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World Education Leadership Symposium Online Conference (WELSonline)

Initiator und Leiter / Initiator and Organizer:
Prof. Dr. Stephan Gerhard Huber

Veranstalter WELSonline 2020 (seit 2009) / Host WELSonline 2020 (since 2009):
Institut für Bildungsmanagement und Bildungsökonomie (IBB) / Institute for the Management and Economics of Education (IBB)
Pädagogische Hochschule Zug (PH Zug) / University of Teacher Education Zug (PH Zug)

Kooperationspartner / Cooperation Partners:
Schulleitungs- und Lehrerverbände, Ministerien und Behörden sowie weitere Hochschulen und Partner / Association of school leaders and teachers, ministries and authorities as well as further universities and partners

Overview on Leadership in Schools Under Challenging Circumstances

David Gurr
The University of Melbourne

Gurr, D. (2019) Panorama del liderazgo en escuelas de alta complejidad, in Jose Weinstein & Gonzalo Munoz (Eds) Liderazgo en Escuelas de Alta Complejidad Sociocultural, Diez Miradas (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales), pp. 19-70.

Leadership in challenging schools success strategies

- **Preconditions for success**
- **Complex leadership models**
- **School development stages**
- **Teaching and learning**
- **Strategic Interventions**
- **Family, community and system engagement**
- **Context sensitive leadership**
- **Leadership preparation and development**

Preconditions for success

- Physically and emotionally safe environment for all.

- Suitable venue and the provision of at least basic educational resources.

- High expectations of all, linked to agreed purposes and directions.

- Recruitment and development of appropriate staff – teachers and other staff that want to work in these schools, who act professionally and feel that they can make a difference.

All of these preconditions are aspects that principals can exert considerable influence over, and successful principals in challenging contexts seem to be able to do this more often.

Complex leadership models

Leadership to match the stage of school development seems to be important.

Transactional and authoritarian to collaborative and authoritative style.

Teaching and learning

There has to be a focus on teaching and learning.

The often top-down approach of instructional leadership will likely be important to establish basic requirements in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, but the more contemporary ideas of leadership for learning are most likely better suited long-term as these promote teacher collaboration, development and efficacy.

Strategic Interventions

Principals and other school leaders need to engage in purposeful and strategic interventions that reflect the needs and contexts of their schools and which reflect an unrelenting concern to provide an educational experience that enhances student outcomes.

Strategies for sustaining improvement over time:

- Building teaching and leadership expertise
- Structure teaching to ensure all students succeed
- Using data to drive improvement
- A culture of sharing and responsibility
- Tailoring initiatives to the overall direction of the school
- Engendering pride in the school

Zbar, Marshall & Power (2007); Macklin & Zbar (2018)

Family, community and system engagement

Engaging with family, community and systems is crucial for exceptional student outcomes in these schools.

Increasing social capital and influencing family education culture.

Reciprocal relationship between school and community.

University support – improvement programs, critical friends, improvement consultants.

Context sensitive leadership

Contextual influences are clearly important, but in many cases of successful leadership in challenging contexts it is evident that school leaders are not so constrained by context; some principals seem to be less constrained by context, and can indeed influence context to support their school improvement work.

With principals that are less successful, it may be that context plays a larger part in how their leadership impacts on their school, and one that makes successful outcomes more difficult to achieve.

Leadership preparation and development

There is little guidance in relation to the identification, preparation, recruitment and development of school leaders in challenging contexts.

What we do see, however, is that schools in challenging circumstances often have a principal who has come from the same community or a similar community, and/or who has a passion for working in these schools (often manifested as a strong sense of social justice).

It seems that based on our knowledge about the challenges faced, system efforts to identify, prepare, recruit and then support people in principal and other leadership roles would be beneficial for the success of schools in challenging contexts.

The paper

Importance of leadership.

Identifying challenging circumstances.

Leadership in challenging circumstances.
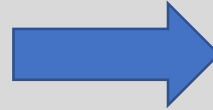
Glenn Proctor and Hume Central Secondary College (McCrohan, Drysdale, Huerta Villalobos).

Conclusion - eight trustworthy statements that can be made about leading schools in challenging contexts.

Research

- **UK - Harris & Chapman; Ainscow and West; Smith & Bell.**

- **USA, Canada - Leithwood, Harris & Strauss; Bryk.**

- **Australia - Zbar, Kimber, Marshall, Power, Macklin.**

- **Chile - Fless, Bramwell, Fernandez and Weinstein; Alvarado.**

- **Mexico - Torres Arcadia, Bustamante & Murakami.**

- **ISLDN - Murakami, Gurr, Notman, Drysdale, Barnett.**

- **ISSPP – Gurr, Drysdale, Goode, McCrohan, Longmuir.**

Local, national and international collaboration

Thank you

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