

# Reading 3.2

## Starratt, R. (2003) The challenging world of educational leadership.

In *Centering educational administration: cultivating meaning, community, responsibility* (pp. 3 – 26). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

**Focus: *What makes Educational Administration unique amongst other types of organisations...***

**Former Views of Educational Administration**

Educational administration has over the past 40 years been viewed as a generalised, uniform type of administration.

This led to the idea that if you can administrate well in one arena, you can do so in another...

In the past, it has been suggested in the States that education adopt a specific type of model to follow, such as military or business. It has also been suggested that schools be run by people with a business administration background.

This suggestion has come from the idea that you can apply a formula or a science to administration based on universal principles.

Taylor (1911), Cubberly (1916), Simon (1957) and Griffiths (1957) all attempted to apply a scientific methodology to educational administration through a variety of applications.

Griffiths (1957) was a proponent of *scientific research methods and theories from social sciences to construct a theory and science of educational administration* (pp. 4). He thought that it was only through this sort of legitimacy that educational administrators would be considered as true professionals and accorded the appropriate respect.

Not all scholars *endorsed the scientism and rationalism of the mainstream theorists of the 1950's and 1960's* (Pp. 4).

Lindbloom (1959) and Cohen, March & Olsen (1972) questioned the rationality and objectivity of administrators.

Cyert and March (1963) suggested that educational administrators were bound by their own reality, so therefore could not really consider all alternative options when making choices, even though they may have goals in mind. They say that decisions tend to be made to address immediate situations but may not be the best choice when considering the long run.

Lindbloom (1959) found that educational administrators tend to make short-term decisions which are not consistent with earlier decisions, nor with those they may make the next day.

Apple (1982), Bates (1987) and Giroux (1991) stated that even though these short-term decisions were sometimes disjointed and irrational, they were made with ideological assumptions and beliefs in mind.

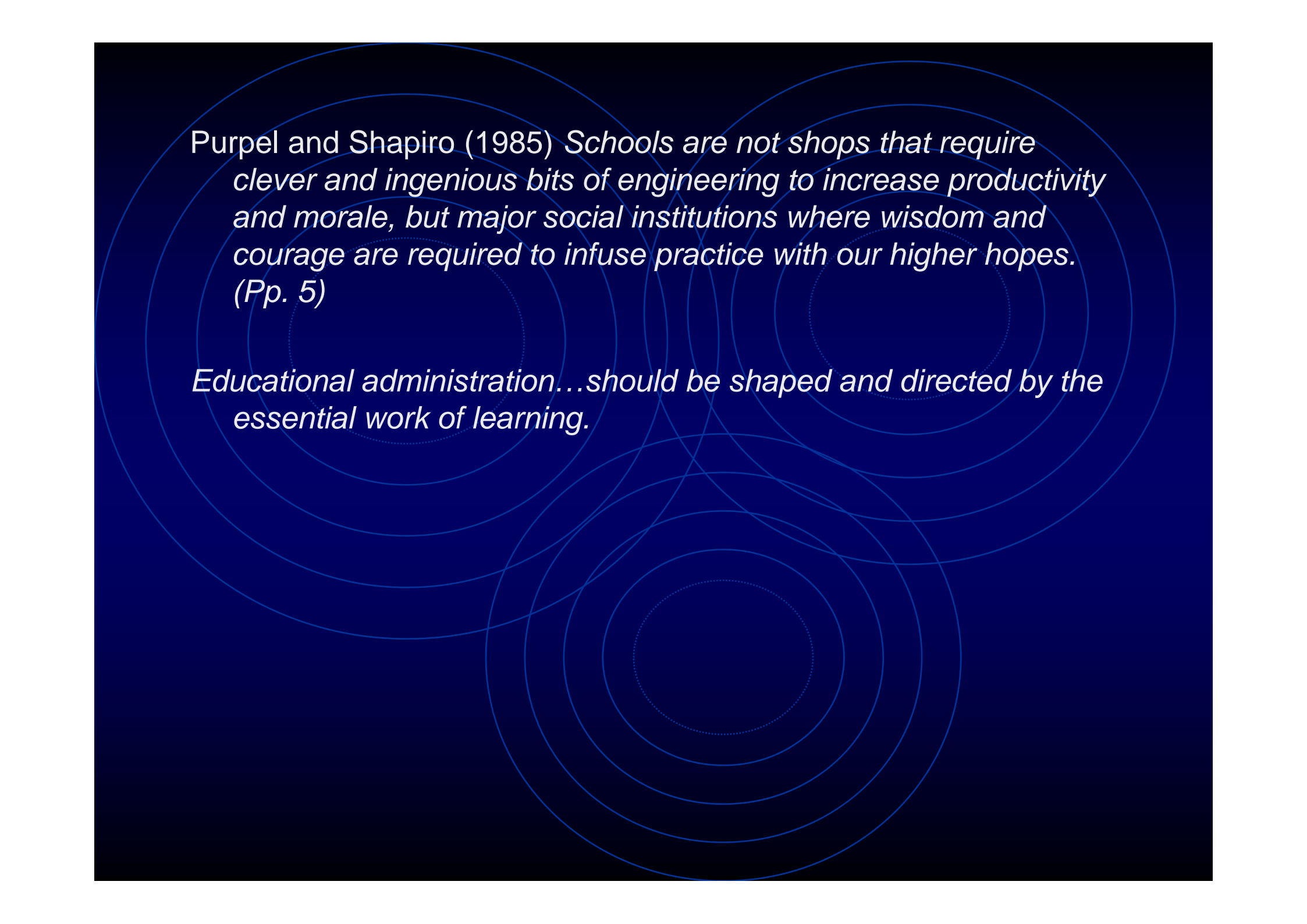
Therefore, the *well-intentioned administrator needs to recognise that the job entails more than making decisions based on a rational assessment of the facts.* (Pp. 5)

The human condition affects how we gather and indeed, how we view the facts.

Administrators needn't be bound by the constraints of acting as an automaton, nor by making decisions based solely on hunches and beliefs.

*Educational Administration requires a constant effort to introduce rationality into decisions. That rationality does not come directly from the individual administrator, but from the individuals involved in the decision discussing the merits of alternative choices.* (Pp. 5)

A harmful side effect from thinking of educational administration as a science has been that some Principals have seen themselves as administrators, and not educators.



Purpel and Shapiro (1985) *Schools are not shops that require clever and ingenious bits of engineering to increase productivity and morale, but major social institutions where wisdom and courage are required to infuse practice with our higher hopes. (Pp. 5)*

*Educational administration...should be shaped and directed by the essential work of learning.*

## New Views on Educational Leadership

Teachers and Principals are now held accountable for student performances on national and international tests more than ever. It used to be the case that schools were required to provide multiple opportunities for students to achieve success

Even though there are far more rigorous curriculum demands, teachers and Principals can be held responsible for individual students lack of progress.

Educational administrators have swung from an administrative based focus to an educational based focus due to the fact that they can be removed if the students are not showing enough progress over a period of time.

This has lead to stress on Principals in under-performing schools and has drawn *criticisms of the way in which administrators are selected and prepared for their job* (Pp. 6).

This has caused university preparation programs in educational administration to come under increased scrutiny, which has led to university accrediting associations to change the accreditation for students graduating.

In the late 1980s, two groups attempted to draw attention to the unfocused nature of degree programs in educational administration:

The University Council for Educational Administration (1987) – published a report calling for more rigorous and selective university programs in educational administration.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) – published a report urging the reform of university-based educational administrator certification programs.

At the end of the 1990s, three influential scholars in the area of educational administration called for a major reorientation of the theory and practice in of educational administration. Their work influenced Starratt decidedly.

## Kenneth Leithwood

Joined by two colleagues (Jentzi and Steinbech), Leithwood embraced the theme of transformational leadership as the framework for the future of work of educational administration.

Their work was based on Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and included components such as charisma, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration.

They identified features of a transformational leadership:

- a) Setting directions
- b) Developing people
- c) Redesigning the organisation

Starratt writes that they focussed exclusively on the organisational work of the adults in the school, and didn't focus enough on *what* schools teach and *what* students learn. He believes that their work needs a closer look at transforming the learning agenda of schools.

## Richard Elmore

Elmore also called for a new structure for school leadership. Elmore proposed that schools were held more accountable due to the change in international, standards based curriculum and that meant a new system for the administration.

Administrators must be knowledgeable about the complexities of teaching and learning

*Turn your school into organisations, for only being involved with the teachers in learning how to bring all students up to acceptable achievement of the standards-based curriculum will you and your schools survive (Pp. 9)*

Starratt feels that Elmore provided a framework for change in administration, but was concerned that it did not reach beyond the standards-based curriculum.

## Joseph Murphy

Joseph Murphy published a challenging analysis of educational administration programs in 1999. It reflected on the past 20 years of educational administration.

Murphy maintained that the field of educational administration was not moving forward with a clear purpose, claiming that educational administration had no integrating principle.

He claimed that this had allowed the profession to drift for 20 years despite the efforts of educational leaders.

Murphy identified three large themes that could be the centre for educational administration:

- a) Democratic community
- b) Social justice
- c) School Improvement

None of these themes had more import than the other, more that they should be each linked to each other inextricably.

The system needs to put structures in place to support the school in relation to smaller class sizes, better PD etc rather than lump them with the burden of better results and blaming the schools for the systems shortcomings.

## Another Perspective

Starratt offers his own perspective stating that it is similar to that of Murphy's but somewhat deeper. Starratt writes about the importance of the three themes identified by Murphy, but also focuses on assessment and accountability. He contends that, like Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbech, transformational leadership is imperative. Like Elmore, he believes that administration needs to work closely with teachers promoting quality learning for all learners, but wants that *learning to go beyond state-based standards to a broader curriculum that cultivates meaning, community and responsibility (Pp. 11).*

Starratt talks of the administration being akin to a gardener, cultivating work with life growth as a result, the focus being on teaching and learning.

Starratt looks at cultivating meaning, cultivating community and cultivating responsibility

# The consciousness of an educational administrator

- Needs to be aware of bigger picture issues than a classroom teacher
- Has a sense of what an educated person should be like and brings this perspective to their coordination of school activities
- Works in collaboration with the school board in bring this perspective into being
- Carries around in their heads the whole school's learning agenda
- Like a conductor of an orchestra
- They should respond to the total condition of the children they deal with

# The Vision behind administrative leadership

- A vision for what kind of educated person they are trying to produce (Ideal)
- A vision that sees things clearly, both in the foreground and background and can see it in all its dimensions, human, moral organisational and educational (Insight)

These two are mutually reinforcing,

- The 1<sup>st</sup> providing an interpretive lens for seeing deeper into present situations
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> enables the leader to make the connections to immediate realities and a larger framework

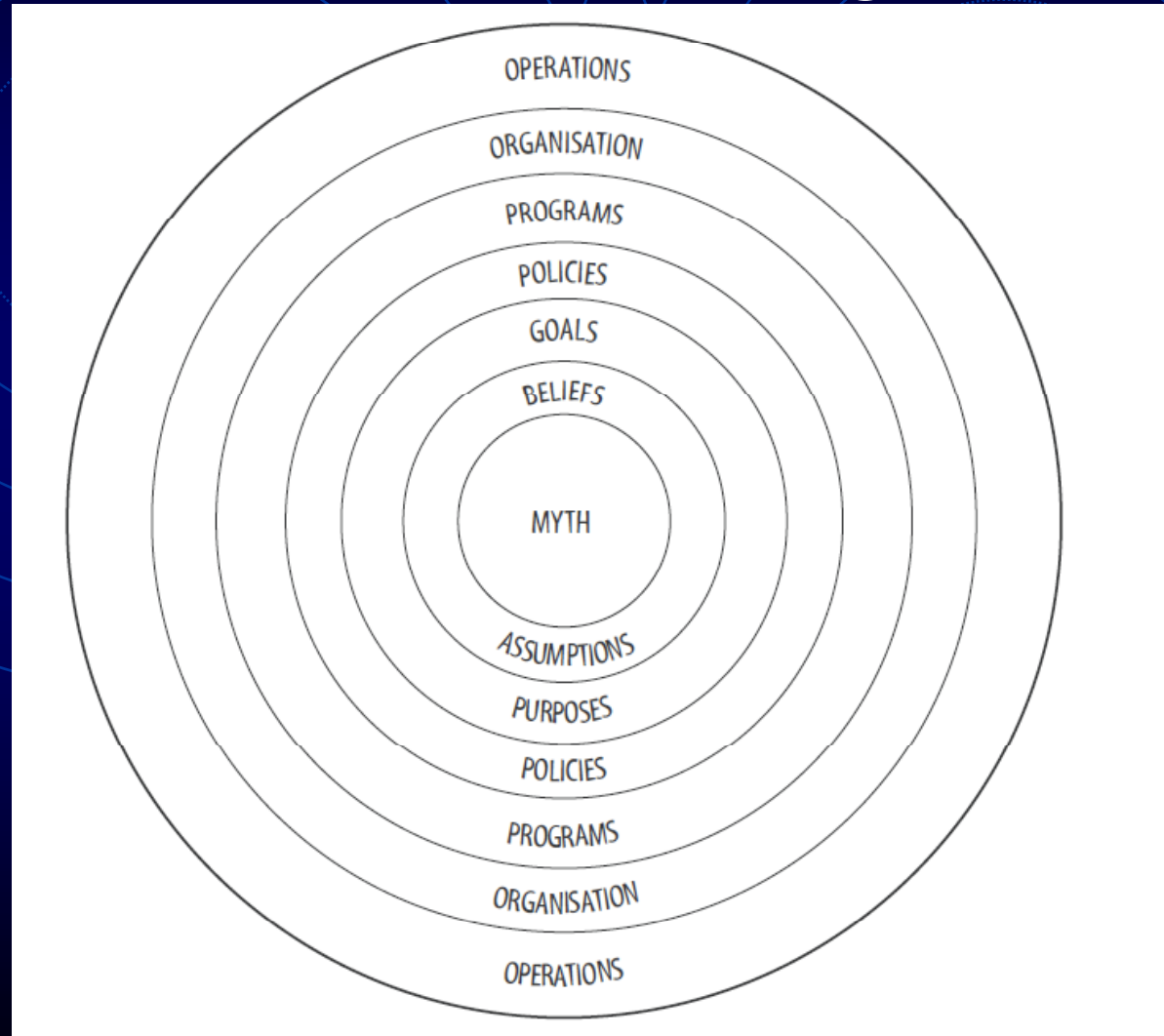
# The Model of Administrative Leadership

- Is grounded in basic meanings about humanity, society, knowledge human development, the natural world and schooling
- Is energised by a dramatic vision of what education might and should be
- Involves the articulation of that vision and the invitation to others to articulate a communal vision of schooling
- Seeks to embody the vision in the institutional mission, goals, policies, programs and organisational structures
- Celebrates the vision in ordinary and special activities and seeks a continuous renewal of both the vision and the embodiment

# Starratt's Onion Model of Schools

- This diagram helps articulate the way the levels of activity relate back to the central myth or core beliefs of the school
- The myth relates to the values essential to our understanding of humanity, its story, poetry, sacred texts, founder
- The leaders work is not complete until all aspects of the running of the school relate and are energised by the central myth

# Onion model diagram



# Leaders and Managers

- Have different roles in the school
- Leaders have the responsibility to articulate the vision and head the school in the right direction
- Managers work in the practical aspects of making this vision come to life in the ordinary day to day running of the school at all levels
- This can't be the work of one person but necessarily it needs to involve a team of people working together with shared purpose.
- For the whole school to progress more than superficially, it needs the involvement of the whole school community.