



# LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATION AND SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

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## Background

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- International Teacher 2000 Project (1995- )
- Study of Successful HSC Teaching (1997-1998)
- Secondary Head of Department Study (1999-2000)
- Quality Teaching Awards (2001 - )
- AESOP (2001 - ) [NSW DET, UNE, UWS]
- Commonwealth Review of Teaching and Teacher Education (2002-2003)



## AESOP

- Processes and practices producing outstanding educational outcomes Years 7-10
  - Faculties (80%)
  - Cross-school programs (20%)
- Adelaide Goals that schools should:
  - “develop fully the talents of all students”
  - attain “high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum”
  - be “socially just”
- Semi-representative sample across NSW
  - Approx 50 sites in 35 schools

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## Defining Success

- It is important to define what we mean by successful teaching in any context.
  - Success could be achievement and/ or improvement in any of the following:
    - External examinations
    - Standardised tests
    - Post-compulsory retention
    - Post-school employment
    - Tertiary entrance
    - Internally assessed academic performance
    - School attendance; School suspensions
    - Pupil behaviour and social cohesion
    - Student-teacher relationships; School-home relationships
    - Pupil health
    - Achievement of certain targeted groups
    - Community involvement
    - Involvement by certain targeted community groups
    - Enrolment demand
    - Other

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## Innovation in Schooling

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- Routes to school improvement and success:
  - Do the standard, accepted things effectively as possible
  - Seek new solutions to existing challenges; anticipate new challenges and canvass their possible solution
- Cumming and Owen - accomplished educators:
  1. Ordinary teachers doing extraordinary things in creative ways
  2. Managed to sustain their level of innovativeness over an extended period
  3. Make innovative teaching look easy

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## The Review of Teaching and Teacher Education

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- Key factors in bringing about school improvement:
  - outstanding leadership, from formally designated staff, notably the school principal, and from the teaching staff and students
  - a clear vision and sense of purpose together with the capability to manage and orchestrate institutional change
  - a commitment by the whole school community, including parents, to this vision and to sustain it in all facets of school life

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## Review (cont'd)

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- highly competent teachers dedicated to achieving excellent learning outcomes for all students and to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and professional learning
- strong system and employer-led strategic planning, resourcing and support

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

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1. Openness to Change and Opportunity
  - Outward rather than inward looking
  - Opportunities rather than threats
  - Benefits in mandated change
  - Seek out, utilise resources to assist with change
2. Positive Attitude
  - Leaders have positive attitudes which are contagious
  - Act to motivate others through example
  - Positive thinking keeps school moving, improving
  - Negativity can be self-handicapping

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 3. Bias to Experimentation, Risk Taking

- Prepared to experiment, even when things appear to be going well
- Support others proposing initiatives
- Prepared to risk time, money, possible failure
- Empower others: "Let's give it a go"

### 4. 'Pirating', Bending Rules, Procedures

- Use discretion, push boundaries, constraints
- Often ground breakers, ahead of the game
- Gained credibility with system officials, "blind eye"
- Move resources around creatively
- "It is easier to gain forgiveness than permission"

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 5. Pockets of like-minded staff

- Pragmatic realists - can't move all staff simultaneously
- Concentrate on talented, committed (faculties, teams, individuals ) and provide them with encouragement, time, resources, PD opportunities
- "contagion" effects, but some danger of resentment, obstruction, "playing favourites", leaving some staff "behind"

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 6. Develop Productive External Links

- Seek out, foster mutually beneficial external alliances inside/outside the system
- Entrepreneurial
- Utilise community/external support and resources

### 7. Moral Leadership

- Exhibit the characteristics expected of others
  - Honesty, commitment, reliability, hard work, trustworthiness, professionalism - “good example”
- “Social justice” agenda
  - Putting students, education first

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 8. All Teachers are Leaders

- Foster, acknowledge leadership of others
- Identify talent, encourage, “coach” and support

### 9. Investment in Teacher Learning

- Place high value on teacher learning
- Prepared to fund PD inside and outside the school
- Find ways to release staff, bring others to school
- Model teacher learning

### 10. Assist, Feedback, Listen to Staff

- Good communicators, listeners, available
- Prompt feedback of “good” and “bad” news
- “Roll sleeves up” when necessary

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 11. Recognition of Student, Staff Achievement

- Take every opportunity to provide recognition of achievement, “talk up school”
- Find ways for all students to be successful
- Recognition seen as authentic, warranted, well received
- Creates a climate, expectation of success

### 12. Leadership Takes Time

- Long term agenda, vision (6-7 years?)
- Turn school around
- *de facto* selective status?

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 13. Leaders Build on What is There

- Identify, nurture seeds for change, improvement
- Use what has been achieved, don't “start from scratch”
- Release latent “organizational energy”

### 14. Leaders Find Common Purpose

- Identify and utilise a central focus
  - e.g., ICT, assessment, literacy, pedagogy, student welfare
- Resources diverted to priority area
- Often, a “champion” or team
- Serves to bring school, staff together

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 15. Centrality of Student Welfare

- Student welfare policies, procedures central
- Every teacher's responsibility
- "Getting students into learning", not "warm fuzzies"
- Support by leaders essential
- Students understand and support student welfare as something done *for*, not *to* them
- Improvement in behaviour, discipline over time

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

### 16. Consistency, Yet Flexibility in Policy

- Simple, standard things done well
- "Zero tolerance"?
- Clear guidelines, good communication
- Consistent application of policy, procedures
- Everyone knows where he/she "stands"
- Not rigidity - flexibility, compassion where needed

### 17. Treat Staff Professionally

- Provide professional, pleasant facilities
- Treat staff, others professionally
- Expect high standard of professionalism in return
- Model professionalism

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

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### 18. Maintain Clean, Pleasant Environment

- High priority on school cleanliness
- Deal promptly with graffiti, mess
- Gardens, seating, shade, offices
- School identification, pride, reputation

### 19. Intellectual Capacity

- The “X-factor”
- High degree of intellectual capacity, imagination
- Good judges of individuals, astute
- Balance “big picture” with finer detail
- Deal with many issues concurrently
- Know when to consult, be decisive, courageous

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## How Does Leadership Contribute to Outstanding Educational Outcomes?

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### 20. Other Personal Qualities

- High level interpersonal skills
- Generally liked, respected, trusted
- Knows, use names, shows personal interest
- Demonstrates empathy, compassion
- Available at short notice when needed
- Epitomises the “servant leader”, yet unmistakably in control
- Work for school rather than themselves.

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## Conclusion

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- The reader might be excused for thinking that the above series of qualities are idealistic or prescriptive. There *is* a danger with such lists in that the context producing them is not sufficiently recognised and they can be regarded as ‘quick fixes’ or recipes for success easily transferred to other contexts. The fact that some of the leaders and their teams had spent years reaching the present level of achievement refutes that view.
- Further, the attributes, actions or qualities need to be considered as both product (output) and process (input) variables, in that they contribute to further change and improvement. In many of the outstanding sites, it was clear that further improvement was taking place in the context of an ‘upward cycle’ of success.

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## Conclusion (cont'd)

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- Despite the present lack of full analysis of data, it can be confirmed that these qualities and approaches were highly evident and prevalent in the outstanding sites visited as part of the AESOP project. Together, under the influence of school leaders, they have been seen to produce positive and productive school environments.
- To some degree, the degree of influence of the principal was somewhat surprising, given that the project aim was to identify and research faculties and teams producing outstanding educational outcomes in Years 7-10, rather than effective schools as a whole or effective principals. This finding could call into question the current concentration on the individual teacher as the major within school factor in student accomplishment.

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