Leadership true to moral purpose:
Schools as social service centres
to Improve learning opportunities
for all

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This paper argues that educational leaders must be fully aligned to their moral purpose and widen their sphere of influence if they seek to make a purposeful difference to global society. One of six futures’ scenarios that the OECD (2001) put forward as re-schooling was schools as “social centres”. In this scenario educators have a strong moral purpose and social agenda to make a difference to society. They work collaboratively with students and parents to purposefully interact with them and the wider community. In this scenario education is a valued commodity and learning happens flexibly throughout the community. Together, educators and community work to add value and co-create new knowledge, with highly paid professionals working alongside others facilitating learning. Local decision-making and shared leadership typify
the educational leadership and governance practice. Education then, becomes a public service, in its truest sense.

In May 2010 I travelled around Australia as the Travelling Scholar for the Australian Council for Educational Leadership coaching leadership with 112 educational leaders in Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane and Adelaide. I gathered qualitative data from each of the participants through a structured written response sheet that asked six questions. What is the change you want to see in the world? What do you need to know, do or be to contribute to this change? How will you learn it? What support will you need? How might your leadership practice be different? How will you know you are making progress? The data was analysed through a thematic analysis, saturating the themes that were prevalent in the data. There were four major changes these educational leaders wanted to see in the world: A sense of global society, a re-focus on human values, education as a public good, and equity and valuing diversity. Key findings about the type of leadership practice that would bring about this change and how they would learn through the change process will be presented.

When you ask teachers “Why did you become a teacher?” they will usually answer “To make a positive difference to young people and their lives.” This is their moral purpose. Recent New Zealand research on recruitment and retention of teachers, involving nearly 800 school teachers and other leaders, supports this anecdotal evidence. They found that “One of the strongest and enduring group of factors affecting recruitment and retention decisions is teachers’ individual intrinsic motivation to working with children, to make a useful contribution to society and to gain personal fulfillment from a job well done.” (Kane & Mallon, 2006, p. 160). Classroom teachers work with hundreds of children in their lifetime, wanting to make a positive difference to their lives. As their sphere of influence widens throughout their career, from individual classrooms, to groups of classrooms, to across school leadership, to full school leadership in a community, do educational leaders see their work within the school community as part of a bigger picture of creating change in the world? How do they connect with the moral purpose that took them into teaching as a career? Do they see their school as a ‘social centre’ for the wider community, which includes neighbouring schools? One of six futures’ scenarios that the OECD (2001) put forward as re-schooling was schools as “social centres”. In this scenario educators have a strong moral purpose and social agenda to make a difference to society. They work collaboratively with students and parents to purposefully interact with them and the wider community. In this scenario, education is a valued commodity and learning happens flexibly throughout the wider community. Local decision-making and shared leadership typify the educational leadership and governance practice, with highly paid professionals working alongside others facilitating learning. Together, educators and community work to add value and co-create new knowledge. Education becomes a public service, in its truest sense. Degenhardt and Duignan, (2010) in their recent book Dancing on a Shifting Carpet argue that the school improvement and school effectiveness paradigms have not made the type of change necessary to really make a
difference to student learning outcomes and suggest a *reinvention* of education is necessary. They call for "...a holistic paradigm of schooling...if you don't know where you are heading how will you work out where to start, which direction to travel, which path to follow, and whether and when you have arrived?...The answer is ultimately a matter of values, and what is understood to be the moral purpose of education" (p. 17). They state that this will need a special kind of educational leaders and acknowledge this change will not be easy: "A key challenge is that the principal in a reinventing school risks appearing incompetent in the short term as well as being unpopular. Many principals may choose not to risk this much...Many will not want to make an already complex and demanding role even more complex and demanding" (p. 38). This paper builds on a decade of research on Boundary Breaking Leadership Development in New Zealand and Canada, trying to develop such educational leaders who will step into their work every day believing that things could be different, and then explores what change Australian leaders wish to see in the world, and how they believe they are contributing to this change in their current practice.

During May this year I facilitated workshops on coaching leadership in Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane and Adelaide as part of the Australian Council for Educational Leadership Travelling Scholar programme. I collected 112 responses from these senior school leaders, asking about the change they wish to see in the world, how they contribute to it, how they learn what they need to know to support them in this change process, how their leadership practice might be different, and how they will know they are making progress. I also gathered data on what these Australian leaders think 21stC learning should look like. This paper presents the analysis of findings from this exploration.

**Crossing boundaries, building bridges**

There are many boundaries formally and informally established in schools and between schools. There are boundaries between teachers in their classrooms; there are boundaries between teachers and students; between schools and families; between schools and other places of learning in the community, particularly other schools. There are boundaries between cultures; there are boundaries between countries. These boundaries place limits on the new learning and new knowledge creation that people can participate in. Bridging these boundaries can create a new learning space – an interstice where participants meet to share their knowledge, respect each other’s knowledge and then co-create new knowledge. Hosting (I define as bringing people together in leadership, the validation of others, their knowledge, their creativity and value) and harvesting (generative learning and co-creating new knowledge) occurs in such mutual spaces.

The Boundary Breaking Leadership Model was developed over a decade of research and development with international leaders (Webber & Robertson, 1998; Robertson & Webber, 2002) to explore how to cross boundaries to enter these new learning spaces for learning and creating knowledge. The principles supporting these spaces are:
- the development of community and provision of a forum for discussion,
- opportunities for shared formal and informal leadership to occur,
- a generative approach to learning, which builds on needs of participants,
- the validation of personal knowledge,
- international perspectives and the growth of a counter culture, putting forward possibilities definitely at variance with the norm,
- and the shared construction of meaning.

These principles enabled particular pedagogical practices to occur, such as co-learning, shared leadership, reduced control and a big picture focus (See Robertson & Webber, 2000). One of the practices is called “Possibilising” – creating “what-if?” moments to explore alternatives and ideas – perhaps the utopian idealism that Halpin (2003, p. 60) describes where “ultimate hopes for the future are translated into action plans that seek to push out the boundaries of what is possible…” Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) have “Dream of how schooling could be if it was ideal” as step four of their twelve-step process for reinventing a school.

Importantly, being emotionally engaged in such learning within these communities which crossed boundaries of cultures, stakeholders, nations, theory and practice, and roles, to explore these places of possibility, created a new leadership practice with particular qualities.

This was educational leadership that was:

**Agentic** – leaders developed in their self-efficacy in their educational leadership. They believed they were agents of change and could move to other ways of being; they were confident they could make a difference, and they realized they needed to be more political about creating the changes they wished to see;

**Beyond self** – through vicarious learning and outside perspectives leaders saw that they were part of a much bigger picture in education, beyond their own class, their own school – to the wider community and the global community. Rather than leadership being the examination of self, it is the recognition that it is part of a whole.

**Emotionally engaged with new learning** – deep learning moves leaders out of comfort zones and established habits and ideas; There may be anger, frustration, excitement, or passion – but some sort of emotion will connect them to their learning, their moral purpose and make them want to know more and do more.

**Critically and politically aware** – where other ways of knowing have assisted the analytical assessment of their leadership practices; hearing other perspectives, others’ stories, other ways of seeing the world.

When leaders reclaim and strengthen their moral purpose they move into what Starratt (2004) called ethical leadership as he challenged leaders to
move beyond the search for another form of adjectival leadership that has been currently created by researchers (Mulford, 2008) and, instead, ask “Leadership for What?” Values, beliefs, and philosophies of leadership and life are then at the heart of leadership and the building of relationships that will enable leadership to occur. The Australian elections were on at the time of this research and indeed this was a question The Sydney Herald felt Australians might have been asking of their political leaders over the past months” Leadership of what and for what?  The Sydney Morning Herald Supplement Decision 2010 (Wednesday July 28 2010, p.1-12) concerned at the focus on hairdo, clothing, partners, children or lack of, slogans and competing personalities and a lack of focus on important leadership issues, asked 15 eminent people what the election should be about – Leadership for What? These people answered resoundingly about societal and world issues: Global world, China, tax system, failure of indigenous policy, climate change, biodiversity, migrants and diversity, Australian culture, education, politics, euthanasia. The Herald political editor Peter Hartcher (Sydney Morning Herald Supplement, 2010, p. 2) asked “Should we expect more from our leaders?” and finished his affirmative answer with the plea for “The leader in a relationship of inspiration…working to rise to their better selves. It can be done, but not in Australia, 2010.”

It can be done – many educational leaders in many contexts throughout the world are working, within their sphere of influence in schools and communities, to make an authentic difference to children’s and families lives.

**Be the change … now**

Ghandi said “We need to be the change we want to see in the world.” Most professional development focuses on what leadership knowledge educational leaders should have and what leadership strategies they should use. However, it is becoming evident that who educational leaders need to be is of as much importance to making a difference to children’s learning outcomes and therefore life chances. A focus on who you need to be, asks you to connect with your moral purpose and think about intentional leadership practice. Margaret Wheatley always asks leaders the one question “What time is it?” because she says, that time is now. That in the busyness of our daily lives it is easy to “…ignore the deep realities of human existence. We can ignore that people carry spiritual questions and quests into their work; we can ignore that people need love and acknowledgement; we can pretend that emotions are not a part of our work lives; we can pretend we don’t have families, or health crises, or deep worries. In essence, we take the complexity of human life and organise it away…People can be viewed as machines and controlled to perform with the same efficiency and predictability.” (Wheatley, 2005, p.19).

School leaders can easily get bogged down in the busyness of the everyday work, managing on the day to day, efficiently and reliably. But whether they are morally responsible and effective, requires a different sort of mindset. Wheatley (2010) says we can all find the time and
most importantly to find the time to think, and ask questions such as, “What's happening in this society?” and acknowledge that we are part of what is happening in the World and that therefore we can be part of a solution. She writes on her website “True leaders should play the role of the host, and lead their team to accomplish most of the work through a collaborative effort. We need to stop thinking of ourselves as leaders, as the centrepiece, the hero, the one who makes things happen but we need to shift our imagery to that of a host – a host to people’s creativity, to people’s generosity, commitment, and that the real work of leadership is the realisation that the work will be done by others. The leader becomes the gatherer, the convenor, the host, the person who brings people together to do the work, who engages people in the creation of projects, who relies on others and not just themselves.”

So how do educational leaders view their leadership influence in this global world? Do they see that influence as wider than the school gates? How did these Australian leaders describe the way their leadership needed to be to achieve the change they wished to see in the world?

What is the change we wish to see in the world?

There were four major themes of data on the types of changes Australian leaders wished to create in the world. They were: a sense of global society, a (re)focus on human values, valuing education, and honouring equity and diversity, including empowerment of individuals and groups. Respondents often gave more than one change they wished to see, which has made it more difficult to quantify data.

A sense of global society

Over half of the respondents specifically mentioned the importance of a balanced, global society. They talked about the importance of “Community and connections” and “Caring for each other and the earth – no matter what gender, creed.” The aspect of safety and “The right to live without fear, hunger and unnecessary sorrow, improving mental health of parents and students, to make the world a better place” was prevalent. Well-being and living a full life was at the heart of these responses.

There was also the subtheme on focusing a “Sustainable global environment” and “Care for the world, living local thinking global”. The words “balanced society” were used several times.

The importance of people operating with a moral and social conscience and social justice underpinned many of these responses. There was also a call for leaders across all sectors to work together to make a positive contribution to Society. One leader said “A world population that has more of a moral consciousness visible – to stand up for just and unjust, with conviction” and another said “I would like to see our young people taking on global responsibilities … we have to move on from an insular perspective to having a
recognition of our responsibilities to our local community and the global community.” (Participant 98Sydney)

The second major theme, although linked to the first, had a different focus.

A (re)focus on Human Values

Again, at least half of the respondents mentioned the importance of the return to and strengthening of human values. Values specifically mentioned were harmony, understanding, acceptance, empathy, peace and love, respect, responsibility, family, relationship and spirituality. Some of the respondents were from Christian schools and three more specifically called a return to “God’s kingdom”. One leader wished for “People valuing life, land, mind, heart over materialism and money.” And another called for, “Slow life, slow food, slow joy, slow communities.” (Participant 105Sydney)

Unsurprisingly the next theme was focused on the value of education.

Education as a public good

What was surprising were the number of calls from respondents for education to be more valued – not just by the media and by society generally, but by educators themselves. They wanted schools to be seen as “a guiding foundation of authentic life-long learning” and for the media to promote “education as our future” and to “Promote the role education plays in society and on future” (Participant 54WA).

Again, at least half of the responses wished for all children to have access to education. All of them assumed quality but one leader stipulated “Every child in every class, in every school, in every city, in every country deserves the best teacher” (Participant 11Sydney). There were many indicators of the type of education respondents wished for. The most frequently stated was “learner-centred” and “meeting individual needs to reach potential.” Also mentioned once or twice were that this education should be future-oriented, engaged, culturally appropriate, inclusive, critically reflective, relevant, have more creativity, and quality. This was backed up by data gathered from all groups later in the workshop on what they believed C21st Learning looked like. Although the original data is available, for later thematic analysis, for interest I have used the Wordle tool across the data to highlight the top 50 words and the number of times they were used by these 112 educators in their group exercise. The size of the word indicates the number of times it was used.
Words such as learning, learners, curriculum, engaged, students, personalized, critical and differentiation all indicated where these leaders felt the emphasis should be.

**Diversity and Equity**

One third of participants specifically mentioned equity and diversity. There were general calls for closing the gap in health, education and partnerships and there were four specific references to “Raising expectations for and engagement of indigenous students” and “Marginalized children” as well as “Women and girls” and “More indigenous children gaining HSC, meaningful employment and becoming role models in low SE communities” (Participant 41Brisbane). One participant wished that “Marginalized children could have equal opportunities to be what they want to be” and another wished there was a “sharing of our resources so that equity might become more of a reality” (Participant 43Brisbane).

A lot of the responses in this theme wished for the “Empowerment of groups and individuals” and the building of self-reliance and the knowledge of self-worth. They wished for “Trust, self-belief and belief in others” and that “Youth [would] feel a part of a community who support each other.” They wished for a focus on those less fortunate, including parents. Others wished for people to recognise that “difference enhances our lives” and wished to see people “celebrating diversity”, being “free from discrimination”, and allowing people to be “free to be themselves.”

Some had wishes for teachers to be “Non-judgmental and [have] unconditional regard for students” and for “Student voice [to be] taken seriously”. There were wishes for younger leaders to be seen taking up roles confidently and recognized as “Leaders of the future” “With optimism”. One participant said that empowering others needed to start even higher at the
The leaders were asked about what they would need to learn, do or be to contribute to the change and how they would learn what they needed to assist them to do this work.

**The learning and change process**

The data fell into four main themes: Action learning, Changing oneself, Working with other leaders, and Developing students as the new change leaders.

*The process of action learning*

Many leaders referred to the importance of experiential learning in the leadership of change. They used phrases such as “Living inside the experience” and that they should “value the process and give time to it.” Others said “By doing it” or, more emphatically, “Just do it!” One specifically referred to “action learning” but a very strong message that came through was the importance of “Having a go at new things”. Specific part so the process such as negotiation, the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of current position and working at the local level were identified. The majority of the leaders felt that their learning would be through doing.

**Changing oneself**

Perhaps it was the make-up of this group - all chosen to come out of the busyness of their work for a day of coaching leadership - but a majority of responses again referred to the changes they would need to make to themselves. They made such comments as “Work on myself” and “Understanding oneself and how you can be wrapped up in it” and “I would need to be more accepting” indicating that they realized they were part of the desired change process and not standing outside of it and referring to it, as leaders often do. One leader stated the importance of “Develop[ing] a sense of ownership in myself and others in adapting to new ways of teaching and learning” and others spoke of how to achieve the change in themselves by adding “Being a thinking person” and “Seek feedback on leadership practice”.

Another added “Be myself more” at the end of the day in reference to some content of the workshop from Goffee & Jones (2009) who urge leaders to “Be yourself more, with skill” and another also related to this with “Be true to myself and my beliefs” (Participant 50 Western Australia). One leader spoke of the influence of modeling the way, and responded “My wellbeing directly correlates to the wellbeing of other learners.” (Participant 30 South Australia).

Some leaders referred specifically to the attributes of influence they would need such as “My efficacy”; “Practice what I preach”; “Discourse – understand my own first, then understand others” and “Being more confident to speak up.” “Learning to encourage, inspire others” and “Develop skills to lead, empower, coach and mentor others to do the same” and another stated “Skills in ICT.”
The next theme of responses was the most saturated. Nearly all of the leaders made mention about learning from and with others.

**Working with others**

The first aspect of this theme were leaders wanting to work with others to get new ideas and perspectives, “Seeking to see with new eyes”. The responses specifically mentioned peers, critical friends, coaches, mentors, and “committed colleagues.” Others talked about the importance of outside perspectives gained from “Leaders outside of education” and “Dialogue with educators who are doing it differently” (Participant 61WA). Others mentioned expert knowledge, role models, community expertise, and university research expertise.

Building capacity through the commitment of colleagues was expanded on by many who made statement like this: “for more ideas and to cover more ground” “With others who share the view” and they were very focused on the need to build capacity “to move forward”. One wrote “2+2 = more”; another talked about ‘the ripple effect” and another the “circle of influence.” Specific reference was made to networks, world organisations, community associations, partnerships and teaming with others to learn from them and with them.

Some leaders talked about those ‘others’ who would be influential in the change process: “Meet with those who have the power to make changes” and referred to the need to “Reignite teachers’ passion to collectively speak out and confidently [about how great a job they are doing]”. They saw the need to “Access, retain and encourage quality teachers in classrooms” and to “Encourage teachers to take positive risks”. One leader saw how important it was for everyone to “Deeply understand our ethical stance.”

For about a quarter of the respondents, this extended to the students.

**Developing students as change leaders**

About 25 leaders specifically mentioned that they would harness the energy of their students in this process and actively work on developing the leaders of tomorrow. They made statements such as “Teach my students about equity, world issues and ways forward so that they can also begin to implement change” and “For me, with students – foster lifelong learning” and “More meaningful time with students.” Another leader was really purposeful in stating “Getting kids to think, know and do to take charge of creating the world in which they want to live.” Others mentioned student voice and the empowerment of young people through listening to their opinions and learning from them: “Engage with inspiring young leaders, listening to them and seeing the world and future through their eyes.” And [in the pursuit of enhancing society’s view of the value of education] “Encourage students to become teachers/educators: Listening to young people.”

Some mentioned the need for “Further programmes in the school that encourage connections” And a “Curriculum that inspires young people to learn about the world” and “A whole school approach.” Other leaders went still
wider and spoke of “Genuine links to the community” and of the need to “Get the community on the train.” The spoke of the importance of “Conversations with parents” and the need to “Take time to know the community.”

The next question in the response sheet was “How might your leadership then be different?”

The leadership

There were four strong themes of data around the principles of leadership practice for achieving moral purpose. They included the importance of praxis – informed, committed practice; being proactive with determination and courage; being more collaborative with shared leadership; and being a role model for the change they wished to see in the world.

Informed, committed practice.

Many of the leaders spoke about ensuring that their leadership was informed and reflective through action learning and actively seeking feedback throughout the process. Their responses supported the concept of praxis – informed, committed practice, and to “Focus on learning”. They wanted “People challenging my thinking” and to “Listen more” and “asking more questions so people can come to their answers” [written at the end of the coaching leadership day]. There was also mention of the “Use of research and data” and to “Be more involved in research”.

Proactive with courage

“I need to dare to dream” (Participant 61 WA). Claiming the power of utopian idealism or developing the vision through possibilising (Webber & Robertson, 1998) was important to being proactive. Being more proactive also meant being “Closer to moral purpose” and to be able to “Articulate vision”. One leader described it in this way: “remain true to professional standards and moral integrity (see 13 quote);

There were a large number of responses that indicated leaders were aware that to achieve their moral purpose will mean finding the courage “To stand up for change” and being stronger and more certain. One said there needed to be a “shift from doing to leading”. One stated “It will probably take me out of my comfort zone...into uncharted territory” (Participant 38SA) and another, that they had to “recognise [the] right time for change, not settling for comfortable outcomes”. There was also one mention of being “Innovative.”

Another aspect of being proactive with courage was the leader’s own efficacy -and also being able to “liaise and share with Senior Leadership Team to understand the nature of what I need to lead and why.” Another said they needed to “Be more targeted, direct, forthright so people will be left in no doubt as to what I stand for (Participant 21NT) and another followed this example realizing that they “Need to develop skills of being diplomatically confrontational to staff who are not performing well to allow students to make the best of their education (Participant 29SA). There was also mention of
awareness raising and advocacy, which highlighted the importance of the leader being a statesperson (Robertson, in the process of change.

**Collaborative shared leadership,**

An overwhelming majority of these leaders said that collaborative, shared leadership was the leadership practice needed to achieve moral purpose. They needed to be working with and consulting others, which required them to be “Non-judgmental, open and inclusive, leading by participating” (participant, 12). One described this as being “More relational.” Another realized they needed to stop “Pressuring myself to ‘know’ all the answers” and another described this as “More balanced between self-assurance and openness to others” (Participant 21). Other responses included the following: engage school community, engage community stakeholders; utilise knowledge of others; engage others in thinking and goalsetting; collaborative, collegial. Participant 7 summed it up by stating that “Change needs to be owned by all for it to be successful … Leadership built on creating, maintaining and fostering a notion of ‘togetherness’ = owned change”. All of them leaders who talked about the importance of collaborative, shared leadership were saying “Get support from the beginning of the journey.”

**Role model**

Being a role model or leading by example “In whatever small way to facilitate and work within communities” (Participant 7) was mentioned by at least 10 other leaders. Some stated it was not necessarily how their leadership would be different “but better” and “Not different but on a more grander scale” (participant 66WA), and being more “Authentic, bringing who I am” to leadership practice. One participant saw that she could make a difference by “Be[ing] more ‘out there” as an example of positive female leadership” (Participant 84SA). Being more ‘out there’ denotes greater self-efficacy and this came through in other comments too such as “I’ll be willing to take more risks and cope better with the negatives around me” (Participant 44Brisbane) and one teacher who said s/he would “Not wait for ‘the leader’ – I will inspire and challenge.

Others looked at how they could promote the role models of others. They said they would “Look for the good (actively) and promote it” and “Focus on the ‘energy’ one teacher at a time. Find the little moments.” They would “Model the passion” and remind “Colleagues that this is how I want to be.”

Some leaders spoke of coaching others and building coaching relationships and be a mentor to add value to others. They highlighted the skills of coaching and effective communication as key to this process and the importance of being able to “Learn to listen”. Leaders were feeling they needed to slow down and take the time to listen and talk with their colleagues and community and to take the time to highlight the pockets of brilliance that they saw would take them closer towards their vision, their leadership purpose.
Moving closer to the true purpose of leadership

The Create the Change sheet asked “How will you know you are making progress?” Some leaders took the opportunity here to point out that they realized it was a “Lengthy process – may not even be demonstrable within a specific timeframe” (Participant 7Brisbane) and “It feels almost insurmountable. There’s such a resistance to change.” Another was more pragmatic and felt that “Progress should mean periods of uncertainty.” However the leaders did know where they should look for the changes they were wishing for: In Empowered teachers, Engaged students, Where school was a valued part of the wider community, and many leaders noted that they would know … In their heart.

Empowered teachers

Leaders said they would know from the words and actions of teachers: “Seeing teachers change how they engage with students”, “Teachers less dependent”, “Teachers learning from each other”. Some mentioned the growth in leadership and confidence in their colleagues: “Others growing in ability and confidence”, “leadership growth in colleagues”, and the ability to be “retaining teachers and the engagement of teachers.”

Engaged students

Again, unsurprisingly, these leaders said they would see the results of their labour in the outcomes for students. They mentioned “achievement”, “young people engaged in learning”, “decrease in disengaged students and truancy”; and “students who see worth in how they act”. One wished to see “students acting with compassion”, another “Aboriginal students talking about their learning.” Many mentioned “improved mental health.” One leader said that “There’s a tipping point in most processes – when children start discussing it [environmental resources] in school that would be one sign (participant 85Sydney).

Community School

Fewer leaders indicated that their influence would extend beyond the school gates. The words leaders used to describe the widening influence and “Small measures within the school community” were: capability and enjoyment, words and actions, teachers proud, staff and students seeing they are making a difference; “Aboriginal men/women being involved in school, employed at teacher aides.”

The joy of leadership

Too many leaders commented on the “cultural shift” they would see and feel, not to include it as a theme. Leaders said they would know “in my heart” and “feel JOY” and feel ‘self-satisfaction, energized, engagement and ‘heart’ investment from families” (Participant 22 NT). Another said it would be felt “Through the quality of my connection with others”. Another mentioned “Happiness” and yet others “Dancing insights” and “Smiles on faces”.

Participant 113Darwin said there would be “Schools with joy and laughter and spirit”. Another recognized that the emotions would be challenging and that there would be “Inner peace and as well as dissonance” (Participant 73WA).

This emotional engagement with leadership and learning was a key finding in the Boundary Breaking Leadership Development research in relation to the level of efficacy and agency shown by leaders in the change process.

These research findings can be summarized as follows:

This relatively small survey of leaders raises as many questions as answers. Do educational leaders see their leadership as ‘creating the change they want to see in the world, or as ‘school leadership’? I’m not yet convinced by the findings of this small study that educational leaders’ notion of their sphere of influence extends much further than the school gate to that of “Community Leadership” or “Global leadership.” Are any teachers and other educational leaders close to being described as the “Social intrapreneurs” that are valued in corporations as “Someone who is capable of making a positive impact to their business and for the world” (SustainAbility, 2008). Criticism of education ideologies are often aimed at “social engineering” but surely this is the purpose of schools as organizations in society? Schools as social services linking with other services for the good of the community, nation and world, is the public service. But how many leaders are daring to “Dream” and are pursuing their moral purpose with integrity and passion? More research is
needed in this area.

There are implications for educational leadership, that have arisen from these leaders’ thoughts about education and leadership, if the sphere of influence and responsibility for making a positive difference to students’ lives is going to move beyond the school gates to impact on the wider ecology of students’ lives.

**implications for educational leadership;**

Promote teaching to students and community as a wonderful profession, which is making a positive difference to the world;

Be true to your moral purpose and articulate your vision.;

Seek out and listen to the voices of students and parents;

Engage students as co-creators in the learning process;

Regard schools as social centres and build bridges to the community and the global world through an authentic education curriculum, which will involve the wider community;

Embrace technology for the flexibility and possibility it affords in bridging and co-creating new knowledge across the global community;

Start with your own sphere of influence, and ripple out in your influence to the school, and wider community;

Build bridges to other places of learning within the community, particularly neighbouring schools;

Build capacity throughout the community by networking with like-minded people wanting to do achieve similar outcomes;

Develop tomorrow's leaders in your classrooms – the change agents who will pursue sustainability, and be political in their purpose.

Show you really care - Be the change.

*In conclusion,* educational leadership has the power to be a major positive influence on children, families and communities in the world. We need to step up into that influence, consciously, every day, in our life’s work. This will involve taking a step back into what I will call “slow leadership” (I know! - one more adjective to describe leadership!) and taking time to think about one’s contribution and moral purpose, and the purpose of education. Taking time to observe, reflect, question, think, coach and build capacity, one student at a time, one adult at a time, in the quest for the changes we wish to see in the world, can help us tap into the creativity and energy we will need on this journey.
This is how the world changes.

And this is why we need to step forward for what we care about.

Little by little, step by step we can resolve the frightening issues of this time and restore hope to the future.

After all, it’s just our turn to help the world.

(Wheatley, 2008)

References


The Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday July 28 2010


