

International Summer School on School Leadership

2007

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Developing the Leadership Culture in Irish Schools

30 July / 3 August 2007

Edinburgh, Scotland



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EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE

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Developing the leadership culture



- Leadership – what is it?
- Evolution of a focus on leadership in schools
- Centralised decision-making and school leadership
- Formal and informal forms of leadership
- School leadership developments in Ireland in recent years



**“Great leaders are not born, they are made.
Which explains why so many have a screw loose.”**

Leadership – What is it ?



- Almost as many definitions of leadership as leaders
- Leadership of what?
 - organisation (small, medium, large)
 - project
 - team / group / class
- Leadership for:
 - improvement
 - maintenance
- Three key elements – direction, guidance, inspiration
- Ever changing mix – situation and circumstances dictate
- Leadership is about results not attributes

Leadership – What is it ?



***Leaders come in many forms, with many styles and diverse qualities.
There are quiet leaders and leaders one can hear in the next county.
Some find strength in eloquence, some in judgement, some in courage.***

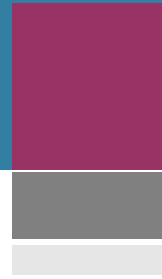
(John W Gardner)

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**“Either lead, follow, or get out of the way.
But never try to do all three at the same time!”**

Leadership – What is it ?



- Leadership is not about implementing a list of rules and procedures
- Leadership is about direction and influence
- Stability is the goal of management – Improvement is the goal of leadership
- Leadership can be full of paradoxes
- Big one for school leaders

'How can I manage to do what needs to be done to-day (this month) and also do what is right for my school five years from now'

Leadership – What is it ?

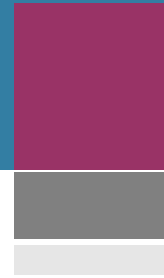


The answer is: welcome to the job as a leader

Anyone can manage for the short term – just keep squeezing the lemon. And anyone can manage for the long term – just keep dreaming. You were made a leader because someone believed you could squeeze and dream at the same time. They saw in you a person with enough insight, experience, and rigour to balance the conflicting demands of short and long term results. Performing balancing acts everyday *is* leadership.

Jack Welch (ex CEO, General Electric)

Evolution on the focus on leadership in Ireland



- an emerging term in Irish education
- pre 1971 - administration
- 80s/ early 90s - management
- mid 90s on - leadership
- From school teacher to school leader
- Focus changes with leadership responsibilities (from growing oneself to growing others)

Evolution on the focus on leadership in Ireland



Leadership framework now being used in Ireland

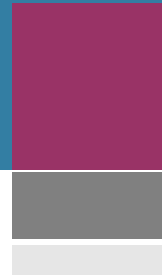
- Moral purpose
- Courage to act
- Situational awareness
- Modelling
- Sustainability

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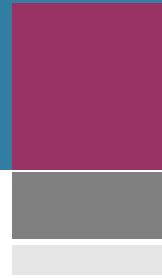
"As your new head, I'm going to do whatever it takes to turn this school around. For starters, I would like everyone to rotate their desks 180 degrees."

Centralised decision making and school leadership



- Irish education system very centralised. No significant intermediate/local administrative structures except for 250 of the 4,000 schools.
- Irish school leaders mediate and implement national policies at local level
- Principal is pivotal as leader
- Seen as 'Primus inter pares' (first among equals)
- Middle management / leadership structures
- Volunteers as Boards of Management

Formal and informal forms of leadership



- Formal - seen by many as confined in the main to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Less formal - some middle management personnel
- Informal - some teachers in professional role
 - some teachers in extra curricular and school related activities
- Professional 'identity' of the teacher in Irish education has been shifting from 'autonomy' to professional 'collegiality'

Leadership development

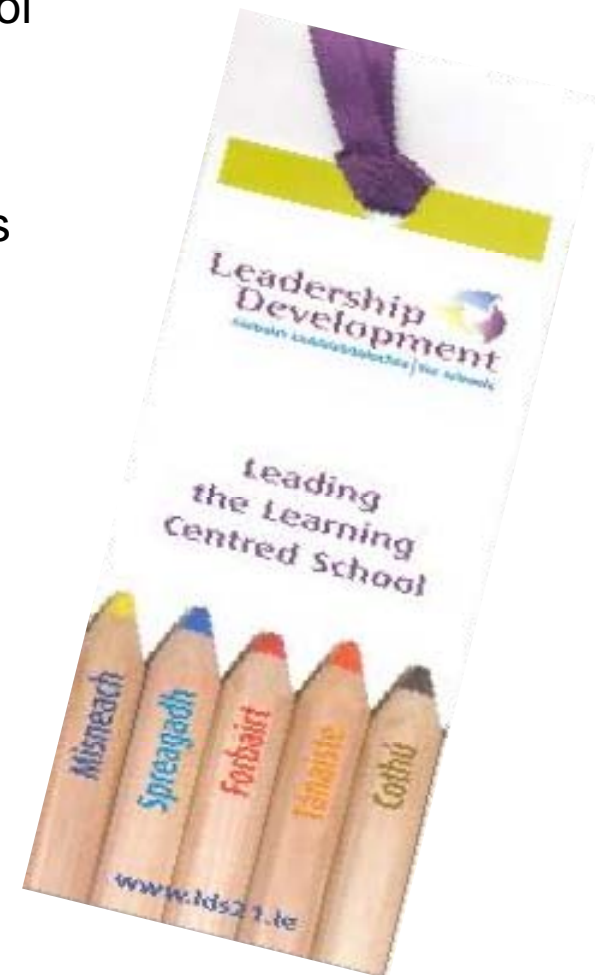


- Interest has increased dramatically in last 10 years
- Two new professional associations supporting school leaders (IPPN/ NAPD)
- LDS Service (Leadership Development for Schools) established wide range of programmes and services now being provided

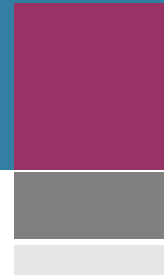
For New Leaders – **Misneach** and **Tanaiste**

For Established Leaders – **Forbairt** and **Spreagadh**

For Leaders of Special Schools – **Cothú**



Key factors in their success has been:



- Ability of LDS to listen carefully to practitioners and their representatives so that programmes can reflect reality on the ground.
- Credibility of presenters
- Investment in developing modules, material and presenter capacity that responds to leadership challenges in many contexts
- Harnessing the goodwill and partnership opportunities among several stakeholders

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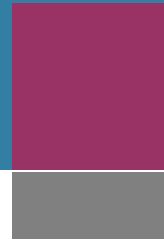
**“You need to learn the law of supply and demand:
it’s your job to supply maximum time and effort
and it’s my job to demand more!”**

Challenges going forward



- Developing a talented pool of future leaders who will apply for senior leadership positions.
- Working with those in middle leadership positions to develop their expertise and capacity to impact on learning
- Further addressing the needs of school leaders in challenging environments and contexts
- Developing a flexible model of accreditation for leadership development programmes
- Leadership development for system leadership, particularly at the level of Boards of Management

Conclusion – some guiding principles for school leaders



- Use every opportunity to evaluate, coach and support teachers
- Make sure that all concerned not only see the vision but live it also
- Exude positive energy and optimism
- Establish trust with candour, transparency and credit
- Probe with curiosity, making sure that questions are answered with action
- Inspire improvement and learning by setting good example
- Celebrate accomplishments and let it be known that your school is on an ongoing journey of change and improvement.



**"When the head isn't around to watch us,
he loads up this screen saver."**



I will end by sharing with you a few thought provoking quotations on leadership:

A leader takes people where they want to go.

A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be. (Rosalynn Carter)

The person who gets the most satisfactory results is not always the person with the brilliant single mind, but rather the person who can best co-ordinate the brains and talents of associates. (Walton Jones)

Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes. (Peter Drucker)