



ICSEI

International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement

ICSEI EXPRESS and DIGEST

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Co-Editors' Note

Welcome to the September edition of the ICSEI Express and Digest.

We have been extremely busy since attending ICSEI at AERA in Washington (it was great to see many of our colleagues there too :)), and we have a bumper edition of the Express/Digest compiled for you - thanks to the enthusiastic contribution of papers and news items from members. The focus pieces in this issue are on Educational Leadership and we hope you will enjoy learning about the research being conducted by international colleagues.

We were all deeply saddened by the recent passing of our great ICSEI friend and colleague, Sam Stringfield. Sam will be missed by so many. Please note that there are plans to honour Sam's many contributions to ICSEI at the Symposium at AERA in San Antonio in 2017. More details to follow.

Meantime, plans for ICSEI, 2017 in Ottawa are moving ahead and we are looking forward to a fabulous Congress here in Canada next winter. Hope to see many of you there! Registration is now open and we strongly recommend you book your travel plans and hotels soon - it's going to be busy in the Nation's Capital, 7-10 January, 2017!

Sincerely,



Susan E.
Elliott-Johns



Paige Fisher

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1. President's Message

I open this message with sincere condolences to the family of our dear friend Professor Sam Stringfield whose sudden passing has really shocked the greater ICSEI family. Sam's long contribution to ICSEI is profound, but it is his coaching of young scholars that I have respected for many years. His academic work is well documented and his legacy to education is extensive. I will speak more about Sam's wonderful service to education in Ottawa.

Summertime in the Northern Hemisphere gives some of us the chance to distance ourselves from the world of work, but also allows for sufficient time to look at the grand stories which dominate our period. There, we are all confronted with new traits of populism which seem to breed like epidemics in different parts of the world. Philosopher Peter Sloterdijk identifies populism as the aggression of simplification, paired with a longing for incompetence in those who hold power. Social as well as traditional media seem to be the speedy carrier of these epidemics, giving populists and their followers the irrational pathway to withdraw from reality. Therefore, Sloterdijk sees democracy as the crucial challenge in this epidemiology. In any country, schools are the arenas where democracy is being lived and learnt. John Dewey's centennial of Education and Democracy offers the chance to empower students with the strength and opportunity to overcome simplification by strengthening their knowledge, wisdom and resilience against populism and radicalism in adverse and uncertain times. It is a moral obligation of the ICSEI community to mitigate the dangerous effects of radicalism and populism through education that enhances agency, as well as the living and working conditions of people and future generations for the benefit of humankind.



Michael Schratz
ICSEI President

2. ICSEI News and Updates

2.1 ICSEI 2017 - Ottawa, Canada

[Registration is now open for the 2017 ICSEI Congress](#) to be held in Ottawa 7-10 January 2017.

[Registration and payments can be made here](#). US and Canadian participants have the option to pay in Canadian Dollars. **Early bird closes 3rd October, 2016.**

<p>WARREN SIMMONS - Senior Fellow, Brown University, USA</p> <p>Warren teaches a course in urban systems and structure in Brown University's Urban Education Policy master's program. His mission remains to improve outcomes and practices in urban schools, especially those attended by traditionally underserved students.</p>	
	<p>KAREN SEASHORE - Regents Professor; Robert Holmes Beck Chair of Ideas in Education, University of Minnesota, USA</p> <p>Karen's research interests focus on school improvement and school reform. Her main area of expertise includes improvement in K-12 leadership and policy over the last 30 years, particularly in urban secondary schools.</p>
<p>CHARLENE BEARHEAD - Education Lead, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (TRC), Canada</p> <p>Prior to her time with Project of Heart and the TRC, Charlene served as a teacher, principal, education director and superintendent of education both on and off reserves in Alberta and Manitoba.</p>	
	<p>RUSSELL BISHOP - Professor for Maori Education, School of Education at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand</p> <p>Russell's research experience in the area of collaborative storytelling as Kaupapa Maori has given rise to his work being published nationally and internationally.</p>
<p>MICHAEL FULLAN, O.C. - Former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada</p> <p>Recognized as a worldwide authority on educational reform, Michael advises policymakers and local leaders around the world in helping to achieve the moral purpose of all children learning.</p>	

2.2 ICSEI Board Activities

Board nominations are now closed and members will be advised by email of the election process which will open on October 1 and close on October 31. Thanks go to all members who nominated to continue the wonderful work of ICSEI.

3. Network Reports

The various networks are busily preparing sessions and symposia for the upcoming Congress. The DIGEST portion of this Express will offer you varied perspectives on the work of scholars, practitioners and policymakers involved in the Educational Leadership network. There is exciting news on the network front - a new network is being launched!

Introducing a new ICSEI Network: The Professional Learning Network

Dr Cindy Poortman, University of Twente
Dr Chris Brown, UCL Institute of Education

Educational researchers, policy-makers and practitioners are increasingly focusing their attention on learning networks as a way to facilitate teacher professional development, as well as school and school system improvement. In his keynote to the 2014 ICSEI Congress, for example, Professor Chris Chapman addressed the importance of such networks within, between and beyond schools. Chapman's work reflects others' such as Hargreaves (2010) and Stoll (2015) who argue that networks are fundamental to achieving effective school improvement. Similarly, recent work by Munby and Fullan (2016) suggests that networks situated at a cluster or district level will, moving forward, be the driving force for both system and local level change. The large, and increasing, number of researchers focusing on networks is also reflected in a multitude of international conference sessions. The programs of ICSEI 2015 in Cincinnati and ICSEI 2016 in Glasgow, for instance, each contained more than 15 sessions on networks. In addition: the importance of networks is also reflected in the future. For example, the theme of the 2017 conference (to be held in Ottawa) is: "Collaborative Partnerships for System-Wide Educational Improvement".

Given the increasing importance now placed on networks, it is timely that ICSEI has agreed that there is a need for a new network on networks: the Professional Learning Network, which will be launched at ICSEI 2017 in Ottawa. For the purposes of the new network we define learning networks as any group of connected educators who collaborate to leverage this connectivity in order to improve practices in and across schools and/or their school system. Our focus thus encompasses professional development networks, research- or data use teams, communities of practice, lesson study teams, teacher design teams, and so on. These networks typically vary in composition, nature and focus: they may consist of teachers from different schools, teachers and school leaders, or teachers and/or school leaders along with representatives from both local and national policymakers. In many cases networks form in partnership and involve joint work with external researchers. What they all have in common however is that they have learning and improvement at their core.

We envisage that, in the first instance, the Professional Learning Network will be focused on the role of networks in:

1. Providing opportunities for knowledge generation and sharing between schools;
2. Enabling teachers and others to direct their own professional development and enabling individuals to change their own practices through inquiry-led approaches; and
3. Facilitating partnership working across a variety of stakeholders

At the same time we recognize that there are other challenges and related aims for research and practice regarding networks for educational improvement and we look forward to exploring those with you further at the network launch.

Yours in Networking
Cindy and Chris

Chapman, C. (2014). *From within- to between- and beyond- school improvement: A case of rethinking roles and relationships?* State of the art session presented at the ICSEI Conference, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Hargreaves, D. (2010) *Creating a self-improving school system*, available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2093/1/download%3Fid%3D133672%26filename%3Dcreating-a-self-improving-school-system.pdf>, accessed on 6 July, 2016

Munby, S. and Fullan, M. (2016) *Inside-out and downside-up: How leading from the middle has the power to transform education systems*, available at: <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Global-Dialogue-Thinkpiece.pdf>, accessed on 6 July, 2016

Stoll, L. (2015) Using, evidence, learning and the role of professional learning communities, in Brown, C. (Ed) *Leading the use of research and evidence in schools* (London, IOE Press) (pp. 53-64)

4. ICSEI Digest

4.1 Introduction

Pierre Tulowitzki and Jacob Easley II; Co-Chairs of the Educational Leadership Network

This issue furthers the aim of the Educational Leadership Network, which seeks to grow the knowledge base of research, policy, and practice within the field by drawing on lessons learned from around the globe. Such an endeavor benefits immensely from networked exchanges and thoughtful collaborations.

Throughout the past years, the network's aim has been made manifest through periodic and ongoing initiatives such as the edited volume "Educational accountability: International perspectives on challenges and possibilities for school leadership," published by Routledge earlier this year (Easley II & Tulowitzki, 2016). The volume showcases collaborative efforts of several of the ICSEI members from the Educational Leadership Network around a common theme—Accountability and its influence on school leadership. Other ventures include a Twitter Chat organized by Michelle Jones in October 2015 on "Leadership Preparation and Development" that sparked a truly international, virtual dialogue, as well as further collaborative projects for research and publication.

This issue showcases a broad range of contributions around educational leadership. They shed some light on school leadership in Morocco (Elmeski, in this issue), the daily work of school leaders in Chile (Galdames, Campos, Montecinos, Ahumada and Leiva, in this issue), leadership and teacher development in Shanghai (Wang, in this issue) as well as leadership in effective and less effective traditional high schools in Jamaica (King, in this issue). In addition, we get a glimpse into the 7 Systems Leadership Study (Harris & Jones, in this issue), a comparative study exploring leadership preparation and development that took place in Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong, England, Indonesia, Russia, and Singapore. Systems and design thinking from the perspective of a university Dean (Easley, in this issue) expand the leadership discussion by exploring the interconnectivity of research, policy, and leadership practice in the US context. Finally, there is a look back on the Network's contributions to ICSEI conferences dealing with educational leadership across the past six years (Tulowitzki, in this issue).

We hope that these contributions can be a source of reflection and inspiration and stimulate the ongoing international dialogue on the meaning, the practice, and the study of educational leadership. We invite you to comment and participate and look forward to hopefully seeing you at the next ICSEI conference in Ottawa in January 2017.

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Find us on Twitter : @EDLEADNetwork

4.2 Appreciative inquiry of school leadership in the Arab World: The case of three urban school principals in Morocco.

Mohammed Elmeski, Ph.D.: Senior Researcher at American Institutes for Research

We know very little about the positive counter narratives of hope written by effective school leaders in the Arab World. In this article, I use appreciative inquiry to capture the leadership of three principals of schools in marginalized urban neighborhoods in Morocco. The findings are drawn from a phenomenological study I conducted in Morocco in 2010 (Elmeski, 2015). Grounded in the leadership of place framework (Riley, 2013), the study posits that school principals' ability to manage change largely rests on their understanding of their physical, socio-political, emotional, and spiritual realities. In this regard, four practices helped the three urban school principals show the necessary leadership to confront marginalization: (1) caring about the school staff (2) commitment to student wellbeing, (3) working with constraints, and (4) clarity about their leadership anchors.

1. Caring about the school staff: The three principals demonstrated mature understanding of their political realities by not deluding themselves into thinking that their positions of authority come with unwavering allegiance. They valued listening, diplomacy, modeling positive behavior, and being present for their staff in sickness and in health. Intentionality about caring won the principals dependable allies and a diverse coalition that channeled collective efforts to serve the student needs. The three principals underscored the importance of listening skills for effective leadership. They also emphasized the value of sharing meals with their staff and the importance of cultivating solidarity in order to build a true school community, and not just another workplace.

2. Commitment to student well-being: The three principals had the ears of parents and teachers. This allowed them to defuse tension and promote student well-being. They defined the responsibilities of leadership as a mix of affection and tough love for children who may lack both in their homes. One of the principals set up a solidarity fund managed by the students to help the poorest among them cater for their most urgent needs. The second principal used the school as a space for facilitating dialogue between teenage girls and their mothers. The third principal shared the school sport facilities with out-of-school youth who lacked similar facilities in the neighborhood. Her initiative fostered community ownership and protected the school from vandalism because she turned her school into a community center. All principals valued the role of art, music, theatre, in addition to sport in cultivating their students voice, and making sure that the children enjoy learning, and enjoy being in school.

3. Working with constraints: The principals were acutely aware of the dissonance between the physical and socio-economic realities of their schools and the political realities of cumbersome central rules and regulations. To span the two boundaries, the principals found themselves in constant negotiation with central administration officials to grant them the license to keep the school open after regular hours, or host meetings with the community.

4. Clarity about their leadership anchors: The three principals credited spiritual and ethical values as their leadership anchors. The first principal highlighted the leadership model of the Prophet Mohammed to underscore the redemptive rewards of hard work. The second and the third principals' commitment to serve were anchored in their belonging to the neighborhoods they serve, and their desire to provide students with the same oppor-

tunities they had enjoyed as young girls. Reference to hard work as an act of worship is a powerful example of higher order gratification that attached a transcendental meaning to what, otherwise, could be a meaningless strife. Similarly, the sense of belonging and empathy with the children of marginalized neighborhoods strengthened the two other principals' conviction that their mission is about school and community revitalization, and, therefore, it is worth fighting for.

In summary, the three leaders exemplified the true creativity that Peter Senge (1990) described as achieved through working with constraints. In this article, I used an appreciative inquiry approach because the quality of students who graduate from educational systems in the Arab World largely depends on the quality of the leaders they are entrusted into. Therefore, identifying trustworthy, inspiring, inclusive, empathetic, optimistic, and effective school leaders will accomplish two goals: (1) generate a solid body of knowledge that prepares effective school leaders in the Arab World; and (2) challenge the defeatist collective mindset of worthlessness that kills risk-taking, initiative, and the desire to learn and grow. Indeed, very little has been written about school leadership in the Arab world. Beginning to capture areas where such leadership could be improved and sustained is a massive undertaking, but it is definitely worth the try.

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4.3 Exploring the daily work of newly appointed principals in Chile

Authors: Sergio Galdames, Fabian Campos, Carmen Montecinos, Luis Ahumada and Veronica Leiva:
Leadership Centre for School Improvement, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso, Chile



The main purpose of this paper is to illustrate and discuss the work of newly appointed public school principals in Chile. As we published elsewhere (Montecinos, Ahumada, Galdames, Campos, & Leiva, 2015) the work of school leaders in public schools in Chile is becoming increasingly difficult, especially for those assuming leadership responsibilities for the first time.

Since the introduction in the 1980s' of market-based educational reforms, public education in Chile has been systematically dismantling in favour of the private sector. In 1981, most of the students were enrolled in public schools (80%); over 30 years later, public schools' enrolment fell to 36%. Public schools concentrate students from low socioeconomic backgrounds as private providers are allowed to select students and are allowed to charge parents an additional tuition fee. As public and private voucher schools are funded through an attendance-based voucher, along with the migration of stu

dents, high-poverty and high needs, public schools are increasingly drained of resources.



In this context, school leaders are being called to ‘save schools’ by turning-around schools that have lost enrolment and show low performance due to structural conditions such as those exemplified above. Since 2011, the selection and hiring processes for public school principals have increased their responsibilities and accountability. Principals are explicitly hired to become ‘instructional leaders’, however, they sign a 5-year performance-based contract that specifies increases in student enrolment, parents’ satisfaction and in scores on standardized tests. They are working

under considerable external pressures in order to not only lead the improvement of their schools but also to keep their jobs.

Funded by Fondecyt (Grant #1140906) our research team aimed to explore the learning process of newly appointed principals during their first three years in the position. We identified 13 individuals who, prior to 2013, had never before held that position. Some of them were working as classroom teacher’s days before assuming their new role and others had leadership roles within the management team in the previous school. We have accompanied them, as silent confidantes during the process for two years now, through diverse data production procedures. In this paper, we share what we have learned specifically through the shadowing technique (McDonald, 2005). This technique is growing in popularity among researchers in the last decade, as it provides detailed data to characterize the work of school leaders [see, for example, Tulowitzki (2013)].

The literature is rich in evidence about the insertion process of new principals, highlighting the challenges and difficulties they confront during their first years [see a summary by (García-Garduño, Slater, & López-Gorosave, 2011; Oplatka, 2012). Equipped with the shadowing technique, our team joined a school leader early morning as their work-day started, and stayed with them until they went home. Across these 13 participants, we shadowed them for two days in 2014 and two days in 2015. A total of 460 hours were recorded and over 2,396 actions identified.



Our findings provide a portrait of the daily work of newly appointed school principals in Chile. One of the most striking findings is related to their working conditions. Most of them work extensive hours, on average around 9 hours per day, but in some extreme cases beyond 12. Furthermore, they present a highly interrupted and fragmented routine. We identified an average of 46 distinct actions per day. Usually, principals were drawn away from a task by external demands, having primary responsibilities and acting as gatekeepers for a large proportion of the school activities. In schools with low enrolment, they did not have a management team to distribute leadership. In other schools they did not have professional trust from team members they had inherited from the previous principal but they could not get suitable replacements.

Although their contract required them to prioritize instructional leadership tasks, only a fraction of their time was related to activities connected with teaching and learning. Most actions were concentrated on administration, accountability and working directly with parents. Instructional activities, such as classroom observation and work with teachers, were minimal (about 15%). We identified a higher frequency (almost double) of instructional activities in schools with lower performance, where the need to improve classroom practices was identified as a high priority. Furthermore, we noticed in some of these cases, structural conditions such as having a leading team or administrators to support the work of the principals might be critical in explaining the continuous attention to learning.

Overall, comparing 2014 and 2015, we found minimal changes in task distribution. One change was a decrease in the time allocated to instructional activities across most cases. This decrease was lower in schools in more challenging circumstances. Additionally, we register 907 actions in 2014, while this number rose to 1,489 in 2015. In most cases, principals were led by the everyday emergencies with scarce attention to long term planning.

As we start to close this three-year process of documenting the work of newly appointed school leaders, we have learned about the high level of complexity of their work. In particular, the shadowing technique brought the schools and the school leader's lives closer to our research team as they saw in their participation a unique opportunity to reflect and express their leadership-related emotions. Additionally, all made explicit to their school community that they were participants in this research study as a way of modelling professional commitment to continuous improvement.

As Michael Fullan (2010) has noted, improvement implies the right combination of improvement and pressure. What we have observed are the limits of policies that provide much more pressure than support. Findings evidence the necessity to invest more in leadership preparation that responds to the specificities of workplace demands and to establish systems to support them during their initial years. We have witnessed first-hand the adversity of the current working conditions for school leaders that derail the high expectations and motivations that prompted them to seek this position. If indeed public policies expect principals to become the school's saviours, at least they should be provided with tools and better yet, with the support necessary to lead change and improvement for all students.

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4.4 System-wide educational improvement: Leadership and teacher development in Shanghai

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School reforms across different educational systems have targeted educational quality and equity, with a particular focus on the improvement of learning outcomes of all students. Shanghai students' outstanding performances on the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 and 2012 have produced a global 'PISA-shock' that has repositioned Shanghai as a significant new 'reference society' (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). The teacher development system in Shanghai has three essential components which combine to incentivize, motivate and reward teachers throughout their careers: the teacher career ladder, in service training and development, and performance appraisal (Zhang, Ding, & Xu, 2016).

This working paper presents some findings of a larger research project (2015-2017) which investigates and compares school education reforms and professional learning communities in two high performing education systems in China: Shanghai and Hong Kong. This research examines the contexts and challenges of school reforms, the policies and strategies of school improvement, and the key features of leadership and professional learning communities that contribute to system-wide educational success. The first stage of the study encompassed document analysis, in-depth interviews, and observations conducted in each setting that captured qualitative insights from policy makers and educators. The findings reveal four key themes on system leadership, principal leadership, teacher leadership, collaboration and accountability.

The findings indicate that the primary focus of leadership within the schools is instructional leadership, distributed leadership and teacher leadership. School continuous improvement is organized around effective teacher professional learning and student learning. Common standards and benchmarks across the system are coupled with increasing decentralization of authority to schools. Principals play a pivotal role in promoting and participating in teacher professional learning and development. They lead the implementation of municipal curriculum and the development of school-based curriculum. Principals facilitate evidence-based decision making and empowerment of staff. They work closely with teachers to develop the school strategic plans and goals collectively. Principals share power and delegate while nurturing talents and supporting teachers as leaders. Schools recognize the development of teacher expertise and value the input of teachers in decisions and their involvement in project management.

Collaborative professional learning and collective accountability are built into the daily lives of teachers and school leaders. They are aligned and firmly embedded in school strategic planning and through incremental improvements. Evaluation and accountability focus on student performance and holistic development as well as the quality of instruction and professional learning. The career ladder system provides motivation and a pathway for career advancement for teachers. It also provides recognition and incentives to improve the instruction and professional learning of other teachers. Senior and Master level teachers lead professional learning in schools and throughout the system. Only teachers who effectively develop both themselves and other teachers will rise to leadership positions in the system. A culture of teacher leadership and shared responsibility is cultivated. Principals and teachers work together in a purposeful manner and develop collective capacity that supports student improvement and the achievement of school goals. Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) argue that the central challenge for all education systems in the knowledge society is to find ways of unleashing creative energy and innovation while continuously improving what they do. The Shanghai education system is no exception.

If you are interested in sharing and collaborating, please contact Professor Ting Wang at ting.wang@canberra.edu.au.

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4.5 Comparing leadership in effective and less effective traditional high schools in Jamaica

Tamara King, University of Huddersfield

Introduction

In this article, I will give a brief overview of preliminary findings from a research that I recently conducted in 5 traditional¹ high schools in Jamaica. Using a multiple-site case study, my aim was to understand how leadership is conceptualised and enacted in 2 effective, 2 less effective and 1 improving schools. Performance at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), which students sat at the end of grade 11, vary among these schools.

Three overarching findings emerged from this study: broadly, two classifications of leadership emerged, i.e., school leaders were inclined towards either a collegial or a bureaucratic leadership framework. In terms of the latter, leadership in the less effective schools tended to emphasise rules and structures while effective high schools were adept at providing the necessary supportive conditions that enabled collective teacher efficacy and teacher empowerment, which in turn, allows Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to germinate and thrive organically; additionally, effective schools, owing to their emphasis on collegiality and flatter hierarchy develop shared vision and values which then translates into the school having robust linkages with its parents and community. The extended PLC (e.g. Mitchell & Sackney, 2007) found in these schools enable them to tap into an abundance of resources, both in terms of financial support for school programmes and a wider pool of social capital.

The case study evidence suggests that the manner in which Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were incorporated into the Jamaican educational context was problematic; it manifested in ways that were confounding. The PLC is a proven school reform strategy that is thought to encourage teacher collaboration and improvement in teachers' practice (e.g. Bryk, Camburn & Louis, 1999; Marks & Louis, 1997). Based on the case study analysis, one could liken the creation of PLCs to seeds that when dispersed will only germinate when and where they have found ploughed and fertile soil; extending that metaphor to the schools in this research, there needed to be high levels of relational trust, and teacher professionalism - including autonomy and empowerment already in existence in schools for the process of instituting PLC to have gone smoothly.

Bringing a complexity theory lens to illuminate the case findings outlined above, it is clear that a top-down implementation of PLC backfired and resulted in less collaboration than existed when the teachers were allowed a desk in the staff room. Complex systems (e.g. schools) exists in a constant state of disequilibrium; emergence [e.g. bottom-up social networks] occurs at the interplay of order or disorder (Morrison, 2002). Instead of a single leader, distributed leadership is more compatible (ibid). Therefore, the regimented, bureaucracy-inspired leadership with its tendency to control and standardise every process of school life are seemingly unsuited to the self organisation or emergence that characterise complex organisations, which perennially teeters on the "edge of chaos". When viewed from a complexity theory paradigm, leadership is shared, collegial, distributed, networked; it is secure in the knowledge that that fluctuation and disequilibrium are natural, even beneficial rather than an invitation for a 'heroic' type of leadership come to the rescue. While the latter attitude might be have been justifiable during the early 20th century, it is incompatible,

nowadays, with the near professional status of teaching.

Lessons can be learnt from the warped nature of PLC that was conspicuously manifested in the data. This, coupled with the data evidence that teachers in the less effective schools are more tied to the 'change of command' and bureaucratic authority than their counterparts in the effective cases, suggest a clear divergence of leadership in the effective and less effective case studies.

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4.6 Seven System Leadership Study: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Leadership Preparation and Development

Alma Harris: Director: Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Malaya

Michelle Jones: Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Malaya

In the pursuit of better school performance and improved educational outcomes, it is clear that school leadership matters. A significant body of evidence (e.g. Fullan, 2010; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2012) and a range of popular reports (Barber and Mourshed, 2007; Jensen et al, 2012) highlight that leadership quality is a critical component of highly effective school systems and by implication, that leadership training and development for school leaders is essential. Consequently, many education systems are busily investing in the development of their school leaders as one way of improving performance. But what exactly do we know about the nature and indeed, the impact of leadership training and development programmes in very different education systems.

Over the last four years, a comparative research study has aimed to address such questions through a detailed analysis of the approaches to leadership development and training in

seven education systems, (Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong, England, Indonesia, Russia, and Singapore). The seven system leadership study (7SLS) is exploring the way in which different education systems are developing their school leaders as part of a drive to raise performance for some systems, and to sustain high performance for others. The research study is also exploring the relationship between leadership development and leadership practice in these very different contexts and cultural settings.

The primary goal of this empirical study is to contribute to the educational leadership knowledge base and to add to the international school improvement literature. This ongoing research study is a contemporary, comparative analysis of reform, development and improvement in seven education systems or sub systems. In particular, it is exploring the relationship between leadership development and leadership practice through grounded and validated cross-system evidence. The study is drawing upon the international school effectiveness and school improvement evidential base (Reynolds, 2010) to test and to corroborate its findings

The research study incorporates a mixed-methods design, involving principal surveys, multi-site qualitative case studies that comprise semi-structured interviews, focus groups and where possible, classroom observation (Creswell, 1988). Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are being used for cross-validating data and findings. A range of documentary evidence has been collected along with various performance data sets relating to school and system performance in each country. There is a local expert or team of experts in each system that are advising and helping with the data collection process.

Inevitably, with such an ambitious project there have been challenges. One challenge has been that of access, as in some education systems collecting data directly from principals has taken time to negotiate. Thus the project has taken much longer than initially conceived. Another challenge has been that of language and ensuring that the data collected in the different settings is valid once instruments have been translated. The current challenge is to collect full sets of data in all the systems in the study, as the data collection process is currently at different phases and stages of development. Analysing and comparing the different data sets is the ongoing task for the project team as is primary data-collection in each system.

Some Findings

While there have been a range of publications emanating from the project², there are some broad or general themes that are worth revisiting. Firstly, within these very different education systems, approaches to the preparation and development of principals look surprisingly similar. All systems have introduced, or are in the process of introducing, national leadership standards, national leadership qualifications and national leadership programmes with dedicated agencies overseeing the quality and delivery. Secondly, the data shows that principals, in the various countries, are raising issues about the type of leadership training they receive and are questioning how far this training meets their every-day needs.

Thirdly, the evidence highlights that the pressure to deliver positive change and system improvement has gravitated much more towards principals in many of the systems in the study, and this is generating significant tensions and pressures. In particular, as more is be-

ing asked administratively of principals the data highlights that many are struggling to meet new requirements and to reach government expectations. For example, principals in Malaysia and Russia state that they feel an acute tension between managing their school effectively and being accountable for its performance with being transformational or instructional leaders (Jones et al, 2015; Bysik et al, 2015).

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Overall, the evidence shows that all the education systems in the study are investing heavily in principals' leadership development and training, as a deliberate strategy to raise school and system performance. Evidence of any clear or direct comparative advantage, from this investment, however is less forthcoming. While the importance of leadership development and training is not in question, how its impact is measured and evaluated is still very variable. The point is not to suggest that an investment in principals' leadership development and training is unimportant, as clearly there is a wealth of literature which suggests the opposite, but rather to argue for more detailed, critical, robust, comparative studies of the process, outcomes and impact of such leadership training and development approaches.

This study is still work in progress but hopefully, sharing it might prove useful to other ICSEI researchers grappling with comparative, cross-cultural work. It might also be helpful to policy makers and practitioners interested in looking across, rather than within education systems. Despite the challenges of collecting data across different country borders and some of methodological issues this raises, the potential to learn much more about school and system performance is certainly worth the effort.

For more information email 7systemleadershipstudy@gmail.com and follow #7SLS

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4.7 Systems and Design Thinking for Cultural Change: An Expanded View of Educational Leadership

Jacob Easley II, Dean

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Educational leadership for school effectiveness is a ubiquitous, yet borderless concept. While most school leadership research tends to focus on the role of the principal or headmaster, the practice and sustainability of school improvement and effectiveness is dependent on a leadership system. This contribution outlines the practice of leadership emanating from a US university, in which a Dean, collaborating with other Deans of Education, sought to address a national, state, and district level challenge for minority teacher recruitment and preparation. Design principles were applied, thereby traversing research, policy, and leadership practice.

According to Feistritz (2011), 84% of the US teaching force is White, 7% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 4% other. During a similar period of from 2012-2013, 73 percent (73%) of teacher candidates were white. Of those, 51 percent (51%) were traditionally prepared. Hispanic/Latino represented 11% of all teacher candidates and African Americans comprised 10%. Among racial minority teacher aspirants enrolled in traditional programs, their representation stands in stark contrast to the seventy-four percent (74%) for whites: 9% African American, 11% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, and 3% two or more races (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Taken together, these data paint a picture demonstrating that both the current and future US teaching force, by way of program preparation, are likely to remain racially disproportionate.

The minority teacher population in the state of Connecticut is not dissimilar to the national average, in which this population is anaemic in comparison to their White counterparts. While more than 92% of the state's teaching force is racially White, slightly more than 40% of the student population is comprised of racial minorities. By comparison the minority teaching force is less than 8%. The achievement gap among racial minority and majority students remains a resident concern at both the national and state levels. Yet, diversity within the profession is more complex than historically positioned, particularly with regard to teacher preparation for a democratic and inclusive society.

The role of the Dean is to ensure program quality for the university's teacher preparation programs. This requires, in large part, attention to program enrolment patterns and the employment needs of state school districts, in particular. Within the state of Connecticut,

legislators and school districts alike, specifically those with large minority student populations, have raised the alarm for teacher preparation programs to aid in the challenge to forge a racial balance within the teacher employment pool. Accepting this challenge, three basic levers have been identified to support educational equity.

1. Research and educational research design. As Deans we found it vital to consult existing and emergent research regarding minority teacher development. In particular, we were interested in knowing what attributes are most likely to shape minority teacher effectiveness for US schools, the barriers to recruit racial minority teacher aspirants, and evidence supporting the merits of growing the pool of highly effective minority teachers. Research indicates that one barrier for the recruitment of minority students and their academic success on racial majority university campuses (and in turn teacher preparation programs) is campus climate. Taylor, Milem, and Coleman (2016) explain that policy and practice to meet diversity goals is highly contextual for each institution. As such, campus culture is influenced by external and internal conditions.

In addition, we recognized the need for research to document, interpret, and understand the results of our efforts to change campus and program cultures for greater inclusivity. For this reason we turned to design research, which foregrounds “the fluid, empathetic, dynamic, environment-responsive, future-oriented and solutions-focused nature of design [thinking]” (Kelly, Baek, Lesh, & Bannan-Ritland, 2008, p.5).

2. Advocacy and policy building. The prospect of shaping campus culture is a matter of examining external, internal, and historical conditions that influence mindsets and actions on campus and across teacher preparation programs. The process of advocacy-based leadership entails informing programs of existing research on the issue along with the needs of their school district counterparts. Creating forums whereby other university officials and external stakeholders, such as related alumni communities who have the greatest potential to leverage support and resources for cultural change is vital. Conveying to state (and even national) policy makers and accrediting bodies institutional goals and the impact policy either impedes or supports said goals is essential. And lastly, Deans must advocate by ensuring that programs, the university, and ally communities understand the evidence based benefits cultural change has had in support of their individual interests.
3. Collaboration and coalition building. Related to numbers one and two, change leadership does not occur in a vacuum. Deans lead from the inside and outside simultaneously, primarily through the assistance of partners and networks. Through collaboration and coalition building, the potential to pool existing and leverage additional resources that meet the needs of respective participants is further enhanced. Mutuality is the aim. The extent to which collaborators perceive a direct benefit of their investment, the greater the prospects are for sustained relationship building.

These emergent levers are commutable across educational organizations and may be applied by other leaders. Yet, their concentricity amplifies the complexity of change leadership, while simultaneously underscoring that the process of change for improvement and effectiveness is highly contextualized and is largely a matter of systems development.

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4.8 The Many Faces of Leadership (Research) - A cursory look at contributions to ICSEI Conferences since 2011

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ICSEI is a vibrant, cutting-edge congress, often featuring brand-new research as well as innovative practices. This is no different in the domain of educational leadership research and practice. Over the last five years, there have been many contributions to ICSEI congresses centred around aspects of educational leadership (see for example Easley II & Tulowitzki, 2016). But were there any trends with regard to educational leadership at ICSEI? Is there any big picture that can be discerned from the mosaic of the many leadership-related contributions to the congress?

For this short piece, conference programs of ICSEI 2011 - 2016 were searched for contributions containing *leadership* in the title. Only the titles were searched, not the text of abstracts of contributions. The basis for the search were the final versions of the programs for each ICSEI conference (2011-2016). All titles containing *leadership* were used to create a word cloud, using the TagCrowd service. The results were filtered so as to disregard *leadership*, *leader*, *leading*, *educational*. This was done because *leadership* was the criterion for inclusion in the search (so its dominant appearance in the word cloud is to be expected, the same goes for its relatives) and *educational* is a very broad and common term, often used in conjunction with leadership (at least in contributions related to educational matters).

academic (4) achievement (7) agency (3) analysis (3) approaches (7) assessment (4) build (7) capacity (10) case (14) challenges (7) change (16) chile (4) chinese (3) collaborative (8) collective (5) commitment (4) communities (11) competencies (5) context (9) countries (3) culture (5) development (24) developmental (3) distributed (10) district (3) diverse (2) effective (22) efficacy (5) enhancing (4) examination (3) excellence (3) exploring (8) factors (5) framework (4) global (7) identifying (3) imagining (2) impact (5) improvement (24) influence (4) instructional (14) international (9) italkas (3) learning (43) lessons (6) linking (4) lithuania (3) local (4) making (2) management (4) mandates (2) mapping (2) matters (4) mediating (4) mexico (2) middle (5) motivation (2) national (2) network (10) organizing (2) outcomes (7) participation (2) performance (8) perspectives (13) policy (9) politics (3) possibilities (2) practice (27) preparation (6) primary (5) principal (24) professional (12) program (7) project (7) public (4) quality (5) reform (6) relationship (9) research (9) response (2) review (4) role (6) school (114) secondary (6) social (8) student (12) study (22) successful (6) sustained (6) system (17) teacher (34) teaching (8) teams (7) theory (3) transformational (12) uk (3) understanding (4) voice (4) working (5) years (2)

The resulting word cloud shows that leadership is often used in conjunction with school. Learning also appears in many titles, echoing the interest in leadership for learning that was especially strong in 2011 (manifested in the publication of an international handbook, Townsend & MacBeath, 2011). Perhaps a bit more surprising is the frequent mention of teacher, possibly showing the many possible links between leadership and teachers. The classic “adjective leaderships” like instructional, distributed and transformational (leadership) also appear multiple times. Possibly underscoring ICSEI’s commitment to school improvement (and development) as well as practice, these terms also appear rather prominently. Other terms like change, collaborative, communities and international show the great range of research in the field.

It goes without saying that this cursory glance comes with severe limitations: As word clouds offer a very simple way of quantifying occurrences of certain terms, they have to be treated with appropriate care (Harris, 2011). For example, slightly different terms with roughly the same meaning (“principal”, “headmaster”) will usually be treated as completely different words unless the data is cleaned up or the word cloud software is programmed appropriately. Context also usually is lost. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the word cloud. Nevertheless, it can serve to give an idea of the wealth and breadth of educational leadership contributions that were featured at ICSEI conferences.

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5. The Next Edition

Our next issue will be delivered in **November, 2016**. We will share news and updates for the Ottawa Congress, and feature updates and perspectives from selected Networks.

If you have an announcement that you would like to have featured, or you would like to submit a ‘Digest’ version of a paper or project (500-1000 words) that you are working on, we will accept submissions until **October 30** for this issue. All queries and submissions should be sent to Paige Fisher and Susan Elliott-Johns at Paige.fisher@viu.ca & susanej@nipissingu.ca

PLEASE NOTE: If you are interested in exploring the possibility of hosting an ICSEI conference in your country, the guidelines are posted on the ICSEI website www.icsei.net and you can contact Jenny Lewis at the ICSEI Secretariat admin@icsei.net for additional information.