Preamble

Chapter One of this Portfolio comprises the Overarching Statement, which provides a collection of evidence of scholarship and research output, sustained activity, research and publication throughout my Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) candidature (March 1998 – March 2004). Chapter One also indicates in summary form, the content of the various Portfolio contributions and their inter-relationships, and an explanation of how the components fit together in my personal and professional development, their temporal sequence and interdependence. The Overarching Statement also explains the nature and extent of my participation in specified research events, including relevant seminars, conferences and research training undertaken through the auspices of the University of Western Sydney (UWS), Australia.

Context

Nothing is impossible... unless...

I grew up in a close-knit farming community, the middle child of five and the eldest daughter, in a family that valued learning and creativity, whilst surmounting the great challenges of rural life. To thrive, not just survive was the intent. Having become accustomed to high expectations and healthy competition, anything seemed possible, until an evening in late 1968.

Second place in this year's Rotary Youth of the Year is Russell, AND first place goes to Kathryn... We are pleased to announce that Russell will be joining the Rotary International Youth Leadership Delegation which will travel to India later this year... arrangements have been made for Kathryn to undertake a tour of Tasmania, hosted by the Launceston Rotary Club.

Whilst this evening should have been one of unreserved celebration, a nagging question remained unanswered – WHY? The reported rationale for the decision:

The opportunity would be wasted on a girl!
Until this seminal moment at age 16, gender had never overtly presented as a discriminating factor in my life. On this occasion though, my personal values, beliefs and expectations clashed head long with a dominant construct of our society that the highest levels of leadership naturally ‘belong’ to men rather than to women.

Eighteen months later, I boarded the train to Sydney to commence my tertiary studies at the NSW Conservatorium of Music as a scholarship recipient, taking with me the best-wishes and aspirations of a rural community, the same community that had deemed it inappropriate that I travel to India. What I did not realise at the time was that ‘for a girl, teaching was okay’, an honourable calling and one that would not conflict with future family responsibilities. Teaching, though not leadership, I was later to discover, was an acceptable endeavour. The unspoken message was that men lead and manage, whilst women nurture. On reflection, I had no concept of the gendered career journey that I had embarked upon, the imminent tensions, dilemmas and professional/personal life challenges that would present as I entered the ‘pink ghetto’ of employment – teaching.

The transition from teaching graduate of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, to secondary school principal, spanned twenty years. The first decade of this journey was as a music teacher. This stage of my career was punctuated by three periods of maternity leave, such career breaks for child rearing form a typical pattern of teaching service for many women. In the second decade I progressed through a series of curriculum (NSW Curriculum Consultant Music Yrs 7-12) and school leadership positions (Head Teacher – Music, Head Teacher – Performing Arts, Deputy Principal) prior to my appointment as principal of a large co-educational secondary school in 1995.
My personal and professional approach to educational leadership is both inclusive and holistic, a practice that positions the school at the centre of the local community, establishing a partnership of learning and service. This leadership approach has been recognised as effective by a range of parties, school, profession and community. One example of which I am particularly proud, given the ironic nature of its source occurred in 2001, when I was recipient of the *Rotary International Vocation Award*. The award stated that I had been chosen for “outstanding qualities of Vocational and Community Service… judged to have excelled in making a contribution to her profession through research, management and practice … recognised as one who is an outstanding representative of her vocation, Education” (Appendix B, p.329). I was the first educator to receive this award. In light of the seminal experience of my youth, it is of interest that it was my local Rotary Club that bestowed this honour for leadership some 33 years later, a club that I have not had the opportunity to become a member of because of its ‘male members only’ policy.

It is now clear that these experiences have informed a career long pursuit of learning for understanding, striving to bring together theory and practice at all levels of school education, from classroom to formal leadership. On reflection the research component of my journey has been professionally rigorous and personally fulfilling. The journey may not have taken me to the ‘elusive India’ that was denied me in my youth because of gender, however, I believe that as a current female principal and researcher, I am ideally positioned to ‘lead the way’, determined to make a difference in the present, whilst reflecting upon the past, and framing policy and practice for the future.
Purpose of the research

I have sought to understand why so few women become school principals. Whether, for example, their exclusion is self-imposed, or imposed by others. As D’Arcy (1995) argued, women must confront stereotypical views or ‘gender schema’ (Valian, 1998) which suggest that they are not ‘tough enough’ (Hall, 1996; Restine, 1993; Sitterly & Duke, 1988) and ‘don’t have what it takes’ (Cupton & Slick, 1995, cited in Hudson & Rea, 1998), an ideology that reinforces the ‘naturalness’ of male domination (Brittain, 1988).

Women who do attain a level of leadership responsibility are often viewed as a ‘token woman’ (Apelt, 1995; Marshall, 1985; Rosener, 1995) and confront a ‘chilly climate’ (Burton, 1997) within ‘masculine cultures’ (Pringle & Collins, 1998), which reinforce the feeling that women in leadership are ‘unnatural’. The behaviours of women in leadership positions ‘evoke confusion and misconceptions’ (Hart, 1995, cited in Hackney, 1999), as they are viewed as ‘anomalies’ (Blackmore, 1993; Porter, 1995; Gill, 1997; Hackney & Hogard, 1998). As a consequence women themselves respond to this dominant set of societal assumptions by over-preparing (Wirt, 1992), with an emphasis on accruing evidence of experience and credentials, particularly in operational areas. This approach ironically heightens their susceptibility to ‘burnout’ (Blackmore, 1999; Oplatka, 2002).

I argue here that these problems result from the often-unintentional ways that women are overlooked and sidelined when opportunities for leadership development and promotion become available. Similar dynamics have been identified in previous studies in Queensland (Limerick & Anderson, 1997; Meadmore, Limerick, Thomas & Lucas,
1995), Victoria (Blackmore, 1999), New Zealand (Pringle & Timperley, 1995), the UK (Hall, 1995; MacBeath & Myers, 1999) and the USA (Hackney & Hogard, 1999; Restine, 1993), however, my research breaks new ground by exploring these dynamics across the NSW government school system during a decade of postgraduate research (1993-2003).

**A new, inclusive approach to school leadership recruitment and development**

First, my research suggests that from the beginning of their careers, women should be offered an equitable share of any opportunities that arise in their schools to engage in leadership, whether on an informal, acting or relieving basis. In NSW, men and women who aspire to positions of school leadership receive minimal formal training (e.g. an externally delivered *Induction Course*) and then only after they have distinguished themselves and gained an area of leadership responsibility within a school. In contrast to women, many men receive informal leadership development and opportunities to act in positions of responsibility from the earliest years of their careers, typically reporting “lots of encouragement … indicating that I had talent”. Further, men refer to promotion as “a natural progression”, stating that their “leadership arose naturally” (Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Dece & Mulford, 2000a, p.105). There is also evidence that men access a greater variety of sources in developing their leadership style, including leadership experience outside schools and education, which leads to a wider range of career options than for women (Refer to Chapter 5, pp. 88-130).

In the Head of Department (HoD) research study included in this Portfolio, women were certainly under-represented in the areas of acting HoD or other school leadership experience and no women mentioned leadership experience outside of their school. Women, in particular, were less likely to have experienced formal or informal
preparation for school leadership and they reported few opportunities to observe women in higher promotions positions, as role models or mentors (Refer to Chapter 6, pp. 145 –146 and Chapter 2, pp.62-65). This certainly reflects the trend in NSW Department of Education and Training data on under-representation of women in educational leadership positions, particularly in secondary schools (Refer to Chapter 2, pp. 60-61 and Chapter 9, pp.225-226).

Secondly, my work suggests that women should be provided with leadership development where the emphasis is on ‘the big picture’, rather than on the narrow operational details of a specific school’s administration. Certainly the contemporary nature of the work of school leaders recognises context, complexity and issues both within and beyond the school, an interlocking of capability domains (Refer to Chapter 8, pp.180-261). I have found that women have to rely much more on experience over time in schools than do men, due to their ‘restricted mobility’. Further findings indicate that women are over-represented in the area of self-initiated preparation. Structured opportunities for professional learning within different educational contexts therefore need to be readily available, supported and accessible. There is substantial evidence that women are most reluctant to consider promotion unless they have experienced a like context and role and are confident of their capacity to deliver in all key result areas prior to making an application. ‘Career hesitancy’ and ‘high visibility’ by way of gender, further present as impediments for women in accessing leadership opportunities (Refer to Chapter 9, p.272, and Chapter 10, p.290 & 297).

Thirdly, I have developed a synthesis of the key elements of ‘effective’ school leadership, based on my research on leadership capability. These elements are
encapsulated in the two education specific leadership development frameworks proposed in refereed publications contained within this Portfolio (Refer to Chapter 9, p.274 and Chapter 10, p.301). Both frameworks are designed to engage quality female and male educators in leadership development for 'effectiveness', by moving beyond the gender exclusive 'traditional masculinist' models, that typically emphasise the technical (specific skills and knowledge), structural (organisational and management), traits and/or style of male leaders, models which have developed out of research based predominantly on 'male experience'. The frameworks I present focus on the contemporary professional learning needs of school leaders and school leadership aspirants, both female and male.

The first framework, Developing and Sustaining Effective School Leaders (Figure 1) represents a shift from a management 'competency training' paradigm, to a 'capability development' leadership and management professional learning frame. The framework highlights the complex and paradoxical 'nature of school leadership – context, conditions and culture', focusing on developing the person, resilience, 'stance' and capability (attributes, qualities, skills and knowledge).

Figure 1: Developing and sustaining effective school leaders
Figure two presents *Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders*, a set of contemporary understandings that are central to the professional learning framework for *Developing and Sustaining Effective School Leaders* (Refer to Chapter 9, p.274).

**Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders**

- **CAPABILITY** is the combination of attributes, qualities, skills and knowledge.
- **AMBIGUITY** the uncertain and constant changing that must be negotiated effectively.
- **PASSION** is purpose, energy, courage, hope, inspiration, creativity, team building and self-awareness.
- **ADJUSTMENT** of leadership style depends on the situation and affects both climate and performance.
- **BALANCE** of the professional and personal builds resilience and wellbeing.
- **INTEGRATED** leadership is centred and draws on a full range of competencies-emotional (EQ), intellectual (IQ), behavioural and social (SQ).
- **LEADING LEARNERS** recognise that all leadership capabilities are learnable.
- **ICT savvy** optimises this convenient tool for professional learning and interactive networking.
- **TRUST** is integrity in action, the loyalty, respect and commitment developed through openness and honesty.
- **YESTERDAY, TODAY and TOMORROW**: reflecting on the past, leading in the present, whilst projecting into the future.

*Figure 2: Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders*

The second framework, *Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness* (Figure 3) sharpens the focus on the core elements of leadership capability: a combination of *Emotional Abilities, Intellectual Abilities, Skills (generic & specific)* and *Knowledge* across five interlocked educational leadership domains: *Personal, Interpersonal, Educational, Strategic* and *Organisational*; enacted with *Passion, Ethics, Trust* and *Balance* enabling a person to perform to a high standard in a given role or context.
Figure 3: Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness

My research suggests that leadership development experiences should be embedded in the daily work requirements of both men and women from the very beginning of their careers. In effect, I argue that leadership opportunities and development should be a key part of the Professional Learning Plans of all teachers, both men and women, throughout their careers.
Research agenda

Leading educational change for a preferred future: A gender inclusive approach to building school leadership effectiveness, capacity and capability through learning, is the overarching theme of this Portfolio and serves to integrate the themes that have emerged from the four research projects conducted during the period of my Doctor of Education candidature.

Research Project One: Women as Educational Leaders, grew out of the research project I had undertaken in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Education (1993). This project was titled Educational Leadership: A Case Study of Four Female Principals in Secondary Schools (Brennan, 1993). After completing the M.Ed., I engaged in a new program of research work for my Ed.D. A literature review was completed on ‘women in educational leadership’ (1998), reflective Principal Journals (1999) were maintained, an analysis of NSW Department of Education system data was undertaken, and semi-structured seminar and conference focus groups were conducted (2000).

Research Project One contributes two papers to this Portfolio: Chapter Two 2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools (Brennan, 2001) and Chapter Three If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen! The Impact of Gender on Secondary School Leadership’ (Brennan, 2003).

Research Project Two: Leading change in NSW government secondary schools includes Planning for a preferred future: A secondary school ‘snap shot’ case study of school culture (Appendix C, p.331). The site-based action research strand of this project was commenced in 1998 and was a negotiated component of the NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) Principal School Development Program (PSDP).
The systemic *Futures Project (1998-1999)* was undertaken under the auspices of the NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC). As a principal collegiate project, the work brings together futures methodology with the unique experiences of principals as teachers, leaders and managers for the purpose of shaping thinking and skilling leaders today to create a preferred future for education tomorrow. Both strands of Research Project Two represent contextual studies of specific workplace and systemic issues: leadership, change and culture.

Research Project Two contributes one paper to this Portfolio: Chapter Four ‘Leading Change for a Preferred Future - Changing culture, Changing leadership’ is a chapter within the ‘NSW Secondary Principals Council, Futures Project 1999, White Paper’ titled *Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW*.

**Research Project Three:** *The role of middle management in secondary schools (state and independent)* was undertaken jointly with three doctoral students at the University of Western Sydney, each a current secondary school principal and a doctoral supervisor who undertook the role of chief investigator. The study of 26 Heads of Department (HoD) at four NSW secondary schools (two Government and two non-Government) sought to throw some light on an under-researched yet vital position in schools, that of ‘middle manager’. This research project was conducted between 1999 and 2000.

Research Project Three contributes three papers to this Portfolio: Chapter Five *The Secondary Head of Department: Duties, Delights, Dangers; A Pilot Study of Four NSW Secondary Schools*, Chapter Six *The Secondary Head of Department: Keylink in the*
quality teaching and learning chain and Chapter Seven Perceptions and Reality of the Work of the Secondary Head of Department.

**Research Project Four: Leadership Capability Research in NSW Government Schools.** During Term 4 (2002), the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Quality Development Unit in partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training undertook Stage One (principal level) of this groundbreaking Leadership Capability Research. Overall 322 ‘effective’ principals were nominated and all participated in this research. This project represents a substantial educational investigation of sufficient complexity and depth to require the negotiation of a research contract.

Research Project Four contributes three papers to this Portfolio: Chapter Eight Learning Principals, Learning Capability and Learning Research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Chapter Nine The Minority Majority? An analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in NSW and Chapter Ten To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in educational leadership.

The research process undertaken for each project, timeframe and publication output is illustrated in Table One.
**Table 1: The research process – projects, timeframe and publication output**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH PROJECTS (P1-P4) AND PUBLICATION OUTPUT</th>
<th>DURATION OF CANDIDATURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong>: 2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong>: “If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen!” The impact of gender on secondary school leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong>: Chapter 3: Leading Change for a preferred future 3.1 Changing culture; 3.2 Changing leadership Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong>: Duties, Delights, Dangers, Directions, Development of the Secondary HoD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong>: The Secondary Head of Department Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong>: Perceptions and reality of the Work of the Secondary head of Department</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong>: Learning Principals. Leadership Capability and Learning Research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong>: THE MINORITY MAJORITY? An analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in NSW.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong>: To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in education leadership</td>
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</table>
Portfolio papers

The first paper of this Portfolio, "2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools" (Brennan, 2001) forms Chapter Two. This refereed paper is published in the *Commemorative Issue Selected Conference Papers 1998-2000 Women in Leadership*, a volume that Kinnear and Green (Eds.) noted 'represents a significant contribution in theory and in practice to the emerging areas of gender, leadership, diversity and organisational development' (p.4).

Chapter Three "If you can't take the heat get back to the kitchen! The Impact of Gender on Secondary School Leadership" (Brennan, 2003) is published in *Leading and Managing, Vol.9, No 1, 2003, pp.61-73*, the refereed journal of the Australian Council of Educational Leaders. This paper positions gender as a mainstream issue by presenting an overview of socio-historical findings with regard to gender during the 20th Century.

Chapter Four, 'Leading Change for a Preferred Future - Changing culture, Changing leadership' is a chapter included in the 'NSW Secondary Principals Council, Futures Project 1999, White Paper' titled *Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW*. This chapter was co-authored by five secondary school principals, each a member of the Futures Project Writing Team. In the introduction to this document, Treskin, President of the Secondary Principals' Council, stated that 'this paper is critical to this continuing debate and the decision making which will change the face of public education' (NSWSPC, 1999, p.i).

Chapter Five, *The Secondary Head of Department: Duties, Delights, Dangers: A Pilot Study of Four NSW Secondary Schools*, co-authored by Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Deece and Mulford (2000a), is published as an *Occasional Paper*, sponsored through the
Chapter 1. Overarching statement

School of Teaching and Education Studies, UWS Nepean. This research explores the world of work of ‘middle managers’ in schools, a critical step in the pathway towards the principalship.

The next two chapters explore these themes further by applying and reporting the findings of the Head of Department research project to a national and international audience. Chapter Six comprises ‘The Secondary Head of Department: Keylink in the quality teaching and learning chain’ (Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Deece and Mulford, 2000b), Paper No. 2 Quality Teaching Series an Occasional Paper sponsored through the Australian College of Education. This paper raises the emerging issue of succession management.

Chapter Seven features a paper published in International Studies in Educational Administration, Journal of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2002, pp. 17-26, titled ‘Perceptions and Reality of the Work of the Secondary Head of Department’ (Collier, Dinham, Brennan, Deece & Mulford, 2002). The focus of this paper was a key finding of the Head of Department research study; ‘that the realities of the position did not match initial expectations, and that those interviewed desired to redesign the role’ (Collier et al., 2002, p.17).

Learning Principals. Learning Capability and Learning Research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (Scott, 2003), for which I was principal researcher, project manager and co-author, forms Chapter Eight. This is the report of a major research study commissioned by the NSW Department of Education and Training, undertaken in partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney. This
Chapter 1. Overarching statement

report provides a contemporary view of the nature of the work of ‘effective’ principals, a profile of leadership capabilities that count and strategies for their development.

Chapter Nine, “The Minority Majority? An analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in NSW” (Brennan, 2004a) has been accepted for publication in the UWS Education Research Conference (re) visioning education, refereed conference proceedings, sponsored through the School of Education and Early Childhood Studies. This paper compares NSW Department of Education and Training teaching service school leadership data and the Leadership Capability Research findings reported in the previous chapter. An evidence-based gender inclusive framework for school leadership development is proposed.

“To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in educational leadership” (Brennan, 2004b), has been accepted for publication in the Twelfth International Women in Leadership refereed conference proceedings, Women Leading the Way: inclusive societies, engaged communities, healthy organisations and comprises Chapter Ten. This concluding chapter integrates core thematic elements of this Portfolio – educational leadership (capability, capacity and development) from the female perspective. A second evidence-based gender inclusive framework, Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness is proposed, creating an overarching conceptual frame for The Ten Principles for School Leaders’ presented in Chapter Nine.

Figure four provides a diagrammatic overview of my research activities and publications within the defined Portfolio focus area.
LEADING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE
A gender inclusive approach to building school leadership effectiveness, capacity and capability through learning

PROJECT 1: Women as Educational Leaders

PROJECT 2: Leading change in NSW government secondary schools.

PROJECT 3: The role of middle management in secondary schools

PROJECT 4: Leadership capability principals in NSW government schools

Figure One: Diagrammatic overview

2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools

If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen" The impact of gender on secondary school Leading & Managing, Vol.9, No 1, 2003, pp. 61-73. Refereed Journal of the Australian College of Educational Leaders

Chapter 3: Leading Change for a preferred future
3.1 Changing culture; 3.2 Changing leadership
Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW A project of the NSW Secondary Principals Council ISBN: 0646380710

Duties, Delights, Dangers, Directions, Development of the Secondary Head OfD Occasional Paper sponsored through the School of Teaching and Education Studies, UWS Nepean. ISBN 1863418520.

The Secondary Head of Department Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain Paper No. 2 Quality Teaching Series, Occasional Paper sponsored through the Australian College of Education 2000


THE MINORITY MAJORITY? An analysis by gender of school leadership, capability research in NSW Education Research Conference (re) visioning education 2003 Refereed Conference Proceedings Childhood Studies

To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in education leadership Twelfth International Women in Leadership Conference 2003 Refereed Conference Proceedings
Participation in research events

An integral element throughout my doctoral studies has been active participation in advanced research events scheduled by the University of Western Sydney. The events I have attended have been varied and relevant to the stage of candidature. As a part-time student studying at a distance from the university campuses whilst working as a secondary school principal, an emphasis was placed on seeking opportunities to interact with fellow education researchers, to experience ‘research community’ and create opportunities to participate in the ‘language and discourse’ of applied research.

During my six year candidature I have participated in scheduled events that ranged in focus from induction (support facilities, electronic library training, web resources), the use of computer software data analysis tools (e.g. Nudist, Leximancer) and document management (e.g. Endnote), to the research process (e.g. ethics in research, issues in research planning and scholarly writing).

I initiated a collegial research team by bringing together four doctoral students who were current secondary school principals (public and private sector) each of whom shared a common understanding of school leadership in practice and were struggling to balance the demands of a rigorous professional doctorate research program with the day-to-day realities of school life. Under the guidance of a supervising academic, we worked through the ‘research process’, building skills in research project design, methodology and management. We also negotiated human research ethics protocols and processes, both within a university context and a public education system.

An essential element of my research skills development, throughout my candidature was attendance and presentation at the university’s annual postgraduate research conference. Initially attendance was not possible as the conference was
scheduled within the school term, which was in direct conflict with my professional responsibilities, however this issue was addressed and I have since participated in four UWS Annual Education Research Conferences. Conference events provided impetus for research productivity, opportunities for sharing of ideas and resources and research skills development (e.g. doing research in education, extending community engagement, getting published, writing an overarching statement, words – tips and tricks for large documents and research trajectory). A summary of this participation appears in Table Two.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>TOPIC/EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18/2/98</td>
<td>Ward Library</td>
<td>Induction night for new Ed.D. students</td>
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<td>5-7pm</td>
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<td>- Information and support facilities</td>
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<td>20/3/98</td>
<td>Rydalmere</td>
<td>Research planning - consideration of issues</td>
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<td>6.30-9.30pm</td>
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<td>16/4/98</td>
<td>Allen Library</td>
<td>Electronic library training research training</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/5/98</td>
<td>Werrington</td>
<td>The Web and other resources</td>
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<td>6.30-9.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/6/98</td>
<td>Rydalmere</td>
<td>Approaches to analysis - seminar on Nudist</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/9/98</td>
<td>Werrington</td>
<td>Ethics in research</td>
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<td>6.30-9.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/10/98</td>
<td>Rydalmere</td>
<td>Scholarly writing</td>
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<td>27/11/98</td>
<td>Werrington</td>
<td>Finale</td>
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<td>2/99</td>
<td>Kingswood</td>
<td>Designing a research project</td>
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<td>3/99</td>
<td>Glenmore Park HS</td>
<td>Research methodology – educational leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/99</td>
<td>Blue Mountains</td>
<td>Preparing a research application (UWS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/99</td>
<td>Kingswood</td>
<td>Preparing a research application (NSWDSE)</td>
</tr>
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<td>5-7/9/99</td>
<td>Katoomba</td>
<td>UWS – Ed.D. Annual Conference</td>
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<td>20-22/7/00</td>
<td>Katoomba</td>
<td>UWS – Education Research Students’ Conference</td>
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<td>2/8/01</td>
<td>Ward Library</td>
<td>Introduction to Endnote</td>
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<td>10-1pm</td>
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<td>12-13/10/02</td>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>UWS – Annual Education Research Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12/10/03</td>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>UWS – Annual Education Research Conference</td>
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<td>(re) visioning education</td>
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</table>

In presenting at four university research conferences throughout the period of my candidature I have had the opportunity to receive critical feedback from external academic advisers, which has complemented my supervisory panel meetings. I have also attended research events scheduled for the university’s academic staff relevant to my studies.
A personal and professional journey of worth

The contribution of professional doctorate studies over the past six years to my personal and professional development and to the field of scholarship has been both significant and far-reaching, greatly enhancing my credibility and standing within the profession. When I commenced my doctoral studies I had just completed three years of principalship in a large co-educational government secondary school, located in a complex and socially diverse regional community.

As the first female principal to be appointed to the school since its establishment in 1929, I traversed a highly gendered cultural environment and drew heavily from the theoretical constructs and learnings stimulated by my M.Ed. studies. My M.Ed. project research had illuminated a path to move away from a dichotomous view of male versus female approaches to leadership, concluding that ‘we’ll know we’ve arrived when women are seen as principals, not as women who are principals’ (Brennan, 1993. p.62).

I was not prepared however, for the educational leadership and cultural change issues that I would have to confront. ‘A marathon not a sprint’, was the stance I adopted for this stage of my career journey as I was committed to making a sustainable difference at the individual, school, system and societal levels. Fullan describes these as the ‘levels of moral imperative’ (Fullan, 2003, p.30). To achieve ‘moral purpose’ at the higher levels, I recognised the need to establish and position myself within the veritable ‘sea of suits’, a visual image of masculinity that typified gatherings of the principals' professional body.

A paper titled ‘Masculinity, Schools and Principals’, presented by C. Bonnor (1997), Deputy President of the NSW Secondary Principals Council, at the International
Confederation of Principals' Third World Convention (Boston), encapsulates the prevailing culture:

Whilst the power and influence of principals... (and) the impact of male and female school leadership on teachers is quite well researched... the links between principals and gender development is less well researched... How do boys discount, devalue or reject gender related messages emanating from female principals? How should women react to this? ... surely [this creates] a dilemma for women in school leadership [raising] all sorts of issues. (p. 1)

Considering that the secondary school principalship was to a large extent the domain of men at that time, I thought it would stand to reason that the questions should be posed of the male collegiate! Certainly the issue of gender pervades all levels of education, and is deeply embedded in a masculine system culture, indicating a need to refocus the profession on a commitment to excellence through equity, equality and social justice. The challenge then was to mainstream and integrate the themes of leadership, education, change, preferred futures theory, culture and gender, underpinned by robust research, professional debate and a proactive dissemination of findings. Mindful that:

*Good ideas with no ideas on how to implement them are wasted ideas.*

(Fullan cited in Scott, 2003, p.52)

Hence I commenced the professional doctoral program to support, inform and challenge my professional practice and extend my scholarship in the field of educational leadership. My studies have evolved as inextricably linked to the professional journey of a *woman* in school leadership within a public education system that had effectively marginalised ‘EEO minority groups’, such as women. At the time of my appointment, only 9.6% of secondary principals were female, whilst females comprised 47% of the teaching service (secondary school level). The dilemmas presented within the workplace provided much food for thought. There was clearly a need to mainstream the issue of gender as it impacts upon school community and school leadership.
I have attempted to develop an applied approach to my research, by drawing on published educational leadership theory and my own practice. As Fullan states ‘an understanding of what reality is from the point of view of people within the role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory’ (Fullan, M., 2001a, p.137).

Public education in New South Wales throughout the latter part of the 20th Century came under siege, a crisis of confidence and purpose evident. As the new millennium approached it became clear that the current education system structure, policy and practice was not sustainable. The Department of Education and Training was widely portrayed as lurching from one external mandate or new idea to another, a future’s crystal ball of the ‘Prospective …What could happen? Probable … What will happen? [OR] Possible… What can happen?’ (Ellyard, 1998, p.43). Significant market share loss to private schools, issues of teacher supply and professionalism, structural impediments to change and the impending school leadership crises were each indicative of the need for new focus. A focus was needed upon core values, the moral purpose of public education, indeed a vision for a preferred future of public education in the 21st Century.

Therefore within this Portfolio, I pursue the construct of a ‘Preferred future … What should happen? … What is our dream?’ a frame espoused by Peter Ellyard (1998, p.44) in Ideas for the New Millenium, a perspective of leadership researched and written, in this instance, by a school leader, with school leaders, recognising the critical elements of cultural change leadership, management and gender, as they impact in a profound way upon the tenets of equity, equality and empowerment. It is indeed timely that this Portfolio take as its theme: Leading educational change for a preferred future. As The Book of Proverbs (29:18) proclaims: Where vision vanishes the people perish.
As mentioned earlier, as a starting point I revisited the grounded theory research undertaken by me in 1993 as a component of my M.Ed. program. The literature I reviewed suggested that most research on the topic tended to focus upon the educational leadership experiences and style of men, conceptualising leadership in androcentric terms. In contrast, my 1993 study described and interpreted the educational leadership style, qualities and experiences of a group of female secondary school principals. I found that the women I interviewed were transforming the cultures of the schools they led, creating an inclusive workplace and a more humane society. What unfolded was a life and career struggle, a search for empowerment. The study illuminated the major barrier remaining as sexism: the issues of status, power, control, asymmetrical relationships between the sexes and structural impediments, which act against women achieving their full potential as educational leaders.

In revisiting my 1993 study and updating the literature review, I established that the reality of women’s experiences did not reflect equity, legislative and system rhetoric or the predicted futures for women in the nineties. By ‘Looking at our future: Listening to the Past’, it became clear that there was a need to work for effective change.

Therefore I initiated and contributed to professional learning forums specifically targeted at women in, or aspiring to, executive roles in schools, including a DET Principal School Development Program—Southern Highlands Female Principal’s Collegiate and the development of a WIEL (Women in Educational Leadership) Network that has become part of the NSW Department of Education and Training EEO program. Such initiatives provided forums to disseminate and field test the authenticity of my research findings, whilst generating a rich qualitative data set, as women demystified
school leadership and the principalship, through the sharing and retelling of their stories. I was invited to present at locations as diverse as Rooty Hill (outer metropolitan), St George (inner metropolitan), the Southern Highlands, State Conference of WIEL (Sydney) and the 8th International Women in Leadership Conference (1999), which was held in Fremantle Western Australia.

_The mystique of the female principalship in secondary schools: ‘Looking at our future: Listening to the past, Working for effective change_ (Brennan, 1999), represents the first research output of my candidature. This work was presented as a kite-flying paper at the Education Research Students' Conference, UWS Nepean.

An exploration of principal appointment trend data over the previous half century showed evidence of a ‘glass ceiling’ with female appointments to the principalship reaching a plateau that is below the ‘critical mass’ needed to attain equity. Just how many years should it take for women to achieve an equality of representation at secondary school principal level in NSW? In ‘2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools’ (Brennan, 2001), published in the peer refereed _Commemorative Issue Selected Conference Papers 1998-2000 Women in Leadership_, I reasoned that a projection based on the trend data of the last decade indicates a ‘2020 vision’, but a similar projection based on figures of the last half century heralds ‘Y3K’! I then argued that the voice of women should be sought, heard and incorporated at the most fundamental levels of understanding and valuing, maintaining that women should be actively encouraged to take control of their careers, creating a career path that reflects the synergy of their life experience, rather than passively waiting, expecting to be recognised and rewarded for the work they do.
As Australia follows global trends education systems across the nation are trying to come to terms with the progressive impact of a school leadership ‘crisis’. ‘Because little attention has been paid to sustainability and because the 1990s represented a decade of neglect in supporting, developing and nurturing new leaders, the dearth of leadership has reached crisis proportions’ (Fullan, 2002, p.12). As statistics from New South Wales anticipate the worsening of an already serious situation, I argue that the NSW Department of Education and Training cannot address the identification, preparation, development, retention and supplementation of effective school leaders without accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants.

In the conference paper: *If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen! The impact of gender on school leadership* presented at the UWS Education Research Students’ Conference 2002, I posit that the goal of preparing a sufficient number of quality education leaders, cannot be achieved if organisational policies and practices that have effectively marginalised 63.3% of the teaching service, women, continues to be endorsed by the NSW Department of Education and Training. This paper mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon the leadership of secondary schools. Further, the paper reflects upon the gendered heritage of education and the career and life struggle of women. It exposes the ‘mythology of the female principalship’ (Brennan, 2001) and the constraints of enacting a principal’s role within a masculine construct of leadership. In so doing this paper forms a necessary precursor to further research. I presented this paper in a range of formats (keynote, motivational and workshop) across NSW at WIEL Network travelling conferences held in regional centres, reportedly influencing Department of
Education and Training EEO and Training & Development policy and program implementation at local, district and state levels.

An invitation to present this paper at The Leadership of Learning National Conference 2000 (Perth) of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association is recognition of the high level professional standing and scholarship developed throughout Research Project One: Women as Education Leaders. The publication of this paper in Leading and Managing (Vol.9, No. 1, 2003, pp. 61-77), the refereed journal of the Australian Council of Educational Leaders effectively positioned ‘gender issues’ in the mainstream and marked the culmination of my first Ed.D. research component.

Now established in my school leadership role and with markedly enhanced personal and professional confidence, having completed the first stage of my Ed.D. program, I became increasingly active within the profession, seeking opportunities to test and disseminate research findings, particularly through auspices of the New South Wales Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC).

An invitation to lead the NSWSPC Principal Induction Reference Group gave me insight into the issues arising for principals upon appointment in diverse educational settings across NSW. This afforded me a unique opportunity to impact upon the culture of the principalship (K-12). The research findings from Project One heightened my awareness of the disparate needs of male and female appointees during the critical first stage of principalship, induction. This led me to embark on Research Project Two: Leading change in NSW government secondary schools.

Literature on the principal journey, the proposition that teachers’ professional lives have a ‘natural history and follows a developmental pattern’, conceptual
frameworks of ‘leadership career’ describing a ‘mobility pathway’ or ‘status passage through time’ (Day and Bekioglu, 1996; Gronn, 1993 & 1994; Pascal & Ribbins, 1998), was the starting point. Of specific interest was the finding that:

Whilst [leaders in schools] seem to have similar beginnings to their career, the second half may follow a different pattern. One route progresses rather negatively and is ultimately destructive in terms of career progression… the other career route is more positive and creative (Pascal & Ribbins, 1998, p.11).

To critically analyse and integrate such theoretical frameworks with personal experience as a practising principal was the challenge presented when I was invited to present a reflective and motivational view of The Principal Journey (Appendix A, p.304), as the key-note speaker for a series of state conferences over a two year period. In recognition of my professional standing and developed presentation skills, I was seen as uniquely positioned to present a gender inclusive framework for educational leadership derived from practice and grounded in research. ‘A secondary school snap-shot case study of school culture’ (Appendix C, p.333) informed the above work. As key-note speaker, I was either programmed to follow the official opening by dignitaries such as the NSW Governor, precede the closing address delivered by the Director General of Education and Training or to close the conference.

It is of further note that during the period 1998-2000, I was invited to represent the wider education community on the University of Western Sydney Macarthur Council. This was an acknowledgement of my developing professional standing beyond the school’s sector.

It was in my capacity as team member of the NSWSPC Futures Project that I contributed to the publication, Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW. A project of the NSWSPC August 1999, specifically the section on Leading Change.
for a Preferred Future (Chapter 3. 3.1 Changing Culture. 3.2 Changing Leadership).

Subsequently I was charged with the responsibility of engaging principal colleagues in
the formulation of key result area strategy, both online and in seminar forums. This work
is recognised as a driver for change (cultural, policy, procedural) within the NSW
Department of Education and Training. The highly politicised context of public education
had driven Departments of Education to become reactionary, constrained by election
cycles and economic rationalist imperatives. Recapturing the public education agenda for
the profession, schools and the communities they serve had become a ‘moral purpose’.

It was the emergent need for evidence based research into educational leadership,
grounded in current practice that seeded the two final projects that I proposed, managed,
researched and reported on in a range of forms and forums. Firstly, The Head of
Department Research Study: 1999-2000 (Letter of Approval, Appendix D, p.344) and
secondly, The Leadership Capability Study, school principal level: 2002-2003 (Letter of
Approval, Appendix I, p.352). The latter research project was undertaken whilst I was on
secondment to the Leadership and Management Development Unit, as NSW School
Leadership Development Officer (K-12).

Both research projects continue to have a significant impact upon Department of
Education and Training policy, planning and leadership development strategy (Refer to
(NSWDET, 2004a) and the DET School Leadership Capability Framework (NSWDET,
2004b). Whilst there have been numerous studies of leadership, Fullan (2002) explains
that ‘organisations at all levels must set their sights on continuous improvement, and for
that they must nurture, cultivate, and appoint successive leaders who are moving in a sustained direction’ (Fullan, 2002, p. 15).

Recognising that educational leadership occurs at all levels of the school community, at the informal and formal, together with principal colleagues and a supervising academic, I embarked on Research Project Three (1999-2000): *The role of middle management in secondary schools (state and independent)*. Previous work had identified both the crucial importance of the Head of Department (HoD) position and the toll it can take on those performing it in terms of decreased career satisfaction and increased stress (Dinham & Scott, 1999). The Head of Department occupies a crucial position in secondary schools, with diverse and demanding responsibilities above and below, as well as their own teaching duties. Those interviewed in this pilot research project articulated the ‘delights’ and ‘dangers’ of the position, along with thoughts on their current duties and professional learning needs.

A Head Teacher Development Program was implemented in secondary schools across all 40 NSW Department of Education and Training Districts in the period 2001-2002, primarily as an outcome of the strong media profile generated by this research initiative across the system (Appendices E, F & G, pp. 345-350). The findings signalled a compelling need for a comprehensive review of the selection, preparation and support for heads of department – and indeed all school executive positions – and a rethinking of the duties. As Dinham et al. (2000b, p.30) state ‘the major turnover of school executive staff in Australian schools over the next decade provides both the opportunity and the necessity for rethinking the current conceptualisation of the leadership of our schools’.
By 2002 I believed it was time to be bold in thought and action and to engage the ‘heart, head and soul’ of school leaders as they seek to thrive, not just survive in a role that is often perceived as thankless, undervalued and unsupported. Leadership Capability and Learning Research in NSW Government Schools (2002-2003) represents the fourth and final research project undertaken within my period of doctoral candidacy, further progressing the Portfolio themes. My goals at this stage were to learn from fellow travellers (school principals) how to build personal and professional resilience, to inspire school leadership aspirants, to nurture the newly appointed, to sustain the experienced colleague and to re-invent those pre-retirement by creating a post school leadership pathway. I was inspired by Fullan’s (2001a, p 253) argument that ‘professional development is not about workshops and courses; rather, it is, at its heart, the development of habits of learning that are far more likely to be powerful if they present themselves day after day’.

As explained earlier, the NSW Department of Education and Training which constitutes the largest school education and training organisation in the southern hemisphere, is facing a school leadership succession management crisis. Through my work as part of the NSW Leadership Development Reference Group (2002), it became evident that in order to identify and effectively support a new cohort of school leaders there is a need to develop plans which are based on a clear picture of the nature of the work of principals, a clear profile of the leadership capabilities required to deliver this work effectively and a clear understanding of how school leaders can best be assisted to develop the capabilities that count. This was seen as a potentially controversial research concept, as the plan was to have the profession and system ‘co-own’ all stages of the
process, by conducting a ‘transparent’ research process designed to engage all principals (K-12) across NSW.

It had been proposed that the NSW future directions policy for school leadership development should be solely informed by research findings and models that had been framed in other Australian states and/or overseas. Following an intense period of consultation however, with key stake-holder groups, combined with an awareness raising strategy (context, need, dissemination of international research findings and possible research methodological frameworks) enacted across the profession and inclusive of key senior departmental officers, spanning five months, I was given approval to design the research project.

Following negotiation with the NSW Secondary Principals’ Council and the NSW Primary Principals’ Association, the NSW Department of Education and Training commissioned the Quality Development Unit of the University of Technology Sydney to undertake a *Leadership Capability Research Study*, by adapting a ‘backward mapping’ research methodology which ‘connects policy decisions directly with the point at which the effect occurs’ (Elmore, 1979, pp. 604-606). This methodology had already proven successful in a range of capability profiling and development studies in other professions (Binney & Williams, 1995; Gardiner, 1995; Goleman, Boyatis & McKee, 2002; Scott, 1999; Scott & Saunders, 1995; Scott & Yates, 2002). Overall, 322 principals were nominated and all participated in the study. The sample covered the full range of schools, districts and contexts that make up the NSW public school system.

The findings revealed that the world of the principal is uncertain, ambiguous and constantly changing, one that is intensely human and characterised by a relentless series
of ongoing challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved effectively. In particular, it becomes clear why technical and academic excellence are not enough, why these must work in combination with a high level of emotional intelligence (personal and social), and a contingent, diagnostic, focused and flexible way of thinking, if the role of principal is to be effectively delivered.

*Professional Capability and Productive Adult Learning Frameworks (Scott, 2003, pp.213-214)* draw together the findings of this study by providing evidence-based frames for proactive and sustainable leadership capacity and the building of leadership density throughout the profession. Professor Scott undertook the role of chief investigator and co-author of the report. As the report was completed on the eve of a state election and in-line with Departmental protocol at such times, it was decided that the report was to be received by the Department and Ministry of Education and Training from an ‘external body’, and therefore the report is published under the chief investigator’s name and the university’s logo. Recognition of my role was restricted to the Acknowledgements section of the report (Scott, 2003, p.iii). Publication of the report drew strong response as illustrated in excerpts from an email communication from Professor Scott:

Kathryn, As my co-worker on this project, please find copied below feedback on our research from Michael Fullan, OISE Canada. High praise indeed from MF who is the world leader in the area! So well done. You may want to pass this on to your Doctoral supervisor...I just read your report on Learning Principals. It is excellent and I will use it in the future. Great frameworks and corresponding quotes... Your research has an individual focus - how to produce more effective individual leaders for the future. We are working recently on complementary system solutions, which actually interact with your findings eg how to systematically set up learning in context strategies that simultaneously develop people as they change the culture. I will be working on a couple of books in this regard. Love to talk to you about these ideas. great job/m (Wed 03-3 Sep-03 9.56 AM).
Whilst scrutinising the data, gender emerged as an area worthy of further investigation, however this could not be incorporated into the initial report. Therefore, I decided to prepare two further papers that would draw upon the existing data set and would be assessed from a gender perspective.

The first paper is titled “The Minority Majority? An analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in NSW” (Brennan, 2004a). This paper has been accepted for publication in the peer refereed conference proceedings of the UWS Education Research Conference (re) visioning education. This paper reports that 47% of the ‘effective’ principal sample was female, when females constitute only 33% of the non-teaching principal cohort, evidence enough of female principals’ capacity to deliver quality leadership across all school categories and levels. An evidence-based gender inclusive framework for developing and sustaining effective school leaders is advanced in this publication, a construct which overtly focuses on the need to transition from the ‘competency training’ management practice of the nineties, to a ‘capability development’ leadership and management learning frame that reflects the complex realities of principalship in the 21st Century.

The second paper, “To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in educational leadership” (Brennan, 2004b) continues the focus on the need for education systems to build leadership capacity by accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants, recognising that gender remains an impediment to leadership appointment in the education sector. This paper presents an analysis of the ‘effective’ principal female respondent data set, and shifts the focus from ‘too few women in school leadership’ to a proactive motivational stance. A professional learning strategy is
proposed that moves beyond traditional gendered interpretations of school leadership, which could potentially engage quality educators in the leadership process, both formal and informal, at all levels. An overarching Learning for School Effectiveness Framework is proposed that recognises the core elements of leadership capability. It is concluded that school leadership development should form a ‘career continuum’. In conclusion I argue that a professional journey that engages both ‘heart’ and ‘brain’ awaits those women with the ‘courage’ to reach within and ‘follow the yellow brick road’. This paper has been accepted for publication in the peer refereed conference proceedings of the 12th International Women in Leadership Conference 2003 (Edith Cowan University, Western Australia).

Upon completion of the Leadership Capability Research Project, Professor Scott and myself undertook an extensive program of research finding dissemination. In collaboration, we accepted invitations to address professional bodies across NSW. We also accepted the invitation to co-present the findings at the National Conference of Educational Leaders, Thinking about tomorrow: Wisdom – Quality – Inspiration (2003). I further accepted invitations to present the research in the UK, at the National College of School Leadership and to trial key strategies in Yorkshire UK. I further accepted an invitation to share the findings with school leaders in Germany. These experiences were critical to the advancement of my research scholarship, by positioning my work within the global context and determining a research trajectory. The output of each research project is evidenced in conference presentations, occasional papers and refereed publications (Table 3).
Table 3: Dissemination and Publication of Research Project Findings

Research Project 1: Women as Educational Leaders - drawing upon grounded theory qualitative M.Ed. research (Brennan, 1993), Principal Journals (Brennan, 1999), quantitative system data, seminar and conference focus groups (2000), current literature and personal experience as a female principal of a large coeducational secondary school since 1995.

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<td>7 August 1999</td>
<td>Katoomba, NSW</td>
<td>The Mystique of the Female Principalship in Secondary Schools. Looking at our future: Listening to the past, Working for effective change Education Research Students’ Conference, UWS Nepean</td>
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<td>25 November 1999</td>
<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
<td>The mystique of the female principalship in secondary schools 8th International Women in Leadership Conference</td>
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<td>9 March 2000</td>
<td>Rooty Hill, NSW</td>
<td>Women as Educational Leaders Western Sydney Women in Educational Leadership (WIEL) Seminar Series</td>
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Title of paper | 2020 Vision or Y3K? The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools

Author(s) & estimated contribution (%) of candidate | Kathryn Brennan 100%

Name of journal/conference proceedings | Commemorative Issue Selected Conference Papers 1998-2000 Women in Leadership. Publisher Edith Cowan University 2001


Status | Published 2001
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<td>22 July 2000</td>
<td>Katoomba, NSW</td>
<td>&quot;If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen! The impact of gender on school leadership” Education Research Students’ Conference, UWS Nepean</td>
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<td>September 2000</td>
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<td>'If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen! The impact of gender on school leadership in the 21&quot;century'. The Leadership of Learning National Conference 2000, The Australian Secondary Principals Association</td>
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<td>10 March 2001</td>
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<td>12 October 2002</td>
<td>UWS Parramatta, NSW</td>
<td>If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen! The impact of gender on school leadership. Education Research Students’ Conference, UWS Nepean</td>
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<td>8 September 2003</td>
<td>Nottingham, UK</td>
<td>Developing Women as School Leaders The Australian experience. National College of School Leadership (NCSL)</td>
<td>Presentation and consultation. Director Equity Programs</td>
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**Research Project 2: Leading change in NSW government secondary schools.**

This includes *A secondary school 'snap shot' case study of school culture*, commenced in 1998 and negotiated as part of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) *Principal School Development Program (PSDP)*; and the NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC) collegial project that brings together futures methodology with the unique experiences of principals as teachers, leaders and managers for the purpose of shaping thinking and skilling leaders today to create a preferred future for education tomorrow.

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<td>June 1999</td>
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<td><strong>Leading change for a preferred future</strong>: How to develop, empower and support leaders.</td>
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<td><strong>Planning for a preferred future</strong>: <em>A secondary school ‘snap shot’ case study of school culture</em></td>
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<td>10 July 2001</td>
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<td>21 January 2003</td>
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Title of paper/Chapter | Chapter 3: *Leading Change for a preferred future*
3.1 Changing culture; 3.2 Changing leadership

Author(s) & estimated contribution (%) of candidate | Futures Project Writing Team Member
D. Hoermann, K. Brennan, P. Hunt, M. Everett, E. Rushton, 20%

Name of journal/conference proceedings | *Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW*
A project of the NSW Secondary Principals Council
ISBN: 0646380710

Status | Published 1999
**Research Project 3: The role of middle management in secondary schools (government and independent) undertaken conjointly with three other Ed.D. candidates who are current secondary school principals.**

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**Research Project 4: Leadership Capability Research (principal level).** A major evaluation study commissioned by the NSW Department Education and Training.

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| August 2002| Ryde, NSW         | “Leadership Development: Strategies to support the ongoing leadership development of principals in the NSW public education system”  
*DET Leadership Development Working Party, PSCD* | Presentation    |
| 7 March 2003| Berida Manor, Bowral, NSW | “Leadership Capabilities”  
Liverpool District Principals’ Conference  
Leading for Engaged Learning | Presentation    |
| 26 March 2003| Wilkins Gallery  
DET Sydney, NSW | “Leadership Capability Research Report”  
NSWSPC Leadership for Learning. A Forum for NSW Secondary Principals | Presentation    |
| 21 March 2003| Byron Bay, NSW    | “The Art of Coaching: A leadership capability development tool”  
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**LEARNING PRINCIPALS. Leadership Capability and Learning Research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training**

**Author(s) & estimated contribution (%) of candidate**

Professor Geoff Scott and Kathryn Brennan
Co-researchers: 50%

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<td>June 2002</td>
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In Conclusion

This Portfolio is the culmination of advanced research embedded in the professional practice of education and was undertaken over a period of six years. It is my belief that this Portfolio represents a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the subject area of educational leadership – capacity building and capability development, with a specific focus on understanding and addressing issues that impede women’s career progress in education. Evidence is provided from Chapters Two to Ten of originality through primary data collection and analysis leading to new insights concerning the pathways leading to the principalship, the problems women face in navigating those pathways, and the challenges the role of school principal poses for both men and women.

As a female Principal and a researcher, I understand that:

At the level of individual women and their organisations...research suggests ...[that] women managers can be and are active constructors of their worlds, they can and do impact upon organisations and their practices, and they are significant negotiators of the construction of gender in the workplace. (Porter, 1995, p.241)

Therefore, throughout my candidature I have sought to effectively integrate the strands of leadership and practice, by implementing ‘leadership praxis’, an applied research process in which issues are identified, investigated and practice informed by and through research. The findings are analysed and interpreted in context, the theoretical constructs tested, and the findings are disseminated, thus creating a resonance within the profession that can stimulate the planning of change for a preferred future. This research process grew out of the work of action research theorists (Lewin, 1946; Grundy, 1995; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) – the cycle of plan, act and observe, then reflect.

In summary form, my research agenda was initially driven by the need to identify why so few women were appointed to the most senior school based leadership position.
Numbers of women in the principalship remain low, relative to their representation in the total teaching service (Chapters Two and Three). In order to move the research forward, it became necessary to identify issues pertaining to system and profession culture, indeed the socio-economic and political dimensions impacting upon school improvement (Chapter Four). What then arose were the following questions: what is the role of the contemporary school leader, indeed is the current role relevant and/or sustainable; what constitutes an ‘effective’ school leader; and how can quality school leaders best be identified, prepared, developed and supported? (Chapters Five to Eight).

The emerging systemic issue of succession management and the constant thread, gender, brought the portfolio research focus ‘full circle’. In particular, the Leadership Capability Research (Chapter Eight) study showed findings that female school principals were markedly over-represented in the ‘effectiveness’ sample. Furthermore the data revealed a relative lack of disparity between the leadership practice of ‘effective’ female and male principals, suggesting that women have the capacity to deliver quality leadership across all school categories and levels. Therefore the proposed gender inclusive frameworks (Chapters Nine and Ten) should prove viable and provide a way forward, ensuring that quality applicants, female and male, are prepared over time to effectively undertake school leadership roles in the future.

Overall the research found that the voice of women should be sought, heard and incorporated at the most fundamental levels of understanding and valuing. Women should be actively encouraged to take control of their careers, creating a career path that reflects the synergy of their life experience, rather than passively waiting, expecting to be recognised and rewarded for the work they do. Further, the findings suggest that the
critical role of women in educational leadership should be recognised and celebrated for gender inclusive change to be embedded in organisational ethos and practice. Indeed, a need exists for women to be collectively inspired by a principal collegiate that is seen to be valued, supported, sustained and developed both by the education system it serves and through proactive generative leadership, inclusive of mentoring and coaching.

Certainly the continuing marginalisation and under-utilisation of women in positions of educational leadership is not supported by the research findings. Therefore, women should be encouraged to join their male colleagues in aspiring to school leadership, confident that they will be similarly targeted for development and supported to excel throughout their career journey.

The challenge is to maintain the momentum generated by the research, a research trajectory that recognises the nature of school leadership – context, conditions and culture. This strategy recognises the critical role of individual school leaders in achieving quality student outcomes, whilst remaining mindful of the negative impact on women educators of a history of gendered education system culture in NSW. As Fullan (2001b) observes ‘individual principals are often the key change agents of school success’ (Fullan, 2001b, p.261).

The research findings presented here provide a case for gender inclusive strategies that specifically identify, target, develop, support and sustain a new generation of school leaders. As Scott argued, ‘addressing the findings… promptly and wisely is critical… This is because continuous quality improvement in education and the development of effective schools doesn’t just happen – it must be led and led well’ (Scott, 2003, p.52).
Dare to dream, Dare to lead is the resounding message contained within this research Portfolio, for women aspiring to school leadership. No longer can individuals or education systems tacitly condone the marginalisation of women. The evidence of women’s capacity to make a difference and lead schools ‘effectively’ by demonstrating leadership capabilities that count is substantial. The future generation of educational leaders are beginning their career journey now, including quality women who deserve to be nurtured and sustained, enabling them to thrive, not just survive, empowered to create a preferred future for the school communities they serve.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.

Goethe
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"2020 Vision or Y3K?" The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

2020 VISION OR Y3K? THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE FEMALE PRINCIPALSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Article published as:

COMMEMORATIVE
ISSUE
SELECTED CONFERENCE
PAPERS
1998-2000
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

1998  Women as Leaders: A Global Challenge
1999  Looking at our Future: Listening to the Past
2000  Keeping Gender on the Agenda
PREFACE

On behalf of Edith Cowan University it is a pleasure to introduce this commemorative issue of papers presented at the 1998 – 2000 Women in Leadership (WIL) Conferences.

This year, 2001, is the tenth year of our highly acclaimed WIL conferences so it is timely to produce such a volume to celebrate our achievements in putting into the public domain a better understanding of the complex interplay between gender, structure, culture and strategy in organisational settings. At worst there is discriminatory practice, at best improvement and enterprise. The volume contains 41 papers which have been blind reviewed by peers to determine their suitability for inclusion. As such the set of papers represents a significant contribution in theory and in practice to the emerging areas of gender, leadership, diversity and organisational development.

ECU may be a young University but it has a long tradition of support for women and the provision of opportunities for their further education and training. From our first year in 1902 women were enrolled in teacher education programs. I am proud that my own grandmother is a graduate from the class of 1907. Edith Cowan was a pioneering West Australian who, as an older person, was the first woman elected to an Australian parliament. During her time in office she advocated for legislation which was enacted that allowed women to work in professions such as law. I am sure she would not have been surprised that ECU has had an active agenda for Women in Leadership or that currently we have a female Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professors Poole and Harman.

This volume would not have been possible without the efforts of a number of women, in particular Dr Leila Green and Associate Professor Adrianne Kinnear. Both of them have worked tirelessly and with utmost professionalism to bring this project to fruition. It is appropriate to also acknowledge here the valuable work of Ms Linley Lord who was formerly the Director of Equity and Diversity at ECU. During her time in this role she was the very active public face of WIL and convenor of successful successive conferences.

I invite you to read these interesting and provocative papers. I hope you will find the time to debate them with others, learn from the shared experiences and apply the insights to your own practice. It is by reflecting on the stories underlying the papers as well as on your own life histories that more women will be in a position to model forms of leadership that can empower all of us.

Professor Susan Holland
Pro Vice-Chancellor
(Cross Sectoral Alliances and Access)
31 October, 2001
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"2020 Vision or Y3K?" The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools.

2020 VISION OR Y3K? (1999)

The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools.

Kathryn Brennan

NSW Department of Education and Training

In 1989, because of a gross imbalance evident towards males at the secondary principal level (93.4%), the NSW Department of School Education implemented an Equal Employment Opportunity strategy 'to remedy the effect of past discrimination'. This prompted a research study by Brennan (1993), to redress an apparent gap in literature, conceptualising leadership in androgynous rather than androcentric terms. This study described and interpreted the educational leadership style, qualities and experiences of four female secondary school principals. What unfolded was a life and career struggle, a search for empowerment. Seven years hence, an update of this study concludes that the reality of women's experiences does not reflect 'equity' legislative and policy rhetoric, nor the predicted futures for women in the nineties. This paper exposes the mythology of the principalship, serving as a 'wake up call', urging increased understanding, vigilance and renewed activism in pursuit of leadership equality for women in education.

Introduction

The current New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training 12th EEO Annual Report (1999) indicates that 23.5% of secondary school principal positions are held by women, while they represent 50.8% of the secondary teaching service staff. This statistic falls far short of the Department's broad objective - "to achieve representation of women and men in promotions positions which is comparable to their representation in the Department of School Education [DSE] as a whole" (NSW DSE, 1991, p.6). This Equal Employment Opportunity [EEO] objective was designed "to remedy the effect of past discrimination" (NSW DSE, 1991, p.6). In 2000 the EEO rhetoric still underpins DET Performance Indicators such as "progress towards the distribution of each EEO group across salary levels is the same as that of all employees" (NSW DET, 2000, p.43). It is notable that half a century earlier (1949), when women had become a 'reserve' army of labour due to the enlistment of men in the armed forces during World War II, they held 20.9% of secondary school principal positions.

In the global context, Aburdene and Naishitt (1990) in their book Megatrends 2000 heralded the 1990's as "the decade of women in leadership", Caldwell (1990) translating this into the field of education, and predicting that "women will claim their place among the ranks of leaders in education, including those at the most senior level" (p.1). These were bold predictions at a time when the EEO Annual Report (NSW DSE, 1990) indicated an imbalance towards men at all levels, with gross discrepancies evident at secondary principal level. In 1989, only 6.6% of secondary school principal positions were held by women, while women represented 47.8% of the secondary teaching service staff (NSW DSE 1st EEO Annual Report, 1990).

Based on these statistics, how many years should it take for women to achieve an equality of representation at secondary school principal level in NSW? A projection based on the trend data of the last decade (Figure 1) indicates a '2020 vision', but a similar projection based on figures of the last half century heralds 'Y3K'!
“2020 Vision or Y3K?” The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools.

Figure 1: % Secondary principals by gender 1989-1999

(source: NSW Department of School Education, *EEO Annual Reports Nos 1-12*)

If we cast our minds back over 5,000 years of recorded history, how many examples can be found of a patriarchal society willingly and peacefully handing over power to a subordinate group? Have women in educational leadership discovered the ‘glass ceiling’, with appointments to secondary principal positions beginning to plateau? Is this a cyclic phenomenon, with the ongoing male dominance of the education hierarchy, ensuring that the ‘critical mass’ of women remains below 25%, a level that raises the expectation of influence, but not the reality of genuinely effecting change within an organisation? Could it be that women principals, being forced to enact their leadership role within the constraints of a masculine construct, are becoming victims of role fatigue as they navigate a highly gendered ‘eduscape’? Does the ever present mantra, ‘if you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen’ prey upon women whose lives, on a daily basis, reflect a ‘professional’ (public domain) and ‘personal’ (private domain) life dichotomy?

This paper addresses issues that arise out of these questions, exposing the mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools. It draws upon grounded theory qualitative research which describes and interprets the educational leadership style, qualities and experiences of four female secondary school principals (Brennan, 1993), *Principal Journals* (Brennan, 1999) and quantitative
data and current literature, to establish if the reality of the female experience in the nineties, reflects 'equity' legislative and policy rhetoric, and predicted futures.

Legislative and policy context.

In 1979 when only 9.6% of secondary school principals were women, a NSW Anti-Discrimination Board study predicted that, based on the existing 'seniority' promotion system, there would be no female principals in secondary schools by 1990. Given equal pay, promotion and access to all schools, following the introduction of Anti-Discrimination legislation, men benefited by moving into principal's positions in girls' schools. There was no such parallel movement of women into boys' schools. At that time there was also the shift to coeducational secondary schooling, which saw the amalgamation of many single sex secondary schools. The impact of the 1932 Married Women's Act, which demanded that women on marriage should give up employment, is also reflected in this statistic.

The introduction of Amendment IXa, (1980-1982) to The Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 (NSW), formed the basis of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy and strategy development, with the legislation requiring all public sector agencies to take positive action to identify and remove discriminatory practices. Within the public school context, Schools Renewal (Scott, 1989) foretold that a "new system will give teachers a promotional 'ladder' which will directly relate to their abilities and performance" (p.26). A system of 'merit promotion' replaced appointment by 'seniority', a process that was based upon external assessment (inspection) of a candidate, and placement on a seniority list (not coincidentally referred to as 'the stud book').

While 'merit promotion' was seen as an innovation of marked EEO potential, Brennan (1993) found the concept of a promotional 'ladder' problematic, as it is a predominately masculine construct. The Brennan (1993) case study participants certainly did not perceive their pursuit of the principalship as ambition interpreted as an 'aspiring up', but more an ambition to 'create social change'. For them success was "not measured in moving from job to job in a vertical continuum ... [but] measured by the quality of any job held" (Carlson & Schmuck, 1981, cited in Shakeshaft, 1987, pp.122-123).

[As Yvonne stated] I can actually make a difference ... I love helping people to make changes in their lives [and] you can do this as the principal...[Narelle* sharing that] I have had students change their perceptions of themselves ... by little things that we introduced into the school, by the fact that I'm principal (Brennan, 1993, p.46).

It is of note that of the Brennan (1993) case study participants, only the youngest may have achieved principal status prior to retirement, if the 'seniority based' system had been retained. Each participant was married and had taken career breaks for child rearing. Resignation was the only option for one, while another had to 'board' her toddlers out with in-laws, as their births were so close together, and leave provisions were not adequate. They had sole or major responsibility for domestic life and minimal mobility, each juggling complex 'personal' and 'professional' lives.

The mythology

Clearly the principalship retains it's masculine bias. Women still have to pass through rigorous filters and confront unique problems in a male oriented culture, and are viewed as anomalies. (Blackmore, 1993; Porter 1995; Gill, 1997; Hackney & Hogard, 1998; Hackney, 1999). It is critical at this time, that the mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools, a mythology invented to explain or excuse the real phenomena (ie. the masculine construct of leadership), is exposed for what it is, a proliferation of myths and tales, ungrounded in the female experience or indeed reality (Restine, 1993).

'Women don't have what it takes'; 'women lack support of teachers and the community' (Cupton & Slick, 1995, cited in Hudson & Rea, 1998, p.1); 'women are unable to maintain discipline or control abusive parents'; 'women are not tough enough to handle the political environment' (Hall, 1996,

* Paragraph six line one 'it's' should read 'its'.
Restine 1993; Sitterly and Duke, 1988), are but some examples of stereotypes or 'gender schema' (Valian, 1998) that comprise the developed mythology.

The mythology is further compounded by the pervasiveness of socialisation factors and seemingly illusive gender barriers (formal and informal), the tension of the 'personal'/professional' dichotomy. Whilst sexual bias in the interviewing of women applicants for positions would now be grounds for appeal, women often report that their referees have been asked gender based questions. 'Does she have the capacity to combine career, marriage and family', 'does she have the support of her husband', 'will she be able to handle an experienced majority male staff' and 'can she handle stress', are common anecdotes.

There is also the barrier a female principal faces if she has a male supervisor and 'experienced' male colleagues, as they may feel threatened because she probably had to work exceptionally hard to get where she is. Brennan (1993) found that the majority of study participants held Masters degrees, gained through part time study, which is consistent with Wirt's (1992) findings that women are better prepared (some researchers refer to an 'over-preparation syndrome') for leadership than men.

One of the most striking realities and an immediate gender issue for women who are appointed to the principalship in secondary schools, is that the majority follow a male principal, becoming the first woman head in the school's history. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) devote an entire chapter to the "New Lady on the Hill" and the problems she faced that were directly related to being a woman in what had always been, in that town "a man's territory...[as] adolescents in secondary schools need to be managed, and this is a job for a man"(pp.89-98). Carolyn* commented that:

Fathers who had previously left school matters to their wives, now accompany their sons for disciplinary interviews with the new female principal... a level of discomfort with a woman in a position of authority evident (Brennan, 1999).

Hart (1995) suggests that on a daily basis newly appointed women principals have to 'deal with the fact that their behaviours evoke confusion and misconceptions among their constituents' (cited in Hackney, 1999, p.2). Upon accepting an appointment, the female principal becomes the subject of scrutiny, rumour and curiosity, constrained by the style, generation and gender of her predecessor, and the support available from senior colleagues. A woman shoulders the 'burden of proof' that she can do the job on a daily basis, and is regarded as weak if she attempts to establish a democratic process, with male staff and parents often wanting a return to the more autocratic style they associate with male principals.

Often a token woman, the new female principal has to contend with increased performance pressure, visibility, being a test case for other women, isolation, lack of female role models, exclusion from male groups and distortion of women's behaviour by others in order to fit female principals into pre-existing sex stereotypes. She often becomes the focus of hostility from male teachers (a form of competency testing), and has to work harder to get male teachers to 'hear' her (Hall, 1996; Hudson & Rea, 1998; Marshall, 1985; Rosener, 1995).

Yvonne* said that "when I first arrived a lot of the people had been here a while... no way they were going to work for a woman... I've shaken along a couple of people who weren't performing and were being obstructionist". Gail* recalled that "this school was astounded when [the panel] picked a woman" (Brennan, 1993, p.41 & p.49) and Pat acknowledged that "there was a bit of a flak about my appointment... anxiety was about whether I could actually do the job" (Thompson, 1986, p.7). The President of Jean's* school P&C moved the following motion: "It's ungodly and unnatural to have a woman in charge of a man (whilst the motion was lost 21 to 7, the minutes of the meeting were sent to the Minister of Education)"(Dunshea, 1996, p.5).

Certainly women principals are often asked "who's in charge? or are confronted with demands from parents to be able to "see the headmaster", as the expectation remains that the person in charge will be a man (Hall 1996).
Narelle* said that "a lot of parents that come into the school expect a male principal and are rather amazed when I actually come out of the office" (Brennan, 1993, p.53).

Strategies employed by female principals in this situation, range from the provision of clear school signage, letterhead and business cards which include their name, ensuring that all formal correspondence includes their 'title'. Carolyn* quipped that "if all else fails, a trusty shredder by the desk can be quite therapeutic in releasing frustration over the receipt of yet another 'Dear Headmaster' letter" (Brennan, 1999).

The interpretation of power and authority both within the school and across the system, and the impact this has upon culture is also a significant issue. After 10 years of EEO it is still common for a new female secondary school principal to 'inherit' a very authoritarian and confrontational 'male culture' (power defined as control/dominance). This requires professional stamina and resilience over time to effect positive learning culture transformation. Women report that the development of 'webs of support' (collegial counsel and coaching), and the modelling of non-confrontational behaviours, are effective strategies in such contexts.

Hall’s (1996) research found that "the women heads’ behaviour and values about school leadership showed them to prefer a ‘practical action’ model in which power for, is preferred to power over...[preferring] collegial rather than judgemental ... androgynous management... a broad integrated repertoire" (p.184 & p.200).

Carolyn* reflected upon the response of staff when she repositioned the ‘principal’ (ie. leadership) at the centre of the school’s leadership and management framework, instead of ‘at the top’ as in traditional hierarchical models of school leadership, staff (majority male) maintaining that “the management diagram [for the school] is a problem... the principal is not the hub of a school” (Brennan, 1999).

Was it preferred that there remain a division between teachers and ‘management’ (the ‘them and us’ 1960s/70s union rhetoric) in which teachers could abrogate responsibility for decision making? It is of interest that the diagram closely resembled a ‘web’, emphasising a flexible and more fluid team approach, and a willingness to share information. Helgesen (1991) found that women were more apt to see themselves in the middle of a tightly spun web, and Rosener (1990) refers to women creating ‘webs of inclusion’. Carolyn* further explained her leadership strategy and rationale for organisational restructure:

In developing a learning community culture, I have sought to create leadership density (staff and student) and informed parent/community and school partnerships... These are enabling strategies, ensuring that ‘non filtered’ information about the school is captured by me, through frequent formal and informal interaction... a style of leadership that is very different from my male predecessor (Brennan, 1999).

Workplace harassment can also be problematic when staff (usually male), attempt to establish dominance/power/status. The journal reflections of Carolyn* included strategies to counter staff intimidation and bullying. “A Code of Conduct was introduced for 'discussion, comment and debate', the format of meetings was changed... including decision making... with ‘what will this mean/model for our students’ the touchstone” (Brennan, 1999).

For women who aspire to the principalship there remain significant impediments to success, not the least being the interpretation of power and authority both within school and across the system, and the impact this has upon organisational culture. Whilst the challenges at times appear formidable for female principals, the opportunity to make a difference for the students in their care and the school community as a whole, bring immense professional and personal satisfaction. Researchers have found that women who have broken through the ‘glass ceiling’, can and do excel in their roles. They have a strong motivational orientation, a sense of mission and a belief that they can effect significant changes in school life (Restine, 1993). "Each express a passion for excellence in their teaching and
leadership and in education generally” (Fennell, 1997, p.4), qualities that were clearly evident in the Brennan (1993) study.

However Hackney (1999) found that women leaders “were both anxious and excited about assuming leadership positions, [speaking] of their fears of not being able to stand up for what is right and of their souls and spirits being crushed in hostile environments” (p. 9). This articulation of ‘fear’ is consistent with findings that suggest that women are often appointed to secondary schools that are in need of significant change. As transformational, futuristic leaders their presence in secondary schools hastens cultural change and reform (Drake and Owen, 1998; Hail, 1996; Regan, 1995; Rosener 1990; Rosener, 1995).

As change agents, female principals need to develop a personal and professional ‘tool kit’, if they are to ‘survive’ the challenges of the role and not succumb to ‘role fatigue’ and ‘emotional burnout’. As Blackmore (1999) explains, “the never-ending housework of the teacher – as ‘mother made conscious’ – is now expected of the good principal who mends the social fabric of school communities” (p167). Tools for self reflection, data capture, context analysis (a psycho-ecological framework) and career development (particularly life-long learning) provide strategies for women to manage the ever present tensions created by the ‘professional’/’personal’ life dichotomy.

Women principals who are cast as leadership anomalies, within a masculine cultural construct, are profoundly aware of the mantra – ‘if you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen.’ But rather than ‘retreat to the kitchen’ and/or be ‘run out of town’, as occurred when “Fran and her husband decided they had had enough and left the community” (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986, p.98), women should be clear and rational, ensuring that their role and expectations of others are not ambiguous, and that they are empowered to make appropriate life choices.

Women principals should share and retell their stories, and in so doing, redefine and reposition leadership, women transforming the cultures of the schools they lead, by expressing, not giving up their personal values and feminist attributes.

**In conclusion**

It is clear that as we enter the 21st century, the reality of women’s promotional experience in NSW government secondary schools, does not reflect ‘equity’, legislative and policy rhetoric, nor the predicted futures for women in the nineties. ‘Looking at our Future: Listening to the Past’, we need to effect a paradigmatic shift from EEO (equal employment opportunity) to EEO&D (equal employment opportunity and outcomes), by establishing system priorities which result in fair employment outcomes for women, at all levels, comparable to their representation in the Department as a whole. This paper serves as a ‘wake up call’, urging increased understanding, vigilance and renewed activism in pursuit of leadership equality for women in education. The voice of women should be sought, heard and incorporated at the most fundamental levels of understanding and valuing. Women should be actively encouraged to take control of their careers, creating a career path that reflects the synergy of their life experience, rather than passively waiting, expecting to be recognised and rewarded for the work they do.

**Note:** * indicates name not a real name

**References**


CHAPTER THREE

"IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT GET BACK TO THE KITCHEN!" THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

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ABSTRACT: As Australia follows global trends, education systems across the nation are trying to come to terms with the progressive impact of a ‘school leadership crisis’. Statistics from New South Wales (NSW) anticipate the worsening of an already serious situation. It is argued that the NSW Department of Education and Training cannot address the identification, preparation, development, retention and supplementation of effective school leaders, without accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants. The author posits that this goal cannot be achieved if organisational culture, policy and practice that has effectively marginalised 63.9% of the teaching service, women, continues to be promulgated. This paper mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon leadership of secondary schools, reflecting upon the gendered nature of education and the career and life struggle of women exposing the mythology of the female principalship and constraints of enacting a principal’s role within a masculine construct of leadership. In so doing this paper forms a necessary precursor to further research by presenting an overview of socio-historical findings of the 20th Century.

Introduction

Succession management, workforce planning, leadership capacity and sustainability in education have become a 21st Century socio-economic and political ‘catchcry’. Fullan (2003, p.12) believes that ‘because little attention has been paid to sustainability and because the 1990s represented a decade of neglect of supporting, developing and nurturing new leaders, the dearth of leadership has reached crisis proportions.’ In Australia, as in many parts of the world, the education systems across the nation are trying to come to terms with the progressive impact of a ‘school leadership crisis’. Over the past decade in the Australian State of New South Wales (NSW), there has been scant regard for developing leadership capacity and density within and across educational institutions, nor a developed understanding of the changing role of the secondary school principal. Adding to these concerns, a review of workforce demographics for NSW indicates that erosion of the existing leadership base will take place at an increasing rate:

At present the mean age of NSW DET secondary principals is 52 and deputy principals is 49, with the mean age of primary principals being 50 and deputy principals 48. Retirement projections indicate that 74% of secondary principals and 59% of primary principals will retire within a decade.

(Scott, 2003, p.1)

Given this anticipated worsening of an already serious situation it will be difficult to address the identification, preparation, development, retention and supplementation of effective school leaders, without accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants. This goal cannot be achieved if organisational culture, policy and practice is embraced that has effectively marginalised women, who constitute 63.9% of the teaching service (NSWDET, 2001). Teaching service women are an enormous resource that is demographically appropriate but marginalised and under-utilised.

This paper mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon leadership of secondary schools, reflecting upon the gendered nature of education, exposing the ‘mythology of the female principalship’ (Brennan, 2001) and the constraints of enacting a principal’s role within a masculine construct of
leadership. Acknowledging that gender is the ‘absent presence’ in an education system structured as a traditional home (Apple, 1983; Blackmore & Kenway, 1993; Goodman, 1997, Porter, 1995; Taylor & Henry, 1988; Whitaker & Lane, 1990), this paper forms a necessary precursor to further research by presenting an overview of historical findings of the 20th Century.

The paper draws upon qualitative research, employing grounded theory methodology (Brennan, 1993), Principal Journals (Brennan, 1999), quantitative system data, seminar and conference focus groups, current literature and personal experience as a principal of a large coeducational secondary school, framed by the feminist poststructuralist concepts of discourse, subjectivity and power (Blackmore, 1999, p.14). In particular, it recognises the career and life struggle of women who have been empowered to transform the cultures of the schools they lead, by expressing, not giving up, their personal values, feminine attributes and feminist stance. Quotes are included from Educational Leadership: A case study of four female principals in secondary schools (Brennan, 1993) The names of the women who participated have been protected through the use of pseudonyms throughout this paper.

**Women in education and leadership - a socio-historical perspective**

To reinstate women’s presence in the past provides spaces for women’s voices and actions in the present (Blackmore, 1999, p.23).

Throughout the 20th Century, legislation and policy have reflected the dominant social attitudes towards the appropriateness or otherwise of women as teachers and more recently as educational leaders. To understand the current attitude regarding women in educational leadership, it is necessary to review the socio-political concerns over women entering the teaching service, particularly post-primary school. This is exemplified in the view espoused by the National Board of Education, one of women as being:

... naturally designed for the office of teaching the young; they have more sympathy than men; they know almost intuitively where a child’s heart lies...[but as for] teaching older children a female is not on the whole so well adapted as a male, the loss would be sustained only by the boys over twelve years of age [i.e. those of secondary school age]. (NSW Council of Education Report, 1973, p.90)

As recently as 1996, Gold’s research discovered that ‘as the statistics go up the age phases, women hold positions of even lower status... the older the learner the more prestigious the teaching, and so it is more likely that the work will be done by men’ (Gold, 1996, p.420).

Recognising that discourses of masculinity and femininity are continually reconstituted, in the late nineteenth-century, femininity was associated with nurturing (a ‘pedagogy of the feminine’), irrationality and emotion (a ‘cult of domesticity’). This discursive construction was evident in child-centred pedagogy, ‘love rather than coercion, became the centrepiece...and, with love replacing fear (or authority), was the woman teacher’ (Walkerdine, 1993, p.63). Educational administration (as a ‘technology of the masculine’) ‘produced its own truth claims, discourses and practices’ (Blackmore, 1999, p.23). Men were seen as the leaders and managers, based on their rationality and autonomy, whilst teaching was positioned as the ‘other’.

This construction of gender quickly became embedded in ‘education system culture’, as the ‘discourse of patriarchal masculinism [was] institutionalised by, and into, the regulative practices of emergent state educational bureaucracies during the late nineteenth century’ (Blackmore, 1999, p.23-4). Female teachers were ‘consistently judged as being more moral, more docile, more industrious and more patient and meticulous in their work. It was assumed that they had already been trained in their traditional role of women to be caring and thoughtful’ (Kyle, 1988, p.32).

From the start, teachers were classified and promoted, as in the public service, by seniority and ‘good conduct’, the latter determined by the male inspector’s reading of community values. Thus the characteristics of bureaucratic life - uniformity and hierarchy - surfaced early in public education. Patriarchal control was largely maintained through visitation of the male inspector to their one-room
school. Such surveillance was of both a sexual and a professional nature, the male inspector checking for female moral impropriety as well as poor work (Kyle, 1990 cited in Blackmore, 1993, p. 32; Theobald, 1996).

An irrational fear of male bureaucrats regarding the feminisation of teaching became evident, particularly through overt attempts to exclude women from the teaching service in the early 1900's when NSW moved to regulate the teaching profession, favouring less qualified and experienced males. Interestingly, the male recruits of this era were described by a NSW male inspector of schools, as 'single men in the decline of life...unsuccessful in other occupations and who take teaching as a last resource' (Kyle, 1988, p. 31).

Therefore a once female domain soon became male dominated, based on socio-economic and gender grounds, rather than on evidence of merit. For 'women teachers...en masse...are an ineffectual and unspectacular lot...[their] classroom style...lacks the political punch...and 'macho' deemed necessary for the proper and more rounded development of young boys' (Collins, 1973, p. 20).

Even when permitted to enter the teaching service, provision for a career path equitable to that of men was not available to women. Regulations institutionalised male advantage and women were paid 80 per cent of the male wage regardless of equal work, legislation protected male teachers and barred women from being principals of larger schools (Theobald, 1996, p. 184). The characteristics of 'father' were readily transferred into public roles such as 'principal', hence the predominant image was of 'teacher as mother'. Bureaucracy, official rules and regulations convinced women that teaching was not offered to them as a life time career. The 1932 Married (Lecturers and Teachers) Women Act is just one example. This Act embedded in social attitudes demanded:

...that women on marriage should give up employment previously engaged in, no matter how great the material sacrifice involved. Ample occupation for a married woman is assumed to be provided in home making, and the rearing of a family—the sacrifice of independence and comfort being considered merely a normal condition of marriage. (M.Heagney. 1935 cited in Taylor & Henry. 1988, p. 33)

During the 1950s and 1960s the socio-dominant role expectation was that of the woman as the 'homemaker' and the man as the 'breadwinner'. The discourse of 'paternalistic masculinism was encapsulated in the ideal of the rational, neutral bureaucrat, which came to dominate the postwar social democratic educational settlement that shaped the modern welfare state' (Blackmore, 1999, p.24). Women continued to be employed as teachers (until marriage), because of their 'natural affinity with the young', but they were still paid a lower salary than men, hence their recruitment on economic grounds was encouraged. As a result, analysts began referring to teaching as a 'pink ghetto' of employment.

This created a paradox and Langeveld (1963, cited in Drake & Owen, 1998, p.134.) is quoted as stating that, 'no country should pride itself on its educational system if the teaching profession has become predominantly a world of women.' Teaching became seen as 'too important and honourable a calling to drift into becoming mere women's work' (Arnold 1984 cited in Taylor & Henry, 1988, p.29).

It is of note that in the post-war years, until the 1970's all male applicants for teacher education scholarships in NSW were accepted on an aggregate up to 60 points lower in their Leaving Certificate then for women. These men were referred to as the '4B boys', as they only needed 4B's in the Leaving Certificate to get a teaching scholarship. The recurrent 'discourse of male anxiety' is a significant thread, an anxiety that arises 'out of the threat to the formation of a masculine identity closely bound to the authority over women and paid work' (Blackmore, 1999, p.27).

However the 1970s expansion of the teaching service to accommodate the post-war 'baby boom' renewed opportunities for women to enter a 'convenient', 'socially acceptable' profession, one a woman could enter and leave given the constraints of motherhood.

**Equality and equity - legislative and policy rhetoric**

In acknowledging that the under-representation of Australian women in educational leadership reflects a
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gendered heritage of education based on the ‘history’ of a gendered workforce (women teach/nurse, men lead/manage), to further develop our understanding of this complex journey, issues of discrimination, legislation and policy rhetoric will be discussed.

In the 1970s, women celebrated the gaining of equal pay* for equal work (introduced over a protracted period) combined with an increased opportunity for women to undertake university study and enter the teaching profession, particularly through teaching scholarship schemes. However, these advancements for women brought with them hostility of many men, the discourse of male anxiety.

That the feminisation of teaching or the intrusion of women in administration could cause such alarm suggests that it was perhaps more ‘fear of making males effeminate, the rejection of female authority over men, and women’s lack of intellectual ability to educate older boys’ (Blackmore, 1999, p.41).

Indeed throughout the 20th Century there is much evidence of ‘backlash discourses claiming men are the victims of feminism’ (Blackmore, 1999, p.40), an hostility which included claims of discrimination, framed by men who believed that women retained ‘sanctuaries’ of female leadership opportunities unavailable to similarly qualified men, such as priority appointment to the leadership of girls’ schools. Interestingly, as principalship of co-educational schools had been denied to women, ‘administering the feminine’ as a career path for women had been gained through the discourse of professionalism, which had advocated suitability for appointment to domestic science schools on the grounds of ‘expertise in the new science of the domestic’ (Biddington, 1994, p.81).

Given equal pay, promotion and access to all schools, following the introduction of Anti-Discrimination Act (1977), men contested this policy and benefited by moving into principal positions in girls’ schools on the basis of seniority, a criteria that could not be matched by women who had to take career breaks for child rearing, as leave provisions were inadequate. Whilst men argued equality, the reality was that there was no such parallel movement of women into boys’ schools. The socio-historical impact of the 1932 Married Women’s Act is also reflected in this trend. For women who married resignation was mandatory; they could not pursue teaching and educational leadership as a career; significant ‘seniority’ and re-entry impediments stifled leadership aspirations; social expectations prevailed of ‘wife as home maker’; and ‘social conscience’ dictated that women should ‘do what was honourable’, ensuring that jobs were returned to men. This time also saw the shift to coeducational secondary schooling, which precipitated the amalgamation of many single sex secondary schools.

A study by the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (1979) found that in the immediate post-WWII era (1949), when women had become a ‘reserve army’ of labour due to the enlistment of men in the armed forces, found that 20.9% of principals in government secondary schools were female (Brennan, 2001). By 1979 this figure declined dramatically to only 9.6%. The Annual Report of the N.S.W. anti-discrimination board also included a prediction that there would be no female principals in secondary schools by 1990, based on the existing ‘seniority’ promotion system, an inspectorial process in which suitable candidates were placed on a seniority list (List 4 – principal, List 3 – deputy principal and List 2 – secondary head teacher), inappropriately referred to as ‘the stud book’. It is of note that Chapman (1984, p. 7) found that ‘relative to other groups (Catholic and Independent), women [were] least likely to be principals of government schools. This [was] consistent across all states in Australia [92% male and 8% female, figures rounded up].’

Implementation of the Affirmative Action (EEO for women) Act 1986 resulted in heightened tensions within the workplace as policy was introduced to target women for school principal appointment, on a proportional basis, ahead of men on the ‘seniority’ list, to counter the impact of gender issues including reduced career mobility ‘It’s not fair, women are getting all the jobs!’ became the impassioned cry, whilst the reality indicates that by 1989 only 6.6% of principal positions were held by women (Figure 1).

* Equal pay for female teachers in government schools was implemented between 1963 - 1970 by all Australian states.
FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF SECONDARY PRINCIPALS BY GENDER, A HALF CENTURY VIEW

The introduction of Amendment IXa (1980-1982) to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) formed the basis for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy and strategy development, with legislation requiring all public sector agencies to take positive action to identify and remove discriminatory practices, hence legitimising and institutionalising discourses of equity throughout the public sector. As part of major structural reform, *Schools Renewal* (Scott, 1989), the NSW Department of School Education phased in procedures to select and appoint staff 'on merit'. ‘Selection of the best person for the job the basis of EEO ... [recognising that] the high value placed on qualifications and seniority can act against women ...[and] there is a need to recognise that members of these [target] groups acquire expertise outside the school’. (NSWDSE, 1991, p.6)

An analysis of the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training EEO Annual Reports (1990-2000), available since the introduction of ‘merit selection’ shows that in the last decade of the 20th Century, women have incrementally moved into secondary school principal positions (Figure 2).

The 14th EEO Annual Report (NSWDET, 2001) reveals that only 23.5% of secondary school principals are women, while they represent 50.8% of the secondary teaching service. This statistic falls far short of the Departments broad objective of representation ‘comparable to their representation in the DSE as a whole’ (1991), which is reflected in DET Performance Indicators such as ‘progress towards the distribution of each EEO group across all salary levels the same as that of all employees’ (NSW DET, 2000, p.43).

Urging for increased understanding, vigilance and renewed activism in pursuit of leadership equality for women in education, Brennan (2001, p. 10) showed that projections based on trend data of the previous decade indicates a ‘2020 vision’ for women to achieve equality of representation at the secondary school principal level, but that a similar projection on figures of the last half of the 20th Century heralds ‘Y3K’! Rather than a steady trend towards equity the level of representation of women in educational leadership appears to oscillate between a ‘socially acceptable’ minima, specifically 10% to 25% (figures rounded up).

From myth to reality – issues, impediments and constraints

Certainly an historical understanding of women in educational leadership demonstrates that throughout the 20th Century ‘women have adopted the roles and responsibilities which society and the nation state have deemed appropriate for them at their point in socio-economic, historical time’. (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997, p.247)

For gender equality and equity to become a genuine value in organisational culture in the 21st Century a shift from legislative and policy rhetoric to evidence based change, implementation strategies must become a targeted, transparent and measurable system priority. As Porter (1995, p. 21) states:

There are no grounds for sensibly justifying a skewed participation in management in a female
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dominated profession that also caters for fifty percent female clientele …what is the society losing by maintaining institutional practices – both educational and in families – which prevents the talents, skills and perspectives of women being utilised in one of the most crucial activities in our society?

Against this formidable gendered heritage in education, women in the secondary school principalship, often find the study and practice of educational leadership and administration a confronting and exclusionary experience, for on a daily basis women face the challenge of enacting their role within a dominant androcentric cultural and theoretical construct. The ‘boss syndrome’ (‘boss’ defined in the Macquarie Dictionary (1985) ‘to be master of or over…control’), an interpretation of leadership embedded in such tomes as ‘Leaders and Leadership’ (Byrt, 1978, cited in Beasley, 1983, p.13) which states that:

An effective leader is a ‘big man, a father-figure, who is superior to his subordinates in certain important ways, courage, energy, intelligence and so on. He leads from the front directing and ordering his subordinates.

Founded in the leadership experiences and style of men, this construct is problematic, producing invalid conclusions for women in leadership positions, as they strive ‘to develop their own leadership style, more in keeping with the ways women think, act and prioritise’ (Brennan, 1993, p.9).

Whilst there is an emergent feminist leadership discourse, leadership and management issues continue to be addressed in the literature, populist media and in training seminars, almost exclusively in the ‘masculine’. When issues seen as particular to women in leadership are included, it is often in a tokenistic manner, such as an article in a journal or a chapter in a book. Even more problematic is that in these contexts, women leaders are invariably depicted as a homogeneous group, with the richness of individualistic variance in leadership capability and style not addressed. Rarely do leadership conference participants experience female keynote presenters and new publications written ‘for women, by women’ are a rare find. Indeed ‘to be a woman in a masculinist culture is to be a source of mystery and unmeasurability for men’ (Butler, 1990, p. vii).

With such a dominant male presence in educational leadership positions, many women and girls still spend their school and professional life with no senior female role models at all, especially in country areas. Women, due to their minority, don’t get the opportunity to share experiences and to learn from each other. Mentoring of female leadership aspirants and the establishment of effective networking remains problematic.

Men and boys have minimal opportunity to learn how to relate to, work for, or with a woman who is a peer or holds a more senior position. Secondary schools remain male-oriented in terms of physical space, assumptions, systems, procedures and rules, both for students and staff.

School communities have little opportunity to experience the leadership style and qualities of a female principal, which has implications for ‘merit selection’ panel training and appointment procedures, for in reality selection procedures tend to reinforce the homogeneity within an organisation. Sampson (1987, cited in Randall, 1993) noted that:

Most hierarchies of power have complex inbuilt systems for reproduction. Many senior men appear to be more comfortable with each other than having women as superiors or peers, so they give patronage to youthful images of themselves. The use of intuition in the selection process is considerable and selectors are less likely to choose women without the experience of seeing them in top management positions. (p. 8)

Female secondary school principals who participated in case study research (Brennan, 1993), shared their experience of the ‘merit selection’ process, Barbara commenting that:

Having worked as a panel convenor…the parent rep (female, home duties) definitely favours male candidates’...[Yvonne shared that her] panel-community rep was home duties... she was very much against my getting the job because she didn’t think I could do the discipline thing but she would be one of my greatest advocates now...[Gail worried about] community choices of people...this school was astounded when [the panel] selected a woman. (p.41)

The often tokenistic inclusion of women on selection panels (under EEO guidelines), particularly if
they have not chosen a professional career path themselves, is of concern. Women are placed in a position of assessing the suitability of another woman, whose career path, professional and life experiences is so opposed to their own value laden socialisation (Taylor & Henry, 1988).

How then can the teaching profession move towards a preferred future for education in the 21st Century, a future built upon the organisational leadership principles of ‘inclusiveness, equity, social justice, ethical practice and excellence’ (NSWSPC, 1999, p.4), if difference and diversity are not valued at school principal level. Clearly if androcentrism, ‘a viewing of the world and shaping reality through a male lens, [one in which] the experiences of men and women educators are assumed the same’ (Hall, 1997, p.72), is not vigorously contested and shown as flawed, the issues, impediments and constraints that work against women achieving their leadership potential will continue to impact adversely on leadership succession strategies.

Personal challenge, tension and dilemmas

As discussed earlier in the paper, there is evidence that women in education who do break through the ‘glass ceiling’ are not always welcome. Women often have to cope with hostility from both men and women, who are greatly threatened by their presence and competence in what has been hitherto ‘a man’s territory’. Research highlights sexism as a major barrier: the issues of status, power, control, asymmetrical relationships between the sexes and structural impediments that act against women achieving their potential as educational leaders (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Brennan, 1993; Randall, 1993).

‘The mythology of the female principalship in secondary schools...is ungoundied in the female experience or indeed in reality’ (Brennan, 2001, p.7). The proliferation of myths and tales inform stereotypes, gender schema, socialisation factors, social bias, gender barriers, unique expectations and isolation (a sense of people waiting to see them fall) which serve to compromise women’s orientation to leadership responsibilities (Hall, 1997; Powney & Weiner, 1991; Smith and Hale, 2002; Valian, 1998).

‘She wouldn’t know a management strategy even if she had a recipe book’, ‘there will be tears’, ‘reminds me of my mother’, ‘now she’ll appoint her own’ are some examples of common anecdotes reported by newly appointed women principals. For women who become the first female head in the school’s history, they confront significant challenge and dilemmas. Issues of scrutiny, rumour and curiosity, the burden of proof, tokenism (who’s really in charge), interpretations of power and authority, and their capacity to establish webs of support, impact upon self and family (Brennan, 2000).

Women face the challenge of exclusion ‘from the informed, male-dominated networks in their organisations. This exclusion process then bans them from the power strongholds of the organisation and thereby lowering the possibilities of promotion’ (Gill, 1997, pp.8-9). Patricia spoke of women ‘not getting the same support...we don’t have the same support structures ... we don’t go for the Friday night drink...we don’t go off to play golf for the weekend, we have other priorities/responsibilities’ (Brennan, 1993, p.46).

The tension of managing the professional and personal life dichotomy has become an increasing issue.

‘Women were encouraged to increase their representation in a broader range of educational and occupational pathways. Despite the fact that women retain continuing responsibilities for childrearing and homemaking while spending an increasing proportion of time in the paid workforce, the home-based contribution, until recently, often remained unrecognised and invisible’ (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1977, p.247). This is reflected in Gail’s socialisation and career journey.

I wasn’t supposed to get an education...my parents made me do book keeping...because I was a girl...I turned into a mother very young...I had to go to Uni in the evenings, rush home and wash nappies...I’d get up at 4am to study...I was very exhausted...just looking at my male senior executive now, he’s working hard, his wife’s reaction is to help him and support him emotionally...my husband is wonderful, but I certainly don’t get that...he’s as busy as I am. [Patricia shared this view] Men can go home and wipe out the role of leader, as mother you still have to look after the home. (Brennan, 1993, p.52)
Women principals are increasingly becoming victims of role fatigue, as they navigate a highly gendered ‘eduscape’. Cast as leadership anomalies, women have to manage the ever present tensions created by a multi-layered ‘professional’ (public domain) and ‘personal’ (private domain) life dichotomy, and are, as a consequence, profoundly aware of the mantra – ‘if you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen’ (Brennan, 2001). Oplatka (2002, p. 213) noted that:

Women in general tended to present higher mean burnout levels than men...The burnout was found to be related to women’s lesser control over their life’s work environments, women’s tendency to deny their own needs while seeking to satisfy others’ needs and desires, and their needs to cope with the work-family conflict...

Of significance is that this mid-career research of female principals in Israel found that ‘in spite of their fatigue and reduced personal accomplishment, the women principals could describe ...their proactive, innovation-oriented management as well as their positive attitudes towards their staff and students’ (Oplatka, 2002, p.219). This sense of personal and professional stamina and resilience would support observations that women principals are consistently over-represented in school improvement data. Caroline reported that her District Superintendent was ‘most definite in his assertion that it was not by accident that the two highest performing secondary schools in his district were led by women [the only two women in the district]...who demonstrated exceptional resilience and commitment to excellence, effectively transforming school culture and organisational practice’ (Brennan, 1999, p.4).

Whilst research studies have consistently found that women principals enact educational leadership as an androgynous activity, transform the cultures of the schools they lead and create a more humane and inclusive workplace, women report how their experiences and needs differ from their male colleagues. When sharing their stories, it is evident that inhibitors, barriers, and frustration could have entrapped and consumed them had they not had such a strong motivational orientation, sense of mission, support from the female collective, a passion for excellence in teaching and leadership, and a belief that they can and do make a difference.

[As Yvonne stated] I can actually make a difference...I love helping people to make changes in their lives [and] you can do this as the principal...[Patricia sharing that] I have had students change their perceptions of themselves...by little things that we introduced into the school, by the fact that I’m Principal. (Brennan, 1993, p.46)

Conclusion

The progression toward achieving equality and equity for women in educational leadership has not been linear and is certainly incomplete. The journey has been at times illogical and at best confusing, characterised by disparate elements of optimism, regression, discrimination, activism and policy reversal, precipitated by irrational concerns, inaccurate stereotypes and socio-political imperatives. At times the negativity of recurrent themes throughout the 20th Century is disarming and frustrating, and one can understand why ‘a retreat back to the kitchen’ or a return to the ‘chalkface’ where women have traditionally been seen as ‘socially appropriate’ is an ever present temptation.

Future research needs to establish a contemporary understanding and realistic expectation of the role of secondary school principal, one that recognises context, complexity and issues that impact upon the delivery of quality public education. There needs to be a redefinition of educational leadership to include leadership capability (the ‘combination of attributes, qualities skills and knowledge that enables a person to perform to a high standard in a given context and role’, Scott, 1999, p.200), and a gender inclusive framework (Brennan, 2003) that recognises the dimensions of the emotional (personal and interpersonal) and strategic, qualities that define the educational leadership of women.

Only by creating a new paradigm for women in the secondary principalship will the leadership capacity of women be realised. Women need to be collectively inspired by a principal collegiate that is seen to be valued, supported, sustained and developed both by the education system it serves and through proactive generative leadership, inclusive of mentoring and peer coaching.
Chapter Three

"If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen!" The impact of gender on secondary school leadership.

The critical role of women in educational leadership should be recognised and celebrated for gender inclusive cultural change to be embedded in organisational ethos and practice. Building on the momentum of the past decade, women need to move forward together with courage and purpose, valuing their unique life and professional experience, personal qualities and female perspective. We’ll know we’ve arrived, when women are seen as principals, not as women who are principals.

References


NSWSPC (1999) Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW, a project of the NSW Secondary Principals Council, NSWSPC, (West Ryde: Marsden High School)
Chapter Three

"If you can't take the heat get back to the kitchen!" The impact of gender on secondary school leadership.


CHAPTER FOUR
LEADING CHANGE FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE -
CHANGING CULTURE, CHANGING LEADERSHIP

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Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW

A project of the NSW Secondary Principals Council
August 1999
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SHAPING THINKING AND SKILLING LEADERS TODAY
TO CREATE
A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR EDUCATION TOMORROW
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

SHAPING THINKING AND SKILLING LEADERS TODAY
TO CREATE A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR EDUCATION TOMORROW

The traditional concept of a school will be challenged by the rapidly changing nature of society, work and learning. The future will see:

LEADERS

- facing new challenges as they operate in more ambiguous organisational and political cultures
- using highly tuned emotional and social intelligences to work deftly within these new cultures
- mastering and applying knowledge systems and emerging technologies.

SCHOOLS which will operate

- within flexible learning environments where the curriculum, organisation, timing, entry, progression and exit points are determined to suit the needs of learners
- as multi-dimensional learning communities where quality personal interactions and relationships give individual learners a sense of connection and security
- in a culture of mutual support and care where risk taking and the development of skills for life-long learning will be the driving force
- in flexible learning environments where a broad range of educators and support personnel will interact with them to meet academic, welfare, cultural, social and vocational learning needs

LEARNERS who will

- take initiative in designing their own learning pathways
- use individualised programs to learn how to learn and develop the skills to acquire and apply knowledge and understanding
- use holistic, co-operative and collegial approaches to learning, thinking and doing
- take part in authentic assessment processes and procedures which articulate locally, nationally and internationally
TEACHERS who will

- expand the range of learning tools and support materials to match the needs of students, the requirements of assessment and the availability of resources.
- work in reshaped learning environments, using sound pedagogy and the latest technologies
- shape, negotiate, monitor and guide learning programs for individuals and groups
- work collaboratively in small teams with learners of all ages
- facilitate virtual classrooms where the teacher can be available on-line for on-time, any-time, anywhere learning.

CURRICULUM which will provide

- a broad range of learning and opportunities for academic, vocational and personal growth
- plans for individual learners using networks of providers and on-line services
- standards frameworks to ensure the quality of knowledge, skills and understandings expected of, and the levels of achievement attained by, the student.

CREDENTIALLING which will allow

- on-line assessment of student achievement against standards frameworks
- students to easily update their credentials and articulate them into future pathways.

TECHNOLOGY will be used to

- enhance learning outcomes and opportunities, the quality of learning and attitudes to learning
- develop higher order skills while using technology to build knowledge, solve problems and interact with a wide array of information sources and people
- provide a more sophisticated and global understanding of complex international and national issues
- deliver courses in the cyber classroom to expand curriculum choice.

SYSTEMS which will provide

- policy frameworks within which schools can develop flexible responses to the needs of their students
- support services to enhance the functioning of schools.
CHAPTER 3

LEADING CHANGE FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE

3.1 CHANGING CULTURE

Fundamental to the implementation of any recommendations are the issues of change and culture within schools and within the System. The focus we and others have placed on change management over the past decade suggests we have failed to build systems with “designed-in” responsiveness. Changes in society, as evidenced by the widening gap between the experiences of students and their teachers, present challenges for the design of learning.

Research has shown that in each change situation there is a wide and complex range of sources and influences from the external, system and local level. There is a need for learning and unlearning on the part of all participants. School culture and climate, quality of leadership and the nature and expectations of the student body are fundamental levers for change. Given the challenges and complexities within each of these areas, there is an urgent need for all participants to understand and make use of the lessons learnt from change management.

Since 1996, the increase in the amount of Internet traffic on Telstra’s networks has not just moved ahead of voice traffic, it has taken off exponentially. The social, economic, competitive and political impact of this change for school education, and particularly for current approaches to teaching and learning, is significant.

Supporting the view that “no one size fits all for education”6, the NSW Secondary Principals Council believes that more flexible organisational structures and processes are urgently needed to enable schools and teachers to be more anticipatory and responsive to rapid change. Constructive change will flow from learning communities having the opportunity to reconfigure, refocus and reshape secondary education.

Exploration of such concepts as middle schools, with flexible and discrete components and senior establishments focusing on different modes of delivery of learning, are just a beginning. The possibility of learning anywhere at any time and tapping into the vast array of intellectual capital offered through multiple partnerships with industry, other educational providers and unions is compelling. Such exploration would afford an opportunity to measure the impact on outcomes for students and their future employability as well as issues such as autonomy, empowerment, collaboration, responsiveness and flexibility.

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3 Moriarty, G. Address: Australian Technology Network of Universities Conference, 1999
5 Moriarty, G (1999) Address, Australian Technology Network of Universities Conference
6 NSW Minister for Education (1999) Paper, delivered at the NSW Secondary Principals Futures Conference

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The NSW Secondary Principals' Council believes staff selection and promotion are central to the development of an effective education service. These processes are particularly important in developing the Department of Education and Training's capability to manage continuous change.

Trends in preference for teaching as a career over other professions must be constantly monitored. Teaching as a career needs to be made more attractive to a diverse group of people at different life and career stages. Strategies should be developed to anticipate teacher needs to ensure a constant supply of staff in all future curriculum. One would be greater involvement of DET in teacher training. Is the teacher-education paradigm one we can continue to use? Would training be better modelled on that for the information technology industry, with its understanding of immediate obsolescence of knowledge?

If timely and appropriate professional development support is not provided to enable staff at all levels to keep abreast of changes in our operating context, the outlook for educational outcomes that are relevant to the 21st century is bleak. This in turn requires incentives for the acquisition of relevant further qualifications.

Work overload, isolation, undervaluing, powerlessness and threat are significant problems affecting climate and culture.7 The NSW Secondary Principals Council believes that a bias for action will emerge through the allocation of resources that "buy time" for the development of collaborative work place practices.8 Where local experiment is rewarded and recognised, where staff are actively assisted to focus their energies on a small number of agreed and strategically-wise development priorities, where admitting and learning from errors is valued, a culture of staff support and welfare will be maintained. This will lead to a greater level of support for change and success in the projects undertaken.9

It is now clear that the entire learning community is a facilitator of change. Identification of the key capabilities necessary for effective change management must become an essential facet of staff selection.10 The central role of principals and district superintendents in leading cultural change requires that they be explicitly trained to learn about and apply the results of research and futures methodologies. This expertise is best developed in relation to specific improvement projects and innovations.

The NSW Secondary Principals Council believes that re-culturation is inextricably linked to effective change and improvement. Teachers can indeed make a difference and ideally the process of change is best driven by practitioners who are trained on how best to manage change in education.

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NSW Secondary Principals Council, Futures Project 1999, "White Paper"
The NSW Secondary Principals Council thanks the following **Team and Support Members** for their contribution.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS,
DIRECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT. A PILOT STUDY OF FOUR NSW
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:
DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS, DIRECTIONS
AND DEVELOPMENT

A Pilot Study of Four
NSW Secondary Schools

Stephen Dinham, Kathryn Brennan, John Collier,
Alan Deece, David Mulford

School of Teaching and Educational Studies,
University of Western Sydney, Nepean

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**Chapter Five**

The Secondary Head of Department: Duties, Delights, Dangers, Directions and Development. A Pilot Study of Four NSW Secondary Schools

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RESEARCH LEADING TO THE PROJECT

The Teacher 2000 Project

Since the mid-1990s, Dinham and Scott from the University of Western Sydney have been conducting an international research project which has attempted to explore and benchmark teacher and school executive satisfaction, motivation and mental stress in the context of the contemporary educational environment. As part of this study, staff at a variety of schools in Australia, New Zealand, England and the USA have been surveyed, with work continuing in such nations as Malta, Morocco, Israel, France and Romania.

Key findings of this project relevant to the current study include both the crucial importance ‘middle managers’ in schools play in operationalising educational change (see also Ayres, Dinham & Sawyer, 1999), and the demands the position makes upon such leaders.

Position Held and Health

Recent international research has demonstrated a relationship between physical health and occupational status/level of appointment, that is, that those persons who hold higher level positions in organisations enjoy better physical health on average than those in lower positions. Researchers have speculated that this may in part be due to the lower levels of control exercised over pace and timetabling of work by those occupying lower promotions positions (see Marmot & Therorell, 1988; Marmot & Feeney, 1996; Marmot, Bosna, Hemingway, et al., 1997).

However, the work by Dinham and Scott referred to above has found a distortion of this ‘normal’ pattern in their samples of school executive and classroom teachers (Dinham & Scott, 1999). In the samples of teachers from Australia, New Zealand the USA and England, it was found, as predicted, that Principals were least stressed and most satisfied, followed by the next level, deputy Heads.

However overall, the most stressed group did not comprise classroom teachers, but those in ‘middle management’ positions such as secondary Heads of Department and primary executive below the rank of deputy.\(^1\)

Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the difficulties experienced by those occupying such crucial ‘linking-pin positions’ in meeting the demands of their own teaching (usually a ‘full load’ or almost so), and the various roles of staff supervision and development, leadership, pupil discipline and welfare, school administration and other duties. This complex, often conflicting set of duties has to be juggled with the key role of initiating and responding to change in all areas.

Classroom teachers by comparison - although less satisfied and more stressed than Principals and deputies overall - experienced less of the role conflict, overload and ambiguity experienced by their supervisors.

Research Into the Role of the Secondary Head of Department

While there has been a significant amount of research into the role of school principals and for that matter, classroom teachers, the ‘middle manager’ level in

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\(^2\) The term ‘Head of Department’ and its abbreviation HoD is used in this report, rather than the DET specific term Head Teacher (HT), which means principal in some countries. For consistency, HoD replaces HT in direct quotes and other places.
schools has received far less attention. In considering the literature in this area, Comners (1999: 27) states that:

Studies of the head of department as a middle manager date from the mid-1980s and emphasise that they are a driving force in a secondary school, are very much pre-occupied with routine administration and crisis management, have little time for strategic thinking, and are reluctant to monitor the teaching of their colleagues; that there are considerable differences in the ways departments operate in a school and from school to school, that the department is the crucial 'working unit' in the school, that school performance and departmental performance are not inextricably linked, that the key indicator of effective departments is their ability to effectively organise teaching, and that time is a key constraint for heads of department in carrying out their management and leadership roles. However, few studies in Australia or internationally have explored the importance and the dimensions of the head of department's role in a secondary school. (emphasis added)

The following is a sample of the literature in the field, but what comes through strongly is the dual, intermediary function of the Head of Department, who must provide leadership for a group of people under his or her supervision, while being part of a higher 'executive' of the school. There is also the well documented dichotomy of 'people' and 'task' orientations which middle managers must deal with.

Koechler (1993:11) states that 'Department chairs walk a tightrope between the maintenance and survival needs of the School and the human and professional needs of the people within it'. He also stresses the intermediary role of such a position noted above.

White and Rosenfield (1999:1) write about the notion that subject departments are seen as being 'potentially highly influential sites', with the HOD responsible for the development of a 'motivated collegial team of workers united in direction and committed to the learning of their students'. They emphasise the huge impact that educational change is having on school based management systems, especially due to 'growing demands for increased effectiveness, greater efficiency and accountability'.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) argue that we do not yet understand the complexity of the HOD's role and that initiatives need to be taken and obstacles overcome in order to facilitate and improve teaching and learning in secondary departments. McLendon and Crowther (1998:14) also highlight the surprising lack of 'specialised consideration' into this 'unique leadership position'.

Brown and Rutherford (1998:75-88) in their phenomenological study of eight HOD's in the UK (Catholic and State Schools) attempted to look at department heads as 'social actors'. Their data gathering methods included examination of documentary evidence, shadowing of the Heads of Departments, a series of structured interviews, and interviews with the HOD's superiors. They used Murphy's (1992) typology derived from analysis of the leadership and management of School Principals in the United States. This typology comprises the:

1. HOD as servant leader - ability to use their ability rather than their line of authority
2. HOD as organisational architect - ability to create a variety of innovative structures that facilitate the sharing of leadership
3. HOD as a moral educator - motivation by a set of deep personal values and beliefs that demonstrates their care and valuing of staff and students
4. HOD as social architect - addressing the needs of students
5. HOD as leading professional - focus on improving teaching and learning, leadership by example

Brown and Rutherford found that HOD's did address the five dimensions of the typology although the relative emphasis given to each varied according to the context of school. Conner (1999:27, 17), in reviewing Brown and Rutherford's research findings, reported that there was little time left for HOD's to facilitate the improvement of teaching and learning and achievement. The major obstacles impeding HOD effectiveness as evident from Brown and Rutherford's study were:

6. Lack of time to effectively carry out all dimensions of their role;
7. Lack of curriculum stability in the face of the demands for the National Curriculum;
8. Lack of professional development opportunities at the departmental level;
9. Lack of direction and vision from some senior executive members;
10. Often a lack of effective communication between HOD's and senior management.

Leadership and the Head of Department

Much has been written about educational leadership in recent decades, although most focuses on the Principal at the expense of middle management.

However, Heads of Department are in a potentially powerful and influential leadership role. McLendon and Crowther (1998:14), in a study conducted a study in Queensland, reviewed five action learning projects based around an initiative of a Head of Department. Entitled Project HOD, in their review they stated that the projects 'provided a clear connection with leadership competencies'. The following table outlines the qualities that were evident in the projects.

**TABLE 1 Best Practice in HoD Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practice in HOD leadership is:</th>
<th>Inspiring, risk taking, empowering, energizing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transformational</td>
<td>Linked to systems imperatives, co-ordinating, facilitating, measuring, benchmarking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strategic</td>
<td>Challenging unjust practices, appreciative of local community values and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational</td>
<td>Participatory, process driven, democratic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Organisation</td>
<td>Focus on teaching and learning, grounded in personally meaningful theories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Pounder, Ogawa &amp; Bossert (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pedagogical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neumann &amp; Wehlage (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beare, Caldwell and Milikan (1989) in their very popular book 'Creating an Excellent School', comment on two key leadership behaviour dimensions which they describe as a 'concern for accomplishing the tasks of the organisation and a concern for the relationships among people in the organisation' (106-116). They outline ten generalisations about what shapes leadership in Schools where excellence is valued:

1. Emphasis should be given to transforming rather than transactional leadership
2. Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisations
3. Vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment amongst its members of the organisation
4. Communication of vision requires communication of meaning
5. Issues of value - what ought to be - are central to leadership
6. The leader has an important role in developing culture of an organisation
7. Studies of outstanding Schools provide strong support for School based management and collaborative decision making
8. There are many kinds of leadership - technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural
9. Attention should be given to institutionalising vision if leadership of the transforming kind is to be successful
10. Both 'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotype qualities are important in leadership, regardless of the gender of the leader

Duke (1987:81-4) suggests seven 'key situations' with which the educational leader must deal:

1. Teacher supervision
2. Teacher evaluation
3. Instructional management
4. Resource management
5. Quality control
6. Co-ordination
7. Trouble shooting

As Duke states 'handling of these situations well requires far more than a particular skill or set of competencies. The situations constitute complex configurations of intentions, activities, people and interrelationships'.

Hannay and Schulze (1998:2) carried out a research project into the role of a Head of Department in an education district in Ontario, Canada. Data was collected over the course of three separate interview sessions from six Schools and was analysed to create a description of the current and changing role of the HOD. The push for more site based management systems was found to be creating new power relationships in schools. Their study suggested that the departmental structure still provided 'meaningful sub-groupings within the larger, complex structures of secondary Schools'.

Conclusion to the Literature on the Head of Department

The various studies and writings outlined above provide a useful conceptual base for understanding the work of the contemporary secondary Head of Department. However, like earlier work on the principalsip, what tends to be provided are typologies and lists of desirable attributes, roles and characteristics which by their very nature imply prescription of 'what the head of department should be like, and what he or she should do'. What is lacking at this juncture is the question and issue
of ‘how’ this range of responsibilities is to be carried out and indeed balanced, something of fundamental concern to all those interested in improving teaching and learning in schools.

There is an increasing body of empirical evidence to support the contention that it is the department and individuals and groups within these that contribute or ‘add value’ most to student outcomes (see Darling-Hammond, 2000, for a comprehensive review of the literature to date). It is timely then, that attention is given to the role of the secondary Head of Department.

HOW THE PROJECT AROSE

As noted, the project arose from earlier work of Dinham and Scott which had highlighted some of the difficulties currently experienced by ‘middle managers’ in schools, and the general dearth of research into this level of leadership in the field of education.

Concern over the extent to which these crucial educational leaders are able to perform their intended functions led the researchers to want to explore the ‘world of work’ of the contemporary secondary head of department.

Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Deace and and David Mulford are experienced secondary principals who recognised both the importance of and difficulties faced by secondary heads of department. Each is enrolled in the Doctor of Education program at UWS, Nepean and it was decided to utilise head teachers at their schools - two government and two independent - as a sample for a pilot study to validate and extend some of the findings of earlier work and to further explore the area.

Once a project proposal had been formulated, it was necessary to secure approval to conduct the research both from the University of Western Sydney, Nepean and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training.

Telephone interviews with volunteer heads of department were conducted in the latter part of 1999, concluding in early 2000 (see below under description of methodology). Analysis of data took place in late 1999-2000, with formulation of this report of the study being completed in April 2000 for dissemination to various stakeholders.

PROJECT AIMS

Secondary Heads of Department - termed Head Teachers in the NSW DET - occupy a crucial position, being the ‘linking pins’ between their departments and the upper executive of the school. If educational change of a positive nature is to occur, the Department Head must guide and drive this both at the department and executive level. However, this position in schools has been relatively neglected in prior research, which has concentrated on other levels, especially principals and classroom teachers.

Recent research has however revealed that ‘middle executive’ in schools are finding their current responsibilities onerous and, at times contradictory, with the holders of these positions experiencing various facets of role conflict ambiguity and role overload, with resultant high levels of stress in some cases (Dinham & Scott, 1999).

This study is a pilot investigation designed to explore how heads of department are currently performing and in turn, being influenced by their roles. The following study questions guided the research design:
1. Why do HoDs aspire to the position?
2. How well are HoDs prepared for the role?
3. What are the elements of HoDs’ workloads?
4. What do HoDs like most and least about their work?
5. How would HoDs prefer to allocate their time and effort?
6. How do HoDs develop/acquire their individual leadership style?
7. How do HoDs see their role contributing to educational change, leadership and decision making?
8. What are the professional development needs of HoDs and how are these addressed?
9. What are the future aspirations of HoDs?

It was thought that if meaningful answers to the above questions could be found, this would facilitate more effective operation of this position in schools and systems and provide valuable understanding to help meet the professional development needs of these people through provision of effective training and development programs by schools, systems, professional associations and tertiary institutions.

It was also hoped that the project might throw up important findings relevant to the selection and preparation of people to take on this role in the future.

As suggested above, greater understanding of the role of the secondary HoD has a number of potential benefits, not the least of which is enhanced educational outcomes for students and schools and a less stressed, more motivated and satisfied teaching force.

Finally, with the introduction of the ‘New HSC’ in NSW secondary schools in 2000, HoD’s will play a vital part in the implementation of new subjects changes, and a greater understanding of their role could well be very beneficial in achieving what is a major reorganisation of the secondary curriculum in NSW.
INTRODUCTION

As noted, the study followed on from a large international survey, predominantly quantitative, utilised with teachers and school executive in a number of countries.

This present study of the secondary head of department built on this earlier work through an exploration of some of the matters of concern raised in the Teacher 2000 Project and the literature. In turn, the Teacher 2000 Project had built upon earlier mainly qualitative interview based work with teachers and school executive carried out by Dinham (1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997).

Because of the intended exploratory nature of the present study, it was determined to utilise a structured, open-ended interview design with volunteer head teachers at four secondary schools (two government and two independent), with data to be analysed using content analysis.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study will have immediate application while serving as a basis for follow up work with larger groups of heads of department in the future.

INSTRUMENT

An interview schedule was developed comprising both closed demographic items and 12 open-ended questions closely reflecting the original study questions (see Appendix 2).

The open-ended questions were designed to encourage reflexivity, in that they were arranged largely chronologically and took the participant through his or her career from initial attraction and opinion of the role to the present, finishing with questions about current professional development needs and the future. There was a slight refinement of the questions between the initial pilot of 12 interviews and the remainder, in that it was found that interviewees found it difficult to specify percentages in questions 6 and 7.

In framing the interview questions, there was an attempt to contrast the present experience and workload of the heads of department with how they would prefer to spend their time.

THE INTERVIEWS

Two of the secondary schools where the study took place are in far Western Sydney, one is in the Blue Mountains, while the remaining school is in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Because of reasons of confidentiality and in facilitating free expression, it was decided that each of the participating principals would not interview any heads of department from his or her school.

Once heads of departments had contacted the chief investigator volunteering their involvement, each was allocated to the principal of another school who was to conduct the interview. No principal was informed of the heads of department participating or not as the case might be from his or her school and principals did not have access to the interview schedule data from their own school.
Telephone interviews were conducted with participants, both because of convenience given the geographic spread of teachers and schools, and because of the demonstrated advantages of this approach in facilitating thought and reflection (see Dinham, 1994; for an examination of the method of the telephone interview).

Interviews occurred at an agreeable time and place, usually out of school hours, and took from 45 minutes to two hours to conduct, with 60 minutes being typical. In several cases, interviews took place at schools, but the potential for distraction and disruption meant that this was avoided wherever possible.

While the chief investigator was experienced in the technique of the telephone interview, the co-investigators were not, and it was necessary to workshop and discuss the technique both before and following the first 12 interviews.

Interviews were not audio taped as is sometimes the case with this method. Rather, the interviewers made notes on an individual interview schedule, frequently reading back and clarifying responses with the interview subject. This technique requires 'active listening' and appears to have some advantages over audio recording in that the interviewer is more engaged in the process (Dinham, 1994). It is, however, demanding.

Pertinent direct quotations were recorded on the interview schedule, and notes typed up as soon as possible afterwards to assist in recall and understanding of what had been said.

In line with previous uses of the method, the process of the telephone interview was found to be highly enjoyable by both parties and even cathartic in some cases, those interviewed stating that they had not thought deeply about an issue before or that they found the process of talking through an issue with a fellow experienced 'anonymous' professional beneficial. It is important in this process that the interviewer possesses the 'theoretical sensitivity' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 41-47) needed to converse with the interviewee and to fully understand the context, in this case, contemporary secondary education.

DATA ANALYSIS

The method used in the analysis of data was that of content analysis and utilised elements of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), although full application of the technique did not occur due to the exploratory nature of the study.

In this case, concepts were identified from the transcripts by the researchers, these were then consolidated, categories or themes derived from these, and then spreadsheets utilised to record the frequency of concepts within categories and for the individual heads of departments (see Appendix 3).

The categories derived from the content analysis comprised:

1. Personal Orientation [to the position of head of department]
2. Major Influences [on becoming a HoD]
3. Preparation for the Role [of HoD]
4. Usefulness of Preparation
5. Matching Expectations [prior perceptions v actuality of the role]
6. Best Aspects [of the role of HoD]
7. Worst Aspects [of the role of HoD]
8. Workload Elements [of the role of HoD]
9. Workload [proportion/percentage of total time]
10. Preferred Workload
11. Leadership Style
12. Origins/Influences Leadership Style
13. School Leadership Involvement
14. Preferred School Leadership Involvement
15. Professional Development Needs
16. How Professional Development Needs Met
17. Future in Education

For each category, a spreadsheet was constructed with the heads of department on the horizontal axis (HT1-HT26) and concepts identified as elements of this category on the vertical axis. For example, for Category 1: Personal Orientation [PO] to the position of HoD, there were 14 concepts identified by the researchers from the transcripts:

**TABLE 2: Sample Category and Concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL ORIENTATION TO POSITION [PO]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PO 1 Natural career progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 2 Greater involvement in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 3 To lead a team/be a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 4 To do something different from teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 5 To make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 6 Greater involvement in school change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 7 Enjoy responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 8 Asked/encouraged to take on role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 9 To be a leader in subject area/love of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 10 Challenge of role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 11 Drifted into it, circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 12 Power and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 13 Increased salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 14 Personal ambition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refinement of the concepts continued to occur until the researchers were satisfied they had exhausted all possibilities.

The researchers then returned to the interview transcripts and recorded the occurrence of each concept against each head of department for each category.

Totals for the sub-groups of male/female, government/non-government school were also calculated for each category.

Overall trends and results for each category were thus discerned (see 4, Results).

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3. Data from category 9 was not fully utilised due to difficulties in calculation/specification of how the HoDs spend their time, a telling point in itself.
3

PARTICIPANTS

SAMPLING

It was determined that all those occupying positions equivalent to head of department/head teacher in each of the four participating secondary schools would be approached in writing by the chief investigator. A letter (Appendix 1) outlining the aims and procedures of the study was provided which included a tear-off informed consent form which could be posted or faxed to the chief investigator at UWS.

Anonymity was assured and no principal knew the identity of participants from his or her school. Each principal did however, promote the study with his or her staff to encourage involvement.

From a potential population of 47 heads of department, 26 (55%) agreed to take part in the study and be interviewed. Response rates per school varied from 6 out of 13 (46%) at a government school, to 7 out of 8 (87%) at a non-government school.

No claims are made about the representative nature or not of the sample. Briefly, one government school is a well-established school in an area well served by a variety of educational providers. The second government school is a new school in a growing residential area. Both non-government schools are well-established and each serves the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney. Both have attached K-6 schools.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Appendix 4 provides the demographic data for the sample.

Age, Sex and Teaching Experience

Of the 26 participants, 6 were female and 20 male (77%). The average age of those interviewed was 43 (range 29 to 54), with females (46) being older on average than males (42), possibly reflecting the tendency for females to be older when gaining promotion due to such matters as broken patterns of service.

There were 12 participants from the two government schools (4 female) and 14 from the two non-government schools (2 female).

Average length of total teaching experience was 20 years (range 9 to 30 years), with average length of tenure at current school being 7 years.

The average length of time in the position of head of department was 6 years (average 4 years at current school). On average, those surveyed had 14 years teaching experience before being promoted to head teacher, although some had experience as year coordinators, sports coordinators, and in relieving positions, prior to their substantive appointment as a head of department. This reflects the well-known phenomenon of promotion in education - with its few levels of hierarchy in schools - where teachers typically gain their first promotion far later in their careers than members of the general workforce or comparable occupations.
Highest Level of Qualification and Area of Responsibility

One participant at a non-government school possessed a PhD, whilst there were 7 HoDs who had completed coursework masters degrees. For 6 of those interviewed, their highest qualification was a graduate diploma which followed the completion of an undergraduate degree. Nine gave a bachelors degree as their highest qualification, which in most cases had followed an initial teaching qualification such as a diploma in teaching.

Only two of the 26 interviewed were currently engaged in higher degree study, both undertaking coursework masters degrees.

Those taking part in the study were fairly well spread across 'Key Learning Areas', although there were 6 HoDs who had uncommon combinations or areas of responsibility, 5 of whom were working in non-government secondary schools.
RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Results are organised around the themes and categories emerging from the content analysis of the interview data. This structure closely follows the original organisation of the open-ended interview questions.

Where sub-groups are compared, it is useful to note that 20 men and 6 women took part in the study, with 12 HoDs from government schools and 14 from non-government schools. Thus, patterns of responses need to be compared with these overall ratios of participants.

BECOMING A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Reasons For Wanting to be a Head of Department

There was a diversity of reasons given for wanting to be a head of department, with some of those interviewed giving more than one reason. In rank order, the main reasons were given as:

- A natural career progression (10 HoDs from 26)
- Being asked or encouraged to take on the role (9)
- Wanting to make a difference (8)
- Attracted by the challenge of the role (8)
- Desire to be a leader in subject area (7)
- Wanting greater involvement in decision making (7)
- Just drifted into it (7) [See Appendix 3 for full results]

As noted, 10 of the 26 interviewed said they saw becoming a HoD as being part of a natural career progression, while there were 6 who described becoming a HoD as a personal ambition. On the other hand, 7 HoDs stated that circumstances led them to just 'drift into the job' (5 non-government).

A large proportion saw themselves as curriculum specialists and wanted to be a leader (7) and to make a difference in their subject area (8).

Other reasons given for becoming a HoD included 9 who said they were asked and encouraged to take on the role, while 7 HoDs wanted a greater role in decision making. Eight HoDs said they wanted the challenge of the role.

Increased salary flowing from promotion to HoD was mentioned by only 4 of those interviewed, while an equal number gave the desire for power and influence as a motivation for them seeking the position. No women gave either salary or power and influence as a reason for taking on the role of HoD.

Overall, implicit in many of the answers to this question was a feeling of reaching a stage in one's professional development where greater responsibility and influence over teaching, learning and decision making was now sought, although there was a minority who found 'greatness thrust upon them'.
Comments about becoming a head of department included:

'It's a natural progression. I like control over my own destiny' (male, government).

'I've had a personal interest and enthusiasm in my faculty. I want to have more power in organising the development of my faculty' (male, non-government).

'Originally I was encouraged by a senior teacher. I worked towards it from my second year. They [other HoDs] were all positive and encouraging' (male, government).

'It's mostly innate. It comes from within. It eats at you when you hear about others who have gained promotion and you don't think much of them' (male, government).

'The position gives you credibility' (female, government).

Influences on Seeking the Position

Major influences on those interviewed seeking to be a HoD were, in rank order:

Other HoDs (11)
Senior school staff, including principals (10)
Mentors and role models (9)

Overall, other people engaged in the educational profession, usually at a higher level, were the major influence on becoming a HoD for those interviewed in the study. Sometimes this took the forms of encouragement, networking, role modelling and/or mentoring. Clearly, the judgement of a more experienced colleague was important in making the decision to put oneself forward for promotion, the reverse side of the coin being that senior staff often act as 'talent spotters' in their schools and for their subject areas.

Of the 26 HoDs interviewed, 21 saw other people in their schools as being the major external influence on them seeking promotion.

Ten saw encouragement from the principal or senior staff as being a major influence and 11 mentioned other HODs (8 from non-government schools). Nine mentioned the importance of a mentor, mostly from within the school.

For five of those interviewed, a negative role model became a major influence in that the person concerned felt he or she could do a better job than HoDs they had worked with. In the words of one person interviewed, 'They treated me like an idiot' (male, non-government).

Other comments included:

'Originally I was encouraged by a senior teacher – a 'de facto head teacher' in my first school. There were only three of us in the department and from my second year onwards I worked towards it. They were all positive and encouraging' (male, government).

'I had lots of encouragement in my first year of teaching by the HoD ... indicating that I had the talent ... current deputy principal really encouraged me in my previous school (male, government).
'I watched 'The Bill' [TV series] and didn’t want to be like 'Tosh', locked into one job forever' (male, non-government).

'The music inspector [pre 'merit selection'] contacted me re a head teacher music position that was coming up and encouraged me to apply' (female, government).

Preparation for the Role

A majority of those interviewed (17 out of 26) reported little or no formal preparation provided for or undertaken by them before becoming a head of department (10 in non-government schools).

What preparation there was tended to be informal and 'on the job', and either self initiated (11), or consisted of periods of time as an acting HoD (10, including 7 from non-government schools). The experience gained in other school leadership roles was given as a form of preparation for the role by 8 of those interviewed.

Formal preparation programs such as higher degree study (4), professional associations (2) and school or system in-service (5) were in the minority of sources of leadership preparation cited by those interviewed.

One HoD stated: 'Studying for my masters gave me an insight into being a HoD'. (Male, non-government). Two cited leadership experience outside the school, while, as noted, only 5 said their system or school provided formal in-service for the role.

It should be noted that women were under-represented in the areas of being an acting HoD or other school leadership experience (1, versus 9 men), whilst no women mentioned leadership experience outside school (2 men), professional associations (2 men) or school or system in-service (5 men). Women were, however, over-represented in the area of self-initiated preparation (4, versus 7 men, out of a sample of 6 women and 20 men).

As noted, HoDs were more likely to have the experience of acting in a higher position in non-government schools (7, versus 3 government HoDs).

Comments about preparation for the role included:

'Not much really. I saw many HoDs at my school. I saw a variety of ways they functioned. I asked questions. No training was provided by my employer' (male, non-government).

'I've never received any training for the job apart from on the job training' (male, government).

'Very easy – none was received. Technically no formal DET in-service. What I had was two supportive principals who allowed me to co-ordinate my subject and attend executive meetings and be part of the wider organisation of the school' (female, government).

'I did a course with the Leading Teacher for three months. We met weekly after school and talked about the requirements for a head of department and what was needed. The LT developed this course. At the time I had a really bad HoD and I asked the LT to help' (male, government).
Perceptions of the Usefulness of Preparation for the Role

There were largely opposing views in response to the question about usefulness of preparation undertaken for the role of HoD.

Twelve out of 26 felt unprepared, 8 out of 26 felt adequately prepared and 8 out of 26 felt well prepared. Of the latter, two also stated they were unprepared in some important areas of their role. More respondents from non-government schools (8 out of 12) felt unprepared for the HoD role.

Men and women were fairly evenly split on this issue relative to their respective numbers, although women were less represented in comments about feeling well prepared (1, versus 7 men).

Comments about the preparation for the role included:

'I wasn’t well prepared. I felt I battled through it’ (male, non-government).

‘In some ways I was well prepared, but in conflict management I was not prepared’ (male, non-government).

‘I was fairly well prepared ... I think I had knowledge about my subject area, organisational skills and technical skills’ (male, government).

‘From my perspective fairly well. I had a wide ranging experience over a period of time’ (female, government).

Expectations for the Role

Only half (13 of 26) of the respondents felt that the actual job of being a head of department matched their initial expectations, with 8 of these being from government schools.

There were 2 HoDs who said they were enjoying the role more than they expected they would, but on whole, those interviewed encountered a range of negative pressures and experiences they neither not anticipated nor believed they had the skills to deal with. These included:

Problems involved with ‘people management’ (mentioned by 8 HoDs)
Underestimating the workload (7)
Lacking conflict resolution skills (6)
Dealing with constant pressure (5)
Interpersonal demands and pressures (5)
Lack of awareness of aspects of the role (4)
Parental demands and pressures (3)
Imposed tasks and responsibilities (2)
Impacts of a whole school role (1)

As noted, 7 of the 26 said they had underestimated the workload of the HoD (5 non-government). One HoD (male, non-government) commented that the ‘Workload was much more than I expected ... there are not enough hours in the day’. The theme of lack of time came through in answers to other questions, including the ‘worst aspects’ of the role to be examined shortly.
Women were over-represented in the group saying the role had matched their expectations (5 of the 6 women interviewed), whilst no women mentioned problems with imposed responsibilities, parental demands, lack of awareness of aspects of the HoD position, or impact of having a whole school role.

PERFORMING THE ROLE

Best Aspects of Being a Secondary Head of Department

Clearly, the most popular aspect of the role amongst the heads of department interviewed in the study was working with staff. Seventeen of 26 respondents identified this area as being a highly rewarding aspect of their role.

Comments such as ‘working with staff in your own Faculty area and developing a team, sharing decisions and responsibilities ... and gathering competent, professional people, is gratifying’ encapsulated the views of many.

Also seen as significant was the capacity to exert greater influence within the school and to initiate change (mentioned by 13 and 11 respondents respectively). One HoD described this as ‘the enjoyment of making changes and seeing them work’.

Allied responses covered the rewards of team leadership (9 responses), serving students and staff (7), and facilitating success (7, 5 from the Government sector), working with students (6), sharing one’s love of a subject (5), and freedom and discretion (5).

Development of curriculum was mentioned as a ‘best aspect’ of the role only by 5 respondents. This relatively low rate for what appears to be a major aspect of the role may reflect current short-deadline driven pressure with the new HSC in NSW, requiring rapid development of new teaching and learning programs. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the results of the next section on worst aspects of the role.

Managing finances and resources (3), choosing one’s own staff (1), enjoying support from the school (1), and having a whole school focus (1), did not attract high ratings.

Women in the sample were over-represented in areas of facilitating success and working with staff, while no women indicated developing curricula, choosing one’s own staff or managing finances and resources were amongst the best aspects of the role for them.

Overall, the best aspects of being a HoD were clearly seen to revolve around working with, leading, and serving people, with contributing to change within the school through having a greater influence also seen as being important positive aspects of the role.

Worst Aspects of Being a Secondary Head of Department

The most prominent negative aspect of being an HoD mentioned in the study was lack of time (14 respondents): ‘I take a lot of work home ... I cannot do any of my own class preparation or marking at school’, (male, non-government), being a typical comment. A related concept was constant work load and pressure (9). Underperforming staff (9), and inter-personal conflicts and problems between staff (7) were also seen as significantly negative aspects of the role.
Tension between the Faculty and the upper management of the school was mentioned by 6 respondents. One spoke of being 'caught between your own staff and their expectations of you and the demands and responsibilities in terms of Senior staff or administration'.

Six heads of department mentioned the difficulty of dealing with parental complaints and demands. Four struggled with imposed charge and 5 with enthuising unmotivated staff. A total of 9 HoDs found the pressures and workload of being a head of department detracted from their own teaching, and that the role compromised their own performance.

Three HoDs found imposed deadlines problematic, while 3 mentioned the difficulty of disciplining students. Two each cited lack of personal space, staff/student issues and their work being reactive, not pro-active, while 1 HoD mentioned financial constraints and inability to plan for the longer term.

Constant workload and pressure, lack of time and parental complaints and demands produced approximately double the level of responses from the non-Government sector.

Women were over-represented in identifying workload pressure, dealing with under performing staff and interpersonal conflicts/problems with, and between, staff as the worst aspects of the role.

WORKLOAD OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Elements of the Workload of the HoD

Most prominent elements of the work of the head of department were seen to be paperwork and other administrative requirements (22 responses), teaching (21), student discipline and conflict resolution (18) and chasing up matters with students (18). With the exception of teaching, these major elements of the HoDs workload, along with others below, tend to arise from externally imposed demands and pressures.

On the next level of responsibility were curriculum development (13), assessment and marking (12), curriculum monitoring (10), facilitating the professional development of staff (11) and dealing with own staff (13). Meetings (6), other external requirements (5), whole school involvement (5), dealing with parents (7), organising activities (6), extra curricular activities (3) and dealing with non-department staff (1), round out the multi-faceted role of the secondary head of department today.

In the sample, men were more likely to mention organising activities, external requirements, and meetings, while HoDs in the non-government sector were over-represented in comments about teaching, assessment and marking, organising activities, meetings and chasing up students.

A key feature of the comments made by HoDs about their responsibilities and tasks is that the vast majority are extraneous to teaching one's own classes (see below), a major part of the HoD's role in respect of time, given the modest time allowance – and salary - most HoDs receive in return for taking on the position.
How Heads of Department Spend Their Time

As noted earlier, it had been hoped that the HoDs might be able to specify in percentage terms how they spend their time. However, in most cases those interviewed found this too difficult. Most in fact, seemed to be faintly horrified when they realised the spread of their responsibilities, as noted above. What follows, then is more proportional than exact.

Most significant aspects of the workload of the head of the department were seen teaching one’s own classes (14 responses), student discipline/conflict resolution (14) and paperwork/administration (14).

Curriculum development, with 12 responses, was also seen as very time consuming, as was facilitating professional development of staff, with 11 comments.

Assessment/marking and curriculum monitoring, noted by 9 and 8 HoDs respectively, also rated highly. Dealing with faculty staff (7), and whole school involvement (6), also occupied significant time for some.

Organising activities (2), and dealing with parents, maintenance and extra-curricula activities (1 each) were less prominent in answers to this question.

In this section, women were strongly represented in areas of curriculum monitoring, assessment and marking, facilitating the professional development of their own staff, dealing with their own staff, paperwork and other administration and whole school involvement.

Preferred Workload – Redesigning the Role

Notions of redesigning the role of head of department centred on reducing the teaching load of HoDs (13 respondents), making more time available to spend with staff (13) and reducing administration (12). One head of department pointed out ‘most free time currently goes in day-to-day running of the Department, with not enough time to sit down with individuals’. Another put it succinctly: ‘management of people requires time … People are pushed by time’, while another HoD simply said ‘shed administrative cluster’. ‘Less paperwork’ was probably the essential summary.

One reflective comment indicated that there is ‘not nearly enough opportunity to arrange significant blocks of time when Faculty staff get together to discuss pedagogy and curriculum’. A related idea was more time on ‘core business’ (9 replies), followed by more time with students (5). Reduced extra-curricula workloads on staff (2), and more whole school involvement (1) received some support.

Reducing administration was a more frequent response to this issue in the government sector. Men were more prominent in comments about spending more time with staff and more time on core business.

MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership Style

When describing their leadership style, those interviewed clearly saw themselves as key members of a team. This role required them to be collaborative and to consult with others (17 responses), to be a team player (14), and to act in a democratic and consensual manner (13). It is important to note that these are self-perceptions, that might or might not be shared by others in the school.
Being a facilitator was considered important (7), although there was a need to know when to be decisive (7).

Keeping people informed and being communicative (11), being available and approachable (7), and being helpful (3) were also mentioned as aspects of the leadership style of those interviewed.

Empowering others and being inclusive (7), while recognising others and providing positive feedback to staff (10) were also considered important aspects of the leadership role of the head of department.

Overall, the heads of department saw their leadership style as dependent on being able to work with and for others, i.e., they stressed the interpersonal demands of the role of HoD. The key "linking pin" role of bridging the gap between the department and its field of operations and the higher executive of the school was implicit in many of the comments made about being a conduit for information and communication.

Women were over-represented relative to their overall number in comments about being a team player, recognising and appreciating others and providing positive feedback.

Men were over-represented in comments about being available and approachable and in knowing when to be decisive.

Heads of department in non-government schools were over-represented in comments about being available and approachable.

Comments concerning personal leadership style included:

'I like to listen to people, both personally and professionally' (male, non-government).

'... consensus, teamwork, staff having confidence in me and I in them' (female, non-government).

'... lead by example ... the buck stops with me, but we do it together' (female, non-government).

'I lean towards a democratic leadership style - a product of personality. Tends towards laissez-faire ... easy going. I like to see everyone enjoy what they do and not be offside and work in a happy environment' (male, non-government).

'Consultative, consensus person. Not much point telling people [what to do] as I'm dealing with staff at least as bright, or brighter, who are able to evade what they don't want to do. Ownership is important ... I'm not a great believer in meetings and formal minutes ... need to be up-front with people' (male, government).

'I try to be accessible as possible and lead by example. I try to involve staff in every aspect of the organisation - give time in faculty meetings to inform them of what is required and I want their input ... staff can specialise in an area and I give them as much self determination as possible ... open leadership ... people can feel they can speak and be respected as professional people' (female, government).
Origins and Influences of the Leadership Style of the HoD

Overall, experience working with and observing other people - rather than attending formal in-service courses or undertaking higher study - was considered by those interviewed to be the major influence on the leadership style they had developed.

There were 8 comments by HoDs about the influence of previous heads of department they had worked with, while role models and mentors (9) and observation of others (8) were mentioned by HoDs as important influences on their leadership style.

Individual personality (7) and an understanding of people (3), along with experience over time (8) were also mentioned as origins of and influences on leadership style.

In reflecting the dominance of more informal, experiential, and inter-personal factors in this matter, professional associations (1), formal study (1) and in-service (2) were infrequently mentioned as contributing to leadership style.

Additional informal and intangible influences such as collegial groups (2), the culture of the school (4) and leadership experience outside education (5) received higher prominence in comments about origins of personal leadership style than formally structured leadership preparation activities.

Interestingly, there were some who mentioned negative role models and experiences (6) as being important influences on the development of their leadership style, i.e., lessons - again from experience - on what not to do.

There was a sharp and very interesting distinction between men and women in answers to this question. Men, overall, gave a much greater variety of sources of their leadership style, with networking of various forms being important, while women appeared to have utilised fewer avenues to develop their individual leadership style. This finding may reflect the under-representation of women in higher promotion positions in schools who can act as role models and mentors to other women - at least at the time those interviewed were in their 'formative years' as educational professionals - and the fact that men might be more likely to network with and assist other men.

To illustrate this distinction between men and women, there were 8 men, and no women, who mentioned previous HoDs as being influences on the development of their style of leadership. There were 7 men who mentioned the observation of others as being important, while only 1 woman who gave this as a source or influence on her leadership style.

Leadership experience outside education was mentioned by 5 men and no women as being an influence on leadership style, while women relied much more on experience over time in schools than did men (8 women, 3 men).

There were 7 men who said their leadership arose naturally or from their personality, whilst no women mentioned this as a factor in their leadership.

Finally, observation of others as a source or influence on leadership style was mainly confined to non-government schools (6 from 8 comments), as was leadership experience outside education (4 from 5). Non-government HoDs were also more likely to mention the influence of role models and mentors (6 of 9 comments), although, non-government HoDs were also more likely to cite the influence of negative role models (4 of 6 comments).
Comments concerning the question of origins and influences on leadership style included:

‘Influenced by a very good K-12 principal in the past who was a servant leader – never would ask you to do something that he did not do, e.g., pick up rubbish. I’ve been influenced mainly by good leaders, not the poor ones that have been witnessed’ (male, non-government).

‘It developed as I was going through my own experiences. I was given support and wanted to pass this on to other people’ (female, government).

‘I have gone through all sorts of leadership type things – I was SRC President at school and involved at uni and these developed my skills ... all sorts of committees. I’ve sought to do more than others’ (male, government).

‘I think it’s innate. I’ve always been involved in a team situation ... I’ve got no formal training. I’ve watched and listened to my parents. I read and get feedback from my colleagues’ (male, government).

‘I’ve always been involved in the people side ... year adviser (state system) ... leadership style influenced by this ... It’s very uncomfortable with a person who takes an authoritarian line, i.e., one dimensional’ (female, non-government).

‘The influence came from past experience. I’ve learnt what will work and what won’t work ... I also like to experiment’ (male, non-government).

IN Volvement IN WHole SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

School Leadership and Decision Making Involvement

Those interviewed perceived their school leadership and decision making involvement in formal terms overall, i.e., through official channels and measures, rather than in terms of more informal or intangible influences on school change.

School executive meetings were seen as the major involvement (22 of 26 interviewed), while meetings with other heads (10) were also seen as avenues for school leadership and decision making.

Having and utilising access to senior executive (8), working with other executive (5), being consulted by other executive over change (7) and being involved in school project teams (5) were also given as examples of school leadership involvement.

There were 12 HoDs who mentioned in favourable terms their opportunity to contribute to and influence school decision making, with some noting their considerable opportunity for influence and involvement (5). However, this view was not universally shared, with some HoDs noting they did not have a large influence (3), and that top-down decision making was the order of the day in their school (3).

Four HoDs complained of a lack of access to senior executive, while one HoD said he had no more influence than the ‘average teacher’ in terms of his involvement in school leadership and decision making.

Women were proportionately more likely to make comments about access to senior executive and to be consulted by senior executive about change. Men, however, were
more likely to complain about top-down decision making (3, versus no women), not having a large influence (3, versus no women) and lack of access to senior executive (4, versus no women).

HoDs at non-government schools were more likely to mention meetings with other HoDs (8, versus 2 HoDs at government schools), and having a say or influence (8, versus 4 government HoDs) in respect of their involvement in school leadership and decision making. HoDs at government schools were more likely to mention involvement in project teams (4, versus 1 non-government).

A common approach mentioned by newly appointed HoDs (7 were in their first year), was ‘finding one’s feet’ and getting to know the people and culture before becoming more heavily involved.

Comments about involvement in school decision making included:

‘At this school, HoDs do have a say and influence – if it is not supported by HoDs then it will not run’ (male, non-government).

‘I'm having no more input than before being a HoD ... I'm a new HoD hence just finding feet. The [department] team is very large hence difficult to have an impact ... There is some sense of removal of the senior executive from the HoDs - a feeling that executive decisions are often made and then handed down, probably due to lack of time’ (male, non-government).

'[senior] School executive has the decision making roles. Head of School is usually ready to listen to ideas ... I'm very aware that I am putting forward suggestions ... not in the driver's seat' (female, non-government).

‘Hard to say at the moment because I’m so new ... I am part of the HoDs’ meeting in which every voice is heard ... changes have occurred smoothly because of this’ (female, non-government).

‘High involvement in small [senior] executive, decision making spread over small number of people. A lot is delegated from above ... Heavy involvement in whole school planning, policy writing ... exciting and new. Executive laid back but well supervised by Principal and Deputy’ (male, government).

‘The HoDs are a cohesive group. There is a strong network ... You can be involved at all levels. The principal utilises the process of the HoD being the intermediary between principal and staff. You're asked to report to staff and come back with a decision’ (female, government).

Preferred School Leadership and Decision Making Involvement

The heads of department interviewed in the study were largely happy with their current involvement in school leadership and decision making, with better communication with senior executive perceived as the major problem area for improvement.

There were 14 HoDs who stated that they were satisfied with present decision making processes, although better communication with senior executive was mentioned by 8 HoDs as needed in their schools.
There were 4 HoDs who said that change should be slower and more evolutionary in their school, 2 HoDs said that executive meetings needed to be restructured to allow greater discussion and input, while 2 HoDs thought sub-committees or project teams for specific purposes should be introduced at their school.

Despite the fact that women had previously noted access to senior executive as a part of their involvement in school decision making, women were also more likely (3 of 6 women interviewed) to cite the need for improved communication with senior school executive.

However, overall, those interviewed realised the constraints on both themselves and their superiors, particularly in the areas of imposed change, mandatory requirements and lack of time, where the usual tone of response tended to be philosophical.

One comment is typical:

'I wouldn't choose to alter it – I have considerable scope in what I want to do and I'm consulted re changes' (male, non-government).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HoD

Present Professional Development Needs

The most obvious feature of the perceived professional development needs noted by those interviewed was actually the diversity of responses.

The main professional development needs noted by the 26 department heads were in the areas of people management (7), meeting with heads of department from other schools (7), conflict resolution (6), dealing with the diverse demands of the job (6), time management (5), and the better use of technology (4).

Issues in the area of people management were dominated by frustrations arising from dealing with difficult or incompetent staff, with 6 comments from the non-government sector and 1 from a head of department in a government school. Comments included: 'One of the worst things is trying to deal with unprofessional staff ... yet many just need coping strategies'. Another head of department stated that one of the worst things was when 'you had a teacher who was not trying'.

Problems associated dealing with complaints and demands of parents were also noted: 'I did not expect the intensity of some of the parent complaints. It is difficult to balance support for staff and dealing with the issues ... you get caught between the two'. As noted, the related area of conflict resolution was seen as an area of professional development need by 6 heads of department. Comments in this area included references to being the 'meat in the sandwich' in interpersonal disputes and the fact that some staff tend to 'personalise complaints' that might be made about their practice. Another head of department stated 'you can't walk away from problems - you must work through them to create a resolution'.

As noted, the opportunity to meet with heads from other schools was given as a professional need by 7 of those interviewed (6 males and one female). The general theme here was that some 'benchmarking' and sharing of ideas with other HoDs, especially of the same discipline background, would be very useful.

The next two categories of dealing with diverse demands (6) and time management (5) are obviously related. Comments were made about 'left field agenda items' and 'paperwork generated internally and externally' that caused problems.
One head of department commented that he learnt early that he couldn’t ‘do all the job description’ and hence had to ‘learn to prioritise’. A frequent issue was ‘not enough hours in the day’ and that the school day is taken up (apart from teaching) with ‘full on administration’ and ‘crisis management’. One head of department said that ‘Major initiatives can only be thought about in holiday periods’. Another was concerned that he were a poor delegator - ‘I sometimes think I do too much for staff ... but staff are pulling their weight ... they under stress’.

As noted, there were 4 responses regarding the need for better use of technology. Usually, these comments were about a perceived need to ‘keep up to date’ with technological developments.

Other concepts that received between 1 and 3 responses for professional development needs were student welfare (3), enhancing staff performance (2), outcomes based assessment (2), experience of higher levels of management (1), stress management (1), career path advice (1), budgeting (1), leadership (1), curriculum (1), change management (1) and current educational trends (1).

As noted, there was a great diversity of responses to this issue, with many professional development needs being noted by only one or two HoDs. However, non-government HoDs were more likely to cite the professional needs of people management and conflict resolution, while government HoDs were more likely to mention dealing with diverse demands as a need.

How are These Professional Development Needs Being Met?

The heads of department were equally divided as to the question of whether they felt their professional development needs were currently being met (11 responses) or not (11).

Many commented on the concept of ‘learning on the job’ and the fast externally driven changes that were occurring in education. The need to keep up to date with educational change was seen to take priority over other professional development needs – both one’s own and other staff - due to shortage of time. The role of head of department was seen as becoming more complex, with one head of department noting ‘the diversity of skills needed ... this point has really come home to me this year’.

External in-service courses were the most popular (7) form of obtaining required professional development. This was particularly so for males (5) and non-government HoDs (5 of 7). Several (3) from the state system commented favorably about specialist head teacher in-service courses for people new to the role offered by the NSW DET.

Other avenues for professional development utilised by those taking part in the study were professional associations (3), internal in-service (2), formal study (2), higher executive at school (2), subject meetings with staff (1) and own external networks (1).

On a different tack to more formal means of meeting professional development needs, there were comments about a need for greater recognition of the role of the head of department from senior school executive and external bodies or systems, heads of department commenting on the ‘lack of recognition for the role’. Also mentioned was the fact that ‘more support is needed for this pivotal position’, and the need for greater feedback on performance - ‘I did not know what the boss thought until I asked for a reference’. The view was also given that the ‘Methere
years are still taking their toll ... a feeling of everything is dumped on middle management is still around ... or anything the principal does not want to do'.

Overall, there was a feeling that the head of department position is 'where the real work gets done', to use the words of one of those interviewed, but that it is a 'pressure position'.

PERCEIVED FUTURE IN EDUCATION

The largest group of those interviewed saw themselves as staying in the head of department role in the future. There were 4 heads of department who wanted to stay at their present level and at their present school, while there were 10 HoDs who wanted to move to another school. Only 2 of the 10 who wanted to move elsewhere desired a promotion to either Deputy or Principal.

Overall, 11 HoDs saw themselves as staying at the head of department level. Of those desiring promotion, 7 aspired to Deputy Principal and 3 to the position of Principal. There were 4 who saw their preferred future in higher education, whilst 3 intended to leave teaching.

On the issue of career advancement, one female HoD at a government school had very strong views on the negative bias towards females, stating 'females not only have to equal men they have to be better'. Two others (male, government) were very unhappy with the trends within the Department. One stated: 'most want to be loyal but the Department has lost it'.

Two HoDs (male, non-government and government) commented on the new workload of the deputy principal. One said he had wanted to be a deputy but 'not now due to the workload, stress, burden, and pay'.

One HoD (male, non-government) commented that he was on the 'cusp of decision making ... either promotion to Deputy, stay a HoD, retire early, or get out'.

Two HoDs said they desired voluntary demotion, while commencing higher degree study and moving into a consultancy role were each mentioned by two HoDs as their preferred option for the future.

Men tended to mention a wider range of career options than women. For example, there were 4 men who saw themselves taking on increased management responsibilities, 3 men who saw themselves leaving teaching, 2 men who mentioned voluntary demotion, and 2 men who intended to pursue higher degree study. None of these options were mentioned by the female HoDs interviewed.

These findings beg the question of where the next generation of senior school leaders is to come from, if so few of those HoDs interviewed expressed a desire for promotion to deputy or principal.

OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE HOd

Often, this final section of an interview schedule elicits the deepest, most thoughtful responses, following the reflection that earlier structured questions promote. Below is a varied selection of thoughts and views which throw further light on the world of work of the secondary head of department today.

'There is a lack of recognition of the role – it's where the real work gets done. I learnt early you can't do all the job description – amazing what is
expected ... I needed to learn to prioritise ... It is still good being a HoD as some control is gained’ (male, non-government).

The main reason for going into the job was financial but really the financial security is not there!' (male, government).

'The fact is I believe we're very much 'over cooked' where we are now ... a lot of pressures coming up from below ... teachers coming into the system with low level teaching and management skills and minimal subject knowledge. The school's over burdened now ... pressure coming from the top ... I enjoy everyone of these experiences, but don't enjoy not being able to give major time to specific projects ... It is important as a HoD I need to be able to do something different otherwise I'd go crazy ... need new challenges, e.g., new syllabuses' (male, government).

‘I'm feeling a little insecure re the position of HoD [following release of DET salary award proposal] ... wondering how schools can adapt to possible changes ... imagining more multi-skilled HoDs ... multi-campuses ... How will I fit into the pattern ... how will schools cope?’ (female, government).

'I think we work too hard and fast ... don’t stop to reflect ... perhaps there should be a development program for HoDs ... very onerous position' (female, non-government).

'I have strong feelings about male versus female management opportunities ... still male dominated ... females not only have to equal men they have to be better ... promotion to HoD is the best thing I could have done, but I didn’t do it for the money ... I am starting to encourage other females’ (female, government).

'The diversity of skills needed really staggered me the more I thought about it ... More support is needed for this pivotal position. The [senior] executive can tend to be too removed from the classroom – the HoD is a good position to be a conduit between the classroom and the executive. This continuum between the classroom and the executive could be very powerful. At present it is not being exploited enough’ (male, non-government).

‘At [this school] lots of HoDs feel hard done by, they feel there is inequity between loads, lack of understanding, lack of recognition – I didn’t know what the boss thought about me until I asked for a reference ... The executive does not often realise how much pressure there is – they unload their pressure on HoDs. There has been a lot of sickness/stress leave here with HoDs ... School Council forget the degree of pressure – there is some resentment against this group ... Some [HoD] jobs are huge yet others relatively 'cushy' ... a bigger differential is needed and/or a better recognition of the big departments ... time is more important than money ... constant nature of pressure is the thing you notice’ (male, non-government).

'I try to actively encourage others to do the HoD job. It’s a critical job in the school. I find that as you move up the rung you seem to have less support. The senior executive can tend to feel isolated’ (male, government).
'I think the HoD job is worthwhile. I'm only new and I come into contact with a lot of cynical HoDs – not just at this school but elsewhere. They don't believe this, but I do' (male, government).

'It's a challenge. It is different. The amount of work is overwhelming and it's not seen as hard ... I find in a private school I have to take work home. You have to consider both staff needs and school needs at the one time and this is difficult' (male, non-government).

'I think days when you can step back and see others doing things are great. The most difficult thing is being interrupted and trying to do other things. I feel I give the job my best – to my personal detriment. I feel I have to adhere to a high level to achieve' (female, government).

'Do it if you get the chance. Don't think you're not capable. Have a go. That's how I started, admittedly with a helpful principal. Most people could do it if they have people skills and can interact with a range of stakeholders. I figured I could always go back to classroom teaching if it didn't work' (male, government).

'The job has changed enormously. When I started, the job was running a department ... not expected to do all other peripheral things. In a short time that became more difficult ... staff aging makes it more difficult to introduce change. I once came at 8-00am and planned lessons. Today I still come at 8-00am but can't get through my pigeon hole by the start of the day, so much more to read. Everything in schools is in a rush – the kids are not getting a fair go out of this. Classes are as large now as when I started teaching, which makes a big influence on discipline' (male, government).

'So much comes down to matching one's own personal style with the principal's personal style ... the principal [here] likes a fixed communication time each week. In this system, this is hard to obtain in a large school with constant activity. It does happen in small primary schools and industry ... the system is only as good as the people in it and how they work' (male, government).

'The headmaster reckons this is a high stress position. It's different for me because money is not an issue and I have no goals to go further. Sometimes it's hard to think what I'm doing this for. You can't win all the problems. It can be both rewarding and depressing. You get caught between two levels. You're always on a hiding to nothing but when you're right it feels good. We've got a crowded curriculum and little flexibility. It's good to recognise talent and encourage it' (male, non-government).

'Basically the job is very enjoyable but it can be frustrating when you have deadlines and have others you work with to depend on ... Sometimes I have to cover up for others. It's stressful at times but rewarding working with staff and students. It's good to have a role in major decision making' (male, non-government).

'I think I'm lucky with the variety of things I do. I've got great support from the school, including resource support. I have a substantial level of resources ... The sad thing is that if you want to be better paid you have to move from the classroom. This is a major problem. I know many of my colleagues are just going back to teaching ... There is an increasing demand on my time. This seems to come in wave after wave' (male, non-government).
'It is an opportunity I wouldn’t have missed. You see things in an interesting way as an HoD … part of life’s rich tapestry but not one I would have wanted to stay in permanently' (male, non-government).

'It’s the most enjoyable position in the school. Senior executives work under a lot of pressure. HoDs are less pressured as they deal with kids. Higher up are very emotional issues, especially for the deputy headmaster. As HoD, you can still know the kids. I’ve done acting positions – including acting deputy in a government school for two terms. Too pressured’ (male, non-government).

'It’s an area not easily defined re parameters and limits, it depends very much on the school and it’s culture, which can have significant influences on the position. There are aspects of the job which go beyond normal expectations and especially in terms of time … has to be balanced against personal life. Demands can be enormous and can fluctuate at different times of the year. There never seems enough time to administer everything ... many constraints and complications’ (male, non-government).

'... a balancing act, frustration, stress attached with this all the time ... sense of responsibility ... demanding content [in subject], to take higher level classes others don’t want to do ... two courses [the HSC and IB] ... I didn’t like the question on percentage of time [spent on aspects of role] ... it was a frightening thought provoker .. I was confronted with the necessity to cut back teaching’ (male, non-government).

'I’m settling in more now as two terms ago I was a raw recruit … I like to be organised and am not as much as I’d like to be because I’m in a different environment … I don’t seem to be moving … not quickly enough … seem to be going around and around in circles … the nature of changing positions … At this stage each day is still a new day … until I’ve been in the school 12 months getting a grip, getting a handle on ‘authority’ that comes with the position’ (female, non-government).
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

As noted in the section of this report dealing with sampling, this is an exploratory pilot study, and no claims are made concerning the representative nature or otherwise of those heads of department taking part in the study.

Our intention is to provide a foundation for further research and enhanced understanding of the work of the head of department and, more generally, 'middle executive' in education.

Having said that, we feel that there are insights and findings revealed within the study that can be immediately taken up by those interested in the area.

What follows is a summary of the major findings of study, possible implications and areas requiring further thought, study and attention.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

Aspiring to Become a Head of Department

Those interviewed tended to view promotion to head of department as a logical 'next step' in their professional development. For many, there was the desire expressed to be a leader in one’s curriculum area or field, rather than viewing leadership in more generic terms. A majority in fact, saw themselves staying at this level of the school hierarchy.

Around a third of those interviewed in the study said they had been encouraged by others to think about taking on the role, while another third said they 'just drifted' into the position.

It would seem beneficial that all classroom teachers engage in discussions with more experienced colleagues from quite an early stage so that career goals and directions can be explored and clarified. This happens in many cases, but seemingly on an ad hoc basis overall. Initiatives such as portfolios and mentoring have the potential to facilitate this process.

A related issue is that of 'talent spotting' and nurturing. A common comment from more experienced heads of department - not just in this study but from other research and discussion - was that in the past inspectors of government schools, particularly those with a subject area of responsibility, often identified potential school leaders, encouraged them to think about and work towards promotion and kept a friendly 'eye' on their progress. On the other hand, comments have also been made by executive and classroom teachers (Dinham & Scott, 1996) that the introduction of 'merit' promotion into government schools in NSW led to a competitive environment where others are seen as potential rivals, with a culture of not sharing or encouraging others arising from this.

Thus, the question of the need for identifying and nurturing the next generation of educational leaders arises. Formal courses and processes can play a part in this, but it has been seen from the present study that more informal interpersonal processes
such as networking, mentoring and encouraging others are also very important. A key
question with the use of mentors is who should perform this role. In some cases this
could be a head of department at the same school, a more senior executive at the
school, a head of department or senior executive at another school or an official of
some sort. Flexibility is needed to ensure the best interests of all concerned are
served by such arrangements.

### Key Issue 1
There is a need to find ways to better identify and nurture potential
school leaders.

### Preparation for the Role

Over half of those interviewed in the study reported receiving little or no preparation
for assuming the role of head of department. 'On the job' preparation such as
observation of other HoDs, other school leadership roles, 'negative' role models or
acting in a higher position were the major forms of preparation noted by those in the
study. Women, in particular, were less likely to have experienced such preparation.

Almost half of those interviewed stated they felt unprepared for taking on the role of
HoD, whilst only half said the job matched their initial expectations of what it
would be like.

### Key Issue 2
There is a need to find ways to assist potential heads of department
to better understand the role and to clarify their own reasons for
aspiring to it.

There was a wide range of problems experienced by the HoDs on appointment and
beyond, including 'people management', underestimating the workload and its
effects, lack of conflict resolution skills, dealing with constant pressure, interpersonal
conflict and pressures, lack of awareness of aspects of the role, parental demands
and problems, imposed tasks and responsibilities, and problems with assuming a
whole school role.

Thus, we have a situation where 'rich' but informal and unstructured experiences are
the dominant form of preparation - and highly valued by those who receive it - but
that formal preparation, where available, is not highly regarded.

The challenge here is to design formal preparation programs for school leadership
which 'build in' the rich experiences such as observation of other HoDs and
experience of other leadership roles, while addressing the diverse areas of need noted
above. Such programs should build upon the outcomes flowing from addressing the
first issue outlined above and 'tailor make' for the individual based upon his or her
needs and present capabilities.

### Key Issue 3
There is a need to design and make available to aspiring school leaders
formal programs which contain an adequate range of 'rich', relevant
experiences, knowledge and skills to meet the demands and challenges
they will face in schools.

### Performing and Redesigning the Role

Those heads of department interviewed in the study found working with other staff
the most enjoyable aspect of their role.

They saw themselves primarily as more experienced curriculum specialists and
enjoyed leading teams and working collaboratively with others. Having a greater
influence on educational outcomes at department and school levels was also seen as a positive aspect of the role of the head of department. In short, the study confirmed that the ‘core business’ of the head of department was found to be highly satisfying (Dinham & Scott, 1998b).

Conversely, more external demands and pressures were seen to be the worst aspects of the role of the HoD. These pressures and problems included having to compromise one’s own teaching, dealing with a complex and constant workload, problems arising from being ‘caught in the middle’ between the needs of senior executive and the department, dealing with under-performing staff and staff conflict, parental demands and problems and imposed demands generally.

Overall, time was considered the enemy of the head of department, with too little time available to deal with the multiplicity of demands of the position. The head of department still has a substantial teaching load, and many felt that their own teaching and the professional development of their staff suffer because of more extraneous pressures and demands. Thus, they felt their ‘core business’ to be undermined and compromised, a confirmation of the findings of larger scale survey based findings on middle management in schools (Dinham & Scott, 1998b).

To this end, half of those interviewed in the present study recognised the need to reduce their teaching load in order for them to better perform their other responsibilities. Almost half of the HoDs in the study also noted the need to reduce the administrative aspects of the role to provide more time for them to meet with staff and students and to engage in higher level tasks and responsibilities. It is interesting that prior to assuming the position, many of the HoD’s in the study spoke of wanting to be a curriculum leader, yet this was rarely mentioned once they had taken on the role. Thus, the conflicts currently inherent in the role, e.g., ‘master teacher’, curriculum overseer, people manager, administrator, conflict resolver, staff developer, etc., need to be reconciled.

Therefore, there exists the need to rethink the current responsibilities of heads of department to enable them to spend more time on the ‘professional’ aspects of their role.

Key Issue 4: There is a need to rethink and reconceptualise the work expected of the head of department in schools to make more time available to enable them to re-direct their time, expertise and energies to the higher level and more ‘professional’ responsibilities of the position.

Development of Leadership Capacities of the Head of Department

Those interviewed in the study overwhelmingly saw their leadership style as involving team leadership, collaboration, facilitation and communication. Being democratic and able to reach consensus, being approachable, available and helpful were all cited as aspects of leadership style.

Empowering and recognising others and being able to ‘get on’ with a range of individuals and groups were also seen as important. A key aspect of leadership style was the capacity to provide a bridge between the department and the rest of the school, particularly the senior executive.

The leadership qualities and ‘style’ of those interviewed was seen to derive partly from individual personality, but more importantly, it was believed to come from the influence and example of people such as other HoDs, role models, mentors, and previous leadership experience, including leadership experience outside education.
Previous mention has already been made of the vital importance of such informal, interpersonal influences on the development of the head of department. Because the availability of assistance from others is so variable, there is thus the need to provide processes and avenues, both within and across schools, to enable discussion, networking, encouragement and support and the transfer of professional knowledge and skills between more experienced executive and aspiring and beginning heads of department.

The value of the role of mentor or 'critical friend' is increasingly being recognised and such roles need to be incorporated into formal programs of in-service and staff development, and into the official duties of more senior executive. If this is not to result in an increased workload for those involved in such activities, the reconceptualisation of responsibilities for HoDs mentioned earlier needs to take place, in the context of an overall review of teacher and executive roles and responsibilities in schools.

Something which comes through strongly in the comments made by those interviewed is that relationships such as mentoring, where they occur, are greatly satisfying and rewarding for all parties. Initiatives such as the mentoring program at masters level currently being provided by the University of Western Sydney and the NSW DET are a welcome innovation worthy of far wider adoption and provision.

**Key Issue 5:** We need to provide support and encouragement to enable networking to occur within and across schools to link aspiring and beginning school executive with more experienced, supportive colleagues.

**Involvement in Whole School Leadership and Decision Making**

Those interviewed in the study were largely satisfied with their involvement in whole school leadership and decision making. Where problems were noted in this area, these tended to centre on communication barriers and difficulties, particularly with the senior executive of the school.

The structure of the modern secondary school tends to militate against effective communication, with vertical barriers between departments and horizontal barriers between teaching staff, heads of department and senior school executive.

In the day to day frenetic activity of the school, effective communication can suffer and problems arise because of this. Principals may not be able to make themselves as accessible and available as they or their staff might wish, and heads of department report the same difficulties in respect of being able to find time to communicate with members of their departments.

**Key Issue 6:** There is a need to focus on improving formal and informal communication methods in today's secondary schools.

**Present Professional Development Needs of the Head of Department**

As noted in the section detailing the results of the study, there was a diversity of perceived professional development needs noted by the heads of department. The needs cited – people management, meeting with HoDs from other schools, conflict resolution, time management, dealing with diverse demands, better use of technology, student welfare, enhancing staff performance, outcomes based assessment, and other
areas of perceived need - underline the complexities of the demands and responsibilities of the position.

A worrying finding was that only a minority of HoDs felt that their professional development needs were currently being met through the formal avenues open to them.

Key Issue 7: There is a need to build upon the programs advocated for aspiring heads of department to provide individually tailored and packaged professional development programs for practicing heads of department which recognise both the diverse demands of the position and individual need. Such programs need to be grounded in an experiential problem solving framework and utilise other measures already advocated such as networking with more experienced school executive and specialist staff. Such professional development, where successfully undertaken, needs to be supported, formally recognised, linked to salary, and where relevant, accredited towards higher degree study and.

The Future of the Heads of Department

The hierarchical structure of the secondary school means that it is not possible for all heads of department to be promoted to higher levels, and as has been seen, many of those interviewed wish to remain in their present position because of the vital and satisfying contribution it makes to teaching and learning.

The problem then arises that a person can be promoted to the position of head of department and then be faced with 20 or more years in the same position, and even the same school. To relinquish the position is presently costly, both financially and in terms of status. As seen, several of those interviewed desired voluntary demotion, whilst others wanted to move to another school.

It is important that the position of head of department not be construed as a ‘dead-end’. There is thus the need to explore more flexible promotion and appointment procedures. For example, the notion of serving a fixed period of head of department before ‘returning to the fold’ is long established in higher education. This can give those entrusted with such positions a known time frame to work energetically within, knowing that the position can be relinquished at the end of the term, or if desired, another term sought. This also has the benefit of shifting responsibility around, developing and utilising leadership expertise and experience in a wider group of people and enhancing greater understanding of the complexities of running a school.

Facilitating short and longer term exchanges between heads of department, including across systems and even internationally, could also serve vital rejuvenation and professional development functions.

There is also an argument in the research findings for an intermediate position to bridge the gap between classroom teacher and the head of department, particularly with larger teams of teachers. The Advanced Skills Teacher was expected to bring with it some of the benefits flowing from such a position, but has been widely regarded as not meeting its original intentions (see Dinhum & Scott, 1997).

A new ‘stepping stone’ in what is already a fairly flat career structure could serve as recognition for talented staff, spread the load of the head of department and serve as valuable professional development for those involved. Such positions could also be on a fixed term, rotating basis.
Finally, as part of the formal professional programs already advocated, there is a need to provide career counselling for heads of department to assist them to clarify their needs and goals and to assist them to continue to be rewarded and satisfied in their profession. It is of concern that so few of those interviewed in the study aspired to the position of principal or even deputy principal. Where, then, will the next generation of such leaders come from if the experience of being a head of department dissuades such people from seeking further promotion?

**Key Issue 8:** There is a need to consider and adopt more flexible appointment and promotion procedures for executive in secondary schools, including fixed term appointments, the introduction of an intermediate executive position in some departments, and enhanced transfer and exchange opportunities.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Previous work has identified both the crucial importance of the head of department position and the toll it can take on those performing it in terms of decreased career satisfaction and increased stress (Dinham & Scott, 1999).

The head of department occupies a crucial position in secondary schools, with diverse and demanding responsibilities above and below them, alongside their own teaching duties.

Those interviewed in this pilot study articulated both the ‘delights’ and ‘dangers’ of the position, along with thoughts on their current duties and professional development needs.

New leadership preparation programs are currently being introduced in systems and a re-thinking of executive positions in schools has begun, partly as a result of industrial award negotiations. These initiatives need to continue.

However, there is a compelling need for a comprehensive review of the selection, preparation and support for heads of department – and indeed all school executive positions - and a rethinking of their duties, if for no other reason that we are faced with a major, unprecedented exodus of experienced school executive due to the ageing of the Australian teaching profession.

The major turnover of school executive staff in Australian schools over the next decade provides both the opportunity and the necessity for rethinking the current conceptualisation of the leadership of our schools.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

1. SAMPLE INFORMATION/PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Secondary Head Teacher,

We are currently undertaking a pilot study at two NSW government secondary schools, including yours, which aims to explore the world of work of the Secondary Head of Department. This work is being carried out under the supervision of Dr Steve Dinham of the School of Teaching and Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney, Nepean. Your principal has given approval for this project to take place and is a member of the project team. Approval for the project has also been given by the NSW DET and UWS Nepean.

Our project title gives something of the flavour of our intended investigation:

‘DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS, DIRECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT’

We believe that Head Teachers occupy a vital position in secondary schools, being ‘linking pins’ between classroom teachers, their departments/faculties and the executive of the school, and we want to explore how HT’s currently perceive their role.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and there will be no adverse consequences if you decline to take part. Your principal will not be told whether or not you have decided to participate. All possible steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of your responses, although there is a possibility that your comments may still permit identification. You may also choose to withdraw from the project at a later date if you so desire by contacting Dr Dinham (phone: 02 47360275; fax: 02 47360400; email: s.dinham@uws.edu.au).

If you do decide to take part, you will be interviewed by telephone (normally at your home or out of school hours) by another principal taking part in the study. He/She will ask you a series of questions about such things as how you came to be a Head Teacher, what comprises your current workload, how you might like to change this, and what you perceive to be the best and worst aspects of your role. You will also be asked about your present professional needs and future aspirations. Interviews will normally take 30-45 minutes to conduct and will be held in the period August to September 1999. Previous experience with this method has found it effective, non-threatening and even enjoyable for both parties. Interviews will be transcribed and transcripts securely kept under the sole control of S. Dinham for a period of five years and then destroyed. We anticipate that we will have a final report ready by November 1999, and you and your school will receive copies, regardless of whether your decide to take part.

Our feeling is that the Head of Department has been somewhat neglected in prior research, which has tended to concentrate on principals, deputy heads, and classroom teachers. We intend to make the findings of our project known through conference presentations, a report to the DET and other publications, through which we hope to influence policy making and procedures in this area in both government and non-government educational systems.

Further information about the project can be obtained from Dr Steve Dinham (see above for contact details) or your principal. If you would like to assist us in our work by participating, please fill out the tear-off slip below and post or fax as convenient. Please keep a copy of this information/consent sheet for future reference.
Yours sincerely,

Dr Steve Dinham (Chief Investigator)

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Nepean Human Ethics Review Committee (Protocol No. HE/95/57). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (tel: 02 47 360 169). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Written Consent Form:

'DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS, DIRECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'

I, ___________________________, of ______________________ High School give written consent to be interviewed by telephone as part of the above project. I have read the above Information Sheet.

I wish to be interviewed at the following telephone number:

__________________________ at the following preferred times/days:

________________________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Post to: Dr Steve Dinham, TES, UWS Nepean, PO Box 10 Kingswood 2747

or Fax: 02 47360400
2. THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS, DIRECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CODE NUMBER: ........................................ TIME TAKEN: .................. mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWER: ........................................ DATE: ..........................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Closed Respondent Data
a) Age .................................................. 

b) Sex ..................................................

c) Years of Teaching Experience (this school, total) .......... ...........

d) Years as HOD (this school, total) ......................... ...........

e) Qualifications (highest held, currently undertaking) ........ ...........

f) Department/Major Responsibility (e.g., Maths) ............. ...........

2. Open-Ended Questions
1. Why did you want to be a head of department? What/who were the major influences on your seeking to become a HOD?
2. What preparation did you receive for becoming a HOD, including that initiated by yourself and provided by your employer/system?
3. With hindsight, how well prepared were you for your (first) appointment as a HOD? Did it match your expectations of what you thought it would be like?
4. What are the best things now about being a HOD?
5. What are the worst things now about being a HOD?
6. What are the major elements of your workload as a HOD? What percentage of your time would you typically spend on each?
7. If you could redesign your job, how would you prefer to spend your time (give percentages, if possible)?
8. Describe your management/leadership style. What are the influences on this, and how did it develop?
9. What is your involvement with overall school decision making, leadership and change? Would you alter this if you could? If so, in what ways?
10. What are your major professional development needs at the present time? Are these being met? How?
11. How do you see your future in education? Is this your preferred future?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about being a HOD?
CHAPTER SIX
THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT. KEY LINK IN THE QUALITY
TEACHING AND LEARNING CHAIN

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October/November 2000 (Appendix F, p.349).
PAPER No.2

The Secondary Head of Department
Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain

Steve Dinham, Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Dece and David Mulford
QUALITY TEACHING SERIES — PAPER NO. 2

The Secondary Head of Department: Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain

Steve Dinham, Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Deece and David Mulford

The Quality Teaching Series is published by the Australian College of Education with a view to enhancing teacher professionalism. Papers in this series are designed to provide information and practical advice on ways of making learning and teaching more effective. In general, the papers will be research-based and draw on the wisdom and expertise of accomplished teachers in a range of settings including early childhood, school, TAFE and tertiary education. Authors who are interested in contributing to this series should contact Jim Cumming, Executive Director.

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ABSTRACT

The secondary Head of Department — along with other 'middle managers' in schools — occupies a crucial 'linking position' between specialist classroom teachers and senior school executive, yet has received comparatively little attention from educational researchers and those devising and providing professional development programs.

Recent international research has revealed that those occupying and performing such 'middle management' roles in schools are reporting lower levels of career satisfaction and higher levels of mental stress than those above and below them in the school hierarchy.

This paper reports on an interview study involving 26 heads of department at four large NSW secondary schools, two government and two non-government. Matters explored include reasons for and influences on seeking the position, positive and negative aspects of the role, elements of workload, origins and nature of leadership style, involvement in whole-school decision making, professional development needs and redesigning the role.

Key issues raised by the pilot study are presented for consideration.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Context of Teaching

Despite widespread impressions to the contrary, there has never been a 'golden age' when the world of education was largely static and change itself unknown, or at worst, leisurely.

The reality is, "people are always wanting teachers to change" (Hargreaves, 1994: 5) and, for as long as there have been students and schools, there has been pressure on teachers from various quarters to 'improve' and 'change' what they do. However, it is equally true that the pressure for and pace of educational change have increased considerably since the late 1980s — the 'restructuring decade' — partly due to what some have referred to as a worldwide "educational reform movement" (Beare, 1989).

As a result, education systems have experienced change in the areas of teaching practice and curricula; greater involvement of stakeholders in education; attempts to streamline educational bureaucracies with a greater emphasis upon accountability, rationality and self-management; and the increased politicisation and 'reform' of educational systems (Bourke, 1994).

With global recession, the restructuring of national economies in the hope of greater international competitiveness, and unresolved social problems of unemployment, family break-up, crime, poverty and poor health for many, schools have been looked to for solutions, with the result that they have, in many respects, become the "wastebaskets of society" (Halsey, cited by Hargreaves, 1994: 5), being expected to solve the problems that society appears unwilling or unable to deal with (Dinham, 1994a).

To compound matters, in many 'western' nations, demographic changes are occurring due to the twin effects of longer life expectancy and falling birth rates. In Australia, for example, the average age of the teaching service is now in the high 40s. Resignation rates have fallen to the lowest levels since World War II, while retirement rates are expected to rise considerably in the years ahead. Projected growth in student numbers is 'flat' over the next decade, despite immigration of around 90,000 per annum, with the result that there are actually fewer students of high school age in Australia than 20 years previously.

A result of this situation is that it is currently difficult for 'new blood' — younger, more recently trained teachers — to enter teaching, yet there is likely to be considerable demand for teachers with rising retirements of older teachers and school executive in the near future. Teacher shortages, for both permanent and casual staff, are already becoming critical in some areas, with systems both in Australia and overseas now attempting to attract trained teachers to meet shortfalls. In addition, teacher mobility in educational systems has declined markedly, fewer males are entering teaching, and there is concern over teacher status and the 'quality' of those entering teacher training (New South Wales Department of School Education, 1994; Dinham, 1996; Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1998).
RESEARCH LEADING TO THE PROJECT

The International Teacher 2000 Project

Since the mid-1990s, Dinham and Scott have conducted an international research project which has attempted to explore and benchmark teacher and school executive satisfaction, motivation and mental stress in the context of contemporary educational environments. As part of this study, staff at a variety of schools in Australia, New Zealand, England and the USA have been surveyed, with work continuing in these and other nations.

Key findings of this project relevant to the current study include the crucial role ‘middle managers’ in schools play in operationalising educational change (see also Ayres, Dinham & Sawyer, 1999), and the demands the position makes upon such leaders, with commensurate effects on performance and health.

Position Held and Health

Recent international research has demonstrated a relationship between physical health and occupational status level of appointment, that is, that those persons who hold higher level positions in organisations enjoy better physical health on average than those in lower positions. Researchers have speculated that this may in part be due to the lower levels of control over work exercised by those occupying lower promotions positions (see Marmot & Therorell, 1988; Marmot & Feeney, 1990; Marmot, Bosma, Hemingway et al., 1997).

However, work by Dinham and Scott referred to above found a distortion of this ‘normal’ pattern (Dinham & Scott, 1999). In their samples of teachers from Australia, New Zealand, the USA and England, it was found, as predicted, that principals, on average, were least stressed and most satisfied, followed by the next level, deputy heads.

However, overall, the most stressed group did not comprise those at the ‘bottom’, classroom teachers, but those in ‘middle management’ positions such as secondary Heads of Department (HoDs) and primary executive below the rank of deputy. Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the difficulties experienced by those occupying such crucial ‘linking-pin positions’ in meeting the demands of their own teaching (usually a ‘full load’ or almost so), and the various roles of staff supervision and development, curriculum leadership, pupil discipline and welfare, school administration, their own professional development, and other duties. This complex, often conflicting set of duties — that is, being both formal staff supervisor and ‘coach’ — had to be juggled with the key role of initiating and responding to change in all areas.

Classroom teachers by comparison — although less satisfied and more stressed than principals and deputies overall — experienced less of the role conflict, work overload and ambiguity experienced by their supervisors.

RESEARCH INTO THE ROLE OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

While there has been a growing amount of research into the role of school principals and, for that matter, classroom teachers, the ‘middle manager’ level in schools has received far less attention. In considering the literature in this area, Conners (1999:27) states:

Studies of the Head of Department as a middle manager date from the mid-1980s and emphasise that they are a driving force in a secondary school, are very much pre-occupied with routine administration and crisis management, have little time for strategic thinking, and are reluctant to monitor the teaching of their colleagues; that there are considerable differences in the ways departments operate in a school and from school to school, that the department is the crucial ‘working unit’ in the school, that school performance and departmental performance are not intrinsically linked, that the key indicator of effective departments is their ability to effectively organise teaching, and that time is a key constraint for heads in carrying out their...
management and leadership roles. However, few studies in Australia or internationally have explored the importance and the dimensions of the Head of Department’s role in a secondary school. [Emphasis added.]

What follows is a sample of the literature in the field, but what comes through strongly is the dual, intermediary function of the Head of Department, who must provide leadership for a group of people under his or her supervision, while being part of the higher ‘executive’ of the school. There is also the well-documented dichotomy of ‘people’ and ‘task’ orientations with which middle managers must deal.

A Sample of the Literature on the Head of Department

Koehler (1993:11) states that: “Department chairs walk a tightrope between the maintenance and survival needs of the School and the human and professional needs of the people within it”. He also stresses the intermediary role of such a position noted above.

While and Rosenfield (1999:1) write about the notion that subject departments are seen as being “potentially highly influential sites”, with the HoD responsible for the development of a “motivated collegial team of workers united in direction and committed to the learning of their students”. They emphasise the huge impact that educational change is having on school-based management systems, especially due to “growing demands for increased effectiveness, greater efficiency and accountability”.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) argue that we do not yet understand the complexity of the HoD’s role and that initiatives need to be taken and obstacles overcome in order to facilitate and improve teaching and learning in secondary departments. McLendon and Crowther (1998:14) also highlight the surprising lack of “specialised consideration” into this “unique leadership position”.

Brown and Rutherford (1998:75–88), in their phenomenological study of eight HoDs in the United Kingdom (Catholic and state schools), attempted to look at department heads as “social actors”. Their data-gathering methods included examination of documentary evidence, shadowing of the HoDs, structured interviews and interviews with the HoDs’ superiors. They used Murphy’s (1992) typology derived from analysis of the leadership and management of school principals in the United States. This typology comprises the HoD as:

1. Servant leader — ability to use their ability rather than their line of authority
2. Organisational architect — ability to create a variety of innovative structures that facilitate the sharing of leadership
3. Moral educator — motivation by a set of deep personal values and beliefs that demonstrates their care and valuing of staff and students
4. Social architect — addressing the needs of students
5. Leading professional — focus on improving teaching and learning, leadership by example.

Brown and Rutherford found their HoDs did address the five dimensions of the typology although the relative emphasis given to each varied according to the context of each school. Conners (1999:27, 17), in reviewing Brown and Rutherford’s findings, reported that there was little time left for HoDs to facilitate improvement of teaching and learning and achievement. The major obstacles impeding HoD effectiveness as evident from Brown and Rutherford’s study were:

1. Lack of time to effectively carry out all dimensions of their role
2. Lack of curriculum stability in the face of the demands for the National Curriculum
3. Lack of professional development opportunities at the departmental level
4. Lack of direction and vision from some senior executive members
5. Often a lack of effective communication between HoDs and senior management.

LEADERSHIP AND THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Much has been written about educational leadership in recent decades, although most focuses on the principal. However, as noted, HoDs are in a potentially powerful and influential leadership role. McLendon and Crowther (1998:14), in a study entitled ‘Project HoD’ conducted in Queensland, reviewed five action learning projects based around an initiative of a Head of Department. In their review they stated that the projects “provided a clear connection with leadership competencies”. The following table outlines the qualities that were evident in the projects.
### TABLE 1 BEST PRACTICE IN HOD LEADERSHIP

Best practice in HOD leadership is:

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<th></th>
<th>Transformational</th>
<th>Inspiring, risk-taking, empowering, enervating.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leithwood (1994)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Linked to systems imperatives, co-ordinating, facilitating, measuring, benchmarking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limerick &amp; Caldwell (1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Educative</td>
<td>Challenging unjust practices, appreciative of local community values and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grace (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pounder, Ogawa &amp; Bossert (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pedagogical</td>
<td>Focus on teaching and learning, grounded in personally meaningful theories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newmann &amp; Wehlage (1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beare, Caldwell and Milikan (1989), in their popular book *Creating an Excellent School*, comment on two key leadership behaviour dimensions which they describe as a "concern for accomplishing the tasks of the organisation and a concern for the relationships among people in the organisation" (106–116). They outline ten generalisations about what shapes leadership in schools where excellence is valued:

1. Emphasis should be given to transforming rather than transactional leadership
2. Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisations
3. Vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment amongst members of the organisation
4. Communication of vision requires communication of meaning
5. Issues of value — what ought to be — are central to leadership
6. The leader has an important role in developing the culture of an organisation
7. Studies of outstanding schools provide strong support for school-based management and collaborative decision making
8. There are many kinds of leadership — technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural
9. Attention should be given to institutionalising vision if leadership of the transforming kind is to be successful
10. Both 'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotype qualities are important in leadership, regardless of the gender of the leader

Duke (1987 81–84) suggests seven "key situations" with which the educational leader must deal:

1. Teacher supervision
2. Teacher evaluation
3. Instructional management
4. Resource management
5. Quality control
6. Co-ordination
7. Trouble shooting.
As Duke states, "handling of these situations well requires far more than a particular skill or set of competencies. The situations constitute complex configurations of intentions, activities, people and interrelationships".

Hannay and Schmaiz (1995:2) carried out a research project into the role of the Head of Department in an education district in Ontario, Canada. Data was collected from six schools over the course of three separate interview sessions and analysed to create a description of the current and changing role of the HoD. The push for more site-based management systems was found to be creating new power relationships in schools. Their study suggested, however, that the departmental structure still provides "meaningful sub-groupings within the larger, complex structures of secondary Schools".

CONCLUSION TO THE LITERATURE ON THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The various studies and writings outlined above give a useful conceptual basis for understanding the work of the contemporary secondary Head of Department. However, like earlier work on the principalship, what tends to be provided are typologies and lists of desirable attributes, roles and characteristics, which by their very nature imply prescription of what the Head of Department should be like, and what he or she should do. What is lacking at this juncture is sufficient understanding of how this range of responsibilities is to be carried out and indeed balanced, something of fundamental concern to all those interested in improving teaching and learning in schools.

Finally, there is an increasing body of empirical evidence to support the contention that it is departments, and individuals and groups within these, that contribute or 'add value' most to student outcomes (see Darling-Hammond, 2000, for a comprehensive review of the literature to date). It is timely, then, that attention is given to the role of the secondary Head of Department.

HOW THE PROJECT AROSE

As noted, the project arose from earlier work of Dinham and Scott, which had highlighted some of the difficulties currently experienced by 'middle managers' in schools, and from the general dearth of research into this level of leadership in the field of education.

Concern over the extent to which these crucial educational leaders are able to perform their intended functions led the researchers to explore the 'world of work' of the contemporary secondary Head of Department.

Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Dece and David Mulford are experienced secondary principals who recognised both the importance of and difficulties faced by secondary Heads of Department. Each is enrolled in the Doctor of Education program at University of Western Sydney, Nepean, and it was decided to utilise Head Teachers at their schools — two government and two non-government — as a sample for a pilot study to validate and extend some of the findings of earlier work and to explore the area further.

Telephone interviews with volunteer Heads of Department were conducted in the latter part of 1999, concluding in early 2000 (see Method, below). Analysis of data took place in late 1999 — early 2000, with formulation of a report of the study being completed in April 2000 for dissemination to various stakeholders (Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Dece & Mulford, 2000a).

PROJECT AIMS

The study was a pilot investigation designed to explore how Heads of Department are currently performing and, in turn, being influenced by their roles. The following study questions guided the research design:

1. Why do HoDs aspire to the position?
2. How well are HoDs prepared for the role?
3. What are the elements of HoDs' workloads?
4. What do HoDs like most and least about their work?
5. How would HoDs prefer to allocate their time and effort?
6. How do HoDs develop/ acquire their individual management/ leadership style?
7. How do HoDs see their role contributing to educational change, leadership and decision making?

8. What are the professional development needs of HoDs and how are these addressed?

9. What are the future aspirations of HoDs?

It was thought that if the above questions could be answered, this would facilitate more effective performance of the role in schools and systems and provide valuable understanding to help meet the needs of HoDs through provision of effective training and development programs by schools, systems, professional associations and tertiary institutions.

**Method**

**Introduction**

Because of the exploratory nature of the study, it was decided to utilise a structured, open-ended interview design with volunteer Head Teachers at four secondary schools, with data to be analysed using content analysis.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study will have immediate application while serving as a basis for follow-up work with larger groups of Heads of Department in the future.

**Instrument**

An interview schedule was developed comprising demographic items and twelve open-ended questions derived from the original study questions (see Appendix).

The open-ended questions were designed to encourage reflexivity, in that they were arranged chronologically and took the participant through his or her career from initial attraction and opinion of the role to the present, finishing with questions about current professional development needs and the future. There was a slight refinement of the questions between the initial pilot of twelve interviews and the remainder, in that it was found that interviewees found it difficult to specify percentages in questions 6 and 7.

In framing the interview questions, there was an attempt to contrast the present experience and workload of the Heads of Department with how they would prefer to spend their time.

**The Interviews**

Two of the secondary schools where the study took place are in far Western Sydney, one is in the Blue Mountains, while the remaining school is in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. Because of ethical reasons of confidentiality and facilitation of free expression, it was decided that each participating principal would not interview Heads of Department nor see transcripts from his or her school.

Telephone interviews were conducted with participants, both because of convenience given the geographic spread of teachers and schools, and because of the demonstrated advantages of this approach in facilitating thought and reflection (see Dinham, 1994b).

Interviews occurred at an agreed time and place, usually out of school hours, so as to avoid distraction and disruption, and took from 40 minutes to two hours to conduct, with 50 minutes being typical.

Interviews were not audio-taped, as is sometimes the case with this method. Rather, the interviewers made notes on an interview schedule, frequently reading back and clarifying responses with the interview subjects. This technique requires 'active listening' and appears to have some advantages over audio-recording in that the interviewer — and interviewee — is more engaged in the process. It is, however, demanding and not more than one interview per day is recommended.

Pertinent direct quotations were recorded on the interview schedule, and notes typed up as soon as possible afterwards to assist in recall and understanding of what had been said.

It is important in this process that the interviewer possesses the "theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 41–47) needed to converse with the interviewee and to fully understand the context within which those who are being interviewed operate — in this case, contemporary secondary education.
In line with previous experience with the method (Dinham, 1992, 1994b, 1995), the process of the telephone interview was found to be enjoyable by all parties and even cathartic in some cases, some of those interviewed stating that they had not thought deeply about an issue before or that they found the process of talking through an issue with a fellow experienced 'anonymous' professional beneficial.

**Data Analysis**

The method used in the analysis of data was that of content analysis and utilised elements of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), although full application of the technique did not occur due to the exploratory nature of the study.

In this case, concepts were identified from the transcripts by the researchers, these were then 'workshopped' and consolidated, categories or themes derived from these, and then spreadsheets utilised to record the frequency of concepts within categories and for individual Heads of Departments and main sub-groups.

Categories derived from the content analysis comprised:

1. Personal orientation [to the position of Head of Department]
2. Major influences [on becoming a HoD]
3. Preparation for the role [of HoD]
4. Usefulness of preparation
5. Matching expectations [prior perceptions vs actuality of the role]
6. Best aspects [of the role of HoD]
7. Worst aspects [of the role of HoD]
8. Workload elements [of the role of HoD]
9. Workload [proportion/percentage of total time]^4
10. Preferred workload
11. Leadership style
12. Origins/influences leadership style
13. School leadership involvement
14. Preferred school leadership involvement
15. Professional development needs
16. How professional development needs met
17. Future in education

For each category, a spreadsheet was constructed with Heads of Department on the horizontal axis (HT1–HT26) and concepts identified as elements of this category on the vertical axis (Table 3). For example, for Category 1: Personal orientation [PO] to the position of HoD, there were 14 concepts identified by the researchers from the transcripts.
**TABLE 2  SAMPLE CATEGORY AND CONCEPTS**

**Personal Orientation To Position [PO]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Natural career progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Greater involvement in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To lead a team/be a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To do something different from teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Greater involvement in school change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enjoy responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Asked/encouraged to take on role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>To be a leader in subject area/love of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Challenge of role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Drifted into it, circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Power and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Increased salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Personal ambition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals for the sub-groups of male/female, government/non-government school were also calculated for each category (see Table 4).

Overall trends and results for each category were thus discerned (see 'Results').
### TABLE 3  SAMPLE INTERVIEW RESULTS

**Personal Orientation To Position (PO)**

| PO  | H1 | H2 | H3 | H4 | H5 | H6 | H7 | H8 | H9 | H10 | H11 | H12 | H13 | H14 | H15 | H16 | H17 | H18 | H19 | H20 | H21 | H22 | H23 | H24 | H25 | H26 | Tot |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PO 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 10  |
| PO 2 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 17  |
| PO 3 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3   |
| PO 4 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 6   |
| PO 5 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 8   |
| PO 6 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   |
| PO 7 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4   |
| PO 8 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 9   |
| PO 9 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 7   |
| PO 10 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 8   |
| PO 11 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 7   |
| PO 12 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4   |
| PO 13 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4   |
| PO 14 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 6   |
TABLE 4  SAMPLE SUB-GROUPS

Personal Orientation To Position [PO]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>GOV</th>
<th>NON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PO1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARTICIPANTS

Sampling

It was determined that all those occupying positions equivalent to Head of Department/Head Teacher in each of the four schools would be approached in writing by the chief investigator.

Anonymity was assured and no principal knew the identity of participants or non-participants at his or her school. Each principal did, however, promote the study with his or her staff to encourage involvement.

From a potential population of 47 Heads of Department, 26 (55%) agreed to take part in the study and be interviewed. Response rates per school varied from 6 out of 13 (46%) at a government school, to 7 out of 8 (87%) at a non-government school.

No claims are made about the representative nature of the sample, nor of the schools.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Age, Sex and Teaching Experience

Of the 26 participants, 6 were female and 20 male (77%). The average age of those interviewed was 43 (range 29 to 54), with females (46) being older on average than males (42), possibly reflecting the tendency for females to be older when gaining promotion due to such matters as broken patterns of service.
There were 12 participants from the two government schools (4 female) and 14 from the two non-government schools (2 female).

Average length of teaching experience was 20 years (range 9 to 30 years), with average length of tenure at current school being 7 years.

The average length of time in the position of Head of Department was 6 years (4 years as HoD at current school). On average, those surveyed had 14 years’ teaching experience before being promoted to Head Teacher, although some had experience as year coordinators, sports coordinators, and in relieving positions prior to their substantive appointment as a HoD. This reflects the well-known phenomenon of promotion in education — with its few levels of hierarchy in schools — whereby teachers typically gain their first promotion far later in their careers than members of the general workforce or those in comparable occupations.

**Highest Level of Qualification and Area of Responsibility**

One participant at a non-government school possessed a PhD, while 7 HoDs had completed coursework Masters degrees. For 6 of those interviewed, their highest qualification was a Graduate Diploma, which followed the completion of an undergraduate degree. Nine gave a Bachelor’s degree as their highest qualification, which in most cases had followed an initial teaching qualification such as a diploma in teaching.

Only two of the 26 interviewed were currently engaged in higher degree study, both undertaking coursework Masters degrees.

Those taking part in the study were fairly well spread across Key Learning Areas, although there were 6 HoDs who had uncommon combinations or areas of responsibility, 5 of whom were working in non-government secondary schools.

**RESULTS**

**Introduction**

Results are organised around the themes and categories emerging from the content analysis of the interview data. This structure closely follows the original organisation of the open-ended interview questions.⁴

**Becoming a Head of Department**

**REASONS FOR WANTING TO BE A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

There was a diversity of reasons given for wanting to be a Head of Department, with some of those interviewed giving more than one reason. In rank order, the main reasons were given as:

- A natural career progression (10 HoDs from 26)
- Being asked or encouraged to take on the role (9)
- Wanting to make a difference (8)
- Attracted by the challenge of the role (8)
- Desire to be a leader in subject area (7)
- Wanting greater involvement in decision making (7)
- Just drifted into it (7).

As noted, 10 of the 26 interviewed said they saw becoming a HoD as being part of a natural career progression, while 6 described becoming a HoD as a personal ambition. On the other hand, 7 HoDs stated that circumstances led them to just ‘drift into the job’ (5 non-government).
A large proportion saw themselves as curriculum specialists and wanted to be a leader (7) and to make a
difference in their subject area (8).

Other reasons given for becoming a HoD included 9 who said they were asked and encouraged to take
on the role, while 7 HoDs wanted a greater role in decision making. Eight HoDs said they wanted the
challenge of the role.

Increased salary flowing from promotion to HoD was mentioned by only 4 of those interviewed, while an
equal number gave the desire for power and influence as a motivation for seeking the position. No
woman gave either salary or power and influence as a reason for taking on the role of HoD.

Overall, implicit in many of the answers to this question was a feeling of reaching a stage in one's
professional development where greater responsibility and influence over teaching, learning and decision
making were now sought, although there was a minority who found 'greatness thrust upon them'.

Comments about becoming a Head of Department included:

"It's a natural progression. I like control over my own destiny" (male, government).

"I've had a personal interest and enthusiasm in my faculty. I want to have more power in
organising the development of my faculty" (male, non-government).

"Originally I was encouraged by a senior teacher. I worked towards it from my second year. They
[other HoDs] were all positive and encouraging" (male, government).

"It's mostly innate. It comes from within. It eats at you when you hear about others who have
gained promotion and you don't think much of them" (male, government).

"The position gives you credibility" (female, government).

INFLUENCES ON SEEKING THE POSITION

Major influences on those interviewed seeking to be a HoD were, in rank order:

- other HoDs (11)
- senior school staff, including principals (10)
- mentors and role models (9).

Overall, other people engaged in the educational profession, usually at a higher level, were the major
influence on becoming a HoD for those interviewed in the study. Sometime this took the form of
encouragement, networking, role modelling and/or mentoring. Clearly, the judgment of a more
experienced colleague was important in making the decision to put oneself forward for promotion, the
reverse side of the coin being that senior staff often act as 'talent spotters' in their schools and for their
subject areas.

Of the 26 HoDs interviewed, 21 saw other people in their schools as being the major external influence
on them seeking promotion.

Ten saw encouragement from a principal or senior staff as being a major influence and 11 mentioned
other HoDs (8 from non-government schools). Nine mentioned the importance of a mentor, mostly from
within their school.

For 6 of those interviewed, a negative role model was a major influence in that the person concerned felt
he or she could do a better job than HoDs they had worked with. In the words of one HoD, "They treated
me like an idiot" (male, non-government).

Other comments included:

"Originally I was encouraged by a senior teacher — a 'de facto Head Teacher' in my first school.
There were only three of us in the department and from my second year onwards I worked
towards it. They were all positive and encouraging" (male, government).

"I had lots of encouragement in my first year of teaching by the HoD ... indicating that I had the
talent ... current deputy principal really encouraged me in my previous school" (male,
政府).

"The music inspector [pre- 'merit selection'] contacted me re a Head Teacher music position that
was coming up and encouraged me to apply" (female, government).
PREPARATION FOR THE ROLE

A majority of those interviewed (17 out of 26) reported little or no formal preparation provided for or undertaken by them before becoming a Head of Department (10 in non-government schools).

What preparation there was tended to be informal and 'on the job', and was either self-initiated (11), or consisted of periods of time as an acting HoD (10, including 7 from non-government schools). The experience gained in other school leadership roles was given as a form of preparation for the role by 8 HoDs.

Formal preparation programs such as higher degree study (4), professional associations (2) and school or system in-service (5) were in the minority of sources of leadership preparation cited by those interviewed.

One HoD stated: "Studying for my Masters gave me an insight into being a HoD" (male, non-government). Two cited leadership experience outside the school, while, as noted, only 5 said their system or school provided formal in-service for the role.

It should be noted that women were under-represented in the areas of being an acting HoD or other school leadership experience (1, versus 9 men), while no women mentioned leadership experience outside school (2 men), professional associations (2 men) or school or system in-service (5 men).

Comments about preparation for the role included:

"Not much really. I saw many HODs at my school. I saw a variety of ways they functioned. I asked questions. No training was provided by my employer" (male, non-government).

"I've never received any training for the job apart from on-the-job training" (male, government).

"Very easy — none was received. Technically no formal DET in-service. What I had was two supportive principals who allowed me to coordinate my subject and attend executive meetings and be part of the wider organisation of the school" (female, government).

"I did a course with the Leading Teacher for three months. We met weekly after school and talked about the requirements for a Head of Department and what was needed. The LT developed this course. At the time I had a really bad HoD and I asked the LT to help" (male, government).

PERCEPTIONS OF THE USEFULNESS OF PREPARATION FOR THE ROLE

There were largely opposing views in response to the question about usefulness of preparation undertaken for the role of HoD.

Twelve of the 26 felt unprepared, 8 felt adequately prepared and 8 felt well prepared. Of the latter, two stated they were unprepared in some important areas of their role. More respondents from non-government schools (8 out of 12) felt unprepared for the HoD role.

Men and women were fairly evenly split on this issue relative to their respective numbers, although women were less represented in comments about feeling well prepared (1, versus 7 men).

Comments about the preparation for the role included:

"I wasn't well prepared. I felt I battled through it" (male, non-government).

"In some ways I was well prepared, but in conflict management I was not prepared" (male, non-government).

"I was fairly well prepared ... I think I had knowledge about my subject area, organisational skills and technical skills" (male, government).

"From my perspective fairly well. I had a wide-ranging experience over a period of time" (female, government).

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ROLE

Only half (13 of 26) of the respondents felt that the actual job of being a Head of Department matched their initial expectations, with 8 of these being from government schools.

There were 2 HoDs who said they were enjoying the role more than they expected they would, but, on the whole, those interviewed encountered a range of negative pressures and experiences they neither anticipated nor believed they had the skills to deal with. These included:
problems involved with 'people management' (mentioned by 8 HoDs)
- understimating the workload (7)
- lacking conflict resolution skills (6)
- dealing with constant pressure (5)
- interpersonal demands and pressures (5)
- lack of awareness of aspects of the role (4)
- parental demands and pressures (3)
- imposed tasks and responsibilities (2)
- impacts of a whole-school role (1)

As noted, 7 of the 26 said they had underestimated the workload of the HoD (5 non-government). One HoD (male, non-government) commented that the "Workload was much more than I expected ... there are not enough hours in the day". The theme of lack of time came through in answers to other questions, including the 'worst aspects' of the role, to be examined shortly.

Women were over-represented in the group saying the role had matched their expectations (5 of the 6 women interviewed), whilst no women mentioned problems with imposed responsibilities, parental demands, lack of awareness of aspects of the HoD position, or impact of having a whole-school role.

**Performing the Role**

**BEST ASPECTS OF BEING A SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

Clearly, the most popular aspect of the role amongst the Heads of Department interviewed in the study was working with staff. Seventeen respondents identified this area as being a highly rewarding aspect of their role.

Comments such as "working with staff in your own faculty area and developing a team, sharing decisions and responsibilities ... and gathering competent, professional people is gratifying" encapsulated the views of many.

Also seen as significant was the capacity to exert greater influence within the school and to initiate change (mentioned by 13 and 11 respondents respectively). One HoD described this as "the enjoyment of making changes and seeing them work".

Allied responses covered the rewards of team leadership (9 responses), serving students and staff (7), and facilitating success (7, 5 from the government sector), working with students (6), sharing one's love of a subject (5), and freedom and discretion (5).

Development of curriculum was mentioned as a 'best aspect' of the role by only 5 respondents. This relatively low rate for what appears to be a major aspect of the role may reflect current short-deadline-driven pressures with the 'new HSC' in NSW, requiring rapid development of new teaching and learning programs. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the results of the next section on worst aspects of the role.

Managing finances and resources (3), choosing one's own staff (1), enjoying support from the school (1) and having a whole-school focus (1) did not attract high ratings.

Women in the sample were over-represented in the areas of facilitating success and working with staff, whilst no women indicated developing curricula, choosing one's own staff or managing finances and resources were amongst the best aspects of the role for them.

Overall, the best aspects of being a HoD were clearly seen to revolve around working with, leading and serving people, with contributing to change within the school through having a greater influence also seen as being important positive aspects of the role.

**WORST ASPECTS OF BEING A SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

The most prominent negative aspect of being a HoD mentioned in the study was lack of time (14 respondents): "I take a lot of work home ... I cannot do any of my own class preparation or marking at school" (male, non-government), being a typical comment. A related concern was constant workload and
pressure (9). Under-performing staff (9) and interpersonal conflicts and problems between staff (7) were also seen as significantly negative aspects of the role.

Tension between the faculty and the upper management of the school was mentioned by 6 respondents. One spoke of being "caught between your own staff and their expectations of you and the demands and responsibilities in terms of senior staff or administration".

Six HoDs mentioned the difficulty of dealing with parental complaints and demands. Four struggled with imposed change and 5 with enthusing unmotivated staff. A total of 9 HoDs found that the pressures and workload of being a Head of Department detracted from their own teaching, and that the role compromised their own performance.

Three HoDs found imposed deadlines problematic, while 3 mentioned the difficulty of disciplining students. Two cited lack of personal space, staff/student issues, and their work being reactive, not proactive, while 1 HoD mentioned financial constraints and inability to plan for the longer term.

Constant workload and pressure, lack of time, and parental complaints and demands produced approximately double the number of responses from the non-government sector.

Women were over-represented in identifying workload pressure, dealing with under-performing staff, and interpersonal conflicts/problems with, and between, staff as the worst aspects of the role.

Workload of the Head of Department

ELEMENTS OF THE WORKLOAD OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Most prominent elements of the work of the Head of Department were seen to be paperwork and other administrative requirements (22 responses), teaching (21), student discipline and conflict resolution (18) and chasing up matters with students (14). With the exception of teaching, these major elements of HoDs' workloads, along with others below, tend to arise from externally imposed demands and pressures.

On the next level of responsibility were curriculum development (13), assessment and marking (12), curriculum monitoring (10), facilitating the professional development of staff (11) and dealing with own staff (13). Meetings (6), other external requirements (5), whole-school involvement (5), dealing with parents (5), organising activities (6), extra-curricular activities (1) and dealing with non-department staff (1) round out the multi-faceted role of the secondary Head of Department today.

In the sample, men were more likely to mention organising activities, external requirements and meetings, while HoDs in the non-government sector were over-represented in comments about teaching, assessment and marking, organising activities, meetings and chasing up students.

A key feature of the comments made by HoDs about their responsibilities and tasks is that the vast majority are extraneous to teaching one's own classes (see below), a major part of the HoD's role in respect of time, given the modest time allowance — and salary — most HoDs receive in return for taking on the position.

HOW HEADS OF DEPARTMENT SPEND THEIR TIME

As noted earlier, it had been hoped that the HoDs might be able to specify in percentage terms how they spend their time. However, in most cases those interviewed found this too difficult. Most, in fact, seemed to be faintly horrified when they realised the spread of their responsibilities, as noted above. What follows, then, is more proportional than exact.

Most significant aspects of the workload of the Head of Department were seen to be teaching one's own classes (14 responses), student discipline/conflict resolution (14) and paperwork/administration (14).

Curriculum development, with 12 responses, was also seen as very time-consuming, as was facilitating professional development of staff, with 11 comments.

Assessment/markding and curriculum monitoring, noted by 9 and 8 HoDs respectively, also rated highly. Dealing with faculty staff (7) and whole-school involvement (6) also occupied significant time for some.

Organising activities (2) and dealing with parents, maintenance and extra-curricular activities (1 each) were less prominent in answers to this question.
In this section, women were strongly represented in the areas of curriculum monitoring, assessment and marking, facilitating the professional development of their own staff, dealing with their own staff, paperwork and other administration and whole-school involvement.

PREFERRED WORKLOAD — REDESIGNING THE ROLE

Notions of redesigning the role of Head of Department centred on reducing the teaching load of HoDs (13 respondents), making more time available to spend with staff (13) and reducing administration (12). One Head of Department pointed out: “most free time currently goes in day-to-day running of the department, with not enough time to sit down with individuals”. Another put it succinctly; “management of people requires time ... People are pushed by time”; while another HoD simply said: “shed administrative clutter”. “Less paperwork” was probably the essential summary.

One reflective comment noted that there is “not nearly enough opportunity to arrange significant blocks of time when faculty staff get together to discuss pedagogy and curriculum”. A related idea was more time on ‘core business’ (9 replies), followed by more time with students (8). Reduced extra-curricular workloads on staff (6) and more whole-school involvement (1) received some support.

Reducing administration was a more frequent response to this issue in the government sector. Men were more prominent in comments about spending more time with staff and more time on ‘core business’.

Management/Leadership Style

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

When describing their leadership style, those interviewed clearly saw themselves as key members of a team. This role required them to be collaborative and to consult with others (17 responses), to be a team player (14), and to act in a democratic and consensual manner (13). It is important to note that these are self-perceptions that might or might not be shared by others in the school, something we were not able to ascertain due to the limitations of the study with interviews confined to the HoDs themselves.

Being a facilitator was considered important (7), although there was a need to know when to be decisive (7).

Keeping people informed and being communicative (11), being available and approachable (7), and being helpful (3) were also mentioned as aspects of the leadership style of those interviewed.

Empowering others and being inclusive (7), while recognising others and providing positive feedback to staff (10), were also considered important aspects of the leadership role of the Head of Department.

Overall, the HoDs saw their leadership style as dependent on being able to work with and for others, that is, they stressed the interpersonal demands — and rewards — of the role of HoD. The key ‘linking pin’ role of bridging the gap between the department and its field of operations and the higher executive of the school was implicit in many of the comments made about being a conduit for information and communication.

Women were over-represented in comments about being a team player, recognising and appreciating others, and providing positive feedback.

Men were over-represented in comments about being available and approachable, and in knowing when to be decisive.

Heads of Department in non-government schools were over-represented in comments about being available and approachable.

Comments concerning personal leadership style included:

“I like to listen to people, both personally and professionally” (male, non-government).

“...consensus, teamwork, staff having confidence in me and I in them” (female, non-government).

“...lead by example ... the buck stops with me, but we do it together” (female, non-government).

“I lean towards a democratic leadership style — a product of personality. Tends towards laissez-faire ... easygoing. I like to see everyone enjoy what they do and not be offside and work in a happy environment” (male, non-government).
"Consultative, consensus person. Not much point telling people [what to do] as I'm dealing with staff at least as bright, or brighter, who are able to evade what they don't want to do. Ownership is important ... I'm not a great believer in meetings and formal minutes ... need to be up-front with people" (male, government).

"I try to be as accessible as possible and lead by example. I try to involve staff in every aspect of the organisation — give time in faculty meetings to inform them of what is required and I want their input ... I can specialise in an area and I give them as much self-determination as possible ... open leadership ... people can feel they can speak and be respected as professional people" (female, government).

ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Overall, experience working with and observing other people — rather than attending formal in-service courses or undertaking higher study — was considered by those interviewed to be the major influence on the leadership style they had developed.

There were 8 comments by HoDs about the influence of previous Heads of Department they had worked with, while role models and mentors (9) and observation of others (8) were mentioned by HoDs as important influences on their leadership style.

Individual personality (7) and an understanding of people (3), along with experience over time (8), were also mentioned as origins of and influences on leadership style.

In reflecting the dominance of more informal, experiential and interpersonal factors in this matter, professional associations (1), formal study (1) and in-service (2) were infrequently mentioned as contributing to leadership style.

Additional informal and intangible influences such as collegial groups (2), the culture of the school (4) and leadership experience outside education (5) received higher prominence in comments about origins of personal leadership style than formally structured leadership preparation activities.

As noted previously, there were some who mentioned negative role models and experiences (6) as being important influences on the development of their leadership style, that is, lessons — again from experience — on what not to do.

There was a sharp and very interesting distinction between men and women in answers to this question. Men, overall, gave a much greater variety of sources of their leadership style, with networking of various forms being important, while women appeared to have utilised fewer avenues to develop their individual leadership style. This finding may reflect the under-representation of women in higher promotion positions in schools who can act as role models and mentors to other women — at least at the time those interviewed were in their 'formative years' as educational professionals — and the fact that men might be more likely to network with and assist other men.

To illustrate this distinction between men and women, there were 8 men, and no women, who mentioned previous HoDs as being influences on the development of their style of leadership. There were 7 men who mentioned the observation of others as being important, while only 1 woman gave this as a source of influence on her leadership style.

Leadership experience outside education was mentioned by 5 men and no women as being an influence on leadership style, while women relied much more on experience over time in schools than did men (8 women, 3 men).

There were 7 men who said their leadership arose naturally or from their personality, whilst no women mentioned this as a factor in their leadership.

Finally, observation of others as a source of influence on leadership style was mainly confined to non-government schools (6 from 8 comments), as was leadership experience outside education (4 from 5). Non-government HoDs were also more likely to mention the influence of role models and mentors (6 of 9 comments), although non-government HoDs were also more likely to cite the influence of negative role models (4 of 6 comments).

Comments concerning the question of origins and influences on leadership style included:

"Influenced by a very good K-12 principal in the past who was a servant leader — never would ask you to do something that he did not do, for example, pick up rubbish. I've been influenced mainly by good leaders, not the poor ones that have been witnessed" (male, non-government).

"It developed as I was going through my own experiences. I was given support and wanted to pass this on to other people" (female, government).
"I have gone through all sorts of leadership-type things — I was SRC President at school and involved at uni and these developed my skills ... all sorts of committees. I've sought to do more than others" (male, government).

"I think it's innate. I've always been involved in a team situation ... I've got no formal training. I've watched and listened to my parents [both teachers], I read and get feedback from my colleagues" (male, government).

"I've always been involved in the people side ... year adviser (state system) ... leadership style influenced by this ... It's very uncomfortable with a person who takes an authoritarian line, that is, one-dimensional" (female, non-government).

"The influence came from past experience. I've learnt what will work and what won't work ... I also like to experiment" (male, non-government).

Involvement in Whole-School Decision Making

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING INVOLVEMENT

Those interviewed perceived their school leadership and decision-making involvement in formal terms overall, that is, through official channels and responsibilities, rather than in terms of more informal or intangible influences on school change.

School executive meetings were seen as the major involvement (22 of 26 interviewed), while meetings with other heads (10) were also seen as avenues for school leadership and decision making.

Having and utilising access to senior executive (8), working with other executive (5), being consulted by other executive over change (7) and being involved in school project teams (5) were also given as examples of school leadership involvement.

There were 12 HoDs who mentioned in favourable terms their opportunity to contribute to and influence school decision making, with some noting their considerable opportunity for influence and involvement (5). However, this view was not universally shared, with some HoDs noting they did not have a large influence (3), and that top-down decision making was the order of the day in their school (3).

Four HoDs complained of a lack of access to senior executive, while 1 HoD said he had no more influence than the "average teacher" in terms of his involvement in school leadership and decision making.

Women were proportionately more likely to make comments about access to senior executive and to be consulted by senior executive about change. Men, however, were more likely to complain about top-down decision making (3, versus no women), not having a large influence (3, versus no women) and lack of access to senior executive (4, versus no women).

HoDs at non-government schools were more likely to mention meetings with other HoDs (8, versus 2 HoDs at government schools), and having a say or influence (8, versus 4 government HoDs) in respect of their involvement in school leadership and decision making. HoDs at government schools were more likely to mention involvement in project teams (4, versus 1 non-government).

A common approach mentioned by newly appointed HoDs (7 were in their first year) was "finding one's feet" and getting to know the people and culture before becoming more heavily involved.

Comments about involvement in school decision making included:

"At this school, HoDs do have a say and influence — if it is not supported by HoDs then it will not run" (male, non-government).

"I'm having no more input than before being a HoD ... I'm a new HoD, hence just finding my feet. The department team is very large, hence difficult to have an impact ... There is some sense of removal of the senior executive from the HoDs — a feeling that executive decisions are often made and then handed down, probably due to lack of time" (male, non-government).

"[Senior] school executive has the decision-making roles. Head of school is usually ready to listen to ideas ... I'm very aware that I am putting forward suggestions ... not in the driver's seat" (female, non-government).

"Hard to say at the moment because I'm so new ... I am part of the HoDs' meeting in which every voice is heard ... changes have occurred smoothly because of this" (female, non-government).
"High involvement in small [senior] executive, decision making spread over small number of people. A lot is delegated from above … Heavy involvement in whole-school planning, policy writing, … exciting and new. Executive laid-back but well supervised by principal and deputy" (male, government).

"The HoDs are a cohesive group. There is a strong network … You can be involved at all levels. The principal utilises the process of the HoD being the intermediary between principal and staff. You’re asked to report to staff and come back with a decision” (female, government).

PREFERRED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING INVOLVEMENT

A slight majority of HoDs were happy (14 of 28) with their current involvement in school leadership and decision making, with better communication with senior executive perceived as the major problem area for improvement (6).

There were 4 HoDs who said that change should be slower and more evolutionary in their school, 2 said that executive meetings needed to be restructured to allow greater discussion and input, while 2 HoDs thought sub-committees or project teams for specific purposes should be introduced at their school.

Despite the fact that women had previously noted access to senior executive as a part of their involvement in school decision making, women were also more likely (3 of 6 women interviewed) to cite the need for improved communication with senior school executive.

However, overall, those interviewed realised the constraints on both themselves and their superiors, particularly in the areas of imposed change, mandatory requirements and lack of time, and thus the usual tone of response tended to be philosophical.

One comment is typical:

"I wouldn’t choose to alter it — I have considerable scope in what I want to do and I’m consulted on changes" (male, non-government).

Professional Development of the Head of Department

PRESENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The most obvious feature of the perceived professional development needs noted by those interviewed was actually the diversity of responses.

The main professional development needs noted by the 28 Heads of Department were in the areas of people management (7), meeting with HoDs from other schools (7), conflict resolution (6), dealing with the diverse demands of the job (6), time management (5) and better use of technology (4).

Issues in the area of people management were dominated by frustration arising from dealing with difficult or incompetent staff, with 6 comments from the non-government sector and 1 from a government school HoD. Comments included: “One of the worst things is trying to deal with unprofessional staff … yet many just need coping strategies”. Another Head of Department stated that one of the worst things was when "you had a teacher who was not trying".

Problems associated with dealing with complaints and demands of parents were also noted: "I did not expect the intensity of some of the parent complaints. It is difficult to balance support for staff and dealing with the issues … you get caught between the two". As noted, the related area of conflict resolution was seen as an area of professional development need by 6 Heads of Department. Comments in this area included references to being the "meat in the sandwich" in interpersonal disputes and the fact that some staff tend to "personalise complaints" that might be made about their practice. Another Head of Department stated: "you can’t walk away from problems — you must work through them to create a resolution".

As noted, the opportunity to meet with Heads of Department from other schools was given as a professional need by 7 of those interviewed (6 males and 1 female). The general theme here was that some "benchmarking" and sharing of ideas with other HoDs, especially of the same discipline background, would be very useful.

The next two problem areas of dealing with diverse demands (6) and time management (5) are obviously related. Comments were made about "left-field agenda items" and "paperwork generated internally and externally" that caused problems.
One HoD commented that he learnt early that he couldn’t “do all the job description” and hence had to “learn to prioritise”. A frequent issue was “not enough hours in the day” and that the school day is taken up (apart from teaching) with “full-on administration” and “crisis management”. One Head of Department said: “Major initiatives can only be thought about in holiday periods”. Another was concerned that he were a poor delegator: “I sometimes think I do too much for staff... but staff are pulling their weight... they are under stress.”

As noted, there were 4 responses regarding the need for better use of technology. Usually, these comments were about a perceived need to “keep up to date” with technological developments.

Other concepts that received between 1 and 3 responses for professional development needs were student welfare (3), enhancing staff performance (2), outcomes-based assessment (2), experience of higher levels of management (1), stress management (1), career path advice (1), budgeting (1), leadership (1), curriculum (1), change management (1) and current educational trends (1).

As noted, there was a diversity of responses to this issue, with many professional development needs being noted by no less than 1 or 2 HoDs. However, non-government HoDs were more likely to cite the professional needs of people management and conflict resolution, while government HoDs were more likely to mention dealing with diverse demands as a need.

**HOW ARE THESE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS BEING MET?**

The Heads of Department were equally divided on the question of whether they felt their professional development needs were currently being met (11 responses), or not (11).

Many commented on the concept of “learning on the job” and the rapid externally driven changes that were occurring in education. The need to keep up to date with educational change was seen to take priority over other professional development needs — both one's own and other staff — due to shortage of time. The role of Head of Department was seen as becoming more complex, with 1 HoD noting the “diversity of skills needed... this point has really come home to me this year”.

External in-service courses were the most popular (7) form of obtaining required professional development. This was particularly so for males (5) and non-government HoDs (5 of 7). Several (3) from the state system commented favourably about specialist Head Teacher in-service courses for people new to the role offered by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Other avenues for professional development utilised by those taking part in the study were professional associations (3), school/external in-service (2), formal study (2), higher executive at school (2), subject meetings with staff (1) and own external networks (1).

On a different tack to more formal means of meeting professional development needs, there were also comments about a need for greater recognition of the role of the Head of Department from senior school executive and external bodies or systems, HoDs commenting on the “lack of recognition for the role”. Also mentioned was the fact that “more support is needed for this pivotal position”, and the need for greater continuity of the role. “I did not know what the boss [principal] thought until I asked for a reference”. The view was also given that “the Mitherell years are still taking their toll... a feeling of everything is dumped on middle management is still around... or anything the principal does not want to do”.

Overall, there was a feeling that the Head of Department position is “where the real work gets done”, to use the words of one of those interviewed, but that it is also a “pressure position”.

**Perceived Future in Education**

The largest group of those interviewed saw themselves as staying in the Head of Department role in the future. There were 4 Heads of Department who wanted to stay at their present level and at their present school, while there were 10 HoDs who wanted to move to another school. Only 2 of the 10 who wanted to move elsewhere desired a promotion to either deputy or principal.

Overall, 11 HoDs saw themselves as staying at the Head of Department level. Of those desiring promotion, 7 aspired to deputy principal and 3 to the position of principal. There were 4 who saw their preferred future in higher education, whilst 3 intended to leave teaching.

On the issue of career advancement, 1 female HoD at a government school had very strong views on the negative bias towards females, stating: “females not only have to equal men, they have to be better”. Two others (male, government) were very unhappy with the trends within the Department of Education and Training. One stated: “most want to be loyal but the Department has lost it”.

**ACE T S**
Two HoDs (male, non-government and government) commented on the new workload of the deputy principal. One said he had wanted to be a deputy but ‘not now due to the workload, stress, burden and pay’.

One HoD (male, non-government) commented that he was on the ‘cusp of decision making ... either promotion to deputy, stay a HoD, retire early or get out’.

Two HoDs said they desired voluntary demotion, while commencing higher degree study and moving into a consultancy role were mentioned by 2 HoDs as their preferred option for the future.

Men tended to mention a wider range of career options than women. For example, there were 4 men who saw themselves taking on increased management responsibilities, 3 men who saw themselves leaving teaching, 2 men who mentioned voluntary demotion, and 2 men who intended to pursue higher degree study. None of these options were mentioned by the 6 female HoDs interviewed.

These findings beg the question of where the next generation of senior school leaders is to come from, if so few of those HoDs interviewed expressed a desire for promotion to deputy or principal.

Other Comments about the Role of the Head of Department

Often this final section of an interview schedule elicits the deepest, most thoughtful responses, following the reflection that earlier structured questions promote. Below is a varied selection of thoughts and views which throw further light on the world of work of the secondary Head of Department today.

"The main reason for going into the job was financial but really the financial security is not there!" (male, government).

"The fact is I believe we’re very much ‘over cooked’, where we are now ... a lot of pressures coming up from below ... teachers coming into the system with low-level teaching and management skills and minimal subject knowledge. The school’s overburdened now ... pressure coming from the top ... I enjoy everyone of these experiences but don’t enjoy not being able to give major time to specific projects ... It is important as a HoD I need to be able to do something different otherwise I’d go crazy ... need new challenges, for example, new syllabuses" (male, government).

"I’m feeling a little insecure re the position of HoD [following release of DET salary award proposal] ... wondering how schools can adapt to possible changes ... imagining more multi-skilled HoDs ... multi-campuses ... How will I fit into the pattern ... how will schools cope?" (female, government).

"I think the work too hard and fast ... don’t stop to reflect ... perhaps there should be a development program for HoDs ... very onerous position" (female, non-government).

"I have strong feelings about male versus female management opportunities ... still male-dominated ... females not only have to equal men, they have to be better ... promotion to HoD is the best thing I could have done, but I didn’t do it for the money ... I am starting to encourage other females" (female, government).

"The diversity of skills needed really staggered me the more I thought about it ... More support is needed for this pivotal position. The [senior] executive can tend to be too removed from the classroom — the HoD is a good position to be a conduit between the classroom and the executive. This continuum between the classroom and the executive could be very powerful. At present it is not being exploited enough" (male, non-government).

"I try to actively encourage others to do the HoD job. It’s a critical job in the school. I find that as you move up the rung you seem to have less support. The senior executive can tend to feel isolated" (male, government).

"I think the HoD job is worthwhile. I’m only new and I come into contact with a lot of cynical HoDs — not just at this school but elsewhere. They don’t believe this, but I do" (male, government).

"It’s a challenge. It is different. The amount of work is overwhelming and it’s not seen as hard ... I find in a private school I have to take work home. You have to consider both staff needs and school needs at the one time and this is difficult" (male, non-government).

"I think days when you can step back and see others doing things are great. The most difficult thing is being interrupted and trying to do other things. I feel I give the job my best — to my personal detriment. I feel I have to adhere to a high level to achieve" (female, government).
"Do it if you get the chance. Don't think you're not capable. Have a go. That's how I started, admittively with a helpful principal. Most people could do it if they have people skills and can interact with a range of stakeholders. I figured I could always go back to classroom teaching if it didn't work" (male, government).

"The job has changed enormously. When I started, the job was running a department ... not expected to do all other peripheral things. In a short time that became more difficult ... staff ageing makes it more difficult to introduce change. I once came at 8am and planned lessons. Today I still come at 8am but can't get through my pigeon hole by the start of the day, so much more to read. Everything in schools is in a rush — the kids are not getting a fair go out of this. Classes are as large now as when I started teaching, which makes a big influence on discipline" (male, government).

"The headmaster reckons this is a high stress position. It's different for me because money is not an issue and I have no goals to go further. Sometimes it's hard to think what I'm doing this for. You can win all the problems. It can be both rewarding and depressing. You get caught between two levels. You're always on a hiding to nothing but when you're right it feels good. We've got a crowded curriculum and little flexibility. It's good to recognise talent and encourage it" (male, non-government).

"Basically the job is very enjoyable but it can be frustrating when you have deadlines and have others you work with to depend on ... Sometimes I have to cover up for others. It's stressful at times but rewarding working with staff and students. It's good to have a role in major decision making" (male, non-government).

"It is an opportunity I wouldn't have missed. You see things in an interesting way as an HoD ... part of life's rich tapestry but not one I would have wanted to stay in permanently" (male, non-government).

"It's the most enjoyable position in the school. Senior executives work under a lot of pressure. HoDs are less pressured as they deal with kids. Higher up are very emotional issues, especially for the deputy headmaster. As HoD, you can still know the kids. I've done acting positions — including acting deputy in a government school for two terms. Too pressured" (male, non-government).

"It's an area not easily defined re parameters and limits. It depends very much on the school and its culture, which can have significant influences on the position. There are aspects of the job which go beyond normal expectations and especially in terms of time ... has to be balanced against personal life. Demands can be enormous and can fluctuate at different times of the year. There never seems enough time to administer everything ... many constraints and complications" (male, non-government).

"... a balancing act, frustration, stress attached with this all the time ... sense of responsibility ... demanding content [in subject], to take higher level classes others don't want to do ... two courses [the HSC and IB] ... I didn't like the question on percentage of time [spent on aspects of role] ... it was a frightening thought-provoker ... I was confronted with the necessity to cut back teaching" (male, non-government).

"I'm settling in more now as two terms ago I was a raw recruit ... I like to be organised and am not as much as I'd like to be because I'm in a different environment ... I don't seem to be moving ... not quickly enough ... seem to be going around and around in circles ... the nature of changing positions ... At this stage each day is still a new day ... until I've been in the school 12 months getting a grip, getting a handle on 'authority' that comes with the position" (female, non-government).
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

As noted previously, this is an exploratory study, and no claims are made concerning the representative nature or otherwise of those taking part.

Our intention is to provide a foundation for further research and enhanced understanding of the work of the Head of Department and, more generally, 'middle executive' in education.

Having said that, we feel there are insights and findings within the study that can be taken up by those interested in the area.

What follows is a summary of the major findings of study, possible implications and areas requiring further thought, study and attention.

Major Findings of the Study and Possible Implications

ASPIRING TO BECOME A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Those interviewed tended to view promotion to Head of Department as a logical "next step" in their professional development. For many, there was the desire to be a leader in one's curriculum area or field, rather than viewing leadership in more general terms. A majority, in fact, saw themselves staying at this level of the school hierarchy.

Around a third of those interviewed in the study said they had been encouraged by others to take on the role, while another third said they "just drifted" into the position.

It would seem beneficial that all classroom teachers engage in discussions with more experienced colleagues from quite an early stage so that career goals and directions can be explored and clarified. This happens in many cases, but seemingly on an ad hoc basis overall. Initiatives such as portfolios and mentoring have the potential to facilitate this process.

A related issue is that of 'talent spotting' and nurturing. A common comment from more experienced Heads of Department — not just in this study but from other research and discussion — was that, in the past, inspectors of schools often identified potential school leaders, encouraged them to think about and work towards promotion, and kept a friendly 'eye' on their progress. On the other hand, comments have also been made by executive and classroom teachers (Dinham & Scott, 1996) that the introduction of 'merit' promotion into government schools in New South Wales led to a competitive environment where others are seen as potential rivals, with a culture of not sharing or encouraging arising from this.

Thus, the need for identifying and nurturing the next generation of educational leaders arises. Formal courses and processes can play a part in this, but it has been seen from the present study that more informal interpersonal processes such as networking, mentoring and encouraging others are also very important. A key question with the use of mentors is who should perform this role. In some cases this could be a Head of Department at the same school, a more senior executive at the school, a Head of Department or senior executive at another school, or an educational official of some sort. Flexibility is needed to ensure the best interests of all concerned are served by such arrangements.

Key Issue 1: There is a need to find ways to better identify and nurture potential school leaders.

Preparation for the role

Over half of those interviewed in the study reported receiving little or no preparation for assuming the role of Head of Department. 'On-the-job' preparation such as observation of other HoDs, other school leadership roles, 'negative' role models or acting in a higher position were the major forms of preparation noted by those in the study. Women, in particular, were less likely to have experienced such preparation.

Almost half of those interviewed stated they felt unprepared for taking on the role of HoD, whilst only half said the job matched their initial expectations of what it would be like.
Key Issue 2: There is a need to find ways to assist potential Heads of Department to better understand the role and to clarify their own reasons for aspiring to it.

There was a wide range of problems experienced by the HoDs on appointment and beyond, including 'people management', underestimating the workload and its effects, lack of conflict resolution skills, dealing with constant pressure, interpersonal conflict and pressures, lack of awareness of aspects of the role, parental demands and problems, imposed tasks and responsibilities, and problems with assuming a whole-school role.

Thus, we have a situation where 'rich' but informal and unstructured experiences are the dominant form of preparation — and highly valued by those who receive them — but that formal preparation, where available, is not highly regarded.

The challenge then is to design formal preparation programs for school leadership which 'build in' rich experiences such as observation of other HoDs and experience of other leadership roles, while addressing the diverse areas of individual need noted above. Such programs should build upon the outcomes flowing from addressing the first issue outlined above and be 'tailor made' for the individual based upon his or her needs and present capabilities.

Key Issue 3: There is a need to design and make available to aspiring school leaders formal programs which contain an adequate range of 'rich', relevant experiences, knowledge and skills to meet the demands and challenges they will face in schools.

PERFORMING AND REDESIGNING THE ROLE

Those interviewed in the study found working with other staff the most enjoyable aspect of their role. They saw themselves primarily as experienced curriculum specialists and enjoyed leading teams and working collaboratively with others. Having a greater influence on educational outcomes at department and school levels was also seen as a positive aspect of the role of the Head of Department. In short, the study confirmed that the 'core business' of the Head of Department was highly satisfying (Dinham & Scott, 1996b).

Conversely, external demands and pressures were seen to be the worst aspects of the role of the HoD. These pressures and problems included having to compromise one's own teaching, dealing with a complex and constant workload, problems arising from being 'caught in the middle' between the needs of senior executive and the department, dealing with under-performing staff, staff conflict, parental demands and problems, and imposed demands generally.

Overall, time was considered the enemy of the Head of Department, with too little time to deal with the multiplicity of demands of the position. The Head of Department still has a substantial teaching load, and many felt that their own teaching and the professional development of their staff suffered because of extraneous pressures and demands. Thus, they felt their 'core business' to be undermined and compromised, a confirmation of the findings of larger scale survey-based findings on middle management in schools (Dinham & Scott, 1998b).

In response, half of those interviewed in the present study recognised the need to reduce their teaching load in order to better perform their other responsibilities. Almost half of the HoDs also noted the need to reduce the administrative aspects of the role to provide more time to meet with staff and students and to engage in higher level tasks and responsibilities.

It is interesting that, prior to assuming the position, many of the HoDs spoke of wanting to be a curriculum leader, yet this was rarely mentioned once they had taken on the role. Thus, the conflicts currently inherent in the role, for example, 'master teacher', curriculum overseer, people manager and supervisor, administrator, conflict resolver, staff developer, etc., need to be reconciled.

At the current time, there is a glowing groundswell of support for the formulation and application of frameworks of professional standards for teachers (see Australian College of Education, 2000). These standards, where devised, need to begin with the realities of the present work of those such as teachers and HoDs in schools, and to consider how these roles might be redefined. These roles then need to be accurately depicted in job descriptions which are presently lacking in many cases.
DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The HoDs interviewed overwhelmingly saw their leadership style as involving team leadership, collaboration, facilitation and communication. Being democratic and able to reach consensus, being approachable, available and helpful were all cited as aspects of leadership style.

Empowering and recognising others and being able to ‘get on’ with a range of individuals and groups were also seen as important. A key aspect of leadership style was the capacity to provide a bridge between the department and the rest of the school, particularly the senior executive.

The leadership qualities and ‘style’ of those interviewed were seen to derive partly from individual personality, but more importantly were believed to come from the influence and example of people such as other HoDs, role models and mentors, and from previous leadership experience, including leadership experience outside education.

Previous mention has been made of the vital importance of such informal, ad hoc interpersonal influences on the development of the Head of Department. Because the availability of assistance from others is so variable, there is thus the need to provide processes and avenues, both within and across schools, to enable discussion, networking, encouragement, collegiality, support and the transfer of professional knowledge and skills between more experienced executive and aspiring and beginning Heads of Department.

The value of the role of mentor or ‘critical friend’ is increasingly being recognised and such roles need to be incorporated into formal programs of in-service and staff development, and into the official duties of more senior executive. If this is not to result in an increased workload for those involved in such activities, the reconceptualisation of responsibilities for HoDs mentioned earlier needs to take place, in the context of an overall review of teacher and executive roles and responsibilities in schools.

Many of the HoDs interviewed strongly endorsed initiatives such as mentoring, where they occur, as being greatly satisfying and rewarding for all parties.

IN VolvEMENT IN WHOLE-SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Those interviewed were largely satisfied with their involvement in whole-school leadership and decision making. Where problems were noted in this area, these tended to centre on communication barriers and difficulties, particularly with senior executive of the school.

The structure of the modern secondary school militates against effective communication, with vertical barriers between departments and horizontal barriers between teaching staff, Heads of Department and senior school executive.

In the day-to-day activity of the school, effective communication can suffer and problems arise because of this. Principals may not be able to make themselves as accessible and available as they or their staff might wish, and Heads of Department report the same difficulties in respect of being able to find time to communicate with members of their departments.

PRESENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

As noted in the Results section, there was a diversity of perceived professional development needs noted by Heads of Department. The needs cited — people management, meeting with HoDs from other...
schools, conflict resolution, time management, dealing with diverse demands, better use of technology, student welfare, enhancing staff performance, outcomes-based assessment, and other areas of perceived need — underline the complexities of the demands and responsibilities of the position.

A worrying finding was that only a minority of HoDs felt that their professional development needs were currently being met through formal avenues open to them.

**Key Issue 7:** There is a need to build upon the programs advocated for aspiring Heads of Department to provide individually tailored and packaged professional development programs for practising Heads of Department which recognise both the diverse demands of the position and individual need. Such programs need to be grounded in an experiential problem-solving framework and utilise other measures already advocated, such as networking with more experienced school executive and specialist staff. Professional development, where successfully undertaken, needs to be supported, formally recognised, linked to salary and, where relevant, accredited towards higher degree study.

**THE FUTURE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

The hierarchical structure of the secondary school means that it is not possible for all Heads of Department to be promoted to higher levels. As has been seen, many HoDs wish to remain at their present level because of the vital and satisfying contribution it makes to teaching and learning or, in some cases, because of their negative perceptions of higher positions.

The problem then arises that a person can be promoted to Head of Department and be faced with 20 or more years in the same position, even at the same school. To relinquish the position is costly, both financially and in terms of status.

It is important that the position of Head of Department not be construed as a ‘dead end’. There is thus the need to explore more flexible promotion and appointment procedures. For example, the notion of serving a fixed period as Head of Department before 'returning to the fold' is long-established in higher education. This can give those entrusted with such positions a finite timeframe to work energetically within, knowing that the position can be relinquished at the end of the term or, if desired, another term can be sought. This also has the benefit of shifting responsibility around, developing and utilising leadership expertise and experience in a wider group of people, and enhancing greater understanding of the complexities of running a school.

Facilitating short and longer term exchanges between Heads of Department, including across systems and even internationally, could also serve vital rejuvenation and professional development functions, although it is frequently the case that those who would benefit most from such initiatives are least likely to utilise them, which raises the question of mandating such activities.

There is also an argument in the research findings for an intermediate position to bridge the gap between classroom teacher and the Head of Department, particularly with larger teams of teachers. The Advanced Skills Teacher was expected to bring with it some of the benefits flowing from such a position, but has been widely regarded as not meeting its intended functions (see Dinham & Scott, 1997).

A new ‘stepping stone’ in what is already a fairly flat career structure could serve as recognition for talented staff, spread the load of the Head of Department and act as valuable professional development for those involved. Such positions could also be on a fixed-term, rotating basis.

Finally, as part of the formal professional programs already advocated, there is a need to provide career counselling for Heads of Department to assist them both to clarify their needs and goals and to continue to be rewarded and satisfied in their profession. It is of concern that so few of those interviewed in the study aspired to the position of principal or deputy principal. Where, then, will the next generation of such leaders come from if the experience of being a Head of Department dissuades such people from seeking further promotion?

**Key Issue 8:** There is a need to consider and adopt more flexible appointment and promotion procedures for executive in secondary schools, including fixed-term appointments, the introduction of an intermediate executive position in some departments and schools, and enhanced transfer and exchange opportunities.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Previous work has identified both the crucial importance of the Head of Department position and the toll it can take on those performing it in terms of decreased career satisfaction and increased stress (Dinham & Scott, 1999).

The Head of Department occupies a key position in secondary schools, with diverse and demanding responsibilities above and below them, alongside his or her own teaching duties.

Those interviewed in the study articulated both the 'delights' and 'dangers' of the position, along with thoughts on their current duties and professional development needs.

New leadership preparation programs are currently being introduced in systems and a rethinking of executive positions in schools has begun, partly as a result of industrial award negotiations. These initiatives need to continue.

However, there is a compelling need for a comprehensive review of selection, preparation and support mechanisms for Heads of Department — and indeed all school executive positions — and a rethinking of their duties, if for no other reason than we are faced with a major unprecedented exodus of experienced school executive due to the ageing of the Australian teaching profession.

The major turnover of school executive staff in Australian schools over the next decade provides both the opportunity and the necessity for rethinking the current conceptualisation of leadership within our schools.

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1 See http://www.nepean.uws.edu.au/teaching/staff/hta.html
2 The term 'Head of Department' and its abbreviation HoD are used in this paper, rather than the NSW Department of Education and Training specific term Head Teacher (HT), which means principal in some countries. For consistency, HoD replaces HT in direct quotes and other places.
3 Data from category 9 was not fully utilised due to difficulties in calculation/specification of how the HoDs spend their time, a telling point in itself.
4 Where sub-groups are compared, it is useful to note that 20 men and 6 women took part in the study, with 12 HoDs from government schools and 14 from non-government schools. Thus, patterns of responses need to be compared with these overall ratios of participants.
5 Former NSW Minister for Education.
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The Secondary Head of Department: Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain


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APPENDIX

DUTIES, DELIGHTS, DANGERS, DIRECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CODE NUMBER:......................TIME TAKEN: ............mins

INTERVIEWER:............................DATE: .............

1. Closed Respondent Data
a) Age..............................

b) Sex..............................

c) Years of Teaching Experience (this school, total).........../

1. Years as HOD (this school, total)..................

e) Qualifications (highest held, currently undertaking)..../

f) Department/Major Responsibility (e.g., Maths)..........

2. Open-Ended Questions

1. Why did you want to be a Head of Department? What/who were the major influences on your seeking to become a HoD?

2. What preparation did you receive for becoming a HoD, including that initiated by yourself and provided by your employer/system?

3. With hindsight, how well prepared were you for your (first) appointment as a HoD? Did it match your expectations of what you thought it would be like?

4. What are the best things now about being a HoD?

5. What are the worst things now about being a HoD?

6. What are the major elements of your workload as a HoD? What percentage of your time would you typically spend on each?

7. If you could redesign your job, how would you prefer to spend your time (give percentages, if possible)?

8. Describe your management/leadership style. What are the influences on this, and how did it develop?

9. What is your involvement with overall school decision making, leadership and change? Would you alter this if you could? If so, in what ways?

10. What are your major professional development needs at the present time? Are these being met?

11. How do you see your future in education? Is this your preferred future?

12. Is there anything else you would like to say about being a HoD?
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CHAPTER SEVEN

PERCEPTIONS AND REALITY OF THE WORLD OF WORK OF THE SECONDARY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

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Perceptions and Reality of the Work of the Secondary Head of Department

JOHN COLLIER, STEVE DINHAM, KATHRYN BRENnan, ALAN DEECE, DAVID MULFORD

Note: This article reflects research carried out under the leadership of Associate Professor Steve Dinham, by four doctoral students at the University of Western Sydney.

Abstract: A recent interview study with 26 Heads of Department (HoD) at four NSW Secondary schools (two Government and two non-Government) sought to throw some light on an under-researched, yet vital position in education, that of the 'middle manager'.

The study investigated reasons for seeking the position of HoD, and preparation for assuming the role. The HoDs were also asked about their most and least valued aspects of the role, and the elements of their work, both actual and preferred. Origins of and influences on personal leadership style, level of involvement in whole school decision making and professional development needs of the HoDs were also explored.

A key finding of the study was that the realities of the position did not match initial expectations, and that those interviewed desired to redesign the role.

This paper examines key issues in relation to the work of the secondary Head of Department.

Research Leading to the Project

The Teacher 2000 Project
Since the mid-1990s, Dinham and Scott have conducted an international research project, attempting to explore and benchmark teacher and school executive satisfaction, motivation and mental stress in the context of the contemporary educational environment.

Key findings of this project relevant to the current study include the crucial role 'middle managers' in schools play in operationalising educational change (see also Ayres, Dinham & Sawyer, 1999), and the demands the position makes upon such leaders, commensurate with effects on performance and health.

Analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the difficulties experienced by those occupying such crucial 'linking-pin positions' in meeting the demands of their own teaching (usually a 'full load' or almost so), and the various roles of staff supervision and development, curriculum leadership, pupil discipline and welfare, school administration, their

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own professional development, and other duties. This complex, often conflicting set of duties - i.e., being both supervisor and ‘coach’ to their staff - has to be juggled with the key role of initiating and responding to change in all areas. Overall, such middle managers - both secondary and primary - were found to be experiencing least satisfaction and most stress in each of Dinham and Scott’s samples from Australia, New Zealand, the USA and England.

**Research into the Role of the Secondary Head of Department**

While there has been a growing amount of research into the role of school principals and for that matter, classroom teachers, the ‘middle manager’ level in schools has received far less attention. In considering the literature in this area, Conners (1999: 27) states:

Studies of the head of department as a middle manager date from the mid-1980s and emphasise that they are a driving force in a secondary school, are very much pre-occupied with routine administration and crisis management, have little time for strategic thinking, and are reluctant to monitor the teaching of their colleagues; that there are considerable differences in the ways departments operate in a school and from school to school, that the department is the crucial ‘working unit’ in the school, that school performance and departmental performance are not inextricably linked, that the key indicator of effective departments is their ability to effectively organise teaching, and that time is a key constraint for heads of department in carrying out their management and leadership roles. However, few studies in Australia or internationally have explored the importance and the dimensions of the head of department’s role in a secondary school. (emphasis added)

What follows is a sample of the literature in the field, but what comes through strongly is the dual, intermediary function of the HoD who must provide leadership for a group of people under his or her supervision, while being part of the higher ‘executive’ of the school. There is also the well-documented dichotomy of ‘people’ and ‘task’ orientations with which middle managers must deal.

**A Sample of the Literature on the HoD**

Koehler (1993: 11) states that: “Department chairs walk a tightrope between the maintenance and survival needs of the School and the human and professional needs of the people within it.” He also stresses the intermediary role of such a position noted above. Whilst recognising aspects of the HoD’s role, the demands of the former administrative-imposed demands tend to force the HoD into a reactive stance, compromising attempts to meet the professional needs of those within the department.

White and Rosenfield (1999: 1) write about the notion that subject departments are seen as being “potentially highly influential sites”, with the HoD responsible for the development of a “motivated collegial team of workers united in direction and committed to the learning of their students”.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) argue that we do not yet understand the complexity of the HoD’s role and that initiatives need to be taken and obstacles overcome in order to facilitate and improve teaching and learning in secondary departments. McLendon and Crowther (1998: 14) also highlight the surprising lack of “specialised consideration” into this “unique leadership position”.

Brown and Rutherford (1998: 75-88), in their phenomenological study of eight HoDs in the
UK (Catholic and state schools), attempted to look at department heads as “social actors”. Their data gathering methods included examination of documentary evidence, shadowing of the HoDs, structured interviews, and interviews with the HoDs' superiors. They used Murphy's (1992) typology, derived from analysis of the leadership and management of school principals in the United States. This typology comprises the HoD as:

1. Servant leader - ability to use their ability rather than their line of authority;
2. Organisational architect - ability to create a variety of innovative structures that facilitate the sharing of leadership;
3. Moral educator - motivation by a set of deep personal values and beliefs that demonstrates their care and valuing of staff and students;
4. Social architect - addressing the needs of students;
5. Leading professional - focus on improving teaching and learning, leadership by example.

Brown and Rutherford found their HoDs did address the five dimensions of the typology although the relative emphasis given to each varied according to the context of each school. Conners (1999:27, 17), in reviewing Brown and Rutherford's findings, reported that there was little time left for HoDs to facilitate improvement of teaching and learning and achievement. The major obstacles impeding HoD effectiveness as evident from Brown and Rutherford's study were:

1. Lack of time to effectively carry out all dimensions of their role;
2. Lack of curriculum stability in the face of the demands for the National Curriculum;
3. Lack of professional development opportunities at the departmental level;
4. Lack of direction and vision from some senior executive members;
5. Often a lack of effective communication between HoDs and senior management.

Aims of the Study
Secondary Heads of Department - termed Head Teachers in the NSW DET - occupy a crucial position, being 'linking pins' between their departments and the upper executive of the school. If educational change of a positive nature is to occur, the department head must guide and drive this both at the department and executive level. However, this position in schools has been relatively neglected in prior research, which has concentrated on other levels, especially principals and classroom teachers.

Recent research has, however, revealed that 'middle executive' in schools are finding their current responsibilities onerous and, at times contradictory, with the holders of these positions experiencing various facets of role conflict ambiguity and role overload, with resultant high levels of stress in some cases (Dinham & Scott, 1999).

The study was a pilot investigation designed to explore how heads of department are currently performing and in turn, being influenced by their roles. The following study questions guided the research design:

1. Why do HoDs aspire to the position?
2. How well are HoDs prepared for the role?
3. What are the elements of HoDs' workloads?
4. What do HoDs like most and least about their work?
5. How would HoDs prefer to allocate their time and effort?
6. How do HoDs develop/acquire their individual management/leadership style?
7. How do HoDs see their role contributing to educational change, leadership and decision making?
8. What are the professional development needs of HoDs and how are these addressed?
9. What are the future aspirations of HoDs?

Method
Because of the intended exploratory nature of the study, it was determined to utilise a structured, open-ended interview design with volunteer head teachers at four secondary schools (two government and two independent), with data to be analysed using content analysis.

Instrument
An interview schedule was developed comprising both closed demographic items and 12 open-ended questions closely reflecting the original study questions.

In framing the interview questions, there was an attempt to contrast the present experience and workload of the heads of department with how they would prefer to spend their time.

The Interviews
Two of the secondary schools where the study took place are in far Western Sydney, one is in the Blue Mountains, while the remaining school is in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Because of reasons of confidentiality and in facilitating free expression, it was decided that each of the participating principals would not interview any heads of department from his or her school.

Once heads of departments had contacted the chief investigator volunteering their involvement, each was allocated to the principal of another school who was to conduct the interview. No principal was informed of the heads of department participating or not as the case might be from his or her school and principals did not have access to the interview schedule data from their own school.

Telephone interviews were conducted with participants, both because of convenience given the geographic spread of teachers and schools, and because of the demonstrated advantages of this approach in facilitating thought and reflection (see Dinham, 1994b, for an examination of the method of the telephone interview).

Data Analysis
The method used in the analysis of data was that of content analysis and utilised elements of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), although full application of the technique did not occur due to the exploratory nature of the study.

In this case, concepts were identified from the transcripts by the researchers, these were then consolidated, categories or themes derived from these, and then spreadsheets utilised to record the frequency of concepts within categories and for the individual heads of departments.

The categories derived from the content analysis comprised:

1. Personal Orientation [to the position of head of department]
2. Major Influences [on becoming a HoD]
3. Preparation for the Role [of HoD]
4. Usefulness of Preparation
5. Matching Expectations [prior perceptions v actuality of the role]
6. Best Aspects [of the role of HoD]
7. Worst Aspects [of the role of HoD]
8. Workload Elements [of the role of HoD]
9. Workload [proportion/percentage of total time]
10. Preferred Workload
11. Leadership Style
12. Origins/Influences Leadership Style
13. School Leadership Involvement
14. Preferred School Leadership Involvement
15. Professional Development Needs
16. How Professional Development Needs Met
17. Future in Education

For each category, a spreadsheet was constructed with heads of department on the horizontal axis (HT1-HT26) and concepts identified as elements of this category on the vertical axis.

The Sample
From a potential population of 47 heads of department, 26 (55%) agreed to take part in the study and be interviewed. Response rates per school varied from 6 out of 13 (46%) at a government school, to 7 out of 8 (87%) at a non-government school.

Of the 26 participants, 6 were female and 20 male (77%). The average age of those interviewed was 43 (range 29 to 54), with females (46) being older on average than males (42), possibly reflecting the tendency for females to be older when gaining promotion due to such matters as broken patterns of service.

There were 12 participants from the two government schools (4 female) and 14 from the two non-government schools (2 female).

Average length of teaching experience was 20 years (range 9 to 30 years), with average length of tenure at current school being 7 years.

The average length of time in the position of head of department was 6 years (4 years at current school). On average, those surveyed had 14 years teaching experience before being promoted to head teacher, although some had experience as year coordinators, sports coordinators, and in relieving positions prior to their substantive appointment as a HoD. This may reflect the well-known phenomenon of promotion in education - with its few levels of hierarchy in schools - where teachers typically gain their first promotion later in their careers than members of the general workforce or those in comparable occupations.

Findings

Performing the Role

Best Aspects of Being a Secondary Head of Department
Clearly, the most popular aspect of the role amongst the heads of department interviewed in the study was working with staff. Seventeen respondents identified this area as being a highly rewarding aspect of their role.

Comments such as 'working with staff in your own faculty area, developing a team, sharing decisions and responsibilities, ability to choose your own staff and gather competent, professional
people (having a role that makes a difference to how the school operates and its policies and directions of school), encapsulated the views of many.

Also seen as significant was the capacity to exert greater influence within the school and to initiate change (mentioned by 13 and 11 respondents respectively). One HoD described this as "the enjoyment of making changes and seeing them work". Another saw as important "Having responsibility to change things for the better and make a department where people feel they can make a contribution. Particularly enjoyable is being able to work with other people and negotiate solutions, come to consensus regarding getting around problems."

Allied responses covered the rewards of team leadership (9 responses), serving students and staff (7), and facilitating success (7.5 from the Government sector), working with students (6), sharing one's love of a subject (5), and freedom and discretion (5).

Development of curriculum was mentioned as a 'best aspect' of the role by only five respondents. This relatively low rate for what appears to be a major aspect of the role may reflect current short-deadline driven pressures with the 'new HSC' in NSW, requiring rapid development of new teaching and learning programs. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the results of the next section on worst aspects of the role.

Managing finances and resources (3), choosing one's own staff (1), enjoying support from the school (1), and having a whole school focus (1), did not attract high ratings.

Women in the sample were over-represented in the areas of facilitating success and working with staff, whilst no women indicated developing curricula, choosing one's own staff or managing finances and resources as amongst the best aspects of the role for them.

Overall, the best aspects of being a HoD were clearly seen to revolve around working with, leading, and serving people. Contributing to change within the school through having a greater influence was also seen as being important positive aspects of the role.

Worst Aspects of Being a Secondary Head of Department

The most prominent negative aspect of being an HoD mentioned in the study was lack of time (14 respondents). "I take a lot of work home... I cannot do any of my own class preparation or marking at school". A related concern was constant workload and pressure (9). Under-performing staff (9), and inter-personal conflicts and problems between staff (7) were also seen as significantly negative aspects of the role.

"Staff that take a lot of encouraging to see the big picture and work in the same direction", was seen as an issue. "Needed to say to a colleague that their performance is unsatisfactory or limited. No way it can happen nicely. It's difficult. It produces anxiety. One has to bite the bullet. It has to happen. Worst is recalcitrant, difficult staff" was the analysis of another.

"There is not nearly enough opportunity to arrange significant blocks of time when faculty staff get together to discuss pedagogy and curriculum - too much time is spent on keeping nuts and bolts going." was a further comment.

Tension between the faculty and the upper management of the school was mentioned by six respondents. One spoke of being "caught between your own staff and their expectations of you and the demands and responsibilities in terms of senior staff or administration".

Six HoDs mentioned the difficulty of dealing with parental complaints and demands. Four struggled with imposed change and five with enthusing unmotivated staff. A total of nine HoDs found that the pressures and workload of being a head of department detracted from their own teaching, and that the role compromised their own performance.

Three HoDs found imposed deadlines problematic, while three mentioned the difficulty of
disciplining students. Two each cited lack of personal space, staff/student issues and their work being reactive, not pro-active, while one HoD mentioned financial constraints and inability to plan for the longer term.

Constant workload and pressure, lack of time and parental complaints and demands produced approximately double the number of responses from the non-Government sector.

Women were over-represented in identifying workload pressure, dealing with under performing staff, and interpersonal conflicts/problems with, and between, staff as the worst aspects of the role.

**Workload of the Head of Department**

**Elements of the Workload of the Hod**

Most prominent elements of the work of the head of department were seen to be paperwork and other administrative requirements (22 responses), teaching (21), student discipline and conflict resolution (18) and chasing up matters with students (18). With the exception of teaching, these major elements of HoDs' workloads, along with others below, tend to arise from externally imposed demands and pressures.

On the next level of responsibility were curriculum development (13), assessment and marking (12), curriculum monitoring (10), facilitating the professional development of staff (11) and dealing with own staff (13). Meetings (6), other external requirements (5), whole school involvement (5), dealing with parents (7), organising activities (6), extra curricular activities (1) and dealing with non-department staff (1), round out the multi-faceted role of the secondary head of department today.

In the sample, men were more likely to mention organising activities, external requirements, and meetings, while HoDs in the non-government sector were over-represented in comments about teaching, assessment and marking, organising activities, meetings, and chasing up students.

A key feature of the comments made by HoDs about their responsibilities and tasks is that the vast majority are extraneous to teaching one's own classes (see below), a major part of the HoD's role in respect of time, given the modest time allowance - and salary - most HoDs receive in return for taking on the position.

**How Heads of Department Spend their Time**

It had been hoped that the HoDs might be able to specify in percentage or proportional terms how they spend their time. However, in most cases those interviewed found this too difficult. Most in fact, seemed to be faintly horrified when they realised the spread of their responsibilities, as noted above. What follows, then, is more proportional than exact.

In terms of time, most significant aspects of the workload of the head of the department were seen to be teaching one's own classes (14 responses), student discipline/conflict resolution (14) and paperwork/administration (14).

Curriculum development, with 12 responses, was also seen as very time consuming, as was facilitating professional development of staff, with 11 comments.

Assessment/markering and curriculum monitoring, noted by nine and eight HoDs respectively, also rated highly. Dealing with faculty staff (seven), and whole school involvement (six), also occupied significant time for some.

Organising activities (two), and dealing with parents, maintenance and extra-curricula activities (one each) were less prominent in answers to this question.
In this section, women were over-represented in the areas of curriculum monitoring, assessment and marking, facilitating the professional development of their own staff, dealing with their own staff, paperwork and other administration and whole school involvement.

Redesigning the Role
Notions of redesigning the role of head of department centered on reducing their teaching load (13 respondents), thereby making more time available to spend with staff (13) and reducing administration (12). One head of department pointed out: “most free time currently goes in day-to-day running of the Department, with not enough time to sit down with individuals”. Another put it succinctly: “management of people requires time ... People are pushed by time”, while another HoD simply said: “shed administrative clutter”. “Less paperwork” was probably the essential summary.

One reflective comment noted that there is “not nearly enough opportunity to arrange significant blocks of time when faculty staff get together to discuss pedagogy and curriculum”. A related idea was more time on “core business” (nine replies), followed by more time with students (five). Reduced extra-curricula workloads on staff (two), and more whole school involvement (one) received some support.

Reducing administration was a more frequent response to this issue in the government sector. Men were more prominent in comments about spending more time with staff and more time on “core business”.

Discussion
These findings and their discussion need to be considered in the context of what has been a modest, though hopefully valuable, pilot study.

Those heads of department interviewed in the study found working with other staff the most enjoyable aspect of their role, although it also provided many of their problems.

The HoDs saw themselves primarily as more experienced curriculum or subject specialists and enjoyed leading teams and working collaboratively with others. Having a greater influence on educational outcomes at department and school levels was also seen as a positive aspect of the role of the head of department. In short, the study confirmed that the “core business” of the head of department was found to be highly satisfying (Dinham & Scott, 1998b).

Conversely, more external demands and pressures were seen to be the worst aspects of the role, often forcing the HoD into a reactive stance. These pressures and problems included having to compromise one’s own teaching; dealing with a complex and constant workload; problems arising from being caught in the middle between the needs of senior executive and the department; dealing with under-performing staff and staff conflict, parental demands and problems and imposed demands generally.

Overall, time was considered the enemy of the head of department, with too little time available to deal with the multiplicity of demands of the position. The head of department still has a substantial teaching load, and many felt that their own teaching and the professional development of their staff suffer because of more extraneous pressures and demands. Thus, they felt their ‘core business’ to be undermined and compromised, a confirmation of the findings of larger scale survey based findings on middle management in schools (Dinham & Scott 1998b).

To this end, half of those interviewed in the present study recognised the need to reduce their teaching load, so that they will be able to better perform their other responsibilities. Almost half of the HoDs in the study also noted the need to reduce the administrative aspects of the role to
provide more time for them to meet with staff and students and to engage in higher level tasks and responsibilities.

It is interesting that prior to assuming the position, many of the HoDs in the study spoke of wanting to be a ‘subject leader’, yet this was rarely mentioned once they had taken on the role. Thus, the conflicts currently inherent in the role, e.g., ‘master teacher’, curriculum overseer, people manager, administrator, conflict resolver, staff developer, etc., need to be reconciled.

There appears to be a strong need to rethink the current responsibilities of HoDs to enable them to spend more time on the ‘professional’ aspects of their role, which by their own admission, they are currently compromising and even neglecting. There is also a need to examine preparation, selection and support programs and practices for school executive.

More generally, there is a need to rethink leadership and administrative roles and structures in schools, some of which have been with us for decades (see Dinham & Scott, 1998b). This process has in fact begun in many schools and systems with new ‘cross-school’ leadership roles, such as directors of Information technology, teaching and learning, pupil welfare, and so on — with other developments such as senior high schools and middle schools becoming more common. The traditional departmental structure found in many secondary schools may not be the most effective and efficient way of addressing the changing pressures and demands on schooling experienced during the 21st century.

References


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CHAPTER EIGHT

LEARNING PRINCIPALS. LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY AND LEARNING RESEARCH IN THE NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Published as:


Related material:

Leadership Capability Research Project: Approval to conduct research NSWDET
(Appendix I, p.352)

Leadership Capability Research Project: Announcement (Appendix J, p.353)

Leadership Capability Research Project: NSWDET letter of commendation
(Appendix K, p.354)
Learning principals

Leadership capability and learning research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

Professor Geoff Scott

University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)
Quality Development Unit

March 2003
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Project overview

We do know that individual principals are often the key agents of school success, that there is little direct preparation for the role or systematic professional development on the job, and that there is no research that links particular professional development to success on the job.

Fullan, 2001b: 261

Context and need

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training (DET), like many educational systems within and beyond Australia, faces a large number of retirements amongst its school principals in the coming decade. At present the mean age of NSW DET secondary principals is 52 and deputy principals is 49, with the mean age of primary principals being 50 and deputy principals 48. Retirement projections indicate that 74% of secondary principals and 59% of primary principals will retire within the decade. As one of the principals in the present study observed:

With the imminent loss of many effective and experienced principals and, in many districts, the emergence of executives with a short and narrow experience base, leadership in the next ten years is going to be a mounting issue. Plans need to be enacted quickly.

In April 2002, DET established a Leadership Development Reference Group (LDRG). The LDRG comprising representatives from key professional groups (deputy principals, district superintendents, head teachers, principals and school administrative support staff) undertook to review the current School Leadership Strategy (1998) and provide advice on directions for the future. The LDRG completed their work in June 2002. In July 2002, a working party was formed comprising representatives from the NSW Primary Principals’ Association (NSWPPA), NSW Secondary Principals’ Council (NSWSPC) and district superintendents. The working party met regularly to consider actions and work plans that could be applied to a new school leadership development strategy.

It was recognised that in order to identify and effectively support a new cohort of school leaders there is a need to develop plans which are based on a clear picture of the nature of the work of principals, a clear profile of the leadership capabilities required to deliver this work effectively and a clear understanding of how school leaders can best be assisted to develop the capabilities that count. For this to be achieved it is essential that a valid and robust research methodology is used.

With this in mind, the NSW DET commissioned the Quality Development Unit of the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) to adapt a research methodology which had already proven successful in a range of capability profiling and development studies in other professions.

A brief outline of the origins and nature of the UTS research approach is given below.

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1 Cited in an address by Dr Alan Lukehil, Deputy Director General, Schools to the NSW Secondary Principals Council at its State Meeting on 15/3/02.
2 This study represents stage one of the Leadership Capability Framework research (school principal level). Stage two (other executive positions in schools) is scheduled for semester 1 2003.
Learning Principles

Research on professional capability and learning

There is substantial evidence that much of the professional development undertaken in the professions is still not clearly based on reliable and valid evidence about what really accounts for effective professional practice or on the immediate improvement priorities of participants. There is a continuing tendency to use generic, one-off events like off-the-job workshops with content which is not demonstrably relevant or applicable to the immediate workplace problems and learning needs of the participants. This, as Michael Fullan observes, is not a new problem for professional development in school education:

Let’s get one thing straight from the start. Professional development is not about workshops and courses; rather, it is, at its heart, the development of habits of learning that are far more likely to be powerful if they present themselves day after day... Most professional development experiences for teachers fail to make an impact. Over 20 years ago I conducted a review of “inservice”, as it was then called, and concluded that one-shot workshops were ineffective, topics were selected by people other than those receiving the inservice, and follow up support for implementation was rare. Almost 15 years later Little (1993) drew the same conclusion.

Fullan, 2001a: 253 and 255

Research on effective approaches to professional education repeatedly shows that what does engage people in productive learning is workplace relevance; “just-in-time” access to relevant resources and ideas; active not passive learning strategies; ongoing peer support and access to proven solutions to agreed improvement priorities; problem-based learning; and the use of practice as both a site and source for learning. In particular, studies of the adult’s learning projects in many countries, based on the ground-breaking work of Alan Tough (1977) have repeatedly demonstrated that a key support for productive learning is having “just-in-time, just-for-me” access to someone further down the development path you want to follow, a person who is already successfully performing what you want to learn in a similar context.

We know also that an enormous reservoir of professional learning and expertise resides untapped in the staff of our schools and that organisations which manage change effectively and directly tap, surface, validate and share this hidden and typically tacit knowledge.

The above findings have been confirmed in work at UTS with thousands of teachers and educational leaders over the past fifteen years in courses on effective change management and professional learning and have been replicated in a number of other countries.

In particular, they have been confirmed in research on what capabilities distinguish effective performers in a range of vocations and professions and what learning strategies and resources have best fostered their development. This growing body of research started in 1994 when UTS was commissioned by WorkSkill Australia to help develop a flexible and responsive Continuous Learning Improvement Program (CLIP) for prospective Australian Skill Olympians (Scott and Saunders, 1995). To do this, the research reviewed above was directly applied by first locating those who had succeeded in the Skill Olympics, then identifying with these people and those who had trained them what attributes really counted on the day of competition and how these capabilities had been enhanced and supported during preparation for the Skill Olympics. We were then able to “backward map” (Elmore, 1999) from the results to design a comprehensive formal and informal CLIP training system which used the experience of these successful performers to ensure that training was focused and relevant. CLIP won an Australian Institute for Training and Development Curriculum Design Award and a U.S. Book Award in 1995.

3 This research is reviewed at: http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdfs20documents/ManageChangeRevlearnSwe.pdf
4 See Fullan (2001b), Chapter 5
6 For online information on CLIP see: http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdfs20documents/CLIP.pdf
This approach has now been extended to a linked set of studies of graduates performing successfully in the early stage of their career across a wide selection of professions. These ongoing studies are being carried out in Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia.

**Aims**

Given the above context and need, this Leadership Capability Research Project aimed to:

1. Apply and refine the UTS capability research methodology with a sample of school principals from NSW DET identified as performing effectively on a specified range of indicators.

2. From the data generated, produce:
   - a research validated leadership capability framework to give focus to NSW principal preparation, induction and development programs
   - a clear picture of the forms of professional learning and support that are most and least productive for principals.

**Limitations**

It is important to recognise that this study is just one of a series of parallel projects aimed at optimising the quality of school leadership development in DET. It represents only the perspective of the 322 principals surveyed on what, in their particular school context, they believe accounts for their effective performance as a school leader and what forms of training and support have proven most useful in developing capability in these areas.

The principals involved in the study have been nominated as being effective using triangulated evidence on a specific set of criteria agreed by three independent groups. We acknowledge that there may be many other measures. Whenever possible, publicly accessible data, like annual school reports have been considered as part of the evidence used to justify the nomination of a principal. It is acknowledged that the principals nominated are just a sample of the much larger group who are also performing effectively in the role.

Also, because a self-report methodology is used, it is important to note that the principals' perspective of themselves may not necessarily be that of other players. However, as noted in the Methodology Section below, these views were validated by determining that there was alignment between the principals' self-assessment and the perceptions of those people who nominated them.

In subsequent investigations it will be possible, if necessary, to re-administer the study's online survey to other members of staff and to the executive in the schools concerned to further validate the accuracy of our respondents' self-perceptions.

**The study's conceptual frameworks**

* A conceptual framework explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions of a study—the key factors, constructs or variables—and the presumed relationships between them.

(Miles and Huberman (1994) and Huberman and Miles (2001))

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7 The professions currently being investigated include Accountancy, Applied Science, Architecture, Information Studies, Engineering, Information Technology, Law, Medicine, Nursing & Sports Management. For details see Scott & Yasse (2002).

8 For an example of a conceptual framework concerning effective change management in education see Scott (1999: 16–19)
Learning Principals

**Professional capability**

The conceptual framework for professional capability which has guided the present study has been developed from research and writing in a wide range of contexts, some of which have already been indicated. It draws upon:

- Research undertaken on effective leadership and change in education (Scott, 1999 Chapter 5 and Fullan, 2001 a and b).
- UTS empirical research:
  - Studies of what distinguishes the most effective performers in the Skill Olympics (Scott and Saunders, 1995).
  - A study of the key capabilities required by Deans in a period of rapid change in Australian Higher Education (Kemmis and Scott, 1996).
  - Investigations of successful graduates (e.g. Scott and Yates, 2002).
  - A study undertaken for the NSWSPEC which sought to evaluate and explain the effectiveness of its “Futures Strategy” (NSWSPEC, 2002).
- An analysis of the results of workplace research projects undertaken by some 500 graduate students studying leadership and change in the UTS principal researcher’s MEd Subject “Managing Change in Education and Training” over the past 17 years. This subject is offered to educational change leaders both within Australia and internationally.
- The outcomes of some thirty exploratory workshops across NSW over the past two years with more than 1200 principals, members of the school executive and experienced teachers on the topic “leadership and effective change management in state schools” in which the emerging framework has been tested and refined.\(^\text{10}\)

The consistent findings from this extensive body of research are that professional capability is comprised of the five interlocked domains represented in Figure 1. This figure emphasises that the possession of generic or job-specific skills (D and E) is necessary but not sufficient for effective professional performance. What is of equal importance is that the person possesses:

- A high level of social and personal emotional intelligence (A).
- A contingent way of thinking, an ability to “read” what is going on in each new situation and then to “match” an appropriate course of action, an ability to see the core issue in complex technical and human situations and a capacity to deftly trace out and assess the consequences of alternative courses of action (B).
- A set of “diagnostic maps” developed from successfully coming to grips with previous practice problems in the unique work context (C). It is these maps which enable the person to accurately “read the signs”, to figure out what is really going on in each new situation and to determine when and when not to deploy particular generic and technical skills.

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\(^9\) In this study “capability” is defined as that combination of attributes, qualities, skills and knowledge that enables a person to perform to a high standard in a given context and role.

\(^{10}\) Over the same period UTS has run a parallel series of courses and workshops with teachers within and beyond Australia on what constitutes an effective approach to teaching and learning. This work has been supplemented with extensive analysis of student survey data on effective teaching and learning in universities (Scott & Richardson, forthcoming). The parallels in the findings between the distinguishing attributes of effective teachers and effective educational leaders has led us to hypothesise that the most effective leaders see their role as primarily being one of setting up and coordinating the conditions for effective adult and organisational learning for their staff.
UTS research in developing this framework has repeatedly demonstrated that it is when things go wrong, when an unexpected and troubling problem or dilemma emerges, that professional capability is most tested, not when things are running smoothly or routinely. It is at times like these that the individual must bring to bear the combination of a well-developed social and emotional intelligence (A) and a sharp, contingent way of thinking to diagnose what is going on (i.e. to “read” the situation) and, from this, to figure out (i.e. “match”) a uniquely suitable strategy for addressing it (B and C), a strategy which brings together and competently delivers that selection of generic and job-specific skills and knowledge (D and E) most appropriate to the situation.

This suggests, for example, that if leaders cannot remain calm when things go awry or are unable to work constructively with staff then, no matter how intelligent they may be or how much they may know, they will not be able to productively resolve the situation. Equally, however, simply remaining calm and being responsive is not enough. Leaders must have the where-with-all to accurately “read” the total human and technical components of the situation and, with the assistance of well-developed networks, accurately figure out what really lies behind it if a productive solution to the situation is to be identified and implemented. The study’s conceptual framework for professional capability suggests, therefore, that it is the combination of brain and heart that ultimately makes the difference.
Learning Principals

Productive adult learning

The second framework used in the study brings together research on what factors most effectively promote productive adult learning. This framework has been generated from 20 years' study of effective adult teaching and learning. It represents an overall quality assurance framework for learning design and delivery and indicates that adults, including principals, will be more likely to engage in productive learning if their learning programs:

- R Are immediately relevant to their particular backgrounds, abilities, needs and experiences.
- A Provide for more active than passive learning, avoid endless one-way lectures, afford frequent opportunities to make contact with people who are further down the same learning path and enable easy access to a range of quality assured data bases.
- T Constantly link theory with practice, especially through the use of integrated problem-based learning projects, real-world case studies and staff with current practical experience of the area being studied.
- E Effectively manage their expectations about what will be delivered, how assessment will work, and what sorts of access and support will be available.
- D Ensure that learning proceeds logically in digestible “chunks”.
- C Use a valid professional capability profile, like that outlined in Figure One, to specifically generate targeted outcomes and appropriate assessment and to guide the learning necessary to achieve them.
- L Provide opportunities to pursue flexible learning pathways by enabling them to undertake a linked, developmental set of learning activities responsive to their particular needs, the requirements of the profession and (when it is involved) the university.
- A Ensure that feedback on all assessment and learning tasks is timely, constructive and detailed.
- S Not only include opportunities for self-managed learning, but actively coach participants on how to use the systems and resources set up to support it.
- S Provide support and administrative services which are responsive to their needs and specifically optimise the total experience they have of the providing institution and the learning program.
- A Ensure that access to learning times, locations and resources makes participation in the learning program as convenient and productive as possible.

Research questions

In the light of the project's aims, its conceptual frameworks and the prior research which underpins them, the study sought to explore the following specific research questions:

Within the unique context of NSW public education to determine:
- What the concept "effective principal" means.
- What the role of the principal is currently like.
- What the most challenging aspects of the role are and whether these vary depending on demographic factors like school context and classification.
- What leadership capabilities play a central role in effective performance as a principal, what their relative importance is and in what ways they interact.
- Whether the relative importance and interaction of those attributes varies depending on demographic factors like school make-up, context and classification.
- What learning approaches, focus and resources optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified.

Project methodology

An understanding of what reality is from the point of view of people within the role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory.

Fullan (2001a: 137)

Sampling strategy

A composite sampling strategy was used to identify a relevant group of principals to participate in the study. This entailed ensuring that the sample covered the full range of schools, districts and contexts that make up the NSW public school system and that, within these parameters, those selected demonstrably met a range of agreed “effectiveness” criteria.

Coverage

The sample included principals in schools:

- from all 40 NSW DET districts
- of all types and sizes: primary, secondary, central, large, small, specific purpose
- operating in a wide range of geographic and social contexts: country town, rural and isolated, inner metropolitan, outer metropolitan
- with students from a wide and representative range of backgrounds, including those from differing SES backgrounds, ATSI and NESB students.

Criterion-referenced selection

Within these parameters a maximum sample of eight principals from each of the 40 DET districts was sought, with a total of 322 nominations received. Nomination was based on a set of effectiveness criteria identified and agreed upon by the Department, the NSWSPC and the NSWPPA. These criteria were consistent with the sorts of effectiveness criteria which have emerged in the studies of professional capability in other professions (see, for example, Scott and Yates, 2002), and with the accountabilities identified in the DET (2000) publication Leading and managing the school.

The indicators finally agreed required that there should be triangulated evidence of principal effectiveness in terms of:

- delivery of effective and innovative programs and whole-school organisation
- high level involvement of students, parents and the community in the life of the school
- positive perceptions of staff, peers and district superintendent as to the leadership practices of these principals
- commitment to the professional growth and development of self and others.

Considerable care was taken to ensure that the selection process was systematic, carefully managed, evidence-based and triangulated.12 First, three different groups sought independently to identify and justify the selection of a sample of principals from their district. These groups were DET district superintendents, the district president of the NSWPPA and the district representative of the NSWSPC. Second, the representatives from these three groups came together (either face-to-face or through a teleconference or email) to discuss, agree and justify the final sample of up to eight principals to be nominated from their district, based on a range of evidence against the four selection criteria. Included as part of this process, was an analysis of school improvement targets and outcome measures in the relevant school annual report, including its trend data on value adding, mobility, demand, retention and externally moderated assessments and examinations.

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12 “Triangulation is less a tactic than a mode of inquiry. By self-consciously setting out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the researcher will build the triangulation process into ongoing data collection.” (Fluehrman & Miles, 2001: 565)
Learning Principals

The final number of principals nominated was 322 representing just under 15% of the principals in NSW DET. (Two nominations were accepted above the planned maximum.)

To validate the nomination process, a random sample of 24 members of the nominating panels was interviewed by telephone. This confirmed that a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data had been referred to as nominations were considered. In addition to considering data on the above indicators, nominating panels also reported making reference to a wide range of school improvement measures, their first-hand observation of each principal's work practice, performance data on negotiated supervision targets and indicators, and outcomes from the annual DET Principal Assessment Review Schedule. They also reported drawing upon perceptions derived from sustained personal and professional interaction with the principals over an extended period of time. The recurring finding from this validation process was that the nominating panels had explicitly set out to make judgements based on multiple sources of evidence all pointing in the same direction, not just one.

Data gathering

A two-stage data gathering strategy, approved by the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) of both UTS and DET, was used.

Semi-structured interviews

First, a small representative group of the final sample of nominated principals participated in an in-depth interview (n=5). This interview used a semi-structured interview schedule based on the study's research questions and guided by its conceptual frameworks (Appendix 1). The aim of this phase was not only to capture useful qualitative data but to ensure that the Phase 2 data gathering instrument—an online survey—was appropriately expressed, comprehensive and in the voice of the target audience. In parallel studies completed in other professions this had proven to be a very important step in ensuring that the items used in the Phase 2 online survey were valid, comprehensive, engaging and immediately recognisable to the full sample of respondents.

The Phase 1 interview was in three parts. First, interviewees were briefed on the project, their role in it and then shown how the Phase 2 survey would work online. They then signed the research participation form approved by the partner organisations' ethics committees.

Second, they were interviewed individually for approximately one and a half hours. Initially they were asked to respond to the interview questions in Appendix 1 in an open-ended way. Then a number of prompts were given and they were introduced to the study's conceptual frameworks. This "hybrid" approach allowed the researcher to tap their views both without direction and with it and then to compare the results. A particular focus was on determining if each interviewee saw the study's conceptual framework for professional capability (Figure 1) as being relevant, engaging, easy to understand and to establish if it satisfactorily accommodated what they had to say.

Third, each interviewee was asked to review a draft of the online survey and, in the light of what they had just raised as key issues, to suggest enhancements. They were specifically asked to suggest if there was anything that should be added, dropped, changed or highlighted in order to ensure that the survey would be clear, relevant and engaging for their fellow principals.

Online survey

In the light of our own earlier research, the data generated from the Phase 1 interviews, an analysis of parallel work by the DET Leadership and Management Development Unit, the

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13 The group covered primary and secondary schools, large and small, country and city, single sex and selective high schools and included one school with a high proportion of low SES, ATSI and NESB students.

14 This draft was developed using items from previous research on educational leadership and studies of professional capability, including the leadership capability framework proposed by the NSW Primary Principals' Association and the NSW Secondary Principals Council and the DET document Leading & Managing the School.
NSWPPA and the NSWSPC, the DET document Leading and Managing the School (2000) and recent research by Fullan (2001a and 2001b), the final online survey was compiled and field-tested.

This is included as Appendix 2 and has a number of sections.

After giving a range of demographic data and evaluating the relevance of their prior experiences with formal and informal forms of principal development and support, respondents were asked to rate a set of principal leadership capability items clustered into the domains identified in Figure 1. These items were rated first on their importance to effective practice in the respondents' current role as a principal and then on the extent to which that aspect had been addressed in prior training or support programs. A five point rating scale was used (1 = low to 5 = high).

Then respondents were asked to identify, outline and discuss how they had addressed one particularly challenging recent experience as a principal, to identify what they believed were the most challenging aspects of the job and to design an analogy which best conveyed their daily experience of it.

Finally, they were then asked to identify what specific forms of formal and informal professional development, support and learning strategies had proven most or least productive during their career and what they would advise DET to concentrate upon now in order to optimise the relevance and impact of its school leadership development strategy. Throughout the survey respondents could type in comments explaining their ratings and suggesting improvements.

The survey required only a web-browser for completion and was distributed to the selected sample of principals by email using a clickable URL copied into the email. It was accompanied by a letter from the Director, Professional Support and Curriculum explaining the process, the candidate's nomination and the importance of responding to the survey. Respondents could save their responses, which enabled them to complete the survey in stages. This feature has been found to assist reflection and ensure responses are considered. The overall process, including a follow-up of non-respondents, was assisted by the project's DET principal researcher, a secondary principal on secondment who managed the project's implementation. In cases where respondents did not have reliable Internet access, a paper-based version of the survey was used. Three surveys were completed in this manner and the responses were entered manually onto the database by the DET researcher.

All responses to the online survey were anonymous.

**Response rate**

There was a 100% participation rate in the phase one interviews and 100% response rate to the Phase 2 online survey from the 322 principals nominated. This exceptional response rate was primarily due to personal follow-up contact and assistance from the project's seconded principal. The normal response rate to online surveys in education is approximately 20%.

This means that the response sample was the same as the survey sample and, as a consequence, we would argue is highly representative of the full 233 NSW school principals in terms of gender, position classification, school location, SES, level and enrolment type.

As J.M. Mangan, Professor of Educational Statistics at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, who reviewed the methodology section of this report observed:

> Almost uniquely amongst surveys, this sampling process is not open to any error introduced by respondent self-selection. As a result, the significance of any reported statistic can be interpreted as entirely consistent with the formal assumptions of the computations, rather than being a more-or-less rough estimate, as is usually the case.

(Email, 4/1/2003)
Learning Principals

Data analysis
Phase 1 interviews
Respondents’ comments were recorded manually against the questions in Appendix 1.

Coding used a hybrid approach similar to that adopted in a current national study for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training of qualitative data generated by Australia’s higher education Course Experience Questionnaire (Scott and Richardson, forthcoming).

The strategy combines:
- an emergent, “grounded” approach in which a thematic analysis of the responses is undertaken without reference to any externally imposed coding framework
- a more a priori, research-generated approach in which coding domains and subcodes identified in previous studies and the study’s conceptual framework are tested.

In applying this strategy, data generated from the interview questions concerning professional capability in Appendix 1 were coded first thematically and then using the domains in the study’s conceptual framework (Figure 1). The data generated from the questions in Appendix 1 on professional learning were similarly coded, first thematically and then using the study’s conceptual framework for Productive Adult Learning (PAL).

The results of open and research-based coding were compared, the adequacy of the study’s conceptual frameworks reviewed and specific sub-codes for each domain agreed. It was these sub-codes, using the words of the phase one interviewees, which helped ensure that the final questions used in the Phase 2 online survey were comprehensive, clear and valid.

Finally, the emerging items were compared with the feedback given by each interviewee on the draft online survey reviewed at the end of their interview. The resulting survey is included as Appendix 2.

Whenever a parallel area to that identified in previous studies emerged, the original wording of the relevant online item was retained to enhance the validity of subsequent comparisons between data sets.

The results of this qualitative analysis were retained and referred to again when the results of the online learning phase were analysed.

Phase 2 online survey
This survey generated both quantitative and qualitative data.

In terms of the quantitative data, analysis consisted of the following steps:
- Mean ratings for both importance and performance were calculated for each item and the rank order for items on each of these measures was determined.
- Results were produced both in an aggregated form and for each demographic variable.
- Data were presented and analysed against the study’s research questions, using a range of data displays, including a plot of items where the x axis represented importance and the y axis the performance of prior training. This made it easy to immediately identify items rated high on importance but low on performance and to see other patterns in the quantitative results (e.g. to identify items high on importance and performance or those with relatively low importance ratings).
- A number of statistical tests were run to determine if there were any significant differences between results on a range of demographic variables.
In terms of qualitative analysis of the comments made by respondents on the online survey, a process similar to phase one was used but, as data had been entered online, we were also able to use Computer Assisted Qualitative Data analysis tools like Leximancer.\(^{15}\)

**Validation of responses**

To check the accuracy of the self-assessment undertaken by principals, the Phase 2 online survey, suitably modified, was sent to a random sample of eight district nominating groups, representing 20% of the total number of groups involved in the nomination process. The district superintendent, the district president of the NSWPPA and the district representative of the NSWS PC who had participated in the nomination process were asked to complete the survey in terms of what they believed was characteristic of those whom they had nominated. There was an 80% response rate to the online survey sent to the nominating group sample.

A comparison of the results of these two groups indicated that the self-assessment of the principals aligned closely with the perceptions of those who had nominated them. For example, of the ten highest rating leadership capability items on importance for principals, nine also appeared in the top ten identified by the nominating group as being characteristic of the principals they selected.

Subsequent surveys, not part of this phase of the research, can be distributed to the rest of the school executive, and to staff at the schools selected to further compare the perceptions of the different players.

**Drawing conclusions based on the data**

The results and analysis from Phase 1 were then cross-checked with the outcomes from Phase 2. Finally, this combined analysis was compared with previous research and existing DET leadership capability frameworks and management documents and conclusions were drawn in terms of each of the study’s core research questions.

\(^{15}\) See http://www.leximancer.com/.
Learning Principals

Results

In this section both the quantitative and qualitative data produced from both phases of the study are outlined and subjected to an overall analysis against the study's key research questions. It should be noted that the data generated by the study are particularly rich and only the results of the first, broad level of analysis are identified and discussed at this stage.

What does the concept of “effective principal” mean in the context of NSW public education?

Before the empirical phases of the study commenced, decisions had to be made about what indicates that a government school principal is performing “effectively”. The clarification of these indicators represents, in itself, a key outcome of the study and should be further pursued. As noted in the methodology section, the indicators finally agreed as pointing to effective performance as a principal in a NSW government school were that there should be triangulated evidence of:

- delivery of effective and innovative programs and whole-school organisation
- high level involvement of students, parents and the community in the life of the school
- positive perceptions of staff, peers and district superintendent as to the leadership practices of these principals
- commitment to the professional growth and development of self and others.

What is the role of the principal in NSW government schools currently like?

So much of a day/week/term is about carrying out numerous tasks at the same time, dealing with interruptions and “left field” events, and keeping many pots on the boil. Being able to shift and then regain focus; being flexible and (being able to) reorganise priorities on a daily (hourly) basis and maintain a calm and responsive manner.

Principal

The general picture of the principal’s work which emerges from a detailed qualitative analysis of responses to this question in both phases of the study is that the principal’s day is one which involves endless small encounters, in which one must quickly sort out which situations are significant and which are not and then figure out how best to handle the important ones. At the same time, the principal needs to keep the whole enterprise on course and in perspective; by emphasising, in particular, the school’s core mission of assisting all students to learn productively. The extensive qualitative data generated by the online survey provide a rich and dramatic depiction of the current role of the principal. They warrant much closer scrutiny by all those interested in understanding the contemporary world of the school leader and those who want to assist principals to manage this challenging and constantly shifting environment more effectively.

As one respondent observed:

It was not until the document “Leading and managing the school” was published that I saw anything which the DET had written about the role of the school principal. I think this document is an excellent one which, for the first time, acknowledges the complexity of the role of school principal in 2000 and beyond. I think that this questionnaire is excellent as it also outlines the complex role of the principal as being something which cannot be learnt in a book.

The majority of respondents noted that it is when things go wrong—especially when one is faced with an unforeseen situation with not just a technical but a significant human dimension—that one’s leadership capability is most tested. However, a number of respondents did note that, when things are going well, there can also be risks, for example, the risk of becoming too complacent.
Typical comments on the current nature of principals’ work included:

I am aware of how many interactions I have in a day and a desire to never let the management side of the job stop me from endeavouring to be a good leader. It is more crucial that I make the right decision or actions when things are going wrong—and it’s always several things at once.

We have things going wrong all the time. It’s only the severity that differs.

No two problems are the same.

One needs to respond quickly in times of crisis … Often the speed of the response (required) can cause the wrong decision to be made; creating further problems later, or inflaming the immediate issue.

When things are going wrong a principal must be able to think and make decisions quickly in order to stop a situation from becoming worse.

When things are going well, i.e. successful programs, external recognition for a job well done, happy kids, parents and teachers … a monkey could sit at the desk and do my job. When thunderbolts fall from the sky, i.e. allegations about a staff member, a series of break-ins, enrolment of a student with a mental health diagnosis etc. and more that’s when all the skills and knowledge are used … so that the school remains ordered and purposeful.

A good leader would be able to … predict, develop and influence many of the day-to-day events in a school. The real test comes when (one’s) beliefs, skills and knowledge are challenged by events outside your control.

This question was difficult to answer because when things are going wrong you need a totally different set of skills like conflict resolution, communication and management. However when things are going well you need management (skills) to keep them going well and at the same time be planning for future improvement.

There is a natural tendency to answer “when things go wrong” but, while these times are almost certainly more stressful, I’m not sure that one’s professional capacity is not equally tested when things are travelling well. There is always the danger of just becoming too comfortable. Lethargy can be an attractive alternative to the constant drain on one’s store of energy.

Having discussed the nature of their daily work, each of the 322 respondents was asked to identify the analogy which best summarised what their current experience of the job is like. A qualitative analysis of these analogies identified the following as being most common, in rank order:

• the captain of a ship (or something similar)
• a juggler
• a duck with alligators and other things beneath the surface of one’s pond
• the head of a family (or a similar group).

Others included:

• a person trying to change the tyres on a car whilst it is still moving
• in a continuously evolving film set
• on a roller coaster (sometimes alone, sometimes with the school)
• a white water rafter
• a conductor/circus ringmaster/director
• in a swamp
• in the movie “Ground Hog Day”
• a “Roadie” for a rock band
• a bus driver
• on a trek in Nepal, climbing Mount Everest.
Learning Principals

These analogies align closely with earlier research, for example, the analogies identified by educators operating in a wide variety of contexts outlined in Scott (1999: pp. 2-3) or those identified much earlier by Munby and Russell (1988) and Morgan, G (1988).

They confirm that the world of the principal is uncertain, ambiguous, constantly changing; a world which involves working with both local issues over which one has considerable influence and broader economic, social and political forces which, although unmanageable to direct influence, must still be negotiated effectively. It is a world which is intensely human and relentless, and one where people expect the principal to set a clear direction and priorities for the school, but where such plans must be constantly adjusted in the light of a continual series of unexpected events and changing circumstances. It is a world characterised by a relentless series of ongoing challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved effectively.

The results of this part of the study suggest a role which can be both exhilarating and deflating, one that demands the use of approaches which are paradoxical, for example a need for:

- both listen and lead
- use both top-down and bottom-up strategies
- concurrently work on both educational and administrative, infrastructural, support, micropolitical and cultural issues
- give people clear direction yet also empower them
- set a clear, justified and feasible direction for the enterprise but remain flexible and responsive about its implementation.

What the study reveals about the paradoxical nature of daily practice for principals is consistent with earlier research on effective organisational leadership and change in a wide range of contexts. It reveals a need for school leaders who can operate "contingently" as they negotiate the complex daily realities of the school, people who are able to adopt quite different approaches depending on the circumstances. This means that on one occasion they may have to be authoritative, on another affiliative and on still others they may need to be more democratic or shift to using the strategies of an effective coach (Fullan, 2001a: 146-9).

As Goleman (2001: 87) concluded in his studies of effective leadership:

(Th) ... most effective leaders switch flexibly among the leadership styles as needed ... (they) don’t mechanically match their style to fit a checklist of situations; they are far more fluid. They are exquisitely sensitive to the impact they are having on others and seamlessly adjust their styles to get the best results.

What are the most challenging aspects of the role and do these vary depending on demographic factors?

The most difficult time is when everyone wants a piece of you or when everyone expects you to have the solution to their problems or worse, when they simply expect you to deal with problems they have created because it is your job—and when (it is suggested that) ... your main role is to appease people and keep them happy rather than be a firm, decisive and positive leader who will not compromise quality for political expediency.

A qualitative analysis of responses on this issue in the online questionnaire and from the phase one interviews identified five recurring situations when respondents reported that their leadership capabilities were most tested. They primarily concerned issues of human relationships and were, in rank order:

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16 See, for example, Dunphy & Stace (1992); Binney and Williams, 1995, Scott (1999), Mclaughlin & Talbert, (2001) and Donaldson (2001).
17 This concept is discussed in Scott (1999:122-3)
18 cited Fullan (2001a)
• dealing with poor performing or problematic staff
• being confronted by threats of, or experiencing actual physical violence
• dealing with aggressive or litigious parents
• having to decide on nominated transfers
• finding that what one thought were little problems have suddenly blown up into something large and unexpected.

When a sub-sort of these comments was undertaken using Leximancer, some minor variations of emphasis between primary and secondary principals and between metropolitan and non-metropolitan principals emerged. However, handling staff remained the top challenge for every group.\textsuperscript{19}

After managing relationships in the above areas, the next most common challenge identified concerned managing time.

Typical comments included:

\textbf{Dealing with staff}

\textit{The hardest situations to deal with are those involving conflict with or between staff.}

Most of my most challenging situations are related to staffing issues.

\textit{When I first started at this school at a staff meeting earlier in the year we were looking at Assessment and Reporting and I wanted us to look at putting together student work portfolios. One staff member (who was looking to retire at the end of the year) was vehemently opposed to any such idea ... It was the fact that she challenged me in front of everyone else that I found difficult because at this stage I had not been at the school long enough to establish my credibility.}

\textit{Conflict with a staff member who has a history of being very difficult, when I was new to the school.}

\textit{A staff member refused to attend a meeting with me to discuss a number of concerns raised by students and parents.}

\textit{Prolonged attacks by a staff member on curriculum decisions being taken at school.}

\textit{Dealing with unprofessional staff who do a minimum in terms of extra-curricula activities.}

\textbf{Being confronted with threats and violence}

\textit{I and my family had death threats from a parent and their defacto regarding access to their child at lunchtime.}

\textit{A serious assault at the school. This involved both DOCS and the police. One student was charged and had to go to court.}

\textbf{Dealing with parents and the community}

\textit{A group of “concerned parents” questioned the school’s ability to meet the needs of their children who were having learning difficulties and were willing to make personal attacks on teachers and the principal.}

\textsuperscript{19} The rank order of the areas of challenge identified for primary principals was staff, parents, then students and community, whereas for secondary principals it was staff, students, community and parents. The order for metropolitan principals was staff, parents, students whereas for non-metropolitan principals it was staff, students and parents. These variations may warrant follow-up in subsequent studies.
A small school parent body believing they ran the school and everything around it. The former principal had left on stress.

Handling a mentally ill parent.

**Nominated transfers**

At the beginning of this term I had to make a nominated transfer ... The teacher produced a doctor's certificate stating that serious health issues could arise if ... was moved. I received a phone call from a politician concerned that a teacher was being transferred.

**Unexpected escalation of small issues**

Often the speed of the response (required) can cause the wrong decision to be made; creating further problems later, or inflaming the immediate issue.

Just when you think everything is on track and nothing can go wrong something does. It is often what appears to be a trivial issue which suddenly blows up into something very serious.

The real challenge is to figure out which issues are of no significance and which can become serious if you don't nip them in the bud.

**Managing time**

Anyone can hold the helm when the seas are calm. Abusive parents, violent students, etc are the urgent issues that need careful, considered responses. Often you don't get the time for such consideration.

Much of my time is used in dealing with demanding parents, students and staff. It is easy to neglect the silent majority during these times.

In a "crisis" situation all your professional skills and strategies need to kick in to keep the school functioning and to keep staff, students and parents focused on dealing with the issue(s) in a constructive way. When things go wrong perspectives can become skewed.

**The online survey results**

Diagram 1 and Table 1 on the next pages present the quantitative data generated by the Phase 2 online survey. Items 1-45 concern the capabilities associated with effective performance as a principal in the contemporary operating context outlined above. Items 46-57 concern what approaches to principal development and support were seen as being most relevant.

Table 1 gives the mean ratings on a five point scale (1 = low, 5 = high), first for importance in accounting for effective practice as a principal (the left-hand column) and then on the extent to which this item was seen by respondents to have been effectively addressed in prior training and professional development (the right-hand column). The rank order for items on both importance and performance is also given.

In addition, Table 1 includes just two of the many specific sub-sorts possible from the extensive data base generated by the study. First, the mean rating on each item for metropolitan compared with non-metropolitan principals is given and then the means for primary compared with secondary principals.

Diagram 1 presents the overall results diagrammatically so that the relative importance and performance of each item can quickly be seen. The further an item is towards the north-east corner of Diagram 1 the more significant and effectively addressed in prior training and development it is perceived to be. The further towards the south-east corner, the more the item represents a priority for enhancement.
Leadership Capability Survey of Principals

Mean Importance versus Mean Focus

Importance vs. Focus

Higher Importance

4.0
3.5
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5

0.0

Chapter Eight

Learning Principals
### Table 1: Online survey quantitative results

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#### Notes
- **PPIs**: Personal Performance Indicators
- **Mean Importance**: Mean importance rating
- **Mean**: Mean rating of personal abilities
- **Notes**: Notes on the importance and personal abilities

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### Learning Principals

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What leadership capabilities play a central role in effective performance as a principal, what is their relative importance and how do they interact?

The qualities of a good principal come to the fore in a crisis or a difficult situation. Interpersonal skills, good communication, rational thinking, remaining calm, proactive listening and problem-solving skills. The ability to think "the big picture" is vital.

Principal

Table 1 shows that, of the twelve highest ranking capability items on importance for effective performance as a principal, nine come from the Emotional Intelligence Scales. Specifically, six come from the Emotional Intelligence (Personal) Scale; and three from the Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) Scale. Of the remainder, two come from the Intellectual Ability Scale (Way of thinking/Diagnostic maps) and one from the Specific Skills and Knowledge Scale.

Respondents' emphasis on the central role which Emotional Intelligence (Personal and Social) plays in effective practice has emerged in every other professional capability study.
Learning Principals

undertaken to date by both our own research teams (e.g. Scott and Yates, 2002) and others (e.g. Goleman, 1998, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKeen, 2002).

The top ranking item for importance was item 4 (being able to remain calm under pressure or when things go wrong), followed by item 11 (having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective), item 42 (having a clear justified vision for where the school must head), and item 22 (being able to deal effectively with conflict situations).

No capability item in the online survey was rated less than 4 on importance, with most attracting ratings around 4.3-4.4 (i.e. midway between “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” on the five point Likert Scale). This confirms the overall relevance and significance of the leadership capabilities surveyed. As one respondent put it:

I thought the selection of topics for this questionnaire was outstanding. I found it difficult to separate any of them from the high category.

In terms of the rank order of items within each scale, the highest rating items on importance were for:

- Emotional Intelligence (Personal): being able to remain calm (4.85); sense of humour and perspective (4.81); wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (4.75); being able to bounce back from adversity (4.74); an ability to take a hard decision (4.73); being willing to face and learn from errors (4.70).

- Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal): Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (4.79); ability to empathise and work productively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds (4.74); willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (4.71); being able to contribute positively to team-based projects (4.68);

- Intellectual Abilities: Being able to set and justify priorities (4.72); Being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (4.68); being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens as it is implemented (4.68).

- Generic and Specific Skills and Knowledge: having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (4.80); being able to organise work and manage time effectively (4.67).

Given the context and nature of the principal’s work outlined earlier, this pattern of rankings is clearly understandable. It is interesting that “Up-to-date pedagogical knowledge” received a comparatively lower importance rating of 4.3, although this was still well within the Agree to Strongly Agree range.

A range of sub-sorts of the quantitative data on leadership capability is possible in addition to those for primary, secondary, metropolitan and non-metropolitan principals presented in Table 1. One of the most interesting is the comparison of ratings for “Importance” and “Focus” between female and male principals.

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20 These authors identified 18 competencies sorted into four domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) as being essential for emotionally intelligent leaders and organisational success in complex times.

21 Although this item was listed in the Specific Skills and Knowledge Scale, when respondent’s comments on it were studied, it emerged as something far more complex with moral, strategic and change management dimensions. It has close links to what Pullin (2001b) calls “moral purpose”.

22 The capability items attracting a mean importance rating of 4.05 or 4.1 were: Being able to work with DET officers without being intimidated (EI: Interpersonal); Being able to use IT effectively to communicate and perform work functions (Generic Skills); Understanding industrial relations issues and process (Specific Knowledge).

23 The preliminary sub-set by gender showed that, for example, female principals tended to rate all items higher on importance than their male colleagues. However, in terms of focus, the situation was reversed. Some of the main differences between male and female principals in terms of importance were on: Item 1 (male importance ranking 8, female 15); Item 13 (male rank 5, female 20); Item 15 (male rank 6, female 24); Item 19 (male rank 27, female 8). Some of the main differences in terms of focus were on Item 8 (male rank 6, female 12) and Item 39 (male rank 15, female 9).
A detailed analysis of respondents’ comments on the overall ratings in Table 1, shows that it is the combined effect of attributes from every area identified in the study’s professional capability framework (Figure 1) that makes the difference. For example, they note how, when something goes wrong the principal needs to be able to remain calm and keep things in perspective (Emotional Intelligence: Personal) to deal with what is often a situation with a serious human conflict dimension by showing empathy and listening to different points of view (Emotional Intelligence: Interpersonal). In order to sort out what is the key issue in the welter of factors which are at play (Intellectual Abilities) and, from this diagnosis, to identify and effectively implement the appropriate mix of generic and job-specific skills and knowledge. This process is assisted if the principal is experienced in the role and the particular school context and has reflected on this experience (i.e. if the school leader possesses the relevant diagnostic maps indicated in section C of Figure 1).

Respondents note also how being able to set and justify priorities (Intellectual Abilities) links to being able to organise work and manage time (Generic Skill) and how these two leadership capabilities combine with empathy (Emotional Intelligence: Personal) not only to generate a clear vision for the school (Job Specific Skills and Knowledge) but also to ensure that there is sufficient time available to handle the ongoing, unexpected surprises that characterise the job. They note how this, in turn, interacts with the ability to take a hard decision (Emotional Intelligence: Personal).

All of this, respondents emphasised, must be underpinned by principals having what Fullan (2001b) calls “moral purpose”, a commitment to making a positive difference for all of the students at their school. It is moral purpose, they said, which the principal can draw upon for strength when faced by the extremely difficult decisions that sometimes must be made.

Finally, the leadership capabilities interact to support ongoing professional learning. Respondents consistently observe that being willing and able to foster firm, reciprocal relationships with other school leaders and key players (Emotional Intelligence: Interpersonal), means that one is able to call on the assistance of these valued colleagues when faced with a crisis in order to get an alternative perspective on what might be going on (Intellectual Abilities) and to identify previously successful solutions in similar situations (Job Specific Skills and Knowledge). For this to happen the principal must be willing to face and learn from errors (Emotional Intelligence: Personal) and be able to figure out which members of the network are best positioned to provide sound advice on the particular question at hand (Intellectual Abilities: contingent thinking). It is in this way, said respondents, that ongoing professional learning and resolving workplace problems can become more integrated.

Below are some typical comments from principals that illustrate these points.

**Emotional intelligence**

They (principals) need to understand the importance of emotional intelligence. What matters most for competence and excellence in the workplace is based on effective inter- and intra-personal skills in forming productive relationships. We need leaders to have the skills of resiliency, initiative, optimism and adaptability without getting “stressed out”. Empathy, patience, understanding, listening etc are all part of the tool kit. When the relationships are right ... performance improves, collaboration happens ... It takes time. It works.

Having emotional intelligence, handling oneself calmly and confidently in times of expected or unexpected crisis, is crucial to effectiveness. Intellectual qualifications are not necessarily indicators of “star” performers. People need the skills of developing strong meaningful relationships, connecting to people and showing empathy.

The personal qualities listed are essential and I value and aim for them. The extent to which a principal is able to satisfy these qualities is probably a measure of effectiveness.
Learning Principals

Until you are in the principal’s position you don’t realise how important the above attributes are.

I value all of them highly and see them as critical in developing and exercising the maturity and judgement required to manage a school effectively.

People skills are more important than anything and are the hardest to learn if you don’t have them by the time you are on the job. Being a stress inducer or a person who gets angry when stressed makes you the biggest disaster as a principal, so being calm or appearing so is best.

Interpersonal relationships and the way individuals deal with them can have a huge impact on the effectiveness of a school and can make or break the principal.

Interpersonal relationships can make or break the principal’s effectiveness in a school. Without excellent interpersonal skills and an understanding of one’s own strengths and weaknesses it is very difficult to achieve excellent outcomes for all kids.

The best laid plans and intellectual endeavour can become unstuck as we deal with people who are sometimes emotional, irrational, misinformed, disinterested, bitter and twisted and on the war path—never a dull moment!

We work with people first; not machines or objects!

Character is more important than initial skills … Principal selection programs need to identify personal traits necessary for quality principalship.

The rating for personal qualities is high on everything because they are extremely important. The order of importance would vary according to the particular situation.

The issue of resilience is very important; increasingly so as principals are being more isolated in their schools… tolerance of ambiguity is also very important.

The single most important thing is to listen. The next aspect is to look at the big picture. However I think an ability to empathise and “connect” with people generally will go a long way to create a harmonious school.

Emotional intelligence is a key theme: “grace under pressure” is how Ernest Hemmingway described one aspect of this.

Intellectual capability
The ability to remain calm, think logically, think in terms of priorities and the “big picture” (are all needed).

“Calm, focused analysis” is what I call the skills I have taught myself which, upon reflection, seem to include most of the things you have mentioned here.

These problem-solving abilities are required by principals. I have previously given them little consideration.

Thinking an issue through is important, and I know I often miss things, so I use others as a means of checking things over.

The response is based on experience, which seems to come with making lots of previous mistakes and learning from them.

This big picture stuff is really difficult to spend time on as a principal—we often get caught up in the day-to-day mire—a very important quality to really do this well.
It is essential to be a strategic thinker, at all levels and most particularly with the human resource issues. Principals need to recognise potential mine-fields and be appropriately political in the work-place.

Another valuable skill is multi-tasking: so much of a day/week/term is about carrying out numerous tasks at the same time, dealing with interruptions and “left field” events, and keeping many pots on the boil. Being able to shift and then regain focus; being flexible and (able to) reorganise priorities on a daily (hourly) basis and maintain a calm and responsive manner is very important.

As principal it is important to understand and link DET priorities with school priorities. The ability to define the school’s shared future direction, priorities, structures and culture allows a strong school focus on student learning.

Many principals/schools are trying to focus on too much and often each in isolation. Interconnectivity is a critical element to understanding and action.

Specific skills and knowledge

These (aspects of specific skills and knowledge) are the things that DET has focused on in our T and D and they have done a good job.

Emotional intelligence, the ability to stay in balance when times are tough, is much more important a skill to have than (knowing) what policy is current. You can always fnd out information.

Character is more important.

Being a principal is not about being the best teacher at the classroom level but it is about being able to identify those who are and those who aren’t; being able to see what works for students and how to get other people to do it.

Decision-making, knowledge growth are important and the principal must be a life long learner. There must be pedagogy understanding, curriculum knowledge and administrative ability (too). Experience and mentoring make (all this) happen successfully.

These findings align well with those from parallel studies of early career professional capability (Scott and Yates, 2002), with earlier work by people like Schön (1983, 1987), Scott (1997, 1999: Chapter 5) and more recent investigations of leadership in education by Fullan (2001b):

Five components of leadership represent independent but mutually reinforcing forces for positive change ... (having) moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference. Second it is essential for leaders to understand the change process. Moral purpose without an understanding of change will lead to moral martyrdom ...

Third, we have found that the single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve things get better ... Fourth, (effective) leaders commit themselves to constantly generating and increasing knowledge inside and outside the organization ... effective leaders tolerate enough ambiguity to keep the creative juices flowing, but along the way ... they seek coherence ... There is another set of seemingly more personal characteristics that all effective leaders possess, which I have labelled the energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness constellation. The conclusion then is that leaders will increase their effectiveness if they continually work on the five components of leadership—if they pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building and strive for coherence—with energy, enthusiasm and hopefulness.

(Fullan, 2001b: pp. 3–11).
Learning Principals

There are also some interesting parallels with research on the attributes of effective teachers of adults (Foley, 2000; Scott and Richardson, forthcoming) which suggests that the most effective leaders are also very effective adult educators, people who are able to design and deliver responsive, flexible, effective organisational learning and improvement projects for their staff. As Senge (1990) observed over a decade ago:

At its heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people’s powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master forces of change, defects which can be remedied only by a few great leaders .... The new view of leadership in learning organisations centres on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organisation leaders are designers, stewards and teachers.

Informing this study was the work of the NSW principals’ professional associations and the DET Leading and Managing the School (2000) document. The leadership capability framework proposed by the NSWPPA and NSWSFC lists a set of attributes identified by the profession as fundamental to leadership effectiveness. These attributes align closely with those identified and rated as important in the current study.

What the present study demonstrates is not just the relative importance of these attributes, but where they fit and how they interact. As the professional capability framework (Figure 1) indicates, these attributes must work in synergy if a principal is to perform effectively. The DET document Leading and Managing the School (2000) gives a comprehensive profile of the principal’s role and its accountabilities. What the current study does is to identify the combination of capabilities necessary to deliver these functions effectively.

Does the relative importance and interaction of these attributes vary depending on demographic factors like school level or location?

As Table 1 indicates, when the results for metropolitan and non-metropolitan principals were compared, six of the 45 leadership capability items showed a difference of 0.25 or more on the five point importance scale. These items are listed below (highest differences first). None of these items were in the top twelve on importance. The difference between the two groups is indicated in brackets, with the mean rating of metropolitan principals being consistently higher than their non-metropolitan colleagues.

| Item 32: Having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skill (+0.35) |
| Item 37: Understanding the role of risk management and litigation in current professional work (+0.31) |
| Item 39: An ability to help others in the workplace through best practice in adult learning (+0.28) |
| Item 31: An ability to recognise patterns in a complex situation (+0.27) |
| Item 27: An ability to trace out and assess the consequences of alternative courses of action and, from this, pick the one most suitable (+0.26) |
| Item 44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (+0.25) |

This suggests that the operating context for metropolitan principals may, on average, be more challenging than that of their non-metropolitan colleagues. However, there is insufficient data to confirm this interpretation and the hypothesis would require confirmation in a more specific follow-up study.

When the mean importance ratings on the capability items for primary and secondary school principals were compared only one item showed a difference of 0.25 or more. This was Item 45: Understanding of industrial relations issues and process. In this instance, the secondary principals allocated a much higher importance rating than their primary school colleagues (4.44 compared with 3.99, a difference of 0.45).
Given these findings, it appears that the nature of the principal's work and the capabilities needed to undertake the role, are similar regardless of demographic factors.

**What learning approaches, focus and resources optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified?**

This question was addressed in a range of ways during the empirical phases of the study. First, questions on it were included in the Phase 1 interviews (Appendix 1). In the Phase 2 online survey (Appendix 2), respondents were asked questions on this issue on three occasions. First, at the outset of the survey, they were asked to identify and assess the relative importance of the range of formal and informal forms of support they had experienced in their development as a principal. Then, when identifying the relative importance of the leadership capabilities just discussed, they were asked to rate the extent to which their prior training and development as a principal had focused on each capability. Finally, in the concluding section of the online survey, respondents were asked to rate a range of professional development strategies identified from earlier research as being effective, first on the importance of each in making learning relevant, interesting and engaging and then on the extent to which their prior principal training and development programs had used this strategy effectively.

Respondent comments on these ratings were then analysed and recurring themes identified. The results below provide a detailed insight into how DET might best refine and enhance its leadership development strategies in this area.

**Prior training and support for the role as principal**

In the first section of the online survey (Appendix 2) respondents were asked to identify the relative importance of a range of formal or informal types of support in their development as a principal. The following results are significant.

**The role of higher education qualifications in principal development**

Key results concerning the relative importance of higher education qualifications in respondents' development as a principal include:

- A significant number of respondents reported completing basic degrees (82%) and graduate diplomas (51%). However, as these were, presumably, primarily oriented towards initial teaching, they understandably did not attract a very high rating for importance in respondents' development as a principal. For example, of those who had completed either of these qualifications, only 10% rated the importance of their undergraduate degree in supporting their development as a principal as being high (i.e. 5/5 on the five point rating scale) and 9% the graduate diploma. The mean importance rating for the degree in supporting development as a principal was low at 2.4 and for the graduate diploma 2.5.

- Higher degrees generally fared better. For example, of the 36% of the respondents who reported having done a Masters degree, some 28% of this group rated its importance in their development as a principal as being high, with the mean importance rating for the item being 3.8. Further investigation could identify which Masters degrees were achieving the highest importance ratings. Increasing the number of principals taking such qualifications could be considered, especially if these could be made more consistently workplace relevant and were shown to meet the other quality indicators for an effective principal development program identified later.

- The percentage of respondents who reported having undertaken a doctorate was comparatively low, with 3% reporting taking a PhD and 18% an EdD. Of the respondents who reported having completed one of these qualifications 0% reported the PhD as being important in their development as a principal (mean importance rating 1.0). However, for those who had undertaken the EdD, some 27% said it had been of high importance in this regard (mean importance rating 3.3). Further investigation could identify which EdDs were associated with the highest ratings and similar strategies for scaling up participation to those suggested in relation to Masters Degrees could be considered.
Learning Principals

The qualitative data helps explain these quantitative results, with the following comments being typical.

The EdD course was very useful—the PhD for me was not very useful in assisting my work as a principal.

The masters degree thesis (was useful) because it allowed me to research an area of education that was directly related to my work.

I was sponsored to complete my MEd Admin by the Dept at the time of School Renewal. I had the best of both worlds. Senior Departmental officers lecturing along with academic staff ... practical along with theoretical.

Today we are more isolated in our schools and the system is not conducive to professional development. Also the role has grown exponentially and the exhaustion factor sets in as well as having to deal with the impenetrable bureaucratisation of the system.

Importance and performance of specific principal short course programs

Key findings concerning respondents' participation in and the relative importance of a range of formal principal development programs and short courses provided by DET and other groups provide some useful insights into leadership development.

Reported participation rates in DET-provided short course programs for principals varied widely, depending on the type of program concerned, as the following list demonstrates (in rank order, highest % of respondents reporting participation first):

- Leadership seminars (61%)
- Certificate in School Leadership and Management (46%)
- Principals' School Development Program (43%)
- Mentoring program (24%)
- School Leadership Preparation Program (22%)
- Team Leader course (22%)
- Executive shadowing (20%)
- Certificate in Teaching and Learning (12%).

Some 48% of respondents reported undertaking formal short course programs with relevance to their development as principals which were provided by groups other than DET. These included, in rank order:

- Principals' Association/Council courses and conferences (15 citations)
- District-initiated programs (11)
- Mediation, conflict training courses or similar (9)
- Management courses (8)
- Choice Theory/Reality Therapy (CTRT) programs (7)
- International conferences/seminars (6)
- Principals' induction programs (5)
- A range of other courses and programs including the Effective Schools Program, ACE Programs, Leadership Management Coaching, Toastmasters or equivalent.

For respondents who had undertaken the above programs, the ones rated highest on importance in supporting their development as a principal were (in rank order):

- Other courses or programs (mean importance rating 3.8 with 31% marking “high”)
- DET executive shadowing programs (mean importance rating 3.4, with 20% marking “high”)
- DET Certificate in School Leadership and Management (mean importance rating 3.3, with 18% marking “high”)
Learning Principals

- DET Principals’ School Development Program (mean importance rating 3.1, with 17% marking “high”)
- DET Team Leader course (mean importance rating 3.1, with 16% marking “high”)
- DET Mentoring program (mean importance rating 3.1, with 15% marking “high”)
- DET Leadership seminars (mean importance rating 3.1, with 14% marking “high”)
- DET School Leadership Preparation Program (mean importance rating 2.8, with 20% marking “high”)
- DET Certificate in Teaching and Learning (mean importance rating of 2.6, with 0.4% marking “high”)

These data are explained in more detail when the results of a qualitative analysis of respondents’ comments are discussed later.

Typical overall comments on the above ratings include:

It is obvious to me from completing this survey how little effective T & D I have had that has really assisted me as a principal.

Specific skills and knowledge have been the area where DET T & D has focused in terms of principals’ T & D at the expense of other areas.

T & D has been more effective in the skills area.

Apart from studying psychology at university and the odd T & D activity, very little attention is given to these matters by the Dept. The Dept over many years has focused on “change” issues not the reality of leadership in a school. Thus the importance of colleagues and formal/informal mentoring.

From memory, most of my pre-principalship training did not address the personal qualities; it tended to address processes and mandatory procedures and policies.

The initial free (capability) areas are ones I cannot remember ever being touched upon in any kind of “training”. They have only been touched on in informal discussions, but still they are recognised as important.

Most training is focused on knowledge.

Specific skills and knowledge are the things that DET has focused on in our T & D and they have done a good job.

Training is essentially compliance dumping.

My formal training (MEd, Admin) has been done since my appointment as principal.

Specific T & D takes on greater importance when you are actually in the job.

The “Stages” program for school executive was one of the best developmental courses ever designed and is the only course for many years that had practical application to the role of the principal.

The above findings identify a number of issues which recur throughout the Phase 2 data. First, they indicate that many principals have not undertaken formal training programs to be a school leader. Second, a significant number of those who have, can see considerable room for improvement in what is provided, with as many respondents giving an activity a 1 or 2 ranking as those giving it a 4 or 5. Third, there are indications that programs provided by groups other than DET, are seen to be as useful as those provided by the Department.
Learning Principals

Less formal types of support for principal development
The relevance of more informal, peer, networked types of support was given consistent emphasis in both the quantitative and qualitative results.

For example, the percentage of respondents reporting use of the following forms of informal, “just-in-time, just-for-me” support was, in rank order (highest first):

- Fellow principals (100%)
- District superintendent (100%)
- District office staff (99%)
- Principals’ Association or Council (99%)
- Professional reading (99%)
- Family and friends (98%)
- School executive (95%)
- School senior executives (94%)
- Parent groups (93%)
- Other DET support staff (94%)
- Community groups and organisations (90%)
- Professional association (e.g. ACE) (80%)
- Internet (e.g. chat groups) (60%)
- Other (32%).

For those who had used each of these less formal forms of support, the ones rated highest on importance in supporting respondents’ development as a principal were (in rank order):

- Other forms of informal support (mean importance rating 4.4 with 67% marking “high”)
- Fellow principals (mean importance rating 4.4 with 64% marking “high”)
- Informal mentor (mean importance rating 3.9 with 42% marking “high”)
- Principals’ Association or Council (mean importance rating 3.8 with 33% marking “high”)
- Professional reading (mean importance rating 3.8 with 30% marking “high”)
- School senior executives (mean importance rating 3.5 with 25% marking “high”)
- Family and friends (mean importance rating 3.2 with 22% marking “high”)
- District superintendent (mean importance rating 3.2 with 23% marking “high”)
- School executives (mean importance rating 3.1 with 14% marking “high”)
- Professional association (e.g. ACE) (mean importance rating 3.0 with 13% marking “high”)
- District office staff (mean importance rating 2.7 with 12% marking “high”)
- Parent groups (mean importance rating 2.5 with 9% marking “high”)
- Other DET support staff (mean importance rating 2.4 with 8% marking “high”)
- Community groups and organisations (mean importance rating 2.3 with 7% marking “high”)
- Internet (e.g. chat groups) (mean importance rating 1.8 with 2% marking “high”).

What these results mean on a practical day-to-day level is illustrated later when a detailed qualitative analysis of respondents’ comments on these areas is given. Some typical overall comments include:

Out of my PSPD program I became part of a network of five SSP principals which has continued for about five years. This, as well as the wider SSP network, have been the most influential in my professional development.

The development of skills and understandings in these areas has been best addressed for me through informal mentoring with colleagues who are also friends and in the use of collegial structures in programs like PSPD … coaching techniques here would be very useful.
Most of my professional development has come from my own perseverance and trials.

A lot of personal effectiveness is built up over years and experience. Former executive experiences made a difference but in the end learning from strengths and weaknesses as well as from peers has made the most impact.

We learn from our errors—hopefully.

I learnt a great deal from being a DP and a relieving principal.

There have been no courses for me to access that have led to principaship. One’s own views, judgements, opinions and courses of action in the above areas have been developed through trial and error.

My best training for these personal characteristics came from my upbringing.

The above findings align with comments made in the study’s phase one interviews, with what respondents said throughout the Phase 2 data and are consistent with the broader base of adult learning research reviewed at the outset of this report. They confirm the importance of peer-supported learning, how the most productive professional learning arises out of having to confront and resolve ongoing workplace problems through a combination of “learning by doing” and having “just-in-time” access to those who have already effectively addressed similar issues and dilemmas. Some key resources for peer-supported learning are identified (e.g. fellow or retired principals) and a clear role for workplace-relevant professional reading emerges. A number of findings warrant follow-up.

Extent to which prior training and development was focused on leadership capabilities identified as being most important

The results for items 1 to 45 in the right-hand column of Table 1 present respondents’ assessment of the extent to which their prior training and development for the principalship was seen to focus on each of the leadership capabilities identified earlier as being important for effective principaship. Diagram 1 shows the relative position of each item in terms not only of importance, but also in terms of the performance of prior training and development in addressing it. Items in Diagram 1 which are high on importance and low on performance (the south-east corner of Diagram 1) indicate areas for further investigation and enhancement, those which are high on both measures (the north-east corner) indicate areas of current good practice.

Diagram 1 shows that prior training and development for the principalship had focused on some but not all of the top ten capability items on importance.

Table 2 shows the ranking and mean on performance for the ten leadership capability items ranked highest on importance.
Table 2: Focus on leadership capability items rated highest in importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank on importance for effective performance as a principal (mean)</th>
<th>Rank on the extent to which previous T &amp; D focused on this (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure</td>
<td>1 (4.85)</td>
<td>26 (2.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective</td>
<td>2 (4.81)</td>
<td>19 (2.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision of where the school must head</td>
<td>3 (4.60)</td>
<td>2 (3.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations</td>
<td>4 (4.78)</td>
<td>13 (2.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible</td>
<td>5 (4.75)</td>
<td>3 (3.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Being able to bounce back from adversity</td>
<td>6 (4.74)</td>
<td>31 (2.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: The ability to empathise and work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds</td>
<td>7 (4.74)</td>
<td>16 (2.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision</td>
<td>8 (4.73)</td>
<td>29 (2.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities</td>
<td>9 (4.72)</td>
<td>5 (3.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision</td>
<td>10 (4.71)</td>
<td>11 (2.96)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their comments on the above ratings, respondents noted that some of these high importance aspects of capability would, in their view, be comparatively unamenable to formal instruction or training (e.g. items 4, 11 and 12). They did emphasise, however, that these could still be addressed productively through less formal and more ongoing learning strategies (e.g. mentoring and coaching using the study’s findings as a diagnostic framework) and that they should certainly be given more specific attention when seeking to identify and appoint new principals. Other areas (e.g. items 7, 22, 13 and 9) were, they said, far more open to direct attention in principal development programs but were not, as the results in the table above indicate, receiving adequate attention.

Consistent with the findings on the relevance of the more formal types of support currently available to principals discussed earlier, overall ratings on the extent to which existing training and development for the role was focusing on the 45 capability items were comparatively low, with just 10 of these, attracting a training and development performance mean of more than 3.0 (neutral on the 5-point rating scale).

Table 1 shows that, of the capability items rated highest on performance (i.e. as being the focus for prior training and development as a principal), the majority come from the Specific Skills and Knowledge Scale, as follows:

- six come from the specific skills and knowledge scale (item 32: high level of pedagogical knowledge; item 34: management of own professional development; item 36: effective presentations; item 38: program implementation; item 41: work and time management; and item 42: clear school vision)
• two from the Emotional Intelligence (Personal) Scale (item 7: wanting to achieve the best outcome possible and item 8: willingness to take responsibility for projects)
• one from the Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) Scale (item 20: ability to contribute positively to team-based projects)
• one from the Intellectual Capability Scale (item 30: being able to set and justify priorities).

The top ranking item on performance was item 32 (Having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skill), followed by item 42 (Having a clear justified vision of where the school must head), item 7 (Wanting to achieve the best possible outcome), item 20 (Being able to develop and contribute positively to team-based programs) and item 30 (being able to set and justify priorities).

It is not surprising that a number of these items, for example, those concerned with pedagogy and school vision, attracted high ratings for their training and development focus, as these have been the subject of considerable professional development attention in DET in recent years.

It is significant, as Diagram 1 shows, that some of these items (e.g. 14, 30, 42, 7) also attracted comparatively high importance ratings. However, others attracted a much lower importance rating (e.g. items 32, 34, 36, 38).

Typical comments by respondents on their ratings for this measure included:

Most principals go from the classroom to principalship with the barest of principal development. Also many of the points for effective leadership never appear in advertisements for principal positions.

I believe all of these attributes are equally important, however there have been precious few opportunities at an in-service level to work on emotional intelligence.

There is very little or no training provided to increase ability in any of these areas that I had access to or was part of. The biggest training I think I had in gaining these abilities was (on the job) in my previous position.

It is my belief that understanding emotional literacy should be an integral part of the training of principals.

These personal qualities were not highlighted in the CSLM modules I did ... and not strongly emphasised in my MEd Admin, though they do appear in some of the related and subsequent professional reading I have done.

Most leadership programs focus on the skill and importance of curriculum understandings ... While these are important, the development of our emotional capacities to cope with the role are often overlooked.

T & D has been more effective in the skills area.

I believe that most preparation programs have focused on processes, theory and ... the development of participants' understanding of what has to be done ... but limited accent on the "how".

The training I received ... focused on things like properties, OHS, money management, legal issues and efficiency programs etc. Personal strengthening is not addressed.

Some compliance training needs to remain, although this should be the minor portion of PD training for principals.
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(The area of specific skills and knowledge) has been where DET T & D has focused in terms of principals' T & D at the expense of other areas.

The training and development I have received has not necessarily impacted upon any of the areas listed above.

Emotional intelligence, the ability to stay in balance when times are tough, is much more important a skill to have than (knowing) what policy is current. You can always find out information.

I have not participated in any specific preparation programs which address the majority of these items. "Experience" is the only teacher I have had for most of these.

(Key skills as a principal) have been gained through shadowing, observing principals, making mistakes and acting in the role.

I am not sure that you can teach these to anyone. You can, however, learn them by experience. Perhaps a meaningful collegial or mentor relationship would assist people to develop these capabilities.

As a new principal in a rural isolated school, there was no real preparation for difficult situations/parents etc. I have had to contact principals off my own bat and seek help. I don't mind doing this by the way but feel the DET could coordinate things a bit better for new principals. After all we learn by doing, not by listening to others.

These findings give a clear indication of how the focus of more formal DET leadership preparation programs might be enhanced. They confirm also that informal peer-supported learning is central to assisting new or aspiring principals come to grips with the challenges of the role and in helping them to develop leadership capabilities like emotional intelligence, attributes which, although unnameable to formal instruction, are still learnable through observation, guided reflection and coaching. These findings align with the reviews of staff development programs in education by Fullan (2001a: 281).

The most effective learning strategies and resources for principal development

Diagram 1 and the final section of Table 1 (items 46-57) show the learning methods rated highest on importance by respondents for making principal development programs relevant, interesting and engaging (left-hand column) and then the extent to which prior training and development programs on the role has focused effectively on using these strategies (right-hand column).

The learning strategy items ranked highest on importance were (in rank order):

Item 54 Ensure that teaching staff running these programs have current workplace experience (mean importance rating 4.81).

Item 53 Ensure that all principal development programs model the key attributes identified as being important in this research (mean importance rating 4.66).

Item 49 Use effective principals more consistently as a learning resource in these programs (e.g. as mentors or coaches) (mean importance rating 4.65).

Item 47 Use real-life workplace problems identified by effective principals as a key resource for learning (mean importance rating 4.62).

Item 46 Focus more directly on the capabilities identified as being important as a result of this survey (mean importance rating 4.55).

Item 51 Include learning experiences based on real-life case studies that specifically develop the interpersonal and personal skills needed by a principal (mean importance rating 4.46).

It is noteworthy that item 54 attracted the second highest overall mean importance ranking of all 57 items surveyed (4.81).
However, as Diagram 1 and the right-hand column in Table 1 show, all twelve learning strategies surveyed (i.e. items 46–57) received very low performance ratings for effective deployment in current principal development programs, with none attracting a rating for effective current use of more than 2.67. This identifies a key area for improvement for DET in its overall approach to the design and delivery of its learning programs for principals.

A detailed qualitative analysis of respondents’ comments on the most and least relevant forms of principal training and development and sources of support understandably aligns with the above ratings and produced the following results. Table 3 on the next page gives a count on the most relevant forms of training and development and support identified in respondents’ comments and Table 4, the least relevant ones.

This analysis, when combined with earlier quantitative results and the comments that follow, gives a comprehensive picture of what does and does not engage principals in productive learning. The factors which emerge are completely consistent with those identified in the Productive Adult Learning Framework (RATED CLASS A) identified at the outset of this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of training and development or support identified as most relevant</th>
<th>Number of times cited (Total no. comments = 235)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Informal interactions with peers and “just in time”, “just for me” collegial support(^\text{24})</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentoring and coaching on identified real life problems and skills</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience gained in earlier leadership positions(^\text{25})</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in formal principal networks</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principals’ Council or Association Activities, Conferences and courses</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practical problem-based workshops and action learning groups of principals</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shadowing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning from on-the-job trial and error</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principals’ Induction Program</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional reading(^\text{26})</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Need to know” contact with district superintendent or other D.O. staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of real-life cases with peers as presenters</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other specific courses(^\text{27})</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Masters degree and other PG courses</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PDSP</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District Office activities and meetings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visits to other schools or systems</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contact with inspiring international experts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in principals’ listservs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mandatory DET Compliance Training</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing one’s own T and D course for other principals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• IT/ISML based learning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having to develop a school vision</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{24}\) The most popular aspects of this type of support included informal observation of previous principals (both good and bad) and other successful leaders, having access to “cold hands” in one’s specific job area, district discussions, principals’ “care and share” sessions, use of telephone buddies, use of an informal district-based principals’ peer help line.

\(^{25}\) These include earlier relieving positions, secondments to head or district office in a range of roles, including as a consultant, work as a head teacher, deputy principal, being the chair of a committee and taking up leadership roles in other organisations and institutions.

\(^{26}\) Most cited sources of useful professional reading included “The practicing administrator”, Unicorn, ACE publications, Inform, NSW Teachers Federation publications.

\(^{27}\) Choice theory/reality therapy; CMIT, Financial Management, Live in programs, Child Protection.
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Table 4: Least relevant forms of training and development and support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of training and development or support identified as least relevant</th>
<th>Number of times cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information overloaded, large group sessions with endless “talking heads” and “death by overheads”</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET mandatory, compliance training28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T and D programs that are generic and unresponsive to the unique workplace context, needs and problems of participants</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T and D programs that fail to link theory with practice</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of presenters with low credibility and little recent school experience or understanding</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T and D “in a folder”: use of glossy packages, videos, CD-ROMs and sessions in which principals are taken tediously through the contents of “off-the-shelf” packages</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-off, off-site T and D with little workplace follow-up or support</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train-the-trainer and “cascading” approaches to policy implementation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluttered, rushed, unfocused meetings with no practical outcome</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal induction programs that are too generic and too focused on the “warm and fuzzy”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.T. based courses that assume information is learning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Masters and PG programs with little focus on work-based relevance and action research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that are hard to access</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-help groups where “the blind lead the blind”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the results in Tables 3 and 4 are compared a number of things emerge.

- Informal forms of learning and support, especially informal contacts and networking with peers emerge as a key learning support for principal development. This aligns with results on the most productive forms of training and development and support for principal development discussed earlier. The result is also consistent with the findings of Alan Tough’s (1979) widely replicated research on effective adult learning projects. These informal approaches to peer supported learning can be supplemented by more formal peer learning strategies like mentoring and coaching. However mentoring approaches need to be carefully managed, as data from the current study and evaluations of parallel approaches to professional development and review in universities demonstrate (see, for example, UTS Quality Development Unit, 2000).

- Some forms of training and development and support are universally seen as being relevant by respondents. These include informal peer contact and support; mentoring (provided the mentors are well selected, have time to assist and are trained); shadowing; most of the activities and conferences run by the NSWSPC and PPA; learning on the job; the learning that emerges from previous leadership experiences; and targeted professional reading.

- Other forms get a more mixed reception (e.g. principals’ induction programs, DET mandatory compliance training which gets some plaudits but is mainly seen as being unhelpful; peer-supported action learning groups, with those where “the blind are left to lead the blind” being viewed unhelpfully; IT-enabled learning; some university masters’ degrees and other postgraduate programs).

- Another group is viewed universally as being unhelpful (e.g. information-overloaded large group sessions with endless talking heads and “death by overhead transparency or PowerPoint”; generic “one-size fits all” programs unresponsive to participants’ workplace contexts and priorities; sessions that fail to link theory with practice; train-the-trainer and cascading approaches to policy dissemination; “training and development by glossy package, CD-ROM or video”; use of presenters with little current experience of schools or...
understanding of the daily work of the principal; cluttered, unfocused meetings with no practical outcome; one-off workshops with no workplace follow-up).

- The preferred forms of training and development and support are consistent with research from other sources on what engages adults in productive learning (as summarised in the RATED CLASS A framework). They also align with the sorts of training and development identified as being most important earlier when prior experiences with training and development were assessed.

- Consistent with the quantitative results IT-enabled learning receives comparatively little support, apart from its use for informal contact amongst principals using a listserv.

- Respondents repeatedly emphasised the need to be more proactive in identifying people with the potential to become principals, using the endorsed capability framework produced from this study in combination with earlier documents produced by DET and the principals’ professional groups to ensure the process is valid. This, they said, was especially important when looking for people with the sorts of personal and interpersonal emotional intelligence identified in this study as being so important.

Typical comments by respondents on these themes include:

Informal learning and use of fellow principals as a learning support
My best training ground as a principal came from the observations and experiences made from working under people I believe were effective principals and conversely those who were not effective whom I would never emulate.

Informal interactions with other principals I believe is highly productive.

Most of the time the learning and sharing takes place at conferences during morning teas and lunches where we share the problems.

The “care and share” sessions in which principals relate real-life experiences are the most relevant to me as they allow me to reflect on how I would have handled that situation.

Use of acting positions and shadowing
Though I am young, I see the importance of a variety of experiences in leadership roles prior to becoming a principal.

Many of these capabilities are developed in the leadership roles of HT and DP in secondary schools. Maybe if we focused more on succession planning and collegial coaching models based in strong work-based learning we would address more capabilities than we do at present.

Allow aspirants the chance to act as principal whilst their principal is still on site to mentor, provide feedback, or allow them to go to other workplaces to do this for reasonably lengthy periods.

Leadership opportunities are a wonderful way of assessing suitability but are also sometimes difficult to provide because ultimately you never have full responsibility until you are the principal.

Preparation for the job builds steadily as you take on roles and responsibilities; leading committees, executive roles, district and wider positions etc.

Learning from effective principals is most effective through mentoring, co-learning or shadowing.

Mentoring and coaching
Mentoring at the local level is probably one of the most effective ways of changing practice— principals check themselves against the framework then their trusted mentor
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does the same after a couple of days shadowing. The pair then agree on a program for development.

You learn best from the best. Never remove the personal element from T & D for principals. I have learnt everything of value from experienced colleagues and mentors.

Mentoring with a highly respected and more experienced colleague in my early years as a principal has been of the greatest benefit.

Use principals as mentors, including the wisdom of retired principals.

The most useful training I’ve had is workplace-based with effective staff as mentors.

The training that best helped me was that which senior principals provided.

Use of mentors must be quality controlled.

I’m worried at the push for more mentoring. I find time is crucial there.

If it is meant for principals to rate themselves and work with a mentor to further develop their capabilities then there is not a problem; except for deciding who is to be the mentor. If the idea is for someone to come into the school; observe the principal and then tell the principal where they need to improve; and provide a couple of courses to attend, you will cause an even greater barrier to teachers taking on leadership positions.

Yes, you’re getting near the money now. This is starting to align itself with the coaching courses I have completed earlier this year. What a challenge!

I believe that very effective mentoring occurred when we had an inspectorial system and supervisors were getting you ready for a list inspection.

Use of principal networks
I would like to establish a learning collegiate in my district next year that provides interested colleagues with an opportunity for some professional dialogue through sharing professional reading as well as an avenue for sharing our experiences, good and bad and how we are managing issues.

I feel I’m learning on the job and there have been times when I’ve felt quite overwhelmed. Colleagues are also very busy and one doesn’t want to worry them. I have also found there appears to be a culture of “I’m doing brilliantly” amongst beginning principals and it’s not until later you become aware that people have had their struggles and have not felt comfortable in sharing them. This is a worry. We need more formalised networking and a more conscientious approach from our more experienced colleagues to support us in collegial groups.

Formal university programs
One of the things in my masters was some work with members of DET—notable were (names deleted)—they encouraged us to do research that was relevant to our roles at the time and forced some self-reflection.

Professional reading
I enjoy professional reading. I get ideas from these different sources (including interesting speakers for conferences) and implement them strategically.

Time to read professionally and to discuss and think about issues and innovative ideas is also important.
Avoid “one size fits all” approaches to training and development
T & D could be “tailor made” for principals through individual plans.

I understand where principals are in terms of their development. Attempt to individualise the learning as we are expected to for students.

I have doubts about I.T. and self-paced modules for T & D.

I have absolutely detested the mandatory training for Child Protection, Chemical Safety etc. The train the trainer model has some serious flaws; often boring and repetitive.

Courses offered at a more local level taking into account the needs of those involved are vital but they need to be face-to-face. Practical applications are also important.

A program that addresses a gap in your knowledge and teaches you how to implement it in a school without the program being one more thing that you stack in the glass book case.

The principal needs to do a “stocktake” or an inventory or some sort of process (using the capability framework in this study) to determine “what is happening now”. Some areas may be going really well. Therefore the principal wouldn’t need support there. The principal may need support in the area of student welfare or staff welfare or interpersonal skills. Then, ideally a coach could work with the principal who would establish goals for, say a semester. Regular phone hook-ups would enable the coach and principal to discuss progress on the goals and to set action plans. I say phone, because much of this process can be done by phone. I believe there are principals who could be trained to coach other principals. Some of these might be older (wiser?) principals and some would be younger ones … Honest feedback is something that is most important here and would need to be built into the process … perhaps there needs to be checks during the process … maybe 360 degree feedback.

Experiential learning and workplace relevance
Learning is best retained when it is experiential. Most principal T and D is of the talking head variety. We need practising principals to coordinate T and D based on real scenarios experienced by colleagues in schools.

I believe that preparation for the principalship is very important. Most aspirants have participated in one or more of the leadership courses that are currently available but there is very little offered on the practical day-to-day issues that they will face in their first year on the job. This should be a large component of any program for beginning principals.

Leaders learn best from doing it for themselves not necessarily imitating someone else.

Make programs more relevant to real-life situations.

I think we learn to develop effective strategies for the principalship best by “doing”, “experiencing”, “working with others”.

Real experiences with real people in real situations has greater potential for learners than modules.

Learning the skills of principalship is on-the-job training not textbook learning.

Need for principal development to focus on real life issues that principals have to deal with.

It is obvious to me from completing this survey how little effective T and D I have had that has really assisted me as a principal. Most of the real skills have come from dealing
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with a wide variety of day-to-day experiences and perhaps listening to other principals in informal discussions.

I'm committed to workplace training and development.

We can't abandon formal training either. Some structure is good in terms of adult learning. If the learners govern the pace and content, then the all important academic perspective (the objective big picture) can be missed.

Active not passive learning methods
Focus group discussions that allow people to explore issues in detail and then role play, evaluate and try approaches again and again are important.

Avoid the paper, essay response.

Quite often at district meetings there is such a crowded agenda that after all the consultants have their 15 minutes worth your head is in a spin.

(The use of) action learning groups of like-minded principals has been outstanding, the preparation under the supervision of a good principal who planned the experience, a superintendent who coaches although he does not do it consciously ... tertiary masters' study that has been made relevant by the workplace learning that has gone with it.

Working with talented colleagues on joint projects which have direct applications and the collaboration has been exciting and supportive.

The think tank, the group of principals problem and strategy sharing are most effective for me in that no one really knows what the realities of the job involves except another principal.

Credible trainers in touch with workplace realities
I don't believe you can really explain the principalship to anyone unless you have actually experienced it, so whoever runs training programs must have first-hand experience.

Most training programs do not explore real school and leadership problems and often avoid real case studies. These problems are usually an eye-opener when you get to face them.

Use case studies or workshops run by practicing principals.

Utilising current practitioners and tapping into their real life scenarios will have a far greater influence on principals than someone with a lot of theory but no real credibility at the coal face. This is not to say that significant data and research can't be part of the process.

A recent talk from someone in our Industrial Relations department who outlined some current and past dismissal cases they are involved in on a day-to-day basis was probably the most thought provoking and influential T and D experience for me in the last two years ... the fact that the situations and outcomes were real, had happened to my peers only recently was reinforcing.

(Also use) internationally and nationally identified leaders in our field (and closely related fields).

Development must be provided by credible practitioners.
Primary Principals Council, we have a lot of control ... so (our) T & D is based on ideas of principals in our district. We could certainly visit some of the matters raised in this survey.

If you want your appendix removed then it is unwise to rely on a butcher reading a surgery manual. We are specialists—we need specialists to assist.

Select early for the attributes that count
The most important thing is the selection of people to be principals. I don’t believe we are selecting the best ... We need principals who love teaching and learning, have outstanding interpersonal skills and a genuine concern about the welfare of everyone in the school community. There are many people who have these attributes and are not seeking promotion or not being selected. Once we have chosen the best people, the rest is (relatively) easy. Mentoring, working with outstanding principals in schools, attending courses that are practical and run by outstanding, quality school principals.

Importantly you have to have the right person for the job, not just the first one in the queue.

We must look at the individual and ensure they are the right person to be working with that school and those staff.

Programs that suggest that “now you are a principal, you need to develop and think about leadership qualities” are too late. I think we should support classroom teachers to see themselves in the role of school leaders... I think this needs to be addressed if we are to have strong leadership of schools in the future.

Surveying those who wish to take on principalship and match it to this one. The programs and agenda must be cooperative to be relevant.

Overall
Preparation comes through self analysis and seeking knowledge. One can transfer some of the knowledge from working with children in classrooms to working as a leader of a whole school... While I believe that some training can come from DET often the best knowledge comes from what one seeks for oneself whether it be with a mentor, a course, reading or a collegial group.

Training needs to embrace not only technique but attitude and thinking to deal with the complex and ambiguous realities. I have had no experience of training that provides this combination.

Use of ICT in principal development programs
Of particular interest is respondents' reactions to the two items concerning the potential use of information communication technologies (ICT) in the development of principals:

• Item 50: Decrease the amount of formal face-to-face training and development of basic technical skills and use self-instructional guides and ICT to develop these instead.

• Item 52: When relevant, use ICT to make learning as convenient and interactive as possible.

These items received the bottom ratings on importance for all 57 items surveyed and the bottom ratings for performance. In explaining these ratings respondents observed:

Inappropriateness for interpersonal learning
To be a successful principal you need to be a real "people person" with particularly good communication skills, huge amounts of patience and a genuine love of children ... I personally don’t believe it is a great way to enhance the learning of people wishing to be a principal as we are in the people business. I believe more opportunities for talking, discussing and even arguing points is a vital part of training.
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Technology is seen as a solution to many things but is weak in the area of development of people skills, values, beliefs and especially in dealing with the highly complex integration these issues bring into the workplace.

IT is a poor form of education for person-to-person dealings. It is impersonal and that is the current problem with much principal training.

ICT and preferred learning styles

The IT proposals may solve some resource problems in delivery of T & D for principals, but they would not be my preferred style of learning. The professional dialogue of colleagues cannot be overestimated.

I think IT is great but it can’t replace that personal chat, phone call or get together or T & D.

Whilst using technology is a good idea; especially to reduce time taken for travel which is a rural issue, it’s not my favourite way to learn.

I believe that online learning lacks the power of T & D which provides scope for discussion and interaction.

I strongly believe that sitting in front of a computer and getting T & D via a computer or TV screen are not the way to go. Travelling 50 to 150 kms after school to attend a T & D is also a waste of time. Sorry if IT is the future. I don’t want to be part of it.

I know IT could be time and cost effective but this is not how I learn or how I get the collegial warmth and support I feel is so important.

ICT literacy of principals

CD-ROM training packages are sometimes less than user friendly. While the media may be appropriate to principals with a high degree of computer skills, many of my colleagues struggle with these packages.

I found online learning hard, e.g. VITAL; as I had to flick between online and the booklet and kept losing track. Had to print everything to try to keep track—didn’t work. But that’s my style—incompatible.

I’m not sure IT is the best way … sometimes I feel like I’m already doing a correspondence course through distance education even though I’m in the city! Face-to-face is more powerful.

Online access to latest policy documents

DET has many, many policies. Principals need immediate access to these. With the policies constantly changing… the intranet can be used for this (ensuring principals have easy access to the latest version).

There were no differences of more than 0.25 between metropolitan and non-metropolitan principals on the mean importance ratings for each strategy. There was only one difference between primary and secondary principals (item 52: when relevant, use ICT to make learning more interactive and convenient) on this measure, with primary principals seeing ICT use as more important (mean rating 3.74) than their secondary colleagues (mean rating 3.45).

The only differences in performance concerned the use of the existing study’s results (item 53) and survey (item 57) to give training and development more focus. As these strategies have not been implemented this result is not, at this stage, relevant.

Summary of results

Both the quantitative and qualitative data generated through respondents’ assessment of the learning strategies outlined in items 46–57 confirm a number of themes which had already emerged in results from earlier parts of the survey. In particular, that formal learning
programs are most productive when they align with the learning design principles outlined in the RATED CLASS A quality tests, that informal learning methods and resources are as important as more formal ones; that workplace relevance is critical; that mentoring and coaching around the capability framework validated by the study is important to assure the quality of what is delivered and that there is a fair degree of scepticism about the potential of ICT for effective professional learning about the role.

This aligns with the conclusions of Fullan (2001a: 268-72).

*Cognitive scientists have made it powerfully clear that learning is meaning-making that requires a radically new way of approaching learning—one that guides the development of individual minds through many minds working together ... it is necessary to shift to what I have called a capacity-building strategy, in which the larger policy system focuses on preparing educators prior to and on the job for context-based solutions, which by definition require local problem-solving...*

*I think here is where the new insights of cognitive scientists and organisation theorists converge. Just as the former have discovered that learners must learn in context (because of their individuality and the uniqueness of their situations), the latter have concluded that improvement only occurs in context (again individual and setting uniqueness) ... (So) ... the best defense against the relentless pace of change is to build professional learning communities that are good at sorting out the worthwhile from the non-worthwhile, and are sources of support and healing when ill-conceived or random change takes its toll ... there is deep reciprocity between personal and social (shared) meaning. One contributes to the other, both are weakened in the absence of the other.*
Conclusions

I think you are on the right track with the general thrust of this survey. When I reflect on those principals who have been my inspiration or mentors they have scored extremely high on the personal/interpersonal skills they had rather than their "technical" ones or their ability to implement departmental procedures.

My T & D had very little focus on what the job is. We need to learn from this survey and research and develop much more appropriate T & D.

Principals

Research aims and questions

This study had the following aims and pursued six linked research questions based on these aims.

The Leadership Capability Research Project aimed to:

- Apply and refine the UTS capability research methodology with a sample of school principals from NSW DET identified as performing effectively on a specified range of indicators.
- From the data generated, produce:
  - a research validated leadership capability framework to give focus to NSW principal preparation, induction and development programs
  - a clear picture of the forms of professional learning and support that are most and least productive for principals.

In the light of the project's aims, its conceptual frameworks and the prior research which underpins them, the study sought to explore the following research questions:

Within the unique context of NSW public education to determine:

- What the concept “effective principal” means.
- What the role of the principal is currently like.
- What the most challenging aspects of the role are and whether these vary depending on demographic factors like school context and classification.
- What leadership capabilities play a central role in effective performance as a principal, what their relative importance is and in what ways they interact.
- Whether the relative importance and interaction of these attributes varies depending on demographic factors like school make-up, context and classification.
- What learning approaches, focus and resources optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified.

Based on the results of this study to these research questions the following conclusions are made.

The challenging world of the principal and indicators of effective performance

The world of the principal which emerges from this study is uncertain, constantly changing and entails having to judge continuously the significance of and respond successfully to a relentless influx of local events and broad external forces. Principals work in a context which is exceedingly complex, in which human, technical, policy, organisational and pedagogical factors are constantly intertwined. As principals try to negotiate the swampy realities of this daily practice they must paradoxically be able to give both clear direction yet be responsive and flexible, be able to both listen and lead, and be deft at using both top-down and bottom-up strategies. They need to have moral purpose and vision yet be pragmatic and politically adroit.
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There is a world characterised by an endless series of brief encounters and challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved. The most common challenges involve issues concerning poorly performing or problematic staff; threats of or actual physical violence; dealing with aggressive or litigious parents; having to undertake nominated transfers of staff; a world in which what one thought were little problems can suddenly blow up into something unexpectedly large. It is a role which appears to cycle between exhilaration and deflation. And it is a role which few outsiders appreciate for its complexity, risk, relentless uncertainty and ambiguity at the practical day-to-day level.

The study has established that, to be judged effective in such a context, principals must demonstrate:

- delivery of effective and innovative programs and whole school organisation
- high level involvement of student, parents or community in the life of the school
- positive perceptions of staff, peers and district superintendent as to the leadership practices of these principals
- commitment to the professional growth and development of self and others.

Required leadership capabilities

Once the daily realities and nature of the principal's work are appreciated, the unique and complex combination of leadership capabilities identified in the study as being critical to effective performance as a school leader become understandable. In particular, it becomes clear why technical and academic excellence are not enough, why these must work in combination with a high level of emotional intelligence (personal and social), and a contingent, diagnostic, focused and flexible way of thinking if the role of principal is to be effectively delivered.

The study confirms that it is the combination of all five aspects of professional capability outlined in Figure 1 that is necessary for effective performance as a principal and that emotional intelligence (both personal and social) is far more critical than previously understood.

The capability framework tested in the study has been uniformly endorsed by respondents and emerges as being a core resource for alerting all aspiring, new and experienced principals to what really counts for effective performance as a school leader. The study's findings align with previous publications from DET, such as Leading and managing the school, and with leadership capability frameworks developed by the NSWPPA and the NSWSPC. They also align with parallel research in other contexts, for example that cited by Fullan (2001b).

However, whilst endorsing the attributes identified in this earlier research and writing, the results of the present study take us much further.

The data in this study have been simultaneously drawn from a very large, carefully selected sample of 322 effective principals, representative of the many distinctive operating contexts for government schools across NSW. This has enabled the production of a more comprehensive, situated and valid picture of the leadership capabilities that count for effective practice than any study hitherto undertaken. Furthermore, this study shows how key leadership capabilities must interact if performance is to be effective and gives a much clearer indication of the relative importance of particular attributes in different contexts.

The study has demonstrated that the capability framework outlined in Figure 1 can successfully accommodate all of the data generated and that it provides an easily understood overview of the key domains of leadership capability, including the way in which they all must work together for effective performance.

The principals involved in the study consistently observed that completing the survey had turned out to be a learning experience in its own right. They said this was because it had provided them with a comprehensive framework against which to reflect systematically on
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their current experiences as a school leader and that, as a consequence, they had been assisted to make sense of and learn from this experience and to identify key aspects of their current approach which now required enhancement.

There is clear endorsement in the study’s qualitative data of the potential and relevance of using the validated capability framework as a diagnostic tool to ensure that individual coaching, mentoring and improvement programs, which emerge as a key learning strategy for principals, are given a more consistent and comprehensive focus. In this regard there is considerable potential to adapt proven approaches to individualised professional development and review, by adapting the learning contract and performance enhancement methods developed over the past twenty years at UTS.29

It is significant that every one of the 45 components of leadership capability identified in the survey was rated as being important, with the lowest mean rating on this measure being 4.05. This confirms the validity of what had been identified from a review of earlier research and program endorsing DfT and professional association documents and from the phase one interviews. It is also significant that a high level of alignment exists between principals’ self-assessment on these items and the perceptions of their leadership capabilities given by those who nominated them.

There are important links between this study’s findings on the role of school leaders in fostering organisational learning and the results of parallel research on effective teachers of adults. This suggests that one key way to view the role might be to see school principals as organisers of flexible, responsive, work-based staff learning programs focused on supporting the effective implementation of key improvement priorities for their school. In this role the school leader would coordinate the development and delivery of an ongoing set of local, customised learning programs, each specifically focused on assisting identified staff to address those gaps in their expertise necessary to deliver desired educational improvements to their students in demonstrably beneficial ways. It also requires a more sophisticated system for knowledge-sharing about good practice in schools than currently exists, because, as we have seen, it is access to effective practice elsewhere which is one of the most valued resources for practical professional learning.

It is clear that, although some of the key leadership capabilities identified by the study may not be amenable to formal training, they are learnable, typically through ongoing experience supported by guided reflection, coaching and mentoring, using the study’s validated capability framework. Furthermore, the study’s findings indicate there is considerable potential to use this capability framework more strategically and systematically to identify and support teaching staff with the potential to become effective school leaders well in advance of their actual appointment.

Although there are some minor differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan and between primary and secondary principals there is a surprising uniformity in what respondents say about the above issues.

Strategies for principal development and support

In terms of the other key purpose of the study—to identify the approaches to principal development and support that are most productive—we now have a much clearer picture of how best to proceed.

The study demonstrates that existing, formal principal development programs require considerable enhancement if they are to meet the quality tests for an effective learning program endorsed by the 322 principals involved in the study. Although the learning strategies listed in items 46–57 (with the notable exception of those concerned with ICT-enabled learning) received consistently high importance ratings, they received very low

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29 For details of the learning contract method see Anderson, G et al (1996) and for details of the UTS approach to professional development and review see UTS Quality Development Unit (2000).
ratings for effective current use. For example, none of these strategies received a mean performance rating higher than 2.67. Deploying these high ranking learning strategies more effectively represents a key improvement priority for DET if its formal development programs for principals are to be effective.

What emerges from the study about the factors necessary for productive professional learning for principals is consistent with extensive research in other sectors and confirms the validity of the RATED CLASS A learning quality framework outlined at the outset of this report. The data also confirm that informal, ongoing sources and approaches to learning are critical influences on the development of principals, something which has been known for many years from research by people like Alan Tough (1977).

There is extensive qualitative data from this study to indicate exactly how DET might address the above quantitative findings and strategically improve professional learning and support for the principalship. Below the key findings on this issue are summarised. They provide an interesting benchmark for comparison with DET’s current improvement priorities for student learning and are already being reflected in significant changes in other sectors, in particular post-secondary and higher education. They include:

- Make professional development much more flexible and responsive in terms of its content, focus, time and location. This would mean that professional development for principals would apply and test the same flexible and responsive learning strategies currently being advocated for use with school students, including approaches which are proving effective in other sectors of education.

- The study definitively demonstrates that informal, ongoing support from fellow principals operating in a similar context is a key resource. There is considerable potential to support and acknowledge this form of support more actively. This could include facilitating the more consistent use of principal networks, especially where these are used to identify effective solutions to those priority areas for personal and school improvement identified by the participants using the principal leadership capability framework or other quality assurance frameworks.

- Whenever formal training is used, it should focus on all five domains of the capability framework not just job-specific skills and knowledge.

- Off-the-job courses should be more custom-tailored and address the current improvement priorities and dilemmas faced by principals, identified through the use of the study’s capability framework and workplace tracking and research. The content of such programs should include reference to how such priorities and dilemmas are being addressed successfully in other parts of the system, drawing upon relevant, good practice case studies like the 322 developed in the present study and other sources.

- Use far fewer “talking heads” and endless PowerPoint presentations in such off-the-job events and make them less generic, more change-specific and custom-tailored to the improvement priorities determined by participants.

- This study indicates that the temptation to modularise professional development or to outsource it would not be cost-effective.

- There is strong potential to increase the level, focus and range of workplace learning made available to new and aspiring principals. The strategies identified as relevant by participants in this study include: shadowing, placements at successfully performing schools, use of the leadership capability framework to assess and enhance performance in other school leadership positions, the more systematic use of case studies generated from this study and future ones in training, more careful briefing of workplace mentors using the results of this study, use of the leadership capability framework as the foundation for workplace assessment and feedback and so on. In general, there is strong evidence that the more systematic use of the workplace as both a site and source for learning would be justified. This finding is confirmed by the results of parallel capability studies and in a qualitative analysis of many thousands of comments generated by the national course experience questionnaire run by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia. Some
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interesting examples of how such a development can be more consistently addressed already exist in other sectors of education.\textsuperscript{30}

- The study demonstrates that, whilst aspects of emotional intelligence may not be amenable to formal, didactic instruction, it is a myth that the personal and social aspects of emotional intelligence cannot be learnt. There is robust evidence that the less formal approaches to professional learning identified in this study are particularly productive in this regard. These include observing and reflecting on the behaviour of other principals throughout one’s career, reflecting on one’s own practice and seeking feedback from colleagues on it, carrying out various forms of self-assessment guided by the checkpoints in the study’s leadership capability framework and completing surveys like the present one. Our respondents argue that all of these strategies, once understood for their effectiveness, have powerful potential to alert aspiring and new principals to the capabilities that count in this area and to help them improve their performance of them.

- Respondents’ concerns about the usefulness of ICT as a learning tool and their general reluctance to recommend its use in principal development programs require serious consideration. There are strong arguments mounted by the principals in this study about the lack of usefulness of ICT in the development of the social and personal aspects of emotional intelligence or its capacity to refine the way of thinking found to be most useful in the job. There is potential for more proactive use of the tool for just-in-time access to quality assured information, provided principals have the ICT skills and the system has fast download times with sound, easily navigable and searchable data bases. More generally, respondents confirm the results of earlier research which shows that ICT-enabled learning is least effective when it is used to distribute large amounts of digital information and most effective when it is used interactively as part of a much broader learning system based on the RATED CLASS A quality tests (Alexander et al, 1998). Respondents in this study, like those which have preceded it, agree that there is a profound difference between information and learning.

Assuring the quality of formal principal development programs

The above conclusions do not preclude the use of more formal group learning programs for new or aspiring principals. The findings of this study indicate that whenever a more formal principal development program is being considered, there should be demonstrable evidence that the following learning quality tests identified in this study and confirmed by parallel research\textsuperscript{31} are being met.

Evidence that each program:

Is relevant

For example, evidence that it:

- Is the most appropriate learning design for the purpose at hand. That is, it must be demonstrably "fit for purpose", and identified as such through a process of "reading and matching",\textsuperscript{32}
- Takes into account the unique context, needs and workplace problems of those attending, i.e. it should be demonstrably workplace relevant.

\textsuperscript{30} For example, the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) in the UTS Faculty of Engineering has used the results of a parallel professional capability survey of successful engineering graduates to give existing UTS students a more careful briefing on what to concentrate on in forthcoming work- placements. He also uses the capability results to guide assessments of students in such placements, to give focus to workplace interviews and visits and to train workplace mentors. The faculty is giving the successful graduates questionnaire to 1st year students and having them compare their results with those of effective graduates. Trigger videos of engineers being confronted with highly charged human conflict situations are also used to emphasise the importance of emotional intelligence in ensuring technical projects are delivered on time, to specification. For further details of these applications see Scott & Yates (2002).

\textsuperscript{31} As noted earlier, this research includes a detailed qualitative analysis of data from Australia’s Course Experience Questionnaire (Scott and Richardson, forthcoming) and research on effective adult teaching and learning summarised in books like Foley (2000) and papers like that of Scott (2002).

\textsuperscript{32} This process is outlined and justified in Scott (2002).
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Promotes active rather than passive learning
For example, evidence that it:
- Acknowledges and uses participant experience as a part of the program, but avoids a temptation towards “group think” by providing participants with workable solutions to the problems being addressed from across the system.
- Provides specific opportunities for participants to reflect on how they would handle real life case studies and to compare what they would do with what effective principals involved in the case actually did to resolve the situation.
- Avoids the rigid, “fixed script” approaches characteristic of the type of train-the-trainer and cascading models of knowledge and policy dissemination identified in this study as being unproductive.
- Avoids the use of what respondents term “endless talking heads and death by OHP and PowerPoint”.

Consistently links theory with practice
For example, evidence that it:
- Uses presenters who are experienced teachers of adults and alert to the unique context of the principals and the schools represented.
- Makes direct reference to research on effective workplace practice in the area being discussed. This requires providing access to improvement solutions in the area being addressed that exist beyond the immediate experience of participants. These solutions need to be clearly relevant to and feasible in the context of those attending and be demonstrably effective in adding value to student learning and outcomes.
- Provides opportunities for participants to think through and be coached on how what is being covered off-the-job can feasibly be implemented and supported into daily practice back in their unique school environment.

Effectively manages participant expectations
For example, evidence that it:
- Will check and confirm prior to program delivery that what is to be addressed aligns with what participants would find most relevant.
- Makes clear what preparation is to be done prior to the program and, where relevant, what assessment tasks and criteria will be used.
- Confirms what forms of support and learning will and will not be available.
- Confirms who is participating and what their common interest in the program is.

Ensures that learning will be “digestible”
For example, evidence that it:
- Avoids “information overload” and “death by overhead”.
- Produces, when required, detailed factual material in resources that can be read prior to the session or later.
- Uses a suitable variety in learning methods, each one suited to the agreed learning objective at hand.

Makes clear what aspects of principal capability are being addressed
For example, evidence that it:
- Makes explicit which aspect(s) of principal capability identified in the present study as being critical to effective performance it is addressing.

Provides suitable learning pathways
For example, evidence that:
- All possibilities for articulation or advanced standing into formally accredited DET and higher education programs have been explored and made clear to participants.
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- It is not a "one-off" but is part of an ongoing set of formal and informal learning experiences.

Is appropriately assessed
For example, evidence that it:
- Is intended to produce practical outcomes which will demonstrably improve the quality of support and learning for students back in school; if not directly, then indirectly.
- Uses a tracking and monitoring system to determine the extent to which what was covered in the program does subsequently have the demonstrably positive impact on daily practice anticipated.

Provides suitable self-managed learning materials
For example, evidence that it:
- Uses carefully designed and directly relevant support materials but avoids the temptation to use "T & D in a folder", on the net, in a CD-ROM or a video as a substitute for learning. That is, the team responsible for designing and delivering the program must clearly recognise the difference between information and learning.
- Avoids the temptation to read out pre-packaged information kits to participants but shows how such materials can be best used later in more individual learning strategies.

Is appropriately supported
For example, evidence that it:
- Includes specific workplace follow-up and implementation support.

Makes access to it as convenient as possible
For example, evidence that it:
- Has been established that the time, duration and location for learning makes the participation of the principals involved as convenient as possible and that this has taken into account other demands on their time.

A more proactive approach to identifying, selecting and supporting principals

There have been massive numbers of studies of leadership, but little attention to succession ... organisations at all levels must set their sights on continuous improvement, and for that they must nurture, cultivate, and appoint successive leaders who are moving in a sustained direction.

Fullan (2002: 15)

The findings of this study suggest that there is a need to be far more proactive in identifying and then systematically supporting the development of the next generation of principals, right from the early stages of their career, not just when they are appointed as a principal.

Respondents in this study repeatedly emphasised the need to use its validated capability framework much earlier in each DET staff member’s career to identify those who have the emotional and intellectual potential for the role of principal. This is not a new insight, for example, the highly successful McMaster medical education program in Canada has, since 1966, been selecting students not just on their academic achievements but on their emotional intelligence and ability to think contingently.33 So too does the University of Newcastle’s medical school, which has adapted the McMaster model to the Australian context:

33 The McMaster program’s web site is found at:
http://www.mcmaster.ca/mdprog/admissions.htm. Some 400 potentially appropriate applicants are invited for interview each year. Applicant’s potential and their emotional and intellectual capabilities are reviewed by the McMaster Medical Faculty, medical students and members of the community.
As well as demanding that doctors are clinically competent, the medical profession and the community agree on the other qualities they look for in doctors. All doctors need appropriate communication and interactional skills. All doctors should be sensitive to ethical issues and must behave honestly and in accord with society’s moral guidelines. All doctors must be able to critically appraise evidence and make reasoned and reasonable decisions based on the best available data. All doctors should care about their patients.

Newcastle Medical School is sensitive to the issue of human resources and the need to produce competent, caring doctors. The Newcastle approach is to select medical students on the basis of their actual or nascent qualities as well as on their academic ability. Once students commence their medical studies, these qualities can be developed and refined. Years of training at medical school strengthen and mature attributes that students already possess rather than attempting to inculcate them in students. This approach to selection means that there is more likelihood that commencing students will graduate and will not fail to complete their studies.


In a similar fashion, respondents in the present study see considerable potential for the more systematic use of its situatated leadership capability framework to assist staff assessment and development, right from the outset of each individual’s career. They suggest that interested staff complete the study’s online survey, possibly a number of times throughout their early career to track their progress, each time comparing their results with those of effective principals in the leadership area to which they aspire.

It would also be useful, said respondents, for all newly appointed principals to complete this survey and compare their results with those of effective principals from the types of schools and contexts in which they are to work. This would enable them to identify specific improvement priorities to address with a trained leadership mentor or coach during their first years of practice as a principal. The database produced by the current study will enable this to happen in a relevant and focused fashion.

Reactions to the online survey itself

Respondent reactions to the online survey itself have been uniformly positive, indicating that the methodology may have much broader application in DET as a means of quickly tapping the knowledge and views of staff on key issues. Many respondents reported that they found completing it to be a particularly convenient, innovative and practical staff development strategy in its own right.

In this regard, the following comments were typical:

I thought the selection of topics for this questionnaire was outstanding. I found it difficult to separate any of them from the high category... Thanks for taking the time to ask.

All the items mentioned in this survey seem the perfect place to start. These items were extremely well identified.

I really liked the concept of these principal capabilities indicated in the first few pages. These give much scope for meeting the practical needs of a principal role.

Bringing the study’s key findings together

Figure 2 on the next page brings together the study’s key findings and shows the relationship between them. It does this from the perspective of what an aspiring or existing principal might best do with the findings.

The learning framework depicted is mutually reinforcing, capability driven, evidence-based, concentrates on continuous learning and improvement and applies the study’s findings about what formal and informal approaches optimise professional learning. It accommodates the
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fact that, when more formal programs are used, they should explicitly be evaluated as meeting the quality tests identified in the RATED CLASS A framework validated by the study. Fundamental to the proposed system is use of the leadership capability framework endorsed by the study and reference to evidence of effective performance along the lines used to select the principals who participated in it.

What Figure 2 implies is that the most productive way forward for leadership development in DET is to address all of the study’s findings in an integrated, mutually reinforcing way, not just one aspect. The extent to which all of the areas identified in Figure 2 are concurrently, effectively and relevantly addressed and integrated, will determine the extent to which the leadership development needs anticipated for DET will be managed successfully.
Figure 2: A professional learning framework for DET principals

People who can help me set leadership learning priorities & design a uniquely suited program to address them
- My District Superintendent
- My workplace supervisor
- A trained coach or mentor
- University staff when I am enrolled in a postgraduate course

Formal leadership development programs
Programs consistent with the RATED CLASS A quality tests confirmed in the study and which are available from:
- DET
- Universities
- Principals' Associations
- Other providers.

Places where I can learn
- In the workplace as a principal, DP, HT etc or by observing or shadowing other school leaders
- Through site visits to other schools here, interstate or overseas
- At conferences
- At informal collegial meetings
- At home or work via various forms of ICT: telephone, Internet, audio tapes, video conference etc.

My target
Continuous improvement in the key leadership capabilities identified in this study

Key materials to help me learn
- A DET Leadership Development Guide based on the leadership capabilities & professional learning strategies identified in this study as counting most in effective principalship
- Key indicators of effective performance identified in this study
- Carefully targeted professional reading and access to quality assured online learning sites and information

People who can help me learn informally
- Fellow principals performing effectively in a similar context: through just-in-time discussions, informal share sessions etc
- Members of my professional associations and networks
- District networks, seminars etc
- Local school executive, staff, parents, community and students
- DET support staff
- Local community leaders
- Family and friends
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In conclusion
In terms of its aims and key research questions, this study has produced a validated leadership capability framework, a searchable database which can provide sub-sorts of data for schools of different levels, sizes, profiles, locations and SES, generated an operational definition of "an effective principal", clarified the current nature of the principal's work and its key challenges and identified a clear set of learning quality tests with which both formal and informal principal development programs can be enhanced and optimised.

It has then produced in Figure 2, a professional learning framework for school leaders which integrates these findings and suggests how the lessons learnt can be actioned promptly and wisely.

The study has also demonstrated that the UTS online survey approach applied in the study has excellent potential as a tool for future research in DET, provided the quality assurance and support processes used for its delivery in the present study are replicated.

It is very important to conclude this report by emphasising the importance of the following observation from Michael Fullan.

Good ideas with no ideas on how to implement them are wasted ideas.

The present study has produced a number of "good ideas" (i.e. ideas about how best to address the future leadership development needs of DET; ideas which are based not on anecdote but robust, contextualised research). However, these will come to nought if the key lessons from research on effective change management in education are ignored.

It is recommended those charged with implementing the findings from this report understand how to apply the key research lessons on effective educational change management to their work. These lessons are summarised at:
and are discussed in detail in Scott (1999) and Fullan (2001a).

Addressing the findings of this study promptly and wisely is critical to the future of public education in NSW. This is because continuous quality improvement in education and the development of effective schools doesn't just happen—it must be led and led well. A new generation of leaders with the leadership capabilities highlighted in this study will be able to support and lead NSW public education into the future and therefore help develop the total social, intellectual and social capital of this state.

The study is timely because it shows how the school leadership pressures currently being experienced, not just in Australia but internationally, might be systematically and comprehensively addressed using evidence-based strategies derived from robust research. The study's results provide DET with a unique window of opportunity to lead the way in this critical area and set up a relevant, sustainable, proactive and systemic response, something which builds leadership capacity and density throughout the profession and which will enable NSW public education to thrive, not just survive, over the coming decades.
References


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Gonczi, A., Hager, P. and Oliver, L. (1990): *Establishing Competency Based Standards For The Professions*, NOOSR, DETYA.


Scott, G. and Richardson, A. (forthcoming): Qualitative analysis of Australia’s national course experience questionnaire comments, Evaluations and Investigations Project, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.


Appendix 1: Interview schedule
Phase 1: Interview questions for use with each principal selected

Introduce purpose of interview
To:

- Gather in views of successful principals approximately 3-5 years after they have entered their current position on what really makes a difference to their professional performance in their current role as principal and what does not.
- “Backward map” from what you say to ensure that DET’s leadership development strategy is as relevant, well designed and delivered as possible and that it has maximum impact.

Interviewee name:
School name:
School level:
Date:

1. Tell us briefly about your present work
   - Tell us about what is most satisfying and least satisfying about your current job. Is this typical of this sort of principal’s position?

2. What advice would you give to a new principal entering a job like your current one?
   - For someone newly appointed to a job like your current one what would you say:
     - is the most challenging aspect of the role?
     - are the key things she or he must focus on?

3. Why do you think you have been selected as being an effective principal?
   - What is it about you and how you handle your work that you think has been impressive?
   - Open response
   - Then probe stance (Emotional Intelligence), way of thinking and diagnostic maps, Generic Skills/Knowledge, Job-specific Skills/Knowledge (using diagram).

4. Can you think of a specific situation when your capabilities as a principal in this school have been most challenged?
   - This might have been a time when things got tricky, when something unexpected happened or when things went wrong
   - Describe the situation or problem
   - Describe how you handled it and, if this worked, why this was so.

5. What forms of formal support have you received to prepare you for such work?
   - List formal staff development, university courses or other courses.
   - What aspects of this formal support were most effective?
   - What were least effective?

6. What forms of informal support have you used to prepare you for such work?
   - Check use of informal networks, books, Internet or other sources
   - What aspects of this informal support were most effective?
   - What were least effective?

7. Overall if we were to try to develop an optimum way to prepare new principals for work like yours what should we do?

8. What sort of analogy best describes what it is like to be a principal in a school like yours?
Professional capability Framework

A
A1 Social
A2 Personal

B
B1 Contingent “Read and Match”
B2 Ability to trace out consequences

C
Schemes generated experience which enable the process of “reading and matching”

A Stance (emotional Intelligence)
B Way of thinking
C Diagnostic maps
D Generic Skills and knowledge
E Profession specific skills and knowledge

D1 Ability to self manage ongoing professional learning
D2 Interpersonal skills to run meetings, presentations, teach and work constructively with others
D3 ICT skills and knowledge

E Up-to-date skills and understanding necessary to deliver solutions in a particular job “technical excellence”
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Appendix 2: Online survey

Leadership capability survey of principals

Introduction

The aim of this research is to produce a research-validated Leadership Capability Framework to help give the development of current and prospective principals in NSW government schools real-word relevance and focus. It is using a methodology that has already been applied to a wide range of other professions by the Quality Development Unit of the University of Technology, Sydney.

Experienced principals can help ensure that new principals and those preparing for the role learn things that are grounded in real-world practice. Through this survey of a sample of effective principals in NSW schools we hope to identify your views on what really counts in the first few years of being a principal in schools like your current one. This will complement and help give specific detail to the Capabilities Framework agreed by the NSW Primary Principals Association and the NSW Secondary Principals Council and the DET publication: Leading and Managing the School.

In early November 2002 we completed a set of face-to-face interviews with a small sample of the group who are receiving this survey to ensure that the questions in the survey were relevant and clear.

What emerges will be used to ensure that the DET Leadership Development Strategy focuses on what really counts for effective performance as a principal and uses modes and approaches to learning that are productive.

You have been nominated as an effective principal and it is for this reason that you are being asked to complete the survey.

Completing the survey

• simply check the box which best represents your point of view
• there is space for you to explain your ratings at the end of each section
• should you wish to do so
• please post your response in the envelope provided.

All answers in this survey are totally anonymous.

If you would like a copy of the results please email us separately at Kathryn.Brennan@det.nsw.edu.au. Alternately, once we have everyone’s responses and have processed the results they will be made available on the Quality Development Unit web site at www.qdu.uts.edu.au

Thank you for your participation

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About yourself

Please place a cross in the box(es) under each heading.

Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female

Time as principal in your current school
☐ 1–3 years
☐ 4–5 years
☐ 6–10 years
☐ Over 10 years

Position classification
☐ PH1  ☐ PH2
☐ PP1  ☐ PP2
☐ PP3
☐ PP4
☐ PP5
☐ PP6
☐ Central School
☐ SSP

About your school

Location classification
☐ Isolated
☐ Rural Town
☐ Regional Centre
☐ Outer Metropolitan
☐ Metropolitan

Socioeconomic level:
☐ Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP)
☐ Low
☐ Average
☐ Above Average

Significant student enrolments: (if applicable)
☐ ATSI
☐ ATSI and NESB
☐ NESB
☐ Other
☐ Other: ............................................

Other: ............................................

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Prior training and development and support for your role as principal

Below are listed a range of formal and informal types of training and development and support which you may have used to develop your capability as a principal. Could you first note if you have used any of these by checking the box next to it and then indicate for those selected how important you have found it to be in assisting your development as a principal.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Importance in supporting my development as a principal</th>
<th>Importance in supporting my development as a principal</th>
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<td>□ UG Degree/Dipl Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Principals School Development Program (PSDP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Team Leadership Course (TLC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Certificate in School Leadership (CTL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Executive shadowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mentor program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Leadership seminars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other (List)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Guidance

- **University**: Completing a degree or higher within the field of education or related fields can provide you with a strong foundation and up-to-date knowledge.
- **Graduate Diploma**: This can be particularly beneficial if it aligns with your specific interests or areas of need.
- **Masters** and **EdD**: Advanced degrees can lead to more specialized knowledge and can be essential for roles that require deep expertise.
- **PhD**: This level of education is often required for positions that demand the highest level of expertise or research capabilities.

### Support and Development

- **Low**: Indicates that the activity was not utilized or was of minimal importance.
- **Medium**: Suggests a moderate level of importance.
- **High**: Implies a significant role in your development as a principal.

### Additional Points

- **Professional Association**: Membership or involvement in professional associations can provide networking opportunities and access to resources.
- **Internet (e.g., chat groups)**: Online platforms can be a valuable resource for information sharing and peer support.
- **Community groups and organizations**: Participation in community activities can enhance your understanding of the broader context of education and provide valuable networking opportunities.
- **Family and friends**: Guidance and support from personal sources can be crucial.
- **Parent groups**: Engaging with parent groups can offer insights and opportunities for improvement.
- **Informal mentor**: Personal mentorship can provide direct and tailored guidance.
- **Other (List)**: Space for additional support mechanisms that were not listed.
### My personal abilities

The following items first seek your views on how important you believe a range of personal abilities have been in accounting for the effectiveness of your performance in your current position as principal. Then you are asked to rate the extent to which your previous training and development focused on them.

For each item please put a cross in the box which best describes your rating for Importance and focus.

There is space below for you to justify on your ratings and to add any other comments you think would be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Importance of this capability for effective performance in my current work as principal</th>
<th>Extent to which my training and development for principaship focused on this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being willing to face and learn from my errors and listen openly to feedback</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding my personal strengths and limitations</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being confident to take calculated risks and take on new projects</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to remain calm under pressure or when things go wrong</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the ability to defer judgment and not to jump in too quickly to resolve a problem</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A willingness to persevere when things are not working out as anticipated</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being willing to take responsibility for programs, including how they turn out</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to make a hard decision</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A willingness to pitch in and undertake menial tasks when needed</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to bounce back from adversity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain any themes you can see running through your ratings and list aspects we have missed which you believe are important. Then note any specific preparation program(s) you had in mind when allocating ratings in column 2.
Learning Principals

My interpersonal abilities

The following items first seek your views on how important you believe a range of interpersonal abilities have been in accounting for the effectiveness of your performance in your current position as principal. Then you are asked to rate the extent to which your previous training and development focused on them.

For each item please put a cross in the box which best describes your rating for importance and focus.

There is space below for you to comment on your ratings and to add any other information you think would be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of this capability for effective performance in my current work as principal</th>
<th>Extent to which my training and development for principalship focused on this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to empathise with and work productively with people from a wide range of backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to develop and use networks of colleagues to help me solve key workplace problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how the different groups that make up my school operate and how much influence they have in different situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to work with DET senior officers without being intimidated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to give constructive feedback to work colleagues and others without engaging in personal blame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to motivate others to achieve great things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to develop and contribute positively to team-based programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to work constructively with people who are resistors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain any themes you can see running through your ratings and list aspects we have missed which you believe are important. Then note any specific preparation program(s) you had in mind when allocating ratings in column 2.
My intellectual abilities

The following items first seek your views on how important you believe a range of intellectual abilities have been in accounting for the effectiveness of your performance in your current position as principal. Then you are asked to rate the extent to which your previous training and development focused on them.

For each item please put a cross in the box which best describes your rating for Importance and focus.

There is space below for you to comment on your ratings and to add any other information you think would be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Importance of this capability for effective performance in my current work as principal</th>
<th>Extent to which my training and development for principalship focused on this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing that there is never a fixed set of steps for solving workplace problems or implementing a program</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to use previous experience to figure out what is going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to diagnose what is really causing a problem and then to test this out in action</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to trace out and assess the consequences of alternative courses of action and, from this, pick the one most suitable</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens as it is implemented</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to see how apparently unconnected activities are linked and make up an overall picture</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to set and justify priorities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to recognise patterns in a complex situation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain any themes you can see running through your ratings and list aspects we have missed which you believe are important. Then note any specific preparation program(s) you had in mind when allocating ratings in column 2.
## My specific skills and knowledge

The following items first seek your views on how important you believe a range of role-specific and generic skills have been in accounting for your successful performance in your current position as principal. Then you are asked to rate the extent to which your previous training and development focused on them.

For each item please place a cross in the box which best describes your rating for importance and successful implementation.

There is space below for you to comment on your ratings and to add any other information you think would be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Importance of this capability for effective performance in my current work as principal</th>
<th>Extent to which my training and development for principals/ship focused on this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skill</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to use IT effectively to communicate and perform key work functions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to manage my own ongoing professional learning and development</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to chair and participate constructively in meetings</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the role of risk management and litigation in current professional work</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to manage programs into successful implementation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to help others learn in the workplace through adult learning</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how organisations like DET operate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to organise my work and manage time effectively</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having sound financial and resource management skills</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school for where the school must head</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of industrial relations issues and process</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain any themes you can see running through your ratings and list aspects we have missed which you believe are important. Then note any specific preparation program(s) you had in mind when allocating ratings in column 2.
A professionally challenging situation you have experienced

Under which conditions is your professional capability most tested?

☐ When things are going well
☐ When things are running normally
☐ When things are going wrong

Please briefly explain your answer.

Think of one time at work over the past two or three years when you believe that your professional capabilities were really tested.
Please outline the situation, explaining how it came about and what you found most challenging about it. Note who was involved, where it happened, how you went about figuring out what to do and how well this worked.

More generally what are the most challenging aspects of the job?

Overall, what analogy best describes what it is like to be a principal in a school like yours?

Being the principal of my school is like …
## Learning Principals

### Keeping principal development programs relevant

Below are some suggested ways of making principal development programs more interesting, engaging and relevant to the needs of the current profession. Could you first rate the importance of each strategy for making learning relevant, interesting and engaging? Then rate the extent to which any prior training and development to be a principal used this strategy effectively.

For each item please place a cross in the box which best describes your ratings for importance and successful implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Importance of this strategy in making learning relevant, interesting and engaging</th>
<th>Extent to which my training and development for principaship used this strategy effectively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus more directly on the capabilities identified as being important as a result of this survey</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use real-life workplace problems identified by effective principals as a key resource for learning</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make work placements which test out the capabilities identified in this study a key focus in principal development programs</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use effective principals more consistently as a learning resource in these programs (e.g. mentors or coaches)</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease the amount of formal face-to-face training and development of basic technical skills and use self-instructional guides and IT to develop these instead</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include learning experiences based on real-life case studies that specifically develop the interpersonal and personal skills needed by a principal</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When relevant, use IT to make learning as convenient and interactive as possible</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that all principal development programs model the key attributes identified as being important in this research</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that teaching staff running these programs have current workplace experience</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make assessment more real-world and problem-based and less focused on memorising factual material</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use performance on the capabilities identified as being most important in earlier parts of this survey as the focus for assessment and feedback on principal performance</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite staff interested in becoming a principal to complete the questionnaire and to compare their results with those from the present survey</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain any themes you can see running through your ratings and list aspects we have missed which you believe are important. Then note any specific preparation program(s) you had in mind when allocating ratings in column 2.
In summary

In light of what you have said, what forms of principal training and development and sources of support have proven MOST relevant (please consider both formal and informal sources of support) and then briefly list these out and say why they have proven more relevant.

In light of what you have said, what forms of principal training and development and sources of support have proven LEAST relevant. (Please briefly list these and say why they have proven less relevant).

DET wants to make its principal development programs as relevant as possible to aspiring and recently appointed principals. What are the most important things they should now concentrate upon?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.
CHAPTER NINE

"THE MINORITY MAJORITY?" AN ANALYSIS BY GENDER OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY AND LEARNING RESEARCH IN NSW

Article published as:

Related material:
Letter of acceptance for publication in refereed conference proceedings
(Appendix L, p.355).
THE MINORITY MAJORITY?
An analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in NSW.

Abstract
Facing large-scale school leadership retirements over the coming decade, education systems will need to access the largest possible pool of quality applicants. Women, historically under represented in educational leadership, seem the most obvious resource from which to make up the anticipated shortfall. However, in order for this strategy to be successful, a framework for developing and sustaining effective school leaders of both genders must be developed. This study analyses by gender the differences and similarities in the responses of 322 "effective" Principals from a large NSW Department of Education and Training study. This study sought to establish a clear picture of the work of Principals and of the leadership capabilities required to undertake their work effectively. The study adapts a “backward mapping” research methodology that has proven successful in a range of capability profiling and development studies in other professions. Analysis of the data suggests a high level of concordance between the capability rankings of "effective" Principals of both genders. Those domains in which gender differences are identified, can largely be attributed to the lack of planned training and development, inclusive of mentoring and internship, throughout a woman’s career. At the conclusion an evidence-based gender inclusive framework for developing and sustaining effective school leaders is proposed.
Introduction

The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training (DET), like many other education systems, faces a large number of retirements amongst its school Principals in the coming decade. Indeed, “retirement projections indicate that 74% of secondary Principals and 59% of primary Principals will retire within the decade” (Scott, 2003, p. 1).

Against an ever-changing socio-political “eduscape”, one that has impacted significantly upon the expectations of school Principals in the public education sector, the role of school Principal has come under increased public scrutiny and is the focus of extensive system, industrial and profession debate. Consequently, there exists a need to establish a contemporary understanding of the nature of the work of school leaders, one that recognises context, complexity and issues that impact upon the delivery of quality public education.

In the research report, Learning Principals: Leadership Capability and Learning Research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2003, pp. 17-18), Scott describes the world of the Principal as:

...uncertain, ambiguous, constantly changing, a world which involves working with both local issues over which one has considerable influence and broader economic, social and political forces which...must still be negotiated effectively. It is a world which is intensely human, relentless, and one where people expect the Principal to set a clear direction and priorities for the school but where such plans must be constantly adjusted in the light of a continual series of unexpected events and changing circumstances. It is a world characterised by a relentless series of ongoing challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved effectively.

Scott (2003, p. 24) also observed “a range of sub sorts of the quantitative data on leadership is possible... One of the most interesting is the comparison... between female and male Principals”. Further, Limerick and Cranston (1998, p. 41) in arguing for reconceptualising views of educational leadership as organisations continue to change, state that there has been:

insufficient attention given to exploring en/gendered conceptions of leadership which can be “practised” by both males and females, that is leadership which carefully and consciously takes account of the gendered nature of the values and social contexts within which we are practising leadership.
Certainly previous research undertaken by the author (Brennan, 2001 & 2003; Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Deece & Mulford, 2000) indicates that gender problematises the study of school leadership and is hence the focus of this paper.

The paper therefore, provides an analysis by gender of the quantitative data sets; school leadership, leadership capability and learning research. Drawing on *NSW Department of Education and Training Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Annual Report* (2003) statistics and the *Leadership Capability Research Project* (Scott, 2003) undertaken by the NSW Department of Education and Training, in partnership with the NSW Primary Principals’ Association, NSW Secondary Principals’ Council and the Quality Development Unit of the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), an evidence-based gender inclusive framework for developing and sustaining effective school leaders is proposed. The author was both project manager and principal researcher, which presents as a limitation of this study.

**Research Questions**

This study explores the following research questions through a gender specific lens.

1. What is the current school leadership profile within the NSW Department of Education and Training? Is this profile reflected in the leadership capability “effective” Principal research sample?

2. What leadership capabilities play a central role in effective performance as a Principal, what is their relative importance and in what ways do they interact?

3. What is the alignment between the ranked importance of specific leadership capabilities and the extent to which prior training and development focused on leadership capabilities identified by the “effective” Principal sample?

These questions will facilitate an enhanced understanding of gender differences, and similarities, in the enactment of school leadership by “effective” Principals.

**Methodology**

Recognising that “an understanding of what reality is from the point of view of people within the role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory” (Fullan, 2001a, p. 137), a robust evidence based “backward mapping” methodology was
implemented. "Backward mapping... connects policy decisions directly with the point at which the effect occurs" (Elmore, 1979, pp. 604-606). Therefore, in the context of this study the researchers went directly to the nominated 'effective' Principals, gathered and analysed their responses and fed the analysis back to the relevant policy makers. A synopsis of the methodology (Scott, 2003, pp. 9-14) appears below.

**Sampling Strategy**

A composite sampling strategy was used to identify a relevant group of Principals to participate in the study. This entailed ensuring that the sample covered the full range of schools, districts and contexts that make up the NSW Public School system and that, within these parameters, those selected demonstrably met a range of agreed "effectiveness" criteria. The criteria used to evaluate effective leadership performance were:

- Delivery of effective and innovative programs and whole school organisation;
- High levels of student, parent and community satisfaction with the Principal’s work;
- High levels of staff, peer and district superintendent satisfaction with his/her work;
- Commitment to professional growth and development of self and others.

‘Considerable care was taken to ensure that the selection process was systematic, carefully managed, evidence-based and triangulated’ (Scott, 2003, p.7). A sample of 322 "effective" Principals was nominated by district level teams, comprised of the District Superintendent, a local representative from the Primary Principals’ Association and one from the Secondary Principals’ Council. The sample represents just under 15% of NSW public school system primary and secondary school Principals. In the context of the study’s gender focus, it should be noted that the sampling strategy did not require nominations on the basis of a designated gender ratio.

**Data collection**

A two-phase data collection strategy was utilised. In Phase 1, a small number of individual semi-structured interviews (n=5) were undertaken to pilot the online survey. This process
of piloting, aimed to ensure that the Phase 2 data gathering instrument – an online survey – was valid, comprehensive, engaging and understandable to the target audience. Data generated from the interview questions concerning professional capability were coded first thematically and then using the domains in the study’s conceptual framework (Figure 1).

Source: Learning principals: leadership capability and learning research in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (Scott, 2003, p.5)
Chapter Nine
“The minority majority?” An analysis by gender of school leadership capability and learning research in NSW.

The framework comprises five interlocked domains and emphasises that the possession of generic or job-specific skills (D and E) is necessary but not sufficient for effective professional performance. Figure 1 suggests that it is equally important that the person possesses (Scott, 2003, p. 4):

- a high level of social and personal emotional intelligence (A);
- a contingent way of thinking, an ability to “read” what is going on in each new situation and then to “match” an appropriate course of action, an ability to see the core issue in complex technical and human situations and a capacity to deftly trace out and assess the consequences of alternative courses of action (B);
- a set of “diagnostic maps” developed from successfully coming to grips with previous practice problems in the unique work context (C). It is these maps which enable the person to accurately “read the signs”, to figure out what is really going on in each new situation and to determine when and when not to deploy particular generic and technical skills.

The final online survey was compiled and field-tested.

Phase 2 involved administering the online survey. Principals were invited to rate items on both importance and the extent to which their prior training and development focused on this attribute. A separate scale had Principals rate a range of potentially effective training and development options. Extensive comments were also gathered.

To check the accuracy of the self-assessment undertaken by principals, the Phase 2 online survey, suitably modified, was sent to a random sample of eight district nominating groups, representing 20% of the total number of groups involved in the nomination process. A comparison of the results of these two groups indicated that the self-assessment of the Principals closely aligned with the perceptions of those who nominated them.

Survey response
There was a 100% participation rate in the phase one interviews and 100% response rate to the phase two online survey from the 322 Principals nominated. In his report of this study, Scott (2003, p. 9) acknowledges that “this exceptional response rate was primarily due to personal follow-up contact and assistance from the project’s seconded Principal”. The normal response rate to online surveys in education is approximately 20%.

As J.M. Mangan, Professor of Educational Statistics at the University of Western Ontario Canada, who reviewed the methodology section of the report observed:
Almost uniquely amongst surveys, this sampling process is not open to any error introduced by respondent self-selection. As a result, the significance of any reported statistic can be interpreted as entirely consistent with the formal assumptions of the computations, rather than being a more-or-less rough estimate, as is usually the case (Scott, 2003, p.9).

Findings
In this Section the quantitative data produced from both phases of the study are reported by gender against the study’s key research questions.

1a. What is the current school leadership profile within the NSW Department of Education and Training?

The current NSW Department of Education and Training teaching service statistics are sourced from the 2002 Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Report (2003), and draw from payroll file data as of 30 June 2002. Statistics reported are inclusive of teaching and non-teaching school Principals (K-12) across the full range of NSW Department of Education and Training school categories and are displayed in Figure 2 below. The position categories are determined by school level (primary or secondary) and student enrolment i.e. secondary schools (all non-teaching Principals) - PH1 (900+), PH2 (below 900); primary schools (non-teaching Principals) - PP1 (701+), PP2 (451-700), PP3 (301-450), PP4 (160-300); and primary schools (teaching Principals) – PP5 (26-159), PP6 (1-25).
The statistics reveal that 65.27% (32503) of the total teaching service are women, of which 36.9% (826) are Principals. This figure falls far short of the NSW Department of Education and Training’s broad objective (EEO goal) of representation “comparable to their representation in the NSW DET [system] as a whole” (EEO Annual Report, 1991). This goal is reflected in NSW Department of Education and Training Performance Indicators such as “progress towards the distribution of each EEO group across all salary levels the same as that of all employees” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 43). Further analysis indicates that 33% of non-teaching Principal positions (K-12) are held by women (Figure Three), with women more prevalent as leaders of primary schools, particularly as teaching-principals (PP5 and PP6). This finding is consistent with the research of Gold (1996, p.420) who found that ‘as the statistics go up the age phases, women hold positions of even lower status... the older the learner the more prestigious the teaching, and so it is more likely that the work will be done by men’.
1b. Is this profile reflected in the leadership capability “effective Principal” research sample?

In total, 322 “effective” Principals were nominated and all participated in this study. 47% were female (refer to Figure 3), a marked over representation relative to their overall representation at Principal level. Female Principals were represented in each subset of schools as follows: PH1 (50%), PH2 (47%), PP1 (44%), PP2 (39%), PP3 (48%), PP4 (42%), PP5 (61%), PP6 (50%), Central Schools (33%) and Schools for Specific Purposes (50%). The respondent profile contrasts with the current female Principal appointment profile within the NSW Department of Education and Training: PH1 (28.8%), PH2 (26.6%), PP1 (21.5%), PP2 (28.1%), PP3 (39.7%), PP4 (38.3%), PP5 (41.1%), PP6 (71.6%), CS (% not available) and SSP (% not available).

Therefore the current school leadership profile within the NSW Department of Education and Training clearly shows that women comprise the minority of school leadership appointments at the Principal level, whilst they represent the majority of the teaching service. This profile, however, is not reflected in the leadership capability “effective Principal” research sample which is the focus of the current study. In terms of “effectiveness” as defined in this study, women are markedly over-represented in the nominated sample, relative to their overall representation at Principal level. As noted earlier the criterion-referenced sample selection protocol did not specify nominations on the basis of a designated gender ratio.
2a. What leadership capabilities play a central role in effective performance as a Principal?

Table 1 shows the 10 highest ranked capability items on importance by gender. For female Principals, seven of the top ten come from the Emotional Intelligence Scales. Specifically, five come from the Emotional Intelligence (Personal) Scale and two from the Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) Scale. Of the remainder, one comes from the Intellectual Ability Scale (Way of thinking/Diagnostic Maps) and two from the Specific Skills & Knowledge Scale.

For male Principals, eight come from the Emotional Intelligence Scales. Specifically, five come from the Emotional Intelligence (Personal) Scale and three from the Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) Scale. Of the remainder, one comes from the Intellectual Ability Scale (Way of thinking/Diagnostic Maps) and one from the Specific Skills & Knowledge Scale (Figure 1).

Respondents’ emphasis on the central role that Emotional Intelligence (Personal and Social) plays in effective practice is consistent with the research that has emerged in other recent professional capability studies (Scott & Yates, 2002; Goleman, 1998). Indeed, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) identified 18 competencies sorted into four domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) as being essential for emotionally intelligent leaders and organisational success in complex times.
That “effective” Principals ascribe such importance to Emotional Intelligence (both Personal and Social) belies anecdotal commentary that Emotional Intelligence is simply a peripheral set of “soft skills” which reside in the female domain, constituting a fundamental gender difference in the enactment of formal leadership roles. What this research reports is a far greater congruence as to the relative importance of these capabilities between male and female “effective” Principals than is frequently suggested. Further there is evidence that Emotional Intelligence capabilities can be learned whilst they “may not be amenable to formal, didactic instruction” (Scott, 2003, p. 46).

This finding has implications for the design of school leadership development curriculum, and strengthens the validity of creating a gender inclusive framework for developing and sustaining school leaders. As highlighted by a typical respondent comment:

They (Principals) need to understand the importance of emotional intelligence. What matters most for competence and excellence in the workplace is based on effective inter- and intra- personal skills in forming productive relationships... It takes time. It works.

Table 1: Top 10 Capability Items ranked on Importance by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items as ranked by females</th>
<th>Items as ranked by males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (A1)</td>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Being able to bounce back from adversity (A1)</td>
<td>13: The ability to empathise with and work productively with people from a wide range of backgrounds (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (A1)</td>
<td>14: A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Being able to motivate others to achieve great things (A2)</td>
<td>1: Being willing to face and learn from my errors and listen openly to feedback (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (E)</td>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2b. What is their relative importance?

In terms of the rank order of items within each scale, the highest rating items on importance were for:

- Emotional Intelligence (Personal): being able to remain calm (female importance ranking 1, male 1); having a sense of humour and perspective (female importance ranking 4, male 2); being willing to face and learn from errors (male importance ranking 3); wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (female importance ranking 2, male 4); an ability to take a hard decision (female/male importance ranking 5); being able to bounce back from adversity (female importance ranking 3);

- Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal): being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (female importance ranking 2, male 1); ability to empathise and work productively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds (female importance ranking 4, male 2); willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (male importance ranking 3); being able to give constructive feedback (male importance ranking 4); being able to contribute positively to team-based projects (female importance ranking 3, male 5); being able to motivate others to achieve great things (female importance ranking 1); understanding how the different groups that make up my school operate (female importance ranking 5).

- Intellectual Abilities: being able to set and justify priorities (female/male importance ranking 1); being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens as it is implemented (female importance ranking 2, male 2); being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (female/male importance ranking 3); the ability to use previous experience (female/male importance ranking 3); being able to diagnose what is really causing a problem (female/male importance ranking 5);

- Generic and specific skills and knowledge: having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (female/male importance ranking 1); being able to organise my work and manage time effectively (female importance ranking 3, male 4); being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups (female importance ranking 4, male 3); knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice (female importance ranking 2, male 4); having sound financial and resource
management skills (male importance ranking 5); knowing how to manage programs into successful implementation (female importance ranking 5).

The items in which females recorded an importance ranking 10 or more positions higher than males were: Item 19: being able to motivate others to achieve great things (female importance ranking 7, male 22); Item 32: having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skill (female importance ranking 32, male 42); and Item 44: knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (female importance ranking 10, male 25).

These findings are consistent with Shakeshaft’s research (1987, cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p.136-137), who found that for female administrators “Relationships with Others Are Central to All Actions...Teaching and Learning Are the Major Foci...Building Community Is an Essential Part of a Women Administrator’s Style”. Brennan (2001, pp.9-10) also found that it is a “strong motivational orientation, sense of mission... and a passion for excellence in teaching and leadership, a belief that they can and do make a difference” that characterises women who are empowered to lead school communities. Bass and Avolio (1997, p. 208) also found “that women... tend to be more transformational and more proactive in addressing problems”. Research regularly reports that women principals present as driven to achieve, not selfish, concerned giving individuals with a mission for life, and the capacity to make a positive difference. (Holtkamp, 2002; Hackney, 1999; Hagberg, 1998).

The high female ranking of Item 12: being able to bounce back from adversity; reflects earlier research findings on dilemma and tension that female Principals report, the struggle to manage the professional/personal life dichotomy and build resilience (Blackmore, 1999; Brennan, 2003). The ever-present mantra: If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen!

The items for which males recorded an importance ranking 10 or more positions higher than females were on: Item 13: the ability to empathise and work with people from
a wide variety of backgrounds (female importance ranking 18, male 4); Item 14: a willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (female importance ranking 24, male 5); Item 18: being able to give constructive feedback to work colleagues and others without engaging in personal blame (female importance ranking 25, male 14); and Item 25: an ability to use previous experience to figure out what is going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn (female importance ranking 26, male 15) (Table 2).

Table 2: Capability Items showing greatest difference on Importance ranking by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank on Importance for effective performance as a principal (Female)</th>
<th>Rank on Importance for effective performance as a Principal (Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13: The ability to empathise &amp; work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds (A2)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (A2)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: Being able to give constructive feedback to work colleagues and others without engaging in personal blame (A2)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Being able to motivate others to achieve to achieve great things (A2)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25: An ability to use previous experience to figure out what is going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn (B)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32: Having a high level of up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and skill (E)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (E)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although both females and males indicated the high importance of Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) attributes, the male response is of particular interest. This emphasis may be explained by the marked shift over the past decade from unquestioned community acceptance of the traditional masculine construct of leadership, and a growing awareness that to be an ‘effective Principal’, male school leaders need to specifically address the emotional intelligence domain (communication, relationship building...), as they forge a new way of “knowing and doing”. A need to acknowledge that the “hierarchical organisational forms which exaggerate differential power underscore and reinforce... the individual Ulysses type heroic journey already defined by the men who have gone before” (Pringle & Collins, 1998, p. 2) are no longer compatible with the role demands of contemporary principalship.

2c. In what ways do they interact?

A detailed analysis of respondents’ overall comments on these ratings shows that it is the combined effect of attributes from every area identified in the study’s professional capability framework (Figure 1) that makes the difference.

For example, they note how, when something goes wrong the Principal needs to be able to remain calm and keep things in perspective (Emotional Intelligence – Personal) to deal with what is often a situation with a serious human conflict dimension by showing empathy and listening to different points of view (Emotional Intelligence – Interpersonal), in order to sort out what is the key issue in the welter of factors which are at play (Intellectual Abilities) and, from this diagnosis, to identify and effectively implement the appropriate mix of generic and job-specific skills and knowledge. (Scott, 2003, pp. 24)

In the context of this study therefore:

3. What is the alignment between the ranked importance of specific leadership capabilities and the extent to which prior training and development focused on leadership capabilities identified by the “effective” Principal sample?

It is of interest that female Principals tended to rate items higher on importance in each ability scale than their male colleagues. However, in terms of prior Training and Development focus, the situation was reversed with male Principals tending to rate items higher. This suggests a mismatch between the availability, targeting and/or accessibility of relevant Principalship Training and Development for females.
Table 3: Top 10 Capability Items ranked on T&D Focus by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items as ranked by females</th>
<th>Items as ranked by males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32: Having a high level of pedagogical knowledge (E)</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
<td>32: Having a high level of pedagogical knowledge (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20: Being able to develop and contribute to team based programs (A2)</td>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
<td>20: Being able to develop and contribute to team based programs (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34: Being able to manage my own ongoing professional learning and development (D)</td>
<td>8: being willing to take responsibility for projects, including how they turn out (A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41: Being able to organise my work and manage time effectively (D)</td>
<td>34: Being able to manage my own ongoing professional learning and development (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38: Knowing how to manage programs to successful implementation (D)</td>
<td>38: Knowing how to manage programs to successful implementation (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39: An ability to help others learn in the workplace through best practice in adult learning (E)</td>
<td>41: Being able to organise my work and manage time effectively (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36: Being able to make presentations to a range of different groups (D)</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Table 3 shows that, of the capability items rated highest on performance (i.e. as being the focus for prior Training and Development as a Principal), the majority come from the Specific Skills and Knowledge Scale.

The high focus rankings on capabilities from the Specific Skills and Knowledge Scale is consistent with executive and Principal development programs sponsored by the NSW Department of Education and Training and professional associations over the past decade. *Schools Renewal* (early 90’s) saw the focus on areas such as school mission/vision, strategic and management planning, generic management skills (for example, time management, conflict management); joint Department of Education and Training/university credentialled programs (for example, MEd, Certificate of School
Management, Certificate of Team Leadership) and the *Principal School Development Program* (mid 90’s) could be negotiated to meet specific professional development needs of an individual within a group context, *Compliance Training* (late 90’s) focused on legislative requirements/technical skills of management and accountability (for example, OH&S, Complaints Resolution); and professional associations have in recent years refocused on leadership for quality teaching and learning,

It is significant that some of the Items also attracted comparatively high importance ratings including Item 7: wanting to achieve the best outcome possible; Item 30: being able to set and justify priorities; and Item 42: having a clear and justifies vision for where the school must head. However, others attracted a much lower importance rating such as Item 32: having a high level of pedagogical knowledge; Item 34: being able to manage my own ongoing professional learning and development; and Item 38: knowing how to manage programs to successful implementation (Table 4).
Table 4: Top 10 Capability Items ranked on Importance by Gender showing extent of prior T&D focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Items as ranked by females</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Items as ranked by males</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (A1)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (A1)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (A1)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12: Being able to bounce back from adversity (A1)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13: The ability to empathise with and work productively with people from a wide range of backgrounds (A2)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (A1)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14: A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (A2)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19: Being able to motivate others to achieve great things (A2)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1: Being willing to face and learn from my errors and listen openly to feedback (A1)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (E)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the main gender differences in focus (Table 5), as indicated by a differential of 10+ rank positions, were on Item 9: an ability to make a hard decision (female importance ranking 21, male 38); Item 23: knowing that there is never a fixed set of steps for solving workplace problems or implementing a program (female importance ranking 29, male 40); Item 24: being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (female importance ranking 30, male 41); Item 28: being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens when it is implemented (female importance ranking 16, male 26); Item 37: understanding the role of risk management and litigation in current professional work (female importance ranking 42, male 29); and Item 40: understanding how the DET operates (male importance ranking 28, female 17).
Table 5: Capability Items showing greatest difference on T&D Focus ranking by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank on the extent to which previous T&amp;D focused on this (Female)</th>
<th>Rank on the extent to which previous T&amp;D focused on this (Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23: Knowing that there is never a fixed set of steps for solving workplace problems or implementing a program (B)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24: Being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (B)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28: Being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens when it is implemented (B)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37: Understanding the role of risk management and litigation in current professional work (E)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40: Understanding how the DET operates (E)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differential between female and male ranking on Item 9, can be explained through the gendered construction of leadership that positions the ‘ability to make a hard decision’ as a quality of male leaders, the ‘technology of the rational’ (Blackmore, 1999), which impacts upon interpretations of a female principal’s decision making capacity. Reardon’s research (1995, pp. xi and 101) into communication and gender in the workplace explains that “women as a group experience... a quicksand of indifference and disregard... speech patterns of men and women differ in word choice... Women use more intensifiers... tag questions and requests in question form... These suggest uncertainty and a lack of power”. The issue is further compounded by research that reports women enact leadership through collaboration, shared problem solving, and shared decision-making (Fennell, 1999; Hackney, 1999).
In an outline of research that discusses women as leaders, Pringle and Collins (1998, pp. 1-3) posit that:

Existing androcentric theories have given rise to a “women as different” stream, which overlooks the situational factors and the nature of the organisation... the dilemmas for women are sharpened where there are masculine cultures... A common response... is to adopt the behaviours demanded by the situation and live with any personal discomfort... [however] women are preferred if they behave in a way that is more congruent with the feminist sex-role (Wilson 1995) and are more people oriented. In contrast, senior management is more comfortable if female leaders act in ways more congruent with masculine norms... [resulting] in conflicting demands on the women leaders.

The differential between female and male rankings on Items 23, 24 and 28, may reflect the disparate opportunities provided to these groups by way of “internship” (for example, opportunities to act or relieve in higher duties positions within the school) that facilitates work place learning. Research regularly reports that males are more likely to be proactively targeted and mentored throughout their career (Daws, 1995; MacBeath & Myers, 1999; Scutt, 1996).

The impact of “mobility” factors can also restrict experience of different educational contexts as reflected in Item 40. The lack of “mobility”, perceived (Wesson, 1998) or real, presents as a significant impediment for female school leadership aspirants. Also “women still shoulder greater responsibility than men for ‘second shift’ duties...(eg. Tharenou et al., 1994; Stroh et al., 1992) [and] men more than women show greater career advancement benefits from identical characteristics (eg. education) and experiences (job tenure, mobility)... having a family continues to be a career liability for many women” (Burke, 2002, p.225), whilst a career advantage for men. Women regularly report overall responsibility for the maintenance of family (immediate, extended, care of elderly, child rearing), domestic duties and the expectation that they locate/relocate according to a spouse/partner’s work location (Brennan, 2001; Limerick, 1995; Limerick & Cranston, 1998).

The disparity between female and male ranking of Item 37 is supported by the research of Hackney (1998, p.10). Male Principals when confronted with risk management and litigation issues need to move beyond the traditional masculinist response patterns that have grown out of ‘hierarchical organizations where power is defined by placement on the organizational chart...[and learn to create an organisational
culture] Where collaboration replaces competition, where community replaces isolation, where respect replaces distrust and where there is room for all voices’, not just the voice of the ‘boss’.

In summary
In reading through the responses and assessing the various priority tables of this study, the most striking observation to be made is not of the differences, but of the similarities in the capability importance rankings reported by "effective" Principals of both genders. Whilst disparities in importance rankings do occur, there is a level of unanimity across genders that belies common preconceptions. Perhaps it is the sheer complexity of self and relationship management (Emotional Intelligence- Personal and Interpersonal) in the contemporary school leadership context, that drives a Principal of either gender beyond traditional gendered practice, in seeking the most optimal solutions to the many challenges they face. Certainly, both female and male “effective” Principals reflect that it is “moral purpose”, a commitment to making a positive difference for all of the students at their school, from which a Principal can draw courage when having “to take a hard decision”, “deal effectively with conflict situations”, “empathise and work productively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds” and “listen[ing] to different points of view”. In this context, perhaps what differentiates ‘effective’ Principals is their individual stance, rather than any perceived gender specific leadership style.

This study therefore, provides evidence that female members of the teaching service currently comprise the Minority Majority in school leadership roles, in a system that has been steeped in a “traditional masculinist” culture. No evidence has been discovered to suggest that women are unsuited to educational leadership roles. Indeed, that 47% of the “effective” Principal sample in this research are female, when females constitute only 33% of the non-teaching Principal cohort, is evidence enough of female Principals’ capacity to deliver quality leadership across all school categories and levels.
It is therefore argued that a clear solution to the impending shortage of educational leaders referred to at the beginning of this paper is by the successful identification and ongoing support of female educators, through negotiated training and development for leadership roles. By shifting the focus from “too few women in school leadership” to a proactive motivational stance, women should be encouraged to join their male colleagues in aspiring to school leadership, confident that they will be similarly targeted for development and supported to excel throughout their career journey. The relative lack of disparity between the leadership practice of “effective” female and male Principals demonstrated in this study suggests a gender inclusive framework to be a viable way forward.

A proposed future direction: An evidence-based gender inclusive framework

A synthesis of this study’s analysis by gender of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in the NSW Department of Education and Training identifies the need for an education specific framework for effective school leadership development, a framework that effectively engages quality female and male educators, in the leadership process, both formal and informal, at all levels. This need is met in the form of Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders (Figure 4), a construct which overtly focuses on the need to transition from the “competency training” management practice of the nineties, to a “capability development” leadership and management learning frame that reflects the complex realities of Principalship in the 21st Century.

The Leadership Capability Research therefore provides an evidence-based grounding for a gender inclusive framework for school leadership development, one that addresses contemporary educational challenges in an “Integrated” way, recognising the “nature of school leadership - context, conditions and culture” (Figure 4).
The responses of ‘effective’ Principals in the reported study underpin the elements that comprise the Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders (Figure 4). Female and male Principals’ extended responses were reflective and insightful evidencing “Passion - purpose, energy, courage, hope, inspiration, creativity, team building, [and] self-awareness” (Figure 4).
Chapter Nine
"The minority majority?" An analysis by gender of school leadership capability and learning research in NSW.

The latter concept emphasised in the overall ranked importance of Emotional Intelligence-Personal attributes such as “being able to remain calm under pressure” and “having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective”. The capacity to achieve “Balance... [fluid] Adjustment of leadership style...[develop] Trust... [Manage] Ambiguity [whilst concurrently working with] Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow...” (Figure 4).

Finally, the research findings reveal how leadership capabilities interact resulting in evidence of strong commitment from “effective” Principals to ongoing professional learning. As “Leading Learners [Principals recognise] all capabilities are learnable” (Figure 4). Binney and Williams (1997) refer to this as “leaning into the future”, explaining that “successful leaders of change combine leading and learning: they lead in such a way that learning is encouraged; they learn in a way that informs and guides those who seek to lead” (p. 7).

The need to be “ICT savvy: [which optimises] this convenient tool for professional learning and interactive networking” (Figure 4) is also acknowledged by the “effective” Principals as a significant developmental issue, given the high resource investment and government policy priority afforded to Information Communication Technology infrastructure of the NSW Department of Education and Training.

It is argued that the Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders (Figure 4) represents a marked shift from “management competency training” to an holistic “leadership capability development” construct. This creates an authentic “leadership-praxis” paradigm, a dynamic that brings together leadership theory and practice, one that resonates with the study’s findings and incorporates feedback from extensive fieldwork undertaken by the author, whilst disseminating the overall research findings to colleagues across NSW.
This gender inclusive framework can be used to guide and focus the design of \textit{Individual Professional Learning Plans} and system specific \textit{School Leadership Development Programs}. Used in conjunction with the \textit{Leadership Capability Online Survey Instrument}, this approach provides a user-friendly diagnostic package that can facilitate the professional learning journey, providing school leadership aspirants and incumbents alike, with a necessary link between focused self reflection and the capacity to build on strengths whilst reducing gaps in leadership capability.
Chapter Nine
“The minority majority?” An analysis by gender of school leadership capability and learning research in NSW.

References


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NSW Department of School Education (2003). The EEO Annual Reports and Management Plans of the NSW Department of School Education.


CHAPTER TEN

TO FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD! THE CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS FOR WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Article published as:

Related material:
Letter of acceptance for publication in refereed conference proceedings (Appendix L, p.356).
TO FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD?

Challenges and dilemmas for women in educational leadership.

Abstract
The progression toward achieving equality and equity for women in educational leadership has not been linear and is certainly incomplete. At times the negativity of recurrent themes is disarming and frustrating, to ‘get back to the kitchen’ or return to the ‘chalkface’, where women have traditionally been seen as ‘socially appropriate’, emerging as an alluring pathway. However, now more than ever before, Australia’s education systems need to build leadership capacity and sustainability, by accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants, as the nation comes to terms with the progressive impact of a global ‘school leadership crises’. In the New South Wales Department of Education and Training 52.9% (13390) of the secondary school teaching service are female, while 27.5% (112) of secondary principals are female. Why in the 21st Century does being female remain an impediment to achieving school leadership appointment? This paper argues that teaching service women are an enormous resource that is demographically appropriate but marginalised and under-utilised. The study analyses the responses of 151 female school principals, drawn from a larger sample of 322 ‘effective’ principals commissioned by the NSW Department of Education and Training. Co-researched by the author, this study establishes, from a female perspective, a contemporary understanding of the role of the principal, leadership capabilities of ‘effective’ female principals and approaches to leadership development. Two evidence-based gender inclusive frameworks for developing school leaders are presented. A career journey that engages both ‘heart’ and ‘brain’, await those with the ‘courage’ to reach within and follow the yellow brick road"
Introduction

We thought – or we hoped – we were on track to achieve this justice for women but we have been derailed. We now face the end of equality – unless we stand up again and refuse to allow it to happen. (Summers, 2003, pp. 16-17)

The progression toward achieving equality and equity for women in educational leadership has not been linear and is certainly incomplete. At times the negativity of recurrent themes is disarming and frustrating, to ‘get back to the kitchen’ or return to the ‘chalkface’, where women have traditionally been seen as ‘socially appropriate’, emerging as an alluring pathway (Brennan, 2003a). Certainly at the beginning of the 21st Century, gender remains an impediment to accessing positions of leadership in the education sector, as evidenced through a developed mythology, gender schema, stereotypes, socialisation, sexual bias, tensions, dilemmas, the ‘new lady on the hill’ syndrome, misconceptions, tokenism, and differing interpretations of power and authority (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Brennan, 2001 & 2003a; Hall, 1997; Smith & Hale, 2002; Valian, 1998).

The constellation of impediments to women’s advancement in organisations is broadly labelled ‘culture’ with terms such as ‘chilly climate’ and ‘glass-ceiling’ as popular ways of referring to the historical, structural and attitudinal features of work organisations which impede women’s progression. (Burton, 1997)

In the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education Training, women comprise the ‘minority majority’ (Brennan, 2004) in educational leadership. Currently, 52.9% (13390) of the secondary teaching service is female, however only 28.8% (46) of PH1 (student enrolment 900+) principals are female; 26.6% (66) of PH2 (student enrolment >900) principals are female; 30.5% (215) of deputy principals are female; 39.6% (1532) of head teachers (head of department) are female; and 56.8% (11531) of unpromoted teachers are female (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003, p.45). (Figure 1)

These figures represent a 15.6% shortfall of women in promotions positions as set against the NSW Department of Education and Training Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) performance benchmark established in 1991, with the percentage difference higher as the status level rises. Clearly, teaching service women are an enormous
resource that is demographically appropriate, however they remain marginalised and under-utilised.

*Figure 1: NSWDET teaching service (secondary) by gender and position.*

![Graph showing gender distribution by position](image-url)


Now though, more than ever before, Australia’s education systems need to build leadership capacity and sustainability, by accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants, as the nation comes to terms with the progressive impact of a global ‘school leadership crises’ (Fullan, 2002, p.12). Certainly ‘the major turnover of school executive staff in Australian schools over the next decade provides both the opportunity and the necessity for rethinking the current conceptualisation of the leadership of our schools’ (Dinham, Brennan, Collier, Deece and Mulford, 2000, p.35).

In NSW for example, Department of Education and Training workforce planning projections for 2008, indicate retirements of current teaching service personnel at the following levels: 74% of secondary principals; 48% of secondary deputies; and 44% of
secondary head teachers (Duignan & Marks, 2003, p.17). Whilst this creates a window of opportunity for leadership aspirants, female and male, to take up the mantle of school leadership, current executive appointment data reports that application rates are at an all time low, particularly in schools perceived as demographically ‘undesirable’ or geographically isolated. The female promotions application rate outside metropolitan areas and regional centres, is particularly low, with women reporting a ‘crisis of confidence’, an unnerving doubt in their capacity to ‘do the job’, uncertainty about the ‘day-to-day’ realities of the role and an ‘unwillingness’ to undertake roles that they feel under-prepared for.

Therefore it is critical that the voice of women who currently hold school leadership positions, ‘should be sought, heard and incorporated at the most fundamental levels of understanding’ (Brennan, 2001, p.10). It is argued that for women to be motivated to aspire to school leadership roles they need to be inspired, affirmed, supported, developed and sustained, both by the education system they serve and through proactive generative leadership.

This paper therefore, is presented from the female perspective and draws on the responses of 151 female principals from the *Leadership Capability Research Project* (Scott, 2003). The project adapts a ‘backward mapping’ research methodology that ‘connects policy decisions directly with the point at which the effect occurs’ (Elmore, 1979, pp.604-606). Therefore in the context of this study the researchers went directly to the nominated ‘effective’ principals, gathered and analysed their responses and fed the analysis back to the relevant policy makers. The methodology is detailed in Scott (2003, pp. 9-14).

The research taps the experience of 322 ‘effective’ NSW Department of Education and Training principals of both genders. It is of significance that 47% (151) of the 322 respondents were women, a marked over representation of women in the ‘effective principal’ sample, relative to their representation at principal level. Quotes are included with the names of the women who participated protected through the use of
pseudonyms*. The author was both project manager and principal researcher of the study which presents as a limitation of this study. The author currently holds the position of PH1 secondary school principal.

Research Questions
Given the above context and need, this study explores the following research questions from a female perspective.

- What is the role of school principal currently like?
- What leadership capabilities play a central role in the effective performance of a principal; what is their relative importance and prior training and development (T&D) focus; and in what ways do they interact?
- What learning approaches, focus and resources could optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified?

From the perspective of female principals therefore:

What is the role of school principal currently like?

What is a "normal" day, no two are the same - this makes the job both interesting and stressful. Every day is a challenge. (Christina*)

Relentless and ongoing challenge is the central theme that pervades female ‘open-ended’ respondent data, ‘challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved effectively’ (Scott, 2003, p.14). Mary* told of “juggling hats - within a five minute period [I can be] playing parent, counsellor, cleaner, gardener, banker etc”; a series of small encounters, multiplicity of expectation, unpredictability, constant change and ambiguity. Jessica* shared that “it is the sheer diversity, from the mundane to the highly abstract that makes the job so demanding”.

Female respondents readily acknowledge the innate challenges of the role of the principal, though this is reflected against a proactive positive stance. Fullan (2001b, p.31) explains that ‘a culture of change consists of great rapidity and non-linearity on the one hand and equally great potential for creative breakthroughs on the other. The paradox is that transformation would not be possible without accompanying messiness’.
When asked about professionally challenging situations they had experienced, female principals commented that:

This is the time where you can be most creative and move your staff... exciting growth times where you need to be the leader to attain the vision;
This tests your ability to still manage the situation and regain sufficient power within the situation to have an influence on a positive resolution or outcome;
Such situations require excellent memory, high order knowledge of policy, impeccable record keeping, resilience, positive communication skills and boundless capacity to problem solve; [and]
I have to make good decisions quickly in a variety of areas as well as keeping the rest of the school on an even keel, positively moving forward as much as possible.

Of interest are the comments that reflect the challenge of managing the ‘personal’ with the ever-present danger of ‘burn-out’ and/or ‘isolation’:

HAVING NOBODY IN THE SCHOOL TO SPEAK TO ON EQUAL TERMS (the relationship changes when you are a principal and nobody warned me about this);

Long hours...sometimes the more you give people, the more they want;

Finding other ways to achieve your goals is also fun though... trying to keep sane and good humoured;

It's challenging because it is emotionally draining so you need to develop recharging tactics. After talking to a negative person go find a positive person who gets you motivated again don’t go and whinge about it.

Also, the expectation female principals have of themselves to ensure that they reflect upon their actions and learn from a challenging situation is salient, comments such as:

When things go wrong I reflect on why. Was it something I did or was it caused by factors out of my control? What could/should I have done differently? What will I do next time?
BUT more importantly - how can I solve the problem? Fix it? Repair damage? Rebuild bridges etc. You really need to call on all your experience and skills in challenging situations. They keep you ‘sharp’!

Everyone wants you to do what they want, to solve all their problems instantly and they feel they have a right to be abusive and downright rude whenever they are upset. You have to let that all roll over you then begin to work on the problem. You also have to be wrong when you are not, say sorry when you’d rather curse and give compliments the day after someone has tried to undermine or abuse you.

The most challenging situations illuminate common themes: staff, students, parents/community; each theme revolving around human interactions and relationships; demanding a highly developed emotional intelligence.
Time management also presents as a constant challenge, but is not presented by female respondents as an ‘excuse’ for poor leadership performance. Female respondents reflected a capacity to ‘maintain unwavering faith that [they] can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties AND at the same time the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of [their] current reality whatever they may be’, characteristics of highly effective leaders as outlined by Collins (2001, p.13) in his study of ‘good to great’ companies. Having reflected upon the nature of the principal role, respondents are asked ‘what analogy best describes what it is like to be a principal in a school like [theirs]?’

- Managing a large, often unruly family, on a shoestring budget...
- White water rafting ... Sometimes you end up very wet ... it is exhilarating and more people should try it.
- Like the duck on the pond. On the surface it looks as calm and free from stress, but underneath the duck is paddling as hard as a duck can.
- Juggling 6 balls all at once, whilst riding on a unicycle on a bed of marbles.
- Being the captain on the bridge with other officers (the exec – leadership density)...
- A washing machine stuck on a cycle that never stops.

The role is described as both exhilarating and deflating, energising and anxiety filled, one that demands the use of approaches that are paradoxical (listen and lead; use top down and bottom up strategies; direct and empower; set clear directions and remain flexible/responsive).

The data indicates that ‘effective’ female principals do not practice a singular leadership style instead they develop a leadership repertoire, a range of leadership styles that affect climate and therefore performance. Each female respondent demonstrated a capacity to switch between various styles depending on the situation. This aligns with Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002, p.54-55) who found that leaders with the best results didn’t practice just one particular style, ‘rather on any given day or week, they used many of the six distinct styles [visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, commanding] – seamlessly and in different measures – depending on the situation’.

Given this understanding of the current role of school principal:
What leadership capabilities play a central role in the effective performance of a principal; what is their relative importance and prior training and development (T&D) focus; and in what ways do they interact?

Table 1 shows the 10 highest ranked capability items on importance and T&D focus by the female ‘effective principal’ sample. Seven of the top ten capability items come from the Emotional Intelligence Scales.

Table 1: Top 10 Capability Items ranked on Importance showing prior T&D Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Items as ranked by females</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (E)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (A1)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12: Being able to bounce back from adversity (A1)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (A1)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (A1)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19: Being able to motivate others to achieve great things (A2)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (B)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (E)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specifically, five come from the Emotional Intelligence (Personal) Scale (4: Being able to remain calm under pressure; 7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible; 12: Being able to bounce back from adversity; 11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective; 9: An ability to make a hard decision); and two from the
Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal) Scale (19: Being able to motivate others to achieve great things; 22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations).

Of the remainder, one comes from the Intellectual Ability Scale (30: Being able to set and justify priorities) and two from the Specific Skills & Knowledge Scale (42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head; 44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school).

Respondents’ emphasis on the central role that Emotional Intelligence (Personal and Social) plays in effective practice is consistent with the research that has emerged in other recent professional capability studies (Scott & Yates, 2002, Goleman, 1998).

Overall, Table One shows that, of the capability items rated highest on importance, only three were rated in the top 10 on focus for prior T&D as a principal. Ranked two on T&D focus was Item 7 (Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible). This is consistent with the research of Holtkamp (2002), Hackney (1999) and Hagberg (1998), and is reflected in Brennan’s (2001, pp.9-10) findings that it is a ‘strong motivational orientation, sense of mission ... and a passion for excellence in teaching and leadership, a belief that they can and do make a difference’, that characterises women who are empowered to lead school communities. Bass and Avolio (1997, p.208) note ‘that women... tend to be more transformational and more proactive in addressing problems’.

Ranked four on T&D focus was Item 30 (Being able to set and justify priorities); and ranked five was Item 42 (Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head). This response reflects the explicit focus of executive and principal development programs sponsored by the NSW Department of Education and Training and professional associations over the past decade. Schools Renewal (Scott, 1989) saw the focus shift onto areas such as school mission/vision, strategic and management planning, generic management skills (eg. time management, conflict management); joint Department of
Education and Training/university credentialed programs (eg. MEd, Certificate of School Management, Certificate of Team Leadership) further reinforced this change agenda.

Conversely, the extremely low T&D focus rankings of the emotional ability scale capabilities listed as most important for leadership ‘effectiveness’, including Item 9 (An ability to make a hard decision) ranked 38 on focus; Item 12 (Being able to bounce back from adversity) ranked 32 on focus; Item 4 (Being able to remain calm under pressure) ranked 24 on focus; and Item11 (Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective) ranked 22 on focus; indicates an area of significant short-fall in current school leadership development strategy.

The dilemmas and tensions female principals report as they struggle to manage the professional/personal life dichotomy, high visibility by way of their gender, scrutiny, performance pressure, gendered cultures and the resultant need to build resilience and retain perspective, certainly align with the findings of Blackmore (1999) and MacBeath & Myers (1999). These findings are reflected in the ever-present mantra, *If you can’t take the heat get back to the kitchen* (Brennan, 2003)!

In an outline of research that discusses women as leaders, Pringle and Collins (1998, pp. 1-3) posit that:

Existing androcentric theories have given rise to a ‘women as different’ stream, which overlooks the situational factors and the nature of the organisation... the dilemmas for women are sharpened where there are masculine cultures...A common response... is to adopt the behaviours demanded by the situation and live with any personal discomfort... [however] women are preferred if they behave in a way that is more congruent with the feminist sex-role (Wilson 1995) and are more people oriented. In contrast, senior management is more comfortable if female leaders act in ways more congruent with masculine norms...[resulting] in conflicting demands on the women leaders.

A detailed analysis of respondents’ overall comments on these ratings shows that it is the combined effect of attributes from every area identified in the study’s professional capability framework (Figure 2) that makes the difference.

For example, they note how, when something goes wrong the principal needs to be able to remain calm and keep things in perspective (Emotional Intelligence – Personal) to deal with what is often a situation with a serious human conflict dimension by showing empathy.
and listening to different points of view (Emotional Intelligence – Interpersonal), in order to sort out what is the key issue in the welter of factors which are at play (Intellectual Abilities) and, from this diagnosis, to identify and effectively implement the appropriate mix of generic and job-specific skills and knowledge. (Scott, 2003, p.24)

Figure 2: FRAMEWORK PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY


If only I had a heart...

In terms of the rank order of items within each scale, the highest rating Emotional Intelligence Ability items on importance by female principals were:

- Emotional Intelligence (Personal): being able to remain calm; wanting to achieve the best outcome possible; being able to bounce back from adversity; having a sense of humour and perspective; and, an ability to take a hard decision.

- Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal): being able to motivate others to achieve great things; being able to deal effectively with conflict situations; being able to contribute positively to team-based projects; ability to empathise and work productively with
people from a wide variety of backgrounds; and, understanding how the different
groups that make up my school operate. (Table 2)

Table 2: Top Five Personal and Interpersonal Ability Scale Items ranked on Importance showing mean rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Ability Scale Item (A1) (females)</th>
<th>Interpersonal Ability Scale Items (A2) (females)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4: Being able to remain calm under pressure (m4.88)</td>
<td>19: Being able to motivate others to achieve great things (m4.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (m4.87)</td>
<td>22: Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (m4.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Being able to bounce back from adversity (m4.85)</td>
<td>20: Being able to develop and contribute to team-based programs (m4.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective (m4.84)</td>
<td>13: The ability to empathise with and work productively with people from a wide range of backgrounds (m4.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: An ability to make a hard decision (m4.83)</td>
<td>16: Understanding how the different groups in my school operate and how much influence they have in different situations (m4.69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings align with those of Goleman et al. (2002, p.21), who conclude that ‘without a healthy dose of heart, a supposed “leader” may manage – but he does not lead’. As an aside it is noteworthy that in 2002 such authors and researchers use ‘he’ for all references to leadership/leaders.

If only I had a brain…

Further, in terms of the rank order of items within the Intellectual Ability Scale, the highest rating items on importance by female principals were:

- Intellectual Abilities: being able to set and justify priorities; being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens as it is implemented; being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation; the ability to use previous experience; and, being able to diagnose what is really causing a problem.

- Generic and specific skills and knowledge: having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head; knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good
practice; being able to organise my work and manage time effectively; being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups; and, knowing how to manage programs into successful implementation. (Table 3)

Table 3: Top Five Intellectual and Specific Skills and Knowledge Ability Scale Items ranked on Importance showing mean rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Ability Scale Items (B) (females)</th>
<th>Specific Skills and Knowledge Ability Scale Items (E) (females)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30: Being able to set and justify priorities (m4.79)</td>
<td>42: Having a clear, justified vision for where the school must head (m4.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28: Being able to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens when it is being implemented (m4.72)</td>
<td>44: Knowing how to effectively identify and disseminate good practice across the school (m4.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24: Being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (m4.72)</td>
<td>41: Being able to organise my work and manage time effectively (m4.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25: The ability to use previous experience to figure out what is going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn (m4.66)</td>
<td>36: Being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups (m4.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26: Being able to diagnose what is really causing a problem and then to test this out in action (m4.63)</td>
<td>38: Knowing how to manage programs to effective implementation (m4.71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary these findings are encapsulated in the words of Goleman et.al (2002, p.21) who explain that ‘no creature can fly with just one wing. Gifted leadership occurs where heart and head – feeling and thought – meet. These are the two wings that allow a leader to soar’.

What this research provides is an evidence-based grounding for a gender inclusive framework for school leadership development, proposed in Brennan (2003b), titled ‘The Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders’ (Figure Three). This framework addresses contemporary educational challenges in an ‘Integrated’ way, recognising the ‘nature of school leadership - context, conditions and culture’.

Certainly, female principals’ extended responses were reflective and insightful evidencing ‘purpose, energy, courage, hope, inspiration, creativity, team building, [and]
self-awareness’. The latter concept emphasised in the overall ranked importance of Emotional Intelligence-Personal attributes such as ‘being able to remain calm under pressure’ and ‘having a sense of humour and being able to keep work in perspective’. The capacity to achieve ‘Balance... [fluid] Adjustment of leadership style...[develop] Trust... [manage] Ambiguity, [whilst concurrently working with] Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow’.

The capabilities interact to support ongoing professional learning and as ‘Leading Learners [principals recognise] all capabilities are learnable’. Binney and Williams (1997, p.7) refer to this as ‘leaning into the future’, explaining that ‘successful leaders of change combine leading and learning: they lead in such a way that learning is encouraged; they learn in a way that informs and guides those who seek to lead’.

The need to be ‘ICT savvy: [which optimises] this convenient tool for professional learning and interactive networking’ further looms as a significant developmental issue, given the high resource investment and government policy priority now afforded to Information Communications Technology infrastructure in the NSW Department of Education and Training.

With this developed understanding of contemporary school leadership as seen through a female lens – nature of school leadership, context, conditions and culture; capabilities of importance and previous Training and Development focus; there is a need to ensure that female school leadership aspirants engage in development programs that are relevant and optimise learning. Therefore:
What learning approaches, focus and resources could optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified?

Table Four shows the learning strategies rated highest on importance by female respondents for making principal development programs relevant, interesting and engaging and then the extent to which prior Training and Development programs focused effectively on using these strategies. The learning strategy items ranked highest on importance were in rank order: Item 54 (Ensure that teaching staff running these programs have current workplace experience); Item 53 (Ensure that all principal development programs model the key attributes identified as being important in this research); Item 46 (Focus more directly on the capabilities identified as being important as a result of this survey); Item 49 (Use effective principals more consistently as a learning resource in these programs e.g. as mentors or coaches); Item 47 (Use real-life workplace problems identified by effective principals as a key resource for learning); Item 55 (Make assessment more real-world and problem-based and less focused on memorising factual material); Item 51 (Include learning experiences based on real-life case studies that specifically develop the interpersonal and personal skills needed by a principal); and Item 56 (Use performance on the capabilities identified as being most important in earlier parts of this survey as a focus for assessment and feedback on principal performance).

It is of note that Item 54 attracted the second highest overall mean importance ranking of all 57 items surveyed (4.81 on a five point Likert Scale). However, all twelve learning strategies surveyed (i.e. Items 46 – 57) received very low performance ratings for effective deployment in current principal development programs, with none attracting a rating for effective current use of more than 2.67.
Table 4: Keeping Principal Development Programs Relevant
(Ranking on Importance: mean rating on Importance and prior T&D Focus)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Items as ranked by females</th>
<th>Mean Rating Import</th>
<th>Mean Rating Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>54: Ensure that teaching staff running these programs model the key attributes identified as being important in this research</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53: Ensure that all principal development programs model the key attributes identified as being important in this research</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>46: Focus more directly on the capabilities identified as being important as a result of this survey</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>49: Use effective principals more consistently as a learning resource in these programs (eg. as mentors and coaches)</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47: Use real-life workplace problems identified by effective principals as a key resource for learning</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>55: Make assessment more real-world and problem-based and less focused on memorising factual material</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51: Include learning experiences focused on real-life case studies that specifically develop the interpersonal and personal skills needed by a principal</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>56: Use performance on the capabilities identified as being most important in earlier parts of this survey as a focus for assessment and feedback on principal performance</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the quantitative and qualitative results were scrutinised a number of insights emerge:

- Informal forms of learning and support, especially informal contacts, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, action learning teams and networking with peers emerge as a key learning support for principal development; as do activities and conferences run
by the principal professional associations, learning on the job, the learning that
emerges from previous leadership experiences; and targeted professional reading;
- Respondents repeatedly emphasised the need to be more proactive in identifying
people with the potential to become principals, using the endorsed capability
framework produced from this study. This, they said, was especially important when
looking for people with the sorts of personal and interpersonal emotional intelligence
identified in this study as being so important.

The above recommendations do not preclude the use of more formal group learning
programs for new or aspiring principals. It is recommended though, that whenever a more
formal school leadership program is being considered, there be demonstrable evidence of
the following learning quality tests. This includes evidence that each program is relevant;
promotes active rather than passive learning; consistently links theory with practice;
effectively manages participant expectations; ensures that learning will be ‘digestible’;
makes clear what aspects of leadership capability are being addressed; provides suitable
learning pathways; is appropriately assessed; provides suitable self-managed learning
materials & resources; is appropriately supported; and makes access to it as convenient as
possible. These findings align with the RATED CLASS A framework, developed by Scott
(2003, p.6) that brings together research on what factors most effectively promote
productive adult learning.

_If only I had the nerve (courage)…_

‘Career hesitancy’ is often reported by female teachers, the propensity to ‘freeze’ when
school leadership opportunities present. Overwhelmed by the mass of misinformation
(informed by stereotypes, myths and tales), lack of affirmation and proactive support,
female aspirants perceive that entry into the leadership ranks, is tantamount to entering a
‘den of masculinity’, a move that will stifle their leadership integrity and capacity to be
effective. However, as this study reveals, female school leaders can, and do make a
difference in the school communities they lead. In the words of the Australian nurse, Sr
Elizabeth Kenny: ‘It’s better to be a lion for a day than a sheep all your life’ (quoted in
To follow the yellow brick road...

This study presents a way forward for women who aspire to school leadership, by presenting a gender inclusive strategy for developing school leadership capacity and capability.

Firstly the Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders (Figure 3) explained earlier, resonates with the study’s findings and presents as authentic to school leaders in-situ. The Principles incorporate feedback from extensive fieldwork undertaken by the author, whilst disseminating the overall research findings to colleagues across NSW.

The Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders can be used to guide and focus the design of Individual Professional Learning Plans and system specific School Leadership Development Programs. Of most critical import is that the Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders creates a form of ‘leadership-praxis’, a dynamic that brings together leadership theory and practice.

By adopting a proactive stance, sustainable leadership capacity and density building is enabled. It is certainly within a culture of continuous self-improvement and the development of trusting relationships that help, support and encourage each step of the way, that the process of experimenting and practising new behaviours, in varied contexts, is supported (Goleman et al.2002, p.110). Within this context, female school leadership aspirants are urged to display ‘courage’ and move out of their comfort zone!
Figure 4: Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders: A gender inclusive framework for developing and sustaining effective school leaders

Acknowledging:
- CAPABILITY is the combination of attributes, qualities, skills and knowledge.
- AMBIGUITY the uncertain and constant changing that must be negotiated effectively.
- PASSION is purpose, energy, courage, hope, inspiration, creativity, team building and self-awareness.
- ADJUSTMENT of leadership style depends on the situation and affects both climate and performance.
- BALANCE of the professional and personal, building resilience and wellbeing.
- INTEGRATED leadership that is centred and draws on a full range of competencies-emotional (EQ), intellectual (IQ), behavioural and social.
- LEADING LEARNERS recognise that all leadership capabilities are learnable.
- CT ‘savvy’ that optimises this convenient tool for professional learning and interactive networking.
- TRUST is the loyalty, respect and commitment developed through openness and honesty; integrity in action.
- YESTERDAY, TODAY and TOMORROW: reflecting on the past, leading in the present, whilst projecting into the future.

Secondly, a synthesis of this study’s analysis of school leadership, leadership capability and learning research in the NSW Department of Education and Training identifies the need for an education specific framework for effective school leadership development. A framework that moves beyond traditional gendered interpretations of school leadership and effectively engages quality educators in the leadership process, both formal and informal, at all levels. Hence, Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness (Figure 4) recognises the core elements of leadership capability as:

- A combination of Personal & Interpersonal Abilities; Intellectual Abilities; and Generic & Specific Skills and Knowledge; across five domains

- Personal, Interpersonal, Educational, Strategic and Organisational; enacted with

- Passion, ‘the key to successful leadership because it engages more than the mind… gives us our purpose and direction (Kovess, 2003, p.142);

- Ethics, ‘about what is good and bad, right and wrong, worthy or unworthy in human behaviour’ (Elliot and Engebretson, 2001, cited in Elliot, 2003, p.131);

- Trust, which is ‘reciprocal (got to give it to get it) and created incrementally (step by step)… competence trust (trust of capability), contractual trust (trust of character) and communications trust (trust of disclosure)’ (Reina and Reina, 1999, p.64); and

- Balance, the key to achieving optimal ‘effectiveness’ and resilience, with leaders integrating ‘their emotional life into their intellectual, professional and social lives’ (Hede, 2003, p.105); enabling a person to perform to a high standard in a given role or context.
In Conclusion - Somewhere over the rainbow...

This paper proposes a way forward for women in educational leadership, by providing an insight into the ‘day-to-day’ realities of school leadership, leadership capabilities (relative importance, focus and interaction), and learning approaches that can optimise the development of the leadership capabilities identified.

That 47% of the principals nominated for the evidence based ‘effective principal’ sample were female, is a clear indication of ‘system’ and ‘profession’ confidence in the school leadership capacity of women in the teaching service.

The two gender inclusive frameworks presented provide a formative school leadership development strategy, one that moves beyond the gender exclusivity of
existing masculinist leadership and management models. This strategy focuses on professional development at the individual level, and guides school leaders and aspirants through the core challenge of ‘leading and learning’. *Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness (Figure Four)*, draws from the concept of *Professional Capability (Figure Two)*, and creates an overarching conceptual frame for *The Ten Principles for School Leaders (Figure Three)*. These frameworks represent a significant paradigmatic shift from the restrictive competency (technical/management skills) and compliance (legal/policy/regulatory) system training agenda of the previous decade, by confronting the realities of contemporary educational leadership – ambiguity, challenge, dilemma and paradox.

Certainly, to become an ‘effective’ school leader, school leadership development should form a career continuum. A professional journey that engages both ‘heart’ and ‘brain’, await those women with the ‘courage’ to reach within and ‘follow the yellow brick road’.
References


Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986


NSW Department of School Education (2000 and 2003). The EEO Annual Reports and Management Plans of the NSW Department of School Education.


Smith, A.E. and Hale, R.P. (2002). The view from the principal’s desk. Advancing Women in Leadership, Spring. At:

http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/spring2002/SMITH%20EL,HTM


APPENDIX A
CONFERENCE PROGRAMS FOR SELECTED PAPERS DELIVERED DURING EdD CANDIDATURE

1999
Doctor of Education
Annual Conference

5th - 7th August 1999
at
The Carrington Hotel
Katoomba

Abstracts

Kathryn Brennan


In acknowledging Bell’s (1989) argument that there is a dearth of research in educational administration for women, by women, I undertook a qualitative research study in 1995, to redress an apparent gap in literature which tended to focus upon the educational leadership experiences and style of men, conceptualising leadership in androcentric terms.

The study described and interpreted the educational leadership style, qualities and experiences of a group of female secondary school principals. Portraying educational leadership as an androgynous activity, these women were transforming the cultures of the schools they led, creating an inclusive workplace and a more humane society. What unfolded was a life and career struggle, a search for empowerment.

The study illuminated the major barrier remaining as sexism: the issues of status, power, control, as asymmetrical relationships between the sexes and structural impediments, which act against women achieving their full potential as educational leaders.

Against a backdrop of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) and Amendment X(a), The 4th EEO Annual Report of the NSW Department of School Education (1992) indicated a gross imbalance towards males at the secondary principal level (ie.90.4% male). The Department implemented an EEO program ‘to remedy the effect of past discrimination’.

Seven years hence, I revisit and update this study and review current literature, to establish if indeed the reality of women’s current experiences reflect the above rhetoric. ‘Looking at our Future: Listening to the Past’, working for effective change, a preferred future when women are seen as principals, not as women who are principals.

Mrs Kathryn Elizabeth Brennan (kbrenna@hinet.net.au)
Mrs Kathryn Brennan

The mystique of the female principalship in secondary schools.

In 1993 I undertook a research study, to redress an apparent gap in literature, which tended to focus upon the educational leadership experiences and style of men, conceptualising leadership in androcentric terms.

The study described and interpreted the educational leadership style, qualities and experiences of a group of female secondary school principals. Portraying educational leadership as an androgynous activity, these women were transforming the cultures of the schools they led, creating an inclusive workplace. What unfolded was a life and career struggle, a search for empowerment.

The study illuminated the major barrier remaining as sexism: the issues of status, power, control, asymmetrical relationships between the sexes and structural impediments, which act against women achieving their full potential as educational leaders. At that time, with a gross imbalance towards males at the secondary principal level evident, the NSW Department of Education implemented an EEO program ‘to remedy the effect of past discrimination’.

Seven years hence, an update of this study concludes that the reality of women’s experiences does not reflect ‘equity’ legislative and system rhetoric, nor the predicted futures for women in the nineties. This paper serves as a ‘wake up call’, urging increased understanding and vigilance in pursuit of positive change.

Tools for self reflection, data capture, context analysis (a psycho-ecological framework) and career development, provide strategies for change at personal, local and system levels. A preferred future for women in educational leadership in the 21st century, when women are seen as principals, not as women who are principals.
Abstracts

Kathryn Brennan

"If You Can't Take the Heat, Get Back to the Kitchen!"
The impact of gender on school leadership

Current research indicates that the reality of women's experiences still does not reflect equity legislative and policy rhetoric, the predicted future for women in the nineties, nor the preferred future for women in educational leadership in the 21st Century, a future built upon the organisational leadership principles of 'inclusiveness, equity, social justice, ethical practice and excellence'. This presentation mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon leadership of secondary schools. Key issues will be explored and a framework for further research proposed.

Mrs Kathryn Elizabeth Brennan (n9208090@scholar.nepean.uws.edu.au)
NEW SOUTH WALES SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

2000 Annual Conference

Conference Program

'NSWSPC - SHAPING EDUCATION IN NSW'

Fairmont Resort, Leura  13th - 15th June 2000
8th May, 2001

Ms Kathryn Brennan  
Principal  
Bowral High School  
Park & Aitkins Street  
BOWRAL 2576

Dear Colleague

Thank you most sincerely for agreeing to share your expertise during the concurrent workshops, “Sharing Best Practice Research, Showcasing School Projects” at Annual Conference on Wednesday, 13th June, 2001 – 1.45 p.m. to 2.45 p.m., and repeated 3.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

For your information, I have attached a copy of the program as it is at the moment. If you have any questions or concerns about the program, could you let me know as soon as possible before we go to “glossy” print.

Once again, thanks for your willingness to contribute to Annual Conference.

Sincerely

SHARON PARKES  
Convenor  
Principal  
Rutherford Technology High School
THE AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

THE LEADERSHIP OF LEARNING

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2000
Customer Service in Schools: A 21st Century Imperative

Effective customer service will be a necessity for schools in the next decade as we move into an era of parental choice and a free market. In this interactive session, delegates will have the opportunity to discuss practical and effective strategies that can be used to raise the image of individual schools. Through these strategies, participants will be able to focus on identifying and meeting the needs of their multiple clients. The workshop will contain examples from the education sector as well as good practice from private and public sectors.

Participants will be introduced, via video, to Wally Watt and have the opportunity to see Wally set straight on the path to service improvement. The workshop will not only produce a “silver bullet” for customer service in schools but will provide a strong base to reflect on your school’s service and its future in a harsh educational world.

ADELE BRADLEY

Adele Bradley has recently been appointed as manager, Curriculum Design Centre at WA’s Schools of Isolated and Distance Education. Previously she had a long association with Ballajura Community College, first as a middle school team and curriculum leader and then as a deputy in the middle school.

Adele has a background in professional development and literacy. For five years, she managed Stepping Out, a statewide professional development project for teachers of 6 – 10. Stepping Out’s brief was to equip teachers of the middle years to improve the linkage between literacy and learning.

Middle Schooling - Marrying Culture and Organisation

For middle schooling to be effective, it is necessary for schools to create structures that promote collaboration between teachers, students and parents and a positive attitude to change in order to address the needs of individual students.

In this presentation, Adele Bradley will outline some of the structures that Ballajura Community College has developed in order to create such an environment. She will explore some of the organisational structures for activities such as professional development, decision making, teacher planning and curriculum delivery that have been created to promote a school culture that is collaborative, reflective and customer focussed.

MICHAEL BRADLEY

Michael Bradley is the principal of Sanderson High School, a school noted for its development of a unitized vertical timetable and strong vertical pastoral care model. He has held the position since 1993 and was previously an assistant principal, curriculum developer, curriculum consultant, teacher, adviser and union official. Michael’s original training was in the UK in the early 1970’s. He studied at Reading and Manchester Universities before migrating to Australia and initially taught in Victoria before heading north to the Territory. He received his Masters Degree from the NT University. Michael has also worked in WA, with colleagues in Queensland, SA, NSW and Victoria as well as overseas as a consultant. He has written papers on numerous topics including timetabling, staff appraisal and performance and curriculum development. He is currently a member of the editorial board of Principal Matters. His current interests include international education, staff appraisal and professional development all linked to improving students’ learning.

“Listen to the Leaders”

This interactive workshop provides an opportunity for educators to have their say on their experiences with local school management. It will include an initial discussion of academic papers and then focus on the question “What is the impact on student learning of local school management?”. Participants attending this workshop will have the opportunity to update their colleagues regarding local school management in each state and territory. Highlights from published papers such as Caldwell and Townsend, will be used to examine the key principle – “Do the changes impact on student outcomes?”.

Participants will leave the workshop better informed and with a much broader understanding of the issues, having had the opportunity to share, explore and debate.

RON BRANDT

Ron Brandt’s biography is detailed under Keynote Speakers.

Creating Conditions for Powerful Learning

Based on authoritative sources including the American Psychological Association, Ron Brandt has defined a set of ten conditions in which people learn well. In the last decade, neuroscientists have discovered information about brain functioning that helps explain why these conditions foster learning. The challenge for curriculum leaders is to help teachers find ways to create these conditions in the restricted environment of the classroom. The ten conditions apply not only to individual students but also to schools in their quest to become learning organizations.

KATHRYN BRENnan

Kathryn Brennan is the principal of Bowral High School, a recognised Centre of Excellence in
Performing Arts (1120 students). She took up her position in 1995, after serving as deputy principal of Fairfield High School, being the first female senior executive appointed to these co-educational schools. Educated in rural NSW public schools, Kathryn completed undergraduate studies at the NSW Conservatorium of Music (performance and teaching). Her postgraduate qualifications include a Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration and a Master of Education, presenting her Master’s research on ‘The empowerment of women as educational leaders’. Kathryn is currently completing a Doctorate of Education on ‘Leading Change for a Preferred Future – cultural transformation and the impact of gender’.

Kathryn has delivered papers on a number of topics at national and state conferences. In 1999, Kathryn delivered a paper at the 8th International Women in Leadership Conference on ‘The Mystique of the Female Principalship in Secondary Schools’. An active member of the NSWSPC, Kathryn was a member of the Futures Project Team, Student Welfare Reference Group and now leads the NSWSPC Induction Reference Group.

“IF YOU CAN’T TAKE THE HEAT GET BACK TO THE KITCHEN!”: The impact of gender on school leadership in the 21st Century.

In 1989 only 6.6% of NSW secondary school principal positions were held by women, yet they represented 47.8% of the secondary teaching service. The NSW Department of Education implemented an Equal Opportunity Program ‘to remedy the effect of past discrimination’ and ‘achieve representation of women and men in professional positions which are comparable to their representation in the Department of Education as a whole’. Current research however, indicates that the reality of women’s experiences does not reflect the ‘equity’ legislative and policy rhetoric, the predicted future for women in the nineties, nor the preferred future for women in educational leadership in the 21st century.

This workshop mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon leadership of secondary schools. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon the gendered heritage of education. The workshop will explore a number of issues including the ‘principal mystique’ from myth to reality, stereotypes, gender barriers and personal/professional tensions. Kathryn will articulate the constraints of enacting a principal’s role within a masculine organisational construct of leadership including becoming the first female ‘head’ in the school’s history! She will share strategies that empower women to transform the cultures of the schools they lead, by expressing, not giving up their personal values and feminist attributes.

PADDI BROWN

Paddy Brown is the director of Paddy Brown and Associates. Initially trained as a teacher, she has spent 26 years in the area of training and consultancy. She has postgraduate qualifications from Curtin University’s School of Business where she majored in management. She is particularly interested in leadership development and human resource management. She has been involved in facilitating, strategic business planning processes, staff selection, job application skills, team building and performance management.

She has undertaken consulting work for local government, State and Commonwealth government departments and private organisations. Her client list includes the City of Perth, NBS Fleet Care, The Ministry of Justice, University of WA, The Education Department of WA, The Health Department, Perth Zoo and the Australian Taxation Office.

She has made many presentations to major conferences and groups and is renowned for her ability to make her sessions effective and fun. Her maxim is “Making a difference for individuals, work groups and organisations”.

Unlock Your Potential and Effectively Develop Yourself and Your Own Career

In this workshop filled with fun, ideas and practical strategies, delegates will be offered the opportunity to explore the answers to the questions: Why do you work? What do you want in a job? and What does your current job deliver? They will develop strategies to destroy the myth of a “career path” and learn how to create their own “career mosaic”.

In this interactive workshop, participants will discover the competencies for effective personal leadership and learn how to develop and manage themselves. They will also learn how to achieve a balance and plan for a life after work hours.

ALLAN COMAN

Allan Coman’s biography is detailed under Keynote Speakers.

Innovation and Best Practice - The Reality of Transforming a School

Stella Maris College Sydney was one of a hundred schools selected throughout Australia to be part of the Innovation and Best Practice Project conducted during 1998, 1999. The research was focused on how the college was able to change from being a college with declining numbers into a place that was in huge demand even though the surrounding community of children was shrinking.

It is a story of movement from deficit to surplus while spending a million dollars on resources, of an intake of 68 students to 150 with huge waiting lists, of
COMBINED DISTRICTS
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE - 2003

PRINCIPALS.....

♦ Success
♦ Succession
♦ Survival
♦ Satisfaction

CROWNE PLAZA
TERRIGAL
5-6 JUNE, 2003

NSW Department of Education & Training
Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle, Taree
Kathryn Brennan is the Principal of Bowral High School, a recognised Centre of Excellence in Performing Arts (1120 students). Previously she was Deputy Principal of Fairfield High School, a multicultural campus of 1530 students and appointed to develop the first Performing Arts HS in NSW. Educated in rural NSW public schools, Kathryn completed undergraduate studies at the NSW Conservatorium of Music (performance and teaching). Postgraduate qualifications include a G. Dip in Educational Administration and Master of Education, presenting her Master’s research on The empowerment of women as educational leaders. Kathryn is currently completing a professional Doctorate of Education on Leading Educational Change for a Preferred Future.

Strongly committed to professional development Kathryn works extensively in the fields of Education, Quality Teaching and Learning and Educational Leadership (development, cultural change, principal welfare and gender) as a motivational speaker and facilitator in the school and higher education sector.

Kathryn has delivered papers at international and national conferences including: The 8th International Women in Leadership Conference, Australian College of Education National Conference and The Leadership of Learning National Conference (ASPA). An active member of the NSW Secondary Principals Council, Kathryn was a member of the Futures Project Team and Student Welfare Reference Group, leader of the Principal Induction Reference Group, District Representative and is currently supporting the work of the Principal Welfare Team. Kathryn is also a member of the Australian College of Educational Leaders and the Australian College of Educators.

Recognised by Rotary International (Southern Highlands), Kathryn received the Vocation Award 2001 ‘for outstanding qualities of Vocational and Community Service ... contribution to a profession, through research, management and practice’. In May 2002, Kathryn was seconded to the Leadership and Management Development Unit to work on the design of a New Leadership Development Strategy for the NSW DET as both project manager and co-researcher with Professor Geoff Scott.
**CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT**
**PRIMARY SCHOOL EXECUTIVE STAFF CONFERENCE**
**AUGUST 12-13 2003**

* A 2-day conference for Central Coast Primary Executive Staff and those aspiring to executive positions

**Venue:** Mingara Recreation Club  
1 Mingara Drive Tumbi Umbi (43 497765)  
Tasman Rooms 1-3

**Cost:** $10 per participant * (details next page)

**PROGRAM**

**Tuesday 12 August 2003**

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<tr>
<td>8.30-9.00 am</td>
<td>Registration, tea and coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00-9.30 am</td>
<td>Welcome and opening remarks: <em>BILL LOW, District Superintendent</em>, Tasman 1</td>
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</table>
| 9.30-11.00 am | Session 1: *ROB RANDALL, Director, Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate*, Tasman 1  
An Update on the DET Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools and Leadership Initiatives |
| 11.05-11.25 am| Morning Tea                                                              |
| 11.25-12.55 pm| Session 2: *KATHRYN BRENNAN, Principal Bowral HS*, Tasman 1  
Learning Principles: Developing Leadership Capabilities |
| 12.55-1.50 pm | Lunch                                                                    |
| 1.55-2.55 pm  | Session 3: Workshops- choice of 3, 1 to be selected from the box below when registering before Conference |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3 Options</th>
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| I A                | Tasman 1  
Kathryn Brennan .......*Daring to Lead through Learning* |
| I B                | Tasman 2  
John Sweet ..........*A Foundation for Effective Leadership* |
| I C                | Tasman 3  
Tony Ryan ............*Pedagogy in Action* |

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<td>2.55-3.15 pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.15-4.15 pm</td>
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<th>Session 4 Options</th>
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| I D                | Tasman 1  
Greg Griffiths .......*Boy Friendly Schools* |
| I E                | Tasman 2  
John Sweet ...........*Processes for Building a Values Platform* |
| I F                | Tasman 3  
Tony Ryan ..........*The Work/Life Interface* |

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.30-5.30 pm</td>
<td>Drinks and cocktail food served</td>
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Conference Program
Welcome to beautiful Sydney, spectacular Darling Harbour and the opportunity to join together as school educators from around the world, to "Think About Tomorrow".

This conference, like Fleetwood Mac the original creators of our theme, has been a creative collaboration.

I would like to acknowledge Mrs Jenny Lewis (President, Australian Council for Educational Leadership), Dr Kris Needham (Secretary, Australian Council for Educational Leadership-NSW), Mr Ted Brierley (President, Australian Secondary Principals Association), Mr Chris Bonnor (President, NSW Secondary Principals Council) and Mr Bruce Tapp (President, NSW Deputy Principals Association) and their professional organisations for all their effort in getting this show on the road.

We offer a program that is interactive, has variety, and is authentic and engaging. Professor Michael Fullan, Professor Louise Stoll, Professor Frank Crowther, the Honourable Clare Martin and Emeritus Professor Hedley Beare will begin each day with a cutting edge international perspective. Equity, leadership, cultural change and learning will be explored through workshops designed for principals, executive staff and classroom teachers. With 85 presentations from around the world to choose from, a provocative educational forum led by Tony Mackay and a thought provoking presentation by the amazing Noel Tovey, we are confident that your time will be well spent.

Our many overseas and interstate visitors and presenters will not only share the "wisdom, quality and inspiration" which we hope will infuse the next three days, but also we hope, have some exciting nights as well. With two receptions, a dinner and a harbour cruise you will experience our fabulous harbour and learn how to party, Sydney style.

A great conference needs great sponsors, and not only great sponsors but creative sponsors. Canon and Academy Photography have some real surprises planned. Please take the opportunity to visit the stands of Australian National University, Sebel and the many other companies that have made our conference possible.

The Thinking About Tomorrow conference team invite you to "open your eyes and look at the day" and maybe you will "see things in a different way."

Welcome to Sydney everyone, have a great time!
TO FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD?
CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS FOR WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
Cultural Change/Executive
Harbourside Meeting Room 4
Katherine Brennan, Principal, Bowral High School, NSW

More than ever before, education systems need to access the largest possible pool of quality applicants, as Australia comes to terms with the progressive impact of a global ‘school leadership crisis’. In NSW this cannot be achieved if organisational culture that has effectively marginalised 63.5% of the teaching service, women, remains. This session mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts on leadership in secondary schools. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon the gendered heritage of education. Informed by the DET/DITUS Leadership Capability Research (2003) and the UWS Secondary Head of Department Study (2000), both researched by the presenter, a gender inclusive leadership capability development framework will be explored. Strategies to prepare women for and retain them in educational leadership roles will be shared. A career journey, that engages both ‘heart’ and ‘brain’, awaits those with the ‘courage’ to reach within and ‘follow the yellow brick road’.

TEACHERS AS LEADING LEARNERS: PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MENTORING, CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP AND SUPERVISION
Leadership/Principals
Harbourside Meeting Room 7
Severely d’Azeri, Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate, Department of Education and Training, NSW

This is a practical workshop session providing an opportunity to engage in interactive communication skills necessary for effective mentoring, critical friendship and supervision. Participants will engage in activities for the development of empathetic listening, non-judgemental responses, constructive feedback frameworks and strategic questioning. The skills developed will enhance professional dialogue with colleagues as well as the process of self-reflection. There are also the skills required to enhance a school’s capacity as a professional learning community. This workshop is appropriate for anyone working in or with schools to enhance teacher and student learning.

DESIGNING SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AGE
Learning/Classroom
Harbourside Meeting Room 8
Andrew Bunton, The University of Melbourne (Study, Doctor of Education), Architecture (Employment)

This session will consider the design of secondary school buildings for the Knowledge Age. Because buildings are ‘long term assets’, their contribution to the educational cause can become ineffective, as educational and societal changes move on and demand different infrastructure. Educationalists are very aware of the impact of the environment for the very young, but when students reach the secondary years such concern is lacking. We now know that students learn in different ways and that this along with the influence of information technology is creating a list of priorities to change the traditional designs. And what of the concept of the ‘old fashioned school’? There’s a lot of talk about schools being the ‘centre of the community’, but in many parts – reality says otherwise. Is this concept of the school (and education) about to change? This presentation will canvass such issues.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF AN ORGANISATION
Leadership/Principals
Harbourside Meeting Room 5
Julie Dawson, Principal Consultant
Roger Dawson, Deputy Principal, Balmain College, Sydney

Julie Dawson operates the educational consultancy Leading and Learning which provides a range of professional development programs for Senior & Middle Managers and Practitioners. Julie has broad experience in the Education, Health and Museum and Private sectors in Australia, Canada, Japan, Singapore and United Kingdom. Roger Dawson, Deputy Principal of an inner Sydney Secondary College has wide experience in comprehensive, selective, disadvantaged, single sex and coeducational schools in Australia, Canada and the UK. He was awarded a Paralympic Fellowship in 1999 and produced issues in the News, a teaching resource for the Sydney Morning Herald.

This workshop explores some of the concepts of building capacity through a movie and interactive activities. It provides models and practical strategies to increase the leadership capacity at an organisation. The workshop links to continuing programs which can be conducted in Australia or overseas. Programs include Leadership for Student Learning, Ethical Leadership, Building Capacity, Portfolio Development, Mentoring and Coaching.

INSPIRATION AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE CHANGE
Cultural Change/Principals
Harbourside Meeting Room 6
Margot Foster, Department of Education and Children’s Services, SA

This presentation explores the learning from the South Australian Learning to Learn Project that aimed to develop a critical mass of thinking about learning across the State and is based on a belief that personal change leads to organisational change. It recognised that decisions regarding implementation are best made at the local level, with enabling leadership. All staff and leaders in participating sites engage as learners, considering a diverse range of theory that leads to a deeper understanding of the process of learning and the development of a core set of understandings about learning. This new knowledge forms the basis for local change and filters through the whole system in the form of Practicum, extended professional dialogue and site initiated forums.

It is this rich engagement in learning which has captured the hearts and minds of practitioners and leaders alike – tapping into the inspirational domains has been key to the success of the Project. We have explored the Inspirational/Experiential Learning model through the work of Distinguished Visiting Professor Richard Bowden, Michigan State University who is one of the chief Project Colleagues in the Learning to Learn Project. As Curriculum Policy Directorate reconsiders its leadership of curriculum renewal through a partnerships model, insights have been developed for the whole system regarding the power of professional learning for the future.
FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING
Learning/K-12
Harbourside Meeting Room 8
Nirajen Casinader, National Director, Future Problem Solving Program
Australia, Deakin University, Victoria

One of the most important aspects of curriculum in a quality school is the opportunity for young people to develop the skills and insight that will enable them play an active part in creating the future society in which they wish to live. The ability to think critically and creatively in the development of positive solutions to community concerns is an integral part of this skill base. Future Problem Solving is an international and national extension program to creative thinking and problem solving which has been established in Australia for fourteen years. Currently known as the Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving Program (MBFPSP) in Australia, the presentation will include an overview of the Program, with case studies of its successful implementation in a range of schools forming the key feature of the presentation. There will be also a special focus on its flexibility, with the core main components providing a base that can readily adapted to the context and needs of individual schools, with the potential of catering for all P-12 students, and not just the gifted.

LEARNING PRINCIPALS: LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY AND LEARNING RESEARCH
(COMPLETED MARCH 2003)
Learning/Principal
Pyrmont Room 1
Professor Geoff Scott, Director of Quality Development Unit, University Of Technology, Sydney, NSW
Kathryn Brennan, Principal of Bowral High School, NSW

322 principals participated in this groundbreaking research. The principals were drawn from the full range of schools, districts and contexts that make up the NSW public school system. In this session participants will explore the reality of the principalship, a world that is uncertain, ambiguous and constantly changing, one that is intensely human and characterised by a relentless series of ongoing challenges to be faced, assessed and resolved effectively. The study’s findings on the relative importance of personal, interpersonal and intellectual abilities, and role-specific skills and knowledge in accounting for principal effectiveness, together with ways of making principal development programs more interesting, engaging and relevant to the current needs of the profession will be shared. Participants will be introduced to Professional Capability and Productive Adult Learning Frameworks that document the findings of this study, providing evidence-based frames for proactive and sustainable leadership capacity and density building throughout the profession.

THE JOURNEY FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY – CHARTING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL
Leadership/K-12
Pyrmont Room 2
Tony Carmel, Head of the Arts Faculty and Events Co-ordinator, Coomera Anglican College, Queensland

Schools play an important role in ensuring that young people develop a foundation, which allows them to function effectively within society. At all levels of schooling, educationalists need to carefully focus on the needs of students. This is particularly critical in the middle years of schooling. Coomera Anglican College has commenced the process of developing a framework for a Middle School. This paper examines the journey that is currently being undertaken as College moves from concept to reality. The model that is being developed is described in relation to the three core principles of curriculum, pedagogy and organisation. The journey is documented within the context of the current research on middle schooling.

THE QUALITY JOURNEY AT TAFE NSW AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR SCHOOLS
Cultural Change/Principals
Skyline 1
Jennie Burton, TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW has a significant history and success with quality implementation and can offer much to inform quality initiatives in schools. As a large people-based system, adapting to a focus on the customer has required cultural change from the “teacher knows best” attitude to “listening to the customer”. TAFE NSW has made mistakes along the quality journey. Earlier versions of the quality implementation philosophy adhered rigidly to specific methodologies. There are always external circumstances such that service delivery will never be perfect. These include the time and resources available to deliver the service, the combination of resources available, whether all staff understand and agree with the objectives and are cooperative. State Schools in NSW currently seek to increase market share and revitalize commitment to public service. Quality process can be a very useful tool in this regard.

SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE
Leadership/K-12
Skyline 2
Dr David Gurr, The University of Melbourne
Dr Laurie Drysdale, The University of Melbourne
Dr Russell Swan, Victoria University
Mrs. Patricia Ford, Australian Catholic University

This session will report upon phase two findings from Victoria, Australia. Results from government primary, special and secondary schools and Catholic primary schools are included in this presentation. David Gurr (The University of Melbourne) will present an overview of the international project, an exploration of the different phases of the research and detailed results from several case studies of Victorian government schools. Laurie Drysdale (The University of Melbourne) and Russell Swan (Victoria University) will report on findings from government primary, secondary and special schools. Trish Ford (Australian Catholic University) will report on findings from case studies of four successful Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Her presentation will explore some of the issues referred to the concept of “successful” leadership as it is construed in a Catholic context. A highlight will be comparison between the government and Catholic school data.

THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW: THE EXPERIENCE OF WESLEY @ CLUNES
Cultural Change/K-12
Skyline 3
Robert Marshall, Director Wesley @ Clunes,
Bolyn Marshall, Deputy Director Teaching and Learning,
Residential Learning Village, Wesley College, Victoria

Wesley @ Clunes Residential Learning Village provides a unique opportunity for Year 9 students to discover lifelong learning. The satellite campus of Wesley College Melbourne is situated in the middle of the historic township of Clunes, Victoria and students from Wesley College, Melbourne stay for eight weeks. During their eight weeks, students are exposed to a diverse range of teaching and learning environments, which create a very powerful learning community. All students live in purpose-built houses and are required to cook, clean and shop for themselves. As well as concentrating on their domestic tasks, students are required to complete an academic program, which focuses on identity, and is enhanced by reflection and metacognition. This session explores the experience of Wesley @ Clunes and provides inspiration for stimulating lifelong learners.
twelfth international
women in leadership conference

women
leading the way
inclusive societies
engaged communities
healthy organisations

program handbook

24 25 26 November 2003
hosted by the institute for the service professions
edith cowan university
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Golden Ballroom South Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Inviting Industry and Just a Moment for Face the Fear, Including People who Can Help, Women in Catholic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Women in Local Government: Key Takeaways from Strengthening Communities Through Leadership</td>
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To follow the yellow brick road? Challenges and dilemmas for women in educational leadership

Kathryn Brennan*
University of Western Sydney, Bankstown Campus, NSW

The progression toward achieving equality and equity for women in educational leadership has not been linear and is certainly incomplete. At times the negativity of recurrent themes is disarming and frustrating, to ‘get back to the kitchen’ or return to the ‘chalkface’, where women have traditionally been seen as ‘socially appropriate’, emerging as an alluring pathway. However, now more then ever before, Australia’s education systems need to build leadership capacity by accessing the largest possible pool of quality applicants, as the nation comes to terms with the progressive impact of a global ‘school leadership crises’. In NSW this cannot be achieved if organisational culture that has effectively marginalised 63.3% of the teaching service, women, remains. Why are only 23.5% of secondary principals female, when they represent 50.8% of the secondary teaching service? Why in the 21stCentury does gender present as an impediment to achieving leadership positions? It is argued that teaching service women are an enormous resource that is demographically appropriate but marginalised and under-utilised. The DET/UTS Leadership Capability Research (2003) and the UWS Secondary Head of Department Study (2000), co-researched by the author, establish a contemporary understanding of the role of executive in secondary schools. For women to aspire to school leadership roles they need to be inspired, valued, supported, developed and sustained, both by the education system they serve and through proactive generative leadership. A career journey that engages both ‘heart’ and ‘brain’, await those with the ‘courage’ to reach within and ‘follow the yellow brick road’.

‘Face the fear – Including people with disabilities in your life, your community’.

Beth Marchbank*
Edith Cowan University

People with disabilities are the last devalued group to be included in community life: included in mainstream education, included in the work place, included socially. Once we didn’t educate women; other communities didn’t offer education to people with black skin, but people with disabilities are still being excluded from regular education, and many other community settings. What is it that stops us from including people
3.00pm – 3.30pm  The Principal Journey – Inspiration and Reassurance
Kathryn Brennan

3.30pm – 3.45pm  Directions for July 2001
John Bladen

3.45pm – 4.00pm  Evaluation and conference close
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
College of Arts, Education & Social Sciences
School of Education & Early Childhood Studies

Annual Postgraduate Research Students Conference

UWS Parramatta Campus

12 – 13 October, 2002
"IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT GET BACK TO THE KITCHEN!"
The impact of gender on secondary school leadership.

In 1989 only 6.6% of NSW secondary school principals positions were held by women, whilst women represented 47.8% of the teaching service staff-secondary. The NSW Department of Education implemented an Equal Employment Opportunity program ‘to remedy the effect of past discrimination’ and ‘achieve representation of women and men in promotions positions which is comparable to their representation in the Department of education as a whole’. Current research however, indicates that the reality of women’s experiences does not reflect the ‘equity’ legislative and policy rhetoric, the predicted future for women in the nineties, nor the preferred future for women in educational leadership in the 21st Century, a future built upon the organisational leadership principles of ‘inclusiveness, equity, social justice, ethical practice and excellence’. This paper mainstreams the issue of gender as it impacts upon leadership of secondary schools, reflecting upon the gendered heritage of education, exposing the ‘mythology of the female principalship’ (Brennan 2001) and constraints of enacting a principal’s role within a masculine construct of leadership. Strategies that empower women to transform the cultures of the schools they lead, by expressing, not giving up their personal values and feminist attributes are shared.
University of Western Sydney
College of Arts, Education and Social Sciences
School of Education and Early Childhood Studies

Education Research Conference
(re)visioning education

UWS Parramatta Campus
11 – 12 October 2003
THE MINORITY MAJORITY?
A gender analysis of school leadership, leadership capability
and learning research in NSW.

The NSW Department of Education and Training, like many other educational systems, faces a large number of retirements amongst its school principals in the coming decade. Now more than ever before, the education system needs to access the largest possible pool of quality applicants. Teaching service women (K-12) form an enormous resource (63.9%) that is under-utilised. Currently women represent only 28.4% of non-teaching principal appointments, 35.6% in total (including teaching principal positions). It is recognised that in order to identify and effectively support a new cohort of school leaders there is a need to develop plans which are based on a clear picture of the nature of the work of principals, a profile of the leadership capabilities required to deliver this work effectively and an understanding of how school leaders can best be assisted to develop the capabilities that count.

This study adapts a ‘backward mapping’ research methodology that has proven successful in a range of capability profiling in other professions. 322 ‘effective’ principals were nominated and all participated in this study. 47% were women, a marked over representation in the ‘effective principal’ sample, relative to their representation at principal level. The sample covers the full range of schools, districts and contexts that make up the NSW public school system. This paper presents a gender analysis of the leadership capability and learning research findings, providing an evidence-based frame for proactive and sustainable leadership capacity and density building throughout the profession, grounded on principles of equity, equality and effectiveness.
APPENDIX B
ROTARY VOCATION AWARD 2001

ROTARY CLUB OF BOWRAL - MITTAGONG INC.
AUSTRALIA

CHARTER NO. 3204 30TH MARCH 1940
Meet Bowral Country Golf Club, Bowral, 6pm each Tuesday

13 August 2001

Mrs. Kathryn Brennan
Lot 5 Hamilton Avenue,
BOWRAL NSW 2576

Dear Mrs. Brennan,

Vocation Award 2001

The Vocational Service Committee of The Rotary Club of Bowral Mittagong is proud to advise that you have been a successful nominee for its Vocation Award for 2001.

The Rotary Club of Bowral Mittagong introduced the Vocation Award in 1997 to recognise the contribution made by a resident of the Southern Highlands to their vocation.

The nominee is one who is involved in a profession, trade or business and be judged to have excelled in making a contribution to their vocation through research, management, or practice in their particular field of service. The nominee is recognised as one who is an outstanding representative of their vocation.

Your award will be presented to you on Tuesday August 21 2001 at the Blue Cokeral Restaurant, Mittagong at a special dinner of the Club at 6 p.m. Your husband is most welcome to join you.

Kindly confirm your acceptance of this award by phoning the Vocational Service Director, Tom Galletta on 0411 231 462.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Barrett
President
The Rotary Club of Bowral Mittagong

SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SINCE 1940
Citation

Mrs Kathryn Elizabeth Brennan
(nee Watts)

Presented on the 21st August, 2001

Tonight it is my duty and very great pleasure to present to you a lady who has demonstrated many times outstanding qualities of Vocational and Community Service. A resident of the Southern Highlands, she has been judged to have excelled in making a contribution to her profession through research, management and practice and tonight is recognised as one who is an outstanding representative of her vocation, Education.

She was raised in the Central West of New South Wales, at “Austinmere” a wheat sheep property, attending Tichborne Public School (a school of 13 students) and Parkes High School. Positioned as she was in the middle of a strongly Christian family of five children and living in a small community, she participated in many community activities as a matter of course, and through this developed an ethos of community service. This has been part of her life ever since. Demonstrating talent in Music she was awarded a scholarship to the NSW Conservatorium of Music, undertaking teacher training, a Piano Major, graduating in both Education and Performance (Voice).

Her first appointment was in Green Valley in 1975 and she soon found herself at the cutting edge of the integration and development of the Performing Arts. Having a Music background she led curriculum development in Music Education (Years 7-12) in NSW and perhaps most notably, as Head Teacher-Performing Arts, was the driving force behind the establishment of Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, the first public school of its kind in Australia.

Throughout her professional life has been a culture of collegial training and support. Leading and participating in committees and professional organisations too numerous to name here, she has been at the forefront in promoting women in educational leadership, the promotion of youth affairs and working in community based programs and organisations.

She has completed postgraduate studies in both Educational Administration and Education, obtaining her Masters Degree in 1994, is at present undertaking a Doctorate in Education and is an internationally published author. Somewhere in her hectic life she married David, and has raised three children – Jennifer, Stephen and Cassandra.

She became Principal of Bowral High School in 1995 and has earned the respect of her staff, students and the community. As an indicator of this and her commitment to a positive promotion of youth, she is accompanied here, tonight, by one of the Captains of Bowral High School, Miss Anna Baleyg.

President Bob, Guests, Fellows, I present to you, Mrs Kathryn Brennan.

* It should be noted that a number of educators played pivotal roles in the establishment of Newtown High School of the Performing Arts.
Response

On accepting the Rotary Club of Bowral-Mittagong Southern Highlands Vocation Award 2001, Kathryn spoke of being overwhelmed as the awardee in such an education and professionally rich community. She took the opportunity to publicly thank her family, who relocated to Bowral, for their ever present support as she undertook such a highly visible, time intensive role, with the particular challenges she faced as the first female principal appointed to Bowral High School.

“The Award provides great personal encouragement and an opportunity to focus upon the extraordinary potential and achievements of the youth of the Southern Highlands, and the invaluable and ongoing support of Rotary Bowral-Mittagong for education projects.”

“I feel privileged to lead a school that serves over 1,100 students, young people who each have unique gifts and personal qualities, supported by a dedicated staff and community volunteer team. Each day is so different as together we face the challenges and opportunities that traversing adolescence brings, ‘striving ever higher’ in all dimensions of life – Excelsior, the school motto that has inspired generations.”

Kathryn spoke of her passion for teaching and learning, and for the vital role that public schooling plays in preparing our future leaders and citizens, and her leadership commitment to the principles of equity, social justice, inclusiveness, ethical practice and excellence.

“I have never seen teaching as a ‘job’ nor did I plan a career path in educational leadership. Life is a most amazing journey, doors close and others are open. I had a wonderful childhood in country NSW, raised in a family that valued learning and creativity, whilst surmounting the great challenges of rural life. Dum Vivo Discio - ‘while we live we learn’ (my High School motto), the joy of learning imbedded in me by my teachers, the traditions of the Methodist Church, the love of Music nurtured in me by Sister Michael of the Convent of Mercy, provided me with such a strong foundation and passion for life.”

“Tonight, I dedicate this Award to the loving memory of my father, Mr Ronald Austin Watts, who passed away so suddenly on the 7th June, 2001. My father’s Faith, vision, nurture, integrity, devotion to family and dedication to community has been an inspiration throughout my life journey.” Thankyou. Mrs Kathryn Elizabeth Brennan.
Southern Highlands Vocation Award 2001

presented to

Kathryn Brennan

for

Outstanding Contribution to her Vocation

Award inaugurated in 1998, to be presented annually to the Southern Highlands citizen adjudged to be the most worthy recipient from the nominations received.
APPENDIX C (Report findings excerpt)

PLANNING FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE: A SECONDARY SCHOOL ‘SNAP SHOT’ CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL CULTURE.

SECTION 1  Why would you recommend Heritage High School to others?

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1 Name of the school has been protected through the use of a pseudonym throughout this report.

Conference Presentation

Principal School Development Project (PSDP)

K Brennan (27/11/00)
Notes:

- All students were interviewed by the principal and responses were requested in writing i.e. 93 students out of 97 (96%) chose to recommend their school. The four who decided not to indicated the following:
  1. the principal is a control freak
teachers give students no respect
we are a public school and our uniform code is absolutely pathetic
(Male student on formal warning of expulsion from school at the time NB identified himself on the sheet)
  2. private school provides sporting and toileting facilities
rules of punishment for not completing a task or discipline for doing something wrong
sporting in certain areas is restricted for people with certain needs ... no efforts to repair this (Male student)
  3. because not all but some of the teachers don’t assist in the students learning, especially if they are clearly struggling
  4. discipline isn’t fair and if the school feels you are in the wrong than you get hounded down, they judge you on your past all the time, If you’ve got bad relatives you get judged as the same category
award system isn’t fair eg house captains this year got badges our yr didn’t. This yrs peer support group got Certificates for their CV we didn’t. We have nothing to show for what we’ve done. (Female student)

- Structured interview s with verbal clarification of questions provided when requested.
- Written responses to interview questions
- Names not required though some did indicate this on their response sheet.
- All students were told that the data sheets would remain confidential to the principal, but that the content would be used to inform Planning for a preferred future.
- Gender indicated on individual response sheets.
- From the initial open coding process a total of fifteen categories were recorded.
- These responses eg. #1 Performing Arts; #2 Visual Arts; became subcategories. By relating them to a broader category, the process of axial coding takes place. This process revealed eight categories after axial coding (1 Arts curriculum-as above; 2 Public School- #3 public

Conference Presentation
Principal School Development Project (PSDP)
K Brennan (27/11/00)
Appendices

school/range of students; 3 reputation- #4 good reputation, #12 HSC success/heritage; 4 curriculum including extended curriculum- #5 range of subjects/activities; 5 Quality teaching and learning- #6 teaching to varying abilities/integration, #8 most teachers care and support; 6 school upkeep/facilities- #7 school upkeep/facilities; 7 positive climate and culture- #9 self expression/all can fit in, #10 relaxed/disciplined/ happy/safe, #11 opportunities to excel/encouraging spirit, #13 teacher/student relations (snr), #15 peer support/student leadership; 8 location- #14 close to town

- Typical responses within the five categories:

1 Arts curriculum

recommended for Performing and Visual Arts (F)  great supportive teachers (F)

very good in Drama, Visual Arts

PA and VA get to express yourself freely (F)  allowed to show your individuality (F)

A great Performing Arts centre (M)

Many different activities to participate in – dance drama music (M)

Dramatic and music opportunities are extensive (F)

Great community feel in the visual and performing arts (why I came here) (F)

Conference Presentation

Principal School Development Project (PSDP)

K Brennan (27/11/00)
2 Public High School

you are what you are...don’t get looked down upon because you less money then
someone else (F)

quality public school ... teaches children more about the real world than private schools (F)

range of racial and social groups... not being a private school means the restrictions on
your learning aren’t there... freedom of thought without too many influences. A place
where everyone can find a place to fit in (M) caters for a variety of students (F)

place to gain valuable experience about the true demands of life...sense of initiative and
desire to struggle for what one wants out of life (M) has a local feel about it (F)

cheap and affordable (F) good mix of people from all different backgrounds (F)

you don’t have to pay an arm and a leg to attend and achieve high results (F)

don’t feel threatened by social classes (F) large school, good for local students to

attend (F)

which gives you much freedom in certain areas (F) equality is highly valued at BHS (F)
diverse environment.. preparation for future(F)
equal opportunity to learn... welcomes people from any class (F)

not a pecuniary strain ... large school, one can experience a wide cross section of society
and meet many different kinds of people (F) range of backgrounds & family life range

(F)

unbiased environment, anyone willing to learn is able to do so and the extra help is

there(F)

uniform affordable, excursions affordable (F)
because all other schools ‘@’ at least you come out of BHS being able to think! (M)

I think it is important for public schools to be attended and recognised as an excellent

learning place (F)

3 Reputation

past and coming success in the HSC (M) better HSC results(M) popular school (M)
great reputation ... high standard of education technique... educates all levels (M)
opportunity to all in future outlook (F)

good reputation for being a participating school (M)
safest atmosphere in the southern highlands (M non local)

Conference Presentation
Principal School Development Project (PSDP)
K Brennan (27/11/00)
academic opportunities and extensive courses cater for each students needs (M non local) reputation for always looking to further one’s knowledge regardless of background (M) excellence in Performing Arts (F) excellent learning centre with plenty of opportunities in all areas ((M) community spirit (F) content of culture (M) the best state school I have been to (I believe in public schools rather than private0 BHS keeps a balanced, well maintained excellence in all areas, giving students wider choice, opportunities and a broader perspective (M) better reputation...more disciplined...puts forward a better image (F) best academic reputation in the area...more able to express their individuality (M)

4 Curriculum including extended curriculum
range of subjects (F) choice of subjects (F) students able to express themselves in these courses (F) variety within class/courses (M) largest range of subjects and activities (F) good sporting opportunities eg Smith Cup (F) great opportunities (M) for the last six years I’ve had a ball, not because it is easy but because it has a huge amount of different subjects which you can choose from (M) variety of Music groups available and sporting competitions as well as opportunities to represent your school in the community as well as at state (F) a lot of practical lessons like cooking, art, jewellry making to take the drudgery out of going to school (F) many extra curricular opportunities for students to excel in

5 Quality teaching and learning
excellent teaching staff overall ... more than happy to help with problems the students may have (F) gives everyone the opportunity to do their best, in whatever area they want. What you put into your time at HHS is what you get back. Learning and enjoying life go hand in hand. If you do one you’ll get the other (M) teaching varying abilities (F)

Conference Presentation
Principal School Development Project (PSDP)
K Brennan (27/11/00)
Appendices

caring teachers (F) most teachers know students at a personal level (F) staff are friendly help you improve your studies ... guide you (F)
help for disabled students (F) care and effort put in by some* of the teachers (F) teaching staff give a brilliant sense that many care about an individual’s progress (F) resources/programs in History and technical resources in Drama (F) deals with slower learning children (F) heaps of help available M) not looked down upon to achieve by fellow peers (F)
encouragement and expectation to achieve (F) care about your progress and congratulate you (M)
very helpful to my education...helped with the needs I have and were very understanding of my needs (M)

6 School upkeep and facilities

... good upkeep of school (F) computing equipment up to date (M)
good teaching facilities (F)
library a great place to study with the access to the internet etc (F)
a nice set up (playground improvements, buildings etc (M)
good facilities in broad areas especially Drama and Music (F)
access for disabled students (F)
materials/machines for wood/metal work courses are good (M)
by no means ‘resource blessed’...yet this is compensated by an ability to improvise and still achieve a desirable result. Just like life! (M)
sporting facilities (F) clean environment (F)

7 Positive climate and culture

safe school (M) school uniform is nice (F) great atmosphere for a child to mature in (F) easy going environment (F) atmosphere is friendly, no one compares you (F) an academic school... lots of opportunities to excel in many different areas (F) relaxed and effective learning environment (M) isn’t any intimidating factors (F)

Conference Presentation
Principal School Development Project (PSDP)
K Brennan (27/11/00)
excellent student/teacher relations (M)  community feeling within the school (M)
good mix of discipline and freedom for students (M)
peer support helps you settle in (F)  decisions and regulations are all made with fairness
of the student in mind (F)  fair discipline system with reasonable areas for
redemption (F)  lots of peer support (F)  most teachers are supportive (F)
genuine and ‘real’ relationships (F)
drug free zone policy (F)  students are not exposed to drugs or other substances in a big
way (F)  strict policies on uniform, attendance and drug free zone make a safe
environment for students to want to learn (F)
teaches students to face and overcome decisions that are encountered in life (M)
friendliness of most staff (M)  great sport (F)
good opportunities in sport eg Smith Cup (F)  good discipline system (M)
good uniform code (M)  warm fuzzy environment (F)
happy school, close feeling about it, very accepting of new student, welcoming of
younger ones (F)
I know that through the years I have matured and grown to have better communication
skills, my self confidence has grown (F)
Great to see the students eg captains, prefects become involved in areas such as the Green
Team to be good role models (F)  good environment to work in (M)

8 Location

closest public high school... good reputation (F)
close to town (M)  good position (F)
SECTION 4  Quality of School Life - Survey Responses

The five specific aspects of schooling embodied are: Teachers, Relevance, Success, Status and Social Interaction

General Satisfaction (or Positive Affect) reflects favourable feelings about school as a whole. A typical item is *My school is a place where I really like to go each day.*

Negative Affect which refers to negative feelings about school and is typified by an item such as *My school is a place where I feel worried.*

*Conference Presentation*
Principal School Development Project (PSDP)
K Brennan (27/11/00)
Relevance (previously called opportunity) which represents a belief in the relevance of schooling for the future. A typical item is *My school is a place where the things I am taught are worthwhile learning.*

Success (sometimes called achievement) which reflects a sense of confidence in ones ability to be successful in school work. A typical item is *My school is a place where I know people think a lot of me.*

*Conference Presentation*  
*Principals School Development Project (PSDP)*  
*K Brennan (27/11/00)*
Social Integration (previously called identity) which is concerned with a sense of learning about other people and getting along with other people. A typical item is *My school is a place where I get on well with other students.*

Status which indicates the relative degree of prestige accorded to the individual by significant others within the school. A typical item is *My school is a place where I know people think a lot of me.*
Teachers which refers to a feeling about the adequacy of the interaction between teachers and students. A typical item is *My school is a place where teachers take a personal interest in helping me with my school work.*
APPENDIX D
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HoD) RESEARCH UWS ETHICS APPROVAL

UWS Nepean
PO Box 10, Kingswood NSW 2747 Australia

23 July 1999

Dr Stephen Dinham, Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Deece, &
David Mulford
School of Teaching & Educational Studies
UWS Nepean
PO Box 10
Kingswood NSW 2747

Dear Chief Investigators

Re: Duties, Delights, Dangers, Directions and Development of the
Secondary Head of Department: A case study of four schools’
Registration No HE 99/057

Your responses to the issues previously raised have been considered and
your project has now been fully endorsed by the Committee. Would
you please provide a copy of the revised Information sheet as indicated
in the response.

You are advised that the Committee should be notified of any further
change/s to the research methodology should there be any in the future.
You will be required to provide reports on the ethical aspects of your
project.

The Protocol No. HE 99/057 should be quoted in all future
correspondence about this project. Your approval will expire 30
December 1999. Please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Kay Buckley
on tel: 47360 169 if you require any further information.

The Committee wishes you well with your project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Associate Professor Elizabeth Deane
Chairperson
Human Ethics Review Committee
How primary kids are learning the ways of the world

INSIDE: Spicing up the curriculum • The middle manager
A study of four NSW secondary schools has delved into the working lives of heads of department and discovered some difficult truths. By Julie Hare

The middle

As in the corporate world, schools have a hierarchy which determines duties and responsibilities. Not surprisingly, the middle manager or head of department (HOD) treads often difficult terrain. Caught between the vision and demands of the principal and senior executive and the day-to-day needs of the staff and students, HODs can feel pressure from all quarters.

A recent pilot study by Associate Professor Steve Dinham from the University of Western Sydney with four secondary school principals - Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Deere and David Mullford - looked at the demanding, often difficult and high-pressure job of being a head of department.

The study was an extension of work already in progress by Steve and colleague Catherine Scott which has compared teacher satisfaction, motivation and stress in four countries: Australia, New Zealand, England and the USA, with studies in other countries currently taking place.

“What we found was that there is a distortion in the normal pattern of occupational stress and satisfaction when you look at HODs,” says Steve. “The trend is that the higher people are up the corporate or organisational ladder, the happier and healthier they tend to be. But when we looked at head teachers, assistant principals, school executives and advanced skills teachers, we found the trend distorted and many of them were coming out quite poorly in comparison to those above and below them.”

The pilot study, The Secondary Head of Department: Duties, Delights, Dangers, Directions and Development, is an attempt to find out why.

Importantly, the research also adds to an area where there is a dearth of literature.

Twenty-six HODs from four schools - two government and two non-government - were interviewed for the study. The interview covered a range of areas, such as why they wanted to become a HOD, what preparation was received, what were the best and worst things about being a HOD, what changes they’d like to see, how they saw their future and so on.

“These people hold key positions in schools,” says Steve. “They are also the people who largely effect change in schools. It’s the key position in terms of facilitating teaching and learning. For example, the successful implementation of the new HSC will depend to a large degree on HODs.”

Steve and his fellow researchers made a number of major findings as a result of the study. They also, impor-
tantly, looked to the future and the issues that may arise out of these findings.

**Identifying potential leaders**

There is, the study found, a need to find ways to better identify and nurture potential school leaders. “The average age of teachers is mid-to late-40s. In 10 to 15 years time there will be a lot of opportunity for young people to come into leadership positions. We need to look at how to find the right people and how to prepare and support them,” says Steve.

“It would seem beneficial for all classroom teachers to engage in discussions with more experienced colleagues from an early stage so career goals and directions can be explored and clarified. This already happens, but on an ad hoc basis. Initiatives such as mentoring and portfolios have the potential to facilitate the process. This, necessarily, leads directly to a related issue which is talent spotting and nurturing.”

**Preparation of potential leaders**

According to Steve, a whole raft of issues surrounding the preparation, development and support of head teachers came to the fore. There is a need to design and make available to aspiring school leaders formal programs which contain an adequate range of ‘rich’, relevant and informal experiences, knowledge and skills to meet the demands and challenges they will face in schools.

Informal and unstructured experiences are currently the dominant and highly regarded form of preparation, although not all teachers have access to these measures. While worthwhile, the challenge is to design formal preparation programs which build in these experiences.”

**Rethinking the job**

There is, says Steve, a need to rethink the work expected of middle managers in schools. “HODs tend to see themselves as curriculum specialists, at least
initially, and they enjoy leading teams and working collaboratively with others," says Steve. "The core business of being a HOD is highly satisfying. However, external demands and pressures include a complex and constant work load, dealing with under-performing staff and staff conflict, and parental demands which may lead to HODs compromising their own teaching and feeling like they are ‘the meat in the sandwich’.

"Time is the enemy of the HOD. Half of those interviewed felt the need to reduce their own teaching load in order to better perform their other responsibilities. Almost half also noted the need to reduce the administrative side of their position to better concentrate on staff and students and to engage in higher level tasks and responsibilities."

Is flexibility an answer?

There is a need to consider and adopt more flexible appointment and promotion procedures for executives in secondary schools, including fixed term appointments, the introduction of an intermediate executive position in some departments and enhanced transfer and exchange opportunities, according to Steve.

"The hierarchical structure of secondary schools means that it is not possible for all HODs to be promoted to higher levels. Indeed many of those interviewed wished to remain at their present level. The problem is that a person can be promoted as a HOD and then stay in that position for 20 or more years, often in the same school. To relinquish the position is costly, both financially and in terms of status.

"Perhaps the answer to that is to explore more flexible promotion and appointment procedures, such as a fixed period as HOD before ‘returning to the fold’, a notion which is long established in higher education. This gives appointees the opportunity to work energetically, knowing the period to be finite and, if they wish, they can reapply for another fixed term. There is also a place for a new executive decision bridging classroom teaching and being a HOD.

"A new stepping stone in what is already a flat career structure could serve as recognition for talented staff, spread the load of the HOD and serve as valuable professional development for those involved," says Steve.

The study has been vital in acknowledging the crucial role played by HODs in schools. It also recognises the toll the position can take in terms of decreased career satisfaction and increased stress. The study is a step toward addressing some of those issues in the longer term.
Quality teaching series to enhance professionalism

The Quality Teaching Series is the latest in a range of College initiatives designed to enhance teacher professionalism. A major objective is to provide practical information and expert advice on ways of making learning and teaching more effective.

In general, papers in this series will be research-based and drawn on the wisdom and expertise of accomplished teachers in a variety of settings including early childhood, school, TAFE and tertiary education.

Details of the first two papers are provided below. Teachers, researchers and others with expertise in quality teaching/teacher quality interested in submitting papers for publication in this series are invited to contact Jim Cumming at jcumming@auspoly.com.au

Paper No. 1
Successful Senior Secondary Teaching
Paul Ayres, Steve Dinham and Wayne Sawyer
$23.00 retail $18.50 for members
(paper includes postage & handling in Australia, plus GST)

This paper reports an interview and observation study of teachers identified from confidential New South Wales Higher School Certificate results as being highly successful. Findings from the study suggest seven key factors in facilitating senior student success.

School Background, the Faculty of Department, Resources and Planning, Professional Development, Personal Qualities, Relations with Students, and Teaching Strategies. The influence of each on quality teaching is explored.

"...While teachers used a wide range of teaching strategies to build student understanding, a key common factor was an emphasis on having students think, solve problems and apply knowledge. Simply reporting back knowledge or practising formulae outside of the context of application was unusual. Teachers strongly saw their role in the classroom as challenging students, rather than 'spoon-feeding' information...

"...It is important to stress the point that successful teaching in the HSC environment is not a matter of a simple 'recipe' (though certainly some aspects of the strategies observed and discussed are 'reachable' and 'transferable'). The teachers identified here operated in particular contexts and had particular qualities that are not part of any simple recipe that can simply be 'picked up' in other contexts.

Paper No. 2
The Secondary Head of Department: Key link in the quality teaching and learning chain
Steve Dinham, Kathryn Brennan, John Colliner, Alan Ivers and David Mulford
ISBN 9 0 95957 91 4 50p.
$22.00 retail $18.50 for members
(paper includes postage & handling in Australia, plus GST)

The secondary Head of Department is a key position in secondary schools, with obvious and demanding responsibilities above and below them, alongside his or her own teaching duties. Those interviewed in the study articulated both the 'delights' and 'dangers' of the position, along with thoughts on their current duties and professional development needs.

However, there is a compelling need for a comprehensive review of selection, pre-service and support mechanisms for Heads of Department, and indeed all school executive positions, and a working environment that will make it a popular and attractive career option within the teaching profession in schools.
Role call for head teachers

PATRICK LAWNHAM

A SHAKE-up of how our schools operate is needed to cope with the coming exodus of senior teachers due to retirement.

This is the belief of the authors of a pioneering report examining the roles and experiences of heads of subject departments — the middle managers of high schools.

The authors, who include four principals, said their research pointed to the key role of head teachers in addition to teaching duties.

"The major turnover of school executive staff in Australian schools over the next decade provides ... the necessity for a rethink of the current conceptualisation of leadership within our schools," they said.

"There is a compelling need for a comprehensive review of selection, preparation and support mechanisms for heads of department, and indeed all school executive positions," they said.

The authors also recommended more flexible appointment and promotion procedures, including fixed-term appointments, an intermediate executive position in some departments and better transfer and exchange openings.

They noted the country was faced with "a major, unprecedented exodus of experienced school executive due to the ageing of the Australian teaching profession".

Their study, titled The World of Work of the Secondary Head of Department, was presented at last month's Education 2000 conference organised by the Australian College of Education — an association of professional educators. The full report and other papers will be available from the college later this month.

The authors are Stephen Dinham, associate professor of the school of teaching and educational studies at the University of Western Sydney, and the four NSW high-school principals — Kathryn Brennan, John Collier, Alan Dece and David Mulford — who are studying for doctor in education degrees at UWS.

Twenty-six head teachers were surveyed in confidence for the study at the four principals' schools — two government and two private schools. Of the 38 participants in the new study, six were female and 32 male. The average age was 43, with a range of 29 to 54 and an average time in the position of head of department of six years. Twelve heads were from government schools.

The new research partly spins off a 1999 study, co-authored by Professor Dinham, which showed "the crucial importance of the head of department position and the role it can take on those performing it in terms of career satisfaction and increased stress".

The secondary head of department had a crucial "linking position" between specialist classroom teachers and senior school executives.

"Recent international research has revealed that those occupying and performing such 'middle-management' roles in schools are reporting lower levels of career satisfaction and higher levels of mental stress than those above and below them," the report said.

Many reasons were given by surveyed teachers for wanting to become a head of department, including natural career progression, being asked to take on the role, wanting to lead in the subject area, or seeking a bigger say in school decision-making.

Seven heads said they had "just drifted into it".

Most reported little or no formal preparation before becoming a head, and what preparation there was tended to be "on the job".

"Clearly, the most popular aspect of the role among the heads of department interviewed in the study was working with staff," the study said.

The outstanding negative aspect was lack of time.

One male head said: "I take a lot of work home ... I cannot do any of my own class preparation or marking at school."

Underperforming staff and inter-personal conflicts were also seen as negatives.

On leadership styles, seven men said their leadership "arose naturally or from their personality" but no women mentioned this as a factor.

The authors identified several main issues for reform, including "a need to find ways to better identify and nurture potential school leaders".

Formal training programs should be designed for aspirants "which contain an adequate range of 'rich' relevant experiences, knowledge and skills", the authors said.

More time should be available for heads "to redirect their expertise and energies to the higher level and more professional responsibilities of the position".

The college can be contacted on 02 6281 1577.
APPENDIX H

Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management

5 December 2002

Ms. Kathryn Brennan
Principal
Bowral High School
Aitken Road
Bowral
N.S.W
AUSTRALIA

Dear Ms. Brennan,

Please find enclosed a complimentary copy of our CCEAM journal International Studies in Educational Administration Vol.30 No.2, 2002. Thank you for contributing an interesting article on your research for this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Sallis
Business Manager
CCEAM
Dear Mrs Brennan

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *Development of a Leadership Capability Framework*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved. You may now contact the Principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation.

This approval will remain valid until 21/10/03.

You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to schools. I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- School Principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the Principal for the specific method of gathering information for the school must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school’s convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the Research Approvals Officer before publication proceeds.

When your study is completed please forward your report marked to Strategic Research Directorate, Department of Education and Training, Level 6, 35 Bridge Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

for

Dr Paul Brock

Director of Strategic Research

25 October 2002
Leadership Capability Research

Three hundred and twenty two principals participate in ground breaking Leadership Capability Research

During Term 4 (2002), the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Quality Development Unit, in partnership with the DET, Leadership and Management Development Unit undertook Stage 1 (principal level) of the Leadership Capability Research Project. The research is informed by Leading and Managing the School (DET, 2000) and a Leadership Capability Framework developed in consultation with the NSWPPA and NSWSPC.

In this study capability is defined as that “combination of attributes, qualities, skills and knowledge that enables a person to perform to a high standard in a given context and role.” (Change Matters, Scott, G. 1999:200)

Within the unique context of NSW Public Education the study seeks to determine:

- What the most challenging aspects of the role are and whether these vary depending on demographic factors like school context and level.
- Whether learning approaches, focus and resources optimise the development of the capabilities identified.

The research findings will provide direction for DET School Leadership Development.
The report is due to be released at the end of February 2003. For further information contact the DET Principal Researcher Kathryn Brennan,
kathryn.brennan@det.nsw.edu.au
APPENDIX K
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND CURRICULUM DIRECTORATE

Kathryn Brennan
Principal Bowral High School
Park and Aitken Roads
BOWRAL
NSW 2576

Dear Kathryn

I wish to thank you for your tremendous contribution in coordinating the research about school leadership capabilities, commissioned by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Your capacity to support the professional relationship between the NSW Department of Education and Training and the University of Technology, Sydney ensured the successful completion of this valuable project within the allotted timeframe. The final research report, Learning principals, has been made available to NSW government schools on the NSW Department of Education and Training website at: http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/leadership/index.cfm?u=2&i=14

Learning principals very successfully encapsulates the views and opinions of 322 effective principals. It has generated much professional dialogue about the nature of school leadership capability.

This research provides an important platform for the Department’s new School Leadership Development Plan. The data will be used to inform the development, by the Department, of a School Leadership Capability Framework and to guide the development and conduct of leadership development programs.

I would like to acknowledge your commitment to this research project and to the ongoing development of NSW Government school leaders.

Yours sincerely

Robert Randall
Director
Professional and Curriculum
August 2003
APPENDIX L
Letter of acceptance for publication: *To Minority Majority*...

To - Kathryn Brennan
Principal, Bowral HS

Re: Your paper "The Minority Majority"

Congratulations. Your paper has been accepted for publication on as part of the refereed proceedings of the UWS Education Conference that was held in October 2003 at the UWS Parramatta campus. Two academic staff, one of them a Professor, examined your paper and made suggestions to which you responded. Several of the papers that were submitted were not considered to be of a high enough standard, so you have done well.

You will find your paper posted on the following web page.

Yours sincerely

Margaret

Professor Margaret Vickers
Director of Research and Research Degree Programs
School of Education and Early Childhood Studies

Tel 02 9772 6682, Mob 0419 278 108
APPENDIX M
Letter of acceptance for publication: To follow the yellow brick road...

[Letter sent by fax to: 02 48 612164]

5 April 2004

Ms Kathryn Brennan
Principal
BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL
Bowral NSW 2576

Dear Ms Brennan

WIL CONFERENCE 2003

Thank you for submitting your paper for presentation at the WIL Conference 2003

I am writing to inform you that your paper entitled "TO FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD?" has been approved for publication in the proceedings of the conference subject to some minor amendments to be advised in due course.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Assoc Prof Brian English
Director
Institute for the Service Professions
LEADING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE

A gender inclusive approach to building school leadership effectiveness, capacity and capability through learning

A portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Education

from

University of Western Sydney

Kathryn Elizabeth Brennan

M.Ed. (Admin), University of Western Sydney, Nepean
Grad.Dip.Ed.Admin., Deakin University
A.Mus.A., NSW Conservatorium of Music

APRIL 2004

© Kathryn Brennan April 2004
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Abstract

This Portfolio presents a research continuum spanning the period of the author’s Ed.D. candidature (1998-2004) addressing the questions, what capabilities contribute to effective school leadership, why do so few women become school principals and what strategies can be employed that will redress the current gender imbalance among school leaders? Findings are drawn from four research projects: Women as educational leaders; Leading change in NSW government secondary schools; The role of middle management in secondary schools and Leadership capability – principals in NSW government schools. These findings suggest that structured opportunities for professional learning within different educational contexts need to be readily available, supported and accessible. In order to facilitate this, a synthesis of the key research findings is presented in two education specific leadership development frameworks: Developing and Sustaining Effective School Leaders (underpinned by Ten Leadership Principles for School Leaders) and Learning for School Leadership Effectiveness. Both frameworks are designed to engage quality female and male educators, moving beyond the gender exclusive ‘traditional masculinist’ models. It is argued that leadership development experiences should be embedded in the daily work opportunities of both female and male teachers from the very beginning of their careers, as a key part of their Professional Learning Plans. The relative lack of disparity between the leadership practice of “effective” female and male principals demonstrated in this research portfolio suggests a gender inclusive framework to be a viable way forward.
Dedication

To my Family
This is for you

My Mother
Mary Joan Watts (nee) Judd

In memory of my Father
Ronald Austin Watts (1920-2004)

My Husband
David Peter Brennan
Who lived this journey from 'stage to page'
His devotion, wisdom, passion and artistry an inspiration

Our Children
Jennifer Michelle, Stephen Paul and Cassandra Elizabeth
A gift of wonder, joy and love

"Ask and it shall be given you: Seek, and ye shall find:
Knock, and it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8)
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the importance of my friends and colleagues across the education community in the completion of this research portfolio. In particular, I wish to thank Dr Deanna Hoermann and Mrs Barbara Abouchar for their sustained support, counsel and encouragement throughout my leadership journey. To my fellow EdD/Principal colleagues and Head of Department (HoD) co-researchers, I say thankyou for engaging in this learning partnership.

I wish to thank a number of academics from the University of Western Sydney for their assistance and guidance throughout the period of my candidature. From the University of Western Sydney (Nepean) my thanks to Professor Neil Baumgart who was influential in my commencing Doctoral studies, Dr Jillian Boyd my academic supervisor, who persevered throughout my rehabilitation from serious injury and Professor Steve Dinham (currently University of New England) who provided an environment for collaborative research. Particular gratitude is extended to my current supervisory panel, Professor Margaret Vickers and Dr Kerry Robinson from the University of Western Sydney (Bankstown) for their unreserved support and encouragement throughout the latter stages of my candidature.

Special thanks to Professor Geoff Scott, University of Technology, Sydney, for his research mentorship in the fields of educational leadership and change management. Working in partnership with Professor Scott was an inspirational and empowering experience.

Finally, to the many women who so freely shared their ‘stories’, a sincere thankyou, it is my hope that your courage and candour will contribute to a “preferred future” for those who aspire to follow in our footsteps.
CERTIFICATE

I certify that the material in this portfolio, except where acknowledged in the text, is my own original work, and that it has not been previously submitted towards a higher degree at any other university or institution.

[Signature]

7/7/04
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