

# What Leaders Read 2

Key texts from education and beyond

**Summary Report** | Autumn 2003



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National College for School Leadership

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# 1. What is in this Summary?

This document summarises a review of recent literature covering the development of leadership practice in schools. The context for this review is set by addressing these principal questions:

- What kinds of school leadership are needed?
- What does the mainstream literature suggest about leadership?
- How can ideas from the literature be used to develop practice?

This literature review, carried out by a team from the Faculty of Education and the Business School at the University of Manchester, examines the content and recommendations of the following key texts, from both the educational and the non-educational literature. The individual reviews can be downloaded from the NCSL website [www.ncsl.org.uk/whatleadersread](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/whatleadersread)

BASS, B. M (1997) *Transformational Leadership: Industrial, Military and Educational Impact*: Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (208pp)

BRYMAN, A. (1993) *Charisma and Leadership in Organization*. London: Sage Publications. (198pp)

CALDWELL, B. J, and J. M. SPINKS (1992) *Leading the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer (231pp)

CHENG, Y. C. (1996) *School Effectiveness and School-based Management*. Falmer Press: London (210pp)

COLLINS, J. (2001) *Good to Great* London: Random House / Business Books (300pp)

DAY, C., A. HARRIS, M. HADFIELD, H. TOLLEY, and J. BERESFORD (2000) *Leading Schools in Times of Change*. London: Open University Press.

DENTON, J. (1998) *Organisational Learning and Effectiveness*, London: Routledge. (237pp)

DUIGNAN, P. A. and R. J. S. MacPHERSON (Eds.) (1992) *Educative Leadership: A Practical Theory for New Administrators and Managers*. London: Falmer. (192pp)

GRACE, G. (1995) *School Leadership: Beyond Education Management*. London: Falmer. (230pp)

GRONN, P (1999) *The Making of Educational Leaders*. London: Cassell. (210pp)

JOHNSON, D. W. and R. T. JOHNSON (1989) *Leading the Co-operative School*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company. (250pp)

LAMBERT, L. ET AL (1995) *The Constructivist Leader*. New York: Teachers College Press. (216pp)

LEITHWOOD, D. K. and P. HALLINGER (2002) (Eds.) *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers. (2 volumes, 1,246pp)

LEITHWOOD, K., D. JANTZI and R. STEINBACH (1999) *Changing Leadership for Changing Times*. London: Open University Press. (254pp)

MacBEATH, J. (Ed) (1998) *Effective School Leadership Responding To Change*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing. (176pp)

PETERS, T. J. and R. H. WATERMAN, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Run Companies*. London: Harper and Row, 1982. (360pp)

RIEHL, C. J. (2000) "The principal's role in creating inclusive schools for diverse students: a review of normative, empirical, and critical literature on the practice of educational administration". *Review of Educational Research* 70(1), 55-81. (27pp)

RILEY, K. A. and K. SEASHORE LOUIS (Editors) (2000) *Leadership for change and school reform International Perspectives*, London: Routledge Falmer. (223pp)

SCHEIN, E. H. (1992). *Organisational Culture and Leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (418pp)

SENGE, P. M. (1992) 'The Fifth Discipline'. London: Century Business. (424pp)

SERGIOVANNI, T. J. (1992) *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (173pp)

SOUTHWORTH, G. (Editor) (1994) *Readings in Primary School Development*. London: Falmer Press:

SPILLANE, J.P., R. HALVERSON and J. B. DIAMOND (2001) "Investigating school leadership practice." *Educational Researcher* pages 23-28. (6pp)

STARRAT, R. J. (1993) *The Drama of Leadership*. London: Falmer Press. (175pp)

STOLL, L. and D. FINK. *Changing our Schools*. London: Open University Press. (220pp)

WONG, K. and C. W. EVERS (Eds.) (2001) *Leadership for Quality Schooling*. International Perspectives. Routledge: London.

YUKL, G. (2002) *Leadership in Organisations* (5th Edition), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. (508pp)

The purpose of this review is to consider the relevance of these texts to those who take on leadership tasks in schools. In particular, it seeks to provide:

- an introduction to each review that summarises themes and issues and which will be helpful to practitioners seeking to engage with writings about leadership
- a systematic and critical analysis of significant literature that provides useful ideas about leadership and management relevant to schools
- concise summaries of key texts that will be accessible and relevant to practitioners

### 1.1 How are the reviews framed?

The texts that were selected for review include accounts written by or about practitioners, empirical studies and theoretical contributions. All of them are written in English and many are from North America. This emphasis reflects the relative narrowness of the literature that has emanated from the United Kingdom. Each review indicates the status of the text (theoretical, empirical or practitioner account) and also its provenance (educational or non-educational). It then provides a brief summary of the content of the text, focusing specifically on key ideas, themes or arguments, and gives some indication of possible implications for, or applications to, school contexts.

In analysing any literature on leadership practice it is, in our view, essential to pay attention to the importance of context. Leadership takes different forms in different places, not least because of the way it reflects local history, culture and, indeed, legislation. For example, much of the literature on educational leadership focuses on the work of headteachers in a way that implies such people carry out similar roles in schools throughout the world. It is essential to understand, however, that the roles, the status and the authority of headteachers vary considerably from country to country. So, for example, whilst in Portugal they are elected for two-year periods of office by their staff colleagues and often have little authority to bring about changes in policy, in England they have

considerable status and space for discretion, albeit within the constraints of national policies.

In carrying out this review, therefore, we have tried to avoid the danger of assuming that findings and ideas can be combined across cultures. Rather we treat each source individually, seeking to make clear something, at least, of the context from which it emerges. For us, the power of this process is that it enables comparisons and contrasts to be made, which can be used by readers to reflect upon their own thinking and practice.

In summary, then, many sources have been looked at. We have been keen to ensure that influential writings on leadership from mainstream management sources were included. We have also tried to bring together sources from education that explore leadership from as wide a range of perspectives as we could find. However, the limitations of space have meant that not all sources looked at could be included. The decision to focus on around 30 key publications, in about a three-to-one ratio of educational to non-educational sources, imposed certain constraints. Inevitably, this means that some sources are included and that others may have been omitted.

## 2. Using Ideas from the Literature to Move Leadership Practice Forward

### 2.1 What kinds of school leadership are needed?

The issue of school leadership has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. Here in England, where leadership is seen as a key component in the implementation of the national reform agenda, the establishment of the National College for School Leadership has given particular impetus to the search for leadership models and practices that impact on school performance. Among a range of activities, projects and publications designed to promote the study and practice of leadership that have been contributed by NCSL, is the report of a think tank set up to review recent international developments in thinking and practice relating to educational leadership (NCSL, 2002). Drawing on experience from around the world, the report articulates a set of parameters for what it describes as “leadership for transformation”. Insofar as this report benefited from the deliberations of several of the key figures in international research into school leadership, it represents a considered view. This seems to us a useful starting point for anyone wishing to read about contemporary conceptions of the school leader’s role.

The report sets out nine ‘propositions’ (a 10th relates to the College’s role in promoting these) about the leadership qualities needed to transform our schools, as follows:

#### **School leadership must be purposeful, inclusive and values-driven**

This implies:

- a commitment to equity, empowerment and higher standards of learning and achievement as the moral purpose of education
- an impetus for transforming the school as learning community for students and teachers, adequate to the expectations of a knowledge society and economy

#### **School leadership must embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school**

This implies that:

- school leadership must embrace the context of the school in all its complexity as a first step to using proven practices from elsewhere
- the particular mix of skills of school leadership will differ, often dramatically, from context to context

#### **School leadership must promote an active view of learning**

This implies that:

- school leaders regard the design, management and monitoring of settings for active learning as their key task
- school leaders create the conditions and provide the support to enable teachers to improve student learning, encouraging the creation and dissemination of professional knowledge of learning strategies (including e-learning) that work in classrooms and schools

### **School leadership must be instructionally focused**

The focus on instructional leadership is not exclusive of a range of other leadership skills. It implies a general orientation towards teaching and learning rather than an exclusive approach.

Basing school leadership on a concept of instructional leadership implies that:

- school leaders are expert in designing, managing and monitoring the instructional process
- school leaders are also skilful in the organisational, strategic, instructional, personal and interpersonal domains

### **School leadership is a function that needs to be distributed throughout the school community**

Regarding school leadership as a distributed function implies that:

- school leadership is an activity that is spread across the school community
- schools that wish to constantly evolve will need to harness the human and social capital that is their richest potential, creating and sharing the leadership opportunities that provide the capacity to achieve this

### **School leadership must build capacity by developing the school as a learning community**

Basing school leadership on building school capacity for developing the school as a professional learning community implies:

- school leaders understand the concept of capacity and its constituent elements
- school leaders can lead and manage the transformation of the school culture

### **School leadership must be futures-oriented and strategically driven**

This implies:

- a realisation that educational change is complex, non-linear, frequently arbitrary and often characterised by unpredictable shifts and fragmented initiatives
- school leaders can lead the school as an organisation through balancing development and maintenance in the context of both improvement and transformation

### **School leadership must be developed through experiential and innovative methodologies**

This implies:

- an increasing emphasis on an applied knowledge base, on problem framing and solving, with an on-the-job or field-based focus, often involving team learning, and a responsiveness to need and stage of development
- the most valued expertise about school leadership will increasingly be developed in the leaders of the profession by promoting shared learning and innovation and creativity

### **School leadership must be served by a support and policy context that is coherent, systemic and implementation driven**

This implies:

- that policy makers continually keep the 'big picture' in mind in searching for connections and ways of exploiting potential synergy
- a competence in using external support (rather than being used by it) together with a facility in creating and exploiting networks (Hopkins, 2001; NCSL, 2002)

These propositions begin to delineate the complex expectations and responsibilities of school leaders. However, in seeking to bring together relevant sources, we have looked beyond what might be termed educational literature, and also dipped into the mainstream writings about leadership in non-educational settings. We have done this for two reasons. First, because much (though not all) of what appears in the educational literature seems to have been drawn from the mainstream and is essentially interpreted into educational contexts. The ideas will not therefore seem alien. Second, bearing in mind that we are seeking to draw attention to literature as a source of ideas that can be used to develop thinking and practice, we believe that there is value in looking at how leadership is conceived of and written about in more general contexts. We feel that the role of reading in leadership development is more to do with stimulating individual ideas than providing recipes or solutions. We also feel that there is much in common between the two literatures, as well as some important differences in emphasis. In an attempt to illustrate this, we set out below what might be considered a summary of the current state of thinking from mainstream management sources.



### 3. What does the Mainstream Literature Suggest about Leadership?

Drawing on Yukl (2002), whose work offers probably the most carefully compiled and best evidenced exposition of the available theories and models, we note a range of functions that recur throughout the writings on organisational leadership. All of these are functions leaders carry out for which there is strong empirical evidence of efficacy. Though they do not, in themselves, constitute a theory of leadership, they do seem to us to list key functions of leaders and to have clear relevance for educational settings.

#### The functions are as follows:

- Leaders help interpret the meaning of events. Yukl underlines that helping people to find meaning in complex events is an increasingly important aspect of the leadership role. The accelerating pace of social and organisational change is disorienting and frequently deskilling. Effective leaders help people come to terms with this complexity, to interpret events and to understand the implications for their own work and development.
- Leaders ensure alignment on objectives and strategies. Interdependence is a dominating characteristic of organisational life and, consequently, performance. Agreement about what to do and how to do it is therefore vital, but cannot be imposed. Effective leaders are able to generate agreement about objectives and strategies and build a consensus around priorities.
- Leaders build task commitment and optimism. Consistent performance requires persistence and confidence when problems and obstacles are encountered. Effective leaders build enthusiasm and commitment to accomplish task goals, and develop the momentum and self-belief of work groups.
- Leaders display mutual trust and co-operation. Yukl notes that, “Effective performance of a collective task requires co-operation and mutual trust”. Mutual trust develops amongst people who are able to understand one another’s views, accept diversity and manage differences. Consequently, effective leaders encourage co-operation and mutual trust while celebrating diversity.
- Leaders strengthen collective identity. Most successful organisations seem to develop a sense of collective identity – what social psychologists have described as a “we feeling”. Yukl points out that, as organisations become more fluid, as boundaries are less clear and loyalties may be divided, the promotion of a unique identity may be more difficult. Nevertheless, effective leaders do project a positive collective identity, and, with it, a parallel sense of the value of membership.
- Leaders organise and co-ordinate activities. Yukl observes that the successful performance of complex tasks requires the co-ordination of many different, but interrelated, activities in ways that make efficient use of people and resources. Effective leaders help people to organise their efforts and activities, and develop strategies to co-ordinate these activities within and across tasks.
- Leaders encourage and facilitate collective learning. Modern organisations function in increasingly competitive and turbulent environments. To survive and prosper in such environments requires continuous learning and adaptation. Effective leaders recognise that individual learning, while necessary, is not sufficient. Consequently, they deliberately set out to encourage collective learning, shared experiences and the pooling of knowledge and skills.

- Leaders obtain necessary resources and support. Successful organisations are able to interact with their environments in ways that attract the necessary resources, people, permissions and support from outside. Such exchanges offer a key to sustained performance. Effective leaders promote and defend organisational boundaries, securing the resources and support needed to pursue organisational goals.
- Leaders develop and empower people. Organisations need to draw on the knowledge, experience, problem-solving and decision-making skills of all members. A structure and climate that encourages active involvement from all, increases the organisation's capacity to respond to current problems and opportunities while simultaneously developing its future capacity. Effective leaders draw others into leadership patterns and processes, empowering them within current roles and developing them for future roles.
- Leaders promote social justice and morality. Satisfaction and commitment in organisations are fuelled by a wider climate of fairness and equity. Yukl suggests that the creation of such a climate involves active efforts to protect individual rights, encourage responsibility and oppose unethical practices. Effective leaders make these efforts, modelling in their own behaviour and transactions the values they seek to promote within the organisation.

The similarities between these so-called key functions and the propositions developed by the NCSL think tank are striking. Even in areas where we might not expect it, such as the explicit commitment to social justice and equity that is evident within Yukl's mainstream perspective, we find considerable overlap. At the same time, there are some important differences: for example, the emphasis, on 'instructional leadership', which implies a level of understanding of the detail of the school's (organisation's) activities and which does not seem to find a direct parallel in the mainstream formulation.

It is not our intention here to debate the particular merits of one source or the other; rather we hope to illustrate our view that both sources have a role to play in developing the thinking of educational practitioners. We need, therefore, to say a little about how we feel reading feeds into the development of thinking and practice.

## 4. What is it that School Leaders Do?

There is a need to clarify our use of terminology. Recent years have seen something of a swing away from the vocabulary of management, towards an emphasis on notions of leadership, although the exact implications of this distinction remain somewhat confused in the field. In our view, management can be defined broadly as the process of getting things done through people, whilst leadership is essentially about influencing a group of people towards a common goal. Of course, these conceptualisations are interconnected and overlapping in a number of ways, and this is apparent in much of the literature that is reviewed in this report. Nevertheless, there is a marked preference amongst educational sources for the vocabulary of leadership. Accordingly, we have followed the inclusive definition of leadership embraced by the majority of recent educational writers and, indeed, NCSL, that either accommodates management within leadership or subjugates it to the leadership function.

The aim, then, is to remain focused on ideas about leadership roles and strategies that will be of direct relevance to practitioners in the field and that will be of value to those involved in leadership development activities. In this sense we are concerned with what headteachers and other senior staff in schools must do in order to move their institutions forward. With this in mind we have used as our guide a series of issues that, in our experience, represent important challenges currently being faced by school leaders in England. These are to do with forms of leadership that can:

- influence values, beliefs and norms within a school
- foster practices that respond positively to pupil diversity
- create purposeful links with local communities, particularly in economically poor contexts
- lead to sustainable school improvement

The review focuses on writings produced during the past 15 years. However, even in this relatively short period there have been a large number of contributions, especially those relating to education. Though there are many similarities within the variety of theories and approaches available, there are also many differences, both in substance and in emphasis. There also seems to be rather too much attention paid to theoretical complexities and differences, and too little focused on what it is leaders actually do, day by day, that impacts on staff and pupil attitudes, behaviours and performance. Our feeling is that while the development and testing of theory is a vital prerequisite to the design of a leadership curriculum, training for leadership is most likely to be successful when it is practical in emphasis and gives clear and usable advice that can guide actions.

## 5. How Can Ideas from the Literature be Used to Develop Practice?

The team that carried out this review was conscious of the need to be clear about the possible contributions that literature might make to the development of practice in the field. With this in mind, an initial draft was used as the basis of a seminar with a group of headteachers. The participants were asked to comment on the content and format of the review, focusing in particular on its relevance and accessibility. They also explored the possible roles that ideas from literature could fulfil in supporting the development of leadership practice. This led their discussions onto the question of how leaders develop their ways of working.

It was concluded that the development of leadership practice starts from personal experience and involves forms of social learning, as those within a given workplace explore ways of solving the practical problems they face as they carry out their duties. Unfortunately, much of this learning goes on at a largely intuitive level and the knowledge that it creates is mainly unarticulated. In other words, those who develop leadership skills find it difficult to describe the ways in which they do what they do.

In making sense of what is involved, it is useful here to consider the notion of ‘communities of practice’, as developed by Etienne Wenger (1998), focusing specifically on the way he sees learning as ‘a characteristic of practice’. Although the words ‘community’ and ‘practice’ evoke common images, Wenger has particular definitions of these terms, giving the phrase ‘community of practice’ a distinctive meaning. A practice, for example, need not be framed as the work and skill of a particular practitioner. Rather, a practice consists of those things that individuals in a community do, drawing on available resources, to further a set of shared goals. This goes beyond how practitioners complete their tasks, to include, for example, how they make it through the day, commiserating about the pressures and constraints within which they have to operate.

Wenger provides a framework that can be used to analyse learning in social contexts. At the centre of this framework is the concept of a ‘community of practice’, a social group engaged in the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. Practices are ways of negotiating meaning through social action. In Wenger’s view, meaning arises from two complementary processes: ‘participation’ and ‘reification’. He notes:

**“Practices evolve as shared histories of learning. History in this sense is neither merely a personal or collective experience, nor just a set of enduring artefacts and institutions, but a combination of participation and reification over time.”**

Participation consists of the shared experiences and negotiations that result from social interaction within a purposive community. Participation is thus inherently local, since shared experiences and negotiation processes will differ from one setting to the next, regardless of their interconnections. So, for example, within schools we see how hours of meetings, shared experiences and informal discussions over hurriedly taken lunches, also involve the development of particular meanings of frequently used phrases, such as ‘raising standards’ and ‘school improvement’. These shared meanings help to define a teacher’s experience of being a teacher, and, indeed, a leader’s view of what his/her work is about. In the same way we can assume that groups of colleagues doing similar work in another school have their own, shared histories that give meaning to being a practitioner in that particular context.

Reification is the process by which communities of practice produce concrete representations of their practices, such as tools, symbols, rules and documents, and even concepts and theories. So, for example, documents such as the school development plan or a behaviour policy are reifications of the practices within a school. They include representations of the activities in which teachers engage, and some illustrations of the conditions and problems that a teacher might encounter in practice. At the same time, it is important to remember that such documents often provide overly rationalised portrayals of ideal practice in which the challenges and uncertainties of unfolding action are smoothed over in the telling (Brown and Duguid, 1991).

Wenger argues that learning within a given community can often be best explained within the intertwining of reification and participation. He suggests that these are complementary processes, in that each has the capacity to repair the ambiguity of meaning the other can engender. So, for example, a particular strategy may be developed as part of a school's planning activities and summarised in a set of guidance for action, providing a codified reification of intended practice. However, the meaning and practical implications of the strategy only becomes clear as it is tried in the field and discussed between colleagues. In this way, participation results in social learning that could not be produced solely by reification alone. At the same time, the reified products, such as policy documents, serve as a kind of memory of practice, cementing in place the new learning.

Wenger offers some helpful guidelines for judging whether a particular social collectivity should be considered a community of practice. Since such a community involves mutual engagement, a negotiated enterprise and a repertoire of resources and practices, we should expect members to:

- interact more intensively with, and know more about, others in the community rather than those outside the community
- hold their actions accountable (and be willing for others in the community to hold them accountable) more to the community's joint enterprise than to some other enterprise
- be more able to evaluate the actions of other members of the community than the actions of those outside the community
- draw on locally produced resources and artefacts to negotiate meaning more than resources and artefacts that are imported from outside the group

By these criteria, the leadership teams in many schools can be seen as communities of practice. They may share common aims with colleagues engaged in related work in other schools. However, Wenger's conceptualisation is a reminder that much of the learning that has led to their particular practice is grounded in their shared experiences.

Such an analysis seems to provide a way of describing the social processes that influence the development of leadership practice within a given context. At this stage in our argument, however, it is important to stress that we are not suggesting that communities of practice are in themselves a panacea for the development of effective school leaders. Rather, the concept helps us to attend to and make sense of the significance of social processes of learning, as powerful mediators of meaning. Wenger notes:

**“Communities of practice are not intrinsically beneficial or harmful.... Yet they are a force to be reckoned with, for better or for worse. As a locus of engagement in action, interpersonal relationships, shared knowledge, and negotiation of enterprises, such communities hold the key to real**

**transformation - the kind that has real effect on people's lives... The influence of other forces, eg the control of an institution or the authority of an individual, is no less important, but... they are mediated by the communities in which their meanings are negotiated in practice."**

In thinking about the role ideas from appropriate literature can play in the development of leadership practice, therefore, we see the need to take account of these social processes. In particular, we presume that such development requires the creation of a common language through which colleagues can talk to one another and, indeed, to themselves about detailed aspects of their practice (Huberman, 1993; Little and McLaughlin, 1993). It seems that without such a language practitioners find it very difficult to experiment with new possibilities. It has been noted, for example, that when researchers report to teachers what has been observed during their lessons, they will often express surprise (Ainscow, 1999). It seems that much of what school staff do during the intensive encounters that occur in a typical working day is carried out at an automatic, intuitive level, involving the use of tacit knowledge. Furthermore there is little time to stop and think. This is, perhaps, why having the opportunity to see colleagues at work is so crucial to the success of attempts to develop practice. It is through such shared experiences that colleagues can help one another to articulate what they currently do and define what they might like to do. It is also the means whereby taken-for-granted assumptions can be subjected to mutual critique.

It can therefore be argued that the most effective forms of leadership development are likely to be based within the workplace, and to use social learning processes that will influence thinking within the communities of practice that exist. This being the case, we can see how various forms of literature could be of value in respect to these processes. In particular, ideas from literature can be used to:

- stimulate reflection by enabling the reader to compare what they do with accounts of leadership practice elsewhere
- challenge and reframe existing thinking by reading evidence about leadership practices that have proved to be successful in other contexts
- conceptualise learning through engagement with texts that provide deeper theoretical explanations of what is involved in leadership practice

These three development processes throw light on how ideas from the literature may be helpful in constructing the different types of knowledge that are relevant to the development of leadership practice in schools. Consequently, in considering the various texts that are reviewed in this report, we encourage readers to keep these three possibilities in mind as they focus on their own needs as practitioners and learners.

Clearly, some of the texts we review offer accounts from elsewhere that can be used to make the familiar unfamiliar (for example, the case studies of Canadian schools provided by Leithwood and his colleagues or the accounts of practice in England that are presented by Day and his team). In this way the reader is provided with vicarious experiences of practice in other contexts that encourage a reconsideration of existing ways of working, perhaps drawing attention to overlooked possibilities for moving their own practice forward.

Other texts go further, in that they challenge existing practices in ways that may feel irritating or uncomfortable for the reader (for example, the constructivist approaches presented by Lambert and her colleagues; or, focusing on contexts outside of education, Denton's analysis of organisational learning and leadership). Often the benefits of reading such material are most likely achieved through discussions with colleagues who have engaged with the same text.

Finally, some texts operate at a deeper, theoretical level, which may initially seem rather difficult or even irrelevant (for example, the explanations of transactional and transformational leadership provided by Bass; or the notion of the co-operative school developed by Johnson and Johnson). Once again, our experience suggests that discussion of such texts with colleagues is often the most effective means of using complex formulations to re-conceptualise existing knowledge and clarify new understandings.

## 6. Recommended Texts for the Main Subject Areas of this Review

This section provides some suggestions as to which of the reviewed texts might provide the most useful reading on a number of the new challenges facing school leadership. It is hoped that this will allow the reader to target the reviews that are likely to be of most use and, perhaps, determine whether it might be worth consulting any of the full articles. As mentioned above, full texts of the individual reviews may be found on the NCSL website.

In the interests of clarity and brevity, articles are referred to only by the surname of the first author; the full citations may be found in section one above.

### 6.1 Types of leadership

To some extent all of the articles reviewed are about the different ways leadership is practised, so we can only hope here to give a brief indication of the range of styles employed. **Bass** presents his theory of transformational leadership, which replaces old hierarchical styles of leadership with one that considers motivation, stimulation and concerns for the individual. Particular strengths of this book include frequent reference to empirical evidence and an honest approach to the limits of our current knowledge. In discussing 28 corporate organisations in America, **Collins** asserts that 'good' leadership can lead to companies losing sight of the goal of 'great' leadership. The book provides a useful model for continuing improvement, which requires leaders to be extremely ambitious for the organisation but humble on a personal level. For more general reading, **Day** provides a useful overview of features common to those headteachers who are consistently effective, and this work sits comfortably alongside the thoughtful and well constructed book by **Grace**, who traces the historical development of the thinking that has formed current notions of school leadership. The international perspectives on educational theory, empirical study and good practice are brought together in **Leithwood's** 2002 handbook, which is an invaluable and thought-provoking source of ideas and references. **Wong** also presents a view of the range of leadership found on the international stage, and particularly discusses the challenges that are presented by the 'soft' issues, such as values and vision. Readers looking for a good discussion of the complexities of school leadership will find **Southworth's** collection of articles to be very informative. Although this book focuses on the primary phase it is nevertheless of use to those teaching older pupils. Finally, **Cheng** offers a readable theoretical overview of links between leadership and school effectiveness.



## 6.2 Leadership for a changing environment

This is the most challenging issue facing many leaders at the beginning of the 21st century, but there is fortunately plenty of literature to help with the task of planning in the face of change and uncertainty. Much of the work in this area explains how there has been a need to change from a 'top down' hierarchical approach, with prescriptive structures and clear limits of authority, to one that is focused on the involvement and commitment of the individual. **Bryman** presents a useful comparison between the old and new for a business setting and **Gronn** offers a corresponding new framework for the educational world, suggesting six organisational and personal challenges that face leaders of change. The international dimension on this subject is provided by **Riley**, who also investigates the capacity to cope with change at a local level. **Leithwood** (1999) is a good research-based source for those wishing to put transformational leadership into practice, in the face of change, at all levels of a school.

The changes to leadership that have been brought about by the increased requirements for self-management and accountability are discussed by **Caldwell** in a way that is accessible to practitioners and **Stoll** covers the 'what, how and why' of leadership change in an increasingly decentralised system. The other important issue that has recently emerged into the leadership arena is the need to appreciate the difference between leading and managing: the former is largely concerned with the people in an organisation and the latter with the organisation itself. This issue is addressed well by **Grace**, who points out both the differences and similarities and places them in their historical context. **Day's** discussion on the different characteristics that leadership and management require is also a useful read, particularly as it covers both educational and non-educational sectors.

## 6.3 Sharing and collaboration

As the educational system becomes increasingly decentralised, leading to a greater demand for school self-management, the task of leadership is necessarily the responsibility of more people than those at the 'top' of the organisation. Useful writing covering this area of distributed leadership include the books by **Cheng** and **Day**, who both discuss the paramount importance of taking account of all stakeholder perspectives, and **Grace's** argument for strong and participative democratic school leadership. More general discussions of the theory and practice of shared leadership include those by **Leithwood** and **MacBeath**, with **Southworth**, **Sergiovanni** and **Wong** also emphasising the importance of shared values as a driving force for new leadership structures. **Denton** presents the view from the business world and discusses the need for new patterns of leadership, a vision for the organisation that is accepted by all and renewed commitment to team working; the same issues for schools are presented by **Duignan**. Along the same lines, **Lambert** suggests that common meanings and shared purposes thrive under a headteacher who is 'leader of leaders'. The empowerment to lead, by those not traditionally thought of as leaders, is addressed by **Johnson**, **Spillane** and **Riley**.

## 6.4 Tensions

Some of the literature reviewed addresses the emergence of a certain amount of conflict and tension as leadership practice has had to adapt to new demands and pressures. **Day** recognises the discrepancy between a more values-driven model of leadership and the rather rational and structured nature of many formal professional development programmes. **MacBeath's** international comparative study covers the contradictions, tensions and ethical dilemmas brought about by headteachers having to deal with financial constraints, competition and external assessment of performance. **MacBeath, Stoll** and **Riley** also touch on the tension created by a more highly regulated system that nevertheless expects schools to increase self-assessment and self-management.

**MacBeath** in particular addresses the important question of 'Who really runs the school?'

## 6.5 Context and culture

The references related to this issue concern themselves with the increased importance of understanding context and culture when leadership becomes shared by those at all levels in an organisation. In fact, nearly all of the authors cover this important topic to some extent, usually linking it to the challenge of developing shared leadership. Both of **Leithwood's** books make good reading, particularly the 2002 handbook, which considers context from inside the school right up to the international dimension. **Grace's** historical survey on leadership and management includes interesting chapters on leadership in Catholic schools – useful to anyone in a faith-based setting – and women in leadership.

**MacBeath's** international comparative study shows how significant the effects of a particular society's culture can be, and this is used to support rejection of a 'one size fits all' ideology for leadership. The increasing responsibility on leaders to create inclusive schools, which can cater for a range of pupils that is diverse in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, social class and language, is analysed thoroughly in **Riehl's** review of American practice. Some readers may also find **Schien's** book useful here, although it is somewhat theoretical and considers the non-education sector: leadership and management are viewed as two sides of the same coin, making it imperative that leaders understand the culture of their organisations.

## 6.6 From a traditional model to a learning organisation

Although the articles and books covering this could have been included in the 'Leadership for change' section above, a number of authors have specifically raised it. In summary we are talking about the transition from a 'top down' prescriptive approach to one driven by values, where all members of an organisation work together to develop leadership at all levels. **Denton** covers the issue well, explaining how leadership has traditionally been insensitive to context and invested in just a few people, whilst there is now a need for 'learning organisations', in which the need to cope with change, be adaptable and incorporate new knowledge all point to new leadership patterns. As **Johnson** explains, traditional leadership practice has tended to encourage a competitive and individualistic approach to teaching, which prevents development of the mutual vision, individual empowerment and team working that are now required. A useful non-educational analysis comes from **Bass**, who describes it as a change from transactional leadership, centred on processes, to transformational leadership, centred on the members of the organisation. **Caldwell** talks in broadly similar terms regarding the education sector but also discusses the need for the learning culture to encourage more responsive leadership. Other authors who present useful discussions of this important issue are **Grace**, **Leithwood** (1999) and **Lambert**, all of whom emphasise the need for today's leaders to engage fully with all that occurs in their organisations, and **Peters** with the notion that traditional 'rational' management risks stifling much creative endeavour.

## 6.7 Leadership practice in other sectors

One of the aims of this review has been to provide perspectives on leadership development gathered from outside the education sector, in an attempt to encourage new ways of thinking. **Yukl** presents what is probably the most wide ranging single work on the theory and practice of leadership. An eminently readable book, useful for even experienced leaders, it both evaluates major theories and a wide range of empirical research, and gives advice for the practitioner on how to deal with the complexity of managerial leadership. **Collins** also successfully blends theory with practice in a way that will be very accessible to school leaders. **Bryman** considers what changes in leadership are required for success in the current business climate, with a particular emphasis on the idea of 'charismatic leadership' and the need to include everyone in an organisation. **Senge** provides an interesting alternative, that of considering the development of a commercial company in terms of 'five learning disciplines'. However, these may alternatively be viewed as 'five leadership disciplines' and so are useful background reading, particularly as they cover themes that will be familiar to many school leaders.

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