Pedagogic Leadership: Refocusing on Learning and Teaching

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ABSTRACT: This paper critiques instructional leadership and the notion of pedagogic leadership is proposed as an alternative, broader conception of the principalship. Pedagogy concerns enabling the learning and intellectual growth of students in contrast to instruction that treats students as the object of curriculum implementation. Successful classroom pedagogy requires that teachers understand how students learn and have the autonomy to design, implement and assess educational activities that meet the needs of individual and all students. Pedagogic leadership is predicated on informed teacher practice and reflection. Teachers are empowered to exercise professional responsibility and supportive judgements by principals who are pedagogic leaders. The pedagogic leader demonstrates credible knowledge of learning and teaching in conjunction with knowledge of the processes for improving school-wide learning.

Introduction

The effectiveness of schools in educating students is highly dependent upon the presence and nature of multi-leveled pedagogic leadership within each individual school. While principals are formally required to lead the school, leadership is not the sole province of the principalship. Indeed most schools are characterized by a combination of formal and informal leadership as evidenced by teachers assuming responsibility for particular tasks and programs. Although the leadership of schools is a complex phenomenon, the outcomes of successful school leadership are nonetheless readily identifiable. These outcomes center upon the quality of the pedagogy provided by teachers and the engagement of students in learning. Pedagogic change is difficult (Planning & Evaluation Service, 2000) and as Stigler and Hiebert (1999, p.83) noted, teachers tend to replicate the culture and pedagogy of their personal experiences as students, at school.

The following discussion is a synthesis of literature and research into school leadership and changing teachers' pedagogic practices. In particular, this paper identifies the key factors of pedagogic leadership.

Leadership in Schools

Leadership has a chameleon-like quality. Interest in the study of leadership burgeoned in the post-War period. Early research concentrated on what were thought to be the essential precursors to leadership- personality and physical traits (Owens, 1987). Weber's separation of charismatic leadership from position-based leadership promoted the belief that leadership was more of a consequence of a set of human actions based on emotional power that engaged the support of others (Solomon, 2003, p. 202). When Ciulla (2003) tracked variations in the definitions of leadership from the 1940s she noted that in the 1990s the support for the leader had become more an inter-dependent relationship between the leader and the led, which was significantly different from the earliest views of leadership. The development of the concept of leadership is not linear, as Goddard's (2003) listing of 14 leadership styles shows. Goddard's work also clearly demonstrates the indebtedness of education to the business world in leadership theory. In education, Sergiovanni's (1984, p. 6) listing of the multiple dimensions of leadership and the inclusion of the

concept of educational forces marked an important development in the study of educational leadership.

Writing and research on educational leadership, particularly that from the United States, emphasizes the importance of school leaders being heavily involved in the schools' instructional program (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001; Hill, 2001, 2002; Schlechty, 2001). Murphy & Hallinger (1992) noted that in the 1980s, principals needed to become curriculum and instructional leaders if they were to coordinate local school improvement. This dimension of school leadership has been called instructional leadership (Blase & Blase, 1998; Gupton, 2003; Lashway, 1995, 2002; McEwan, 2003; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002).

The Problematic Nature of Instructional Leadership

While acknowledging scepticism about "leadership by adjectives" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), instructional leadership is a concept that joins the two, key activities at the heart of the teaching act. A contemporary example of defining instructional leadership is that of Daresh and Playko (as cited in Gupton, 2003, p.32) who defined instructional leadership as: "…direct or indirect behaviors that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning." A shortcoming of this definition is that a distant politician's direction to spend more money investigating indigenous students' learning styles, for example, would be seen as instructional leadership, even if the act were driven solely for political gain. This definition also failed to signal that students' learning should be improved, not simply affected.

In an international sense, it is unfortunate that much of the current research on the topic of pedagogic leadership is overshadowed by the concept of instructional leadership, which is deeply embedded in American educational literature. The term instructional leadership has an almost oxymoronic quality, where the instruction is problematic and the leadership aspect is often ignored or misunderstood.

While many writers use instruction as a synonym for teaching or pedagogy, instruction is a limiting, clinical term that relates to one part of the teaching and learning cycle. Instruction does not encompass the formative or summative assessment that effective teachers do as a matter of course.

Instruction does not consider the affect of the teacher's body language or discourse that helps create a learning environment that promotes academic risk taking. Instruction does not describe the influence of the class culture on students' understanding of democratic decision-making. In addition, the word instruction is contaminated with pejorative connotations of power. The command, "I instruct you to do X," leaves a second party in no doubt about the power relationship between the speaker and the person being spoken to. As a result, instructional leadership, too, can be perceived as a power based transaction. Wisconsin has a Department of Public Instruction- shades of 1984!

Much of the research and literature on instructional leadership is characterized by the promotion of principal behaviors as distinct from the behaviors of other members of the school organization or community. Instructional leadership is often seen as the sole domain of school principals. For example, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2002, pp. 6-7) defined instructional leadership by setting out six standards of what principals should know and be able to do. Scheerens and Bosker (as cited by Hill, 2002, p. 53) identified five dimensions of instructional leadership:

- "Time devoted to educational versus administrative tasks."
- The head teacher as a metacontroller of classroom processes.
- The head teacher as a quality controller of classroom teachers.
- The head teacher as a facilitator of work-oriented teams.
- The head teacher as an initiator and facilitator of staff professionalization.

The Scheerens and Bosker model (as cited in Hill, 2002) identified the constructs that comprise the principal-led model of instructional leadership. A more realistic model of the instructional leadership needs to acknowledge that within schools there are multiple layers of instructional leadership, not just that ascribed to principals (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Gronn, 2003; Lashway, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Furthermore, instructional leadership remains primarily an elementary school concept, although some examples of

secondary principals are quoted in the literature. Goddard (2003, p. 15) noted the disdain of a high school physics teacher after the principal, with a background in English, described his lessons as boring. The degree of subject specialization in high schools effectively excludes other subject specialist from making more than general comments about other teachers' lessons.

A consequence of the development of the managerialist ideology of New Public Management in the 1970s has been the belief that the manager can solve all problems, and the values of managerialism are universal (Sachs, 2003, p. 26). A study of perceptions of leadership over time show that there has been considerable change in the definition of leadership and the cult of the hero leader has been assigned to history except in businesses and schools. The myth of the hero leader, particularly the male heroic leader, has been debunked by many writers (Gronn, 2003; Lashway, 2002; Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003) and, while the trend toward instructional leadership was an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools, principals were required to adopt the managerial tendencies of New Public Management. Senge (2002) argued:

If the power of top management is in fact limited, why then do people in organizations continue to cling to the belief that only the top can drive change? As Argyris suggests, this belief allows us all to continue to hold the top responsible for whether or not change happens. While that view might be disempowering on one level, it provides a convenient strategy if our real goal is to preserve the status quo. Moreover, there are different types of change, some of which – like reorganizing or creating a new corporate strategy – can only be brought about by top management. Such top-driven changes are familiar to most of us – but they do not reduce fear and distrust, nor unleash imagination and creativity, nor enhance the quality of thinking in the organization. When people confuse top-driven change and profound change, it's easy to hold an exaggerated view of the power of top management, a confusion that no doubt persists among some top managers as well. Finally, we simply have no strategy for escaping the cultural addiction to the myth of the hero-leader. (p. 3)

The real focus of education is student learning, not instruction. The starting point is always the question: "How do students learn best?" Teachers commit a Procrustean error of judgment when they template students with a single, teacher-preferred teaching style. Concentrating on instruction can lead to a de-professionalization of teaching accompanied by a push to employ untrained and partly trained teachers, in the context of a teacher proofed, mandated, text based curriculum. Sachs (2003, p.10) warned that the "… intrusion on teachers' personal autonomy is more likely to come from a centralized and mandated curriculum and the publication of students' results rather than from intervention that aims specifically to reduce autonomy". In such a context instructional leadership, when driven by high stakes testing regimes and mandated curricula, there is a danger of teachers becoming little more than de-professionalized piece workers in a Taylorist culture of scientific management (Callahan, 1962).

This examination of conceptions of instructional leadership has drawn attention to the complex nature of school leadership and to the tension between leadership of instructional and non-instructional aspects of schools.

Towards an Understanding of Pedagogic Leadership

While pedagogy is a contested concept, it covers a wider range of aspects of the teaching act than instruction. Pedagogy is derived from paidagogos (Greek) meaning, the teacher of children, and the intentional use of the term pedagogy, instead of instruction or teaching, in modern times, can be conceptual, geographical and, or ideological. The term pedagogy was relatively uncommon in a decade ago but is currently being used more frequently in publications and teachers' discourse. There appears to be at least five, inter-related clusters of meaning of pedagogy in the literature.

Table 1
The Five Pedagogic Lenses

1. Epistemological
   - Pedagogy as the transmission of knowledge (Lingard et al., 2003)
2. Socio-Ideological
   - Pedagogy as a political tool for the enculturation students (Freire, 1977; Morton & Zavarzadeh, 1991; Smyth, 1985; van Manen, 1999);
   - Pedagogy– ideological practices of constructing subjectivities necessary for reproducing existing social organizations (Morton & Zavarzadeh, 1991).
3. Social
   - Pedagogy as a relationship that produces knowledge (Britzman, 2003; van Manen, 1999);
   - Pedagogy as social practice (Daniels, 2001).
4. The pedagogic act
- The mechanical aspects of *how* knowledge is transmitted
- Pedagogy as an inclusive view of all aspects teaching but not simply instruction (Mortimore, 1999; Newmann & Associates, 1996);
  - Any conscious activity designed by one person to bring about learning in another (Ireson, Mortimore & Hallam).
5. Pedagogy separated from didactics
   - Pedagogy, in the European usage, related to culture and children's learning, while didactics relates to the subjects to be taught (Alexander, 2004, p.10; Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001).

Pedagogy specifically recognizes the cultural, moral, and societal aspects of what is learned and why it is learned. Pedagogy acknowledges aspects of learning that were previously described as the hidden curriculum. Pedagogy peels back the veneer of teaching methodology to expose the conscious and unconscious decisions made by school leaders as the communities' agents of enculturation. Pedagogic leadership is therefore an act that motivates others, thus facilitating culturally and morally aware learning in a second party. As Fullan (2005) noted:

My main point … is that effective (school) cultures establish more and more progressive interactions in which demanding processes produce both good ideas and social cohesion. A sense of moral purpose is fueled by a focus on value-added high expectations for all, raising capability, pulling together, and an ongoing hunger for improvement. (p. 59)

The advantage of using the term pedagogy, rather than instruction, is that it represents a fresh, broader way of thinking about the learning-teaching act, because in the English-speaking world the term hasn't received widespread acknowledgment or usage.

School Leadership as Leadership of Pedagogic Change

A major shortcoming of leadership studies has been the failure to overtly acknowledge that leadership is always about addressing issues of change. Leaders attract followers by offering to change at least one aspect of the followers' personal circumstances. Ciulla (2003) noted in her archetypical definition of leadership in the 1990s that there was a two-way relationship between the leader and the led. In a definitional sense, it can be argued that change is an a priori part of leadership. Hodgkinson (1983) supported this view when he referred to the relationship between the megalomanic poet-leader and the "followership," and the tenuous nature of that co-dependency:

When and if he should lose his vision, or be frustrated in his superimposition of it upon the world, the form corrupts and madness can ensue. The vision lost he may only be left with the power of his office against the frustration and implacability of the realities. The followership may sense this and falter. (p. 186)

As a result, the leadership of the likes of Hitler and Stalin descends into dictatorship. This situation is problematic for the led, for two reasons:

- The relationship between both parties loses its voluntary nature.
- The change process does not bring the promised rewards for those who follow.

In schools, as Hargreaves et al. (2001, p. 175) noted, significant school-wide change is impossible without effective school leadership and the "… educational change literature consistently points to school administrators as vital agents for creating the conditions in which school reform can succeed." This statement by Hargreaves and associates highlighted the multi-dimensional nature of leading change in schools. Hargreaves illustrated the role that principals play in establishing the infrastructure for change (the climate, funding, etc.) but the main role is leading the change (content and process). The concept of leading, in this sense, is predicated on a belief about teaching. Van Manen (1993, p. 9) pointed out, "(I)t is possible to learn all of the techniques of instruction but remain pedagogically unfit as a teacher." Pedagogic leadership takes into account the "Why?", "How?", and "When?" of learning, not just the "How?" Pedagogic leadership bridges the artificial divide, identified by Ellett and Teddlie (2003), between school and teacher effectiveness studies. Pedagogic leadership is based on dialogue, not monologue and the learners are essential participants in the discussion. Evans (1999, p. 11) made the point that principals who are not guided by pedagogic choice "… resort to a thoroughly bureaucratized way of relating to teachers" and as a result teaching becomes an occupation defined by expectations.

Table 2 (below) summarizes the key differences between instructional and pedagogic leadership.

Table 2
Comparing Instructional and Pedagogic Leadership

Instructional Leadership	Pedagogic leadership
Focus on teacher instruction	Focus on students' learning
Driven by mandated curriculum	Determined by the needs and interests of students
Classroom centered	Connected to examples drawn from real life/world
Test results seen as a goal	Test results seen as one aspect of learning and informative of level of student understanding of concepts explored.
Predicated on teaching as a craft	Predicated on teaching as a profession.
Hierarchical in nature	Distributed leadership
More about school management	More about building a professional learning community
Principal as an instructor of teachers	Principal as a leader of teacher professional learning
Pragmatic in nature	Moral and facilitative in nature

Schools, because of their role in the enculturation of future generations, are, by necessity, involved in moral and ethical issues (Begley, 1999; Hodgkinson, 1978, 1983; Leonard, 1999). Fullan (2001, p. 13) warned that the moral purpose takes into account both the means and ends of the change process, particularly in education, which is charged with the development of citizens in future society (Leonard, 1999). Fullan (2001, p. 28) noted "... that moral purpose and the sustained performance of organizations are mutually dependent." It is, therefore, important for the moral purpose to be incorporated in all aspects of the strategic planning, such as the shared vision (Senge, 1995; Senge et al., 2000), which is designed to win commitment and effort from all of the stakeholders.

The literature recognizes the need to change teachers' teaching methods for a variety of economic and managerialist reasons (Glickman, 1998; Government of Western Australia, 1992; Robertson, 1998). The moral reason for facilitating better learning, that students have a right to learn (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999), has attracted less attention. Research underwriting the moral purpose of instruction has confirmed the thesis that better teaching

results in increased student learning (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Newmann & Associates, 1996; Watkins & Mortimore, 1999) and student success has resulted in greater student motivation and engagement. In relation to instructional leadership, the moral purpose of improving student learning concerns attainment of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor educational outcomes. Enabling student learning and engagement is a moral imperative for school leaders.

Fullan's (2001) second dimension of leadership is that leaders must understand the change process. At the school level, change is complex and non-linear. Fullan (2001, p. 5) advised that "... leaders who combine a commitment to moral purpose with a healthy respect for the complexities of the change process not only will be more successful but also will unearth deeper moral purpose." To embed the change, there is a need to re-culture the school and change prevailing beliefs, values, and attitudes of teachers, students, and parents (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2001; Dalin, Rolff, & Kleekamp, 1993; Fullan, 1993)

In complex reculturing, the establishment of a shared vision and purpose that describe the development of the change and the change processes is critical (Cavanagh & MacNeill, 2002; MacNeill & Lander, 2003; MacNeill & Silcox, 2000; NAESP, 2002; Senge, 1995; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, & Kleiner, 2000). While the principal may have a key role in the development of the shared vision, the shared vision advises all stakeholders of the agreed direction and content of change. In relation to instruction, the shared vision, purpose and agreed values guide teachers' choices of appropriate instruction. In the translation of the vision, purpose, and values into action through school planning, there is agreement and understanding of how the change will evolve.

There has been a surfeit of change and innovation in schools that Fullan (2001, p. 109) described as problematic because of the nature of the "disconnected, episodic, piecemeal, and superficially adorned projects." Despite the potential dissonance, schools cannot opt out of change. The leaders' task is to lead the school community through the potential problems by creating an agreed sense of direction through a vision. However, while there may be agreement about a sense of direction, what leaders do often is not scripted and as Heifetz and Linsky (2002) observed, leadership is an improvisational art. Amidst the uncertainty of change, Fullan (2001, p. 118) identified three coherence-making features:

- lateral accountability that engages peers at all levels of the organization;
- Sorting which is applied against the tests of utility and fitting the organizational vision; and,
- shared commitment, in which people inspire and stimulate each other.

The school must establish, implement, and achieve agreed academic standards for students (McEwan, 2003) and confirm expectations and standards for staff (Fink & Resnick, 2001; McEwan, 2003; Miller, 2001; NAESP, 2002).

Fullan (2001) also made the point that in people-based organizations (such as schools) relationships are the key to successful change. He stated "... we have found that the single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve (Fullan, 2001, p. 5). Relationships are important parts of the determinants of success but are also a consequence of success. Leaders are charged with constantly fostering purposeful interactions and problem solving (Fullan, 2001, p. 5). Fullan saw the sense of community as one extension of positive relationships within a school. Relationship building is dependent on many interpersonal skills (McEwan, 2003). While the literature on instructional leadership emphasizes cultural change (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987), the interpersonal relationships between staff are a key factor in effecting the cultural change (Crowther et al., 2002; McEwan, 2003; Sullivan & McCabe, 1988; Fink & Resnick, 2001; McEwan, 2003). Relationships in a school context are to do with learning and much of the literature on instructional leadership emphasizes the principal's role in developing relationships with teachers by visiting classrooms (Fink & Resnick, 2001), commenting on teachers' practices (Fink & Resnick, 2001) and encouraging them to be innovative and take risks (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001).

It is ironic that while schools exist to educate children, the principles and processes of learning are rarely applied to organizational learning and the professional learning of teachers (Hargreaves, 1995; O'Neil, 1995). Fullan (2001, p. 92) observed that "... schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other." The research on instructional leadership emphasizes the role of the principal in knowledge creation and sharing. At the dyadic (collaborative pairs), and whole staff level the literature on instructional leadership emphasizes

the principal directly interacting, in a hierarchical sense, with teachers to improve their performance (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; McEwan, 2003; Petersen, 1999; Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). The shortcoming in this model is that knowledge creation and development is dependent on one person. There is a need to widen the base of knowledge finding and sharing throughout the school by teachers assuming responsibility for their own learning and that of colleagues (King, 2002; McEwan, 2003; Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001).

Conclusion

The improvement of student learning is the key aspect of school leadership (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Instructional leadership has the capacity to focus narrowly the curriculum on learning areas that are considered more important, and in so doing, increase students' test scores in those areas.

On the other hand, the pedagogic principal leader is driven by the moral and social notions of developing the whole child, while acknowledging the socio-political contexts of learning. In the words of Davis, Ellett, and Annunziata (2003, p. 298), "… leadership must facilitate the control of the lifeworld over the systemsworld in school organizations". The challenge for the pedagogic leaders in the next decade will be ensuring that each school community is aware of the students' achievements and development, and then making certain that new, politically driven accountability requirements do not stifle successful, authentic and informed pedagogy.

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