

CHAPTER 13 MULFORD, B. AND SILINS, H. (2003) 'LEADERSHIP FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES – WHAT DO WE KNOW?'

ABSTRACT *The Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) Research Project addresses the need to extend present understandings of school reform initiatives that aim to change school practices with the intention of supporting enhanced student learning. In this article results from LOLSO's teacher surveys ('teacher voice') and student surveys ('pupil voice') are organised around six of the project's major research questions: how is the concept of organisational learning (OL) defined in Australian secondary schools (teacher voice)? What leadership practices promote OL in schools (teacher voice)? What are some outcomes of schooling other than academic achievement (pupil voice)? What are the relationships between the non-academic and academic outcomes of schooling? Do school leadership and/or organisational learning contribute to student outcomes? What other factors contribute to student outcomes? The answers to these questions lead to four clear implications relating to distributive leadership, development, context, and a broader understanding of student outcomes. The answers also raise concerns about the current emphasis on transactional leadership, that is school leadership that overemphasises the managerial or strategic.*

INTRODUCTION: SORTING THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

Reforms for schools, no matter how well conceptualised, powerfully sponsored, brilliantly structured, or closely audited are likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from those in schools. By their actions, or inaction, students, teachers, middle managers, and head teachers help determine the fate of what happens in schools, including attempts at reform (see, for example, Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Berends, 2000; Dinham *et al.*, 2000; Busher & Harris, 2000; Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Sometimes this is not a bad thing, for many a school has been badly disillusioned by the galloping hoofbeats of the itinerant pedlars behind the new movements who ride in and out again exhorting their latest elixirs (Slavin, 1996). On the other hand, there are reforms that may have great potential for

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school reform. To have these advances fall to the same fate as the latest gimmickry or short-term political opportunism benefits no one, especially those in schools, for they are the people most responsible for the long-term improvement of schools and the children in them (Prestine, 1998).

Where do those in schools start sorting the wheat from the chaff, genuine growth potents offering long-term improvement from the elixirs and short-term opportunism? The current and growing emphasis on evidence-informed policy and practice is as good a place as any (see, for example, EPPI Centre, 2001). However, if one is seeking to establish a useful evidence base for school improvement, then one also needs to establish the value of the evidence that is presented. The old computer adage 'garbage in, garbage out' remains as relevant today as it has always been.

In this paper we present some quality evidence for those considering school reform. We believe it is quality evidence because it has integrity and predictive validity as well as clearly defining its variables. The evidence has integrity in the sense that it is complex enough to come closer to the reality faced by schools than much previous research in the area, has been gathered from people other than head teachers (who tend to overestimate the effectiveness of reforms when compared with their teachers) (Mulford *et al.*, 2000, 2001; McCall *et al.*, 2001), and has been collected by people other than those involved in the design or implementation of the reform. It has predictive validity because it attempts to link leadership with organisational learning and student outcomes. The link to student outcomes is a rare event indeed in the research literature on educational leadership and school improvement [1].

THE LOLSO RESEARCH PROJECT

The Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) Research Project addresses the need to extend present understandings of school reform initiatives that aim to change school practices with the intention of supporting enhanced student learning. LOLSO is unique in a number of ways, including its:

- large sample;
- longitudinal nature;
- attempt to define clearly its variables;
- inclusion of the concept of organisational learning (OL);
- use of student and teacher 'voice';
- examination of the relationships among a large number of variables, specifically leadership processes, organisational learning and student outcomes, taking into account a number of contextual variables such as socio-economic status (SES), home educational environment and school size;
- use of a measure of student outcomes that is wider than academic achievement;

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- use of findings to develop a set of problem-based learning professional development materials for educational leaders.

Also, the project is being carried out through the Australian Research Council by those not involved in the design or implementation of the school restructuring initiatives.

In what follows, we will briefly outline the nature of the LOLSO research design and results before turning to what we believe are some of the major implications of our research for school reform. For this paper we will restrict ourselves to the results of the quantitative survey responses from teachers and pupils (for a fuller account of the results of the LOLSO Research Project see Silins & Mulford, 2001; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Silins *et al.*, 1999; Silins *et al.*, 2000).

Research Design

LOLSO's research design required four phases of data collection and analysis conducted over four years:

- In Phase 1, surveys of 3,500 Year 10 students and 2,500 of their teachers and head teachers were conducted in half the secondary schools in South Australia and all the secondary schools in Tasmania (a total of 96 schools).
- In the second phase of the study, cross-sectional and longitudinal case studies of best practice were collected from four schools selected from the sample to triangulate and enrich the information generated by the survey data.
- In the third phase, South Australian Year 12 students, teachers and head teachers were resurveyed.
- The fourth phase saw the results from the quantitative and qualitative data used to develop and trial professional development interventions for school leaders (Mulford *et al.*, in preparation).

In brief, the project's research design allowed for iterative cycles of theory development and testing, using multiple forms of evidence.

RESULTS

Results from LOLSO's teacher surveys (teacher voice) and student surveys (pupil voice) can be organised around six of the project's major research questions. In what follows, for the second to sixth question a figure summarises the answer to the question.

- How is the concept of OL defined in Australian secondary schools (teacher voice)?
- What leadership practices promote OL in schools (teacher voice)?

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Question 1: how is the concept of OL defined in Australian secondary schools (teacher voice)?

This is shown in Figure 1.

OL was found to involve, *sequentially*:

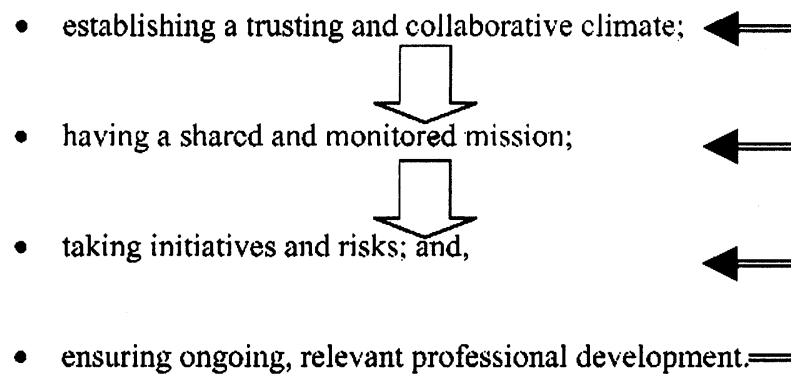


FIG. 1.

- What are some outcomes of schooling other than academic achievement (pupil voice)?
- What are the relationships between the non-academic and academic outcomes of schooling?
- Do school leadership and/or organisational learning contribute to student outcomes?
- What other factors contribute to student outcomes?

Question 2: what leadership practices promote OL in schools (teacher voice)?

This is shown in Figure 2.

The LOLSO research demonstrated clearly that the predominant conditions accounting for variations in OL between secondary schools were a head teacher skilled in transformational leadership and administrators and teachers who are actively involved in the core work of the school.

In brief, leadership that makes a difference to a high school having a community focus, staff feeling valued and OL is transformational and distributive. Having a community focus means that the teachers perceive the school as having productive working relations with the community and that the school's administrators are sensitive to the community, work with community representatives and incorporate community values in the school.

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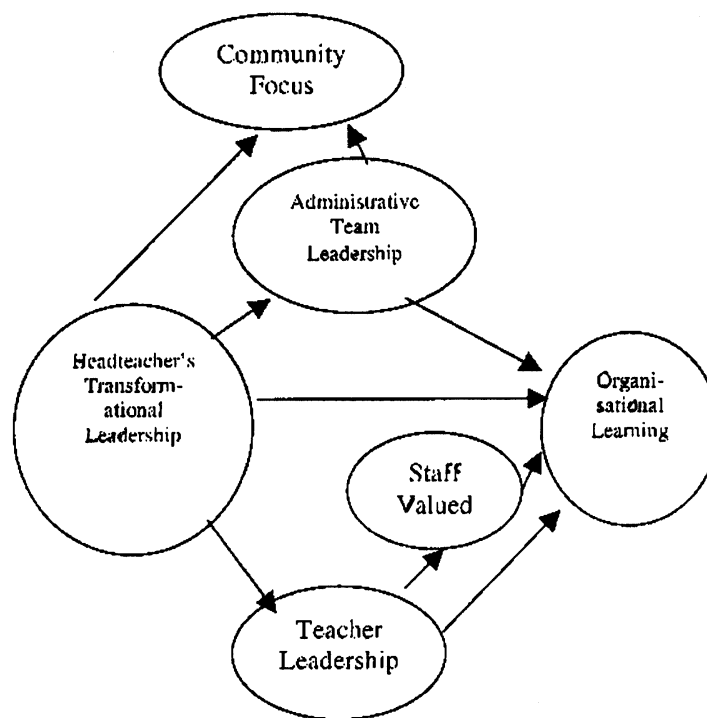


FIG. 2.

The head teacher who is transformational focuses on:

- Individual Support—providing moral support, showing appreciation for the work of individual staff and taking their opinion into account when making decisions.
- Culture—promoting an atmosphere of caring and trust among staff, setting a respectful tone for interaction with students and demonstrating a willingness to change his or her practices in the light of new understandings.
- Structure—establishing a school structure that promotes participative decision-making, supporting delegation and distributive leadership and encouraging teacher autonomy for making decisions.
- Vision and Goals—working towards whole staff consensus in establishing school priorities and communicating these priorities and goals to students and staff, giving a sense of overall purpose.
- Performance Expectation—having high expectations for teachers and students and expecting staff to be effective and innovative.
- Intellectual Stimulation—encouraging staff to reflect on what they are trying to achieve with students and how they are doing it; facilitating opportunities for staff to learn from each other and modelling continual learning in his or her own practice.

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What is important is that the staff are actively and collectively participating in the school, and feel that their contributions are valued.

We also found that the head teacher's gender or the teacher's years in education or their school, age or gender were not factors promoting OL, but school size was. The larger metropolitan schools of over 900 students, staffed by experienced and ageing teachers, did not provide the environment most conducive to transformational leadership or teacher distributive leadership. Perhaps surprisingly, having a community focus was not found to be related to promoting OL.

Question 3: what are some outcomes of schooling other than academic achievement (pupil voice)?

This is shown in Figure 3.

There have been consistent and growing calls for broader measures of school success beyond academic achievement (see, for example, Elliott & Voss, 1974; McGaw *et al.*, 1992; DfES, 2001). For example, alienation of pupils from school can be a critical step leading to failure to complete schooling and is especially important for middle and senior high school students. Pupils who experience acceptance, or a sense of belonging, are more highly motivated and engaged in learning and more committed to school. Engagement and commitment are closely linked to student performance, and, more importantly, to the quality of student learning (Osterman, 2000).

The LOLSO Research Project took such calls on board and included

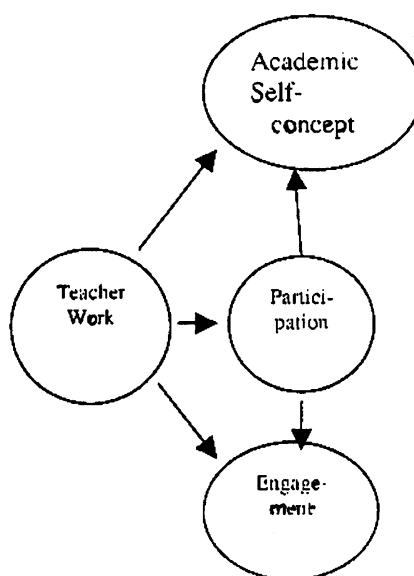


FIG. 3.

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surveys of Year 10 and Year 12 pupils' views of their schooling. The following factors emerged from the statistical analysis of their responses:

Teacher Work—pupils:

- like the way the teachers teach;
- see a variety of activities, constant challenge and good organisation in class; and
- believe teachers discuss their work with them and expect them to do their best work.

Academic Self-concept—pupils are:

- confident of success and graduating;
- satisfied with marks now and at the end of the year; and
- satisfied with the extent of their learning and ability to understand material.

Participation—pupils:

- respond to questions and enjoy giving their opinion;
- set goals;
- participate in extracurricular activities; and
- have few days when they were late and/or skipped classes.

Engagement—pupils:

- are satisfied with student–teacher and student–student relationships;
- identify with their school; and
- see the usefulness of schoolwork for future life.

The findings on the relationships among these four non-academic achievement student outcomes reinforce the importance of the teachers' work for academic self-concept, participation and engagement. They also highlight the central role that participation—that is the active, behavioural dimension—has for the attitudinal dimensions of academic-self concept and engagement.

Question 4: what are the relationships between the non-academic and academic outcomes of schooling?

This is shown in Figure 4.

The LOLSO Research Project gathered data from over half of its student sample on whether or not they continued on from Year 10 to Year 12 (Retention) and their five-subject aggregate Tertiary Entrance score from the Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia's formal assessment procedure (Academic Achievement).

We found that students who stay in school, complete Year 12 and participate in school are most likely to achieve academically. Retention is more likely when students are engaged with school. In other words, engagement is a direct

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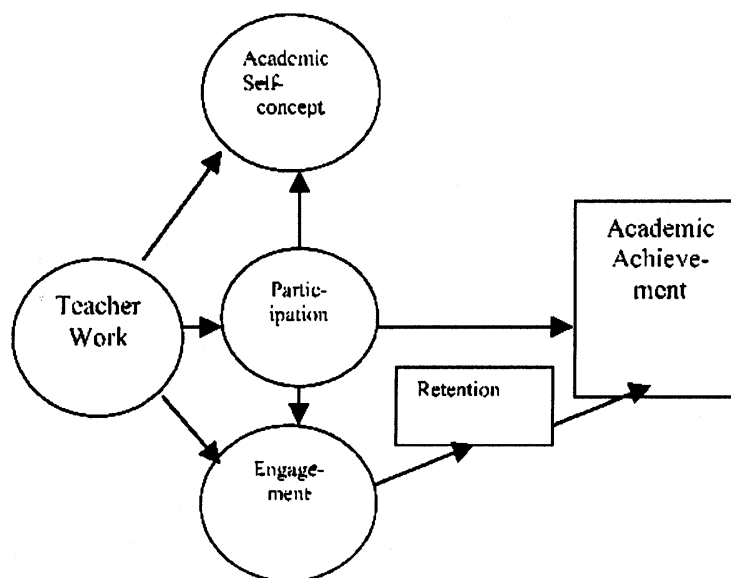


FIG. 4.

predictor of retention but only indirectly influences achievement (through retention). The contra-intuitive result that academic self-concept is not a predictor of engagement, retention or achievement should be noted. We will return to this finding in our discussion of the implications of our research.

Other results indicated that the size and socio-economic status of the school and the pupils' perception of their home educational environment also influenced non-academic and academic student outcomes. Home educational environment involves having a space and aids for study as well as having discussions about, and help with, school work and conversations about world events.

Larger schools were more likely to have students with higher academic self-concept but to have lower student participation. Schools of higher socio-economic status were more likely to have students with higher academic self-concept, retention and academic achievement but lower perceptions of teachers' work. There was a very strong positive relationship between home educational environment and teachers' work and participation and a less strong but still positive relationship between home educational environment and academic self-concept.

Question 5: do school leadership and/or organisational learning contribute to student outcomes?

This is shown in Figure 5. Both positional (head teacher) and distributive (administrative team and teacher) leadership is only *indirectly* related to student outcomes. OL, or a 'collective teacher efficacy', is the important intervening

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variable between leadership and teacher work and then student outcomes. Put another way: leadership contributes to organisational learning, which in turn influences what happens in the core business of the school—the teaching and learning. It influences the way teachers organise and conduct their instruction, their educational interactions with students, and the challenges and expectations teachers place on their pupils. The higher the teachers' ratings of the school on the four sequential dimensions defining organisational learning, the more positively teachers' work is perceived in classrooms by their pupils. Pupils' positive perception of teachers' work directly promotes participation in school, academic self-concept and engagement with school. Pupil participation is directly, and pupil engagement indirectly, through retention, related to academic achievement.

Question 6: what other factors contribute to student outcomes?

This is shown in Figure 6.

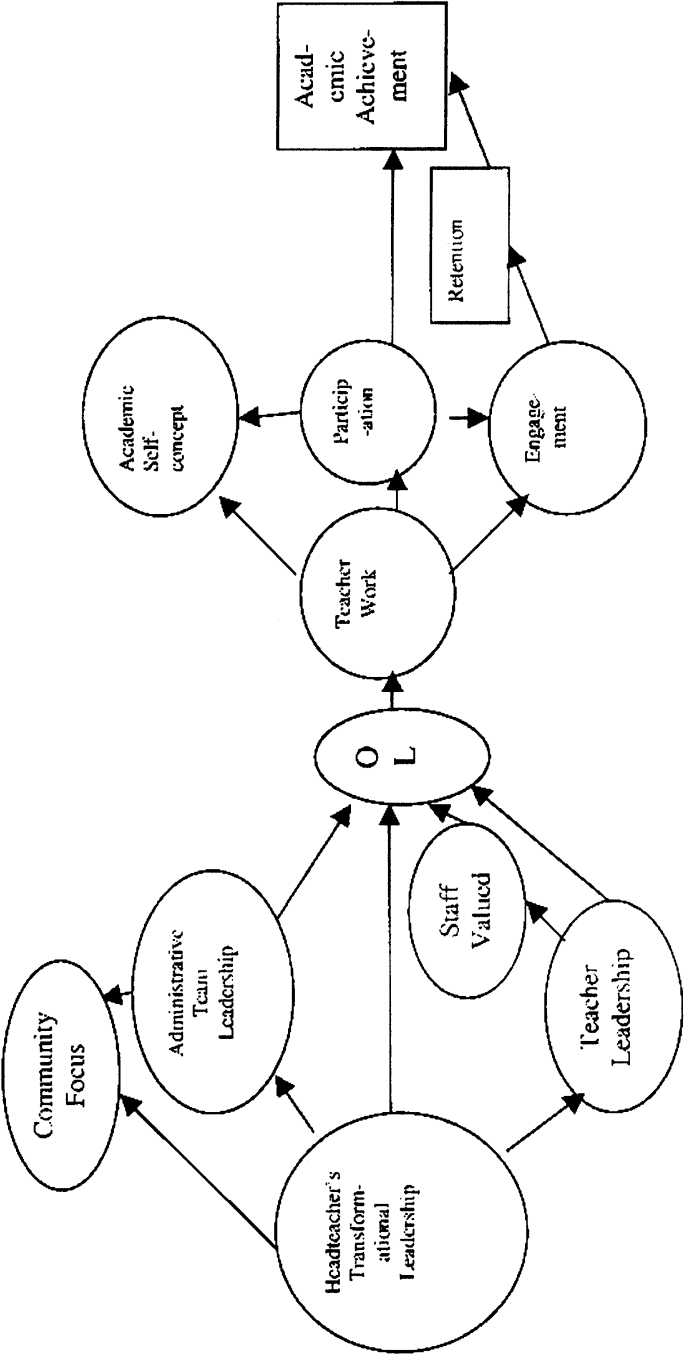
To repeat earlier findings, larger schools were not only less likely to promote transformational or teacher distributive leadership, but were also more likely to have students with higher academic self-concept and lower student participation. In addition, schools of higher socio-economic status were more likely to have students with higher academic self-concept, retention and academic achievement but lower perceptions of teachers' work. Higher socio-economic status was related to having a positive home educational environment. Also, there were very strong positive relationships between home educational environment (pupil provided with study space and aides) and teachers' work and participation, and a less strong but still positive relationship between home educational environment and academic self-concept.

Student participation and engagement in school were either directly or indirectly related to retention and academic achievement. What was important was that pupils, just like teachers, are actively participating in the school and feel that their contributions are valued. However, neither pupil academic self-concept nor the school having a community focus was directly or indirectly related to any of the other student outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS: DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP, DEVELOPMENT/LEARNING, CONTEXT, AND BROADENING STUDENT OUTCOME MEASURES

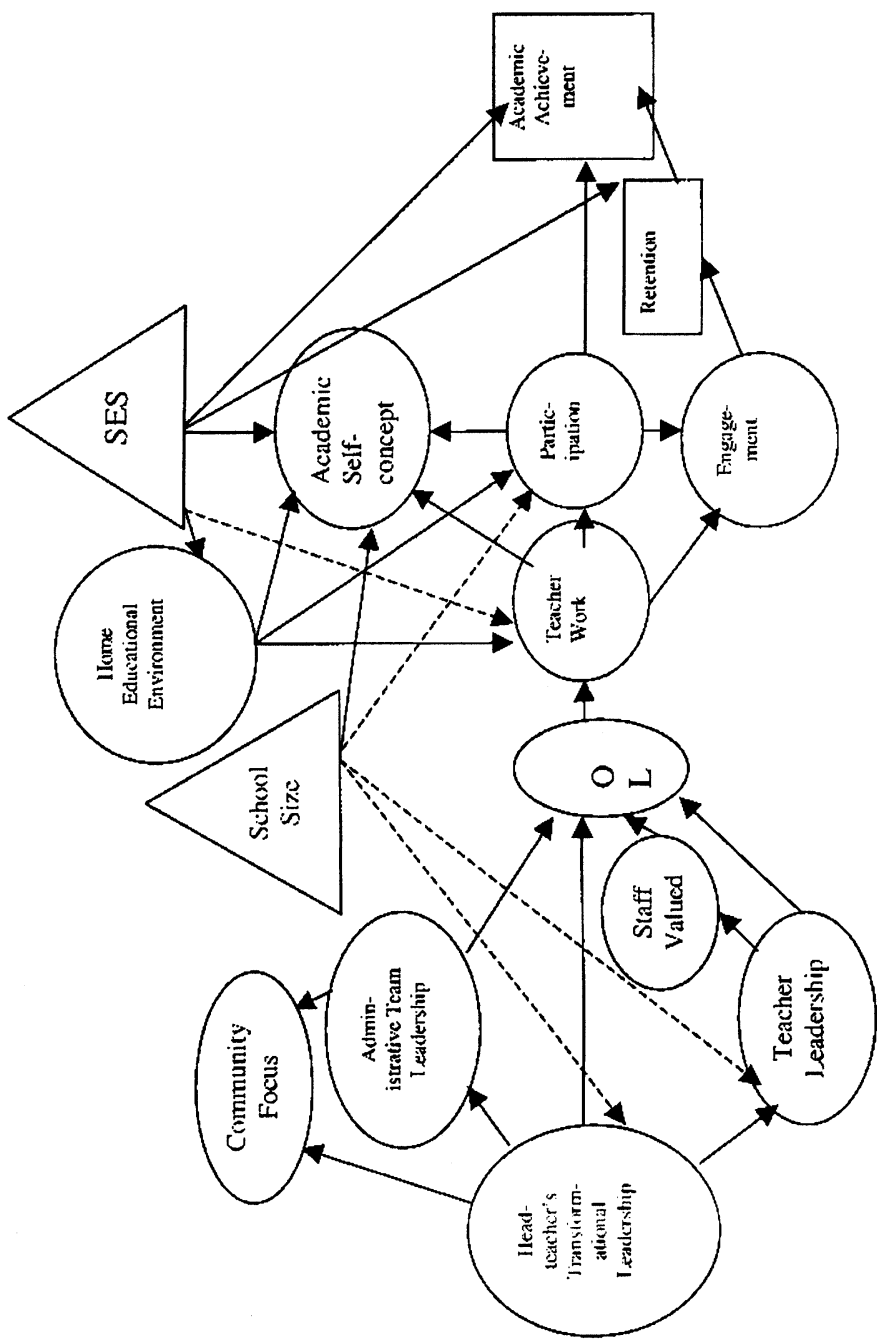
Distributive Leadership

The first of four implications of the LOLSO research is that leadership that makes a difference in secondary schools is both position-based (head teacher) and distributive (administrative team and teachers), and that the effects of this leadership on student outcomes are indirect (through OL and teachers' work). The positional/head teacher leadership we are talking about is what we termed



Key: OL = Organisational Learning.

FIG. 5.



Key: SES = Socio-economic Status; OL = Organisational Learning
Fig. 6.

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'transformational'. What is important is the collective efficacy of the staff and their ability to engage in organisational learning. How the teachers are treated is reflected in how the students perceive the teachers' work, which, in turn, is related to the outcomes of their schooling.

This first implication is consistent with the findings of a recent review of the research literature that identified three major and aligned elements in successful school reform (Silins & Mulford, 2002). The first element relates to how people are treated. Success is more likely where people act rather than always reacting, are empowered, involved in decision-making through a transparent, facilitative and supportive structure, and are trusted, respected and encouraged. The second element concerns a professional community. A professional community involves shared norms and values, including valuing differences and diversity, a focus on continuous enhancement of learning for all students, de-privatisation of practice, collaboration, and critical reflective dialogue, especially that based on performance data. The final element relates to the presence of a capacity for learning. This capacity is most readily identified in an ongoing, optimistic, caring, nurturing professional development programme.

In the UK, the importance of distributive leadership is consistent with the government's recent White Paper (DfES, 2001) on education and some of the directions espoused by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL, n.d.). The White Paper, for example, states that 'Only if we can build on the commitment and enthusiasm of all those who work in schools will we succeed in implementing a truly diverse secondary system'. It talks about 'Education with character' and the importance of the school's ethos for successfully achieving such character. The NCSL's documentation points out that their work is founded on four beliefs including that 'Our most successful schools are self-improving' and that 'Leadership in such schools tends to be shared'. Elsewhere NCSL gives priority to concepts such as 'capacity', 'dispersed leadership' and 'learning communities'.

The rejection in our findings of 'the great man or woman' theory of leadership should be noted. Faith in one person, 'the leader', as the instrument for successful implementation of the Government's educational policy, let alone broader and longer term educational outcomes, might bring initial, albeit temporary, success but the dependency relationship that it establishes will eventually ensure mediocrity, if not failure. There is a clear difference here between the LOLSO research and the Hay-McBer model of excellence for school leaders (Hay-McBer, n.d.). In contrast to the Hay-McBer model, the LOLSO model has no emphasis on the leader showing initiative by acting decisively, having impact by persuasion, calculation and influencing, or creating the vision, through strategic thinking for example. Nowhere is the difference clearer than in our different interpretations of the concept 'transformational leadership'. The Hay McBer emphasis on the 'drive and the ability to take the role of leader, provide clear direction, and enthuse and motivate others' is a mile away from LOLSO's stress on support, care, trust, participation, facilitation, and whole staff consensus.

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The rejection in our findings of 'the great man or woman' theory of leadership should be noted. Faith in one person, 'the leader', as the instrument for successful implementation of the Government's educational policy, let alone broader and longer term educational outcomes, might bring initial, albeit temporary, success but the dependency relationship that it establishes will eventually ensure mediocrity, if not failure. There is a clear difference here between the LOLSO research and the Hay-McBer model of excellence for school leaders (Hay-McBer, n.d.). In contrast to the Hay-McBer model, the LOLSO model has no emphasis on the leader showing initiative by acting decisively, having impact by persuasion, calculation and influencing, or creating the vision, through strategic thinking for example. Nowhere is the difference clearer than in our different interpretations of the concept 'transformational leadership'. The Hay McBer emphasis on the 'drive and the ability to take the role of leader, provide clear direction, and enthuse and motivate others' is a mile away from LOLSO's stress on support, care, trust, participation, facilitation, and whole staff consensus.

Development/Learning

The second implication is that successful school reform is all about development and, therefore, learning. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) made this point some time ago in respect of a leader's use of a task and/or relationship emphasis depending on the maturity of the group he or she was leading (see Figure 7).

A group low in maturity would need a 'telling' style of leadership (high task, low relationship). At the next level of group maturity the leader would need a 'selling' style (high task, high relationship), then 'participating' style (low task, high relationship), and finally with a group high in maturity a 'delegating' style (low task, low relationship). The weakness of this model, however, is that it is not really about development. For example, if a leader keeps 'telling' or 'selling' an 'immature' group, then the group is never going to become more mature. Of course, this assumes one wants mature groups, that is, groups (a school staff) that have the ability (skill, knowledge and experience) and willingness (motivated, committed and self-confident) to take responsibility for directing their own behaviour!

In other words, one needs first to get the personal/interpersonal, distributive leadership, collective teacher efficacy or trusting and collaborative climate 'right'. Once the personal/interpersonal is 'right' then it can be used to focus on the educational/instructional, including having a shared and monitored mission. Once the educational/instructional is 'right', and there is confidence in what the school is doing and why it is doing it, then the leaders and the school can move to development/learning/change, including working with other schools in a 'nested' model.

Development implies another important principle—one needs stability for change, one needs constantly to move ahead but without losing one's roots. Put another way, one needs a base or agreed position from which to develop; one needs to stand for something, to first be 'grounded'.

Context

The third implication of the LOLSO research is that the context for leadership and school reform must be taken more into account. Variables such as socio-economic status, home educational environment and school size have a clear interactive effect on leadership, the school and student outcomes. Reynolds, for example, is wary of any belief in 'one right way' leadership, pointing out that socially difficult schools may involve leadership that is more initiating and more effective schools more managing (Reynolds, n.d.). Recent research by Harris and Chapman (2001), examining leadership in schools facing challenging contexts, has shown that effective leadership in these schools is tight on values, purposes and direction but loose on involving others in leadership activity. The result of such leadership is clear direction and widespread involvement. But given our first implication on the importance of distributive leadership for

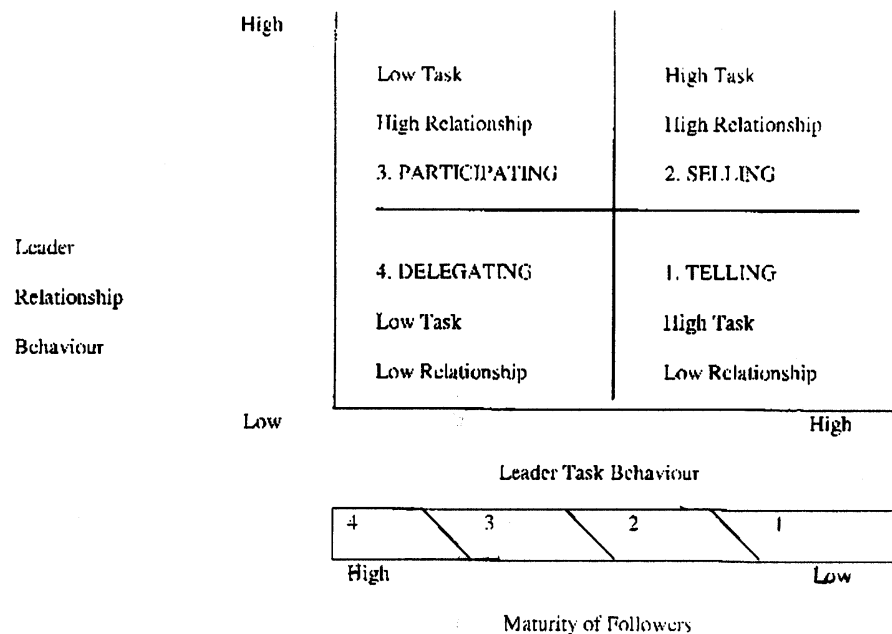
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FIG. 7.

significant and long-term school reform, we need to be careful here. As Barnett *et al.* (2001) have found, a visionary head teacher can actually distract teachers from concentrating on teaching and learning, let alone having ownership of the vision!

Our results help to focus attention on the school size debate and add weight to the research drawing attention to the advantages of smaller schools (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Cotton, 1997). This issue has been recognised in some parts of the USA with large schools now dividing themselves into sub-schools in order to provide the web of support necessary for student and teacher identification and involvement with the school and improved learning outcomes (Hodges, 2000).

The lack of a link between the school having a community focus, and organisational learning or student outcomes, is potentially problematic. On the basis of our results, and if a choice needs to be made between working with and being sensitive to the community and improving home educational environments, then the latter will have a more direct and immediate 'payoff' for student outcomes. The success of the British Excellence in Cities education mentors' programme is a case in point (Radice, 2001; Coughlan, 2001). Of course, having a strong community focus may be important for other reasons, such as for the development of social capital in the community, especially in poor inner city and rural communities.

Broadening of Student Outcome Measures

The fourth implication is the need to broaden what counts for effective education beyond academic achievement. Self-concept is a case in point. Even though we, along with others (for example Silins & Murray-Harvey, 2000), found that academic self-concept did not link to other student outcomes, including academic achievement, it does not follow that academic self-concept is not an important student outcome. For example, pupil self-concept has been shown to be related to later life successes such as employment and earnings (Feinstein, 2000). Data from this British cohort study followed all children born in the UK in the first week of April 1970 and surveyed them again in 1975, 1980, 1986, 1991 and 1996. At aged 10 in 1980 over 12,000 children were tested for mathematics and reading ability and the psychological attributes of self-esteem and locus of control. The children's teachers were questioned about their behavioural attributes of conduct disorder, peer relations, attentiveness, and extraversion. In 1996, at age 26, information was collected on highest qualification attained, earnings, and periods of unemployment. The author, an economist, summarises his findings as follows:

attentiveness in school has been shown to be a key aspect of human capital production, also influencing female wages even conditioning on qualifications. Boys with high levels of conduct disorder are much more likely to experience unemployment but higher self-esteem will both reduce the likelihood of that unemployment lasting more than a year and, for all males, increase wages. The locus of control measure ... is an important predictor of female wages ... Good peer relations are important in the labour market, particularly for girls, reducing the probability of unemployment and increasing female wages. (p. 22)

[These results] suggest strongly that more attention might be paid to the non-academic behaviour and development of children as a means of identifying future difficulties and labour market opportunities. It also suggests that schooling ought not be assessed solely on the basis of the production of reading and maths ability. (p. 20)

Findings such as these, as well as those from the LOLSO Research Project, add weight to those expressing concerns about the sole reliance on academic achievement as the measure of a school's success [2].

The UK Government's recent White Paper (DfES, 2001) gives hope that this argument may be being accepted when it states that, 'Critical though effective academic education is to children's life chances, it is not the only important part of schooling', and that 'we want schools to play their part in developing rounded individuals who are prepared well for adult life' (p. 15). LOLSO's emphasis on children's active participation in their education is also given priority in the Government's support for schools to 'encourage children's active participation in decisions that affect them', the introduction of citizenship

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into the National Curriculum promoting not just political literacy but also 'social and moral responsibility and community involvement', and extending 'opportunities for children to be involved in out-of-school activities' (p. 15).

Another interesting development in the White Paper is the interest in pupil voice, with proposals not only for greater involvement but also adding pupil voice to the requirements for inspection. This development may be timely, for research is now 'beginning to encounter students expressing doubts about the genuineness of their school's interest in their progress and well-being as persons, as distinct from their contributions to their school's league table position. [The result is that] contract replaces community as the bond of human association' (Fielding, 1999, p. 286). Another recent study based on interviews with 195 Year 10 and 11 pupils found their attitudes towards school to be uniformly negative. Most worrying, however, was that teachers were beginning to be seen by their students as only representing other people's wills as they seek out the best means to adapt to the requirements of academic achievement results and inspection: 'every effort that a teacher makes to cajole the pupils into more work is interpreted as a sign of the teacher's selfish insecurity ... all appears to be done for the sake of the external powers' (Cullingford, 2001, p. 7).

Despite research such as the LOLSO Project pointing to the importance of not just pupil but teacher voice for successful school reform, the continued ignoring of teacher voice in this country is extremely baffling.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING IN CANVAS?

We are pleased to find that the results of the LOLSO Research Project and the implications for positive school reform that arise from these results are consistent with other contemporary research in the area. For example, in the USA both Goddard *et al.* (2000) and Heck (2000) have found close links between school environments and improved student learning. Goddard *et al.* found that 'collective teacher efficacy is a significant predictor of student achievement ... [and] is greater in magnitude than any one of the demographic controls [including SES]' (p. 500). These researchers conclude, 'a one unit increase in collective teacher efficacy is associated with an increase of more than 40% of a standard deviation in student achievement' (p. 501). Heck found that not only was higher SES directly related to greater student improvement and larger schools produced smaller student gains, but also that schools where the head teacher's leadership was rated as more supportive and directed towards instructional excellence and school improvement and the school climate was seen in positive terms 'produced greater-than-expected improvements in student learning over time' (pp. 538–539).

In this country, detailed case study research following up on 11 effective schools in disadvantaged areas some five years after the initial investigation (Maden, 2001) has found that the levers of change and improvement included: distributive leadership ('It is tempting to dwell solely on the head teacher as a kind of miracle worker, but these heads know that, above all else, securing

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improvement comes through the hearts and minds of teachers' (p. 319) and '... extra mental and emotional energy seems to be triggered off by a shared sense of achievement, particularly when this is the result of the real efforts of staff and pupils' (p. 330)); organisational learning ('It is probable that 'school capacity' is the single most important matter in trying to identify how and why some schools maintain and sustain improvement' (p. 320)); and, pupil participation and engagement ('Effective headship seems always to include the nurturing of leadership opportunities for teachers, but also ... for pupils' (p. 327)).

In their chapter bringing together the lessons from a book of international research on leadership for change and school reform, Riley and Louis (2000) focus on leadership that is more than role-based, that is leadership as an organic activity involving the formation of a network of values-driven relationships. Integral to the success of such dispersed leadership are both pupil and teacher voice. Finally, an OECD nine-country study (OECD, 2001) on innovative initiatives in school management also concludes that 'Changes designed with little involvement of those destined to use them are rarely effective ... In that sense every teacher is a school leader ... It is striking ... how frequently team-working is cited as a key ingredient to the success of new approaches to school management'. The study points out that 'In such learning organisations, individuals and teams become reflective practitioners and are able to review their own situations and deal with problems or challenges as they arise' (p. 55).

It will be noted that LOLSO, as well as this other contemporary research, places much less emphasis on the organisational, managerial or strategic than has previously been the case. This should not be surprising when it is realised that there is very little evidence to link such an emphasis to either OL or student outcomes. Elsewhere (Mulford, 1998, 2000, 2001; Bishop & Mulford, 1996, 1999) we have discussed such 'transactional' leadership as too readily having the potential for 'facades of orderly purposefulness', 'doing things right rather than doing the right thing', 'building in canvas', or 'procedural illusions of effectiveness'.

Sizer (1984) has talked about 'Horace's Compromise', that is working toward a facade of orderly purposefulness, exchanging minimums in pursuit of the least hassle for everyone. Sometimes this compromise can be likened to 'doing things right' rather than 'doing the right thing'. As Sergiovanni (2000) noted, it has the same purpose as the latest military technology of 'building in canvas', that is, building folding canvas tanks and canvas missile launchers designed to serve as decoys and to create an illusion of strength. Thus the purpose for education is to provide the right public face, thus gaining the freedom for the government to interpret, decide, and function in ways that make short-term political but not necessarily long-term educational sense.

Meyer and Rowan (1978) point out that procedural illusions can be employed to maintain the myth of education and function to legitimise it to the outside world. In the absence of clear-cut output measures we turn to processes as outputs. For example, there are precise rules to classify types of head teachers, types of teachers, types of students, and sets of topics. All these rules

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and regulations, competency lists, strategic plans, examinations and so on give confidence to the outside (and to many of those inside) that the education system and its schools know what they are doing.

The structure of the system or school is the functioning myth of the organisation that operates not necessarily to regulate intra-organisational activity, but to explain it, account for it, and to legitimate it to the members outside the organisation and to the wider society. The transactions in educational organisations are concerned with legitimacy. Structures are offered that are congruent with the social expectations and understandings about what education should be doing; for example, process goals explicitly stated by an education department to help maintain or develop this legitimacy may influence the use of certain 'approved' consultants, the creation of organisational sub-units such as an audit section or office of review, the setting up of national examination boards and training institutions, and so on. While such actions may have little proven positive effect on what goes on in schools, classrooms or with pupils, they do, at the time of their creation, demonstrate congruence with the goals and expectations of the wider society as perceived by the department or authority.

Here we are talking about high visibility and the *impression* of decisiveness of action. Such goal displacement does, of course, raise important moral questions, especially if you believe, as we do, that deception has no place in education and its leadership or administration.

Galton (2000) makes the point well in terms of teachers:

By making certain techniques mandatory you run the danger of turning teachers into *technicians* who concentrate on the method and cease to concern themselves with ways that methods must be modified to take account of the needs of individual pupils. As we face the demands of a new century, creating a teaching profession which while technically competent was imaginatively sterile would be a recipe for disaster. (p. 203, emphasis in original)

As it is for teachers, so it is for leadership for school reform.

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NOTES

- [1] The Standing Conference for Research on Educational Leadership and Management (SCRELM) is currently involved in an exercise run through the EPPI Centre (EPPI Centre, 2001) seeking to assess the quality of research evidence of the impact of school leadership and management on pupil outcomes. After an extensive search of the literature, the pool of evidence is not very large.
- [2] Interestingly the Government's own National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education made this point: 'Ability comes in many forms and should not be defined only by traditional academic criteria. Academic ability alone will no longer guarantee success or personal achievement. Every child has capabilities beyond the traditionally academic ... Equally, creative and cultural education of the sort we propose can also help raise academic standards' (DfEE, 1999, p. 13).

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