

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: DEMOCRATIC AND INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP

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Why the Increased Focus on Leadership in Schools Today?

Sociological and structural analyses of the living conditions in contemporary Western societies and cultures (Giddens, 1991; Kirkeby, 1998) indicate that a basic condition for our lives is the hyper-complexity of societies, which is evident in both an increase in complexity in terms of time (society transforms at a much higher speed than before), in terms of space (the number of actions involving communication has increased dramatically) (Qvortrup, 2001), in the global risks that are increasingly created by humans, rather than by nature (Beck, 1986), and in the resulting contingencies. Another trend is that social relations are being lifted out of their local contexts of interaction into symbolic signs and expert systems as society becomes more differentiated. Yet another trend is the continuous questioning and critique of knowledge that was instituted in the epoch of Modernity in the late eighteenth century (Beck, 1986).

As systems have become more and more complex over the past decades, it has become apparent that even if the locus of control is central, steering with an input-oriented system has not worked effectively enough. To reduce complexity (and obviously cost), the idea of decentralizing systems is spreading internationally. For many years governmental institutions were state run and managed according to detailed budgets and strict regulations. Now they have been transformed into self-managed organizations that must take care of their own affairs and are accountable to authorities. The ways in which management and the “production of output” are carried out is up to each individual organization. Site-based management of schools is one of these relatively new initiatives.

DE-RE-CENTRALIZATION: A Stronger Political and Administrative Wish for Managing and Monitoring the Decentralized Institutions

The transformation of societies is partly due to new relations on a global level. Globalization has among other things meant a shift in public management strategies. Globalization has first and foremost meant a restructuring of the public sectors in that an increasing number of sectors and institutions are being drawn into the market logic and nation states have become dependent on the interplay with other states within associations and networks like the EU and the OECD and on the will of the corporate world. A large number of transnational companies plan and act without giving much consideration to what states may want. This is one major reason why a growing number of states opt for neo-liberal and neo-conservative policy strategies. Neo-liberally oriented states show particular consideration for private enterprise and the marketplace, and therefore more features of New Public Management are evident. These kinds of strategies are seen in the decentralization of finances and administration; and at the same time, in re-centralizing the content aspects of public sectors. That is what Ball (2003) means when he writes about performativity: states are demanding more transparency and are focusing on output from the entire public sector, including educational institutions.

In short, in contemporary societies leaders are needed because authorities want a person that can be held accountable and also because changes in society make it important for communities like schools to be able to construct their identities in negotiating meaning and reducing complexity and in changing themselves. In this transformation of society and institutions leadership becomes pivotal.

School Leadership and School Effectiveness

The pivotal role of the school leader as a factor in effective schools has been corroborated by findings of school effectiveness research in recent decades. Extensive empirical efforts of quantitatively oriented school effectiveness research – mostly in North America, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, but also in the Netherlands and in the Scandinavian Countries – have shown that leadership is a central factor in school quality (see, e.g., in Great Britain: Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988; Reynolds, 1976; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995; in the USA: Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; in the Netherlands: Creemers, 1994; Huber, 1999a; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; for a critical overview).

The research results show that schools classified as successful possess a competent and sound school leadership (this correlates highly significantly). The central importance of educational leadership is therefore one of the clearest messages of school effectiveness research (Gray, 1990). In most of the lists of key factors (or correlates) that school effectiveness research has compiled, “leadership” plays such an important part that the line of argument starting with the message “schools matter, schools do

make a difference” may legitimately be continued: “school leaders matter, they are educationally significant, school leaders do make a difference” (Huber, 1997).

“Professional school leadership” is described as firm and purposeful, sharing leadership responsibilities, involvement in and knowledge about what goes on in the classroom. That means that it is important to have decisive and goal-oriented participation of others in leadership tasks, that there is a real empowerment in terms of true delegation of leadership power (distributed leadership), and that there is a dedicated interest in and knowledge about what happens during lessons (effective and professional school leadership action focuses on teaching and learning and uses the school’s goals as a benchmark).

School Leadership and School Improvement

Studies on school development and improvement also emphasise the importance of school leaders, especially from the perspective of the continuous improvement process targeted at an individual school (see Altrichter, Schley, & Schratz, 1998; Bolam, 1993; Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington, & Weindling, 1993; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dalin & Rolff, 1990; Fullan, 1991, 1992, 1993; Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1994; Hopkins, West, & Ainscow, 1996; Huber, 1999b; Huberman, 1992; Joyce, 1991; Leithwood, 1992a; Reynolds et al. 1996; Stegö, Gielen, Glatter, & Hord, 1987; Van Velzen, 1979; Van Velzen, Miles, Ekholm, Hameyer, & Robin, 1985, for a critical overview).

In many countries, the efforts made to improve schools have illustrated that neither top-down measures alone nor the exclusive use of bottom-up approaches have the effects desired. Instead, a combination and systematic synchronisation of both has proved most effective. Moreover, improvement is viewed as a continuous process with different phases, which follow their individual rules. Innovations also need to be institutionalised after their initiation and implementation at the individual school level, so that they will become a permanent part of the school’s culture, that is, the structures, atmosphere, and daily routines. Hence, the goal is to develop problem-solving, creative, self-renewing schools that have sometimes been described as learning organisations. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on the priorities to be chosen by each school individually, since it is the school that is the centre of the change process. Thereby, the core purpose of school, that is, education and instruction, are at the centre of attention, since the teaching and learning processes play a decisive role for the pupils’ success. Hence, both the individual teacher and the school leadership provided are of great importance. They are the essential change agents who will have significant influence on whether a school will develop into a “learning organisation” or not.

For all phases of the school development process, school leadership is considered vital and is held responsible for keeping the school as a whole in mind, and for adequately coordinating the individual activities during the improvement processes (for the decisive role of school leadership in the development of the individual school see, e.g., studies conducted as early as in the 1980s by Hall & Hord, 1987; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Trider & Leithwood, 1988). Furthermore, it is required to create the internal conditions necessary for the continuous development and increasing professionalisation of

the teachers. It holds the responsibility for developing a cooperative school culture. Regarding this, Barth (1990), Hargreaves (1994) and Southworth (2003), among others, emphasise the “modelling” function of the school leader.

A Complex Range of School Leadership Tasks

The managing and leading tasks of school leadership are both complex and interrelated, so that there is no clearly defined, specific “role” of school leadership, but at best a coloured patchwork of many different aspects. Some areas or role segments relate to working with and for people, others to managing resources like the budget. All are part of the complex range of tasks the school leader faces in the twenty-first century (see e.g., Huber, 1997, 1999c).

International school leadership research already features a number of different alternatives for classifying school leadership tasks. Various approaches allocate school leadership action within various ranges of duties and assign responsibilities and activities to these (see the analysis of Katz, 1974, as an important “precursor” for classifications of management tasks, but also classifications of school leadership tasks, e.g., by Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Esp, 1993; Glatter, 1987; Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996; Jones, 1987; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Morgan, Hall, & Mackay, 1983).

Louis and Miles (1990) also distinguish between “management,” referring to activities in the administrative and organisational areas, and “leadership,” referring to educational goals and to inspiring and motivating others. For them, “educational leadership” includes administrative tasks like, for example, managing and distributing resources or planning and coordinating activities as well as tasks concerning the quality of leadership, such as promoting a cooperative school culture in combination with a high degree of collegiality, developing perspectives and promoting a shared school vision, and stimulating creativity and initiatives from others.

Leadership Theories

Given the manifold tasks and responsibilities of school leadership, as well as the necessary competences, school leaders might be propagated as a kind of “multifunctional miracle being.” Yet nobody can safely assume that they are or will or should be the “superheroes of school.” What may be deduced, however, is that their role can hardly be filled by persons with “traditional” leadership concepts. The idea of the school leader as a “monarchic,” “autocratic” or “paternal” executive of school has increasingly been seen as inappropriate, but viewing a school leader as a mere “manager” or “administrative executive” is inadequate as well, despite the managerial pressures of the present situation.

Transactional Leadership

As long as the school is seen as a stable system where the existing structures need to be administered as well as possible to effectively and efficiently achieve fixed results, a static concept of leadership may work very well, with the school leader first and

foremost ensuring that the school as an organisation functions well and smoothly. The term “transactional leadership” has been applied to this concept of steady state leadership: the school leader is the manager of the transactions, which are fundamental for an effective and also efficient work flow within the organisation. The daily organisational office proceedings and the administration of buildings, financial and personal resources, the time resources of staff, as well as communication processes within and outside of school are all included in this definition of “transactions” or “interactions.” All this constitutes the daily routines of school leadership and should not be underestimated, since it represents parts of the workload required to create the appropriate conditions for teaching and learning processes to take place.

Transformational Leadership

However, once rapid and extensive processes of change demand that “change and improvement” be viewed and performed as a continuing process, different conceptions of leadership are required. Here, “transformational leadership” is considered to point the way (see, e.g., Burns, 1978; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Leithwood, 1992b). “Transformational leaders” do not simply administer structures and tasks, but concentrate on the people carrying them out; that is, on their relationships and on making deliberate efforts to win their cooperation and commitment. They try to actively influence the “culture” of the school so that it allows and stimulates more cooperation, coherence and more independent learning and working. Here, “leadership” is emphasised over “management.” School leadership, as it is understood here, is reputed to be particularly successful in school development processes. In addition, leadership concentrates on the results, the success of the teaching and learning processes, and on the relation between these outcomes and the specific processes which led to them.

Integral Leadership

In contrast, Imants and de Jong (1999) try to comprehend “management” on the one hand and “leadership” on the other not as contrary poles, but as complementary ones. They regard their leadership concept “integral school leadership” as an integration of management and leadership tasks. This means that steering educational processes and performing management tasks coincide and overlap. The underlying understanding of “leadership” defines it as the deliberate “control” of other people’s behaviour. Therefore, educational leadership means controlling the teachers’ educational actions and the pupils’ learning processes. Consequently, the central issue for a school leader is how to positively influence the teachers’ educational actions and the “learning activities” of the pupils. Thereby, the combination of educational leadership and administrative management, which is often perceived as contrary by school leaders, loses its contradictory character.

Instructional Leadership

Studies conducted in North America, especially in the field of school effectiveness, have emphasised the relevance of “instructional leadership” since the 1980s (see, e.g., De Bevoise, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This leadership concept focuses

mostly on those aspects of school leadership actions that concern the learning progress of the pupils. These include management-oriented as well as leadership-oriented activities like a suitable application of resources for teaching, agreement on goals, the promotion of cooperative relationships between staff (e.g., cooperative lesson preparation), and especially, the evaluation and counselling of teachers during lessons through classroom observation, structured feedback, and coaching.

Distributed Leadership

There is near consensus in leadership literature on the need for distributed leadership (Gronn 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, 2004). There is a sense that the principal cannot be sufficiently informed to make all decisions in a school, nor can she/he be present in all places and situations where decisions need to be made. This is eminently the case in classrooms, where teachers have to interpret demands, goals and situations and make decisions many times every lesson. And it is also the case when teacher teams that meet to plan, evaluate their instruction or engage in professional development. If the principal is not present, she/he is excluded from making decisions (of course she/he can construct the frames, within which teams can manoeuvre). However, as Spillane and Orlina (2005) write, distributed leadership can take many forms. At the core of their concept of leadership is the notion that leadership is not the actions of the leaders *per se*, but the interactions between leaders and other agents. Leadership is therefore “an influencing relation” between leaders and followers that takes place in situations (that can be described by their tools, routines and structures). Leadership is about interactions that influence and that are understood to influence other persons. From another theoretical perspective, a systems theory or social constructivist perspective (Qvortrup 2000; Thyssen 2003a, 2003b), leadership can be understood as “the goal-oriented and specialized communication that aims at stimulating learning at all levels in schools” (Moos, 2003c, p. 19). This communication concept is parallel to Spillane’s and Orlina’s interaction concept in that both focus on the relations between leaders and teachers, and other stakeholders. The actions of the leader are only interesting if they are understood as leadership actions by the followers or co-leaders.

Organisational-Educational Management

In the German-speaking context, the notion of “organisational education” (see Rosenbusch, 1997, 2005) refers to the mutual influence of the school as an organisation on the one hand and the educational processes on the other hand. The core question of organisational education raises a two-fold issue: which educational effects do the nature and conditions of school as an organisation have on individuals or groups within the organization – and vice versa, which effects do the conditions and the nature of individuals or groups within the school have on the school as an organisation? Concretely speaking: how does school need to be designed in order to guarantee favourable prerequisites for education and support educational work? Hence, the influence of the organisation on the teaching and learning process needs to be acknowledged. Administrative and organisational structures have to be brought in line with educational goals. This

does not only concern the structure of the school system or the management of the individual school, but also the leadership style, including aspects of the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among the staff. Hence, empowerment and accountability issues seem to be important and have to be considered seriously in the light of educational aims and goals. In the context of organisational education, school leadership action becomes educational-organisational action, and educational goals become superordinate premises of this action. This means that school leadership action itself must adhere to the four main principles of education in schools – that school leaders themselves assume or encourage maturity when dealing with pupils, teachers and parents, that they practise acceptance of themselves and of others, that they support autonomy, and that they realize cooperation. This adjustment of educational perspectives affects the school culture, the teachers' behaviour, and the individual pupils, particularly through the teaching and learning process on classroom level. Administrative and structural conditions have to be modified accordingly, and be in compliance with educational principles. Thereby, the unbalanced relationship (which is historically conditioned in many countries) between education on the one hand and organisation and administration on the other hand can be clarified.

The leadership concept of “organisational-educational management” assumes a definition of “educational” which not only incorporates teaching and education processes with pupils, but also with adults, as well as organisational learning. Organisational-educational management is committed to educational values, which are supposed to determine the interaction with pupils and the cooperation with staff as well.

Democratic Leadership – Adjusting School Leadership Action to Democratic Principles, Educational Premises, and the Core Purpose of School

To us, the core principle of leadership action is “democracy” and “cooperation,” both as an aim and a method. Due to the complex hierarchy within the school, democracy and cooperation represent an adequate rationale for actions concerning the intrinsic willingness and motivation of staff and the pupils for co-designing the individual school. However, cooperation is not only valuable as a means for reaching goals; it is a decisive educational goal in itself.

Implementing these ideas would result in a broad distribution of leadership responsibility to form a “community of leaders” within the school (see Grace, 1995). This view is also taken by Jackson and West (1999) in their depiction of “post-transformational leadership.” If the school is supposed to become a learning organisation, this implies the active, co-determining and collaborative participation of all. The old distinction between the position of the teachers on the one hand and the learners on the other cannot be sustained, nor can the separation between leaders and followers. Therefore, leadership is no longer statically connected to the hierarchical status of an individual person but allows for the participation in different fields by as many persons from staff as possible. This also extends to the active participation of the pupils in leadership tasks.

The delegation of decision-making power should not occur, however, in order to “bribe” the stakeholders into showing motivation, but for the sake of a real democratisation of school. Therefore, cooperation or “cooperative leadership” is not just a leadership style (like “consultative leadership,” “delegative leadership” or “participative leadership”) but reflects a fundamental leadership conception as a general attitude.

This discussion is also important when discussing school leadership, because leadership needs to be designed in accordance with the core purpose of the community that is being led. To us, the main purpose of school leadership is to empower and enable staff and students to assume responsibility for learning, acting and collaborating in school and outside school. The reasons why this is the main purpose are as follows:

First, school is an important cultural institution in every society with a special purpose to contribute to the education of the next generation to become active, knowledgeable and caring citizens of their societies. Therefore, the purpose of schools is to provide a comprehensive, liberal education with a responsibility to community – education for democratic citizenship – and learning (also called “Bildung”), so the students can grow or develop into being independent and enlightened adults, who are concerned with equity and social justice. This has been called “action competence”: the individual is able and willing to be a qualified participant (Jensen & Schnack, 1994). This ideal creates a fundamental paradox that has occupied theorists and practitioners for many years, and continues to do so: “How is it possible – through external influence – to bring human beings to a state where they are not controlled by external influences?” (Leonard Nelson, 1970 in Oettingen, 2001, p. 9). We know from experience that children are not able to take care of themselves. They must be educated. Parents educate children and they leave it to schools and other institutions to educate on behalf of themselves. Education is at any rate an external influence (Moos, 2003b). Leadership always implies some influence on others. Educational leaders are to cultivate some awareness for the importance of dealing carefully and responsibly with power. Their educational aim has to be that pupils will develop to become independently thinking, self-responsible and socially responsible, mature citizens who grow beyond being led. Principles such as self-autonomy, respect of oneself and of others, and cooperation play an important part, as they also do in adult learning processes and in leadership in general (Moos, 2003a).

Second, as schooling takes place in school communities, it is necessary for students and teachers to behave and to feel like members of these communities. Third, school acts according to the goals and aims set by the society at large and is therefore accountable to it.

This leads to a short discussion of democracy, democratic schools and democratic leadership. These notions are in many countries considered to be pivotal societal values: the democratic value is set out explicitly in the acts on schools in some Scandinavian countries. But while most people agree that democratic schools are essential for society and that democratic leadership is good for schools, they do not agree on what that means. For Dewey, who has been a great inspiration for many theorists as well as practitioners, democratic leadership meant that democracy was lived through participation in the everyday practice of school life:

What the argument for democracy implies is that the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, comes by

use and practice ... The delicate and difficult task of developing character and good judgement in the young needs every stimulus and inspiration possible ... I think, that unless democratic habits and thought and action are part of the fibre of a people, political democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships. (Dewey 1937, p. 345)

Dewey (1916, in Mulford & Moreno, 2007) saw “deep” democracy as involving respect for the dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions, reverence for and proactive facilitation of free and open inquiry and critique, recognition of interdependence in working for the common good, the responsibility for individuals to participate in free and open inquiry, and the importance of collective choices and actions in the interest of the common good.

Beane and Apple (1999) are very much in line with Dewey in their description of the characteristics of democratic schools:

- The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.
- The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.
- Concern for the welfare of others and “the common good.”
- Concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.

Before we continue looking at democratic leadership it is useful to position the view of democracy that is used by Dewey or Beane & Apple and also by us: the concept of participatory democracy, which is the most appropriate and useful concept in regard to schools and education. There are many views of democracy. This concept is one of the most used and misused concepts in both politics and education. Almost everybody can agree that democracy is based on positive principles but have different opinions on what it means. Seashore Louis (2003) distinguishes between three basic forms of democracy:

- Liberal Democracy – the purpose of society is to support the individual in becoming autonomous, tension between perceived societal needs and individual freedom, so liberal democracy argues that educational goals should be determined by the will of the majority;
- Social Democracy – social rights and equality, group cohesiveness and redistribution of social good including education, equalizing educational attainment and opportunity, social democracy argues that protecting vulnerable classes of students – that is, students of linguistic, religious and racial minorities – requires stable state control over goals;
- Participatory Democracy – based on the Greek ideal of citizenship, participation and ownership, congregations debate and determine key issues, schools belong to a local community, local responsiveness, so participatory democracy argues that participants in the educational project are best able to determine goals. (Seashore Louis, 2003, p. 101)

Closely linked to the concept of participatory democracy is the ideal/the idea of the “better argument.” The ideal calls on the participants to strive to build communication

on the ideal of the better argument that prevails without the use of coercion (Habermas, 1984, 1987). This ideal refers to communicative relations among participants that – to the extent possible – seek mutual understanding and aim at minimising the exercise of dominance within institutional relations that must necessarily be asymmetric and embedded within particular organisational structures.

Another account of the view is given in a series of portraits of school leaders striving to become democratic leaders. The following orientations are shared (Blase, Anderson, & Dungan, 1995, pp. 132–150):

- they all tried to encourage teachers' involvement in decision-making about instruction and are committed to the principle of sharing power with others;
- they were all child-centred and strongly committed toward improving teaching and learning and supporting teachers;
- they all had trust in teachers' motives;
- they all had the ability to listen and to communicate openly.

Leadership in Communities – Leadership as Communication

Classrooms and schools are social fields and education and learning take place in those social fields. Loyalty and commitment to the organisation is not by any means an automatic starting position for any institution; so building and deepening it is a leadership duty and mission. If staff and students are to behave loyally to their organisation, leaders should make an effort to transform the organisation, which is characterised only by a formal structure, into a community, which is characterised by all members being sufficiently committed to the ethos of the community. A prerequisite for this transformation is to focus on the integrity of the organisation: the ability to be both a convincing internal work- and life-frame and the ability to appear reliable in the eyes of all stakeholders.

Inspiration for discussing community and membership can be drawn from Wenger's theory on how learning and identities are constructed within communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). Identity construction is a dual process in a field of tension between our investment in various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those different contexts. The production is partly identification (investing the self in relations) and partly negotiability (negotiating meaning).

We can find different kinds of communities in schools: the classroom as a democratic community, a professional community, a community of learners and a "community of leaders." This last type of community is based on the notion of shared leadership: "In communities, leadership as power over events and people is redefined to become leadership as the power to accomplish shared goals" (Wenger, 1999, p. 170).

This description of communities and leadership applies to the school as a community, the senior management team as a community, teacher teams as communities and classrooms and other student-teacher groups as communities. All of them need to develop a sense of ethos, membership, direction, power sharing and trust building, and distributed and participatory-democratic leadership. And all of them can profit from looking at leadership as communication.

Power and Trust

When describing schools and classrooms as communities one should not forget that they are at the same time social fields with struggles for positions as a key feature (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). One way of looking at this problem is also discussed by the Norwegian philosopher Tian Sørhaug (1996). To Sørhaug leadership is about:

- developing and indicating a direction for the organisation;
- controlling the relationships between the inner and outer contexts;
- creating trust through trustworthy use of power.

To him the core concepts are “power” and “trust”:

Power is described as “the capacity – in persons and institutions – that makes people do things, they (probably) would not do otherwise” (Sørhaug, 1996, p. 22). Power is described as a floating concept that is in itself empty but when used in actual situations it is filled with meaning. Power creates the conditions and mobilises people to action and collaboration. Trust is dependent on the will and good will of people when new issues are being addressed.

The two forces threaten each other and they presuppose each other: power without trust eats up its own basis, and trust without power cannot survive, because there will always be a portion of violence in a group. Members of a group have different interests that sometimes are contrary to the common negotiated norm or the set goal, so they threaten the inner boundaries and they try to destruct norms within the organisation. Therefore, there is a need for somebody to stop the violence. There is need for a leader who is endowed with appropriate means of power, and who can restore the trust through trustworthy use of power. This someone is more often than not the principal. If a teacher is totally opposed to the norms and values, this could be seen as an internal act of violence that has to be taken care of.

A very crucial leadership task is to restore the limits of the community. This is the pivotal point for the trust-power interplay, but external pressure begins to alter internal power relations in school communities with consequences for trust. This points to the need for leaders to set the agenda for the professional discussions in schools: what is interesting for our community, and how are we going to resolve those problems?

However, leadership must be made legitimate in society and above all to those who are “led.” Power must be handled carefully, and the balance between influence and trust has to be maintained. The main principles of education in schools have to be respected: maturity has to be encouraged when dealing with pupils, teachers, and parents, acceptance of oneself and of others has to be practised, autonomy has to be supported, and cooperation has to be realised. School leadership should be aligned to these beliefs.

The Core Functions of School Leadership

As stated above, many authors in our field point to the fact that in the practice of schools there is not only one leader; leadership needs to be distributed and therefore people need to be developed and empowered so they can accept and carry out leadership functions at

different levels. Furthermore, they claim that organisations must be redesigned in order to accommodate new functions and practices.

Even though schools in some systems are managed in some detail, when it comes to outcomes (standards, inspections and tests) they have to find the ways to achieve these outcomes themselves. They have to interpret demands and signals from the outer world and choose means by which they want to respond to them. It is a major challenge to school leadership to interpret signals and engage in communications about differences that form the premises for the next decisions in the community (Thyssen, 2003a). This is about setting directions and making sense.

The ways in which leaders at all levels can influence each other, staff and students, is communication (Moos, 2003c). In a social constructivist-perspective, persons are seen as autopoietic systems that can choose to transform their cognitive patterns if they are disturbed or irritated by communication from other agents. In another perspective, a practice theory perspective, it is in the interactions (Spillane & Orlina, 2005) with others that influence is made. This is a mutual/reciprocal action, an interaction involving both parties. This is about communicating and negotiating sense.

Schools are organisations, held together by structures, but if they are to be effective and successful, they must also be communities, held together by a shared sense of identity and by sufficiently common norms (Bourdieu, 1990). This is about designing and managing communities.

Integrative Leadership

The principle that school has to be a model of what it teaches and preaches (Rosenbusch, 1997, 2005) has consequences for schools and school leadership. It implies that school leadership needs to be based upon certain principles, which are oriented towards the constitutive aspects of a fundamental educational understanding (see Rosenbusch, 1997). School leaders should adjust their educational perspective: educational goals dominate over administrative requirements, administration only serves an instrumental function. They also should take the two levels of their educational work into consideration: first, school leaders have to work with children and promote their learning, and second, as they also have to work with adults, they should promote adult learning as well. Hence, conditions of adult education and adult learning have to be taken into account. This must have an impact on their leadership and management style, particularly in professional dialogues, when knowledge is shared, expanded, and created. School leaders should be more resource-oriented than deficiency-oriented: a new orientation towards promoting strengths instead of counting weaknesses is needed. So far, in many countries bureaucratically determined school administration has concentrated on avoiding mistakes, on controlling, detecting, and eliminating weaknesses instead of – as would be desirable from an educational point of view – concentrating on the positive aspects, reinforcing strengths, and supporting cooperation; it should be about treasure hunting instead of uncovering deficiencies. They should follow the logic of trusting oneself and others (see Rosenbusch, 1997, 2005): it is necessary to have trust in one's own abilities and as well as in those of the staff and

others so that empowerment, true delegation, and independent actions can be facilitated; then mistakes can be addressed more openly. Finally, they should act according to the principle of “collegiality in spite of hierarchy”(REF??): individual and mutual responsibilities have to be respected and appreciated, although special emphasis is placed on a shared collegial obligation regarding the shared goals.

If schools are considered learning organisations, this implies that the stakeholders are empowered and work together collaboratively. Leadership is about empowering others as viable partners in leadership. Some colleagues call this “cooperative leadership” or “democratic leadership”; other concepts that have emerged are “organisational-educational management” (Rosenbusch, 1997a), or “post-transformational leadership” (Jackson & West, 1999). Huber’s (2004a) “integrative approach to leadership” focuses on the core purpose of school and adjusts school leadership to the aims of school, integrating the different roles and expectations, but also emphasising the empowerment of the different stakeholders (Figure 1).

As stated above, “integrative leadership” integrates three components:

- First, there should be a focus on educational premises as formulated in organisational-educational management. Among those are the acceptance of other stakeholders, the support of their autonomy, and cooperation in terms of an aim and at the same time the method to achieve it. Besides, a more broadly defined understanding of leadership includes moral and political dimensions of leadership in a democracy. Leadership in a democratic society is embedded in democratic values, such as equality, justice, fairness, welfare and a careful and reflective use of power.
- Second, the individual school leader should integrate the different school leadership roles and functions in her or his personality and actions in such a way that they are adjusted to the overarching aims of education, whether it is the more person-oriented (or consideration) role or the more task-oriented (or initiating structure) role; in other terms the more administrative-management focus or an emphasis on leadership.
- Third, school leadership actions have to integrate all stakeholders in terms of cooperative leadership as described above and focus on the different individuals and

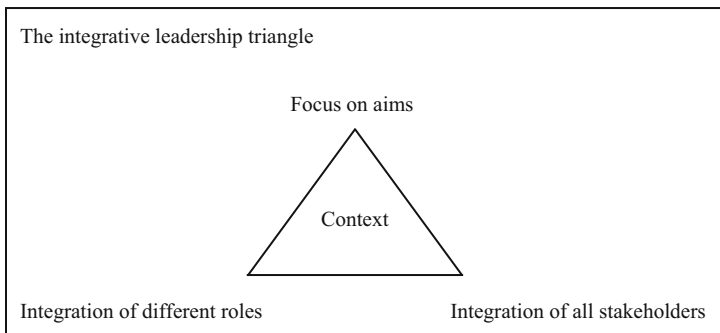


Figure 1. The integrative leadership triangle (Huber, 2004b, 2007)

groups involved as well as on the collaborative relationships among them. School leaders need to be able to develop appropriate (context-task-person-oriented) professional relationships and foster such relationships among all stakeholders (in order to create a “cooperative and democratic school”).

Moreover, the concrete everyday realisation of school leadership has to take the context into account, as leadership is always context-specific. In general, leadership is dependent on and limited by the context. In particular, leadership, on the one hand, takes the context into account when it comes to analyzing, evaluating and deciding how to act. On the other hand, leadership tries to influence the context to create better conditions for improvement (focusing on aims, integrating the different roles, integrating all stakeholders). School leaders have to be able to understand the complexity of the system. They need to be familiar with the potential “stumbling blocks” that may exist and how these obstacles can become challenges that will be overcome. School leadership must shape the school in such a way that the teachers who work there can then ideally be more effective in supporting their pupils to achieve better learning outcomes. Hence, the school leader becomes a facilitator of change and someone who effectively supports teachers in their work with pupils.

This requires reflection on the role, function, and goals of the school, and consequently on the role, function, and goals of appropriate leadership and management. Hence, last but not least, leadership is about “a multi-stage adjusting of school leadership aims” (Huber, 2004a). A multi-stage adjusting of aims requires putting forward the following questions: first, what are the essential aims of education? From this, the corresponding aims for schools and schooling in general can then be derived: what is the purpose of school and what are the aims of the teaching and learning processes? Considering the perspective of the new field of “organisational education,” one should ask: how does the school organisation need to be designed and developed in order to create the best conditions possible so that the entire school becomes a deliberately designed, educationally meaningful environment? This in turn would enable effective and substantial teaching and learning to take place as well as multi-faceted and holistic educational processes that would lead to achieving the schools’ aims. Consequently, we should ask: how can this aim be realised through teaching and through the communicative everyday practice in schools and the culture of a school? This means that leadership activities like decision making processes, dealing with conflicts, problem solving, interpretations of regulations and instructions, as well as the everyday routines at school have to be brought in line with these fundamental premises.

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