1.

Reference

Sergiovanni, T. J. 1984, '*Leadership and Excellence in Schooling*', *Educational Leadership*, vol. 41, no. 5, pp. 4, 6–13.

Chapter Two

Case Stories and Critical Commentary
Part One

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Case Stories and Critical Commentary

Part One

Learning from case stories

On the final day of the program with support from the delivery team, participants worked with their peers to collaborate on developing their case stories. Of those who completed the program and submitted their case stories some have also provided consent to allow their stories to be published, subject to our scrutiny and subediting of them in order to hold harmless the authors and their colleagues. Here is a sampling of their stories and our responses to them. In the interests of further protecting the anonymity of the writers and the people in their schools, we have not named the authors. We hope that you will enjoy reading their case stories and learning along with our participants and ourselves. We are grateful for their willingness to share their experiences to enhance the learning journey for all of us.

Brenda Beatty

Hang on to your hat: Professional learning with a difference

What was I getting into? A course that suggested some time together for three days, a bit of work that involved reading and making some pertinent comments, meet again for a day and finish! Sounded great! Little did I think that I would then choose to apply for further study for the next couple of years because of this course. I think I should explain what happened to me.

For three days we explored the discussions of modern school leadership from some well-noted educators – Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor Ken Leithwood, Professor Andy Hargreaves, Ms Sandra Dean, Dr Brenda Beatty, Mr Jeremy Hurley, Dr Allie Clemans, Dr Len Cairns, Dr Phil Riley and Mr Cliff Downey. What were the things that I learnt from these people? What did I learn from the group that I was placed into? Just from being there? It sounds like a cliché, but ‘many things’.

Below I will outline details about the speaker, the topic, the thoughts I gained from the speakers and then a possible approach to my project topic. At times I have included some other points that are relevant to me and the school where I am assistant principal.

- From Pat Maslin-Ostrowski, who spoke on ‘Leading with Integrity: The Promise of Creating Space for the Inner Work of Leadership’, I learnt that slow knowledge allows plans and practices to be well thought out, that planning and evaluation can be well supported in the school. Allowed time to develop, the school is able to complete its objectives. Pat also mentioned the fact that professional wounds almost inevitably occur and that they need to be discussed and shared.

Having reflected on this in relation to my school at present, which possesses a very cohesive leadership team, as part of our support for each other we hear and share what has wounded us. This has become a very powerful support measure in our school, but is not typical for all schools unfortunately. A possible idea for my project would be the provision of time and space for adequate discussions/ sharing to take place.

- Jeremy Hurley spoke on ‘Understanding Leadership: Self-Discovery, Wounding and Wellbeing’. He told of the need to look at good leadership and know the direction that that leadership is taking you. Look at personal needs, professional interests and organisational goals. This provided the idea for me to reflect on my personal needs, and my professional and organisational goals. I need to consider whether they are compatible with each other. As part of the Performance and Development Culture Accreditation process that my school recently went through, we identified the need to develop mentors for each staff member, to insist on some early times to leave school, to work for life balance in teachers’ schedules and to make time for visiting other classrooms or schools to see leaders in action in different environments. This would be wonderfully enriching and potentially rewarding for all teachers, particularly our many young teachers, as we are a young developing school with a large graduate component workforce.
- Brenda Beatty spoke on ‘Emotion Matters in Educational Leadership’. The point that Brenda raised for me was that leaders who are emotionally prepared for their own anxieties and deficiencies develop inner strengths to draw upon. Dale Carnegie in his book *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* suggests that to live life to the full, we may need to know its ‘dark places first’ (Carnegie 1948, p. 121). As a possible project topic, I noted that there was a need to provide discussions on leadership that prepare us for difficult or confronting situations so that when the time comes, and it will, we are rehearsed and more emotionally prepared.
- ‘The Leader’s Story: Wounded but Wiser – Emotional Meaning Making’ presented by Brenda Beatty led me to understand that we need to ensure we meet regularly with our mentorees at school, to provide them with a safe place and person with whom to discuss issues and learning they have experienced on their journey as an educator. As part of a project this suggests that we strengthen the mentor program and provide a time for staff discussion.
- When Ken Leithwood spoke to us he was dealing with ‘Leading with Teachers’ Emotions in Mind’. The idea that I took away from his discussion was that I needed to look at ways of building an approach to improving leadership in my school. Also, to work on building community involvement and to discuss with staff our successes. As part of a project, this would mean looking, listening and discussing with staff the ways best to communicate. My thoughts focus on whether direct speech is the only or best way to build our community links and ensure that discussions take place on leadership issues and how we best approach decisions.

- Sandra Dean spoke on ‘From Principle to Practice: The Human Leadership Journey’. She highlighted the need to focus very much on the positive and to celebrate success. To really only focus on the positive. As a project idea, my thoughts became centred on how we can fully celebrate our positive successes so that they are meaningful and relevant.
- ‘Leading for Learning with Adults’ was presented by Allie Clemans. Allie spoke of the need to know your learners. Adults and children learn best when educators begin by getting to know them first. This inspired another project idea: how to put knowing our students better into practice. What can we do to know students more thoroughly? This idea fits very well with our current Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) as we have the goal of ‘knowing your students’ as one of our key targets.
- Paradigms for understanding self and others, presented by the trio of Brenda Beatty, Len Cairns and Phil Riley, provided a number of ideas. Attachment theory was discussed as it starts early in a person’s life. We move children forward and also staff! Consistent failure brings a lessening of self-esteem and self-efficacy. This seems to me a logical outcome of failure and does indeed have important repercussions for classroom planning. Staff members need to have some understanding of attachment theory which will allow them to know their children better. Also, as teachers and leaders, we must ensure that failure is not repeated! Certainly not planned for. The natural follow-on from this idea is obviously that children must experience success regularly thereby improving self-esteem and resilience.

The project idea here follows on from knowing your students better with an understanding of attachment theory to support success planning.

- Andy Hargreaves was one of those people who you could listen to for hours! A very interesting person with many good ideas. He was a valuable contributor to my learning. Andy spoke on the theme of ‘Re-energising Leadership: Sustaining Others, Sustaining Oneself’. He went on to say that we need to understand that energy is finite and needs to be allocated carefully. We must also prepare the way for future leaders if we care to leave a legacy intact for others to build on. This reality is certainly relevant to our new school as we build tradition and culture in our school, not to mention buildings and the landscape. So as a project what can we do to sustain our energy? I believe that we need to plan for effective leadership development – perhaps by rotating our roles every term to ensure that all staff members have some experience for future roles. There are inherent difficulties here but with discussion maybe these can be overcome. At my school there is a strong leadership development program for future leaders led by the region and strongly supported by our school. We selected two young teachers (one has since been promoted to a nearby school) who regularly meet with this group and discussions and visits take place. Within our own school deputy roles have been created to allow a wider range of experience to be shared by our relatively young staff.

- Cliff Downey spoke to us on ‘Leading with the Community: Connecting for Learning Success with a Koori Community’. He emphasised the need to know your community first. On a recent study tour to Perth, our group visited a Koori community school. Again the message was the same: to get any value from the students at this school, you must first get to know and be accepted by the parents of these students. They will then support you. I left wondering, ‘How can we do this back at our school?’ We understand our community better by meeting with the community – whether it is in the schoolyard, around the school, in homes, the shopping centre or by participating in local events.
- Len Cairns and Brenda Beatty spoke of the need ‘to see ourselves as others see us’ with 360-degree feedback, tools for reflection, and becoming emotionally prepared for the pedagogy of discomfort. Increasingly an area for teachers to prepare for, as many evaluations of performance rely on visits to your classroom by others – mentors, peers or leadership. The focus here was clearly to clarify our perceptions of ourselves. To critique others more accurately so that we see ourselves as others see us. A project point is then to ensure that we provide fair and accurate feedback in any evaluation.
- Our final session for the three days focused on the variety of approaches from many different authorities. Each group was allocated a particular area to discuss and so we did. With all the knowledge gained from the wonderful range of speakers we had heard over the previous three days, our project aim was to use at least one of the ideas gained from these speakers back in our schools.

In choosing a project, the many points opened up by the collection of speakers were vast. There were many areas to develop if I wished to but I know that we needed to focus on one key point or the project would become overwhelming, a little bit like the Performance and Development Culture Accreditation process.

My choice of project topics was to 'know the students better' so that teachers would get to understand their students, their interests and their true abilities. We attempted to develop this idea on a number of fronts. First, for student welfare and behavioural issues, I developed a spreadsheet to show each child and to highlight their need. Different colours designated different needs: for example, discipline, urgent calls, DHS/Child Protection and Student Welfare issues. It was then easy to identify different areas of involvement with each student. Many students of course had no highlighted area but may well have been spoken to by grade or level teachers. This process will be developed further next year to show the needs of the students more adequately.

Second, we have been able to gather data on each student in relation to Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) results, teacher judgments, other report measures and online testing. Together these indicate the general range of a child's ability – a very useful set of data for report writing and moderation of results as there are a number of external tests involved. This has been a valuable activity and innovation in our school. In fact the model used by this program is an effective model for other personal development of teacher skills.

Our school is looking at introducing this model for other areas, for example mathematics and information and communication technology. This presents some exciting new possibilities for our school.

Third, we have created a database that tracks children's results through their primary life. The database stores general information about a child, contact numbers, all test results, playground incidents, and a number of other pieces of information. This has been a very useful experience that has enabled the teachers to understand their children better. This fits in well with Allie Clemans' idea of 'leading for learning'.

What has this journey achieved for me? It has rewarded me with a whole new skill set. Some areas I have no doubt I already possessed some level of proficiency in. With reflection, I have been able to develop these areas more fully. Books that once appeared dry, I now find rich and rewarding as my experiences more closely match the understandings from eminent professionals in education. My experiences and knowledge have now caught up with the thinking of these experts. Reflecting on education is something I now find rewarding. This has been a rich journey for me and I eagerly look towards the future of my education and education generally.

Reference

Carnegie, D. 1948, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Adults and children learn best when educators begin by getting to know them first. This inspired another project idea...What can we do to know students more thoroughly?

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This participant's story of being surprised and even transformed by the Human Leadership: Developing People program reflects what can happen when people become fully engaged with the various aspects of this domain. This engagement can certainly be fostered by participating in a formal program designed to promote human leadership development.

A founding principle for sustainable leadership and leader wellbeing is the reintegration of personal needs, professional interests and organisational goals. It is crucial that we reclaim this integrative way of being as it enhances the synergies in our kinds of consciousness. When we actively engage in the rediscovery that these potentially separate and even competing dimensions can complement each other, we are on our way. Ideally, this powerful process becomes part of one's ongoing reflective practice.

By reclaiming the inner emotional (personal) space and positioning it as important and valuable to us as professional leaders of learning, we find it far more natural to confer the same dignity upon others. Relationships flourish in the midst of resulting mutually supportive respectful ways of seeing and being. When this outlook informs our considerations of professional situations and we actively combine personal and professional perspectives with scholarly and organisational perspectives from among the rich resources that are readily available, the world of collaborative professional learning can become both fun and refreshing.

In this case story, it is clear that many of the principles of human leadership have found their way into this leader's plans for practice. The first step, to slow down and become more deeply reflective, was taken to heart and has begun to inform the project-planning process.

Wisely, structural considerations were addressed with the provision of time and place to make real contact and share inner experiences, a powerful way to build understanding, trust and relationships.

The benefits of acknowledging the inevitability of wounding when one is leading change could flow through to this person's school, by creating similar opportunities for colleagues in the Human Leadership: Developing People project being described here. This is leading with a definite difference. This author has quickly made the link between the Human Leadership: Developing People program concepts and the school's potential for a staff mentoring scheme. The work involved in raising consciousness of the growing skill set is a great way to focus in collaboration with project team mates.

Brenda Beatty

You can lead a horse to water but it helps if s/he is thirsty ...

Through the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) our school has a focus on improving student achievement in VCE.

Over the last four years, we have implemented many changes to processes and structures designed to improve the students' work ethic. These measures have had substantial success which is observable on a day-to-day basis and which has been confirmed through improved VCE results in each of the last four years.

However, there is still a long way to go before our goals are reached. We realised that we had gone as far as we could in changing student behaviour at this stage. Our emphasis now needed to be refocused on teachers and their classroom practices.

We began last year by holding meetings with each Year 12 teacher, where available data was analysed and teaching and learning successes and strategies were explored. We've further encouraged and supported the exchange of teaching and learning ideas at Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT) meetings and at Year 12 teachers' meetings. The practice of data-focused, learning-centred conversations has been widely embraced and there are many exciting things happening in Year 12 classrooms as a result.

The obvious next step was to extend the conversations to Year 11 teachers. This is where my Human Leadership: Developing People (HLDP) project came into it. My project involves facilitating meetings involving each of the Year 11 teachers, an assistant principal and myself, where professional dialogue about what goes on in their classroom can be explored.

These meetings, like the ones with Year 12 teachers, have been largely successful. They have provided an opportunity for the teachers to share some of the great things they are doing with their students and to articulate their ideas and receive feedback from experienced staff. The meetings have also demonstrated the importance leaders in our school place on teaching and learning via both the time commitment given to these meetings and the genuine interest in the subject matter discussed at them.

However, the challenging situation that emerged was the number of staff, perhaps a quarter, for whom teaching Year 11 was clearly not a priority. Some of these teachers paid lip service at the meetings but went away to their staff rooms saying they were a waste of time and they weren't changing anything they did. Others were more openly sceptical – simply unwilling to entertain new ideas or ways of teaching their subject. A third attitude I encountered was the workload issue: 'If you want us to develop new curriculum material, give us more time'.

Although the majority of Year 11 teachers enjoyed the discussions, appreciated the feedback and agreed that their work at Year 11 is vitally important, it is hard not to feel disappointed in the reaction of the minority. I suppose it is more than disappointment – it's the powerlessness associated with not knowing how to improve the situation.

My dilemma is whether to concentrate my efforts on supporting those who are willing to try new things, to explore different pedagogies, and accept the fact that there will always be some 'blockers'. Or should I expect everyone to get on board and continue to try to bring this about? I need to apply my learning from the Human Leadership course to achieve some strategies to accomplish this.

The practice of data focused, learning-centred conversations has been widely embraced and there are many exciting things happening in classrooms as a result.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

It is always disappointing when the envisioned level of engagement and enthusiasm doesn't materialise as we seek to lead change in education. Teachers are usually thirsty for the opportunity to talk about their work with kids, but it helps if the professional learning opportunity looks relevant, structured, important and inviting. Clearly these conditions were met for the majority but there is a need to address the minority who remain disengaged. I see that there were definite signs of success in the Year 12 project. So let's examine the evidence as to some of the factors that may have been responsible for the wider engagement there.

To begin with, in the Year 12 project it would seem that there was a school-wide (aka leadership team) commitment to and acknowledgment of the importance of putting some special effort into the VCE results area. Even though the Year 11 project is conceived by this participant to be an extension of this, is the perception shared? The meetings themselves do send a signal through the commitment of time and interest. But what could be missing?

The emphasis on student study habits in the first phase of the Year 12 project yielded some hard data that could be showcased to demonstrate that their efforts had paid off. So they were building from strength and evident success as they turned to the next phase, to focus on teaching practice. This is strategically helpful in terms of the human need to build confidence and a sense of self-efficacy in order to take on more demanding challenges. I wonder if the Year 11 group could also benefit from doing this in two phases.

Human leadership is very much about people locating themselves within their organisation's directions and energy flows. The high-profile VCE results are very public and symbolic. The principal class endorsement of efforts to improve these VCE results by focusing on the Year 12s would likely have gone a long way to providing people with the sense that they were taking part in an important initiative. As well, there would be implications for VCE teachers from the results. They had a vested interest, therefore, from two dimensions of their meaning-making systems: professional and organisational. These two areas of our identity can have a tremendous impact on our personal satisfaction, whether we acknowledge this or not. When our membership in a project within our organisation receives extrinsic affirmation, and our professional prowess in an area of our work that we are intrinsically motivated to do well in is under scrutiny, it isn't hard to become motivated to get involved for our own personal satisfaction.

It might be a good idea to try to compare the mindset for the Year 11 teachers who were invited to participate with that of the Year 12 teachers in that project. What was their sense of the school-wide commitment to the importance of their work with the Year 11s? If unclear, why might this be? Is it likely that any improvement in the VCE results would be attributed to the Year 12 teachers anyway? Is there a status issue involved? Are these Year 11 teachers a completely different group from those who enjoyed successful participation in the Year 12 project?

Perhaps some principal class clarification of the position of this Year 11 project, and endorsement of its value of and appreciation for those who are involved would help. Potentially, the importance could be positioned with a similar profile to that of the Year 12s within the overall school AIP.

Furthermore, I think it is important to take another look at the details of the protocol for the Year 12 teachers to notice some of its strengths:

We began last year by holding meetings with each Year 12 teacher, where available data was analysed and teaching and learning successes and strategies were explored. We've further encouraged and supported the exchange of teaching and learning ideas at Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) meetings and at Year 12 teachers' meetings. The practice of data-focused, learning-centred conversations has been widely embraced and there are many exciting things happening in Year 12 classrooms as a result.

The use of data, presumably on student performance but perhaps also on attendance and behaviour (ideally), especially when considered with teachers' own reflections on their teaching strategies and corresponding student learning successes, provides a nexus or intersection of information and ideas that can take participants beyond discussion and into focused reflection on specific professional strategies. This can feel more satisfying and clearly credible because it is data inspired.

The use of the PLT meetings to encourage and support teachers in exchanging ideas with each other, gives a formal context and set of principles and concepts through which teachers can enjoy collaborating and comparing notes on their practices as they acquire a common language and shared understanding. Learning with peers is among the most powerful modalities for shifting the sense of knowledge authority from ‘out there’ to ‘in here’. This is one of the great strengths of the Victorian Blueprint for Government Schools and its flagship strategies according to a recent case study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2007 which positioned it as a world leader in its development of awareness, shared understandings and use of common language to describe its concepts and frameworks.

The pre-set ‘time and place structure’ of the PLT meetings and the ‘conceptual structure’ of its principles both have an enormous impact on formalising the process and giving it credibility. The recognition that what we are ‘discussing’ matters even more because it is part of a larger centrally mandated scheme of systemic reform is represented in this formality, even if the meetings themselves are fairly informal.

Beyond conversations though, these data-focused learning-centred dialogues began to become embedded in the professional discourse and practices of the Year 12 teachers. Through the cycle of planning, doing, collaboratively reflecting upon, studying and revising their practices together, the culture shifts to one of continuous cooperative inquiry.

Perhaps the absence of the data focus, formal structure, key principles and explicit positioning of the Year 11 project relative to the school-wide push to improve VCE results made these conversations seem to be, well, just conversations. Tangible benefits of participation, structure, and clear outcomes with action and strategic importance need to be apparent. These things, along with leadership encouragement and support based on early signs of success, create some of the human conditions that help to foster the will to get involved and to persevere.

In summary then, and in response to this participant’s concern about where to direct the most energy and in what order, perhaps a place to start is in reflection. Try comparing the Year 12 with the Year 11 processes. It may be that the ideal model is already there, and it just needs to be applied in this new situation.

Perhaps those who are already involved need more public acknowledgment, encouragement and support. Still, some Year 11 teachers may continue to resist becoming too involved. People go through stages of concern when expectations for changes in professional practice are introduced. It would be worth reviewing the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) to get a sense of where the individuals are positioned along that continuum.

Even if you optimise the conditions for success, it is important to respect individual differences in readiness to engage in professional self-critique which can be threatening and emotionally daunting. Sometimes a mentoring system can help to support individuals to find a safe and satisfying entry point. Fundamentally, human leadership works, one relationship at a time, which is a good thing to keep in mind when we are leading change.

Brenda Beatty

Anderson, S. E. 1997, ‘*Understanding Teacher Change: Revisiting the Concerns Based Adoption Model*’, *Curriculum Inquiry*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 331–67.

How do I get all the ‘expert’ staff to take an active role in mentoring new and less experienced staff?

Making mentoring matter

I work in an outer suburban primary school with approximately 500 children. The school is in a largely safe and peaceful community, though some parents are economically challenged. The staff profile is typical of the region with a very small number of teachers in the 10 to 15 year range of experience, and an increasingly large proportion of graduates and teachers approaching retirement. There are many aspects of the school to celebrate:

- Student achievement data indicates that there is a steady improvement in academic results e.g. Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) results on state mean or above.
- Parent opinion survey shows an overall positive trend and there is an increase in the rate of response of surveys.
- Staff opinion survey indicates teachers see the leadership team as supportive. Other positives are role clarity and opportunities for professional interaction.
- Student opinion survey results for ‘attitudes to schooling’ point to a ‘healthy state of affairs’. Student safety is higher than the state mean. Students feel that other students are not as disruptive. Student motivation, learning and learning confidence have all increased.

The dilemma

However, I am facing a dilemma. How do I get all the ‘expert’ staff to take an active role in mentoring new and less experienced staff?

My role is to assist in facilitating this dimension, that is, to work with the more experienced group and to assist them in their role as mentors.

The dilemma I face is that I am responsible for leading the change, but the ‘expert’ teachers are fully absorbed with classroom teaching roles and are unsure of how to mentor their new mentorees. Fortunately a lot of the ground work was done for me when the leadership team initiated a mentoring program at the beginning of the year. Two consultants were employed to lead the change and a mentoring program was set up.

The case

I see this as a case of someone (who is relatively new to the school in comparison to some teachers who have been at the school for at least 15 years) trying to lead the change and sometimes feeling powerless. ‘I went from being one of the team, getting support and having a sense of belonging ...’ (Maslin-Ostrowski 2007) to feeling slightly isolated by certain situations. I had a sense of vulnerability and fear of leading – it was so easy to remain ‘part of the group’. There was one person who tended to sabotage any discussion and generally influenced the tone of all meetings in the past. The specialist team had never been a cohesive team; however, for the first time since the implementation of the mentoring program, wherein everyone had to be involved, this person realised that they had to change as they had to interact with another person, their mentoree! The members of the specialist learning team (all mentors) were unsure of their role, and needed to work on a project, and this is how I came to lead it. This is a case that calls for human leadership – developing people by developing collaborative reflective relationships for learning together and supporting each other.

Relevant aspects of the Human Leadership program learnings

In my recent experiences as a participant in the Department's Human Leadership: Developing People program, I learned from:

Dr Brenda Beatty – that 'high trust among adults in schools was positively correlated with top quartile schools for student academic performance' (Bryk & Schneider 2002). I feel we are lucky as a staff at our school, as on the whole we do treat each other as professionals and there is respect and trust as professionals. The culture of the adults is important to student achievement. Our students have indicated this in the Attitudes to School survey.

Dr Pat Maslin-Ostrowski – that 'in spite of my rather strong and confident exterior ... I am sensitive inside just like everyone else'. I found myself a couple of times feeling vulnerable during meetings and, after discussion with another leader I could trust, that I probably focused too much on the person who negatively impacted the tone of the meetings and needed to listen to all the others on the team. I discovered that it was really that person who needed the most help with mentoring, and I just focused on my aim and that was to guide the team. I also shared chapters in the book, *Schools as Professional Learning Communities*, (Roberts & Pruitt 2003) with the team and found this person related well to the readings. In this case I learned to trust my feelings.

Professor Keith Leithwood – that the culture of the school matters. When there are clear goals for judging performance, role clarity, a safe school environment and high expectations for students, then it's more likely there will be higher student progress and higher staff morale.

School structures – Time to allow for both preparation and collaboration. In a primary school we have plenty of resources but we are time poor to use them.

Setting directions – Fostering the acceptance of group goals, for example, our Specialist Professional Learning team goal of finding out about the role of the mentor as their project.

Professor Len Cairns – that teacher efficacy (confidence in self as a teacher) is linked to student achievement.

Dr Phil Riley – who spoke about understanding 'difficult' people, and that we tend to focus on conflict and how we respond to conflict. This was very useful. There are particular skills needed to deal with people we are having difficulties with and it is important to understand that the behaviours belong to the person, and not to you. Try not to react by feeling too sensitive and emotional and learn to find out what the problem is with the person and what they want to achieve. Ask open questions, attack the problem and not the person. Learn to listen actively and make a conscious effort to really hear the person's words and needs. And especially stop thinking about it too much! Don't take it home!

How the selected elements relate to the case

At the beginning of the year, we worked on setting up a mentoring program. All members of staff were included in the induction, including senior staff. The professional learning session was led by two consultants in the area of 'building teams for school improvement', and teachers were led through the initial stages of the mentoring process. Once the mentoring process began, time was allocated for all staff to meet with their mentors/mentorees and set goals.

Having read the program materials about the power of collaborative reflection in professional learning, and having participated in my book study group with this Human Leadership program, I was given direction on how to deal with the 'expert' teachers who acted as mentors and I tried to help them to help their mentorees. Challenges still exist as some people take a little longer than others to deal with their new role as mentors.

I also understand that real leadership is about being courageous and understanding oneself.

Understanding the human leadership dimension

It seemed to me that the human dimension of this situation involved the need to build the sense of self-efficacy in certain teachers so as to give them the confidence to mentor their mentorees.

Taking the first steps, I initiated meetings on a regular basis and we:

- shared information about issues regarding mentoring and mentorees
- documented discussions and reviewed them at each meeting (there were at least two per term)
- shared readings
- listened to teachers on the specialist team provide readings to share
- experienced opportunities for classroom visits (time release was provided for mentors and mentorees to visit one another in their classrooms)
- watched a DVD on reflective practices.

In the DVD exercise, I asked the specialist team to view a number of scenarios that demonstrated reflective practices and to comment on what the mentors and mentorees said and how the mentors used reflective questioning techniques.

I noted who did the most reflecting, observed body language, and whether questions were supportive and challenging without being threatening. What were the barriers to supportive reflective relationships?

All mentors were given a DVD of the scenarios to watch before the meeting. During the meeting, small groups viewed a particular scenario and shared their findings with the rest of the group. Each group had leading questions related to their scenario. The findings were documented and given to all members of the group at the next meeting to put in their mentor folder.

Further steps

SWOT analysis – feedback from the mentors

Strengths – what are we already doing well?

- exchanging ideas with each other
- allowing opportunity to meet with mentors
- positive approach to mentoring.

Weaknesses – what do we need to do better?

- keep mentor buddy system in line with confidentiality
- learning goal focus could be similar
- have more professional readings
- establish how to go further
- establish how many goals to be set after achieving the first.

Opportunities – what can help us to make it happen?

- buddy grades mentor/mentoree
- learn with another school that has been involved and have some of their staff members come and visit
- provide feedback and question professional learning
- set clear goals together and establish a time frame for the year
- offer the opportunity for other interested staff to have a mentor to help with their own career paths.

Threats – what could stop us from making it happen?

- not completing professional reading
- lack of time
- apathy
- lack of common understanding
- betrayal of confidences
- imbalance of mentors and mentorees in the future
- staff changes.

Gather data and review it together: Staff Mentoring program – Evaluation survey

All mentors and mentorees were surveyed regarding the mentoring program. We are considering the survey findings together in order to learn more about what we need to do to improve.

Overall, based on the survey, the program has had a positive start and the mentors have seen it as a positive experience. However, although time was allotted for mentors and mentorees to gain access to each other, it would seem that overall these times were underutilised.

Continuing challenges and personal dilemmas

Next year we will focus the professional learning on the mentors and look at further strengthening our growing collaborative culture through practice in reflective questioning and giving feedback. For mentorees, we should probably give them a list of mentors' expertise in certain learning areas to access when choosing a mentor.

Impact of the HLDP program

I would like to continue my association with the members of the book study group. One thing I learned from the process is that 'adult learners are more ready to learn if they have a practical use for the knowledge and think it will benefit them in real life' (Roberts & Pruitt 2003). Some of the mentors were enthusiastic from the beginning with their new role whereas others were less so as they were taken out of their 'privatised' comfort zone. Still, the latter group had no choice but to share their expertise with another person which prompted a change in attitude and actions.

Conclusion

The case story was a great idea for reflection. In all, at our school, while we may be only part of the way there, we have created a firm foundation for future learning together. The principal and assistant principal continue to be very supportive and encouraging, and the expert teachers are seeing the benefits in sharing their wealth of experience with their mentorees. I also learned about myself and that it is important to take time with things. I now recognise my preferred learning style and my belief in trusting my intuition. I also learned to speak to others about my problems and to enlist the support of another person – shared leadership.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case story helps us see some key learnings that have made a real difference to this leader's experiences in addressing a dilemma: 'How do I get all the "expert" staff to take an active role in mentoring new and less experienced staff?'

In evidence is the dedication of this leader to engage fully in the learning opportunities provided in the program and the application of these learnings in this leadership challenge: (a) taking stock of the relevant ideas from each speaker in the introductory intensive

days and applying them; (b) being fully involved in the book study group and sharing relevant readings with colleagues to good effect; (c) engaging in reflective practice about the inner experience of leadership including emotional meaning making about leaders predictably feeling vulnerable and newly separated, and realising that feelings evoked by others' behaviours can cause inner turmoil; (d) seeking support for yourself; and (e) shifting the focus to others' needs by providing learning opportunities in

answer to predictable resistance when people are asked to move beyond their comfort zones into roles for which they feel unprepared. Finally the author clearly values and practises professional reflection, which is in evidence from this excellently presented case story. This leader has clearly made significant progress along DEECD's Human Leadership developmental continuum. For a program designer, this is encouraging feedback!

Brenda Beatty

Personality clashes: Working through instead of stepping around

At my school, there is a long history of personal conflicts which have been allowed to continue into the present; some are minor, petty, personal, low key, and others are quite significant in their effect on the whole staff. There is a climate of resignation to personality differences and this has a daily impact on our staff and on our culture. Issues that occurred many years ago continue to have a detrimental impact and are referred to as if they were recent events. There is real reluctance to let things go and allow them to rest.

This subterranean current of discontent, resentment, suspicion and secret rebellion by some staff against others is apparent in our staff survey data and in the undercurrents between some staff members. Recently, an issue concerning staff members who continued to break policy regarding certain behaviours, something which has reared its ugly head several times before, arose once more (despite previous apparent resolutions). The issue was raised and then discussed through appropriate channels within the school and it became clear that the issue needed to be dealt with – once and for all.

When the issue was initially raised, my thoughts were ones of dismay and apprehension at having to deal with it and also suspicion as to the intentions of the staff member who broached the subject. At the same time, I also believed raising the issue to be quite justified having had concerns myself about the matter in the past. I was also very conscious that I needed to respond, and that the way I dealt with the situation was going to be closely observed. I was quite honest with the person who broached the matter with

me, and said that this was a difficult and sensitive issue, and that I needed to take some time to think about how best to respond so that the outcome would be one that meant that the issue would be sensitively but finally resolved.

I did my research, checked on the policies, and took counsel from my principal colleagues about how they have responded or would respond to similar situations.

Covey speaks of the important habit of ‘thinking win/win’, where there is clear commitment to finding a solution that satisfies all stakeholders. With this in mind in seeking to find a resolution, I approached the group taking part in the activity in question and asked them to think about a solution. I spoke of the policy compliance that we have to follow so that they might consider this in addressing the activity that was causing the concern. The immediate response from several individuals was seeking to know who had raised the issue, and a conviction that the issue had been raised as a way of ‘getting back’ or retaliating for past events. My response was that it really didn’t matter who had raised the issue, that it was a clear-cut issue governed by clear policies.

After consultation, I decided to present the issue to the whole staff during a briefing and also in our weekly bulletin, raising the concern and making people aware of the regulations governing the situation. Criteria for a solution were established and ideas were called for. Support for a change to the existing situation came from many quarters and there seemed to be a sense of relief that the issue was being publicly and openly discussed; there was also confusion about why the situation had been permitted to continue (in past attempts to resolve the matter).

I touched base with staff members who had been engaging in the activity and the level of resentment over the issue was astounding. The sense of outrage against the staff member that each of the group perceived had voiced the concern was alarming and did not bode well for finding an amicable solution which would be adopted and supported by all. The aggressive comments I received when I checked with the involved staff about possible solutions were also confronting, not to mention being given the ‘cold shoulder’ at times; most worrying was the continuing of the activity, despite the clear message that the activity could not continue.

A number of staff members came to see me confidentially to say that some staff had continued the activity and that I needed to speak with those staff. While I agree that people defying the clear message that had been given needed to be spoken with, it is symptomatic of our school that having difficult conversations is perceived as being the realm of the principal team only, that no one else has the responsibility to say anything. To take action would be working through rather than stepping around the problem, as had been the past pattern.

It was clear to me that I needed to speak with the staff involved and after a sleepless night working out what to say, I knew I needed to do this in a way that was not perceived as my ‘telling them off’ (despite having being told by other staff that I needed to do just that!). Still the problem persisted, despite some of the individuals having agreed that there needed to be a change. I said to them quite frankly that they were putting me in a very difficult situation.

I made it clear that I was trying to engage all involved to find a solution that met the needs of all parties, but their going against the clear message that had been given was not acceptable. Some of the staff in question would not accept a student behaving in this way, and yet were doing what they had been asked not to themselves (I chose not to take the path of commenting that they were opening themselves to criticism or disciplinary actions).

I met with real opposition from the group and particularly from one senior person, who told me that no one was going to tell them what to do and this situation wouldn't have arisen if our principal had been there. Continuing with that conversation with others present was not wise in my opinion and I filed it away as one I needed to return to with that person when there was no audience present. I did that, choosing a time where I felt we would not be interrupted and broached the subject once more. As with others, the response was all about the history of conflict between people rather than the fact that the current practice was going against very clear guidelines. I articulated that I felt hurt by the level of resentment and opposition levelled at me and that I was seeking to find a solution that would satisfy on many levels and that not responding to this situation was not a choice for me. The issue had been raised and it was important that I deal with it.

I really struggle with people choosing what they will or will not follow: while I never advocate threatening people with disciplinary action, do we as a profession not recognise that we have guidelines that are not negotiable? It is not the first time in our school that staff members have openly chosen to go against a direction – in fact it was referred to quite openly in our reviewer's feedback. Depending on the person, the response can be very different: two staff members could make the same request and get very different reactions, based on liking or having respect for/history with the instigator.

What is it about our workplace (schools in general or just ours?) that makes people feel comfortable with thinking that because they don't agree or they don't like the person asking/directing, they can choose to do otherwise? Do staff members in workplaces other than schools choose to behave in similar ways or is there a greater emphasis in other sectors on directly dealing with such issues and making it clear that acting professionally is expected?

Another vital component of my leadership that I have been thinking deeply and reading about is courage and accountability. Building relationships based on important values is not always easy and having high expectations of staff means that at times, there will be the need to have difficult conversations. Such conversations are challenging and possibly confronting, but entirely necessary for a safe, purposeful and inclusive environment in which learning continues to be the focus. Feedback from our review has been that many staff members feel that at times, those conversations have not happened when they were very necessary.

In Todd Whitaker's text, *What Great Principals Do Differently: 15 Things that Matter Most*, he writes 'that effective principals can and should instil their values and beliefs at the heart of the school [and] one hallmark of effective leadership is what they do when not everyone shares their belief'.

It is the strength of the existing relationships and the way in which such conversations are handled that determines the outcomes: a willingness to broach issues of culture is a sign of the emotional wisdom and intelligence and professionalism of a leader. I am not completely comfortable with the solution we have reached but there has been a change in behaviour and an alternative approach taken that has alleviated the need for further intervention. What I am very comfortable with and proud of myself over has been my courage and my willingness to meet a difficult challenge and to have difficult conversations openly. I am pleased that I have been able to use the integrity of existing relationships to accomplish this. The Human Leadership program is all about preparing leaders to face up to and handle these kinds of difficult conversations as professionally and sensitively as possible.

There seemed to be a sense of relief that the issue was being publicly and openly discussed...

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This is a very sticky-wicket situation. The existing cultural tradition of leadership avoiding having the difficult conversations sets an expectation that defiance of directions is okay. As this author points out, this kind of behaviour wouldn't be tolerated in students. So how does this situation evolve? Having the difficult conversations is, well, difficult, unpleasant, uncomfortable, even frightening, especially if a leader hasn't sorted the importance of symbolic leadership in their dealings with others. When a leader ducks the issues, it sends an important message: it doesn't really matter if you do what you know you should.

Whatever the offending behaviour here, if such a message is interpreted to extend to stated expectations regarding teaching practices, you can see where students can be the real losers.

This author, in an acting role, took charge of an issue that had needed to be addressed for a very long time. Furthermore, by being reflective, planning carefully, making sure communication with the key people occurred in private and with some offering of disclosure of the leader's own experience of being defied, a negotiated change occurred. I believe that this resolution from an acting school leader position is a real accomplishment and a sign of human leadership in action.

Human leadership is about making a difference by taking into consideration individuals and their particular perspectives, and then finding the courage to have the difficult conversations with respect, by being present with the other person. Todd Whitaker's text is a great source, and this author took its lessons to heart. While there may have been a sleepless night or two, the care that went into taking stock of the principles, values and practices that matter, generated a solution that saw behaviour change. Difficult conversations do indeed call for courage and for being professional and sensitive at the same time. Well done!

Brenda Beatty

The times they are a-changin'

When I first came to the college we had an enrolment of approximately 1000 students in a semi rural area with many students coming from families that had resided in the district for long periods. The school had strong links with these families and a significant number of teachers had taught at the college for more than 10 years, which reflected its reputation as a 'good place to teach'. The college had very little cultural diversity and was considered to be an 'academic' local secondary college.

In a relatively short space of time due to significant growth (the area becoming among the fastest growing in Australia), things changed. The socio-economic mix altered dramatically as the area rapidly developed into a suburb that offered cheap affordable housing. The college now has more than 450 families who receive an education maintenance allowance, an increasing enrolment and is still growing. The college has also become much more culturally diverse.

These changes have resulted in many challenges for the college, the most significant being the large number of students who present serious behaviour problems. The difficulties associated with the behaviour of the students have been having a detrimental impact on student learning and staff wellbeing. The staff opinion survey data clearly indicates that student misbehaviour is the area of greatest concern and the area in which we rated most poorly. The trend for the areas of student misbehaviour and classroom misbehaviour has worsened over a period of years. Student survey data supports the views held by staff.

Staff members say that a disproportionate amount of their teaching time is being spent on trying to discipline students and the students who are keen to learn are being disadvantaged as a result. Staff members also indicate that they do not receive appropriate support from the principal class and that we have limited understanding of what they have to tolerate daily in their classrooms.

Many staff members seem to have developed a siege mentality and are reluctant to get involved with issues that do not directly involve them. They turn a blind eye to things that happen in the schoolyard, hallways, and so on, only dealing with what directly affects them, resulting in the sense that there is little overall support for dealing with the issues through a united front. Support remains a contentious issue from the perspectives of both teachers and the principal class.

We have attempted to deal with this issue over recent years by many of the traditional means with very limited success. We have:

- held staff forums to seek feedback from staff and have enacted many of their suggestions
- revised our Code of Conduct and School Rules
- held repeated assemblies with students
- strengthened our wellbeing team by adding additional staff e.g. social worker
- had a blitz and zero tolerance approach to specific behaviours
- implemented anti-bullying programs into the curriculum

- developed a culturally specific group
- developed links with the local community and run a variety of parenting workshops
- significantly modified our curriculum and teaching approach at Year 9 to try and improve the level of engagement.

Some of these initiatives have resulted in some short-term gains. However, we have had difficulty maintaining any gains we have made. My dilemma is how to rebuild the staff confidence in the Principal Class Officer (PCO) team and get staff supporting each other.

My Human Leadership project has involved taking a case management approach with our most difficult students. This approach has resulted in some improvements, but there is so much more to do... any feedback would be greatly appreciated.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case story author sees clearly one of the key human leadership issues that is at hand: 'how to rebuild the staff confidence in the PCO team and get staff supporting each other'. This is certainly an appropriate place to direct important energies.

It would also seem that the relatively recent shift in demographics has left staff reeling from the dissonance between the old days and current needs of students, parents, and even themselves. The 'siege mentality' that this leader sees as responsible for the divesting of shared responsibility for staying active in the yard, hallways and so on, is a dangerous situation. I mean this literally. While in Texas I had occasion to learn about a situation in which the general chaos and wild behaviour in the halls contributed directly to a student's death. Screams for help were ignored by teachers who were only a few metres away in their offices. A student was crying out for help as her boyfriend wielded a knife and stabbed her repeatedly. I asked myself 'How could this happen?' By reviewing the situation with one of the teachers present at the time, one of those just a few metres away, we came to appreciate that it was the unaddressed wildness in the halls that had made it acceptable and even customary for teachers simply to keep their heads down and adopt a habit of ignoring students who were raising their voices and behaving wildly. This teacher told me that it had become impossible to decipher when the noise meant nothing and when it meant danger or in this case, a desperate cry for help.

This case story describes a situation that calls for an intervention, one that addresses teachers' concerns that they cannot rely on the professional support from the principal class, and one that opens the door to a whole new sense of shared responsibility for the safety and security of the students and themselves. Correspondingly, the principal class has to address its own needs for support. Only through the rededication of consistent effort and action that demonstrates that the whole adult group is working together with each other and with the students, to support the reclaiming of this school's hallways and classrooms for the safety and learning conditions of all concerned, is this likely to change.

Clearly the problem has not been ignored. The list of things this school has tried suggests that the behaviour issue is well and truly on the agenda. But are human leadership principles and practices being employed? If we examine the level 1 profile on page 6 of The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders we see that the entry level, level 1, involves the adherence to legal requirements that support a just and secure environment. These are the minimum requirements. In this same level's description there is the notion of addressing the impact of student diversity and establishing processes to identify students' needs. These things are arguably inherent in several of this school's already tried approaches, including the creation of a culturally specific group. However, does this school need more cultural separateness or more shared school culture togetherness? Perhaps both.

The overarching wellbeing issue (also part of level 1) is on the agenda, but has apparently been addressed by hiring a social worker. I am left wondering, is wellbeing everybody's business at this school? Is the wellbeing of the professional staff also being considered along with that of the students? As the levels proceed along the continuum we notice that ideally (as in level 4), there is a collective responsibility for maintaining a just and secure environment. Monitoring progress on initiatives with specific measures and shared analysis of the data, their results and implications, could enhance this school's readiness to know what's working and what isn't and why. Issues of classroom management are addressed effectively by Associate Professor Ray Lewis at La Trobe University, Bundoora, a well-respected expert in the field. His work with our own Dr Philip Riley is making a significant impact, especially in situations where initial teacher behaviour changes don't seem to last.

The engagement of the whole school community is inherent in the highest level profiles of human leadership. I would be keen to learn what anti-bullying programs have been 'integrated into the curriculum'. I remain inclined to believe that a comprehensive whole-school approach to developing respectful and learning-focused relationships at all levels within the school and its community might be the way to go. There are lots of programs, but if they are not part of a whole-school community approach, they can't effect whole-school community change. Culture change seems to be what's needed here. I can recommend a few whole-school approaches.

One that involves the community in reinventing itself and becoming a dynamic respectful learning community is the Together We Light the Way program. A whole-school approach to bullying is the Olweus model. However, if what's going on at home is coming to school, having a parenting focus is a great idea. As part of an integrated whole-school community initiative this could work even more effectively. It certainly did for Sandra Dean as our participants learned in the program and some of our leaders studied in her book *Hearts and Minds*.

Systemic change requires systemic thinking, strategic communication, collaborative development and shared commitment to action plans. I recommend that this leadership team seek and receive some additional outside help to address this situation in as timely a manner as possible.

Brenda Beatty

Leading by learning: Getting into the performance and development bandwidth

Setting the scene

Our school decided to seek Performance and Development Culture Accreditation in 2007. Providing leadership in this area became one of my priorities. The accreditation process relies on staff beliefs that we have a performance and development culture, provide multiple sources of feedback, have individual performance plans, provide quality professional development and have induction for new teachers to the school. Induction had been openly criticised by graduate teachers in the past and was the most obvious area in need of improvement, and mentoring in the school was informal.

The dilemma

My dilemma was twofold: first, as a new leader, I [and all staff including leadership] knew little of accreditation, its elements and requirements. As I was new to leadership, the importance of achievement in this area was a visible challenge. Second, my knowledge and understanding of the induction processes were that they were only adequate for certain groups of teachers. There was little formal mentoring occurring. There was an absence of a recognised process and a lack of supporting documentation.

It seemed important to gain staff acknowledgement of the positive processes already in place so that we could demonstrate that we had a solid base to build on, while acknowledging former negative feelings. It was expected that it would be difficult to get a mind shift with some staff to look at the present and future, rather than their past experiences with induction.

The case

It was obvious that I had to develop myself and manage the timeline of all aspects of accreditation. I had to gain a greater depth of knowledge of a Performance and Development culture and specifically, induction and mentoring programs. Connection with other schools and professionals assisted in directing my thinking, growth and approach.

I also needed to use emotional awareness to take on board the strong feelings expressed by a number of staff and show that leadership would demonstrate consistency between words and actions. Developing a Performance and Development culture is about building collegial relationships and improving communication processes. It was clear that developing individual capacity through induction and mentoring could, in turn, develop collective capacity. But we would have to achieve this together.

Relevant aspects of the Human Leadership program learnings

Symbolic: To gain a broad understanding and to set a direction, I was committed to developing my knowledge and understanding of what accreditation was, a great deal of literature being available online. This symbolised my own willingness to learn, and would provide a model for staff.

I contacted a local accredited school to gain further knowledge. I also attended Professional Development from a leading school in performance and development, and set up a Curriculum Day utilising a professional (both in knowledge and his ability to communicate) to enable staff to get on board the accreditation journey.

Human: It was necessary to further develop relationships to build trust and respect by encouraging staff to speak freely of their needs, both met and unmet, regarding induction and mentoring. Input from all staff groups was gained and I used documentation and processes that clearly reflected the needs of staff. It was important to learn more from and about those who remained dissatisfied.

The importance of human and symbolic leadership was paramount to this case; however, I had not considered this prior to taking the HLDP program.

I had thought that the human leadership domain was probably my strong area; nevertheless I did not understand that an innate ability alone, without the understanding of the capabilities, lacks sufficient depth to be successful in leading change in a school setting.

Taking the first steps

Staff members were introduced to the Performance and Development framework at staff meetings. It was necessary for this to be a gradual process with aspects tabled on the agenda over term one. The Curriculum Day was the turning point for staff to gain sufficient understanding so that they could make a commitment to move forward. A presenter from an accredited secondary college was able to present, in a positive and informative way, the process and benefits of a Performance and Development culture. Most importantly, all staff, including administration and School Support Officers (SSOs), were present as we began to develop our collective capacity.

Staff completed a survey regarding all aspects of accreditation and the results clearly showed there were mixed feelings regarding induction and mentoring. Following this, the staff was placed in collegiate groups: new graduates, not so new graduates, new experienced teachers, and returning staff. They were asked to identify what they thought induction was, their view of induction and what aspects they would like to see improved.

With the help of a graduate teacher, we developed tables that clearly displayed the steps of induction and showed the areas that had been lacking. A key SSO worked with colleagues to identify their needs.

I asked staff to attend a meeting if they were interested in mentoring. I presented material to assist them in gauging their suitability and their understanding of the role of a mentor. Through this and discussion with graduate teachers, we matched needs and interests and gave additional information with evidence and analysis sheets to assist in our shared planning direction setting, teaching goals and reflections.

Mentoring tables are now in place for mentors and mentorees to follow, which should make the process more overt. This has not been overly effective this year, due to the late commencement of mentoring and the lack of time given for the program to happen.

Further steps, continuing challenges and personal dilemmas

Along with a couple of experienced staff members, I will attend mentor training to further enhance our knowledge. The induction program for 2008, following the tables produced, will begin this year as new staff members are appointed. The process is overt and explicit.

A challenge I foresee is in providing time for mentors and mentorees to work together. This has not yet been determined, but the plan is to provide additional time to support this relationship, timetabled as mentor/mentoree time. I intend to oversee the mentors and liaise with the graduates each week and SSO groups each term, to gain their feedback and assess the improvement of our structures.

I am committed to following through so that our words match our actions and believe the changes will improve our school culture. We will await news of accreditation in early December which I hope will confirm our belief that we are moving forward in a proactive and professional manner.

Impact of the Human Leadership: Developing People program

The Human Leadership: Developing People program was my first opportunity to mix with a wider group of colleagues in leadership. I had not anticipated what an impact the program would have, but was surprised at the self-reflection and the opportunity to explore emotional matters. It was really the beginning of my understanding of leadership domains and capabilities and I believe human leadership is central to school leadership.

I am pleased that my Human Leadership: Developing People project was so closely aligned with such an important journey that my school was undertaking. This case story has given me further opportunity to reflect on the actions that have been taken, and more significantly with the leadership elements that underpin the process.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case story reflects impressive applications of the principles and practices of human leadership. The evidence is clear that this leader's actions are associated with a profile well into the DEECD level 4.

Starting from strengths

By acknowledging 'positive processes already in place' this leader created a 'solid base' upon which to build in order to proceed with examining 'negative feelings' too.

Inner leadership first, last and always

This leader looked inward too 'to develop myself' and to discover what needed to be learned to prepare for the task. Proactively, opportunities for this learning were created by networking with successful schools.

Emotional awareness

By consciously attuning to 'the strong feelings' of staff, the leader listened and took to heart their criticism, and then took steps to ensure 'consistency between words and actions'.

Accordingly, the leadership team made sure that they not only were but also were seen to be supportive and engaged: 'all staff, including administration and SSOs, were present as we began to develop our collective capacity'.

By deliberately putting systems in place to support 'building collegial relationships and improving communication processes' they were not only 'developing individual capacity through induction and mentoring' but in so doing were also developing 'collective capacity ... together'.

By encouraging self-selection, motivation was assured, and importantly this group was supported in assessing their own suitability and preparedness by reflecting on their 'understanding of the role' before the matching of interests and needs.

Again, consistent with the description of level 4 Human Leadership activities, there were 'shared planning, direction setting', the establishment of 'teaching goals and reflections'. This leader also empowers others, for example, 'with the help of a graduate teacher, we developed tables that clearly displayed the steps of induction and showed the areas that had been lacking'.

Importantly, the whole process became increasingly overt and explicit as it was refined and established. Consistent with level 5 in the HL profiles, this leader used a range of strategies to improve relationships and address negative influences while developing with others a system for tracking and continuous monitoring for improvement. This case story illustrates the power of professional reflection in and upon action and suggests that the author has significant prowess in this domain.

Brenda Beatty

From cruising to collaborating: New leadership structures for a high-performing school

My school is a high-performing school with sound student achievement indicators. We have had four substantive leading teachers (LTs) for many years. In 2006, the school was successfully accredited for Performance and Development culture and also completed a Negotiated School Review. Based on the results of the Performance and Development Culture School Self-Assessment, the Annual DEECD Staff Opinion survey and the Negotiated School Review, aspects of the school's operations were targeted for reform.

While the school self-assessment was positive (from the above-mentioned indicators), the focus/direction the school needed to consider was based around:

- the effectiveness of leadership roles within the school (communication beyond Professional Learning Teams)
- the need for the development of succession planning – enhancing the leadership profile.

My HL project is based around strengthening the leadership profile within my school.

Case Study Action Plan

The year 2007 has been a year of transition – Year 1 of School Strategic Plan – the first challenge.

For the first time, it was decided to reinvent the role of leading teachers in our school. A recommendation from the Negotiated School Review was that the school consider using its leading teachers vertically throughout the school (to improve communication and consistency across the school), rather than what had been the traditional role of leading teachers: managing

Professional Learning Teams (PLT) and all that this role entailed (including assessment/teaching and learning approaches/professional development/ curriculum provision and team-based activities). As a result, following a process of consultation, the leading teachers assumed whole-school portfolios in 2007 in the following areas:

- assessment and reporting
- professional development
- curriculum (VELS)
- principles of learning and teaching (PoLT).

It was also established that the administrative tasks, previously managed by PLT leaders, needed to be met so the opportunity was created for five PLT leader positions to be created from the next tier of leaders within our school (expert/ accomplished teacher classification level).

As a result, along with the Principal Class Officers (PCOs), there were nine staff members charged with significant responsibility throughout the school. It was decided that this group would take what was formerly the role of the consultative committee (PCOs/LTs and Australian Education Union rep) – whole-school directions – from the consultative committee and from the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). This decision also created a change of focus and composition of the consultative committee whose members have now become a cross-section of all levels in the school that deal specifically with whole-school management (staffing/ budgets/grievances/organisation etc.).

To ensure that these changes were met effectively, clear and specific role statements and committee role/s and compositions throughout the school were established by the PCOs in consultation with all staff.

The journey so far... an update

The decision to redefine the role of leading teachers at this school was met with some trepidation in that we were moving away from traditional roles; it involved staff members who had invested significant time and energy into their existing roles. It was essential at this point that we had to impart the benefits of this approach to the whole school moving forward.

This change in direction also provided opportunities for aspiring leaders to take on significant leadership roles, which has been most successful. It has addressed the feeling of being 'locked out' of leadership at this school as it has given new staff members access to leadership positions (PLT leaders) and the opportunity to become involved in whole-school decision-making, as well as allowing more staff input, which assists in driving whole-school directions. It has also given these staff members the opportunity to perform administrative tasks at the PLT level.

As a further spin-off of these changes, the addition of Domain Leaders has given more staff members the opportunity to participate in leadership. There are not too many members of staff in this school who do not have some leadership responsibilities!

Another aspect of this redefinition of roles was to transform the 'perceived' stranglehold on leadership positions. A whole-school policy statement on Leading Teacher Tenure was developed in 2007 to outline that, for the first time, Leading Teacher Tenure at this school is to be 'time-limited' to the life of the School Strategic Plan. It would then be at the school leadership's discretion whether the leading teacher positions would be rolled over, re-advertised or reduced in number for the period of the next School Strategic Plan (depending on need).

Along with the success of redefining the leadership profile in this school and the restructure of our decision-making committees, there have been some challenges as some members of staff were required to relinquish some of the decision-making powers they had traditionally had in the past, including staffing/budgets/grievances/organisation etc. Consultation with the whole staff was the key to achieving these changes on the coat-tails of the Negotiated School Review recommendations.

We are now in the process of reviewing the success of the above with the following conclusions being drawn.

Our challenge from here

While the SPG is working well, there needs to be additional accountability placed on all members to 'lead' changes in practice. Leadership in these roles needs to make a difference in the classroom. This is happening but we need to be forever mindful that it is our primary purpose.

As the period of this school's Strategic Plan evolves, so too will the leadership profile/roles of all members of staff.

The PCOs' aim is to continue to work with all SPG members to drive these directions beyond 2007. The SPG needs to evolve to be more than a reporting meeting. It needs to become a forum for educational discussion that shares new ideas and discusses the implications of these for our school. By working together on strategies to adopt change, all members will develop their professional learning and hopefully the embracing of new directions that will further develop what the school has to offer.

A potential progression for the Assessment and Reporting Leading Teacher Portfolio could be to maintain the management approach to the DEECD Student Report Package, but also to turn more attention to leading the school's refinement of their current assessment practices within classrooms.

A potential progression for the Professional Development Leading Teacher Portfolio could be to become more focused on staff accountability for professional development experiences (sharing with others) as well as maintaining the coordination of staff access to Professional Development programs and budget expenditure. This Leading Teacher Portfolio could see the introduction of the Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning being introduced to the staff as a further refinement of our Professional Development policy.

A potential progression for the Teaching and Learning Leading Teacher Portfolio is to maintain accountability for teaching and learning strategies, as developed in 2007, as well as to further promote and support teaching and learning practice across the school – 'What does good teaching and learning at our school look like?' We are currently exploring the option of employing a consultant or developing a peer coach approach to help facilitate this direction to ensure all members of staff have similar understandings as to what good teaching and learning actually is.

A potential progression for the Curriculum Leading Teacher Portfolio is to maintain accountability to curriculum provision based on VELS, but also to lead the reform of the school's approach to integrated units (encompassing VELS) as part of improving our teaching and learning practice.

It is also anticipated that the next progression for the PLT leaders is to become more involved in leading change and supporting new directions at the PLT level beyond 2007. Their tenure is for two years (2007–08), and after a year of experience, the hope is that their input will become even more valuable. Currently our leading teachers are still classroom teachers within the PLT that they previously led and it is from 2008 onwards that we hope the new PLT leaders will become less reliant on the leading teachers at the PLT level given their 2007 year of experience.

The above-mentioned change processes represent a significant step in moving our school towards further developing teacher effectiveness and performance. The human leadership dimension continues to figure prominently in our planning and implementation as we consider the impact of the changing leadership roles in our school.

The decision to redefine the role of leading teachers at this school was met with some trepidation...

Commentary from a Critical Friend

A structural approach is one of the cornerstones of leading change. One of the first human leadership challenges in this case story had to be collaboratively developing the design for the restructure itself. That was no mean feat! The impetus for the grand design seems in part to be to achieve a more distributed model for decision-making, and a corresponding succession pathway through the broader sharing of leadership throughout the school. These are both worthwhile goals indeed.

With the grand design in mind, and having been developed with wide consultation, further human leadership challenges emerge when we look to helping people with vested interests in the old model; this, so that they can appreciate the benefits for the whole school in the new approach. An intellectual reasoning approach is a good start. However, human leadership also involves dealing with personal meaning making in association with the professional and organisational dimensions of our identities. Emotional meaning making in connection with loss seems relevant here since, as this author has noted, the restructure altered the positional briefs of the leading teachers and caused them to lose some of their areas of authority. While ‘consultation with the whole staff was the key to achieving these changes on the coat-tails of the Negotiated School Review recommendations’, some individual leading teachers may still be trying to manage the grieving process.

Having the opportunity to discuss the inner leadership challenges associated with these changes can be constructive and healing, especially when the energies released are coupled with the invitation to consider ‘What opportunities would you like to create?’ This empowering question, when asked sincerely in a setting wherein there is attentive listening and careful consideration of the answer, can help turn pain into recovery in a very short time. Being present to the emotional dimension of our own and our colleagues’ professional lives fosters wellbeing. It says I care about who you are and what you are going through, not just what you can do for me.

These new structures bring more and younger voices to the table and this is wonderful. What I see in the section ‘Our challenge from here’ has also a great deal to do with human leadership: for instance, it would seem that more leadership and less management is the desired developmental direction. This author seems to position ‘accountability’ as the driver. Maybe, but it seems that leadership development creates its own accountability. When people learn how to lead they can distinguish between the managing and the leading dimensions inherent in their positional responsibilities. Perhaps some professional development could help these new leaders to enrich their vision of the role.

To lead in changing assessment practices in classrooms requires collaborative learning so that the entire teaching force begins to become curious about their own practices, open to new learning about alternatives, and welcoming of others into their classrooms and their thinking about teaching.

This can’t happen without the sense of safety that comes from developing professional relationships and shared understandings. It certainly can’t hurt to have some outside help, but I believe the outside help needs to be in the form of an empowering facilitator who helps the whole teacher group discover their collective potential as they engage in new activities that will help them become a dynamic learning community.

The focus on professional development is a real strength of the present plan but I hope there isn’t an over-reliance on policy to do the human relational work of creating the collaborative learning habits that are envisioned here. Policy can create the place holder, and support the allocation of resources. However, there is a great deal of human leadership involved in making sure people are confident, well prepared, and safe to enjoy the process of stepping up in front of their peers to help them learn. Teachers are surprisingly timid about presenting to their colleagues until they get the knack of it. I recommend carefully scaffolding the expectations, and having experienced professional development presenters go first. It is good to have partnerships of one experienced and one inexperienced presenter so there is moral support, shared expertise and learning along the way. The introduction of the Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning will be helpful, especially if they are discussed and endorsed by the staff. And just as importantly there needs to be some fun!

The use of an outside consultant to help decide ‘What does good teaching and learning at our school look like?’ could work. What I expect will be the most valuable though, will be the conversations that go on once the consultant has left. A peer-coaching program can provide a great model, one in which teachers identify something they would like to learn more about, and then engage in focused exchange visits between classrooms to acquire this learning. It tends to send the message that there are lots of good things happening already and that it is valuable to share the collective wisdom in the group. Where learning communities identify a gap, they can then fill it by looking outside of the school and initiating a learning opportunity that would suit. Teachers taking charge of their own learning is essential for fostering collective teacher self-efficacy.

Brenda Beatty

Targeting teacher self-efficacy: A human leadership challenge

Improving beginning and new teacher induction processes through human leadership to encourage new teachers to more quickly develop self-efficacy and thereby remain in the profession.

Setting the scene

Australia faces a significant issue with workforce planning in education due to:

- a) an increasing shortage of teachers
- b) the impact of generation Y (current graduates) who are reluctant to remain in the profession long term
- c) the impact of state government policies in the 1990s on teacher recruitment that has left a gap in the workforce of individuals in the 8–16 years of experience range
- d) average age of workforce is the mid-forties, and age of retirement is currently most frequently 54 years and 11 months and has implications for a high rate of retirement.

This situation requires a multi-pronged approach to addressing the workforce planning issues of:

- a) recruitment
- b) retention
- c) leadership.

Challenges in our setting

At our secondary college we face further difficulty in recruitment, retention and leadership because of our remote and rural location. Our staffing profile is typical of the region with a large proportion of staff being at or within three years of retirement, a very small number of staff in the 10–15 year range of experience and an increasingly large proportion of graduate teachers. While we provide a supportive and energised working and learning

environment for staff, including high levels of professional development and leadership opportunities, we are rarely able to retain graduate staff for more than two years. As the core of stable, long-term employees with experience decreases due to retirement we are facing a challenge if we are going to be able to continue to provide a stable, efficacious workforce that is capable of teaching and other leadership responsibilities. We also find that the leadership opportunities and professional experiences of our staff make them highly marketable to other schools closer to the regions they would prefer to work in, and thus migration of leadership potential is also high.

Given this climate, we are dedicated to increasing the efficacy of graduate teachers as quickly as possible, so that they feel rewarded by their careers. Students will benefit from the high level of teacher self-efficacy, and graduate teachers are more likely to be able to contribute to the college and enjoy satisfaction by being part of the leadership and IMPACT domain, rather than just the SELF domain that is common for beginning teachers.

The dilemma

The dilemma I face is that the most efficacious teachers are fully allotted to classroom teaching and/or leadership roles and I am unsure about the suitability of staff who do have time allowance and therefore would possibly be available to mentor new and/or beginning staff in terms of: adherence to our trademark behaviours and vision, high expectations of students for achievement and behaviour, and overall attitude to the profession.

Given this situation I am faced with the dilemma of how to provide a high-quality induction and mentoring program for new and beginning staff that demonstrates an enactment of our trademark and expectations of staff at the college, and at the same time engenders a commitment from inductees due to their experience of the respect for and rewards of the teaching profession. In the past we have been required to provide mentor relationships less frequently and quite possibly have had a proportionately larger pool of experienced and efficacious staff to draw upon to fulfil that role. In any case, we need to make the connections between experienced and new staff work as a source of strength and affirmation of commitment to our school.

This year, I am required to take a much more proactive leadership role in the development of new and beginning staff than ever before. This has required me to redevelop empathy for new and beginning teachers who lack experience with the ongoing intensity of classroom teaching, the difficulty of classroom management in the absence of status and experience, and the development of varied, engaging, targeted and individualised curriculums in the absence of experience. It also requires me to develop leadership capacity in inexperienced staff much earlier than would have been expected in the past.

The impetus for providing a comprehensive and capacity-building induction and mentoring program for new and beginning staff is additionally important to the college given that we are attempting to attain Performance and Development Culture Accreditation in 2007.

Relevant aspects of the Human Leadership program learnings:

a) Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski

- I have instigated the idea that everyone, myself included, must allow time for reflection, and have demonstrated this to the new and graduate teachers, the leadership team, and my cluster colleagues. I have reiterated to all of these various team members that in order to be effective and increase our effectiveness we need to make time to work on the system as well as in the system and I have modelled this through all my work, and specifically with the new/graduate teachers.
- I have re-evaluated my own values regarding professionalism. I tend to close my mind to those staff members who do not demonstrate energy, interest, and high expectations. Since becoming assistant principal I have had to improve my relationships with members of staff who do not sit comfortably with my professional values. I have seen that if I disregard these individuals I further disenfranchise them from potentially improving.
- I have had to demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen attentively to the issues of new/graduate teachers, rather than moving to solutions. I have had to become more patient and I have adopted the habit of asking all staff, 'Is it too early for you to begin brainstorming solutions with me?' Additionally if I move to brainstorming solutions, I have become more aware of the body language and responses of staff to realise that they are not ready for solutions, they need more time for discussing and having someone listen.

b) Jeremy Hurley

- I have explained to others, including new/graduate teachers, the feeling and excitement of entering the 'zone' where one feels flow and where one's personal and professional needs are congruent with those of the organisation. I have demonstrated my love of the profession and had deep, open discussions with new/graduate and mentor staff about the possibility of achieving flow.

c) Dr Brenda Beatty

- Given my status position in the school it has been important for the new/graduate teachers to develop the sense that I do not judge them when things do not go right, nor do I always get everything right myself. I have encouraged new/graduate teachers to observe my classes and see that in spite of my status and my experience, things do not always run smoothly in the classroom, nor do they in the domain of leadership. This has enabled them to relax and work with me when coaching and team teaching together.
- I have also repeated this process when coaching and training mentors to be coaches.
- This has increased the confidence of many members of staff to deprivatise their practice and allow others to observe, coach or team teach. This has not only happened this year, but during the past three years. It is a gradual culture shift within the college. It is now a compulsory part of the Performance and Development process for all staff. It is a particularly difficult aspect of the process for new/graduate teachers who do not feel confident sharing their practice with others.

d) From 'The Wounded Leader'

- In general, since the three days of professional development on human leadership I have been more willing to demonstrate and share with others how events, issues, comments, and so on have affected me emotionally and personally. I have also encouraged the principal and leadership team to be more open with their feelings when they have been disappointed, affronted or wrongly accused. A number of staff members have commented on how they appreciate the honesty and emotion and that it has an effect on making staff more accountable.

e) Professor Ken Leithwood

- I have more explicitly demonstrated to others (the leadership team, new/graduate teachers, mentors, students, students with wellbeing issues, parents) that there are some things that are out of our control and we should/can focus our energies on working with what we have some or total control over and accept the constraints or conditions we have no control over.
- I have worked with new/beginning staff and mentors to assist them to set directions to provide motivation. I have trained both groups of teachers (and others) in peer coaching and curriculum development. I have redesigned the organisation through time allowance and the role of assistant principal and I have managed the instructional program of mentors and graduate teacher relationships more closely to ensure they are more fruitful and rewarding and there is an expectation that a relationship exists and looking after it is part of 'normal' practice.

f) Dr Allie Clemans

- I am more aware of the features of andragogy – the four As: Anchor, Add, Apply and Away. I have ensured that I have made time and provision for an 'Away' task and a discussion of it at the time of subsequent meetings to ensure the uptake and transfer of the elements we work on together.

g) Johari Window

- I have discussed with staff the conscious and unconscious practice of skilled and unskilled teachers in relation to peer coaching, and the desire of the coach to enhance the consciously skilled aspects of teachers.

h) Attachment Theory – Dr Philip Riley

- It has been important for me to understand the nature of attachments to beliefs about teaching that graduate teachers hold. For example, many beginning teachers believe:
 - i. students find the secondary specialist area of the teacher just as interesting and intrinsically motivating as the teacher
 - ii. teaching is a relatively easy profession
 - iii. in rural communities a teacher's private life is their private life.

It has been quite a shock to some graduate teachers to have these beliefs challenged. Dealing with the grief and anger associated with letting go of these attachments can be one that requires support, empathy and acceptance.

i) Andy Hargreaves

- Mentoring others in sustainable work–life balance and the rewards of our profession.

Transformational aspects of Human Leadership: Developing People

The three graduate teachers each faced significant challenges in adapting to their new profession:

Graduate A found the adjustment to teaching was very difficult and, while showing enormous potential, was seriously contemplating leaving the profession throughout Terms 1 and 2.

Graduate B found the adjustment was enormous and that role models within the school were lacking so had been leaning toward leaving the profession.

Graduate C had enormous potential, but realised that it would not be possible to work in a specialist area for a number of years and felt challenged by having to develop their craft in public.

We had the potential to lose all three staff, either to the profession or the school, early in the year if the mentorship, coaching, support and strategies adopted for achieving increased efficacy had not been successful. We have now secured two of these teachers for 2008 and both have shown marvellous growth in reflection, curriculum development and leadership within their teams.

We had the potential to lose all three staff...

According to the graduates, the specific measures that have resulted in them finding the challenge more rewarding and improving their self-efficacy were:

1. The learning relationship with the assistant principal

I had a sense that everyone was learning, even the assistant principal. I enjoyed team teaching with the assistant principal because I felt like an equal and I learnt some things about the way she relates to students in an open and calm manner. I felt like I had to be an ogre all the time. When we were team teaching I had a chance to be myself more, I had more time ... I felt more relaxed and my relationship with the students improved.

Coaching has enabled me to be more reflective on what happens in my class, and why it happens. It is great to have some data to back up my assumptions. I also like brainstorming ways to overcome some of the issues.

I loved developing curriculum in a team, bouncing ideas off everyone else, and realising that I have good ideas too.

2. Receiving and providing feedback

The best PD of the year was the Leading Teams PD. Even though we were graduates, we were just the same as everyone else on this PD and even later when we did peer assessments. We had to be reflective of our own work and the work of others.

It made me more aware of what it was to be a professional. It gave me a lot of positive feedback about my work and gave me some ideas about where I should work to keep growing.

The peer feedback process has enabled me to speak up if I see others doing something that is not with our trademark. I would never have done that before.

I like the way the principal and assistant principal sought our feedback too. We were able to let them know things to do that could make our lives easier as new teachers.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

It is clear from this case story that this leader has taken to heart the challenge of ensuring that beginning teachers get the support they need. Importantly this has occurred through processes of listening long and deeply, and being emotionally attuned to the needs of the teachers in question. As well, by making the leader's own humanity apparent, the permission to be a work in progress has engendered a sense of safety for learning, which increases teacher confidence, openness to learning and correspondingly self-efficacy.

It might have been interesting to have administered a validated teacher self-efficacy instrument before and again after this assistant principal's concerted efforts with this group. I would be surprised if there hadn't been a quite a shift. Perhaps this will indeed increase the chances that these teachers will stay, not only in the system, but maybe in this school. Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing breeds success in teacher development like constructive collaborative professional relationships that are personally satisfying and organisationally beneficial. These activities are associated with the highest profile levels of both educational and human leadership. Well done!

What remains of interest to me in this story is how the more experienced teachers might be fostered in rediscovering their passion of purpose, perhaps in the sharing of their own favourite lessons and most rewarding moments. Sometimes there is great wisdom just waiting to be discovered, if only someone would ask ... This is something to consider when dealing with an ageing teaching workforce. We're never too old to get excited about this important work that we do. But it won't happen unless somebody takes the initiative to suggest that we might have something to offer.

Brenda Beatty

Why can't people just get along?

Generally, our school provides a happy environment for students and staff alike and we pride ourselves on continuing to provide the welcoming and caring school environment often associated with rural schools.

The staff at the school consists of a well-balanced mix of ages and experience. Generally the staff is an enthusiastic, cohesive, collegiate group who works well together. Unfortunately one of the most wearing and time-consuming dilemmas currently being faced by the leadership team is a staffing issue. Two of our staff members, who are required to work together, are unable to establish a happy working relationship.

One of our staff members, I'll call him John, has been with us for many years and is a treasure trove when it comes to unearthing the history of the establishment. He is a person who loves to chat to others and is primarily interested in being a front person for the department. He has seen many staff changes and is the longest surviving member of staff at the school.

Ken, conversely, has been at the school for approximately six years and while he is younger he holds a position senior to John. Ken is a stickler for detail. This attention to detail serves him well in a current role which he executes meticulously, sometimes to the annoyance of other staff members. He is a straight shooter. Some staff members find this side of his nature to their liking while others find the abruptness confronting and feel intimidated by him.

Ken and John are required to work together in their roles at the school. Their daily routines are entwined and each relies on the other to some degree. As many of you will be thinking, this is not unusual in the school setting. They

are required to cover for each other on occasion, complete different aspects of the same tasks as requested by the leadership team, and be seen as a united team when dealing with parents and students. And it is at this sharing point that our dilemma and my story begins ...

Unfortunately for all of us, Ken and John have never been able to maintain a professional working relationship. John's haphazard shake of the shoulders when he has failed to finish a task to Ken's satisfaction or the required level, has frustrated Ken. Ken's requests have infuriated John to the point where he has been verbally abusive towards Ken and other staff members have been required to step in to protect Ken. Their relationship has degenerated progressively and the general work environment is tense and unpleasant. Both Ken and John spend a lot of their time unproductively monitoring each other's behaviour; they are mistrusting and will undermine each other to fellow staff members. This of course has added extra stresses to staff members, especially the leadership team.

Obviously this is a case for human leadership. Late last year the then principal sought counselling for both Ken and John after various group and individual discussions. Strategies were put in place, roles and work spaces were further defined, and expectations were outlined. This had some degree of success. The situation, while not resolved, had been acknowledged and it was hoped that all could move on.

Our current school year has seen a myriad of changes. Our principal transferred to a new school and there has been a complete change of leadership team. During this time, Ken and John's relationship has ebbed and flowed. Ken is very unhappy at work and

feels it is unfair for him to be forced out of his position due to what he perceives as the incompetence/unworkable attitude of another staff member. John, in turn, feels threatened, and tends to go for the stand-and-fight mode of operation when he feels cornered. Ken looks to others to solve his problem while John tends to ignore what is going on until he lashes out in anger. The rest of us just feel like the meat in the sandwich! The current principal and I looked at revamping their roles after the review process, but this has proven not to be possible.

We have spent some time reflecting on and discussing this dilemma. We knew from our current readings and professional development, as the school moved towards the Restorative Justice model of behaviour management, that it was essential that the relationship between Ken and John be restored to or at least shifted to a workable level.

I also knew from the Human Leadership: Developing People program reading of Blase and Blase (2001) Empowering Teachers that we needed to build Ken and John's level of trust by demonstrating our trust in them. According to Blase and Blase, building this trust would be by deeds more than words and would be critical to empowering both parties. I was hoping that the notion expressed by Blase and Blase, that staff are likely to work harder, be optimistic and feel a sense of professionalism when there was an atmosphere of trust in the workplace, would come to apply to this difficult situation.

We decided to have a restorative chat with Ken and John. We had both attended the program Human Leadership: Developing People and were beginning to understand the concept of wounding, introduced to us by our keynote speaker, Pat Maslin-

Ostrowski, who co-authored the book *The Wounded Leader*. Ken and John had not seen this very wounding situation as an opportunity to grow and reevaluate. It was also possible that the restorative chat session could be a wounding experience for us! How brave were we feeling?

Due to the delicate nature of the discussion the principal scripted a chat in which she would express her feelings about the current situation and pose questions to encourage Ken and John to gain some empathy for each other's situation.

I thought she was very brave and it was a very tense meeting. We were hoping to have Ken and John acknowledge the effect they have on each other but John was steadfast in maintaining the position that his words, moods, actions did not have any bearing on others at work. We were having a 'men are from Mars and women are from Venus' moment. It was at this point I had my 'aha' moment. Both the principal and I expressed our need to be emotionally connected to our colleagues and the

effect we have on each other in our daily work practice.

We have always assumed that all parties come to the table with a hope for resolution but the form of this resolution can be very different. Perspective is nebulous and varied and I began to wonder at which point we move from our concept of resolution to acceptance.

What bearing does this have on the restorative justice procedures with students? Perhaps you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink!

The principal and I came away from the chat quite flat and feeling it was of limited value. We are both firm believers in the need to lead by example and the importance of recognising and valuing work.

Interestingly, however, the situation has improved over time. I sense that John does feel listened to and has become less defensive and more productive. And Ken seems more accepting of the situation, although not completely happy. The principal and I are feeling

increasing confidence when dealing with the dilemma as our understanding of the different perspectives grows.

No doubt, learning at the recent Human Leadership: Developing People program was instrumental in the steps forward we have been able to take. Our innate understanding of the importance of emotional relationships was validated and readings were a helpful resource. Realising that taking risks was essential and possible wounding would be an opportunity to grow and develop was empowering. While encouraged by our progress, we realise there will be ups and downs in the situation but at least we have been able to take some steps forward and improve an almost untenable situation.

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Commentary from a Critical Friend

In this case story, we see a long-standing 'failure to communicate' and a dysfunctional professional relationship begin to transform.

What were the key factors? It would seem that the understanding that a wounding experience can provide an opening for growth and development was helpful to the two leaders involved as they tried to figure out how to help Ken and John. Their willingness to put their own emotional experiences, values and practices into the mix were likely

catalysts to both teachers beginning to reframe their view of themselves in this situation. While John seemed to be clinging to the idea that he could remain an island, he may have begun to acknowledge that real leaders take responsibility for the way they make others feel. Modelling this by putting their philosophy into action likely brought this standoff to a tipping point. And yet there were no doors flying open or floodgates of expressiveness, just a gradual improvement over time.

It would be interesting to know how John and Ken perceive the events that have helped them make peace. The courage and careful planning of this leadership team made all the difference. They deliberately and explicitly broke the typical professional silence on emotion and shared their sense of its importance in their own leadership lives. Nice work. human leadership in action!

Brenda Beatty

Welcome to the school: Here's the new program you'll be running!

I am fairly new to my school. The year before I came here a local university did a research project and made some recommendations about needing to engage middle years students more (surprise, surprise!). So certain key people in the school, led by the cluster educator, introduced an integrated program at Year 7 involving three staff from different learning areas. Apparently there were a number of opportunities for the rest of the staff to consult and be involved in the change.

Although the program had some teething problems, it appeared to be running quite well. However, most of the staff felt 'left out' by this new program. They complained they knew nothing about it, except it tied up the timetable. The other thing it had done was take over our only large room, which had formerly been set aside for a VCE study centre. So we were disadvantaging our senior students. Senior students also resented this and began taking it out on the younger students. Parents saw this and started complaining about the Year 7 program. A survey undertaken halfway through the program had quite negative results. However, the three staff involved directly in the program felt it was definitely beneficial to the students and for their teaching, despite not having been allocated any joint planning time.

The following year the staffing changed and I became involved as one of the teachers. There were still a number of issues, such as a lack of even one period of joint planning time for the staff. But a number of changes were implemented, such as the fact that the students were split up a lot more, as parents had expressed concern about the teaching in one large group and the associated noise level. This changed the dynamics of the program to more integrated studies rather than a real team-teaching approach. However, the program was a lot more accepted and the survey results much more positive. One girl this year, who moved back into the mainstream of Year 8 and definitely was no little angel said, 'I can't believe it, but I really miss the Year 7 special program'.

This year the program had a large hiccup. Due to a large number of late enrolments, Year 7 went from three classes to four at a very late stage. Hence, instead of having just three core teachers, we ended up with seven different teachers, one being the most vocal opponent to the Year 7 program. Once again there was no joint planning time. However, the program has worked well and we have been able to engage the students in a range of rich tasks (basically writing extras for the extra four staff). Something positive – the teachers who were negative towards the program have slowly (albeit reluctantly) come around to seeing the value in the program.

Unfortunately the toll that this program takes on its key staff is fairly high – particularly with no planning time. At this stage we have no volunteers to teach next year's program. I am on leave and the other two staff members feel worn out from the program. Is this a case of the administration not allowing enough time – and not even being able to – with all the other demands of schools nowadays?

The program has evolved to a very meaningful educational experience for the students. However, the teachers have not been able to maintain the energy to continue with this. I have tried to involve other subjects and staff through the year, but everyone is so tied up with their own area and has no time to even think about other things happening in the school.

My dilemma as a leader:

- beginning at a school and running a program that I have not played a part in developing, and which has some detractors
- involving other staff and communicating information to staff and school community
- adequately resourcing a new program
- ensuring that there is enough success with the program to continue.

Relevant and transformational leadership learnings

There were a number of different leadership models which I chose to use along the way. The core of all of these was listening to other staff and trying to understand that with change, communication is the core focus. When people feel informed and involved they will be much more willing to participate in an idea.

Epilogue: Success – the program will continue next year with an enthusiastic team. We have had a new teacher come to the school who was more than willing to participate in the program. With her enthusiasm two of the teachers who have been involved in the past agreed to continue. We have also convinced the administration to give a little more planning time to the program.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

There's nothing quite like being given the leadership of a new program that is not very popular with those who have nothing to do with it and not very easy to deliver.

Believe me, I know. It would seem that this leader has shown great fortitude and perseverance in sorting through the issues, keeping people involved and informed, and lobbying for the critical planning time that will likely make it possible for the program to flourish. The comment from 'no little angel' says it all. The program, especially in its revised form, is making a difference in children's lives.

By gathering data early, they knew they were in trouble in the first go round, but the shift to integrated studies seems to have tipped the balance in favour of a meaningful learning experience for children. And now, they're in for the real test, when this leader is on leave and the team has to carry on. It is a real testament to successful human leadership when the sense of collective efficacy of the group can sustain success, with or without the leader. You know you're a successful leader when the place still functions even though you have left the building.

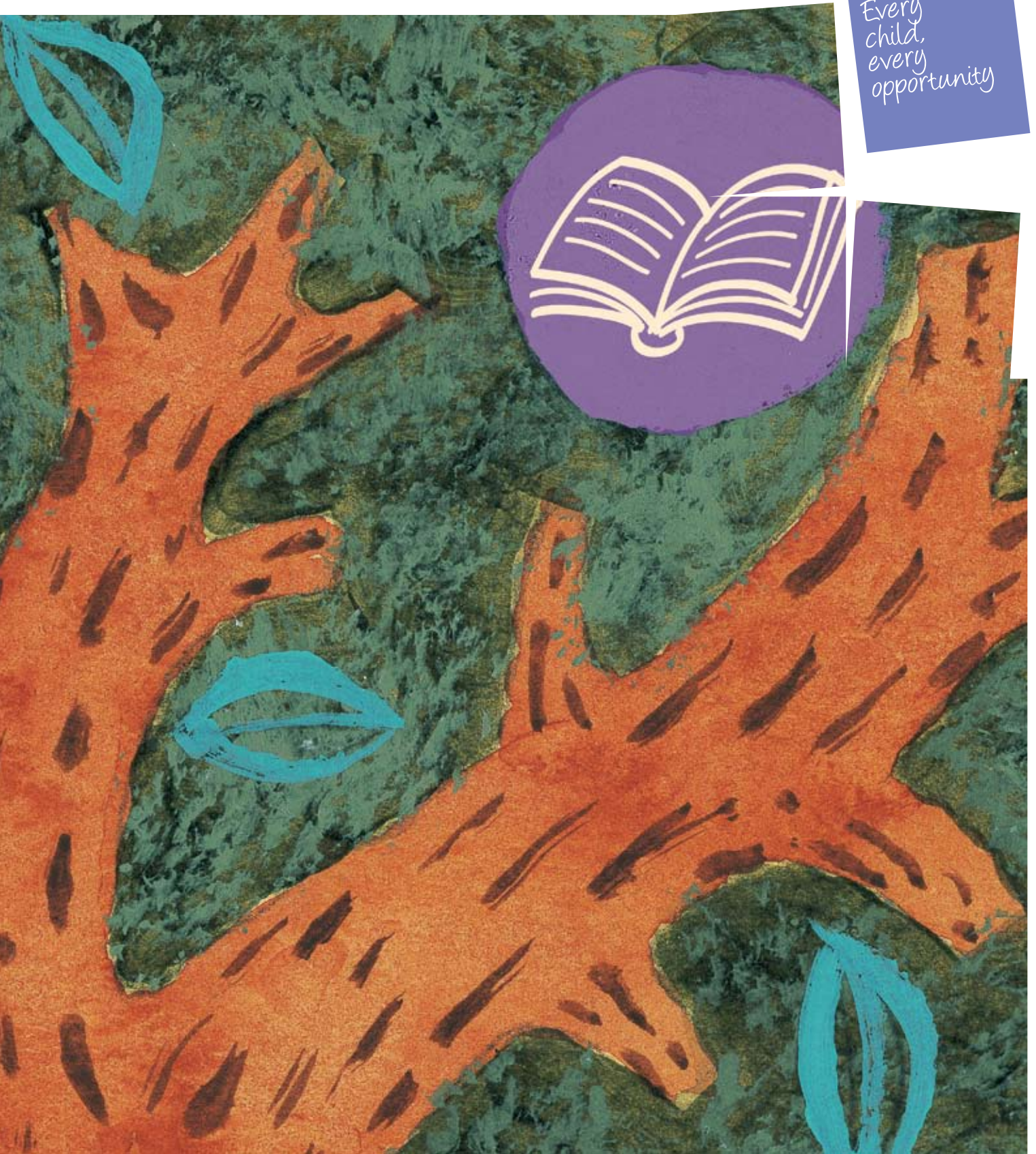
Brenda Beatty

Chapter Three

Courage and Opportunities,
Resistance and Security:
The Human Leadership Domain

Phil Riley

Every
child,
every
opportunity



Courage and Opportunities, Resistance and Security: The Human Leadership Domain

Phil Riley

Most teachers try to work with students by beginning with ‘where the child is at’. For leaders working with colleagues this maxim still holds...

Even a cursory glance at The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders (DEECD 2007) reveals that when school leaders are operating at level 5 in the human leadership domain, teachers and learners alike discover all sorts of information about themselves and the world around them (some of which they may not have wanted to learn, but nevertheless, can benefit from).

At its best everyone is energised by the experience and the learning creates its own momentum, helping to sustain learners and teachers. It also serves to enhance the relationship between learning and teaching by blurring the boundaries between the two. However, when this domain is poorly practised it can leave all concerned frustrated by poor processes, a paucity or even avoidance of candour, intellectual depth and rigour. There can appear to be an endless circling of important issues without ever really engaging with them.

The aim of this chapter is to outline and examine, hopefully without oversimplifying, some of the underlying issues that arise when school communities attempt to implement change in their practices. In broad terms, these issues revolve around the tension created when the excitement of the new for some members is met with resistance from others. There are many variations to this theme of course, and I encourage the reader to bear these in mind and make specific connections with their own experiences of change implementation in the organisations to which they belong, by seeking to confirm or refute the underlying patterns of behaviour outlined below.

While it is self-evident that there are many more than two types of people who work in educational organisations, for the purposes of this chapter two broad groups, which we can define as promoters and conservers² for convenience of discussion, represent the most common attitudes. These groups seem to have the most difficulty in dealing with each other when change is introduced into schools.

Their difficulties are often played out in the human leadership domain so it is critical that aspirant and established leaders understand the sometimes subterranean processes at work, to be able to effectively deal with them. It is important to note that any member of the school community from the principal down can find themselves in either group, depending on the context, but will usually remain in one or other camp for any particular issue that arises. Therefore, there will be members of each group who are firmly entrenched, and those whose membership is less clearly demarcated and driven more by each issue as it appears. Once formed, the two groups can become disengaged from each other and oppositional when trying to discuss the process of change. Attempts to articulate the points of agreement and disagreement and work through to a resolution often fail to solve the disagreements, because the conversations are usually conducted without reference to the security that comes from the ‘felt connection’ to the organisation. It is this sense of security which lies at the heart of the difficulty between the two groups.

²The labels are arbitrary and useful for discussion only. They are not meant to represent any value judgment on my part. Indeed organisations need to promote and embrace change while conserving values, ethics and morals that hold the organisation together.

Security

In simple terms, the security for the group advocating change, the promoters, comes from apprehending their role within the organisation as initiators, leading into new territory – drivers of change if you like. For the promoters, stability of the organisation is a threat to their connection with it. The security for the conservers, however, is derived from knowing that their role is confirmed through the organisation remaining predictable.

Any suggested change to the organisation is therefore a potential threat to the conservers' connection and sense of organisational identity. This is a tricky situation for both groups to be in, and a semi-permanent tension can persist between them unless they are invited to consider this terrain at a meta-cognitive and meta-emotional level. Members of each group know that the other has some common sense attached to their position, therefore this should be the point of contact when they attempt to iron out their difficulties, but sadly, often this is not the case.

When these two groups attempt to discuss the issues the conversation very often flounders because they are not discussing the fundamental reasons why they are on opposite sides in the first place. They may communicate in ways that are as different from one another as foreign languages are, thus ensuring that the intended reforms are not introduced effectively. This limits their success, and they are eventually abandoned or fizzle out, leaving the promoters frustrated at being 'blocked' and the conservers frustrated by time wasted in 'fruitless' discussion and needless attempts at change. Often each group also has to deal with feeling less connected to the organisation than before they began the discussion.

Given that a background tension exists between these two groups even before planned changes are introduced to the organisation, perhaps the maxim that the only constant in organisations is change, needs some revision. There are in this context always two constants: change and resistance to it. Therefore to understand the processes that are going on when trying to implement change in schools, the concept of resistance needs to be understood by all members. After all, it is something experienced by all people at various times in their lives, and is usually associated with different contexts for different people. The difficulty in organisational change is that it is not uniform, and that resistance can be a cloak of many colours. Some members are ready to embrace what others fear is too much, so finding a common place to begin an exploration of what really matters to everyone is the key.

Resistance

Resistance to change in organisations has traditionally been dealt with using a 'crash or crash through' approach: aiming at the latter but often ending with the former. This is the traditional political model of change. However, when looked at through the lens of the human leadership domain, where the aim is not to defeat the enemy so much as bring everyone on board for the journey, the crash-through model can create as many problems as it solves. As stated above, the resistance emanates from the sense of connection that the members of the school community we have labelled conservers feel to the organisation as it is rather than as it might be.

They coalesce around the sense of security that each member of the community feels as part of their role within the organisation and the degree to which they can remain comfortable enough to allow the connection to be challenged by the inevitable changes to the organisation involved in curriculum and pedagogical reform.

Traditionally many schools have been steeped in a culture of curriculum and pedagogical fragmentation. While some learning areas are becoming more integrated, particularly in light of the new VELS curriculum developments, this culture of 'breaking down' learning into its subsets is so pervasive that it is rarely apprehended in schools as a distinct way of operating: it is simply the way things are done, and therefore becomes invisible. This is not the ideal place to begin the change in school-wide practice that aims at holistic change, but might be the only option for many, perhaps most school leaders.

Thus when the introduction of new educational practices or the development of new policies or operational practices is the aim, tensions inevitably lead to resistance. The skilled leader, operating mainly around level 4 or 5 of the Developmental Learning Framework will appear to seamlessly support teachers by encouraging them to experiment with new programs or approaches for a part of the teaching day, along with encouraging risk taking and mistake making. This looks easy from the outside but takes a great deal of skill, sensitivity and care.

³One can never expect resistance to vanish: there is always some resistance to change.

Starting with smaller, less dramatic changes which, given time, may evolve into school-wide reforms, offers the chance to keep all of the school community members feeling secure within the organisation while change is begun, so that change is not the opposite of security for the conservers and is therefore resisted less as a result. That being said, encouraging teachers to risk take and make mistakes is very challenging in itself. Neither risk taking nor making mistakes comes easily to teachers, despite the fact that they are encouraging their students to do so on most working days. To the promoters of change this seems an odd contradiction. Many become confused and frustrated by colleagues' complaints about the current modus operandi, colleagues who are also resisting changes designed to address the issues that are the source of disquiet. The complaints suggest that the teachers are not happy with the system as it is, but the promoters of change are dismayed when they discover that it does not follow that the conservers are ripe to embrace changes to the system they complain about: whether toward holism or any other new idea. Change is another issue entirely, one that is very unsettling for many teachers. Recent research has shed some light on why this might be so and possibly also why schools have changed so little since their inception (Riley 2008b).

Supporting and encouraging teachers to try new approaches in the classroom create many human leadership challenges for school leaders because most leaders and teachers have never been formally trained in how to do it, although this is now changing.

Anxiety is not to be underestimated in this context, either for teachers or school leaders. Anxiety is the guardian of the self (Eisold 2000). Its emergence signals danger that is to be avoided. Raising the level of professional anxiety in conservers through the promotion of changed practice reduces their level of felt security to the organisation and ensures resistance. Increase anxiety enough and eventually the promoters will join the conservers' group.

When the possibility of change is the catalyst for increased anxiety levels, change becomes the enemy. Not change to a new way of working or new type of organisation, but change from what made members feel secure. So when it comes to implementing change in schools 'walking the talk' can be an interesting undertaking to say the least. In many schools this too offers unique challenges. Professional learning often associated with any significant change can be seen by teachers as an unwanted addition to the already busy workload, rather than an opportunity to discover how to 'work smarter not harder'.

One way to maximise the chances of a positive outcome is to keep all the teachers' needs in mind. This is much easier said than done because what teachers want in terms of stated goals that can be clearly articulated, and what they need to feel secure, which is often left unsaid, can be quite different. These can even appear to be in opposition to each other at times. However, keeping teachers' need to feel secure in mind, through strengthening their connection to the organisation as the changes are introduced, is one of the keys to a successful lessening of resistance to change.

Opportunities

The professional learning needed by everyone as a precursor to changing the educational practice in a school requires a significant commitment. Sophisticated, reflexive learning practices such as double-loop or deuterio learning challenges teachers with deep questions (Argyris 2002; Korth 2000). For many teachers who feel a strong connection to their school this is an exciting opportunity to strengthen their connections. For others, who feel their connection is fragile, attempts to look at their practice are perceived as a threat to their identity, and therefore place, within the organisation.

Most teachers try to work with students by beginning with 'where the child is at'. For leaders working with colleagues this maxim still holds, but can easily be overlooked. By really trying to understand where the resistor 'is at' and working from that place, the opportunities for growth and change begin to appear, and the issues can be broached in ways that can be addressed. In effect the security of belonging is maintained while the change is taking place. This is, I believe, the most significant human leadership challenge. Peter Fonagy and his colleagues have named this process mentalization (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist & Target 2002; Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco 2005a, 2005b). In operation mentalization, the very act of trying to understand where the other person 'is at', strengthens the connection to the other and thus their connection to the organisation. Thus the reasons to resist recede. Sounds easy, but it takes courage to step into that space.

It takes courage

The only way to test your level of courage or bravery is seeing how you function when you are feeling anxious or frightened. If you are not fearful you cannot be courageous, no matter how much real danger confronts you. For many leaders of professional learning first time presenting offers a wonderful opportunity to test levels of courage and bravery. Suddenly the same forces that cause some teachers to resist professional learning opportunities well up inside: 'I don't need to do this!', 'They won't change anyway so why should I do all this extra work?' and so on. This is your opportunity to really understand the resisters: not always an easy lesson but a very valuable one. By digging into the feelings provoked when you are feeling professionally anxious, you experience what you feel during times when you must show courage, perhaps by appearing to remain calm on the outside when you feel the opposite. This aids the mentalization process and helps to connect you to the resisters. This is important because it increases the communal security through empathy, and increases the chances of a positive outcome. (Riley 2008a)

The end lies in the beginning

Sometimes the most valuable lessons are those we tend to shy away from, but these usually offer the lessons we need to learn most! Human leadership exercised skilfully builds communities through better communication. Therefore strengthening relationships within schools is the key outcome of the human leadership domain. If relationships are not strengthening, the leader has still a way to go on the human leadership journey.

It seems that the first step into the human leadership domain is to strengthen relationships by encouraging empathy at all levels. Then the curriculum might just take care of itself.

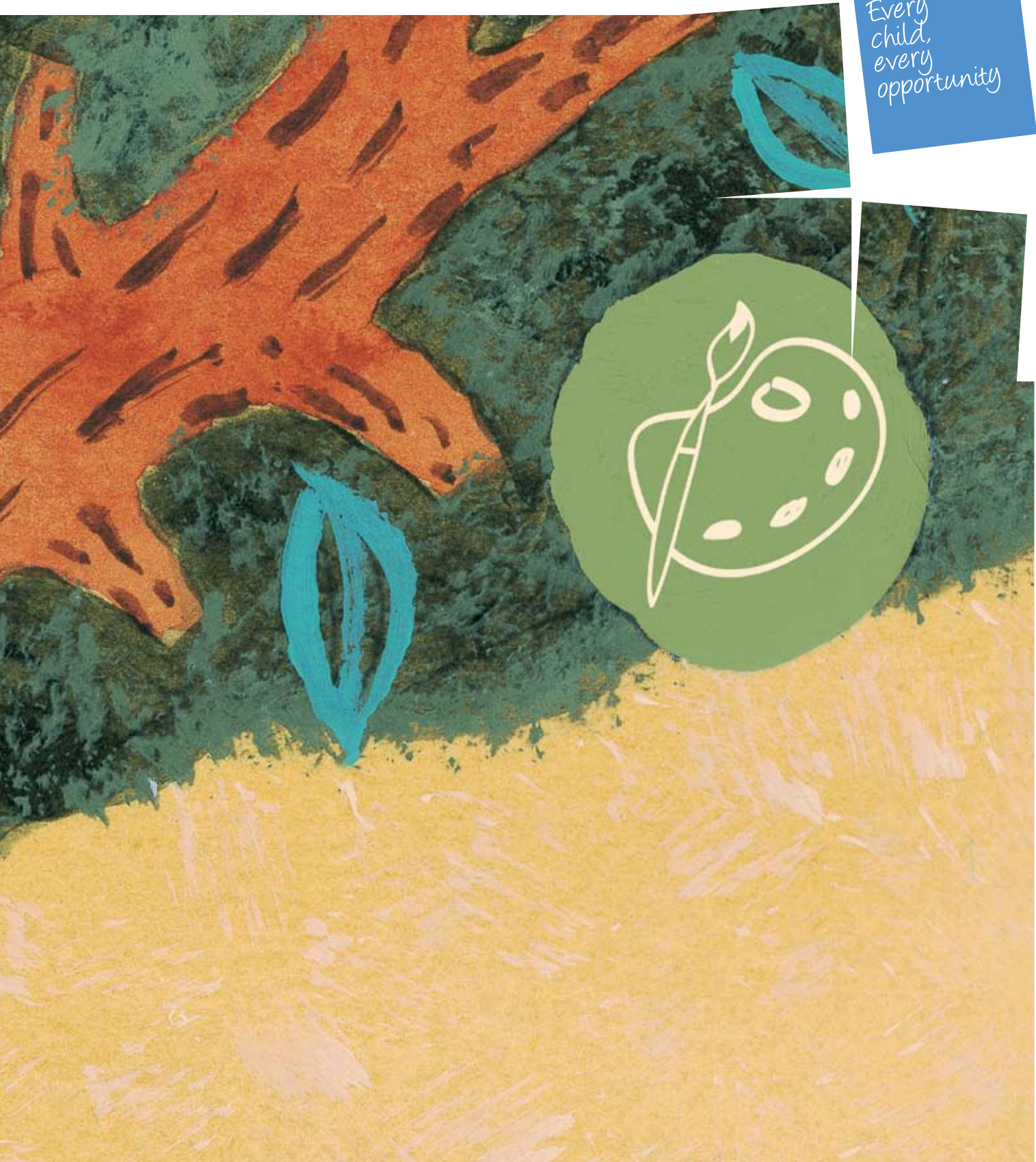
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Chapter Four

Case Stories and Critical Commentary
Part Two

Every
child,
every
opportunity



Case Stories and Critical Commentary

Part Two

The intention of this section of the book is twofold. First, our aim is to demonstrate variation in the way we have responded to the cases. There is no right or wrong way to interpret any case and what has been left unsaid is often the part that interests us most. Our second aim is to ‘dig in’ to the detail of the participants’ cases so the tone of this commentary is in a sense more conversational. At the end of each case there is a brief summary of the broader human leadership issues raised by the case, and usually links are made to the profiles and levels of human leadership development drawn from The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders (Department of Education Victoria 2007). In this Part Two presentation of the case stories, as in the first, all cases have been subedited to protect the anonymity of all concerned. Again we are grateful to the program participants who have so generously shared their stories.

Phil Riley

To lead or to manage: That is the question

It seemed as the year progressed we moved closer and closer to 'breaking point'. There was tension between different groups of staff. Stress levels were escalating and patience and understanding were dwindling. This was a huge challenge and I felt responsible for 'steadying the ship' and keeping the organisation moving forward. It seemed that every time a positive step was taken, something new would arise to dampen enthusiasm and drain energy. This was an opportunity to apply my learning and experiences in a 'real' situation that required 'real' leadership.

The situation I refer to was the implementation of a Leading Schools Fund initiative directly involving 32 staff and 500 students across Years 7 and 8. The idea was to operate two learning communities at Year 7 and two learning communities at Year 8. By definition, each learning community consisted of eight teachers and approximately 125 students. My role was to coordinate this program, and liaise with the principal class of the school and the various stakeholders.

The submission was written and approved in 2005. Funding for additional teachers and planning commenced in 2006 before full implementation, including the opening of brand new facilities (two open-plan learning centres) in 2007.

During the planning stages in 2006 decisions were made about the leadership structure, time allowances and make-up of the different teams. My key submission to the principal class, along with other recommendations, was to have a full-time coordinator working across the four learning teams.

I felt this was a significant and transformational initiative that required significant time, leadership and support. This submission was rejected and coordination of the program was left to me, with no additional time allowance, no real reduction in other responsibilities and a teaching allotment within the new learning centre. Further, added to this allotment was the teaching of subjects I had never taught previously.

I accepted this decision but had grave concerns about the ability of the four teams to operate effectively as a team implementing a very new and different program. I feel I was placed in a situation headed for inevitable problems. I had grave concerns about my ability to support and lead these teams with the support and resources I was provided. I have always been successful and taken pride in being efficient, effective and competent. I could foresee a dilemma between my own personal standards and feeling an inevitable failure or inability to meet these standards.

The year commenced and the new buildings were not completed. We spent Term 1 operating out of a gymnasium and a community hall. We were on the 'back foot' to begin with. Many staff were ridiculing the initiative and I felt I was 'busting my gut' to make this work. By the end of Term 1 the 32 staff teaching in this program were exhausted. Dealing with a new program, educating parents and enduring the negativity of other staff in the school were taking their toll.

Term 2 commenced and we were teaching in the new buildings. Things were improving but the huge staff turnover within teams due to illness, personal issues and new appointments meant any momentum gathered was quickly lost. By working in teams for the first time we also started to see the strain on 'good' teachers trying to 'carry' and push forward the 'poor' teachers.

As coordinator I was struggling to juggle my existing leadership responsibilities, my new teaching allotment and the expectation to align the various programs and practices operating within the four teams. This is a struggle I envisaged but it allowed me to prioritise and target specific issues while under pressure from a range of sources.

For instance, there was pressure from the principal class and the Department to meet certain targets and requirements. This is where I started to apply my learning about the importance of human leadership. I articulated my feelings to principal class members and team leaders to ensure we supported staff through this process and eased unrealistic expectations and targets. I also expressed the importance of us as leaders keeping things 'on track' and not losing sight of the long-term direction and 'bigger picture'.

Some leaders were quite stressed and it was very visible. I emphasised the need for us to be calm, by looking calm and staying calm. This might sound simplistic but the importance of self-management cannot be underestimated. This has been reinforced time and again to me through a range of forums. I feel from that day forward things have improved. This is not to say everything is working perfectly (does it ever?) but the mindset of the leaders in this program became one of learning and improvement.

I feel I had applied a SWOT approach and was now viewing this whole situation as a huge challenge, but more importantly a significant opportunity. Had I not been fortunate enough to have had the leadership opportunities I have had over the last three years in particular, I don't know whether I would have been able to handle this situation with such surety.

I have recently completed a Masters in School Leadership and am familiar with Sergiovanni's domains of leadership (Sergiovanni 2000, 2007). I am convinced that the human leadership domain and effective relationships are the key to successful leadership. They 'unlock' the potential to be an effective leader in the other domains of leadership identified by Sergiovanni. I am also confident that my learning through this program and other building leadership capacity opportunities and the application of that learning allowed staff and team leaders working in this initiative to navigate their way through a very difficult and challenging period.

For 2008, things are already looking good. The four learning communities over the second half of this year have improved dramatically.

Teams are working more effectively together, students are being provided with innovative and engaging curriculum delivery and the focus on teacher professional learning is starting to germinate. The focus on human leadership within this program has been hugely successful and has reaffirmed my belief in its importance among the other leadership domains.

It will be interesting to explore the research and opinions of others in the relative importance of each of the five Sergiovanni leadership domains.

References

Sergiovanni, T. J. 2000, *Leadership for the Schoolhouse: How is it Different? Why is it Important?*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. J. 2007, *Rethinking Leadership: A Collection of Articles* (2nd ed.), Heatherton Victoria: Hawker Brownlow Education.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

The idea of a vibrant learning community following the same broad vision is a wonderful ideal atop of level 5 in the development of school leader profiles.

While this should always be the aim of leadership teams, understanding that it cannot always be achieved continuously is also needed. It takes courage and self-belief, sensitivity and persuasion to bring the group along with you and to really harness the energy and commitment from the whole of the school.

When everyone gives their voluntary effort on top of their professional responsibilities the sky is the limit. Working out how to achieve this with limited resources is a very tricky undertaking. This is where the human leadership domain is crucial: when the going gets tough.

We saw some interesting dilemmas faced in this case. 'Feeling responsible for steadying the ship' can be a position you choose to adopt or feel forced into. I wonder how much of each underlie this case.

As in other cases, the resourcing issue speaks to the symbolic value of the project.

A significant challenge of leadership is to manage up line as well as down. There are good examples here of personal values not aligning with organisational goals and the dilemmas that this causes people. This may have been underlying the 'negativity of other staff' cited by the author.

Phil Riley

Making good schools great!

Our school is located in the heart of a residential area, in close proximity to the shopping centre, public transport, the public library and sporting facilities. Built many years ago, the well-maintained school buildings are a link with the past. Staff and parents support the ongoing commitment to the home-school partnership. Our school's code of behaviour encourages students to respect and care for the rights of self and others. Cooperation and courtesy form the basis for daily school life.

Our staff is friendly, approachable and dedicated to providing the best possible learning opportunities for all students. They are a cohesive, talented team who set high standards for themselves and pursue professional development and further study to develop skills and expertise. However, I believe I am facing a dilemma: how do we make this good school a great school?

It takes vision, passion and courage to make a good school great. This is the key message I have taken away as a participant in the Department's Human Leadership: Developing People program, from Dr Brenda Beatty. I was inspired by the keynote presentation by Andy Hargreaves. Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts.

As school leaders it is our moral imperative to create great schools that are underpinned by a culture in which relationships built on trust and respect enable both leaders and teachers to care for the personal and professional development of each other. If the culture is enriched in trust, commitment, collaboration and combined with quality curriculum and educational vision, exceptional student outcomes are achieved. In short, effective leaders create the conditions that nurture the growth and development of effective schools that have the capacity for continuous improvement and a culture focused on performance and development.

As a school leader my challenge is to lead this evolution in creating a community of learners with a focus on building the capacity of all its members. The saying, 'Doing what you have always done will get you what you have always had' is unacceptable and inadequate for any school in the 21st century in a rapidly changing world. I do not want to be at a school that 'flounders in the shadows of a safe harbour' waiting for answers and not creating solutions, in essence maintaining the 'status quo' and continuing to stay mediocre. This is morally inappropriate for today's school leaders.

I am in the ideal position to explore the notion, and to implement strategies and processes that will create the conditions that nurture the growth and development of members of the school community to create a culture focused on performance and development. Initially it takes the actions of a courageous leader to 'rattle the cage', and ask questions such as:

- What makes a great school?
- Where are we currently?
- How can we evolve into a great school?

I've learned from Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski that real leadership emerges in times of crisis. Having read *The Wounded Leader* (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski 2002), I was prepared for resistance and if wounded it would only influence my professional and personal growth as a leader. Timing of change is important and I knew I could 'win the support' of my colleagues. Affirmation and recognition of the current situation are vital in the early stages. The school community needs to believe, together create and build upon the vision for it to be sustained.

The project focused on reconceptualising professional development as an opportunity to learn together. As school leaders we need to display the courage to ask questions like, 'How do we learn best from each other?', then act and implement strategies that support and allow change to occur.

Within all schools there is a tremendous, often untapped resource in each other's strengths, talents, experience and training that could be further shared. We need to continue to present what has been successful, observe each other's teaching, and continue to plan together. Great teachers make a difference!

In visiting several schools staff commented on the innovative ways professional learning had been delivered. The theme that presented itself in the interviews was that the types of professional development that are most highly valued by teachers, but rare in practice, are peer-to-peer learning and various forms of mentoring and coaching from highly experienced teachers recognised for their excellent practices.

This is what teachers want, for most teachers need to see new approaches in practice before they will change their own teaching practices.

Further, I learned from Professor Carl Glickman that professional dialogue and team learning focused on a 'pedagogy of democracy' are vital in today's schools. This can lead to what we ultimately want as educators and that is producing individuals who are active members of society. We need to engage students in a curriculum where students and teachers work together to make students' learning a contribution to their larger communities. Give students opportunities to demonstrate their learning in public settings and receive public feedback. And also maintain high degrees of excellence in both academic objectives for students and in their contributions to a larger community.

Having read in the program material about the power of collaborative reflection in professional learning, and having enjoyed working with my peers in the book study group associated with the Human Leadership: Developing People program, I have renewed enthusiasm and restored courage to revisit the issues. I know that the challenges still exist but I am heartened by the understanding that real leadership is naturally an emotionally risky business. This calls for courage! What I wanted to achieve was to deepen current team culture and continue to build strong relationships based on respect, trust and empowerment. My goal as a school leader was to promote, embed and sustain team learning.

After reading that 'the effect of professional development on practice and performance is inversely proportional to the square of its distance from the classroom' (Richard Elmore), I was compelled to focus on quality professional learning and the development of a culture of professional learning that would lead to building teacher professional capacity and delivering successful student outcomes.

What did I do?

1. The establishment of a Leadership Forum was a unique opportunity to promote a vision of an effective professional learning culture at the school. Each term the leadership group meets to measure our success, celebrate team achievements and focus on improvements.
2. The establishment of a Strategic Leadership Team to focus on optimising the school's financial, human and physical resources through sound management practices and organisational systems that contribute to the achievements of the school's vision and goals.
3. The establishment of ongoing Staff Forums that provided opportunities to establish a common purpose for the school, underpinned by values and behaviours that secured the commitment and alignment of staff to the success of a culture of performance and development. They also provide an avenue to discuss and develop clear, cohesive pathways and expectations for success.
4. The establishment of Professional Learning Teams within the timetable to allow teams of teachers to engage in dialogue and develop shared understandings, knowledge and deepen their professional relationships with each other.
5. Aligning the Curriculum Coordinators with the professional learning teams to facilitate discussion, and provide educational support and direction.

6. The establishment of Term Planning Weeks to focus on moderating student work samples and developing units of work.
7. The establishment of a quality Induction and Mentoring program. Appointing a new teacher to a teaching position is both a challenging and exciting experience. We have strategically hired and supported the right people to drive curriculum reform. Our induction program focuses on the development of relationships and connectivity to school.
8. Team and individual teacher visits to other classrooms, and becoming involved in Study Groups engaged in the reading of professional literature.
9. Coaching and Intervention programs for teachers have provided educational support.
10. The development of an easy and accessible Intranet has established a Resource Bank that enables teachers to store and retrieve innovative curriculum that together they have developed.
11. The Teacher Appraisal and Recognition Process aligns individuals' performance goals with school priorities.
12. Teachers using Multiple Sources of Feedback to improve practice. These include peer observation and feedback, attitudes to school survey data, parent opinion data, staff opinion data, PoLT survey, involvement in action research projects and vignettes.

The results

1. Accreditation as a school with a culture for performance and development – creating a more enriching, supportive and motivating environment for staff.
2. Acknowledgment by the region as a reference school. We have worked closely and successfully with the region to provide targeted support for schools seeking accreditation by providing activities such as workshops, school visits and the provision of supporting resources.
3. Implementation of a model of professional learning that is highly valued by teachers. By establishing peer-to-peer learning and various forms of mentoring and coaching from highly experienced teachers recognised for their excellent practices, we have been able to put into place what teachers want. We have successfully reconceptualised our understanding of professional development as opportunities to learn from each other.
4. Establishment of Professional Learning Teams enabled teachers and school leaders to engage in professional discussion, evaluation and planning in a coordinated and consistent way. Promoting inquiry and reflection through the PLTs has been instrumental in supporting reflective practices, by using evidence to identify priorities for improvement and encouraging intellectual exploration.

5. The vision of staff at the school was to 'implement a performance review process which is valued and regarded by staff as an essential element of their ongoing professional growth and development'. What we have is a meaningful, teacher appraisal and recognition process that is successful as it celebrates individual achievements and identifies areas for personal and professional improvement.
6. My association with the members of the book study group we established in the Human Leadership: Developing People program. I fully expect that we will continue to support each other. One thing I learned from Dr Allie Clemans and the book by Glickman et al. (2004) that we studied together is that adults learn best when they are encouraged to reflect on and build from life experiences.

Conclusion

Informally in the corridor and at the various meetings, teachers actively engage in professional dialogue and 'reflective conversation'. The opportunity to learn from each other allows our beliefs, feelings, perceptions and values to become transparent and transform into espoused school values. At school we are building on our mutual trust and common purpose, and truly developing into a 'learning community'. Collaborative, ongoing professional learning in action research projects has enabled teachers to redefine professional development as an opportunity to learn.

It takes time but requires administrative support and courageous leadership that believe in the benefits of establishing a learning community and are willing to allocate appropriate resources to support change. Administrative support is a key element in successful professional development planning and implementation.

Principals can provide support and recognition of the importance of the work through their leadership actions and allocated resources.

I hope I have taken the reader on a journey where I have shown how staff can embark on a cycle of inquiry of continuous improvement that has led to the creation of a great school. Our focus has been on team learning. We are a great school, a school where staff plan the change, carry it out, study the results and decide to adopt the change, abandon it, or run through the cycle again. This model of continuous improvement can be adapted to significant projects within a school context.

It takes vision, passion and courage to make a good school great. The staff of our school has developed a culture that is underpinned by relationships built on trust and respect that enable both leaders and teachers to care for the personal and professional development of each other. This culture is enriched in trust, commitment and collaboration combined with quality curriculum and educational vision.

References

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- Senge, P. M., Cambron-McCabe, N. H., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J. & Kleiner, A. 2000, *Schools that Learn: A Fieldbook for Teachers, Administrators, Parents and Everyone Who Cares About Education*, London: Nicholas Brealey.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

Making good schools great is a wonderful example of what happens when the focus is clear, the values are shared and the learning is distributed widely.

This story emphasises the central place of trust in this. Passion and commitment are driving this change and creating opportunities for everyone in this school. The vision here is wonderful. I think it is best summed up in the quote 'Doing what you have always done will get you what you have always had' ... and the following thought that this 'is unacceptable and inadequate for any school in the 21st century in a rapidly changing world'. I can only wholeheartedly agree.

This case outlines what happens when the values are clear and the vision aligns with them. This is much harder to achieve than is perhaps outlined here.

However, it is a great case to read when the road ahead looks a little rocky in your own organisation. It is wise also to remember the author's reference to Pat Maslin-Ostrowski's observation that, 'real leadership emerges in times of crisis'. This is an example of a learning leader becoming the leading learner. Succession planning was a vital and intrinsic component of the process. As leaders we must all be trying to bring on the next generation of leaders as we move into the job ourselves.

The other important aspect of this case is the focus on systems thinking. This aligns all aspects of leadership in a way that allows buy-in from all stakeholders. In this case it also helped to highlight that communication, reflection and evidence-based practice are significant ingredients for success.

Phil Riley

Kids – ‘Go For Your Life’

Every second story on current affairs shows is about children and obesity – what are we doing to our kids? The Government has set mandates that schools by the end of 2008 are not allowed to sell soft drinks, chips and confectionery that have a certain percentage of sugar. This is a great step to assisting children to eat more healthy foods but it is only a single step. To actually make a difference there needs to be a holistic approach. So I joined the school up to the Kids – Go For Your Life program that focuses on all aspects of a healthy lifestyle. The government mandate on food is only a small step compared to what the program requires. They divide food into three categories: the green section – fresh products; the orange section – can only contain a percentage of sugar and fat to the quantity of food; the red section – foods high in sugar and fat. The Kids – Go For Your Life program requires that canteens have no red foods on the menu and a higher percentage of green foods to orange.

I thought this was going to be a problem but was pleasantly surprised when I had a meeting with the owner who was very helpful and was happy to accommodate. He will also benefit as this will allow him to promote himself as a Kids – Go For Your Life accredited canteen to other schools. The program has also allowed me to focus on promoting healthy lunch boxes, organising play days where the focus is on movement and switching off computers/television and ensuring students have the knowledge and facilities to drink water throughout the day.

But this led me to a dilemma of leadership and the focus of this case study: fundraising! Chocolate drives, sausage sizzles, packets of lollies and cakes have been the way it’s done since the opening of the school. It is what the school community knows, the students like it, and ultimately it is financially successful. So how do you change an embedded thought process? How do you convince an entire community that healthy alternatives can be just as successful?

I thought back to Jeremy Hurley’s presentation where he discussed the difference between strong leadership and good leadership and that it is important to have a moral purpose, which I felt I had. So armed with this knowledge that I had a moral purpose I embraced Jeremy’s next statement that ‘leadership is everybody’s business’. I approached the leadership group at school and requested their support to investigate this situation further. In order to change the culture of the school community I had to go to the group that controls many of these thought patterns and put a lot of time and effort into school fundraisers – the parent club. The following quote rang loudly:

... because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear – their daily habits, tools, loyalties and ways of thinking – with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility. Moreover, leadership often means exceeding the authority you are given to tackle the challenge at hand.

People push back when you disturb the personal and institutional equilibrium they know. And people resist in all kinds of creative and unexpected ways that can get you taken out of the game: pushed aside, undermined, or eliminated. (Heifetz & Linsky 2002)

So I knew when I approached the parent club that I would have to show that their work in the past had been invaluable.

I would also have to provide alternatives so they could see the possibilities and see that it wouldn't all be left to them to make these changes. I did my research and wrote a letter outlining the goals of the Kids – Go For Your Life program and how together we need to trial new healthy fundraisers and why. I attached some ideas that I had found on the internet and packaged it altogether for their next parent club meeting.

I am yet to hear from the group but I hope that together as a community we can lead the school into viewing healthy alternatives as a sustainable part of life (Andy Hargreaves' presentation) not just a single event to achieve our aim for the Kids – Go For Your Life program.

Reference

Heifetz, R. A. & Linsky, M. 2002, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*, Boston Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

Here is a great example of the clash of values with habits and mores. True leadership is about challenging the status quo and never resting on your laurels. In the human leadership domain this means 'unsettling people' just enough in a way that still allows them to feel part of the community.

It's about valuing the person while challenging the behaviour. In that way it is just like teaching: start from where the child is. Establishing collective responsibility is a level 4 behaviour on the Developmental

Learning Framework for School Leaders. Leaders who can achieve this in their schools are well on the way toward greatness for the whole school.

The focus on bringing about change as a human leadership domain challenge is nicely portrayed in this case. By stating that 'leadership is everybody's business' this case is placed squarely in context. It highlights the need to provide security when instigating change. This helps to deal with the resistance of those who are fearful of

change. By 'honouring the resistance' we are able to keep people feeling safe within the organisation as it changes, which releases their energy to achieve the task.

Most people working in schools, at all levels, have very similar goals. The differences that are experienced as resistance are often only related to how the goals might best be achieved. Therefore remaining fixed on the goals helps people to come on board.

Phil Riley

**Brute facts:
Evidence-based school improvement**

I currently work in a primary school of about 500 students. The school has built a very good reputation over a period of time. However, the school has struggled to maintain that high benchmark in recent years. When I was appointed to this school as curriculum coordinator, the curriculum was very formal and teacher practices were very traditional, particularly in the upper school. My directive from the principal was to challenge the way things were done and try to bring the school into the 21st century. The profile of the staff is varied and it ranges from young graduates to very senior experienced staff.

Throughout my four years at the school I have worked predominantly with the senior school and have therefore established a good rapport with staff in the 3–6 area of the school. I have also tried hard to make myself available for all staff and I feel I have a good rapport with them. There is no doubt in my mind that the school is in the process of an ideological war. The staff has struggled to come to terms with embracing new and innovative teaching methods as the old tried and true methods established the good reputation. The older staff refers to the new methods as warm and fuzzy, and attribute the slow decline in students' results as a lack of attention to the basics.

The introduction of the Principles of Teaching and Learning (PoLT) program was an opportunity for the teachers to evaluate their teaching practices. This program allowed staff to reflect on their teaching and rate their own skills on a set of different levels of effectiveness. The introduction of the PoLT program was a shared responsibility between myself and two other leading teachers. We decided that the best way to train the staff was to adopt a train the trainer model.

The first round of training involved an interview with a chosen teacher. This required them to rate themselves on the various principles. This was a successful process; all participants said they found the exercise thought provoking. Following this, students were surveyed and their results were compared to those evaluations of the teachers against each principle. This had the potential to cause the biggest problem in the process, particularly if the students' feedback didn't match the self-evaluation of the teacher. The teacher I worked with accepted all of the comments provided by her students and found the process enlightening.

The problems associated with the project began to be revealed during a whole-staff meeting when the process and a more in-depth look at each principle were discussed. The idea of getting student feedback was met with some scepticism, and some of the more senior staff indicated that they would find this process confronting. The next step was taken carefully, and hopefully teachers will come to view this program as an opportunity for personal growth and a means of improving student outcomes rather than a negative process.

This is the challenge for our leadership group – teachers will naturally feel that they are being judged and assessed. It appears to me that we face a challenge about how we develop a 'more collaborative culture' from a profession that has been very individualistic. We need to develop individual capacity to enhance collective capacity.

In my view, as teachers we have had a somewhat righteous view of our roles. We love talking about what 'I' have done or are doing as a natural way of reassuring ourselves we are doing a good job. Some bring a 'what's in it for me' ethos to discussion about what's happening in the school. Again this I feel is linked back to the nature of our work. We feel that unless we speak up we will be left behind. All of these thought processes are very natural, however outdated, in the age where effective professional learning is about collaborative work.

To ignore your natural instincts and not internalise every decision or point of view is very difficult for most of us. As teachers and leaders we have to embrace the culture of education as dynamic, always evolving and recognise we are all 'a work in progress' and therefore we must drive and evolve all decisions that are made within our school. What we neglect to realise is that being in charge doesn't necessarily mean taking charge of everything. Our challenge is to create a culture where we support one another.

We must be supportive and non-judgmental as we endeavour to bring others on board. We want teachers to challenge the way they teach, enhance, modify and develop their skills and practices to help achieve optimum results for their students.

This process will be difficult at times but once this attitude of challenge and change is embraced then the PoLT program will become fully embedded and the school will see the full benefits of teachers looking closely at their style and skills as an ongoing practice.

I feel confident that some of the recent changes introduced including the introduction of the PoLT program will be a success. I'm also a realist and mindful it will take the slow and the smooth institution of this program for it to be fully supported. As a result we will focus firstly on those more keen and willing to challenge their current practices to assist with the positive talk. With the weight of approval and genuine enthusiasm for an effective and useful professional learning program, the resistance will become more diminished. Until this time we take carefully planned steps to bring teachers on board.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case is a very good example of how leadership challenges come in various forms and need to be dealt with in creative and innovative ways. The aim of continuous growth and improvement is right in line with the discussion paper for Blueprint 2. PoLT principles and the P&D culture processes are designed to ensure that this kind of vision is translated into improved student outcomes school-wide.

As a general rule, building on the positive is a great way to go. In this way leadership is distributed as is the responsibility for outcomes.

Success is not guaranteed when data is used to drive decision-making with those values underpinning the process, but without it failure is a certainty.

Being told to 'bring the school into the 21st century' by a leader can be seen as either being handed a blank cheque to change everything as you see fit, or being landed with an unclear set of directions that therefore cannot be carried out effectively. Clarification leads to clear goals and much less angst.

In this case it seemed that a battle of beliefs that was being conducted by various factions within the staff could

have been averted by reference to the evidence in support of each side of the argument. The mismatch between the data and the beliefs is a good place to begin fruitful discussion. However, the leader needs to introduce and contain this kind of interaction very sensitively. The language we use is very important (see reference).

Phil Riley

Reference

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L. L. 2001, *Seven Languages for Transformation: How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pondering leaders ...

Throughout my career as a teacher, educator and leader I have been involved in fostering change at various schools. I have taught in primary education for five years. This involved me teaching Years 3 and 4 as well as 5 and 6. I have now taught in the secondary system for three years. My first year was as a Year 7 teacher and this year a Year 7/8 teacher.

In 2005 I made the change to secondary from primary. This was a culture shock! The daily running of a class was totally different. I no longer had my students for 27 hours a week with only three hours of planning time and their 28 faces looking at me anticipating what we were about to do next. Now I had 24 bigger faces that I saw three times a week for only one and a half hours each time. I also had three different classes for two different subjects. It was certainly interesting. The relationships were different and there was no consistency between classes.

After six weeks of feeling lost and disconnected I put together a proposal that would be the first introduction of integrated learning to my students in the subschool I worked in. I have always loved teaching an integrated program to my students and have seen the benefits. There is so much to education and there are numerous ways to educate; however, I wanted to look at the best practice in the secondary classroom and took a proposal of ideas to the leadership team and discussed future possibilities. From this meeting the curriculum change and implementation has snowballed.

In a traditional program, relevancy can be a problem. One of the most common questions in a mathematics class is, 'Why are we learning this math?' And the common response is, 'Because you will need to know it in your math class next year'. This response seldom satisfies the learner. Schools report higher attendance rates when students are engaged in an integrated curriculum. (Leopp 1999)

My ideology has always revolved around the development of interdisciplinary curriculum. The notion of a straight discipline-based curriculum has its place but I do not believe that it is as effective. As an educator I believe it is my job to provide a wide range of experiences that ready my students for the world after school. I have the understanding that there are certain concepts that are difficult to integrate into curriculum and that finding a balance between true integration and discipline-based curriculum is a powerful way to educate students. The Victorian Government has recently introduced the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) which sits nicely with my philosophy. This is represented by the triple helix picture.

It is important to point out that the triple helix demonstrates the overall concept of the VELs. It aims to create a new approach to organising curriculum that encompasses all facets of education: personal, social and academic learning.

With the implementation of the VELs, I felt that as we were changing from a discipline-based focus a new approach to learning would complement the introduction of the new VELs documentation. The holistic approach to planning, preparing and implementing curriculum according to the VELs would be well suited to the Connect style of curriculum.

Setting the scene

Our college has a particularly interesting, albeit brief history. We commenced in January 2004 with 240 Year 7 students and 24 staff in the first stage of a three-part building program to be completed over three years. The development is a direct result of the increase in population. It is estimated that one new family moves into the area each week. The total population of the youth sector (10–24 years) in the area is projected to almost double between now and 2011 (Miller 2005). The school has increased by a year level each year resulting in 750 students in Years 7 to 9, 61 teaching staff and 10 support staff in 2006. The teaching staff consists of 31 graduates, 8 accomplished, 11 expert, 8 leading teachers and 3 principal class. By 2009 the college will have 1500+ Year 7 to 12 students.

The initial establishment – 2004

The inaugural principal was appointed in September 2003. He was given four months to form a College Council and to put in place the policies, structure, program and procedures for the new school to open in January 2004. Twenty teachers were appointed, including six graduates and seven beginning teachers. Prior to opening, the staff worked during December and January to develop the school curriculum and program. We shared a common philosophy about creating a school that meets the needs of its students and provides the best possible learning environment for all.

The initial challenges

With the initial buildings already in place, the Stage 2 buildings under construction, and the Stage 3 buildings fully documented prior to the opening of the college in 2004, the school's physical design in no way reflected the philosophy and aspirations of the principal and teaching staff. The most significant issue this caused was the difficulties the physical layout imposed on the developing subschool structure. However, the buildings were developed for a traditional Key Learning Area (KLA) based facility.

Beginning the school with a relatively inexperienced staff has been a fantastic opportunity; however, it has also created different challenges. Our teachers struggled with the flexibility we were trying to create. Workload pressures, inexperience and lack of confidence saw some staff retreat to the comfort of traditional KLA curriculum delivery.

Regardless of their level of experience, some teachers brought with them a history of previous school experience based around KLAs, conservative pedagogies, memories of their own schooling and a lack of knowledge about Middle Years Research and Development Project (MYRAD) and Middle Years Pedagogy Research and Development (MYPRAD). The results obtained from Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) tests, attendance data and the 2004 Attitudes to School Survey showed that the pedagogies employed thus far were not engaging the students. But it was early days.

As the curriculum leader I was employed to come into the school after teaching in the middle years for seven years and implement an innovative middle years' curriculum. My journey began in January 2006 with the implementation of the Connect program.

The dilemma – explanation of the proposed curriculum change and teachers working in teams

Connect is an innovative concept for integrated curriculum delivery in the middle years of schooling. Based on a student-centred approach it aims to improve all learning outcomes with a focus on preparing students for the future world.

Connect enables students and teachers to identify and research problems and issues without restrictions on discipline boundaries. As a whole-school staff we have developed units of work relevant to our students' needs. These units integrate English, maths and science into relevant, interesting and real-life-based units of work. Curriculum integration consists of the following:

- Students use skills from all disciplines to research personal and global issues. They identify these and then work on a project that will make a difference.
- Organising themes that are drawn from life experiences, which allows students to question and engage in real-life issues and promotes collaboration between students and teachers.
- Tool boxing sessions are developed around the knowledge that certain subjects are difficult to integrate but are necessary to learn.
- Students learn what is worthwhile and relevant. This allows students of all abilities to contribute.

Connect will meet the varied and diverse needs and interests of individual students, building on knowledge and transforming the current and future practice of teachers new to the college. Central to the Connect plan is the focus on increased development of self-motivated learners. The target is to improve specific student outcomes in literacy and attendance which will be measured using AIM, VELs, attendance and Attitudes to School Survey data.

Connect is a unique concept which is currently being enthusiastically developed by me and the staff. Teachers work in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) with large groups of students in an open and flexible space. This model of learning and teaching aims to connect students and teachers with learning, one another, the college and the community.

The development of staff teams will allow for teacher PLTs and the development of superior teacher effectiveness. They will act as facilitators to develop and implement middle years' pedagogies through team teaching, action learning, critical friends, ICT, team planning, reflection and evaluation.

The Connect philosophy has been fostered around the creation of teams of teachers and teams of students. This has been the driving focus to this curriculum approach of integration. As teachers we have the ability to work as a team and provide a more powerful curriculum for our students. Teams of teachers then become professional learners rather than just a teacher within four walls.

My ideology of curriculum has been the driver for my position as the curriculum leader. I love working with students and they drive me to be a better educator through the challenges they set for me day by day. As a leader, educator and teacher I am focused on developing curriculum that allows for my students to become well rounded future citizens of the world who have had numerous personal, social and real relevant experiences. 'Nothing is constant but change' – Heraclites 500 BCE.

The case definition

Looking at curriculum as the curriculum leader, I constantly ask the question ‘What did you do last year?’ This seemed a strange question to ask of staff who had only done things once.

There were many issues that we were faced with as a school. No curriculum, no history, two-thirds of the staff were in their first year of teaching, more experienced staff expected students to have knowledge that students did not have, teaching from a textbook was comfortable.

Looking at the students and the socioeconomic environment, it was important to recognise that many students were from disadvantaged backgrounds and it was therefore vital that the curriculum offered was engaging and innovative. It also had to suit the needs and interests of our students.

At this stage I applied for Teacher Professional Leave which gave me the ability to research best practice of integrated curriculum. The original objective for Connect was to create teams of teachers and teams of students that allowed for collaborative learning and teaching. It was also about providing our students with curriculum that was relevant and powerful enough that it made them want to learn.

Throughout 2006 the change developed from being about what do we do? in a Connect class to where do we head from here? Throughout 2006 the staff was trained in Tribes (a middle school/ adolescent learning approach) and given a range of support throughout the implementation of Connect. There were teams that worked with critical friends to support the implementation.

Where we are at now is where the real case story begins. Our teams of teachers were placed with teams of students. Placing staff together with students who do not really know each other has been

by far the biggest challenge. Teams of students as well as staff are expected to work together harmoniously and effectively.

Relevant aspects of the Human Leadership program learning

In my recent experiences as a participant in the Department’s Human Leadership: Developing People program, I learned from Dr Brenda Beatty that the emotions – both my own and those of others – are always present and always relevant. More than anything I have realised that taking the emotion out of dealing with difficult people and difficult situations is the most important. Being able to say I really value your opinion and respect your point of view was what has made me realise that if you take the time to listen, whether it is relevant or not, there is always something in the conversation that is the underlying issue.

I used the ‘Fire’ poem that Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski shared at the program with my staff as the start of a curriculum day. This was an amazing conversation. In my head I saw the fire poem to be the logs representing the curriculum. When you place too many logs on the fire the flame goes out. That was my perception of the poem. The staff perception was more about things in everyday life as well as students in the classroom.

I must admit when I first was listening to the staff discussing their understanding I remember thinking ‘boy they really did not get it’. On reflection, however, I see their reaction was really about what was going on for them at the time. Not about curriculum and the fact that there is so much to do. I really have learned that when we lead initiatives it is normal and natural to be in the melting pot so to speak. People get out of their comfort zone and they feel stressed and even threatened.

Taking the first steps

Throughout the year I have constantly had to support staff members of two teams who break down in tears about their teaching partnerships. I was fortunate enough to go on the Human Leadership course and choose these two teams as my focus for the project. There was a great deal of nasty behaviour, lack of consultation and so on within these teams, and so my project began.

My main aim working with the two teams was focused on their functionality. My goal was to get them working towards both effective teaching and learning and effective planning. These meetings have been challenging in many ways. They have cut through to the core of what was really annoying the staff members.

Some of the issues that were occurring were:

- communication
- role understanding
- planning development
- feeling of being let down
- respecting of one another’s professional judgments.

From these conversations I was able to facilitate discussion about the behaviours that were occurring in order to create a common understanding and shared vision for the teams to be working towards. The issues were really just on the surface. The more the meetings occurred different foci occurred. Each week there would be a common understanding of what was to be achieved as well as an understanding as to where we were heading. Over the weeks the team became more functional and is now at the stage where they are able to function, plan, develop and work through a planning session without me being there.

Continuing challenges and personal dilemmas

I believe that there has been one really positive outcome from this whole experience. As a leadership team we have realised that there really do need to be protocols that allow for ‘pre-crisis talks’. I think that in reality people often won’t ask for help even when they really need it. This means that there needs to be a formal process that allows for teams to go through meetings and restoration rather than becoming resentful as well as unhappy.

Impact of the Human Leadership: Developing People program

For me the Human Leadership: Developing People program was one of the best PDs I have ever been involved with. I was really blown away by Professor Pat Maslin-Ostrowski and the work she has done. I loved reading *The Wounded Leader* (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski 2002) and still refer to it as I find perspective within the chapters and case studies in my own troubled world of leadership.

I have made lifelong contact with members of my book team and people who I will be able to look towards in the future with leadership conversations as well as challenges that I will face.

Conclusion

Currently I feel as though I have had great success as the teams that I was able to work with have developed and are now functioning. While we still have a long way to go, we have created firm foundations for future learning together. There is so much to do being a new school. I believe that in time if we stay focused and work through the challenges that we will be faced with along the way we will really be a leading school!

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Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case is complex and interesting. It spans a number of levels in the developmental profile, and touches on so many important aspects of the leadership journey in a unique situation.

This author has displayed a great deal of courage by continuously stepping out of the comfort zone and into the growth zone, to borrow from Vygotsky. Growth, however, is not always all it’s cracked up to be. Two steps forward and one step back would be nice. In reality it might feel a little more like snakes and ladders.

We have to all be ready to enjoy the journey, safe in the knowledge that we don’t know what’s around the corner.

At level 2 of the Developmental Learning Framework leaders implement programs to respond to student diversity. This case is a good example of the drive that is needed to make things happen at this level. There are some nice examples of distributed leadership and trusting teachers’ professional judgments to help everyone grow. The reflection experience is nicely illustrated also. This is great training for life, not just life in school.

Also, the power of listening is highlighted here. This seems a good example of ‘hearing people into speaking’ (Midgley & Midgley 2005). I did think that this author may have a job waiting for them at the United Nations bringing peace to the Middle East and Africa if they tire of school leadership. We need to walk our talk, in schools, the community, and the world. We are growing together!

Phil Riley

The dangers of mind-reading: Communication for shared understanding

We often run into leaders who feel they can do no more. The more they give the more they feel they are expected to give. It is often too easy to set yourself up as 'the expert' and thereby deprive others of the opportunity to develop their own expertise and also see 'the expert' missing out on doing some learning of their own ...

Over time I have begun to see that at our school we have a huge supply of experts, which creates a set of challenges of its own, particularly in the area of professional development. On numerous occasions this has led to situations where:

- some staff resent being 'told all the time' and hence not having their input valued
- some staff feel that they have nothing to learn from others and that they are above attending Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT) meetings because 'there is nothing new for me!'
- some staff become involved in major power plays as they try to be more expert than others.

I do not see this as a healthy form of professional development.

A secondary problem has also emerged because of the fact that our school has been in budget deficit for many years with an ageing, 'experienced' staff and the result of this has been that we have been forced into a position where any new staff positions have been tagged 'graduate'. This has created a large divide between expert and inexperience.

When looking at this situation it's possible to see that experts could take the quick-fix option and simply impart their hard-earned, tried and true expertise to our inexperienced staff. Instead we must look at the situation as an opportunity not only for the newer teacher to grow but also to support and strengthen the experienced staff by providing them with opportunities that stop them becoming stuck in a rut.

I am committed to the development of a coaching style of professional interaction where team members are given the opportunities to grow their talents in a supported, active way rather than being seen as empty vessels in need of filling. With the focus of my Human Leadership project on spelling there have been a myriad of activities and incidents that have allowed members of the P-4 Professional Learning Team (PLT) to support, develop and grow as professional learners. One such event is the subject of my story.

The story of Cal

A new teacher found herself in a prep grade. Her previous experience had been in a Grade 4 level and all her teaching rounds were in the senior areas of schools. Our grade placement issues saw many staff showing a lack of flexibility, but to her credit Cal volunteered to be the 'hole plugger'. 'Just put me where you need me', was her comment. In later discussions she revealed quietly to me, 'I didn't think they'd take me seriously ... I don't know a thing about preps! But I'll give it a go'.

In her third week she came to me and said that she felt there was no leeway in the teaching opportunities that the other prep teacher was offering her. Big book work had to be done this way, writing that way and so on. While not professing to know how to do it herself, she was expressing the idea that she should have some ownership of her teaching rather than becoming a mirror of the more experienced teacher. I was reminded of the old proverb 'give a man a fish ... feed him for a day ... Teach a man to fish, feed him for life'. Then came the tricky part ...

How could I support Cal in her journey without becoming yet another 'teller'? She needed to be the one to make the discoveries ... trial the new ideas ... evaluate the pros and cons ... In short I had to show her that I valued her teaching and was there to coach not to 'play'. And so the game began ...

'I don't feel that I'm doing my big book the right way. How can I make the spelling links?' was a starting point for our initial discussion. This part was easy.

'What do you think are the non-negotiables of big book time? And, what opportunities are you making for your grade to use the big book for spelling support?'

Having created her list to focus her thinking and reflection we then had to provide an opportunity for her to step outside herself and watch what she was doing. Video ...

I set the video going and left her to it. Cal was given time to privately watch herself, reflect in terms of the list she had formed, and that was the end of stage one. She shared with me ideas about what she saw as areas for future development.

Our second wave saw a second taping a few weeks later. This time Cal was ready to share the tape with me and we discussed the learning opportunities and possible directions for future work that this session had. Both she and I learned from the discussion and the way we could bounce off each other saw us generate ideas for Cal to trial down the track.

The next stage was more informal: 'I tried that today' conversations were casual and often over coffee. A month later Cal was again taped during her big book session. This video was shared with the P-4 PLT during a meeting where all team members were encouraged to feed back their responses to Cal's teaching session. Again discussions

were in line with what things were negotiable and what were non-negotiable in the big book time. Each team member offered their own insights and ideas as to how they went about incorporating spelling into the big book sessions. The list of ideas was amazing. As a group we were able to celebrate the diversity and expertise of each other's teaching styles. This also displayed clearly that knowledge of one's own students' learning styles and needs was paramount to allow for the greatest learning outcomes. Reflection helped Cal discover how far she had come in developing her expertise in this area of teaching. This was so valuable.

The whole team took something away from the session that they felt could help them with their own teaching. A prized comment came from the 'expert' prep teacher who came to me afterwards and said, 'I'd forgotten about using that method to do big book. I used to do it but sometimes you need to see someone else to reinspire your thinking'.

The opportunity to step back and 'see yourself as others see you' is a valuable tool for professional development. Through the use of video taping Cal was given opportunities in private, partnered and shared situations to consider, contemplate and adapt her teaching strategies to allow for maximum learning opportunities for her students.

The impact on her teaching was substantial, the impact on my teaching was substantial and the development of her students in the area of literacy skills, particularly spelling, was significant.

Commentary from a Critical Friend

This case is a terrific example of the limitless possibilities that can be opened up through sensitive leadership, courage and support in a leadership context. The goal was clear and therefore could be easily understood (eventually – once resistance to change was taken care of by inclusion rather than exclusion).

One gets the feeling reading this case that the focus was always sharply directed toward increased student achievement through improvements in staff performance and collaborative professional learning. This is truly distributed leadership at its best.

In the end everybody wins – an inspiring story to be read when the road ahead looks full of potholes.

The opposite of this is mind-reading leadership where we guess what is in the other person's mind rather than checking in with them. The danger of mind-reading is similar to labelling people: we lose sight of the person and keep our biases strongly in mind. Sometimes this is caused by not knowing (fearing being unable to live up to the label 'expert') and sometimes through cultural means. When everybody uses a label such as 'blocker' it is difficult to be the one

person to refrain: with the potential for isolation from the group.

Another important feature of this case is facing up to the issue of the quick-fix versus sustainable change. This is an important tension that leaders face constantly, and one that is going to become more challenging as schools fill up with Generation Y teachers replacing the current cohort.

Phil Riley

The value of networking

Some students from a Year 11 class were working in a computer lab and were not under direct or continuous supervision of their teacher. Another teacher from the faculty approached a group of students who were using the computers to play games instead of completing their work. The teacher asked one of the students to stop playing games. The student ignored him. The situation escalated into a yelling match which eventually led to the teacher, out of pure frustration, manhandling the student quite forcibly. The student responded in kind. Balancing the needs and managing the emotion would prove difficult. Reaching an outcome that satisfied all stakeholders as well as managing the situation after a resolution were also going to create a problem.

Clearly this was a very serious incident. A strategic process needed to be developed that involved the teacher, the student, the parent, the student coordinator, the acting assistant principal and the acting principal of Sunnyside College.

Sunnyside College is a large secondary school in rural Victoria. The college has approximately 800 students. Our data in recent years indicates that the college faces a number of challenges within the current Strategic Plan – particularly developing more effective relationships with students. The student cohort has changed significantly in the last five to seven years as the college is no longer a traditional ‘high school’ where students at risk were ‘moved on’ to other school types. We are now an inclusive environment that offers a comprehensive education to a broad cohort of students.

This, coupled with an ageing staff who have consistently delivered curriculum in a traditional way believing that discipline is the responsibility of the administration, means that there are occasions when difficult student management issues arise such as the one just described.

Through the incident we certainly gained a clearer understanding of one of the key aspects of human leadership. There were clear links to the text our group studied, in particular the emotional side of leadership and the expectation that others have of their leader. In terms of my own project, the link is the expectation from staff that the principal will manage the difficult processes and provide staff with ‘the reasons why’ she acted as she did.

A number of significant learnings have arisen since this incident occurred:

- The expectation that a process will be put in place and that an outcome will be reached that covers all the complexities of such a situation has been developed. Also, it is important that we are reassuring those involved (especially the parent) that the process will deliver the necessary (or expected) outcomes.
- The value of networking was highlighted – for example seeking advice from those people who are experienced with these kinds of situations (our Senior Education Officer) or have particular expertise in the area (e.g. Conduct and Ethics Branch of DEECD).

- Dealing with the emotional aspects – we were faced with a very angry parent seeking retribution, a student who was reluctant to accept full responsibility for his role in escalating the situation, a staff member who regretted his actions and was spiralling down with self-blame, and a relatively inexperienced student coordinator. I also had to deal with my own emotions, given that the process involved a formal warning, letter and conference with the teacher involved.
- I had to learn to deal with a wounded staff member who clearly regretted his actions. I had to balance his wellbeing and his self-doubt that resulted from his actions with his anger that the student was not punished for his actions as part of the process.
- The importance of following through in difficult circumstances. I needed to make sure letters were written, and had phone contact with the parent regarding the process to reassure him that something ‘official’ had been done; conduct follow-up meetings with the teacher to gauge his level of wellbeing and confidence in me as a leader; touch base with Conduct and Ethics Branch to confirm the process had occurred; and inform the principal about this incident upon his return from overseas.
- The learning and confidence that develop once you have come through to the ‘other side’ of a difficult situation – I am continuing to develop my ability to articulate the processes and growing in confidence about the process itself.

- The ‘Fab Four’ – empathy (hearing and acknowledging the circumstances of those involved), role clarity (my job and indicating to the teacher that manhandling students is not within their role), engagement (meetings, phone calls, support) and coaching (managing the return to teaching of the teacher and providing him with a focus to ensure that he continues as a teacher).

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Commentary from a Critical Friend

Here is a great example of the vulnerability of leadership. What becomes clear in this case is that the leader becomes protected by stepping into, rather than shying away from the vulnerability.

To acknowledge that one is human, not an invincible leader, and doing the best job that they can, not deliberately trying to get in other peoples' way is to seek honest support from those around us who are able to offer it.

For those who can't, we have to remain positive and hopeful, while understanding that the slings and arrows they may direct our way are their issue not ours.

This is easy to say, much harder to do of course. We all need to walk our talk. That way we preserve our energy for the things that matter most. To try to be what we are not is too exhausting. Acknowledging our vulnerabilities is a great way to start that process.

Leadership is a process not a product. By keeping the focus on the outcomes of leadership, a better world for the people and better people for the world, the meaning of the work shines through. Good luck with your journey ... may you have courage, strength, humour and humility in equal measure.

Phil Riley

Chapter Five

The Hard Work of Human Leadership:
Courage, Counter-Intuition and the
Commitment to Connectedness

Brenda Beatty

Every
child,
every
opportunity



The Hard Work of Human Leadership: Courage, Counter-Intuition and the Commitment to Connectedness

Brenda Beatty

To be adept at human leadership we need to do the hard yards that always begin and end with reflection and bold self-critique.

It is wonderful to see that the Department's Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders (DLFSL) (2007) features Human Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Symbolic Leadership and Educational Leadership along with a redefinition of what is often mistakenly believed to be a matter for mere managerialism, that is Technical Leadership. But even Technical Leadership, as it is characterised in these DLFSL profiles involves considerable collaboration, distribution of responsibility and consultation. Essentially the human, cultural, symbolic and educational dimensions are inherent in technical leadership as well! This is a truly integrative model and that is why it is so visionary.

Not surprisingly, given the well-designed and skillfully implemented Blueprint for Victorian Government Schools (2003) and its excellently applied suite of flagship strategies for developing leadership capacity across the system, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has recently reported having found our own DEECD's system-wide approach to improving school leadership to be cutting edge. Victoria's government school system reform initiatives were chosen from 22 countries as one of five exemplary case studies worldwide (OECD 2008). The other four case studies were derived from Austria, Belgium, Finland and the UK.

In my view, part of the secret to Victoria's ultimate success will lie in its commitment to relationships with people – in the general public, schools, networks and regions – and people who are members of a national and international community of scholars and practitioners who treat research, theory and practice as blended and mutually reinforcing dimensions of education. Victoria's DEECD has gone a very long way to develop relationships among an ever-strengthening worldwide network of people who are passionate about the possibilities in schools.

Having looked over the fence and into lots of other leadership capacity building paddocks, I have seen many excellent leadership development practices. From my perspective, however, few systems can compare with the provision of such a coherent set of programs, policies and exemplary practices as that in which our very own Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is engaged.

The Department promotes shared understandings of common concepts and language throughout the system and is providing an astounding range of opportunities for educators to learn and work together to improve school leadership. Human Leadership: Developing People is one of these programs.

The human leadership domain is one of the trickiest to master, if one ever could. Furthermore, the burden of proof of mastery in this area is never complete. It is emergent and ongoing. The evidence of one's capabilities in human leadership is manifest in the daily interpersonal encounters we experience every day.

We teach and lead from who we are. Thus it follows that it is important to have a deep and bravely honest learning relationship with oneself. To be adept at human leadership we need to do the hard yards that always begin and end with reflection and bold self-critique. This is the stuff of inner leadership, and inner leadership provides the foundation for building the necessary skills and predispositions to engage successfully in higher level human leadership profile activities.

Inner leadership (and thus human leadership) involves reflection, pausing to consider and reconsider. This pertains not only to our organisational selves but also our professional and personal identities. Our actions and inactions, our words and our deeds continuously define the integrity, the integrated (or 'dis-integrated') dimensional complexities that make us who we are.

Yet leaders, and principals in particular – being people of action and well practised in roles that require rapid-fire decision-making – can find that it feels downright counter-intuitive to stop at all.

It can be harder still to let oneself truly reflect and allow the emotional dimension of our meaning making systems to inform us. Nevertheless, it is in the process of regularly taking some serious time for reflection about one's own humanness and relatedness to others that these capabilities can grow. This is the real stuff of human leadership. Without reflection upon and in action, unexamined patterned responses to self and others may or may not be serving us well.

Despite the numbing pressures of the job and the crushing ironies that are exacerbated by isolation in the role, regular reconsideration of the importance of building and rebuilding relationships is inherent in high levels of human leadership capability. It's the hardest work of all. But it makes all the difference.

Within the DLFSL is a set of profiles that describe the kinds of activities associated with a continuum of developmental levels for each of Sergioivanni's forces or domains. These profiles have been crafted to reflect the notion that each of its levels subsumes the one before it as the expertise associated with its activities goes further than the last. You can readily see the cumulative development from level 1 right through to level 5. At level 5 in Human Leadership, leading with the development of healthy productive relationships, tracking progress and addressing sources of negative impact upon the quality of cooperation in the learning environment become ways of seeing and being.

This often means finding the courage to have some difficult conversations. Distributing leadership responsibilities and supporting those both within and beyond their school boundaries becomes second nature to leaders whose activities reflect the highest – level 5 – profile.

Leaders create an environment that intuitively responds to changes that impact on the school community. A range of strategies are initiated to improve relationships between teams and individuals and behaviours that impact negatively on a cooperative environment are addressed. They create innovative ways of communicating and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of communication strategies.

They delegate authority to others in the school community. They publicly support other schools to build trust and cooperation across the system. (DEECD 2007, p. 6)

Why not begin with the end in mind as Steven Covey advises? Let us examine some of the intricacies of this level 5 activity statement. For instance, what does it mean to 'create an environment that intuitively responds to changes that impact on the school community'? To create an environment at all, one would have to be attuned to the people, the culture and the contextual factors that are continuously co-creating and co-maintaining it. It's not too hard to identify problem relationships but what would 'a range of strategies' that 'address' and 'improve relationships between teams and individuals and behaviours that impact negatively on a cooperative environment' look like?

To develop the strategies, one needs to be sensitive to the human factors and to accomplish such sensitivity, the instrument of one's self – the sensing mechanism if you will – needs to be taken into account and considered as part of the said 'environment'.

This is particularly true of people in leadership positions, as often the position is what people will initially respond to, largely based on past experiences with others in the same role. Knowing this can help a lot when one is faced with challenge and criticism, or even more deadening: silence and passive resistance. Understanding the importance of ‘innovative ways of communicating’ suggests it’s time for something different. It is exciting to explore the possibilities when people step outside their role-bound identities and decide to communicate openly with each other. It takes courage and it is definitely counter-intuitive relative to outdated modes of simply ruling the roost, but oh what a difference when we shed the pretence and take a step toward authenticity.

A leader who is capable of creating a culture made up of people who function in ways that embrace their complex interconnectedness – with themselves, each other, the children, the school community and its holism – is a leader who is also more likely to sense threats and dangers, and is surrounded by others who do this too. Leadership is diffuse in such learning communities, as individuals act to promote harmony and flexible collective responses to challenges. All members of such communities share and take delight in their sense of the whole. They know what ‘we’ stand for and how to challenge each other’s thinking without diminishing the sense of regard in which a person is held. In such ‘environments’ individuals look after one another; this so that they are better able to look after society’s children.

A person who is able to create a human environment that can respond intuitively to change and impacts upon its community is an adept, ecologically and systemically oriented leader. Interconnected responsiveness is paramount in an attuned ‘environment’ made up of people who ‘get’ what they are about – individually and together – and know how to participate constructively to challenge and change. There are many images one might conjure to capture the idea of an intuitive environment ... This is worth pondering so that such images can inform our praxis. But one thing is for sure, a leader who can foster such an entity would need to honour the intuitive in her or himself!

Level 5 in the profile of Human Leadership is evocative of activities that demand highly functioning personal and interpersonal qualities. People who are operating through activities in this level enjoy a non-anxious presence as they have overcome the need to be defensive or belittling to fend off criticism. Such a person would have learned that their own wounding experiences were actually opportunities for growth and thereby have become highly developed philosophically. For such a leader, the diversity of perspectives has become a resource, a reservoir of possibilities and not a threat.

It takes courage, and counter-intuition to teach oneself to move toward the danger, and embrace the discomfort of being present to others, when you have no way of knowing how they will treat you. Leaders who have the self-awareness to realise that no matter what happens their integrated self is safe, can afford to take risks and to let others engage in creative adventures too. The commitment to connectedness – with self and with others – is leadership.

With support from colleagues leaders can overcome the destructive conditions of isolation that go with the territory. They can recognise the organisational pressures that fragment the integrated dimensions of mind, body and spirit, if you will. With support from trusted others, leaders can learn to unravel the emotional complexities of their own wounding experiences, and heal and grow in the process.

Isolation is the most damaging working condition of the principalship but it doesn’t have to be this way. Some wise and enduring principals I know have monthly breakfast gatherings with a cadre of peers who simply listen deeply and help each other hash out what needs to be said. When we create opportunities for mutual support with trusted others, we can continually rediscover ourselves when we are lost. Professional friends are critical if leaders are to get the help they need to remain centred in the midst of the most demanding and complex situations. This is the stuff of human leadership. Remember, in a mid-air crisis, put your own oxygen mask on first or you’re not going to be much use to anyone!

To be or not to be . . .

To insist proactively on the importance of humane, respectful, relational ways of exercising discretion, especially from a position of unequal power; to truly empower others and share leadership authority and be able to live with the results; to be able to continue to confer respect and dignity on those who are and are not trying their best and may or may not yet be succeeding; all of these things and more are called for if one is to become engaged in human leadership. It's about creating a resilient, relational culture of collaborative professional learners who are committed to continuous improvement. And it's about participating as an active member. This is the ultimate accountability. Without a highly developed sense of relational trust – in ourselves and our colleagues – caution can take the place of creativity. It's that simple (Beatty & Brew 2004). And so it should not be surprising that levels of trust among adults in schools are predictive of student performance (Bryk & Schneider 2002). Human leadership is about releasing the creative potential in all learners at all levels: certainly the children and the teachers, but also the leaders themselves.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading the case stories of our Human Leadership: Developing People participants, and I trust that our commentaries have provided some insights into the ways we are learning along with our fellow educators, how best to foster the development of human leadership capabilities. There is much work to be done if we are to reculture school leadership so that it becomes redefined in terms of the commitment to connectedness. I do believe, however, that with such a commitment and the necessary courage and counter-intuition, schools and the authority figures within them may in a very short time be able to model for generations of children to come, a new dawn for leadership itself, and the world of possibilities that goes with it.

References

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Appendix 1

Human Leadership: Developing People Improvement Project Topics

PROJECT TITLE	OVERALL PROJECT AIM
The Challenge Collective Purpose ... Collective Practice	To build a cohesive team, with a transparent collective purpose and practice.
Knowing your Students	To develop a set of processes that will enhance the teacher's knowledge of the students in their classes.
Professional Dialogue with VCE Teachers	To increase student achievement at VCE.
Mentoring	To lead and guide the Specialist Professional Learning Team to provide quality support to assist mentors to develop skills required to build a successful mentoring relationship through mentor training.
Our Culture – Post-Diagnostic Review 2007	To support our school to address some of the very clear issues raised through our Diagnostic Review process.
Individual Management Plans for Students with Extreme High Level Behaviours	To enable the college to better manage those students who exhibit extreme behaviour that impacts negatively on themselves, teaching staff, students and families.
Improvement in the performance and development culture where teachers work in teams providing feedback on teacher effectiveness	To create a climate and culture where all team members feel confident and competent in giving and receiving feedback and where individual and collective capacity is enhanced.
Reflective Pedagogy	To initiate a reflective culture amongst teachers through coaching, constructive feedback and collegiate support.
Improving Performance, One Teacher at a Time	To work with individual teachers to improve classroom performance. This will be done by developing effective relationships with teachers to develop a shared understanding of classroom performance and using a range of resources in the school such as peer coaches to work with those teachers. Undertaking such a project will enable me to develop skills in establishing effective professional relationships in difficult circumstances.
Performance & Development Accreditation Journey. Induction & Mentoring Programs.	To consolidate Induction and Mentoring programs.
Swap program	To enhance professional interaction amongst staff and to allow staff to experience other areas of the school.
Leadership Profile / Teacher Performance and Feedback	To enhance the leadership profile in the school. To investigate improved methods of Performance Review that will in turn increase teacher effectiveness. To develop a sustainable approach to Performance Review that is meaningful to all participants.

PROJECT TITLE	OVERALL PROJECT AIM
Improving Senior School Results and Learning to be an Assistant Principal	To support and oversee staff, and lead a number of initiatives introduced to specifically target the senior school improvement priority of our School Strategic Plan. These include a Mentor Teacher program, an Attendance Policy (and associated processes) Study Hall, the Year 12 Teachers Professional Learning Team. Already one thing that is emerging is the pressure and workload, as we have specifically targeted teachers and students in this area. With this project I aim to monitor staff and student perceptions of workload through focus groups, surveys at Year 12 teachers PLT meetings with a view to ensuring that staff and students' emotional wellbeing is considered.
The New Middle School	The new sub-school leadership structure requires leading teachers to take on a mentoring role with new team members. My HLDP project is designed to maximise the effectiveness of this mentoring role by building capacity in my team members and consequently aid in reaching the targets as set out in the Annual Implementation Plan. I have aimed to lead my team through a number of tools designed to identify where we want to be at the end of the year, the vision and ethos we wish to engender through our work, what we have done already this year, what needs to happen, the type of support and training we need (including a visit to another school to learn from their sub school structure and operation), the people within the school we need to enhance our relationships with and by utilising a number of the tools used through this program to support their development as future leaders.
Responsible Personal Management	To work with a small team to develop policy and take this to relevant groups for input and finally to School Council for approval.
Improved Beginning and New Teacher Induction Process through Human Leadership	To improve the induction process to ensure that new and beginning teachers are supported and trained to be self-reflective and improvement focused.
CASEA – Early Intervention Service for Young Children with Challenging Behaviours and Emerging Conduct Disorders	To develop a school-wide approach to managing challenging behaviours.
P and D Culture	To gain P and D Culture Accreditation by the end of 2007.
From Rules to Relationships	To implement a Restorative Justice model of behaviour management.
Year 8 and 9 Review	To review and possibly change the Year 8 curriculum in order to improve student engagement and outcomes.
P and D Culture Accreditation for the School by April 2008	To achieve P and D Culture Accreditation so that all teachers are supported to extend their repertoire of effective learning and teaching approaches.
Supporting staff to participate in a collaborative process to reflect on school performance and effectiveness	To implement a comprehensive and consultative self-evaluation of school performance.

Appendix 1

Human Leadership: Developing People Improvement Project Topics

PROJECT TITLE	OVERALL PROJECT AIM
Leading Schools Fund Implementation	To lead the school's Leading Schools Fund initiative and use this opportunity to develop my leadership capacity using aspects of the Human Leadership framework as a reference and evaluation tool.
Building the capacity of the leadership team to support professional learning teams	To work directly with the five members of the school's leadership team to explore further the five domains of the Leadership Framework, with a key focus on supporting team members in their leadership roles in order to strengthen their capacity to support and develop their staff professional learning teams.
Developing a Common Practice	To introduce and implement Restorative Practice.
Building a school culture through a vision of shared purpose and teacher practice	Through consultation and collaboration with all members of the school community, I hope we will be able to articulate a shared vision of student learning at the college, with teacher learning an integral part of this process so as to deliver the best learning environment for our students.
School Leadership Team Development	To broaden and deepen the school's leadership team experiences and capabilities in order to improve the learning of the team, colleagues and students.
Effective Personal Learning	<p>It takes vision, passion and courage to make a good school great. As school leaders it is our moral imperative to create great schools that are underpinned by a culture in which relationships built on trust and respect enable both leaders and teachers to care for the personal and professional development of each other. If the culture is enriched in trust, commitment, collaboration and combined with quality curriculum and educational vision exceptional student outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>The project focus is on establishing a performance and development culture and advocates that this culture is underpinned by strategic leadership, quality learning opportunities built on trust, the establishment of strong relationships and the development of strategically focused school. Initially it takes the actions of a courageous leader to 'rattle the cage', and ask questions such as:</p> <p>What makes a great school? Where are we currently? How can we evolve into a great school?</p>
Smart Choices	To improve parent and student understanding of connections between healthy lifestyle and the impact on academic and personal performance.
The CLAN	To get together with two other small schools nearby more often and work more closely. Share facilities, personal (students, teachers and community), and resources to build a working model for shared leadership benefiting everyone involved.
Introducing the Principles of Teacher and Learning	To introduce successfully the Principles of Teaching and Learning program to the staff and establish a plan for that introduction.

PROJECT TITLE	OVERALL PROJECT AIM
Professional Learning Teams	To introduce and develop professional learning teams into the school in 2007 and to seek feedback from staff to refine the model for 2008.
Developing Teams	To turn a non-functioning team into a functioning team.
An Effective Junior Leadership Team	To develop my capacity to build a supportive and productive Year 7–9 coordination team in order to support more effectively two identified priorities of the college’s AIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to build quality relationships and engagement through building social relationships and teamwork supported by quality teaching • to improve student safety and wellbeing at all levels.
Teaching Focus Plans	To enhance the understanding of teaching focus plans and their usefulness within the classroom through the leading teacher group.
Ready Set Spell	To develop and implement a focus on spelling in line with our school AIP. The specific focus of the project is to work in the P–4 sub school. More specifically it will provide us with the opportunity to align our teaching practice with VELs, PoLT, and the Covey Habits as required by our school. This process will allow the PLT to research and develop knowledge of the topic in order to enhance the delivery of this area of curriculum within our sub school.
Improved Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning	To ensure that the implementation of our Leading Schools Fund Project continues, specifically through the completion of a refurbishment of a ‘space’, and the ‘roll-out’ of an extensive professional development program for our staff. A significant cultural shift is the aim.
Developing Leadership Potential in Others	To develop leadership in others to improve student learning in writing in order to increase the number of students working at or above the expected level of achievement and enhance student engagement in non-fiction writing through a supportive and motivating classroom environment.
Efficient Use of Timetabled Class Time in Inquiry Learning and Centre	To increase the efficiency of the newly built Years 7 and 8 centre as well as reconsider the efficiency of time use on a daily basis in the timetable.



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