

| RESEARCH AREA & SOURCE | DESCRIPTION & MAIN FINDINGS/ARGUMENTS |
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| <p>School Effectiveness</p> <p><i>Journal of Educational Thought Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 217 - 222</i></p> | <p>Agassi, J. (2005) Book Review of Reynolds, D., Creemers, B., Stringfield, S. Teddlie, C. & Schaffer, G. (2002) <i>World Class schools: International perspectives on school effectiveness</i>. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>The reviewer is pretty scathing about the inadequacies of the book (though his own writing is pretty abstruse). Usefully, however, he gives us three lists of factors contributing to effective schools as listed in the book:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From two previous empirical studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong headmasters • High expectations • Emphasis on basic skills • Safe and orderly climate • Frequent evaluation of pupil progress and achievement 2. From the studies conducted in as part of the research for the book - in English-speaking countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal leadership • Expectations from students • School goals • Inter-staff relations • School image 3. From the studies conducted in as part of the research for the book - in non-English-speaking countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's experiences • Instructional style • Curriculum • Parental influence |
| <p>Leadership / Learning Communities</p> <p><i>The Australian Educational Leader Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 46 - 47</i></p> | <p>Avenell, K. (2007) Common themes on learning communities.</p> <p>Avenell summarizes a study done by DEST (Department of Education, Science and Training - Commonwealth of Australia) and places it in the context of theories of learning communities. The DEST study was an investigation of 20 highly effective schools.</p> <p>Main Findings (of the DEST study):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without exception, each of the highly effective schools in the study performed as a professional learning community. The common characteristics of the learning communities in these 20 schools were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explicit expectations of learning • aligned values, culture and actions • focussed leadership and teaching • networked linkages • Overlaid across each of these characteristics was the pervasive trait of relatedness and relationships which accented shared beliefs and understandings, interaction and participation, interdependence and concern for individuals. • Consistent across the study was the central and pivotal importance of school leadership and particularly the principal in transforming a school into a learning community. |

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| <p>Leadership / Curriculum Development / Curriculum Implementation / Teaching Strategies (General)</p> | <p>Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (2001) This study investigated 975 classrooms in 24 schools in Queensland, Australia. The study mapped backwards from student outcomes to pedagogy and assessment to school organizational capacity and leadership to determine what factors had a positive impact on student learning. The vision for student performance was largely based on the criteria developed by Newmann and Associates in their work on Authentic Achievement. The categories developed by Newmann were extended and refined. Two of these revisions are of particular interest. One was to include descriptions of social learning as well as academic learning. The other was to extend the idea of connection to the real world to a much broader vision of connectedness including to the world beyond school to other subject areas, to students' background knowledge etc.</p> |
| <p><i>Submitted to Education Queensland by the School of Education, University of Queensland</i></p> | <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of teachers rate basic skills of numeracy and literacy as being their primary goal and social skills as being their second most important goal. The study found an overemphasis on the 'basics' to be counterproductive. Without a greater focus on more complex learning goals, these will never be achieved. • General levels of 'productive pedagogy' and hence 'productive performance' as defined by the study were low in schools. • Teachers tended not to see assessment as an integral part of good practice • Teachers tended to harbor a number of misbeliefs including that behavior management must be taken care of prior to considerations of classroom practice and that the achievement of academic and social goals required some kind of 'trade off' • Leadership in schools tended not to focus on learning • There was no strong emphasis in classrooms on intellectual quality or connectedness, though social support for learning in schools was generally rated highly. • Many assessment tasks set by teachers do not require the application of complex skills or higher order thinking. • The study developed a model of school leadership (which they called productive leadership) with 9 dimensions based on analysis of the 24 schools. This model was able to account for 96.2% of the variance between schools. The dimensions were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A focus on pedagogy - from strong to weak 2. A focus on structures and strategies – (to facilitate the smooth running of the school) - from high to low 3. A focus on a culture of care (in particular emotional support for teachers and support for teacher risk-taking) – from high to low. 4. A focus on supporting professional development and learning community – from strong to weak. 5. Nature of change commitment - from focused and thick (where fewer changes are implemented in a more considered way) to widespread and thin. 6. Hot / Cold knowledge as a basis for change; pedagogy - from hot knowledge of pedagogy which is grounded in practice) to cold (disconnected from practice) 7. Hot / Cold knowledge as a basis for change; political – from hot (knowledge of the political scene including the local community and society more broadly) to cold (disconnected from political contexts) 8. Commitment to dispersal of leadership – from strong to weak 9. Relationships amongst school community (teachers, students, parents, administrators and others) – from involved to aloof. • Schools tended to form three clusters when analysed for leadership - low leadership (on all dimensions), incoherent leadership (having a managerial focus, without the corresponding concern for pedagogy and professional development) and coherent leadership (with a strong focus on structures and a focus on pedagogy and commitment to change). • No correlation was found between the construct of productive leadership and student productive performance. The researchers speculate that since the relationship of leadership to learning is indirect, perhaps their measures were not sensitive enough to capture it. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A number of individual dimensions of the model were related to student performance, however. They were as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highly structured leadership was correlated with low recognition of difference and low levels of citizenship as exhibited in student performance. 2. A high culture of care was correlated with higher levels of transformative citizenship. ● The following correlations could be seen between individual dimensions of leadership and productive assessment in classrooms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture of care is related positively with integration of knowledge (connectedness) and an audience beyond the school. 2. Dispersal of leadership is related to a decrease in the integration of students' background knowledge into tasks and less consideration of alternatives built into task design. The researchers find this puzzling, but something which needs to be considered and further investigated. They say it is possible that an increase of dispersal of leadership focused on managerial aspects may lead to increased burdens on teachers which may then negatively impact on assessment practices. |
| <p>Teacher Quality / Recruitment</p> <p><i>Educational Administration Quarterly 41,3 p. 449 - 479</i></p> | <p>Baker, B. & Cooper, B. (2005) Do Principals With Stronger Academic Backgrounds Hire Better Teachers?</p> <p>Using data from Schools and Staffing surveys in the USA the researchers set out to determine whether principals with stronger academic backgrounds (defined as having attended a more selective university as an undergraduate) hired teachers who also had stronger academic backgrounds. The premise, based on other studies was that having more teachers with strong academic backgrounds would positively affect student outcomes.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall a principal who attended the most selective university was 2.3 times as likely to hire teachers who also attended highly selective universities. ● In the highest poverty quartile of schools a principal who attended the most selective university was 3.3 times as likely to hire teachers who also attended highly selective universities. ● Researchers surmise that there are other factors at work in the low poverty schools that attract academically gifted teachers |
| <p>Curriculum Development</p> <p><i>Paper presented at the 2007 ACSA conference</i></p> | <p>Luke, A. (2007) Why social justice and equity still matter.</p> <p>This paper compares the level of equity achieved by education systems that have what the author terms 'cool' or 'hot' curriculum climates, which he defines based on the level of interpretive / inferential work needed to work with the curriculum. Cool curriculum is defined as requiring a high level of interpretive work on the part of teachers and therefore giving teachers more freedom to adapt if to the individual contexts. The major comparison was between Finland and Ontario as examples of cool curriculum climates on the one hand and the USA and UK as examples of hot curriculum climates on the other. Level of achievement equity within the systems was based on PISA results.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High Accountability using carrots and sticks attached to standardized testing can achieve some initial gains but these plateau very quickly ● Overall a 'hot' environment coupled with high accountability via standardized testing leads to a steepening of the regression curve for equity, meaning less equitable achievement distribution. ● 'Cool' climate education systems achieved the best results for equity of achievement ● High Quality / High Equity systems as rated by PISA were associated with: a strong societal ethos for equity; strong Early Childhood education; Diagnostic / formative evaluation of teachers; no high stakes testing; low definition curriculum documents (in Finland the Yr 1 curriculum is only 8 pages); no league tables; high level of professionalism; teacher autonomy and local curriculum development; meaningful pathways to outcomes with parity of esteem. ● The author concludes that if you have a hot curriculum climate and are in the basement it can get you to the 1st floor but it will never get you to the second. |

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| <p>Leadership / Mentoring</p> <p><i>Educational Administration Quarterly 43:1, pp.101 - 137</i></p> | <p>Youngs, P. (2007) How Elementary Principal's Beliefs and Actions Influence New Teacher's Experiences.</p> <p>This was a set of case studies of six elementary school principals looking at how they organized induction for new teachers in their schools and how this was influenced by their beliefs and backgrounds as well as district policy. The influence on the new teachers were also documented. Methodology was qualitative, involving interviews and observations.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New teachers were positively influenced by induction programs that focused on instruction and content pedagogy (ie not just classroom management) ● New teachers were most positively influenced when the responsibility for their induction was shared between the principal and a senior mentor colleague with curricular experience in the area the new teacher was working in ● New teacher were positively influenced by induction programs that provided specific scheduled times for mentoring, observation and substantive discussion of content pedagogy ● Induction programs not focusing on instructional issues seemed to lead to higher possibilities that new teachers would leave the school and / or the profession. ● In designing induction programs principals are strongly influenced by their background and beliefs about leadership, induction and teacher evaluation - in particular whether principals view themselves as instructional leaders or not affects their efficacy in inducting new teachers. ● Integrated professional cultures (where more experienced teachers support and mentor less experienced teachers with the support of the principal) seem to be the most supportive of new teachers. |
| <p>Teacher Quality</p> <p>ERIC Clearinghouse on Urbane Education. Urban Diversity Series.</p> | <p>Goldhaber, D. & Anthony, E. (2003) Teacher Quality and Student Achievement.</p> <p>A meta-analysis of studies on retention. For the purposes of the analysis teacher quality was defined as the ability to produce growth in student achievement and based on this definition found that:</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● teacher quality can have a major impact on student achievement ● there is a wide range of effectiveness among teachers ● the impact of teacher effects can persist long after students have particular teachers ● the effects of teacher quality are more dramatic for low achieving students ● teacher qualifications, higher degrees and licensure do not correlate highly with student achievement (situations where teachers were teaching very advanced courses and had higher degrees in that particular area were an exception) ● beyond the first few years of teaching, teacher experience does not correlate highly with student achievement ● Positive correlations between teachers' general academic proficiency and student achievement were found in an overwhelming majority of studies investigating this variable |
| <p>Teacher Quality</p> <p><i>Sydney Morning Herald May 21, 2007</i></p> | <p>Garnaut, J. (2007) Best teachers get top marks from study.</p> <p>This study conducted by the Australian National university correlated student scores on standardized tests in literacy and numeracy in years 3 and 5 with information about individual teachers.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the top 10 percent of teachers from the state of Queensland in Australia are twice as effective as the bottom 10 percent, achieving in 6 months what the bottom 10 percent take a year to achieve. ● Female teachers are more likely to improve student literacy ● Male teachers are more likely to improve students' mathematical skills ● There was no positive effect for teacher qualifications |

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| <p>Educational Change</p> <p><i>International Journal of Science Education</i> 28, 919 – 944.</p> | <p>Waters-Adams, S. (2006) The Relationship between Understanding of the Nature of Science and Practice: The influence of teachers' beliefs about education, teaching and learning. Case studies of 4 teachers using action research as a vehicle to expose the dialectical relationship between teacher's beliefs about education, understanding of the subject of science and classroom practice.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All four teachers in the study espoused a hypothetico-deductive approach to science teaching, but this was not evident in their practice, which emphasized the transmission of received knowledge ● The author posits the existence of a tacit understanding in addition to the teachers' espoused understanding as he says that situational factors external to the teacher do not account for the disconnect.. ● By the end of the study 3 out of 4 teachers had come to a position where their espoused beliefs were much more closely aligned with their teaching practice. ● The teachers began to have confidence in their teaching only when it accorded with their deeply held beliefs about the purpose of education and so were much more confident at the end of the study (931). ● The change from tacit understandings driving teaching to espoused understandings driving practice came about through teachers appraising their espoused beliefs and exploring the implications in practice (933). ● Teacher's general beliefs remained constant - their understanding of how those beliefs might appear in practice changed. |
| <p>Educational Change</p> <p><i>School Leadership and Management</i> 26, 453 - 471</p> | <p>Cardno, C. (2006) Leading change from within: action research to strengthen curriculum leadership in a primary school. This is a piece of Action Research conducted in a New Zealand primary school by the administration team with external support by an expert. The admin team perceived that the curriculum leadership structure, comprising mainly subject teams was problematic and ineffective, largely due to a lack of role definition. The research began with the admin team clarifying the problem , followed by cycles of meetings where information was collected from the whole staff and was then analyzed by the admin team, who suggested solutions, which were again brought before the entire staff. The admin team reflected on the process at the end of the 12 month project</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The structure and process of action research allowed the admin team to investigate, analyze data and respond in a measured way and helped alleviate the tendency to ' rush in' with a solution. ● The process allowed for collaboration within the admin team and with all sections of the school. The process began with the admin team and extended incrementally to others. ● The action research process was a useful team-building exercise for the admin team ● The external facilitator was decisive to the success of the project. ● The principal cannot directly manage the quality of all teaching and learning. The principal's role is to design structures and systems that ensure the work gets done in ways that are also educative and developmental for everyone involved. ● Putting the systems in place is 'first-order' change. The change that occurs to teaching and learning as a result is 'second-order' change and also needs investigation. |
| <p>Leadership</p> <p><i>School Leadership and Management</i> 26 371-395</p> | <p>Gurr, D. Drysdale, L. & Mulford, B. (2006) Models of successful principal leadership. A summary of two related series of case studies in two Australian states carried out in 14 schools. The case studies were conducted only in schools that had achieved outstanding results on state-wide tests and also positive school reviews. The data was collected using documents illustrating school achievements and interviews with people at all levels of the schools.</p> <p>Main Findings: The Tasmanian case studies identified the following themes: 1. context 2. principal values and beliefs 3. providing individual support and building individual capacity 4. building school capacity 5. towards a shared school vision 5. school outcomes 7. evidence-based monitoring</p> |

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| | <p>The Victorian case studies identified the following themes: 1. principal's contribution to success 2. values and beliefs 3. personal characteristics 4. styles of leadership 5. understanding the context 6. leadership interventions in various areas. The authors combine the findings with previous research findings to create a model of school leadership focused on student outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Leadership Educational Administration Quarterly 42, 620-651</p> | <p>Ylimaki, R. (2006) Toward a new conceptualization of vision in the work of educational leaders: cases of the visionary archetype. Drawing on a series of cases studies on curriculum directors, where data was collected mostly using narrative inquiry interviews, Ylimaki suggests a new conceptualization of 'vision' in the context of educational leadership. The traditional definitions as either a leader's image of the future or specific change goals do not adequately capture the contextual complexity of true vision and can also be inherently undemocratic. Ylimaki tells the story of three of the case study participants using three metaphors - stepping stones over a river, a view from a bridge and a view from the heart. She relates elements from each narrative back to three qualities of the visionary archetype - 1. tells the truth without blame of judgment 2. knows and communicates own creative purposes 3. honors the four ways of seeing - intuition, perception, insight and holistic seeing (vision). The three cases are compared with a fourth curriculum director who demonstrates a more typical kind of vision. The definition arrived at is that vision is " a dynamic interaction among inner human resources (eg. Insight, intuition and perception), an outward perspective and the context of a particular vision.</p> |
| <p>Brain Research <i>The Economist</i> Dec23, 2006 – Jan 5, 2007</p> | <p>Who do you think you are? (p. 3/4) / Captain Kirk's Revenge (p. 4, 5 &7) / Brainbox (p.5) / Dreamweavers (p. 7 – 9), As Others See Us (p. 9,10) I Think, Therefore I am, I Think (p.11,12). A series of articles summarizing brain research up to now. Some salient points that may relate to education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A study by Terrie Moffitt in NZ demonstrated that nature and nurture can interact in predictable ways. An enzyme which regulates neurotransmitters including serotonin and dopamine comes in two versions. One version in combination with abuse during childhood resulted in severely violent adults while either abuse alone or that particular version of the enzyme on its own produced only violent tendencies. ● 'Higher emotions' (guilt, shame, sympathy), which have in common that they depend not just on what a person thinks about others, but on what the person feeling thinks others are thinking about them, are located not in the limbic system (where more primitive emotions such as fear emanate), but for the most part in the cerebral cortex. This suggests that these emotions work closely together with our rational mind. ● Declarative memory involves the hippocampus, whereas procedural memory involves the cerebellum and the basal ganglia. ● There appear to be two types of explicit memory. Episodic memory records our experiences and is stored in the hippocampus. Semantic memory tries to generalize from our experience and is consolidated in the cerebral cortex. ● Memory evolved to serve a purpose, which is to help us learn to react appropriately to stimuli in the environment by drawing on previous experience. The most efficient way to do this is to generalize and disregard individual details. ● The hippocampus replays experiences during REM while we sleep and seems to also do this to a certain extent when we are resting. ● Long-term memory is encoded(at least in part) by changes in the strength of synapses and the recapitulation of experience in the form of neuronal firing patterns appears to be responsible for changing the pattern of synapses. ● Certain sections of our cerebral cortex seem to be able to extract the essential properties of different objects. One are for example responds strongly to faces. Another area seems to handle written words. ● It is impossible that the area of the brain which handles written text is a result of evolutionary processes as writing is too recent an invention. It must be the result of developmental processes. ● Many believe that the evolutionary pressure which drove the enlargement of the human brain was more a need to negotiate the social world than to survive in the physical world. <p>A recent study has suggested that autism may be the result of a failure of what are known as 'mirror neurons', which mirror that actions and thoughts of others.</p> |

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| <p>Professional Development</p> <p><i>British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 543 - 560</i></p> | <p>Poulson, L. & Avramidis, E. (2003) Pathways and possibilities in professional development: Case studies of effective teachers of literacy</p> <p>A set of case studies analyzing the relationship of professional development to effective teaching of literacy in the UK.</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective teaching of literacy evolved through the interweaving of different kinds of experience (eg. personal learning, experimentation, course, opportunities to collaborate, being mentored etc.) rather than through specific courses. ● Five contexts of professional development were identified - personal, classroom, school, local authority and regional / national. Each of the five contexts is important. ● Professional learning was often long-term and non-linear. ● Effective teachers were supported across a range of the five contexts and over time to develop coherent personal philosophies to underpin their literacy teaching. ● Reflection plays a central role in professional learning ● Teachers need opportunities to learn but also need challenges and the 'learning space' to handle the challenges constructively (learning space includes stimulation of creative risk-taking, engagement in innovations, recognition and reward of effort, teacher perception of some degree of control over their work) ● Professional learning is considerably enhanced through collaborative organizational cultures within schools. ● Personal learning and collaborative learning exist in a dialectical relationship. ● Opportunities for longer-term collaboration in curriculum projects beyond the school create communities of knowledge that greatly enhance professional learning. |
| <p>Curriculum Implementation / Professional Learning</p> | <p>Bussis, A., Chittenden, E. & Amarel, M. (1976) Beyond surface curriculum: An interview study of teachers' understandings.</p> <p>This study used in-depth interviews to assess the belief systems of teachers attempting to implement open education programs (defined to a great extent as seeing the child as a resource).</p> <p>Main Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The congruence of teacher beliefs with those underlying the innovation to be implemented was found to be a crucial factor in successful implementation. ● A distinction was made between surface curriculum (the learning tasks in the classroom) and deep curriculum (a teacher's long-term goals for their learners). A far greater level of self-confidence and self-efficacy was found in teachers whose surface curriculum and deep curriculum were aligned. The least self-confident group of teachers were those who were attempting to implement the |

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| | <p>ideas of open education (even if they expressed a genuine feeling that open education was potentially beneficial), but whose underlying deep curriculum gave priority to grade level facts and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers whose surface curriculum was aligned with their deep curriculum showed a significantly greater ability to justify their choices of surface curriculum activities.• Teachers who were less likely to see the child as a resource in the classroom were also less likely to see other adults as a resource in the school.• Of the various sources of support offered to teachers during implementation, advisors (who worked with teachers in their classrooms) were singled out as being helpful twice as often as the next three most frequently mentioned sources of support.• A set of descriptions of the roles advisors played in classroom was developed (A. Service and Administrative Agent B. Extension of teacher E. Stage Director and Demonstrator F. Diagnostician and Problem-Solver G. Provider of Alternatives H. Explainer and Theorist I. Modeling Agent J. Appreciative Critic and Discussant K. Provocative and Reflective Agent L. Leader and Challenger.• Approximately one-third of all perception of support responses at each site fell within two emotional support categories (category C Emotional Stabilizer and Stimulator; and category D: Respector of Individuality). |
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