

Shared Leadership

EDLE 637

Presented by Krystine Hocking

MODULE 1

- READING 1.3


Gale, T. & Densmore, K. (2003). Democratic educational leadership in contemporary times. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 6 (2), 119-136.

Democratic educational leadership in contemporary times

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- The article seeks to identify the economic and social conditions confronting education leaders and ideas for how they might respond.
- Gale and Densmore (2000) indicates that democratic leaders are seen as those that enable formation of social, learning and culturally responsive public educational institutions.
- Leadership is characterised by democratic directions and influences
- Democratic leaders are also seen as developing a politically informed commitment to justice for all.
- Educational leadership has a number of different views but most common is the role for context in the determination of relevant approaches to leadership
- Leithwood (1999) observe that each approach to leadership:

“Developed in a context of organisational and broader social goals, need, norms, ides, and expectations which allows one or several approaches to leadership dominate, as an ideal, until such time as that context changed sufficiently as to more clearly favour yet another approach or approaches.”



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- Specific and general conditions change over time but these do not by themselves determine the dominance of one approach to educational leadership over another.
- Rather, it is the work of groups that are able to exert dominance, their approach to educational leadership is informed by their interests and interaction with prevailing conditions
- Approaches to educational leadership are variously interpreted and responded to e.g.. Particular approaches are not the same in every educational institution
- Gale and Densmore (2003) make a case for educational leadership that is characterised by distinctly democratic directions and influences
- Democratic leaders enable the formation of social, learning and culturally responsive public educational institutions, they enable struggles to determine what is needed and develop a politically informed commitment to justice for all.
- Education leaders are now facing conflicting pressures, on one level to privilege groups over others, and on another, to ensure that disadvantaged groups have a voice in educational decision-making.
- Historical and contemporary concerns for conflict, calls for greater community involvement in educational decision-making.

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- Gale and Densmore (2003) want to expand discussion on leadership beyond the individual qualities of leaders. Official leaders have special responsibilities, but we need to consider exercising these responsibilities within collective forums in order to support and develop public interest.
 - Bourdieu (1992: 104) conceives educational leadership as a field that involves three necessary and internally connected moments:
 - The first of these draws attention to relations between a particular field.
 - * the bases for social cohesion
 - * instruments of control
 - * forms of organisation evident in contemporary times

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- 2nd- encompasses the 'field of positions'; designated leaders (principals, head teachers) and followers
- 3rd- field of stances e.g.. specifically taking a democratic stance on educational leadership.
- Gale and Densmore (2003) *"The challenge is to create conditions and processes within the schools, and among all those interested in education, that promotes the ability to regard the interests of others as, in some very important ways, our own."*




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WITH WHAT ARE WE FACED?

- Brown (1997) the economic, cultural and social transformation has changed to productivity, flexibility and choice instead of prosperity and security
- “... *common culture as a basis for social solidarity is being challenged by various groups asserting the right to educate their children according to their specific religious and cultural values.*” (Brown 1997)

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- These features of contemporary times are not intrinsically separate but are intimately related and mutually influential.
- Not everything has changed, there are some continuities as well as discontinuities in these contemporary times, some things are not experienced in the same ways.
- Evidence to show that economic and social change, previous understandings and commitments have things to contribute to contemporary times with adjustments.






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CHANGING BASES FOR SOCIAL COHESION

- Societies are struggling to create identity; without single or common culture by which they can be identified
- For many countries, Multiculturalism has largely become mainstream
- However the politics of recognition is more complex: Gale & Densmore (2000):
 - * more women are entering the workforce BUT employment tends to be in service industries and characterised by insecurity tenure (casual work)
 - * Universities have reached mass proportions BUT the financial distance between the rich and poor is widening
 - * Poverty is increasingly identified by gender (especially women), race with population areas called “poor part of town” with reduced services
- Worldwide introduction of new technologies and the globalisation of national economies have emphasised similarities amongst people.
- Economic and social relationships are no longer bound by geography


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- The values and purposes of public education remain divided
e.g.. Schools continuing with differentiation and social selection  limited numbers
 high failure rates  undermining basis for social cohesion
- Problems are serious and persistent e.g. increasing recognition that various forms of discrimination, based on social attributes such as gender, race and class are interrelated.
- We need critical ways of understanding and addressing social differences that translate into a positive changed material for disadvantaged groups.

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CHANGING INSTRUMENTS OF (ECONOMIC) CONTROL

- In globalised economies, citizens have sought new competitive advantages
- Education offers such possibilities but individuals derive significant and specific economic benefits from education
- Private institutions still rely on significant government funding



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- Government schools are to be self managing, they have more responsibilities and are more accountable to the community BUT also invest in keeping procedures e.g. national curriculum, testing regimes – requirements that are not always conducive of local needs, interests and conditions
- Lyotard (1984) believes that motivations today for acquiring knowledge are for profit and power

CHANGING FORMS OF ORGANISATION

- Many people in western society are familiar with restructuring. Most teachers are familiar with school-based management, self managing schools
- A continuity within many educational institutions seems to be hierarchisation of decision-making
- Foster (1989) states *that “the idea of leadership as a transformational practice, as an empowerment of followers, a way of improving organisations (a vehicle for social change).”*

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- Knowing all of this, a new conception of educational leadership seems warranted – need to consider potential democratic effects on organisations


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WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Leithwood (1999) asserts that structural and human resource frames shape our sense of what needs to be done in schools
- We need to contemplate the influence of the market and contemporary forms of governance on today's' educational system and leaders

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- We speak of the need for educational leadership to be resourceful by being inclusive and to show initiative and courage in establishing equal opportunities for all students in the face of changing and challenging economic and social conditions.
- We need to create genuine possibilities for more explicitly collective agendas that take account of difference in ways that are not simply reactive.




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ENABLING CONDITIONS

- Leadership requires a social justice stance (Young 1990, Gale and Densmore 2000)
- A definition of leadership that seeks to assist educational organisations:
 1. self-identification and recognition
 2. self-expression and self-development
 3. self-determination and decision making
- The intent of democratic leadership is to establish the conditions for 'new' relationships (interest, understanding, aspirations) and for 'new' actions (local and global constraints and opportunities)

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- Democratic leadership acknowledges that in contemporary societies, identity is created more than given
- Democratic leadership does allow for transition, variation and innovation
- This broader sense of leadership has the potential to allow for diversity and responsiveness, for the development of individuals




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- Democratic education is based, upon the real, non-lives of their pupils and upon life outside of school, preparing students for life in the fullest sense
- At both local and global levels, a sense of “who we are” and “what we want to achieve” as an educational enterprise
- This stance on self-identification and recognition involves conditions of: shared ownership, active trust, familiarity, mutuality, negotiated authority, genuine opportunities, courage and encouragement

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- Democratic leaders treat the school itself as a cooperative community (Dewey 1958)
- The necessitates:
 1. establishing forums to hold important discussion
 2. establishing multiple and diverse opportunities to express one’s views
 3. establishing ways in which groups strengths an interests can be developed
 4. embracing new technologies that will ensure transitional leadership and change
 5. establishing critical friends and mentoring schemes



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- The creation of schools as micro- communities, where students, teachers, parents and administrators develop their capacities to work with one another is vital
- Democratic leadership is also concerned with meaningful participation involving breadth as well as depth – establishing collaborative relationships with a range of groups – professional associations, businesses, community-oriented programs etc

ENABLING STRATEGIES

- Democratic leaders know how to utilise strategies for democratic ends, how to engage, how to instruct.
- They know when to use the six negotiation strategies:
 1. Trading
 2. Bargaining
 3. Arguing
 4. Stalling
 5. Maneuvering
 6. Lobbying



CONCLUSION

- Democratic leaders establish conditions conducive to the development of social, learning and culturally- responsive organisations and employ strategies that might enable their achievement
- A democratic leader enables particular conversations and struggles to determine what is needed.
- Democratic leaders develop a politically-informed disposition and commitment to justice for all.