Transformation and Emotional Literacy: The role of school leaders in developing a caring community

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ABSTRACT: *Emotional literacy is a values-based concept that incorporates not only individual knowledge and skills but also the processes and practices in an organisation which demonstrate and develop relational values, such as respect, inclusion, compassion and fairness. These values are being promoted in education through the Framework for Values in Australian Schools (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005). This paper summarises research on the intra- and interpersonal capacities of school leaders and the impact of their relational values, skills and leadership style on the ethos of their schools. The author presents findings of a qualitative research project on the development of emotional literacy in Australian schools, specifically exploring the role of the principal in moving forward their vision of a caring community. Findings suggest that an eco-systemic model is useful in the conceptualisation of the bi-directional and interactive factors that create the culture of 'how we think about and relate to each other here' and the affective elements associated with this. Positive discourses of care and community are facilitated where teachers feel included, respected and valued and where leaders model high expectations for intrapersonal and relational behaviour.*

Introduction

There is now a wealth of literature to support strong links between the affective and the cognitive in the learning environment (Zins et al., 2004). Caring schools, in which all feel valued, enhance learning by supporting the active engagement and motivation of students (Abbott et al., 1998), positive teacher-student relationships (Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994), pro-social behaviours (Pasi, 2001) and improved home-school communications (Roffey, 2004). This evidence for the educational efficacy of constructing caring communities gives validity to exploring what this means in practice and the processes by which it may be achieved. This paper focuses on the values, qualities and actions of school leaders in this endeavour.

Management and Leadership

It has been said that managers are concerned with doing things right while leaders are concerned about doing the right thing: managers control while leaders facilitate, and that managers

work *in* the organisation whereas leaders work *on* the organisation (Ellyard, 2001). Where an executive is primarily management-focused this does not necessarily take account of the centrality of human relationships in the efficacy of an organisation. For leaders, however, this is the vehicle by which their organisations thrive, develop and achieve their best outcomes – whether this is the production of cars, efficient transport systems or the education of students. There is increasing evidence (George, 2000; Goleman et al., 2002a & 2002b; Scott, 2003) that relational issues are strongly implicated in the culture and efficacy of an organisation and the wellbeing of those who work within it. The vision, values, leadership style and emotional competencies of the leader are central.

Qualities of Transformational Leadership

The pivotal role of leaders in the transformation of organisations is well researched. Channer and Hope (2001) interviewed six successful business people who had delivered transformational change, to identify what they had in common. They were from varied social, cultural and educational backgrounds and worked in different industries but were united by their determination to make a difference. Each claimed a passion for their goals and said they were more driven by doing 'the right thing' than achieving status or monetary reward. There was little focus on personal ego and they were more interested in being judged against their legacy rather than their current position. These leaders all demonstrated a strong belief in other people and both trusted and empowered others. Their instinct was to take charge but use the team around them to deliver a goal. These leaders demonstrated high levels of integrity, honesty, energy and curiosity, were responsible and conscientious, valuing excellence in themselves and others. They were prepared to take risks and if necessary change themselves, acknowledging what they did not know. They were self-reliant and although analytical were tuned into their own intuition, using data to back their hunches. Significantly all were able to 'switch off' when necessary and not become overwhelmed by pressure. There was congruence between their values in all areas. Most had strong and supportive relationships with their parents and in their current home life. There was little indication that their vision at work was in some way making up for what was lacking in their personal lives.

Channer and Hope (2001) conclude that many qualities in their study had been identified before in leadership research, but the characteristics that defined these six individuals were firstly their humanity – they had the same hopes, fears and concerns as everyone else – and secondly their ability to leverage their own emotions in making a difference and to effectively connect with others in making transformational change.

Others have confirmed and extended these findings. Goleman and his colleagues (Goleman et al., 2002a) were particularly interested in how leaders create a climate that fosters sustainable change and again came to the conclusion that emotional intelligence accounts for the greatest difference between average and outstanding leaders. Goleman also suggests it is how people feel about the place they are working that accounts for 20–30% of business performance. In a quantitative study of 70 managers, Higgs (2002) found strong correlations between six out of seven elements of emotional intelligence (as defined by Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999) with all five

factors in the Change Leadership Competency model (Higgs & Rowland, 2000). According to Wolff and colleagues (2002) leadership often emerges when someone is able to influence and manage emotions within a group, providing direction in times of ambiguity. This involves both empathy and modelling of emotional responses that increase solidarity and help others make meaning of a situation. This facilitates the group moving forward together in the change process.

School Leadership

These findings in the corporate world have resonance with Hoerr's statement on school leadership (2006, p. 7):

> A leader sets the vision but doesn't stop there. A leader listens, understands, motivates, reinforces and makes the tough decisions. A leader passes out praise when things go well and takes responsibility and picks up the pieces when things fall apart. Leadership is about relationships.

Leadership is potentially widely dispersed throughout a school, from students to teachers to the executive. In this paper, however, the primary focus is on the role of school principals and the ways in which they influence school culture.

As principals are often cited as the key agents of school success (e.g. Fullan, 2001), there has been increasing interest in the qualities of the effective principal. Research for the New South Wales Department of Education (Scott, 2003) highlights the centrality of the intra and interpersonal capacities of school leaders. When asked about the most challenging aspects of their job principals were primarily concerned with relationships. They ranked the qualities of effective school leaders as follows:

1. *Emotional intelligence (personal)*: This included staying calm, keeping things in perspective and maintaining a sense of humour. Resilience and bouncing back from adversity, learning from errors and being able to take a hard decision also came under this category – along with wanting to achieve the best outcome possible.

2. *Emotional intelligence (interpersonal)* included dealing effectively with conflict situations, being able to empathise and work productively with people from a wide range of backgrounds, a willingness to listen to different points of view before making decisions and contributing positively to team projects.

3. *Intellectual abilities* included identifying priorities and being flexible. Generic and specific skills covered having a clear justified vision for the school and being able to organise and manage time effectively.

Parkes (2003) talks about how values flow into and help to shape culture. She identified a set of 'values in action' for effective principals, categorised into three domains: the interpersonal, operational style and personal qualities. These were congruent with Scott's findings above and included valuing quality relationships, care and collaboration, self-respect and open, ethical practice. This is not confined to the Western world. Raihani and Gurr (2006) affirmed that trust, caring and empathy were among the values that influenced the practice of principals in Indonesian schools.

A high value on relational values and emotional intelligence are especially desired qualities for school leaders in 'turning schools around' and the management of transformational change. (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) found that the sustainability of change depends on the level of 'relational trust' that permeates a school. They identified this in four dimensions – respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity. High levels of trust between adults in schools is also predictive of higher student academic outcomes (Beatty & Brew, 2005).

 Chatterjee (2006) concludes that it is less the 'common objective' that evokes the best performances from people but the 'shared subjective'. Wise leaders transform the quality of relationships within organisations and this means developing a framework of 'shared values'. This work echoes that of Duignan (1997) who talks about the identification of an 'authentic self' in leadership where values and relationships are central. He makes the point that a lack of such authenticity reduces integrity and undermines ethical leadership. Begley (2006) builds on this by saying that the three pre-requisites for authentic leadership are self-knowledge, sensitivity to the orientations of others and the capacity for moral reasoning.

Fullan (2003), Duignan (2005) and others focus on the moral purpose of educational leadership – schools which promote a more just and democratic society. The study described below gives credence to the view that this moral imperative, emotional literacy, caring school communities and transformative school leadership are not discrete entities but interactive aspects of the same package.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on an investigation into the process of developing emotional literacy in Australian schools. Emotional literacy is defined here as the values, knowledge, skills, and practices that are the foundations for positive relationships and a caring community. This includes not only individual qualities, but also the processes and practices in an organisation that demonstrate and develop relational values.

This paper reports on the specific aspects of the study related to school leaders. What are the values, vision, role, style and skills of principals who are intent on establishing a caring and inclusive school community?

As the focus of the study was in processes and meanings, a qualitative methodology was adopted to explore factors that might support the development of emotional literacy in a school and those that inhibit it. This involved enquiring how school culture changed over time in the target schools. Who were the change-agents and what did they do? What difference did a focus on relationships and relational values mean for both staff and students? In which ways did they perceive the current ethos contributing to their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others? What differences were perceived in terms of student learning?

The research took place over a period of six months in six Australian schools: four primary and two high schools. Five schools were in New South Wales and one in Victoria, two in the Catholic system and the others in the public system. These schools were identified by school counsellors or by the author as making a concerted effort to promote positive relationships throughout the organisation. One was cited in the New South Wales Department of Education and

Training website as focusing on emotional literacy. Students were from varied backgrounds, both ethically and socially, one school being predominantly professional families and another with a large Aboriginal population. Difference between schools was seen as valuable in that it explored evidence for emotional literacy being meaningful and applicable universally. The principals had been in their schools for differing lengths of time. Some were building on existing culture, but for others the realisation of their vision of a caring community required transformational change. Because of the small number of schools involved no further identifying details are given here to protect individual confidentiality.

In four schools data were gathered from principals, teachers, students and school counsellors, in two the principal only was interviewed, one by telephone. Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire and all staff given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in focus groups. In one primary school all staff were interviewed, in two others one teacher group was interviewed and in one high school three group interviews took place. The staff groups were between five and nine individuals. Students from student representative councils were also interviewed in groups comprising five to seven individuals from across year groups.

School counsellors were interviewed individually with the exception of one school, which employed several counsellors. Principals were interviewed individually. Interviews were recorded (except in the phone interview) and tapes transcribed in full. Written notes were also kept.

The qualitative data from both the questionnaires and the interviews were entered into a software program, HyperResearch. This facilitated a rigorous analysis in which both themes and theories emerged and were developed and thickened into rich description by category search and cross checking. The analysis was particularly focused on how the strands of incremental change were interconnected.

Findings and Discussion

The process of developing a caring school community begins with the values and vision of school leaders but much more is needed to turn this vision into reality. Figure 1 summarises the factors involved.

Values:

The values and moral imperative of school leaders in this study underpinned their vision for their school and provided the driver for action in their daily professional lives. Each demonstrated a passion for the whole child and their wellbeing and were highly aspirational for all the students in their care.

> The school was the kids, everything was centred on the children and all of her interactions with the parents, the staff … she always brought it back to what's best for this child (school counsellor).

> While staff and parents are vitally important, school is designed around children. Variations or decisions might cause discomfort to staff or parents, but if the net result is a positive for the students, we will be deliberate in our actions (principal).

For some principals in this study these values were perceived as their faith in action, confirming other research findings (e.g. Day et al., 2000; Keyes et al., 1999).

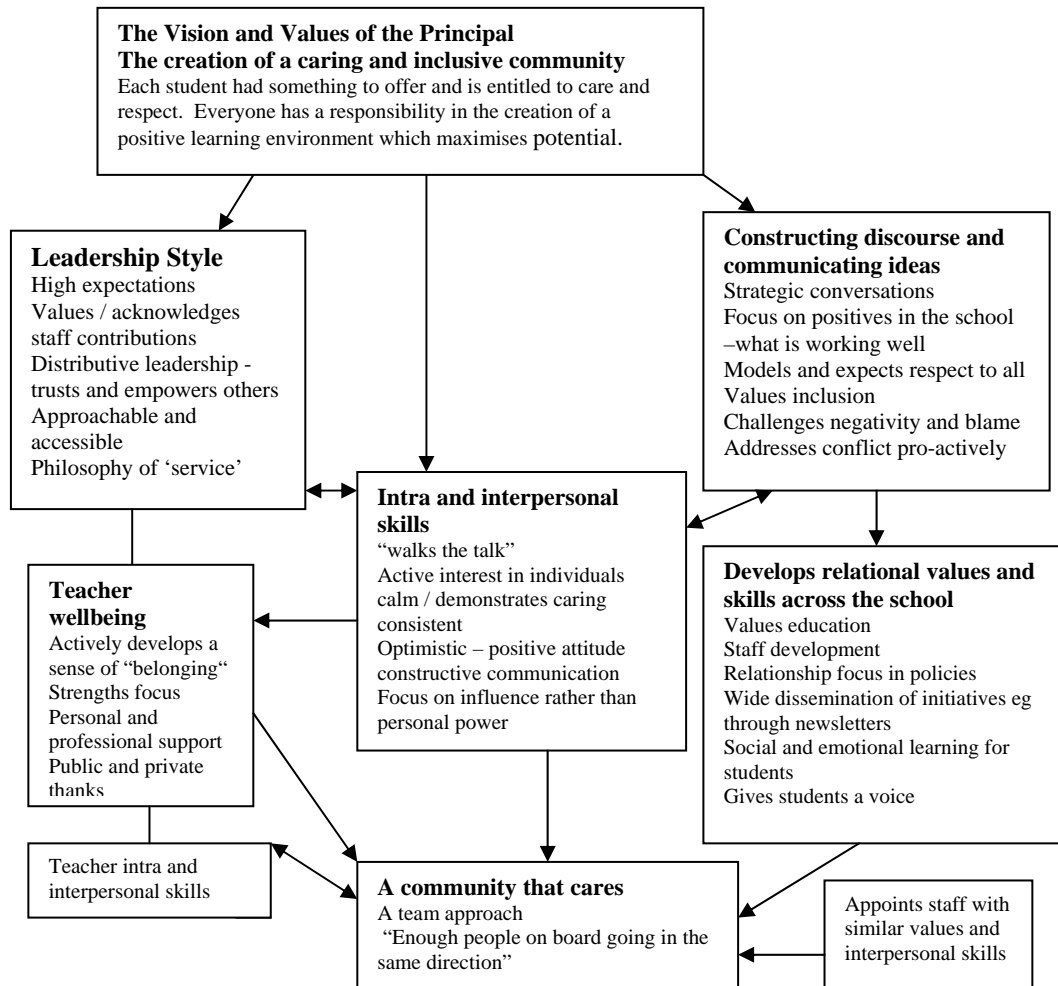> We have a belief about how human beings should interact with each other (principal).

> Catholic Education is very much about education of the whole child (principal).

Values of inclusion, social justice and respect for diversity were, unsurprisingly, strong features of all interviews with principals. This reflects the call for socially responsible leadership and educational practices that model an ethic of community responsibility and care (Duignan, 2005).

> To have any sort of racist comment or other negative is not acceptable. We build an acceptance of others, all are different but all have a place (principal).

Other research (NCSL 2005) emphasises the role of the leader in defining the direction and moral purpose of the organisation; the core values that underpin the vision. This supports Sergiovanni's view (2006) that leadership is about first and foremost about ideas.

FIGURE 1: FROM VISION TO PRACTICE

The Vision and Values of the Principal
The creation of a caring and inclusive community
Each student had something to offer and is entitled to care and respect. Everyone has a responsibility in the creation of a positive learning environment which maximises potential.

Leadership Style
High expectations
Values / acknowledges staff contributions
Distributive leadership - trusts and empowers others
Approachable and accessible
Philosophy of 'service'

Constructing discourse and communicating ideas
Strategic conversations
Focus on positives in the school –what is working well
Models and expects respect to all
Values inclusion
Challenges negativity and blame
Addresses conflict pro-actively

Intra and interpersonal skills
"walks the talk"
Active interest in individuals
calm / demonstrates caring
consistent
Optimistic – positive attitude
constructive communication
Focus on influence rather than personal power

Develops relational values and skills across the school
Values education
Staff development
Relationship focus in policies
Wide dissemination of initiatives eg through newsletters
Social and emotional learning for students
Gives students a voice

Teacher wellbeing
Actively develops a sense of "belonging"
Strengths focus
Personal and professional support
Public and private thanks

Teacher intra and interpersonal skills

A community that cares
A team approach
"Enough people on board going in the same direction"

Appoints staff with similar values and interpersonal skills

Vision:

The personal vision that principals had for their schools was the demonstration of their values in practice. They were determined to preside over a school that honoured the potential of each individual, a place that would value and care about each student. Relational values and relationship skills were seen as central.

> You have to invest in people (principal).
>
> Emotional literacy creates a community that looks after the people in that community. It is pragmatic in working towards a settled environment where people care about each other. Kids feel safe and happy and content to come to school - they like the teachers and the other kids (principal).

The Framework for Values in Australian Schooling (2005) is congruent with the vision of a caring community. This directive is likely to be influential in the increasing concern for the wellbeing of Australian children (e.g. Stanley et al., 2005) and the responsibility of schools in promoting both resilience and pro-social values (e.g. Robinson & Curry, 2006). As evidenced by many examples in project schools (Curriculum Corporation, 2006) this initiative is both a hook and a driver for a focus on the establishment of healthy relationships and the development of the emotional literacy that underpin these in practice.

The processes of change:

Change occurred over time not only because of the passion of the principals for the wellbeing of the students in their care and how they communicated their vision, but also their influence on how people thought about and interacted with students and with each other. Some school leaders appeared to be more aware and active in this regard, especially in fostering emotionally significant experiences in which people felt positive about themselves in school. In these schools there was more evidence of sustainable culture change.

Davies and Davies (2006) confirm that building capacity in people and in organisations needs a focus on 'creative thinking and strategic conversations rather than on filling in documents' (p. 17). The role of the principal was to bring everyone 'on board' or at least as many as would ensure a defined direction. Principals had to find a fine balance between high expectations of interpersonal behaviour for both students and staff, an inclusive leadership style and staff feeling supported and valued. This was challenging and required principals to stay focused and resilient.

Communicating values and expectations:

Nemec (2006) observes that the emotionally literate principal articulates the school mission clearly, refers to it and describes how it will shape change and create the school's future. All principals in this study were overt in their relational values and expectations and that these applied to both students and to staff. Communicating these occurred formally within the curriculum and professional development but also as a consistent element of conversation.

> (The principal) gave everyone a copy of the document Values in Public Education, and we discussed that, and how it was being done in our school, but it freshened everyone's memories and reminded them (teacher).

> We put up displays saying: 'these are the values that we're teaching, this is the one we're focusing on.' We advertised it in the newsletter. So it became something that was part of the community discourse (principal).

> Through all core areas there were lessons where we had discussions about bullying, respect, how we treat others and how we want to be treated (principal).

Although care was a high priority, most principals ensured policies did not condone uncaring behaviour from students and put in place consequences that were adhered to.

> No-one gave a damn about anybody - it was all about 'me', a blackboard jungle - fights etc. We had to introduce some sort of policy / procedure and guidelines which would bring about self-responsibility, discipline and mutual responsibility. We had a policy with heart for behaviour. Consequences were adhered to. These were rules to live by" (principal).

In the main, principals focused on promoting the positive rather than imposing sanctions for breaking the rules.

> I had a philosophy about children. We would not have detention, wailing walls of branded for one or two things that happen (principal).

Some teachers, however, wanted sanctions for poor behaviour rigorously applied and felt unsupported when they did not perceive this happening.

> (On reluctance to exclude students): How dare you do this to us, you don't support us, you are here for the kids. The challenge is to make things seen as fair (principal).

Staff wellbeing:

A focus on staff wellbeing quickly emerged as fundamental in being both strategic and congruent. There is evidence that a number of teachers have experiences in school that are far from caring or supportive, impacting on their motivation and morale (Holmes, 2005).

> I make it my business to know about the staff - have they been having enough sleep, birthday cards etc. Making them feel valued. If they are noticed and acknowledged it will flow through to the kids (principal).

As students who feel valued and respected are more likely to have a commitment to school, so too were staff.

> The faith that he had in me propelled me to give of my best, and to go beyond the call of duty. I was prepared to do anything and everything for the school (school counsellor).

> I think the teachers here really feel supported, and cared about and looked after, and valued, and therefore that translates over into the classroom (teacher).

> It makes you feel comfortable if your teachers are funny, it makes you enjoy school more, you actually want to go to school because you know you'll have a great day (student).

It was a challenge for principals when teachers believed their wellbeing was in competition with demanding students. Principals used a number of positive approaches to support such staff but in the end a strong commitment to student inclusion and wellbeing took precedence over demands to exclude and punish. Although this did happen in these schools it was seen as a last resort where other consequences for unacceptable behaviour were exhausted.

Leadership style:

"Leaders have a special responsibility to establish shared cultures" (Fullan, 2003, p. 67). A leader who is in the business of creating a 'caring community' needs to be able to both involve others in this task and to demonstrate what is meant by his or her vision. As Fullan (2003) points out: "School leadership is a collaborative enterprise" (p. xv). This requires a leadership style that empowers and trusts others.

> First and foremost, it has to be collaborative. You can't have someone from the top saying: 'this is what we're going to do'. You need to give everyone the opportunity… to have ownership of it and to put their thoughts to it (teacher).

> You have to give staff a sense that they have a real say (principal).

Acknowledgement and involvement appeared to be significant factors in both the wellbeing of staff and in their willingness to buy into the vision that was being presented and feel part of the team in developing their school.

> It's about us doing things, so teachers do feel involved, teachers do feel that their contributions are valued (teacher).

Regular, constructive communication helped with this process.

> The communication lines here, whether it be through our bulletins each week, or whatever, you're really very well informed, and I think that's probably a big thing, you can get on and do your job and not be frustrated by not knowing something's happening (teacher).

Where involvement and recognition were consistent and publicly visible, this impacted on the development of a positive school culture and 'the way we do things around here'.

Power and influence:

Leadership is often acknowledged as a complex process of mutual influence (Simkins, 2005), but the hierarchical nature of schools meant that power was sometimes seen to reside in those who had either the executive position or the 'ear' of the principal and this had the potential to undermine a feeling of collaborative endeavour.

In high schools in particular, access to the principal was an issue despite an official 'open door' policy.

> I know that (the principal) does have an open door and every so often, I just wander over there and have a chat about what's happened, but I guess I know that because I've been here for a long time. With new staff members, if she actually came up and said, 'how's it going … come over and make an appointment to see me in the next day or two, I'd love to see you properly' (teacher).

> Sometimes I hesitate to go and talk to (the principal), I still think I'm imposing (teacher).

On occasions principals did, however, need to assert the authority of their role and challenge teacher behaviour that was not congruent with a caring community.

> It is not acceptable at this school to speak to kids as second class citizens (teacher).

This was not always an easy task and required a high level of skill.

Inter and intrapersonal competencies of school leaders:

The leadership style chosen by principals was both a reflection of their own beliefs and values about how people should relate to each other together with their own emotional literacy. The ways in which they interacted with everyone and managed the everyday stress and challenges of schools provided a model for expectations.

> It has to be modelled on the way that the leadership of the school and the staff interact with each other (principal).

> I've got really high expectations, and I don't expect anything I wouldn't do myself, and haven't done myself (principal).

Although they sometimes fell short, particularly in admitting mistakes, the overall impression was that principals had won the respect of their staff for 'walking the talk'. Although there was some criticism of school leaders, there was little indication of double standards.

> (The principal), he's definitely a positive person, he's very key to the school, he's emotionally literate (teacher).

> I saw her handle some difficult situations in staff meetings - very fairly and respectfully, but also very firmly … her skills were very high in this area of social and emotional literacy (school counsellor).

Being positive:

Intra-personal attributes of principals included their ability to stay optimistic and resilient. There is evidence that these are strongly related (Frederickson & Tugade, 2004). Some, however, spoke of the 'personal cost' and effort involved in adhering to the principles of a caring and inclusive community.

> It was originally a battle with staff, parents and kids … I was a wreck, working 7 days a week (principal).

The moods of leaders can permeate organisations (Bower, 1991) and focusing on what is working well makes a difference to how reality is constructed.

> We're always talking about what is good about the place … if we're all saying it, then we all start believing it, and if we all believe it then it is an enriched place - for all of us (principal).

There is now a growing body of evidence about the benefits of 'positive emotionality' (Frederickson et al., 2000) and some principals went to some lengths to promote good feelings in their schools.

> I think the big thing with the bulletin the very first things that ever gets mentioned are the 'thank-you's ... (teacher).

> ... and the individual staff are mentioned for the effort that they've put in the previous week, and, that's the most important thing, it's mentioned first, before any of the 'this is what's happening this week', it does come from the top down (teacher).

An optimistic outlook also had an impact on how staff dealt with issues.

> The few things that I've come across that might be negative, get talked through, and then the negativity is pushed aside, really, it's turned around (teacher).

Optimism and resilience were boosted by having supportive colleagues. For several principals this included the school counsellor whilst others also appointed senior staff who shared their vision.

> I appointed an additional deputy who I could trust who believed in the same things I did (principal).

Patience also featured strongly in the interviews. These principals knew there are no 'quick fixes' and that they were in for the long haul. This was part of their commitment.

> The school is not perfect but it's learning. We are trying to reinvent ourselves every year.

> It has taken 8 years.

Sustainability:

There is a downside to the influence of the impassioned leader unless they take steps to embed the culture of a caring community in their school. Both staff and principals come and go and the student body also changes over time. The creation of a strong school community means that many in that community take responsibility for maintaining the values and principles on which it is founded. Effective transformation requires power to be invested in others (Telford, 1996). Leadership throughout the school ensures that the maintenance of culture is not invested in a small powerful group.

> It's a multi-pronged attack - active and vociferous. The student representative council are happy about this - we need their involvement (principal).

It became clear that not only was it important to have people 'on board' but at times these needed to be the 'right people' who could at least be persuaded to buy into the vision. For some this may mean a paradigm shift in the way students are conceptualised, the goals of education and the role of the educator. There were several instances of initially negative or cynical members of staff who eventually shifted their perspective as they witnessed positive outcomes in the school and experienced respectful and caring relationships themselves.

> The whole culture has changed…Kids now know how you speak to each other with respect; peers or teachers or ancillaries or cleaners. Once it's there it becomes the way things are (principal).

The development of caring is articulated and demonstrated in both conversations and actions that together form the culture of 'the ways things happen around here'. Specific practices were crucial. The 'No Put Down Zone' notices pasted all around one school, including classrooms, staffroom and office were a focus for both conversation and expectation – reinforcing the discourse that creates culture. This affected the way people felt about themselves and others. The frequently stated view 'this school is a happy place to be' was supported by reports of good attendance figures and staff retention.

A disparaging discourse was, however, emerging in one school where the principal had recently left, highlighting again the importance of sustainability.

> I was at a school where we had a fantastic principal, and there was hardly any staff absences, staff morale was high, and things got done, extracurricular things got done, and the staff wanted to do those things, and then that principal retired, we had a new principal come in, who did things very differently and people just transferred out of the staff, out of

the school, left right and centre, and now it's only very few left in the school. So I think a lot of it does come from the top, from expectations from the top, and role modelling from the top, as well (teacher).

Those who appoint school leaders have a responsibility to ensure that incoming principals have the vision and skills to support and sustain what is working well.

Conclusion

Fullan (2003), Duignan (2005) and Sergiovanni (2006) have all written extensively about the 'moral imperatives' of school leadership. Fullan provides an overarching definition:

> … having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced and what people learn enable them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society (p. 29).

Sergiovanni (2006) maintains there is little purpose to leadership if there is nothing significant to follow and emphasises, above interpersonal skills, the values and goals that underpin the shared endeavour of an educational community. He defines moral leadership as the ability to build connections that transform schools from ordinary organisations to communities with a commitment to a shared purpose. If that purpose includes developing healthy and sustaining relationships and the sense of connectedness that underpins both individual resilience and thriving communities, then an ethic of care needs to be an integral part of what happens in schools alongside an ethic of social justice (Noddings, 2002).

An ecological analysis (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) illustrates that outcomes at any moment are not simple cause and effect but the accumulation of bi-directional, interactive factors, and that change occurs incrementally in one direction or another over time. Figure 2 is a simple graphic illustration of the different levels at which a caring school community may be constructed with the principal in the centre as the driving force. These systems are in constant flow with reciprocal influences determining 'the ways things happen around here'.

The outer macro system in Bronfenbrenner's model (not illustrated here) refers to the politics, law and culture of a society. This also needs to be influential in a positive way, modelling relational values and actively supporting the wellbeing of the whole child within a healthy caring community. The literature abounds with examples about how this is not happening: stressed and burnt out teachers, reduced resources and increased demands, students and staff who become disconnected from their 'authentic' selves and from each other (Beatty, 2007). The Values in Australian Schools initiative is a step in the right direction, but not yet enough.

There is a symbiotic relationship between goal of a caring community and the processes by which this comes about. How people feel about their school and themselves within it matters not only for academic attainment but also for much broader social outcomes. The emotionally literate principal is active in taking account of this. An emotionally literate society would make it a high priority.

FIGURE 2: AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL IN DEVELOPING A CARING COMMUNITY.
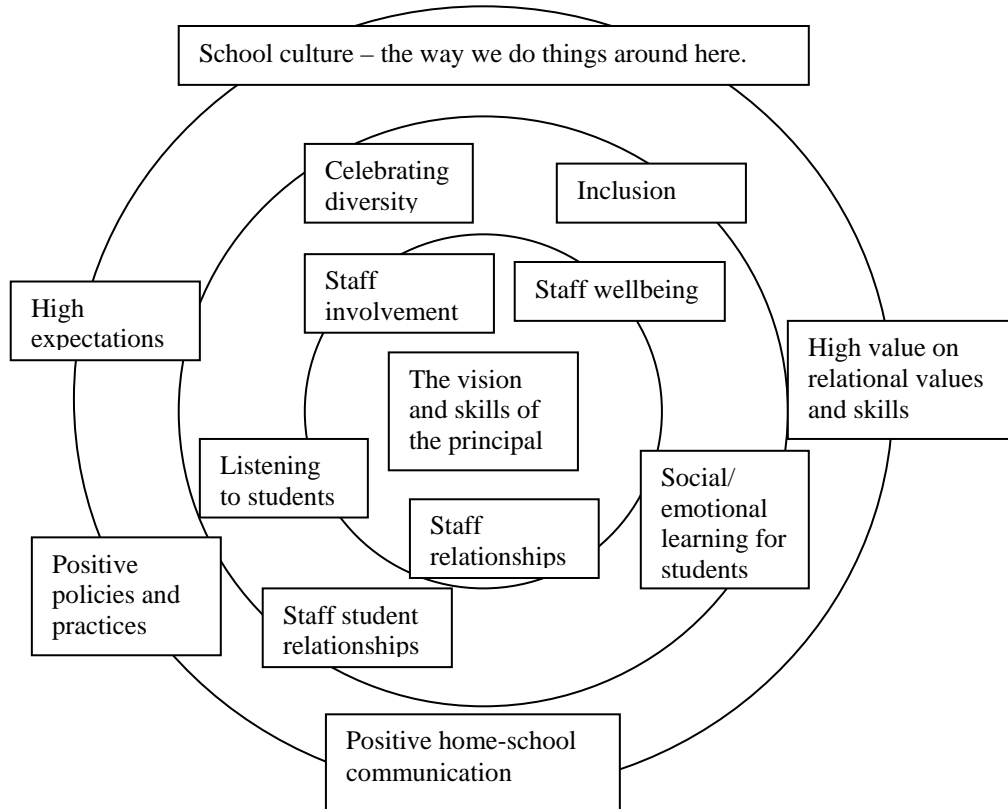
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