

Reading 4.4

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. & Mulford, W.
(2006). Models of successful principal
leadership. *School Leadership and
Management*. 26(4), 371-395

Reading 4.4: Models of successful principal leadership

- “ Provides an Australian perspective
- “ Two separate case studies (from Vic. and Tas.) of successful principal leadership compared

- “ FINDINGS:
 - . Principal is significant factor in school success
 - . Both significant contributors to education program
 - . Common, consistent personal traits & behaviours
 - . Importance of principals' values and beliefs
 - . Important contributors to capacity building and teaching and learning

Introduction

- “ In most countries, principal regarded as key educational leader with most opportunity to lead
- “ Some exceptions – parts of China, Steiner schools, some community-based schools
- “ There is considerable debate, however, concerning the impact principals have on schools, especially on student outcomes (p.372)

Reading 4.4: Models of successful principal leadership

“ There has been much research focused on successful school leadership (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003, provide comprehensive review)

BUT :

- . Most research was from UK and North America
 - . Most research relied on principals for evidence
- (p 373)

- “ So ... the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) was instigated
- “ Includes 8 countries: Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Norway, Sweden, USA using students, parents, teachers, principals
- “ Included 5 schools from Tasmania, 9 from Vic.
- “ Principals were identified by peers as successful and had demonstrable success in improved student outcomes and through positive school reviews

Tasmanian Findings

“ Identified the following themes:

1. Context
2. Principal's values and beliefs
3. Providing individual support, building individual capacity
4. Building school capacity
5. Towards a shared vision/direction
6. School outcomes
7. Evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, critical reflection and change/transformation

(pp374 - 378)

A preliminary model of successful school principalship based on the Tasmanian findings

- “ Tasmanian case studies suggest that successful school principalship is an interactive, reciprocal and evolving process involving many players
- “ It is underpinned by the core values and beliefs of the principal
- “ These and the values/capacities of other community members feed directly into development of shared school vision, which shapes learning & teaching, student outcomes and social capital outcomes (p379)

A preliminary model of successful school principalship based on the Tasmanian findings

This preliminary model highlights (abbreviated):

- “ The imbedded/contextual nature of principal values, individual and organizational capacity, mission and outcomes
- “ The interactive nature of the first three above on one hand and outcomes on the other
- “ A broad interpretation of outcomes and their interaction with each other
- “ The separateness of evidence-based monitoring

(p. 380)

Victorian Findings

“ Identified the following themes

1. The principal's contribution to success
2. Values and beliefs
3. Personal characteristics
4. Styles of leadership
5. Understanding the context and the situation
6. Leadership and interventions in the areas of teaching and learning, student outcomes, school capacity building, other factors (pp. 380-384)

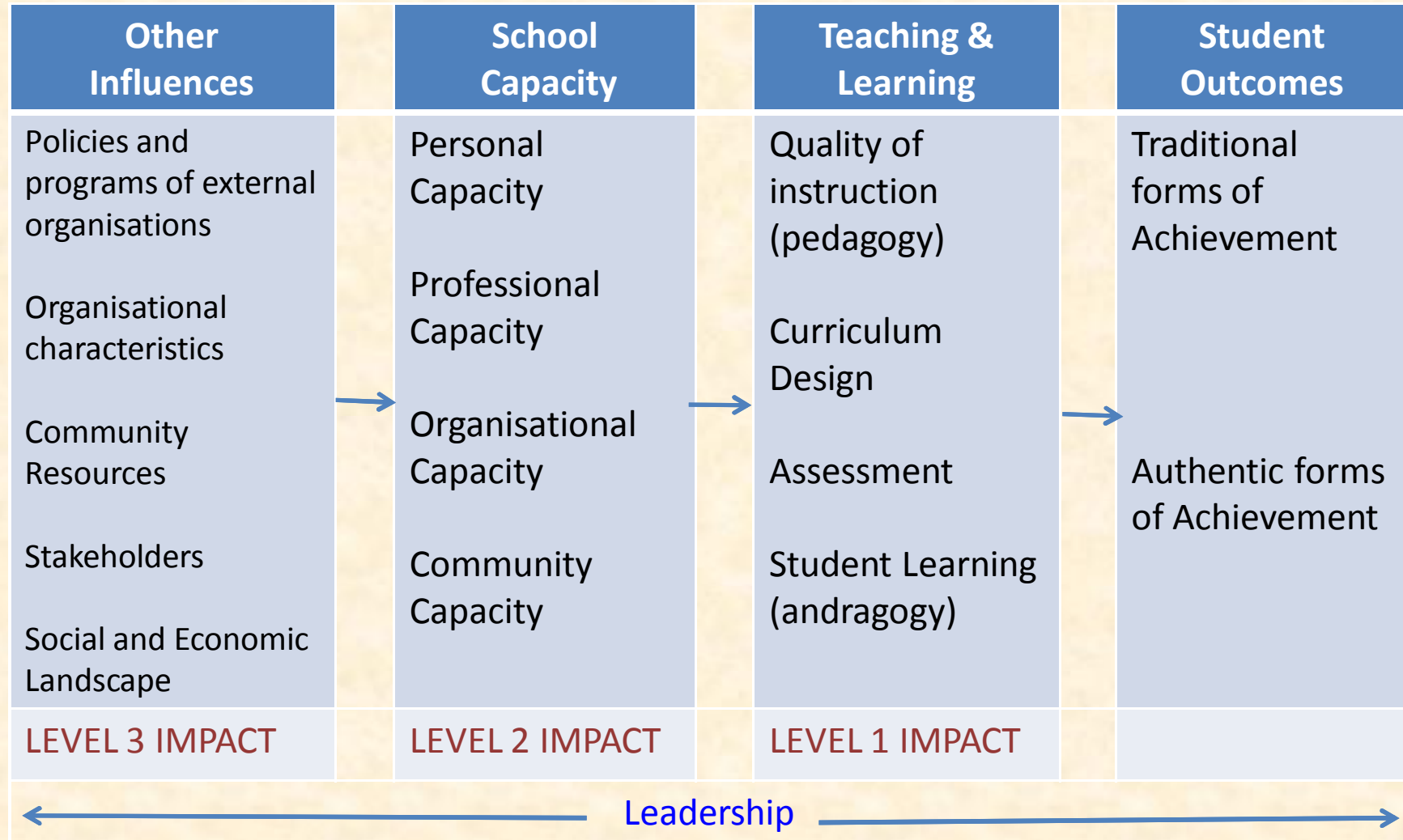
Victorian Findings

- “ Under “Values and beliefs” the following common v&b’s included:
- . Every child is important
 - . Every child can succeed
 - . Every child has unrealized potential
 - . All members of the school community need to be supported
 - . Schools should focus on what was in the best interests of the children
 - . Principals can and should make a difference (p.381)

Victorian case studies: towards a contemporary model of educational leadership

- “ From all Victorian case studies it was clear that each principal contribute to their school’s success in student achievement, with their leadership behaviour, including interventions that led to improved student outcomes
- “ A Victorian model was created (see next slide) that moves away from traditional narrow notion of “instructional leadership” and suggests that principals can make interventions in a range of areas that contribute to student outcomes

Victorian model of successful school principalship (p. 384)



The importance of interventions

- “ The educational leadership demonstrated by the principals showed interventions in each of these areas, especially in teaching and learning and capacity building (p. 385)
- “ What helped make the interventions successful were the beliefs, values, vision, personal characteristics and leadership style of the principal.
- “ The principals set high academic achievement goals for students but added and negotiated other outcomes that were desired by community

Types of interventions

- “ **In learning and teaching:** student leadership programs, redesigning key elements of the curriculum, questioning existing teaching strategies and adopting alternative assessment measures
- “ **In building individual teacher capacity:** pd activities aimed at enhancing teaching skills, strategies to improve self-awareness through reflective practices & networking with other schools, encouraging working in teams
- “ **In organisational capacity:** changed existing heierarchical structures for collaborative decision-making structures & processes, focus on building community support, improving parent-school relationships, actively encouraging greater community participation and ownership (p. 386)

Conclusion

- “ An integrated model is shown on p.388
- “ The two studies highlight the importance and contribution of the principal to the quality of education in a school.
- “ The qualities and characteristics of the principal identified both studies showed a common and consistent set of personal traits and behaviours
- “ The importance of the principals’ values and beliefs as a theme is found in both studies as is their important contributions in the areas of capacity building and teaching and learning (389)