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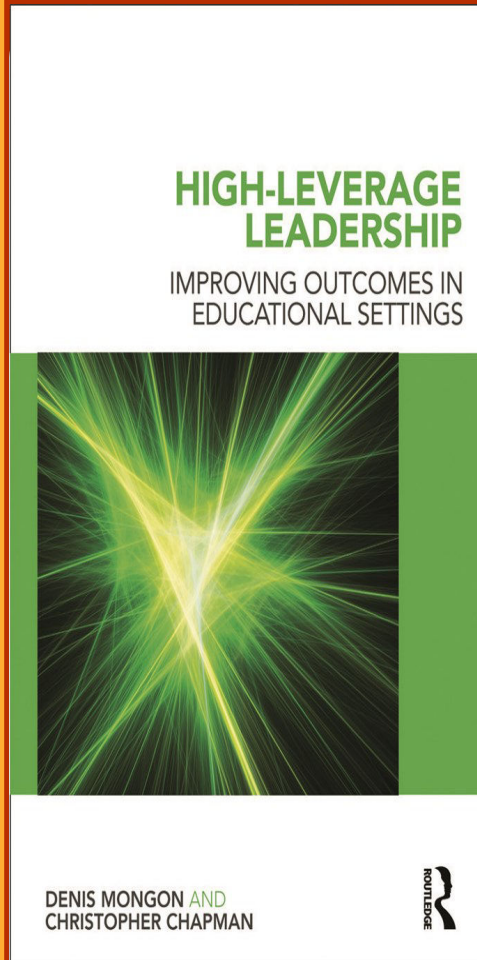
High Leverage Leadership

Improving Outcomes in Educational Settings

Table of Content

HIGH-LEVERAGE LEADERSHIP

IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

DENIS MONGON AND CHRISTOPHER CHAPMAN

About the Authors

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INTRODUCTION

In the view of Mongon and Chapmann, a world without leaders or leadership is unimaginable. In their opinion, there are always people directing, influencing and organizing in one way or the other, there are leaders in every society, sector and sphere of life who have been the corner stone of society, these leaders are trusted and hold a strong set of values and beliefs with unwavering integrity and humility. In the opinion of Mongon and Chapmann, the context of leadership has transformed rapidly due to improvement in technology and media. The aim of this book is to unravel the work of principals and head teachers who are successful against all odds, to expose the complexity of their educational leadership and offer accessible insights into their key practices.

The authors used the term "high-leverage leadership" to describe leadership that is associated with higher outcomes than normal.

Chapter 1

In this chapter, three themes were explored,
*An overview of the development of educational leadership research,

*A number of theories and practices associated with educational leadership, and ,

*The emerging challenges that brought the conclusion that re-conceptualization of educational leadership is necessary if we are to maximize educational outcomes

Why Educational Leadership? Why Educatio

Mongon and Chapmann are of the opinion that high leverage leaders engage in three forms of related activities ; navigation, management and partnership to produce higher outcomes for the younger

Mongon and Chapman realized that the past decades have witnessed an increased attention on educational leadership and has introduced new ideas into the industry forming a bedrock for educational research.

According to them, academic researchers such as Gronn (1996), Ronald Edmonds(1979)linked effective schools for the urban poor to institutional leadership. Rutter et al(1979) highlighted the relationship between school leadership and effective schooling.

In the opinion of Mongon and Chapman, the three year research conducted by Day et al(2010)
Identified ten strong claims of importance to educational leadership.

10 Claims

The claims are:

1. Head teachers are the main source of leadership.
2. There are eight key dimensions of successful leadership.
3. Head teachers' values are key components in their successful leadership.
4. Successful heads use the same basic leadership practices but there is no single model for achieving success.
5. Differences in context affect the nature, direction and pace of leadership actions.
6. Heads contribute to students learning and achievement through a combination and accumulation of strategies and actions.
7. There are three broad phases of leadership success.
8. Heads grow and secure success by layering leadership strategies and actions.
9. Successful leadership distribute leadership progressively.
10. The successful distribution of leadership depends on the establishment of trust.

The authors are of the opinion that these strong claims highlighted some key messages And also raised some doubts, which raised some issues, such as; the relationship between leadership and school improvement is not as established as we think. Second, research funding. Third, stability and sustainability of effects over time. Fourth, managarialism and performativity, and the fifth has to do with principals being the main agent of change at the same time the primary unit of analysis for accountability purposes. Mongon and Chapman believe that the attention given to educational leader is worthwhile.

What works in leadership?

Leadership and management are closely related. While Leadership is concerned with doing the right things, management is concerned with doing things right. Mongon and Chapman outlined six leadership models from Bush(2007), which are;

- *Collegial management*
- Formal management
- *Subjective management*
- *Ambiguity management*
- *Cultural management*
- *Political management*

LEADERSHIP

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Confronting the challenge: developing leadership practice that is fit for purpose – Navigation, Management and Partnership

In confronting the challenges, according to Mongon and Chapman, "Research suggests that leaders are increasingly recognizing the limitations of existing arrangements. Consequently they are exploring how new arrangements, both structural and through redefining relationships within the system, provide opportunities to develop more appropriate leadership, management and governance practices." p.10

Chapter Two

- Building vision and setting directions.

- Understanding and developing people.

- Designing the organization.

- Managing and supporting the teaching and learning program.

- Collecting, monitoring, analyzing and using information.
(Mongon and Chapman, 2008 p.17

Mongon and Chapman in this chapter aimed to show that high leverage leader are not leaders with short term tactics or leaders who stood afar off the task but are leaders who worked along side staff and students and communities. The aim of these high leverage leaders according to the authors was not for the students to just pass their examinations but rather for higher performance.

The authors believed that high leverage leadership is best observed in poor and disadvantaged communities and having observed some of these leaders they proposed that leadership in high leverage was based around five core practices. These are;

......It is where outcomes have historically been poor that the highest leverage is possible. P.15

The authors had some questions on their minds which motivated them to dig deeper into the complexities of contemporary high-leverage leadership.

if high-leverage leaders
are 'only' following the common repertoire, why is their impact so particularly
effective?

Can every or even most leaders learn to be so effective?

Common Elements of High Leverage Leaders

⬜ high-leverage leaders are attentive to the quality of teaching and learning: some through introducing a banding system, others through a deep commitment to mixed ability groups;

⬜ high-leverage leaders are attentive to the non-negotiables of student behaviour: some through quiet affirmation and understated determination, others with public and often vigorous assertion;

⬜ high-leverage leaders are attentive to pupils at the margin: some through having as many as possible designated as having special educational needs, others through avoiding that as an inappropriate stigma;

⬜ high-leverage leaders are attentive to student appearance: some requiring a blazer-and-tie uniform, others having T-shirts and sweatshirts;

⬜ high-leverage leaders are attentive to their relationships with difficult students and families: they are described as being good at that, some because 'they always stay calm', others because 'they're prepared to fight fire with fire'. P.18

In the authors' observations of the leadership styles of leaders with high leverage leader, they came up with the following personality traits;

- *Self confidence*
- *Personal responsibility*
- *Conscientiousness*

.........And set of skills that they described as 'intelligences'. These are;

Professional Intelligence

Social Intelligence

"High-leverage leaders are sensitive to the school's external environment without being condescending to the social or professional communities they work with. 'It is hard,' one said to us. 'It's difficult out there, but that's no excuse for any of us."
p.22

A model of 'high-leverage' leadership

Chapter Three

In the view of Mongon and Chapman, Navigation is securing the vision, which means setting a direction and nurturing development, in their view navigation requires the three activities which they pointed out as awareness, acceptance and advocacy.

Awareness

"It takes a strong sense of purpose and direction to solve intransigent problems,
and the high-leverage school leaders in our studies are capable of infusing and
enthusing the adults and children in their school communities with a compelling
sense of purpose. They do not do that by dwelling on whether their purpose is based on values, morals or ethics." p.43

Acceptance

In the authors' perception, acceptance is understanding that current practice may be a hindrance but bearing in mind that improvement is possible.

Advocacy
..........creating a 'living vision' and participating in focused workforce development to introduce sustainable change. p.51

Chapter Four

MANAGEMENT

Mongon and Chapman are of the view that management encompasses the three activities which they termed analysis, action and application.

Action

Analysis

Application

Management

Analysis

Mongon and chapman believe that, combining data, written material, local stories and other information creates high definition picture of how well the school is working in parts and as a whole.
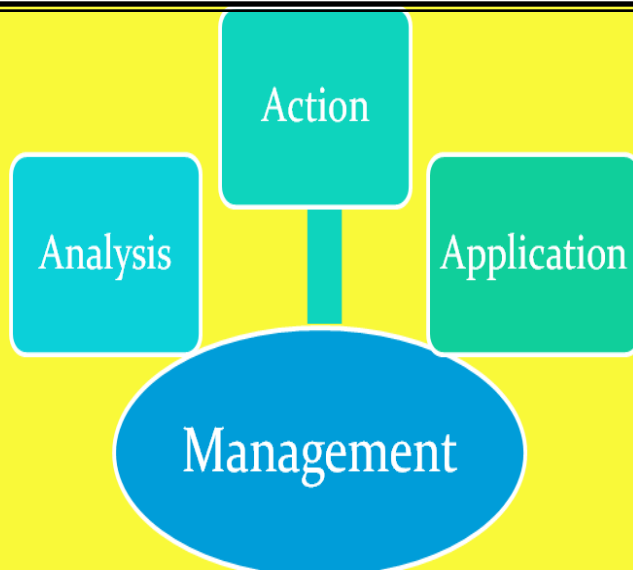
High-leverage leaders recognize the significance of the volume of numeric data at their disposal but also value oral narratives. Some of these narratives may be formal while others are informal. High leverage leaders process the collected data into a language of informed judgments and professional ambition using professional intelligence. The data collect should be reliable.

According to the authors, high-leverage leaders make use of their professional intelligence which informs how and when to use data that in turn enhances their professional competence. From high-leverage leaders, the authors learnt that:

 Analysis satisfies ambitious curiosity;

 Analysis is an aid to accountability;

 Analysis is now relatively easy.

Chapter five

Partnership

Association
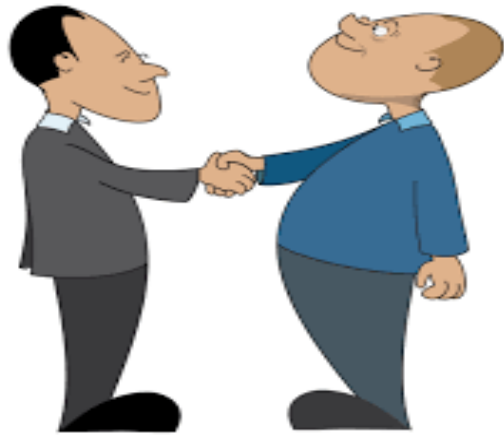
In the authors' bid to better explain that high-leverage leaders influence the way that the people around them feel about one another. They noted that one of the key tactics through which they promote and sustain change in the way people work together is termed '**association'.**

In their understanding, association which can be highlighted under social intelligence is being socially aware: nurturing the school as a community in its own right, as a member of its neighborhood community and as a unit in a wider professional community. p.86

Alignment

The proposal of Mongon and Chapman is that high-leverage leaders minimize the dissonance between students' experiences in school and their experiences in the families and communities within which they spend the other 85 per cent or so of their time, as well as that between different providers working with children and their families. p.96

Area focus

In the authors' understanding, area focus is engaging with the wider community in a partnership role because for young people there is no 'one size fits all'

Chapter Six

Organizational pathology and high-leverage leadership

As Mongon and Chapman proceeded to explore relationship between navigation, management and partnership, improvement and school context, they argued that different emphases are required for schools at different stages of development.

The authors highlighted Hopkins (2001).....Authentic school improvement strategies need to pay attention to context . . . a wider range of improvement options should be made available to schools and more intelligence used in linking improvement strategy to need.

The best high-leverage leaders draw on their intelligence to navigate, manage and work on partnerships suited to their schools' specific contexts. These leaders create a sense of urgency and demand change, but they are sensitive to the emotional and physical dimensions of school context and the natural rhythms of
the school year.
.......High-leverage leaders are committed to the longer term. They have recognized when directive, authoritative leadership is necessary and they have sensed when a more distributed approach is appropriate.p.126

Chapter Seven

In the view of Mongon and Chapman, high-leverage leaders feel *responsible for generating the best possible outcomes* for the young people whose wellbeing and attainment are entrusted to them.

High-leverage leaders use governance and accountability to create powerful alliances between their schools, other services,
elected government and local communities. Governance and accountability become the working connection between professional expertise and the expectations of young people, families and communities. P.126
High-leverage leaders are therefore not neutral about accountability and governance. They nurture a very active relationship with their schools' governing
bodies. P.127

Mongon and Chapman infared that high-leverage leaders appear to operate in five interlinked 'authorizing environments', each with overlapping though distinctive sources of capacity and measures of value. The five authorizing environments

⬜ Personal
⬜ Associate
⬜ Institutional
⬜ Contextual
⬜ National.

The appropriate measures of value by which the work of high-leverage leaders can be judged may need to be different in the five different au-

Chapter Eight

Reflections on high-leverage leadership in education

The lessons learned by the authors are;

⬜Importance of taking the principles of high-leverage leadership to scale from institutional through area to national levels.
⬜ Move beyond a narrow use of 'system leadership' as a generic, vogue phrase.
⬜ Importance of national education systems learning the lessons of their own experiments.
⬜ Navigation, Management and Partnership
could be used to critique and improve not just institutional but also system
Leadership.

KEY ISSUES

There are three key issues in the identification of future system leaders.
First, in their preparation future leaders must understand the importance of
vision and advocacy within leadership. Until now this has been an undervalued
and underdeveloped area. Second, future leaders must also be aware
that, as a system becomes more fragmented and autonomy increases, leaders' management skills become more important. Finally, leaders' ability to build
external alliances will become increasingly important as system fragmentation
and increased autonomy become the norm. Again, these are both important
areas which to date have been undervalued and underdevel-

My Take Away

high-leverage leaders are

high-leverage leaders are attentive to student appear-

high-leverage leaders are attentive to their relation-ships with difficult students

high-leverage leaders are attentive to the non nego-tiables of student behavior.

high-leverage leaders are at-tentive to pupils at the margin.

High-Leverage leaders are com-passionate, sociable, ever learn-ing, 'go getters', goal oriented, fo-cused and futuristic.

This book is highly recommended for all present and future school leaders, such as head teachers, principals, adminis-trators, heads of de-partments and sec-tional heads.

Reference: Mongon D & Chapman C.(2012). High-Leverage Leader-ship:Improving out-comes in educational settings. Routledge. New York.