

# International Studies in Educational Administration

Journal of the Commonwealth  
Council for Educational  
Administration & Management



**CCEAM**

Volume 44 • Number 3 • 2016

**International Studies in Educational Administration** by the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM). Details of the CCEAM, its headquarters in Australia and its affiliated national societies throughout the Commonwealth are given at the end of this issue.

Enquiries about subscriptions and submissions of papers should be addressed to Jenny Lewis FCCEAM, CEO of CCEAM at 86 Ellison Rd Springwood, New South Wales, AUSTRALIA; phone: +61 2 47 517974; fax: +61 2 47 517974; email: admin@cceam.org; website: www.cceam.org.

### **Commonwealth**

Subscribers in Commonwealth countries receive a discount, and pay the Commonwealth rates as stated below. Payment should be made to the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM).

### **The rest of the world**

Subscribers in the rest of the world should send their orders and payment to the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM).

### **Account details for all payments are as follows**

*Account name:* Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management

*Bank:* ANZ Branch: Springwood, 166–168 Macquarie Road, Springwood NSW 2777, Australia

*Bank/State/Branch BSB:* 012-836

*Account number:* 279728989

*Swift code:* ANZBAU3M

### **Subscription rates for 2016**

Institutions, Commonwealth	£150
Institutions, rest of world	£170
Individuals, Commonwealth	£30
Individuals, rest of world	£35

© CCEAM, 2016.

**International Studies in Educational Administration (ISEA)**

An official publication of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM)

**EDITORS**

**Associate Professor David Gurr**  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
The University of Melbourne  
3010 Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

**Associate Professor Lawrie Drysdale**  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
The University of Melbourne  
3010 Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

**Professor Christopher Bezzina**  
University of Malta, Msida  
MSDV 2080, MALTA

**Jeremy Kedian**  
Leadership Innovations NZ LTD, Papamoa Beach, 3e118,  
NEW ZEALAND

**Professor Paul Miller**  
Brunel University London,  
Uxbridge UB8 1AS, UNITED KINGDOM

**CCEAM OFFICIALS**

**President:** Ken Brien, EdD Associate Professor, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton NB, CANADA

**CEO:** Jenny Lewis FCCEAM  
86 Ellison Road, Springwood, NSW 2777, AUSTRALIA

**EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**

**Dr A.O. Ayeni**, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, NIGERIA

**Professor Ray K. Auala**, University of Namibia, PO Box 13301, 340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Windhoek, Pioneerspark, NAMIBIA

**Professor Christopher Bezzina**, University of Malta, Msida, MSDV 2080, MALTA

**Professor Mark Brundrett**, Liverpool John Moores University, Barkhill Road, Aigburth, Liverpool, L17 6BD, UK

**Professor Emeritus Brian Caldwell**, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, 3052, AUSTRALIA

**Professor Emeritus Christopher Day**, The University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, UK

**Professor Gang Ding**, East China Normal University, Shanghai 200062, CHINA

**Professor Fenwick English**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599, USA

**Professor Philip Hallinger**, College of Public Health Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, THAILAND

**Professor Alma Harris**, Director of the Institute for Educational Leadership, University of Malaya, MALAYSIA

**Dr A.A.M. Houtveen**, Utrecht University, PO Box 80140, 3508 TC Utrecht, NETHERLANDS

**Professor Lejf Moos**, Danish University of Education, Copenhagen NV, DENMARK

**Professor Petros Pashiardis**, Open University of Cyprus, PO Box 24801, Lefkosia 1304, CYPRUS

**Professor Vivienne Roberts**, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, PO Box 64, Bridgetown, BARBADOS

**Professor Sun Miantao**, Research Institute of Educational Economics and Administration, Shenyang Normal University, Shenyang, CHINA

**Professor Paula Short**, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of Houston, Texas, 77204, USA

**Dr Clive Smith**, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg 2092, SOUTH AFRICA

**Professor Duncan Waite**, Texas State University – San Marcos, Texas, 78666, USA

**Professor Philip van der Westhuizen**, Potchefstroom Campus, North West University, 2520, SOUTH AFRICA

ISSN 1324-1702

International Studies in Educational Administration (ISEA) aims to enhance the effectiveness of educational leadership, management and administration to support intellectual, personal and social learning in schools, colleges and universities and related educational, social and economic development in a range of national contexts. It publishes research- and scholarship-based papers within the broad field of educational leadership, management, and administration including its connections with educational/ social policy, and professional practice. It focuses on the Commonwealth and beyond. It is strongly international in that, while it may publish empirical research or scholarship undertaken in specific national or regional contexts, papers consider issues and themes of interest that transcend single national settings. Papers offer new facts or ideas to academics, policy-makers and practitioners in education in varied national contexts ranging from advanced economies to the least economically developed countries. The journal aims to provide a balance between papers that present theoretical, applied or comparative research, and between papers from different methodological contexts, different scales of analysis, and different access to research resources. Editorial Correspondence and Books for Review should be sent to the Editors. Business Correspondence should be sent to the President or the CEO.

# Contents

Editorial Note <b>KATINA POLLOCK</b>	<b>1</b>
Embracing Work Passion: Perspectives of Filipino Principals and School Heads <b>JEROME BUENVIAJE</b>	<b>5</b>
Principals' Changing Work in a Time of Hong Kong Education Reform: Challenges and Opportunities <b>ANNIE YAN-NI CHENG AND ELSON SZETO</b>	<b>21</b>
Dare to Make a Difference: Successful Principals Who Explore the Potential of their Role <b>LAWRIE DRYSDALE, DAVID GURR AND HELEN GOODE</b>	<b>37</b>
Principals' Work in Ontario, Canada: Changing Demographics, Advancements in Information Communication Technology and Health and Wellbeing <b>KATINA POLLOCK</b>	<b>55</b>
School Leadership Practices of Headteachers in Kathmandu <b>SHANKAR BIR SINGH AND DEREK J. ALLISON</b>	<b>75</b>
Leading with Data: An Increasingly Important Feature of School Leadership <b>JINGPING SUN, BOB JOHNSON AND ROBERT PRZYBYLSKI</b>	<b>93</b>
The Changing Nature of School Principals' Work: Lessons and Future Directions for School Leadership Research <b>MOOSUNG LEE</b>	<b>129</b>

# Dare to Make a Difference: Successful Principals Who Explore the Potential of their Role

**Lawrie Drysdale, David Gurr and Helen Goode**

**Abstract:** *This article explores how successful school principals ‘dare to make a difference’ and enhance the lives and performance of members of their school communities by exploring beyond the boundaries and potential of their role. The article outlines a model called the Total Role Concept that attempts to balance the leadership and management roles through defining work roles as including core, expected, augmented and potential elements. Through re-analysis of three extensive case studies of the work of successful Australian principals involved in the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), we suggest that successful leaders leave the relative safety of their concrete and tangible management roles and focus on the more abstract and intangible leadership aspects of their role. The article shows how principals can be innovative and creative by exploring and enacting the outer boundaries and potential of their role..*

**Key Words:** Leadership, Principal, Management, Role Theory

## Introduction

We know that the work of principals is both demanding and rewarding. A longitudinal Australian survey (Riley 2014) has shown that principals are experiencing high levels of emotional demand and labour, high levels of offensive behaviour at work, and high levels of stress and burnout, with stress related mostly to the quantity of work and lack of time to focus on teaching and learning. This study also found that principals are mostly positive about their work and report high levels of job satisfaction. Some (Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman 2015) argue that principals’ work is intensifying, although there is evidence that the nature of the work has been demanding for sometime (e.g. Gronn 1999; Gurr 1997, 2008). It is probably truer to say that the nature of principals’ work is changing and that this is causing a complication in terms of the role of principals. Pollock et al. (2015) provide evidence as to the full extent of the nature of principals’ work, something that extends views focused on particular aspects such as leadership (Gurr 2015; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi 2010), trust (Tschannen-Mora & Gareis 2015) and the interactive nature of administrative work (Spillane 2015), and they provide a picture of principals’ work that captures its true complexity.

One way to explore the nature of principals' work is through consideration of how principals conceive of their role. While there is a lack of agreement concerning the meaning of the term 'role' in role theory, it is often defined as a social position where individuals are expected to behave in a particular manner according to a particular situation (e.g. Biddle 1986; Mead 1934; Merton 1957; Parsons 1951).

In this article, we merge ideas from psychology (the cognitive dissonance theory – Festinger 1957; Hollon & Chesser 1976), organisational theory focused on roles (self-imposed limits from Bennis, Parikh & Lessem, 1997; the doughnut principle from Handy 1994), and marketing (the total product concept from Levitt 1960, 1986) to arrive at a model of role theory applicable to educational leadership and management that we term the Total Role Concept.

## Leadership and Management

The debate about the difference between leadership and management has preoccupied theorists and writers on organisations for many years. Some have argued that leadership and management are two sides of the same coin, others have proposed that the two are separate but complementary concepts, and yet another school of thought has reasoned that leadership is merely an aspect of management. These different conceptualisations of leadership and management have a long history and are illustrated in the literature review that follows. Whatever the difference is, it seems that there is often a need to find a balance between management and leadership (Bush 2003; Deal & Peterson 1994) because too often the balance seems to be weighted towards management at the expense of leadership, or leadership at the expense of management (Bennis 1989, 2009; Kotter 1990). Kotter (1990) proposes that leadership and management were separate but complementary concepts. He defines leadership as setting direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring, whereas management is planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Bass (1990: 383) argues that the concepts overlap, but they are not the same.

Leaders manage and managers lead, but the two activities are not synonymous. Leaders facilitate interpersonal interaction and positive working relations; they promote structuring of the task and the work to be accomplished. They plan, organise, and evaluate the work that is done...Managers plan, investigate coordinate, evaluate, supervise, staff, negotiate, and represent...All these management functions can potentially provide leadership; all the leadership activities can contribute to managing. Nevertheless, some managers do not lead, and some leaders do not manage...

Bennis et al. (1997) argue that there is a profound difference between management and leadership, with both being equally important: managers administer while leaders innovate. They suggest that leaders are interested in direction, vision, goals, objectives, effectiveness and purpose, while managers are interested in day-to-day and short-term efficiency.

From an education perspective, there have been several researchers who have influenced thinking about leadership and management. Cuban (1988) provides for a clear distinction between the two concepts by arguing that leadership is focused on change while management is about maintaining order. He also emphasises the importance of both. Bush (2003, 2007) argues that whilst leadership and management overlap, essentially leadership is about values or purpose, while management relates to implementation or technical issues.

Leithwood (1994:14) argues that there is little value in trying to distinguish between management and leadership through looking at overt behaviours as 'most of the overt behaviours of transformational leaders look quite managerial.' Leithwood's observation is in relation to

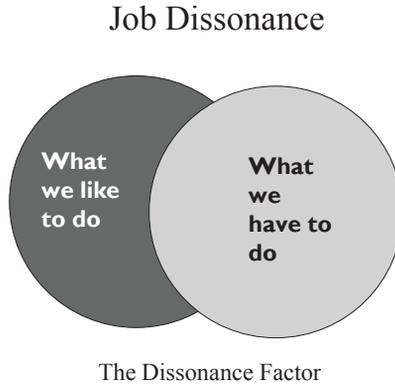
transformational leadership and its difference to transactional leadership, which he equates to management. He suggests that the value-added dimension of transformational leadership is to be found not in overt behaviours, but in the 'school leaders infusing day-to-day routines with meaning and purpose for themselves and their colleagues' (Leithwood, 1994:14). However, Leithwood is not arguing that leadership and management are different phenomena, but rather that there is a continuum between transformational leadership and transactional leadership, between leadership and management.

A way to link leadership and management conceptually can be found in Sergiovanni's (1990) concept of value-added leadership. For Sergiovanni, school leaders can focus on value or value-added dimensions. Concentrating on value dimensions results in a school that is competent, with good management being one value dimension that produces competence. However, by concentrating on value-added dimensions, a school has the potential to be excellent; leadership is viewed as one of the value-added dimensions capable of producing excellence. In Sergiovanni's model, management is subsumed within leadership: 'Leadership combines management know-how with values and ethics' (Sergiovanni 1990: 28).

Despite the different points of view, there is a sense that leadership requires people to do more than is expected, such as to head in a new direction, expand the zone of influence, challenge the status quo, implement a new innovation, or create a new social order. Whether it is Collins (2001) going from good to great, Kouzes and Posner (2007) challenging the process, Bennis (1997) breaking through self imposed limits, Handy (1994) going beyond the boundaries, Peters (1994) in pursuit of 'wow!', Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) exploring adaptive challenges, or our own work with outstanding principals (Gurr & Drysdale 2003, 2007; Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford 2005, 2006, 2007), there is a common theme: leadership entails extending the boundaries of set role to make a difference to an organisation.

## Conceptual Model

To a large extent, failure or success in stretching oneself to achieve or take on new challenges is linked to the concept of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). Festinger developed the theory of cognitive dissonance in which a sense of discomfort is caused by holding conflicting ideas simultaneously. Cognitive dissonance is a psychological term describing the uncomfortable tension that may result from having two conflicting thoughts at the same time, from engaging in behaviour that conflicts with one's beliefs, or from experiencing apparently conflicting phenomena. Dissonance theory has been used extensively to investigate and interpret a wide variety of phenomena in the work place (Hollon & Chesser 1976) and has been applied to role theory. Figure 1 shows how job dissonance can exist within an individual's work role. Role conflict and dissonance can occur where there is a significant gap between what a person would like to do and what they have to do – the bigger the gap the greater the dissonance. For example, a school principal who might want to motivate teachers to be more creative in their approach to teaching and learning, yet feels constrained by the need for conformity in practice in order to secure high test scores, would most likely experience job dissonance.

**Figure 1:** The Dissonance Factor

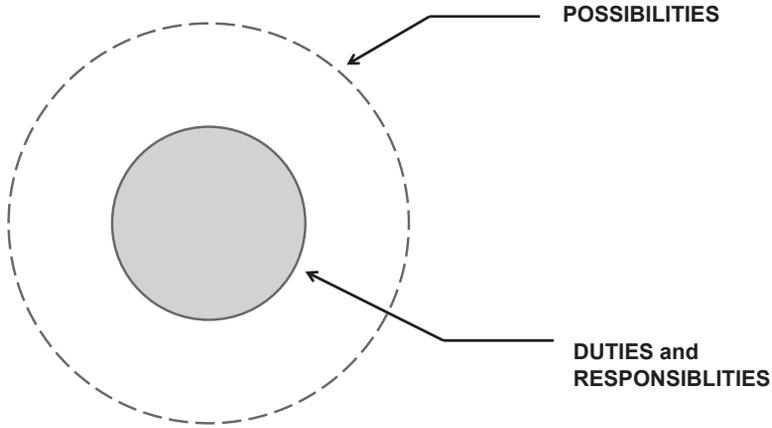
Four decades ago Halpin (1969) outlined the dilemmas and potential conflicts within the principal's role:

...far too many principals allow their responsibilities to become obscured by trivia, with the result that they abdicate their leadership role and allow themselves to degenerate into mere functionaries. Routine and perfunctory activities have a specious attractiveness because they often allay anxieties that are inherent in the principal's leadership role. But we must avoid the mistake of confusing sheer routine activity with the productivity and creativity required for effective leadership. (p. 308)

It can be argued that the same dilemmas remain (e.g. Duignan 2006). In order to survive, many school principals spend too much time in the office and immersing themselves in the day-to-day running of the school. Attempts to focus on impact and future direction are often swamped by the need to respond to immediate problems and administrative demands such as day-to-day operational issues, development of school policies and procedures, understanding budgets, and responding to system demands. But, in order to *dare to make a difference*, principals need to look beyond the mundane and routine, and set their sights on focusing on leadership and avoiding surrendering to management; otherwise, the likelihood is that schools will become 'over-managed' and 'under-led'.

Handy (1994) outlines what he calls the Doughnut Principle. He describes an inside-out doughnut where the heart of the doughnut is the core, containing all the things that need to be done on the job or in the role (the principal's duties). He suggests that to make a difference, principals need to go beyond the boundaries of duty and explore what is possible so that they can live up to their full potential. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.

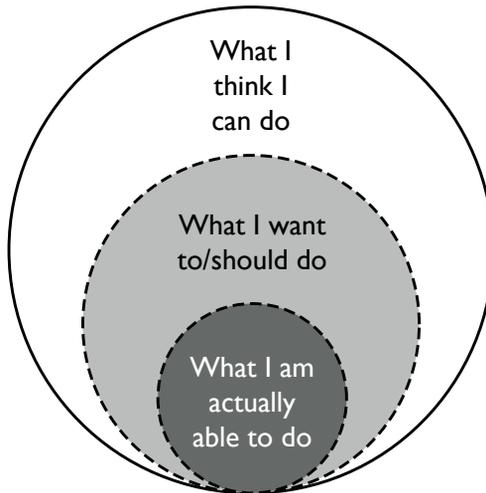
**Figure 2:** The Doughnut Principle



Source: Handy (1994: 65).

Similar to the doughnut, Bennis et al. (1997) explains the necessity for leaders to move outside the limits that they set for themselves. He identifies three levels of concentric circles: the inner circle, which represents ‘What I am able to do’; the middle circle, which represents ‘What I want or should do’; and the outer circle, which represents ‘What I think I can do’. Bennis (1989, 2009) argues that leaders are so consumed by detail that they fail to motivate or inspire employees to rally behind a vision. The focus on routine work suppresses creativity and innovation.

**Figure 3:** Self-Imposed Limits



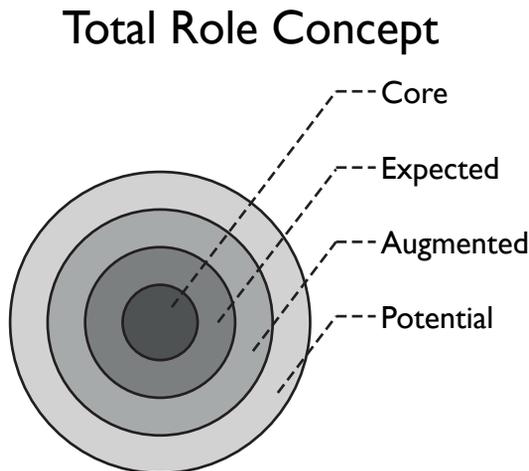
Source: Bennis, Parikh & Lessem (1997: 30).

## Total Role Concept

We build on previous work by proposing a conceptual framework called the Total Role Concept, which outlines the various leadership and management roles used by leaders. The framework is an adaptation of the Total Product Concept developed by Levitt (1960, 1986) wherein he outlines various levels of a product for marketing purposes. He argues that a product has a number of dimensions; there are tangible and intangible aspects of a product. The tangible aspects might be the physical qualities or characteristics of a product. The intangible aspects of the product might include quality, service components, branding and other values associated with the tangible aspects of the product. A product is '...a bundle of physical, service, and symbolic attributes designed to satisfy a customer's wants and needs' (Boone & Kurtz 2005: 318).

Just as a product is made up of a number of dimensions, likewise a principal's role has a number of dimensions. The Total Role Concept framework is presented as concentric circles (see Figure 4), in which each circle representing a particular level or aspect of the principal's leadership and management role. The inner circle is the core role; the next circle is the expected role; the third, larger circle represents the augmented role; and the final, outer circle is the potential role.

**Figure 4:** Total Role Concept 1



Source: Adapted from Levitt (1986).

**The core.** The centre of the diagram is the core. The core represents the formal aspects of the leader's role, which are usually written down. It comprises the duties and responsibilities that are prescribed and understood to be fundamental to the role. Functions associated with the core include planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, controlling and problem solving (Kotter 1990). These functions are seen to satisfy the organisational needs for efficiency and accountability.

**Expected.** These represent the set of expectations that various groups have of the principal's role. They may not be formalised or stated in a duty statement, but they are assumed and are implicit in the role (for example, attendance at social and sporting functions). These expectations will vary from one school community to another.

**Augmented.** These are the aspects of the role that principals believe encompass their responsibility but are neither implicit nor explicit. They are the things principals believe are important and would like to do (for example, challenging the concept of literacy within the school community, or challenging the school to really become a learning community).

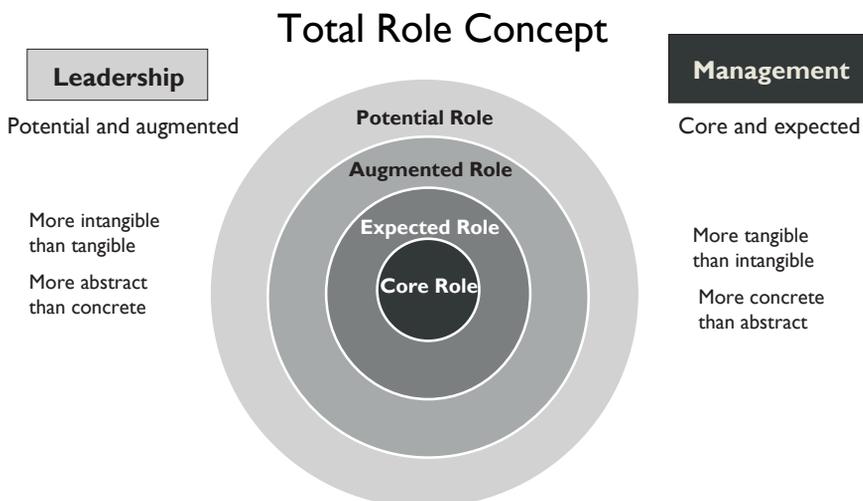
**Potential.** The outer circle of the role comprises initiatives, as well as the creative, innovative and entrepreneurial aspects of the role. These are the aspects, together with the augmented role, that can make the difference.

**Leadership and management.** We conceive that each circle represents a particular level or aspect of the principal's leadership and management role. The two inner circles or levels – the core and the expected – represent management. The two outer circles – augmented and potential – represent leadership.

What distinguishes the inner from the outer levels of the role? The core and expected role functions necessitate rational decision-making, tough-minded analytical skills, stabilising and structural processes, attention to the human potential, and political manoeuvring. These exemplify the skills that most management courses focus on and are the more tangible elements of the role; i.e. those that are more concrete than abstract, more measurable and definable. The leadership role – pushing the boundaries – requires inspiration, courage, experimentation, imagination, innovation, passion and vision. This aspect of the role is more intangible and spiritual. It is more ambiguous, abstract, symbolic and cultural. The skills are conceptual rather than technical. The inner circle is more to do with what has to be done, while the outer is about possibility and what could be done.

Figure 5 shows that the management roles (core and expected) are more concrete and tangible, and tend to be roles created by the organisation. As a result, principals are often more comfortable and secure within these roles. The leadership roles (augmented and potential) are less defined and more abstract and intangible. Principals may feel less secure in these roles because they tend to be outside their comfort zones, and are more often created by the individual. The shading from dark to light emphasises the move from management to leadership behaviours.

**Figure 5:** Total Role Concept 2



## Methodology

In this article, we draw on the data from a number of case studies developed as part of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP)<sup>1</sup> that has operated in eight countries since 2002, and now includes more than 20 countries. The ISSPP started in 2001 and was established to address the need to better understand how principals contribute to school success. This research has produced more than 100 multiple-perspective cases studies of the leadership of successful schools and many publications, including four project books, seven special journal issues and more than 100 chapters or journal articles. In his foreword to the fourth project book (Day & Gurr 2014), Caldwell (2014) described the project as ‘the most comprehensive and coherent international comparative study of the principalship ever undertaken’ (p. xxi).

Principals and schools have been predominantly selected using one or more of the following methods:

- evidence of student achievement beyond expectations on state or national tests, where this evidence exists
- principals’ exemplary reputations in the community and/or school system (this could be gained through consultation with system personnel or other principals, school inspection reports, and so forth)
- other indicators of success that are context-specific, such as the overall reputation of the school, awards for exemplary programmes, etc.

The multiple-perspective approach to conducting the case studies means that data include individual interviews with the principal, senior staff and school board members, group interviews with teachers, parents and students, and a collection of appropriate documents. For the schools that were revisited so that the sustainability of their success could be explored, observation of the work of the principal and the functioning of the school was also included. Methodologically, the ISSPP relies on a relatively open and grounded approach to constructing interview protocols. While no protocol is atheoretical, the ISSPP does not rely on a theoretical foundation for the questions, with interview questions covering areas such as: the school ethos and context; the principal’s vision, leadership priorities, and plans for the school; challenges for the school; defining school success; measuring success; accounting for school success; principals’ role in school success and how they know they are successful; leadership strategies; handling complex issues; principal relationships with members of the school community; non-professional sources of support for the principal; and principal succession.

This article explores findings from research conducted with three successful principals from Victoria, Australia. These three principals are people that we have worked with for more than a decade each, and who that have allowed us to extensively research their work as principals through initial multiple perspective case studies, subsequently returning five years later to conduct observational multiple perspective case studies. We could have drawn on other principals as well, but for the purposes of this article, these three principals are those that we have studied the most over a long period of sustained success. For each principal we present small statements describing their school, significant features of school success, and their contribution to this success. We also indicate some of the published findings in regard to these principals, and encourage readers to explore these to get a full understanding of the principals’ work. The findings below are brief snapshots only.

1 [www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp](http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp).

## Findings

### ***Bella Irlight***

From 1986 to 2009, Bella Irlight was principal of Port Phillip Specialist School, which is a school for students with multiple disabilities. The school is in an inner-city location in Melbourne, Australia. During her time as principal, Bella achieved extraordinary things for the school and its students. By the time she retired in 2009, she had transformed the school from a small school in a converted home with less than 20 students into a magnificent facility with an innovative curriculum, a worldwide reputation and 150 students. She was recognised with numerous awards, including the Order of Australia and CEO of the Year for Not for Profit Organisations.

Our research showed that Bella demonstrated heroic traits (Di Natale 2005; Drysdale 2007; Drysdale, Bennett, Murakami, Johansson & Gurr 2014; Drysdale, Goode & Gurr 2009). While we did not label them as heroic at the time, her achievements were certainly heroic. Bella challenged prejudice towards students with disabilities in the community, and her passion to create a world-class special school meant that she often fought the Education Department bureaucracy to gain autonomy, make decisions and obtain resources beyond what would normally be available. She was able to obtain the very best for her students to maximise their potential. Of her many achievements, the most notable was the transformation of the school site with state-of-the-art buildings, equipment, resources and facilities.

Bella geared the school's mission and purpose towards meeting student needs by establishing Australia's first Fully-Serviced School for students with disabilities, introducing a fully integrated services model to support students and families. In terms of curriculum, Bella was an early adopter of technology to support student learning, drove the development of an innovative performing arts curriculum that encompassed all subject areas, established an independent living house on the school property to help students in transition from school to independent living, and restructured and initiated a new reporting system that included pictorial profiles of the students' progress. Most importantly, she was successful in changing the school culture from one of 'caring' and 'therapy' to one of 'education and learning'.

Bella clearly showed characteristics of heroic leadership: her vision and high expectations to create a world-class special school, her resilience and determination to overcome all obstacles, her direct and assertive leadership style, and her uncompromising drive to achieve the very best for the students based on a personal philosophy that all children could be educated. She was persuasive and influential, as demonstrated by her ability to attract considerable resources to underpin and build the staff, school and community capacities to improve outcomes for specialist students (Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford 2006). A high sense of self-efficacy supported her to take risks and be innovative.

Yet we also identified in Bella characteristics of the post-heroic leader (Drysdale et al. 2014). She demonstrated a range of personal and interpersonal skills that helped her build relationships within the school and the wider community. In her restructuring of the school's leadership, she introduced a more distributive model than was previously the case. She surrounded herself with – as she described them – 'smart people' that challenged her thinking and served to establish a pool of talent as a strategy for succession planning. Bella also changed over time, and staff described her as becoming more collaborative and a better listener. She was sensitive to people's needs and was viewed as being extremely compassionate. She encouraged ownership amongst staff and

community. The success of the performing-arts-based curriculum was shared by all. She was able to develop strong and enduring relationships that helped forge a strong and supportive school community. We described her as a 'visionary doer' (Drysdale et al. 2009).

### **Jan Shrimpton**

From 1999 to 2009, Jan was principal of Morang South Primary School, a government primary school of about 500 students in a growth corridor in outer Melbourne. Jan took over the school in a state of despair with poor student outcomes, low student and teacher morale, and a parent body that was disenchanted with the school. She was able to dramatically turn around school performance within her first four years as principal. She significantly improved student learning outcomes, and she developed a values-based school community that meant students, parents and staff all wanted to be at the school. Staff and parent survey results became more positive during these four years, and indicated much greater support for the school. Jan developed a personal philosophy and set of values that were based on her belief in making a difference to students in challenging contexts. She was able to maintain the school's good performance until her retirement in 2009 (Drysdale et al. 2014; Drysdale, Goode & Gurr 2009, 2011; Ylimaki, Gurr & Drysdale 2011).

Jan was courageous. For example, despite pressure to continually improve literacy and numeracy results, she was not willing to do this if it meant losing some of the other positive aspects of the school such as the emphasis on the whole child, developing a strong values-based school community, and supporting staff. In Drysdale et al. (2014), we described her as having post-heroic leadership characteristics, some of which we note here. She was a positive role model, inspirational, empathetic, and displayed leadership that was consultative and conciliatory. Outstanding personal characteristics included integrity, high energy, sensitivity, enthusiasm and persistence. Her personal philosophy was centred on the whole child, not just academic results. Most importantly, she was good at building relationships among staff and with the community. Her strategic interventions included introducing a Quality Education Program at the classroom level, establishing teams across the school, recruiting talented staff, building strong relationships with the community and outside agencies, opening up classrooms so that teachers supported each other, and introducing a 'values-based' as opposed to a 'rules-based' approach to education, which resulted in a physically and emotionally safe school environment.

During her ten years as principal, Jan was able to successfully respond to numerous external and internal challenges (e.g. changing staff profile, decline in enrolments due to new schools opening up, changing government policies). She maintained the school's success through focused leadership, an inclusive leadership style, and her exemplary personal characteristics, values, and competencies that focused on developing and supporting people. However, she was not afraid to address issues head-on, while remaining cognisant of the welfare of all involved. While she was described as charismatic, her leadership style was open and invitational rather than confrontational. Her approach to decision making was described as 'collaborative', 'democratic' and 'consultative'. Key decisions were discussed in forums where issues could be openly raised by staff. Jan and her assistant principal, Julie, worked as a team, Jan being the communicator who was able to articulate the vision and build relationships, and Julie the curriculum leader who had expertise in teaching and learning. The success of the school relied on both Jan and Julie, and increasingly on teachers involved in leadership teams. Jan developed a structure that promoted professional learning teams at each level, and she empowered the teams to set their own goals and try new approaches. Teachers

were encouraged to be leaders at every level and both individuals and teams were expected to be accountable for their performance. Interestingly, while Jan empowered staff she was also a 'hands-on' leader. She frequently visited classrooms and provided support where possible.

### **Rick Tudor**

Rick Tudor was the headmaster of Trinity Grammar School in Melbourne, Australia from 1999 to 2013. This school, founded in 1902, is a high-fee, independent Anglican boys' school of more than 1,300 students, operating programmes from pre-school (age 3) to year 12 (age 18) in a location about seven kilometers from the central business district of Melbourne. Publications on Rick's leadership include Doherty (2008) and Doherty, Gurr and Drysdale (2014).

Rick was a heroic leader whose leadership was seen as integral to the continued success of the school. In terms of personal qualities, participants in our study described him as selfless, humble, affirming, calm, personable, approachable, disciplined, tolerant and, most of all, 'a gentleman'. His philosophy and values were strongly evident and based on social justice issues, particularly indigenous inequality and equity. He had a clear vision of the school and himself. His vision was to build on his predecessors' work and establish a learning community with an emphasis on Anglicanism and boys' education. His leadership style was depicted as inclusive, collaborative, affirming, measured and, when necessary, decisive. He was seen to 'actively manage' and to be highly visible in the school.

During Rick's tenure as leader, the profile and reputation of the school grew, as evidenced by long waiting lists for key school entry points (years 5 and 7). There was evidence of the strong development of social conscience among the students, opportunities to extend student learning globally, and high parent and community support. Of particular note was the extent to which the leadership capacity of both staff and students had been developed; under Rick's watch, the bar was raised. The Executive Team was expanded and opportunities for staff to 'step up' temporarily when other staff members were on leave were encouraged, resulting in a significant number of staff moving on to more senior positions in other schools. A three-year appraisal cycle was introduced, with every member of staff meeting with the headmaster in their third year. There was evidence of Rick mentoring and coaching leaders and aspiring leaders, and a system of peer coaching between staff and staff, and between students from different year levels, was implemented. The capacity of staff as learners was developed through a strong commitment to professional learning, and encouragement for staff to both attend and present at conferences. Developing the leadership of the boys was also very evident, both in the Junior School and, more particularly, in the Senior School where students had significant roles in leading other students and as ambassadors for the school. Rick's philosophy was described as 'not everyone is a leader, but everyone can learn to lead'. There were other significant changes, not least of which was a 'building for the future' in which a small 450 metre square library was replaced with a Centre for Contemporary Learning (a 3,500 square metre multi-level building which offered a range of unique learning spaces to better cater to the varied learning styles of students). The school changed quite dramatically in its use of ICT, not only in the provision of hardware and software, but in the expectation that ICT would be part of each boy's learning experiences. To this end, there was an emphasis on professional learning for teachers, a high level of technical support, and in-house support in rewriting the curriculum to ensure learning experiences were contemporary. Expanded global opportunities for students included Kokoda track expeditions in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, language experiences in Germany, France and Italy, European history tours, international cricket tours, reciprocal student exchange programmes, and social justice programmes in the Philippines and twice a year at a

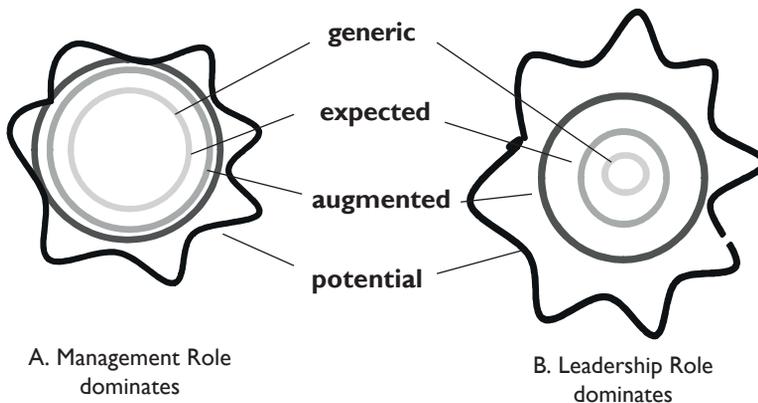
remote Indigenous school in Northern Territory in the far north of Australia. Further expansion of global opportunities was planned, with all Year 9 boys participating in an Asia experience programme at Yu Xin School in Beijing, China. An abundance of leadership opportunities and training programmes were provided for boys at all levels with a distinct emphasis on 'doing the right thing' rather than just being recognised as a leader. The principal's leadership style changed since the first research was completed. Through expanding the Executive Team, more responsibility was delegated, and Rick was described as being less 'hands on and more of a guiding light'. He remained very collaborative and affirming and 'positive beyond your wildest dreams'. Nothing was too hard, nothing impossible, and Rick's drive and enthusiasm were infectious.

## Discussion

Why is it difficult to move to a leadership role? From what we know about schools, the management role can be overwhelming. The task is all-consuming. It appears that many principals envelop the role with self-imposed limits to form a comfort zone that prevents them from moving to the outer circles. It is often safer to stay within the core and expected roles, mainly because they are more concrete, tangible and measurable. The abstract and intangible nature of the leadership role means that it is more difficult to grasp and requires developed conceptual skills. To use colloquial terms, to move or think outside our comfort zone is scarier. We have a tendency to stay in the pack, stay in the mainstream, not make waves, not attract attention, not challenge or push, because this is less risky. Finally, we tend to think short term rather than long term. In an environment which encourages the 'quick-fix', we often lose sight of the bigger picture.

The three principals in this paper demonstrated that they were able to move past the core and expected aspects of their role and tackle the augmented and potential aspects. As noted in the literature, management and leadership are both important. Figure 6 shows how leaders attempt to balance their leadership and management roles. Diagram A indicates pictorially how the management role can dominate; Diagram B shows how the leadership role can dominate. Bella Irlight is an example where the leadership role dominated and contributed to making a difference. Jan Shrimpton and Rick Tudor were more balanced in their roles, but still showed how they could make a difference by focusing on leadership.

**Figure 6:** Balance between Management and Leadership Role



We argue that the following characteristics are critical to principals making a difference to schools: vision, personal philosophy, courage, 'first things first', and environmental scan.

**Vision.** While 'vision' has become an overused word in the management literature, it remains central to making a difference. For the three principals in this study, a belief in what was possible provided them with energy, purpose and direction. Lee (1997) suggests that if one is uncertain about one's vision, one should ask the following questions: 'If you did not have to work for a living what would you do? If you couldn't fail, what would you do with your life?' (p. 184). These questions challenge our imagination and conscience. The three principals in this paper all had a strong vision that was shared by their constituency. This gave them the compass that allowed them to be innovative and creative in their roles. Bella strove for continuous change to achieve a vision of creating a world class special school; Jan and Rick achieved schools of which they were proud. Both had good balance between student achievement outcomes and broader outcomes, such as whole child development and construction of a values-based community in Jan's school, and whole child development and student leadership in Rick's school.

**Personal philosophy.** All principals had a well thought out and internalised personal philosophy, based on meaningful and significant values, which acted as a guide as well as an anchor for exercising their leadership. They understood and clarified their values, and decided what was right and what was worthwhile, which helped to empower them to be proactive rather than reactive. Covey (1989) believes that value-driven people have the internal power to make choices in response to complex issues. In the case of the three principals, this provided them with confidence to explore the potential of their role.

**Courage.** To break the security of the inner circles requires courage and determination to want to make a difference. To move outside of comfort zones and let go of the safety and protection of the inner circle in the direction of a vision requires a sustained effort and the willingness to take calculated, deliberate and faith-filled risks. All principals demonstrated this capacity. Bella was constantly searching for new ideas, but new ideas founded on research and sound practice such as the development of an arts-based curriculum. Jan pushed hard to establish a values-based educational environment, even trying innovative ideas such as school pets to calm students and develop a sense of caring. Rick was able to change established structures such as the House system, but did so respectfully and with care for all. He was also able to leave a legacy of buildings (e.g. the Centre for Contemporary Learning building that has become the symbolic centre of the school) and curriculum changes (e.g. academic and whole-child-focused curricula).

**'First things first'.** Covey (1989) suggests that a leader needs to focus on what is important instead of what is urgent. Often because leaders are prisoners to urgent items of management, the important leadership areas are neglected. The three principals were able to put 'first things first' (Covey 1989), and this required self-management and will power. They determined the real priorities of the role, which helped them organise and execute around priorities to assist them move in the right direction. Bella Irlicht put the needs of her students at the centre, which provided the motivation and will power to make a difference to their lives by exploring the potential of her role. In a different way, Jan Shrimpton also put first things first; for her it was putting students first, but by focusing on building relationship and staff capacity even more first. Rick focused on change that moved the school forward but which was also respectful of the past.

**Environmental scan.** Scanning the environment for new opportunities and becoming opportunity-focused rather than problem-minded exemplified Bella Irlicht. She focused on what was happening on the horizon rather than being captured by immediate and pressing events. She achieved

strategic gains by taking a term-long perspective based on recognising and seizing opportunities. Jan Shrimpton was more concerned with the current situation, but she understood the environment in which she operated and took full advantage of opportunities to build relationships, enhance the reputation of the school in the community, and create an organisation that focused more on values than rules. Rick was somewhat in between the orientations of Bella and Jan; he understood the broader educational environment, knew what he wanted to help the school achieve success, and provided balance between rapid change and respect for the past and traditions of a 100-year-old private school.

Figure 6 helps us understand how leadership can be developed. Aspiring leaders and those in middle-level leadership roles often – rightly – focus on the generic and expected aspects of their role, as after all, this is how they will be judged in any performance review. However, as they settle into their role, if all they do is remain focused on these aspects they will be managers and not leaders. To become leaders, they need to be encouraged by the principal and other senior leaders to explore the augmented and potential dimensions. In our middle-level research programme spanning more than a decade (Gurr & Drysdale 2013), we have found that while some people in these roles are expected to be leaders that influence teaching and learning, and they may be developed and supported to do so, too often they have few expectations or opportunities to exercise leadership. We concluded that lack of understanding and organisational support by senior leaders, lack of professional preparation and leadership development by individual middle-level leaders, and underdeveloped professional knowledge and capability contribute to a missed opportunity to make a difference in schools. We recommended that middle-level leadership can be enhanced by focusing on opportunities for quality professional learning and leadership development in building professional knowledge and practice in teaching, curriculum, assessment and student learning, and also in helping with developing strategies for building school capacity. Equally importantly, the Total Role Concept can be used to encourage those in leadership roles to think broadly and creatively, take risks, and work more in the augmented and potential dimensions of their role.

## Summary

The article presents a model that distinguishes the leadership and management roles of school principals. Case studies from the ISSPP have provided evidence to support the model and show how successful school principals can make a major contribution to the school community by exploring the potential of their leadership role that provides the opportunity to be innovative and creative. The findings add to the body of knowledge that has accumulated through the ISSPP. It provides new insights using the existing research. It shows that successful school principals are more likely to take risks and explore the outer limits of their role in order to make a difference. It is hoped that the conceptual framework will help challenge school principals and aspiring leaders to define and clarify their leadership and management roles and show the courage, vision and foresight to step outside their comfort zones to explore the limits of their roles.

## References

- Bass, B.M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership: theory, research, and managerial applications*, 3rd edition. New York: Free Press.
- Bennis, W., Parikh, J. & Lessem, R. (1997). *Beyond leadership: Balancing economics, ethics and ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Bennis, W. (2009). *On becoming a leader*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub.

- Bennis, W. (1989). *Why leaders can't lead: The unconscious conspiracy continues*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Biddle, B.J. (1986). Recent developments in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 67–92.
- Boone, L. E. & Kurtz, D.L. (2005). *Contemporary Marketing*. South Western, OH: Thomson
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (3rd edition). London: Sage Publications.
- Bush, T. (2007). Educational leadership and management: Theory, policy, and practice. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3), 391–406.
- Caldwell, B.J. (2014). Foreword. In C. Day & D. Gurr, (Eds.), *Leading schools successfully: Stories from the field* (pp. xxi–xxii). London: Routledge.
- Collins, J.C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap... and others don't*. London: Random House Business.
- Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people*. Melbourne: The Business Library.
- Cuban, L. (1988), *The Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Day C. & Gurr, D. (Eds.), *Leading schools successfully: Stories from the field*. London: Routledge.
- Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (1994). *The leadership paradox: Balancing logic and artistry in schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Education Series.
- Di Natale, E. (2005). What are the qualities, skills and leadership styles adopted by a successful school principal in a successful Victorian Specialist School? Unpublished Master of Education thesis, University of Melbourne.
- Doherty, J. (2008). Successful leadership in an independent school in Victoria. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Melbourne.
- Doherty, J., Gurr, D., & Drysdale L. (2014). The formation and practice of a successful principal: Rick Tudor, Headmaster of Trinity Grammar School, Melbourne, Australia. In C. Day & D. Gurr (Eds.), *Leading schools successfully: Stories from the field* (pp. 85–97). London: Routledge.
- Drysdale, L. (2007) Making a difference. In Duignan, P. & Gurr, D. (2008) *Leading Australia's Schools* (pp. 132–138). Sydney: ACEL and DEST, .
- Drysdale, L., Bennett, J., Murakami, E., Johansson, O., & Gurr, D. (2014). Heroic leadership in Australia, Sweden, and the United States. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(7), 785–797.
- Drysdale, L., Goode, H. & Gurr, D. (2009). An Australian model of successful school leadership: Moving from success to sustainability. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(6), 697–708.
- Drysdale, L., Goode, H. & Gurr, D. (2011) Sustaining School and Leadership Success in Two Australian Schools, in Moos, L., Johansson, O., & Day, C. (Eds) (2011) *How School Principals Sustain Success Over Time: International Perspectives* (pp. 25–38). Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.
- Duignan, P. (2006). *Educational leadership: Key challenges and ethical tensions*. Melbourne: Cambridge Press.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of educational leaders*. London: Cassell.
- Gurr, D. (1997, September). Principal leadership, what does it do, what does it look like? Australian Principals Centre Research Forum, published on the APC website (no longer available).
- Gurr, D. (2008). Principal leadership: What does it do, what does it look like, and how might it evolve? Monograph, 42. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Leaders.
- Gurr, D. (1915). A model of successful school leadership from he international successful school principalship project. *Societies*, 5(1), 136–150.

- Gurr, D. & Drysdale, L. (2003). Successful school leadership: Victorian case studies. *International Journal of Learning*, 10, 945–957.
- Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2007). Models of successful school leadership: Victorian case studies. In K. Leithwood & C. Day (Eds.), *Successful school leadership in times of change* (pp. 39–58). Toronto: Springer.
- Gurr, D. & Drysdale, L. (2013). Middle-level school leaders: Potential, constraints and implications for leadership preparation. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(1), 55–71.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. & Mulford, B. (2005). Successful principal leadership: Australian case studies. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 539–551.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. & Mulford, B. (2006). Models of successful principal leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 26(4), 371–395.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. & Mulford, B. (2007). Instructional leadership in three Australian Schools. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 35(3), 20–29.
- Halpin, A.W. (1969). How leaders behave. In F.D. Cerverand & T.J. Sergiovanni (Eds.), *Organisations and human behaviour: Focus on schools* (pp. 287–315). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Handy, C (1994). *The empty raincoat: Making sense of the future*. Sydney: Random House Australia.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A. & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Hollon, C.J. & Chesser, R.J. (1976). The relationship of personal influence dissonance to job retention, satisfaction and involvement. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 19(2), 308–314.
- Kotter, J. (1990). *A force for change: How leadership differs from management*. New York: The Free Press.
- Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lee, B. (1997). *The power of principle*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(4), 498–518.
- Leithwood, K., Patten, S. & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 671–706.
- Levitt, T. (1960). The marketing myopia. *Harvard Business Review*, 38(4), 45–56.
- Levitt, T. (1986). *The marketing imagination*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Merton, R.K. (1957). *Social theory and social structure*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. London: Routledge and K Paul.
- Peters, T. (1994). *The pursuit of wow!: Every person's guide to topsy-turvy times*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Pollock, K., Wang, F., & Hauseman, D. C. (2015). Complexity and volume: An inquiry into factors that drive principals' work. *Societies*, 5, 537–565.
- Riley, P. (2014). Australian principal occupational health, safety and wellbeing survey. Fitzroy, Victoria: Australian Catholic University.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. (1990). *Value-added leadership*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Spillane, J.P. (2015). Leadership and learning: Conceptualizing relations between school administrative practice and instructional practice. *Societies*, 5, 277–294.
- Tschannen-Mora, M. & Gareis, C.R. (2015). Principals, trust, and cultivating vibrant schools. *Societies*, 5, 256–276.

Ylimaki, R., Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2011) Sustaining Improvement in Challenging, High Poverty Schools. In Moos, L., Johansson, O., & Day, C. (Eds.), *How School Principals Sustain Success Over Time: International Perspectives* (pp. 151–166). Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

### **Author Details**

Dr Lawrie Drysdale  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
The University of Melbourne  
Email: [drysdale@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:drysdale@unimelb.edu.au)

Dr David Gurr  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
The University of Melbourne  
Email: [d.gurr@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:d.gurr@unimelb.edu.au)

Ms Helen Goode  
The University of Melbourne  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education  
The University of Melbourne  
Email: [hngoode@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:hngoode@unimelb.edu.au)