

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: IS A SHIFT FROM EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE POSSIBLE?

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LIDERAZGO ESCOLAR: ¿PODEMOS EVOLUCIONAR DE MODELOS DE GESTIÓN  
EFICIENTE A MODELOS DE JUSTICIA SOCIAL?

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### Abstract

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The paper analyses school leadership in an Australian and Anglophone context where professionalism in school management or dealing with educational models, teaching styles, envisaging work, cooperation, participation. . . , are assumed to be shared in school communities. It is so that to deal with leadership from critical perspectives, from inclusive and social justice perspectives, makes a difference from new management options, from effective and efficient models, learning communities, or others. In this paper, leadership is presented in a context readable for a global Spanish audience. We consider that the ways schools and educational actions are built, contributes to boys and girls, and the youth, personal, social, cultural, scientific, emotional, moral, healthy and civic development. And schools are the spaces to construct identities, to organize the opportunities to learn, share spaces, discover, experiment, work with one another and cooperate.

**Key words:** Leadership / participation / social justice / diversities.

### Resumen

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El artículo ofrece una lectura sobre el liderazgo escolar en un contexto australiano y anglo americano en el que la profesionalización de la dirección escolar, los modelos educativos, los estilos de enseñanza, las formas de trabajo, de colaboración, de participación. . . , resumen una responsabilidad compartida en la Comunidad escolar. En este sentido, plantearse el liderazgo desde posicionamientos críticos, desde la inclusión y la justicia social, marca una deriva de otras opciones relacionadas con el 'new management', los movimientos eficaces y eficientes, las comunidades de aprendizaje.

El liderazgo en este trabajo se contextualiza de forma ilustrativa para lectores hispanos, porque el cómo funcionan las escuelas y la educación contribuye a la construcción personal, cultural, social, científica, emocional, moral, saludable, y cívica, de niños/as y jóvenes. Y las escuelas son espacios definitorios de identidades, de oportunidades de aprender, compartir espacios, descubrir, experimentar, cooperar y colaborar.

**Palabras clave:** Liderazgo / participación / justicia social / diversidades.

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## 1. SETTING A CONTEXT FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION.

There are a variety of socially accepted discourses about leadership in education. Those discourses, which hold most influence at a particular time, will in themselves produce knowledge about the role of leaders in various educational settings and societies at different times (Wilkinson, 2008). Discourses are productive in that they produce knowledge about what is known and valued in particular circumstances. They also produce 'effects of power', that is, dominant knowledge about leadership. Such knowledge will influence and construct preferred kinds of leadership and leadership values. People who do not fit the 'mould' of particular dominant discourses, consequently, may find it more difficult to reach formal positions of authority.

After early dominant *top – down models* ("benevolent dictators" for Thomson, 2004 p.47), followed by *participatory models* up to the 1960's and 1970's (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Fiedler, 1967; French & Bell, 1973), or quoting Gimeno (ed.) et al. (1995, p.139): *authoritarian, democratic and "laissez faire" models*, a dominant discourse of school management in many Anglophone nations which arose in the late 1980s, and early 1990s, was that of *self-management* of schools (Hill & Crevola, 2003), (Leithwood & Hallinger, 2002). It was located within a broader regime of neoliberal ideology, which placed an emphasis upon efficiency, accountability, competition and individualism as opposed to conceptions of education as a collective public good. It became a key discourse which was particularly attractive to leaders from the political right who were looking for ways to more economically govern schools and hold them to greater account in countries such as Australia. Those individuals or organisations which put forward an alternative view (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999), and who expressed concern about the social justice implications of such arrangements, found it more difficult to have their voices heard at the time (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). As such, the *discourse of social justice* in schools and educational leadership became a *marginalised discourse*. Progressively, self managing schools as a discourse lost its prominence, and the social justice implications of funding structural arrangements for schools, began to be recognised. Teacher's professional development dealing with feminine professions (Zufiaurre, Pellejero, 2000), (Albertin, Zufiaurre, 2006), (Sinclair, 1998) demanded for answers.

But what are some of the other ways to think more broadly about leadership in schools, that is, in ways which answer back to previously dominant discourses of self-management, but which suggest possibilities for a more explicit focus upon issues of social justice and equity? One alternative possibility is to focus upon the *dispersed practices* (Leithwood, Tomlinson, Genge, 1996) across schools that are not explicitly associated with formal leadership roles, that is, dispersed leadership (Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie, 2003). For example, a longitudinal study of improved academic and social practices in schools and classrooms conducted in Queensland, Australia, maintained that if the central purpose of leadership in schools was *achieving the best educational outcomes for all students*, then *teacher-leadership* was critically important because 'individual teacher practices, including both pedagogies and assessment, are the most significant school level variables for enhancing student outcomes' (Lingard et al. 2003, p.53).

Such a finding has important implications. It suggests that 'teacher leadership becomes important', because it is *teachers* who can make the major difference for their students. In order to do so, leadership needs to become dispersed throughout educational organisations (Lingard et al. 2003, p.53, -quoting: Whitaker, 1998). The second implication is that principals

have a crucial role to perform as *educational leaders* in schools rather than as managers of a quasi business. Here, *effective school leadership* becomes 'that which encourages and disperses best classroom practices across the school and has, at the same time, political and policy effects, while connecting school practices to the local and the global' (ibid, p.17). To focus upon the management and/or administration of the school is not so important.

In this article, we map some key trends in educational leadership in Anglophone nations over the past two decades, in relation to how *self management* as a discourse has been played out in schools; and in terms of key findings in regard to improving students' academic practices and the subsequent implications for school leadership. We then examine some alternative constructions of school leadership practice which suggest greater possibilities and openness to notions of equity, collaboration and school community while maintaining a key focus upon improving students' *social* as well as academic practices. We contend that a focus upon both aspects of students' outcomes is a critical component of educational leadership for social justice, and we conclude by looking at some specific examples of how and why leadership for social justice is a critical factor of educational leadership.

Central to our article are some key underlying assumptions about the purpose of schooling and leadership. Schools play a critical role in the personal, cultural, social, scientific, emotional, moral, and civic construction of children. It is at school where future identities are defined, and where the 116ppportunities to learn, share spaces, discover, experiment and cooperate, can be developed. It is where boys and girls share and develop in an uninterrupted succession of exchanges, assumption of responsibilities, openness to diversity and difference, and learn what is important for the next generation of citizens. Good models of school leadership *dispersed* throughout the organisation can and do play a critical role in helping children prepare for the future.

## **2. LEADERSHIP AS MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS.**

Educational leadership as a field describes the social space in which leadership as a *practice* is carried out in schools, as well as the research, or study, conducted to investigate these practices. In discussing the field of educational leadership, Gunter (2004, p.23) maps the various ways in which terms, such as 'administration', 'management' and 'leadership', historically have been taken up and applied (Gunter, 2004, pp.25-33). She demonstrates that such terms do not arise out of the 'ether', but have the material effect of privileging particular sets of institutional and political practices, while silencing or marginalizing others.

For example, in the late 1970s onwards, the term 'management' of schools was increasingly used in England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, to capture the purpose of education and characterise the subsequent and identity work of headteachers, or principals as being primarily economic, rather than for education's sake (Gunter, 2004). It was a challenging time economically, and the harder economic climate forced a scrutiny of the 'concept and practice of the public sector', including opening up for debate 'the purposes of education', such as whether 'education served itself, or the economy' (Gunter, 2004, p.27). Headteachers were to embrace the 'manager identity' and management became increasingly seen as a 'superior form of activity'.

In her research, Gunter (ibid) asks whether terms or 'labels' such as 'management', are "benign" and do no harm ... or are "toxic" because they are oppressive in how they shape and 'represent identities' of those people who carry out the leadership, administration or

management work. Gunter's key point is that we should not accept such terms as taken-for-granted words, but need to examine the meanings that they construct around leadership, the knowledge that this produces about ways of leading or managing, and the impact this may have upon people's practices. Why it is that head teachers or principals are not called 'planners ... strategists ... data analysts ...' (Gunter, 2004, p.22) or 'leading learners'? How might these changes contribute to labels or constructions of leadership work impact upon which practices are valued/privileged in schools and classrooms and what might be the subsequent impact for students?

Depending on the political contexts in history, as the label changes, so does the emphasis upon particular practices. Some practices come to be more valued and others devalued. For example, if the major formal role of leadership in one educational setting was to be relabelled as 'leading learner', rather than manager or principal, the more visible and valued practices might shift to the learning occurring in that setting, and the policies and practices that the 'leading learner' would need to put into place to encourage such learning to occur. Possibly, other management functions, such as administration of budgets, would continue to be carried out by the 'leading learner', or potentially, such functions might be given to someone else to carry out. The labels used to describe leadership practices and leaders confer different types of leadership identity.

Pat Thomson, a former Australian school principal (2004, pp.48-49), speculates about the principal 'identity' of a leader, and attempts to challenge some of the taken-for-granted notions about leadership embedded in much study of educational leadership. Her discussion of the kinds of governance, or public management theory, that has swept much of the public sector in Anglophone countries, draws upon the private sector, emphasizes competition and privatisation, and leads to greater forms of accountability, for the public sector and its employees. For Thomson (2004, p.47), the model of principal has today changed, from the 'benevolent dictator with a small budget and significant freedom to engage in school-based curriculum development'. To illustrate her point, she utilises the somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but nonetheless chilling metaphor of the principal and school as a 'head/body' machine which is 'programmed to appear human, but work totally predictably' (Thomson, 2004, p.48).

What Thomson points to are the different kinds of leadership identities produced by the global/national economic and political contexts, which in turn, place particular demands upon the kinds of leadership work, identities and practices that principals or educational leaders must carry out. The principal of a school is not simply a well-oiled machine. Educational institutions and the people that manage/lead them are human, they deal with human beings, but this appears to be a fact that much educational organisational leadership theory ignores. It is also a fact that government policies in regard to education have tended to overlook as a result of the hegemony of new public management policies of the 1980s and 1990's.

### **3. SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MOVEMENTS: DEFINING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES.**

In relation to improving students learning outcomes and the subsequent role of educational leadership, two key movements which have had a major influence upon the field of educational leadership in the past two decades are the *school effectiveness* and

*school improvement* movements. Their work derives from the 'school effects research' in the USA in the 1960s, which inspired major debates about schooling as a force for social change. The fierce division between the two 'camps', has meant that the two movements increasingly converge, and the key question which underpins both movements, is how does schooling make a difference to students' educational outcomes.

*School effectiveness* research drew upon large quantitative studies which attempted to examine the 'black box' of schools through an examination of input-output models, that is, for example, analysing variables such as school leadership, number of students in a class, etcetera, whilst simultaneously trying to control for variables such as socio-economic background, ethnicity, IQ... Initially the focus was upon schools as a whole unit, but with increasingly sophisticated methods of statistical analyses, researchers began to examine what was actually happening in classrooms. And a key finding has arisen; teachers have a great effect on students' educational outcomes. For example, Sammons & Elliot (2003, p.514), noted that schools 'accounted for 8 per cent of the achievement differences between students ... but classroom level/teacher effects were substantially larger'.

David Hopkins (2003, pp. 509-510) has provided an overview of four aspects of the legacy of the school effectiveness movement: \*'the educability of learners': 'all students can learn'; \*'focus on outcomes'; \*'taking responsibility for students' rather than 'blaming the victim for the shortcomings of the school itself; and \*'attention to consistency throughout the school community'. His research findings attest that more effective schools are 'more tightly linked - structurally, symbolically and culturally - than the less effective ones'. Hopkins (2003, p. 507) notes in this respect that 'until quite recently, the ability of schools to make a difference to student learning was widely doubted'. Some older studies suggested that 'intelligence', "race" and socioeconomic status', had a far greater influence on student educational outcomes than the particular school the student attended (Sammons and Elliot, 2003, p. 511). However, over the past three decades, a major finding of the school effectiveness research has been that 'individual schools can make a difference to student progress' and that 'all students can learn' (Hopkins, 2003, p.509, -quoting Murphy, 1992).

In contrast to *school effectiveness*, *school improvement*, has utilised qualitative studies, rather than quantitative, and has concentrated on the *process of how* schools can improve, rather than *the end product* of this improvement. That is how the *school effectiveness movement* has revealed statistically what qualitative educational researchers have claimed for years, that teachers in classrooms do indeed make a major difference to students' learning. This *how* or *why* this difference occurs is something quantitative research is unable to explain. Qualitative research, in the form of case studies of effective teachers, classrooms and schools, is able to 'drill down' into the everyday realities of the 'messiness' of process to provide insights into how effective teaching (and effective schools) can make a difference.

Lezotte (2009, p.3) refers to the correlates of *effective schools* as entities based on: \*instructional leadership; \*clear and focused mission; \*safe and orderly environment; \*climate of high expectations; \*frequent monitoring of students progress; \*positive home- school relations; \*opportunity to learn; and students time on task. Emphasizing the role of the leader in the learning process, he connects with what Reynolds (2001) has referred to as a good leader for effective schools. They both refer to what can be seen in many current systemic initiatives to improve learning outcomes. However, what is not acknowledged in such initiatives is the complexity of challenging environments in schools.

Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore (1995, p.8) refer to effective leaders as 'firm and purposeful' in leading improvement; 'participative' by sharing leadership and delegating their pedagogic and curriculum knowledge'. Effective leadership, consequently, is a predominant feature of effective schools, but to be an effective leader, to have a formal role of authority, does not explain why an effective leader in one school may no longer be effective in another school. This suggests that studies of effective leadership, and the school improvement literature, need to consider the differing *contexts* of educational settings, complex as unique sites.

Another issue which the leadership effectiveness research overlooks is that leadership is not simply invested within the formal body of the principal/headteacher. The interrelationship of leadership with other factors is important, as headteacher impact on learning outcomes is more likely to be 'mediated through teachers and the conditions for learning established within the school' (Gunter, 2001, p. 33). As Lingard et al. (2003, p.17) note:

*Leaders, such as headteachers, principals, directors of adult learning centres, can encourage and disperse best classroom practices across the school, and at the same time mediate... political and policy effects while connect(ing) school practices to the local and the global.*

And hence, the formal leadership role here is a *mediating* function in order to assist and support teachers in their work to produce better academic and social outcomes.

#### 4. SCHOOLS AS LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

The notion of learning communities marks an important shift in traditional conceptions of leadership (Kilpatrick, Falk, Johns, 2003) with a diminishing of the authority pattern contained in the traditional hierarchical structure of educational organisations. For example, the findings of the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) (VAA-QSRLS, 2001-2002, p.11), are that 'the development of professional learning communities within schools is associated with greater use of more productive classroom pedagogies by teachers'. The QSRLS found evidence that 'enabling leadership can create strong 'school-based teacher professional learning communities when there is a focus on aligning pedagogy, curriculum and assessment' (ibid, p. 20).

To illustrate these points, Lingard et al. (2003), reflect on three different case studies of schools and leadership roles undertaken as part of the QSRLS. Each case study occurred in different contexts and revealed different leadership habituses/forms. *Cassia State School* was run by a highly charismatic male *Aboriginal principal* who had many of the characteristics of transformational leadership and who legitimated and valued Aboriginality within the school in terms of students' competence and esteem. Here, the leader, created a sense of purpose for the school, students, teachers and parents; changed the social relations within the school and students in particular; built relationships with the community; established a formal management structure, but also 'worked beyond' it (p.96); dispersed leadership duties by involving 'significant community leaders in decision-making "at the top level of the school"', and set high expectations upon students' and teachers' learning.

*Waratah State School* was a different primary school, with a different ethnic clientele and locale, run by a white female principal, who did not lead with a strong vision, in terms of transformational leadership characteristics, but 'built one with staff based on their curriculum

interests'. She led 'from the centre' and from the 'pedagogic core of the school', rather than from the front, using a 'participatory and consultative approach' (Lingard et al. 2003, pp.99-100). Between the two types of leadership, there are gendered differences, a leadership style associated with traditionally masculinist ways of leading, in contrast with a 'feminised' collaborative approach. Again, a focus upon sense of purpose, dispersal of leadership, involving others, changes in curriculum and pedagogy, social relations, management structures and strategies, and external relationships, were common elements of the changes brought in the two schools.

The third case study examined a secondary school, *Tallwood*, in which the leadership 'was dispersed among a team of people including an active woman deputy and several heads of departments and teachers' (Lingard et al. 2003, p.111). This third case study illustrates some of the differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of location of leadership and the particularly crucial role that deputies and heads of department often assume in secondary schools in terms of leading learning. Interestingly, the positive changes which occurred in the school were led from this dispersed leadership team identified previously: 'more passive than active', and not from the principal, and were pedagogically focused, 'related to curriculum, teaching and learning' (Lingard et al. 2003, p.117).

The three case studies referenced (Lingard et al. 2003, pp. 89-117), provide examples of differing kinds of learning communities established within these schools. *Cassia's* appeared to involve an active collaboration between key elements of the Aboriginal community and school management. *Waratah* had an active teacher learning community led by a teaching principal who gently, but firmly, encouraged teacher growth through modeling of her own practice whilst encouraging ongoing discussion of pedagogy and classroom practices in an active and supportive climate that allowed teachers to take risks and learn from their mistakes. But given that there appears to be emerging evidence that learning communities may be important sources of developing teacher leadership, assisting in the intellectual discourse of what constitutes effective classroom practices and encouraging dispersal of leadership throughout an organizational setting, what exactly is meant by *learning communities?*, how can they be encouraged?, must they include only teachers?, and what can be the key criticisms of the concept?

Professional learning communities, as such, are defined as social groupings of new and/or experienced educators, who come together over time for the purpose of gaining new information, reconsidering previous knowledge and beliefs, and building on their own and others' ideas and experiences in order to work on a specific agenda intended to improve practice and enhance students' learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2003). In this sense, the notion of teacher learning communities is focused on a growing understanding that effective teacher learning is necessary for improvements in students' educational and social outcomes. Effective teacher learning is consequently: \*learner focused, rather than training focused; \*ongoing/long-term; \*focussed upon student learning; and \*site-based (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2003, p.2462).

However, effective collaboration may be inhibited by: \*structural factors, for example, timetables, physical organisation of schools or other educational settings; \*cultural factors amongst educators such as habitual behaviours that counteract notions of a learning community; \*difficulty of establishing and maintaining functioning communities of learners (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001); \*emphasising excessively liberal approaches which foster individualism (Westheimer, 1999); \*desire to maintain status quo (McLaughlin

& Talbert, 2001); and \*values and attitudes of teachers, for example, if teachers are racist, the community may simply reinforce stereotypes about students (Lipman, 1998).

Teacher learning communities can encourage ongoing effective teacher learning through collaboration with other teachers, students, parents, members of the community, and other professionals, such as members of professional associations, etcetera. On the other hand, criticisms of professional learning communities can include: critiques of community, that is, community is idealized, although not real, and collaboration can become “balkanised”, “comfortable” or “contrived” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998).

## 5. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES.

Critical perspectives of leadership draw upon a range of theoretical orientations to provide a critical examination of the knowledge foundations upon which we can construct a different version of leadership theories. It is a ‘bundle’ of theories, rather than just one, and includes feminism, postmodernism and critical policy perspectives. Although coming from a variety of epistemological positions, some common orientations of these views are that the key characteristics of the postmodern world are change and unpredictability, and what *we ‘know’* and *how we ‘know’* are increasingly being brought into question. According to these, changes in schools and other educational settings are complex and unpredictable, and cannot be theorized through simplistic theories of leadership that do not take into account the broader contexts in which educational settings are located. Critical theorists consequently place: \*a focus on the importance of teachers in bringing about improved educational and social outcomes for students; \*an emphasis upon more democratic collaborative forms of leadership that encompass parents, students and the broader community, and which challenge the traditional status quo of leadership as enacted in a single (often male, white) individual; \*a key emphasis upon pursuing the goals of social justice and equity for students in terms of improving their learning and social outcomes, often with an emancipatory focus that argues for a challenge to traditional power relations both within educational institutions and more broadly within wider society.

What is to be taken into account from critical perspectives, is the broader societal, economic and political context, in which schools and educational institutions work, while challenging and questioning the knowledge basis that underpins taken-for-granted ‘truths’ such as what constitutes leadership. Knowledge is situated and partial. There is no such thing as an absolute ‘truth’, or grand theory about leadership ‘out there’, which can be applied. Instead, knowledge is always partial and limited. A key insight of feminist theorists, for example, is the gendered nature of educational organisations which underpins the unequal power relations operating in schools, universities and others. An example of this persistence of structures is that women tend to be the educators (Zufiaurre, Pellejero, 2000), and males the administrators. The latter role is valued the most, and focused upon most persistently in theories of leadership, despite evidence that it is teacher practices that make the greatest difference to student outcomes (Weaver, Weindling, 1996).

A major point that critical theorists have made about leadership as it is currently constructed, is that principals are viewed ‘as managers rather than educators’. Hence, there is a ‘great discursive silence ... about pedagogy’ in educational policies, in principals’ actual practices, and in the research upon leadership (Lingard et al. 2003, p.12). Moreover, the context in which educational leadership occurs cannot be ignored. A key question is then: what sort of

leadership do we require in order to produce better learning and social outcomes for students? This question places a focus upon students' learning, that is, a shift away from focussing upon the managerial aspects of formal leadership.

An example of a critical theorist approach to educational leadership is the QSRLS study noted previously carried out by Lingard et al. (2003). A major finding of the QSRLS study was that developing a leadership habitus/identity, labelled 'productive leadership' provided critical links to better learning outcomes for students. They noted that such productive leadership in schools 'is often associated with placing higher pedagogical demands on teachers, and ... this may result in greater use of more productive pedagogies in classrooms' (VV.AA. – QSRLS 2001-2002 p.12). Importantly, the productive leadership habitus, or identity, was not solely linked to principals or other formal leaders, but paid attention to ways in which leadership is exercised by teachers, students and parents (Lingard et al. 2003, p.14).

The emphasis here was upon pedagogy rather than management or change of organizational structures, and upon how such leadership can and should be exercised through a range of stakeholders in education, rather than seeing it as concentrated in an individual formal leader at the 'head' of the educational site. Hence, leadership was to focus on: \*the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment; \*an emphasis upon the latter as the central activities of the school/educational setting; \*vision, purposes and goals of the school; \*dispersal of leadership; \*social relations within the school; \*management structures and strategies; and \*relationships outside the field (Lingard et al. 2003, pp.87-88)

## **6. LEADERSHIP BASED ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES.**

A key strand of the professional learning community literature is its 'critical' approach arguing for democratic educational communities that encompass a range of stakeholders within an educational setting. The research in this area of leadership concerned with social justice examines what exactly constitutes community, how one can encourage a more inclusive community which incorporates a range of interests and, in schools, for example, how parents and students can become an integral part of such a community. The emphasis is upon social justice, inclusiveness and notions of democratic citizenship, so that empowerment of community leading may lead to emancipatory practices. Authors such as Ann Liberman, Amy Stuart Wells, Andy Hargreaves, and Pat Thomson, place the importance of effective leadership as achieving, not just better academic, but social outcomes, and how notion of leadership is underpinned by concepts of social justice, democracy, social empowerment and emancipation through assisting students to become active, thinking citizens. As Lingard et al. (2003, pp. 2-3) contend:

*Social learning should engage students in a globalized awareness of citizenship and civic participation which embraces difference. Similarly, academic learning should engage students critically and analytically with different knowledges, including those that are being destabilized and reconstituted in global times. Additionally, academic learning should enable students to engage with new technologies that are changing workplaces and careers in a knowledge economy. Within this context, the distinction between academic and social becomes somewhat elided as schools become sites of learning and work, and workplaces become sites of work and learning.*

Democratic learning communities place a very different emphasis upon formal educational leadership, in contrast to the emphasis in the 1990s upon management. The referenced example of Cassia Public School where the school leadership actively encouraged the local community to develop a much stronger sense of ownership about the school illustrates this emphasis. Underpinning this leadership work was the school principal's commitment to social justice for the students and the achievement of education outcomes in both the academic and social areas, so that Aboriginal students could leave school 'strong and smart' and be able to take their place within Australian society as active, informed, critical thinkers and citizens.

The emphasis upon more democratic, socially just and inclusive notions of educational communities, in schools in particular, has arisen in part as a reaction to the failure of the self-managing schools movement of the 1990s. One of the problems with the notion of the self-managing school as it was operationalised in Anglophone countries, was that the management functions of the system, such as selection of staff, administration of monies in terms of hiring staff, maintenance, repairs, administration of personnel requirements such as long service leave, etcetera, were placed upon schools without adequate preparation, training or resources of personnel, including administration. Moreover, this occurred as part of a wider context in which, 'management' of schools (and other educational and public organizations, such as universities, adult education, and training colleges, hospitals etcetera) came to dominate, with debates as to whether leadership was incorporated by management or was merely one aspect of good management. The critical theorists and practitioners argued, that leadership required good management but was not incorporated by it that leadership was the imperative, and that good leadership, in turn, provided the ethical basis upon which good management resides (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007).

It is highly debatable whether schools, hospitals, universities, and other public institutions, have either the capacity to deal with the management functions placed upon them from the broader system, or should be asked to take on such roles. In particular, schools with lower socioeconomic backgrounds, suffered because they did not have the personnel or financial resources to manage in the same way as wealthier schools. Evidence of increasing polarization between poorer and wealthier schools, an increase in poverty and divisions between the poorest and wealthiest members of society, and the increasing demands this has placed upon schools, and other educational institutions, has led to an awareness that schools cannot govern alone without systemic support. Moreover, there is mounting evidence that the promise of school based management 'has largely failed to fulfil its promise to enhance student outcomes' (Silins & Mulford, 2002, p.567). This realisation has led to a focus upon community again, and in particular, more democratic, socially just models of community that are inclusive and able to build community capacity and resilience, such as that demonstrated in Australia by Cassia, Waratah and Tallwood schools.

## **7. LEADERSHIP FOR DIVERSITY: AN AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT.**

The complexity and challenges facing leaders and teachers in diverse schools in which some of our most vulnerable young people are being educated, include: \*high numbers of Indigenous/First Nation students; \*high numbers of children with specific learning and/or behavioural problems or with disabilities; \*children from low socio-economic backgrounds; and multicultural classrooms with children with multiple identities, diverse languages, diverse backgrounds and ways of life, refugees, diasporas, romanis, etcetera. For many

schools, such diversity remains a problem to overcome, rather than an opportunity to be harnessed.

Reyers and Wagstaff (2003, p.4) define diversity as variety and/or difference and conclude that:

*It is a multidimensional difference weighted in general and particular ways with prejudicial points of view, and sometimes with hatred. So many students make the journey from home to school expecting fair treatment leading to an opportunity to learn, only to find the opposite, shabby treatment from teachers, administrators and fellow students with the door of opportunity to learn more closed than open to them. For these students school and the education they hope to gain there from are not the great equalizer of opportunity as it has been for millions of their predecessors, because they come from diverse backgrounds.*

In this respect, Mary Kalantzis (cited in Dinham, 2003, p.27) observes:

*The problem in each case is the distance between the worlds of community experience and the world of institutionalised education and valued knowledge. Despite its undeniable truth, this list is rather too simple. First the list is all too neat. The groups are not separate, they are overlapping, simultaneous, multilayered. Second, the groups are not internally defined, but defined in and through social relationships (racism, sexism, comparative socio-economic privilege) that often play themselves through in schools and classrooms, and not separate attributes. Finally, the group categories are often crude, oversimplifying the differences within groups and between individuals which determine success and failure.*

The questions which arise when examining different historical approaches to the recognition and teaching of diversity within Australian schools and more broadly are noted as:

*\*What is the impact of student diversity on a school, its leadership and culture?; \*is the principal's leadership role different, more challenging, and more complex in a school with high numbers of students from different backgrounds and who have significantly diverse need?; \*what are the implications for the school leadership team in terms of relationships with parents, community, advocacy groups, and government agencies such as Health, Community/Social Services and Juvenile Justice?; \*what about accountability and the legal rights of young people especially those with a disability?; and \*what about issues such as discrimination and changed community views on homosexuality? (Kalantzis, cited in Dinham, 2003, p.17).*

In relation to students with intellectual and physical disabilities, Zaretsky, Moreau & Faircloth (2005) found that few school leaders are well prepared to mediate the instructional, ethical, political and legal complexities inherent in the special education processes. Diversity, special education, and the demand of education for all, pose key challenges on educational leadership in contemporary contexts. As expectations increase for more rigorous and demanding academic standards of achievement, for all students, the progress of *all* must be accounted for. Principals need to be able to address the instructional needs of *all* students while leading in increasingly diverse yet ostensibly inclusive contexts. Research suggests that many principals lack both the course work and field experience needed to lead improvement efforts that have as their primary focus quality programs and sustained academic success for all students. For example, Di Paola & Walther-Thomas (2003), and

Zufiaurre & Belletich (2013) from a Spanish context, note how in a context of increasing standardisation of education diverse students can be excluded.

To better address these goals, it is argued that school leaders must understand effective instructional practices and interventions that can support sustained student achievement. Research has often indicated that principals who engage in instructional types of leadership are best able to support others in the development and implementation of purposeful interventions that improve student performance. (Blase & Lase, 1998; Fullan, 2002). They note that effective leaders need to have more specialised knowledge and skills about the education of students with diverse needs. They need in this sense: \*an in-depth understanding of the legislation that protects the rights of all students (Bowlby Peters & Mackinnon, 2001); \*the ability to communicate with the school community about special programs and services and to ensure legal compliance; and \*an ability to nurture necessary relationships, partnerships and networks within a context of accountability. This creation of relational networks is particularly critical to the lasting success of special education efforts.

In a study of students with physical and intellectual disabilities (Zaretsky et al. 2005) the following were responsibilities principals were expected to assume in relation to providing programs and services: \*support of regular special and diverse education teachers in their efforts to provide effective instructional and assessment practices embedded in individualised education programs; \*coordination of services; \*development of effective communication strategies and protocols among teachers, parents, regional support staff, advocacy groups, government and non government agencies and associations; \*establishment of procedures to ensure compliance with provincial/state legislation in special education; and \*identification and arrangement of effective in-service training opportunities in the area of special education for all staff.

Critics argue that the widespread tendency to place undue credence on various moribund and outmoded forms of biological and social determinism which assume that individual children-whether they be boys or girls-do poorly, or well, at school, because of developmental differences, because they are 'dumb' or 'smart' or come from 'disadvantaged' or 'advantaged' backgrounds, can not be sustained anymore. It is a question of schools, school leaders, teachers and institutional involvement to guarantee the right of education, and education for all, in good quality circumstances by law. In this respect, Edmonds (1978, p.33) observed that 'The belief that family background is the chief cause of student performance ... has the effect of absolving educators of their professional responsibility to be instructionally effective'.

In terms of Indigenous Australian students, Edmonds (ibid) referred to a case study of Cherbourg State School, Queensland (Australia) written by the school's first Aboriginal principal, and outlined a process of change that took place between 1999-2002, in which: \*the implications of valuing Aboriginal perspectives about Aboriginal students; \*the use of some very basic strategies for achieving some dramatic student outcomes; and \*the importance of leadership in creating a school vision, high expectations, valuing Indigenous staff and community members, made major differences to students' academic and social outcomes.

In October (2003), the then New South Wales Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs announced a review of the effectiveness of the provision of education and training for Aboriginal students in New South Wales (Australia). The Review, and subsequent Report, set out to guide the development of a comprehensive state-wide

approach to improving Aboriginal education. The Review concluded that irrespective of the way performance is measured, the learning outcomes of *Aboriginal students* at whatever age and stage continue to be at the lower end of the scale. High levels of absenteeism and suspensions were having a significant effect on student achievement, and consequently, the low levels of literacy and numeracy skills possessed by many *Aboriginal students*, especially in secondary schools, committed these students to failure (Yanigurrs, Ganggurrinyma, Yirringin, (2004). The consequent disengagement with learning results in lower educational achievements which, along with low retention rates, were being translated into limited employment and life choices.

Given the growing Aboriginal population and the increased numbers of Aboriginal students in schools in NSW, the Report recommended that these inequities were to be addressed effectively and rapidly. Social dislocation, low self esteem and negative attitudes, are consistent features of Aboriginal children's experiences in schooling. Strong and urgent action was needed to redress these imbalances and close the gap between the performance of Indigenous and non Indigenous students. This finding led to 71 recommendations. To advance these recommendations, key improvements were required in retention, attendance, and academic performance of Aboriginal students. Critically, these transformations were at least in part dependent on a dispersal of leadership which focussed on: \*vision; \*operational planning to drive local decision making; \*priorities and action; \*explicit accountability measures; \*shared communication including ensuring that each Aboriginal student had a personalised learning plans developed as a partnership between students, parent and teacher; and \*professional learning for teachers.

## **8. CONCLUSION.**

In this article, we have ranged across some critical influences within educational leadership practices and scholarship in the past two decades. We have attempted to draw a map of some of the key influences upon school leadership, especially in relation to issues of social justice and diversity. In particular, we have noted the increasing tensions between caring about diversities and holding schools more accountable for student outcomes through the imposition of quasi business models in schools. We have used examples from Australia to illustrate that and, at the same time, we confirm that the increasing diversity of school communities necessitates that more than ever, more culturally responsive and diverse models of school leadership practices which are responsive to issues of social justice and equity are greatly needed.

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