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## Leaders and their Learning

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### LEADERS AND THEIR LEARNING

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The text, *Leaders and Their Learning*, is an outcome of the National Project on Leadership and Management Training for Principals.

The challenges facing principals are clarified as restructuring, changes in organisation and funding, curriculum, assessment of students and acquisition and appraisal of staff. (v). A concern expressed is, Are educational leaders prepared for these changes? (v)

The foci suggested in facing these changes are that the work of principals must address teaching and learning processes for students' success (3). This incorporates areas of justice, social class, culture, gender and special needs (3), an understanding of national and international trends, and increasing partnership formalisation (4).

To assist principals, the relationship between leadership and management is clarified. The former encompasses vision, clarification of goal achievement, consultative measures of decision making and creating an atmosphere wherein learning and empowerment occur (4), while management ensures practices and organisation reflect planning, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness (4). The areas for consideration for professional development by principals are identified as financial development, entrepreneurship and restructuring.

Within the National Project, principals indicated five leadership styles as important - organisational, educational, cultural, political and reflective (8); these styles demand a combination of understandings and skills (8). Educational leadership demands knowledge of educational change, courses, learning processes, curriculum, assessment, policy and national global issues, and instructional technology. Skills needed are interpretation, articulation, reflection, evaluation and technological competence (8-9). Organisational leadership requires knowledge of organisational change, structures, ethics, networking, reform, empowerment, and morale with some of the skills required being self reflection, co-operation, liaison, power sharing, morale boosting, policy in action, and sharing of

expertise (12). Cultural leadership entails knowledge of a school's ethos and culture which requires analysis, co-ordination, synthesising, diagnosis, planning and resolution skills (16). Political leadership entails knowledge of local and societal trends, future directions, policy making, administrative priority and negotiation processes with the ability to engage, mobilise, support, nurture and communicate as some important skills (17). Reflective leadership requires knowledge of one's own characteristics and theories of leadership thus allowing for analysis and choice skills to be practised (18). Reflective leadership is seen to influence choice of professional development activities wherein co-operative planning, support, reflection, feedback and networking are established (22). It involves flexible modes of practice which incorporate knowledge of theory and research.

It was the concern for quality professional development which initiated the establishment of the National Project on Leadership and Management Training For Principals. The text suggests possible courses available for leadership development and gives samples of recent work in the area. It is a worthwhile text for planning initiatives as an individual principal or for working with others in regional leadership ventures. It will be important for principals to share and publicise progress and worthwhile experiences, even to acknowledge difficulties experienced as they develop professionally within the guidelines suggested in *Leadership and Learning*. A further text might provide case studies of principals' experiences.

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