Leaders and their Learning

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BOOK REVIEWS

LEADERS AND THEIR LEARNING

**compiled by B Evans (1993) for
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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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