

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Building productive relationships

In educational systems and organisations the core work associated with administration, management and leadership is the resolution of educational problems. When these problems are complex and contain tensions between collective organisational aspirations and interests and those of individuals, they present particularly challenging situations. The practitioners who perform administrative, management and leadership roles in these organisations can approach complex problem-solving through building productive relationships that provide a foundation for effective practice.

Naming the field of practice, study and research

If researchers and practitioners search for knowledge that supports the intent to perform the roles of educational administrators, educational managers or educational leaders effectively and productively, then an understanding of these concepts is essential. The terms educational administration, educational management and educational leadership have in common a focus on the core business of educational organisations, namely, teaching and learning. Leaders in educational organisations will be familiar with all three of the

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terms administration, management and leadership which define broad concepts in relation to the way in which education is organised in formal and informal ways. Yet, usage of the terminology in the literature and in the day-to-day parlance of the workplace, indicates that there are manifold meanings assigned to each concept separately, and there are often confusing or conflicting explanations of the links and relationships between these terms.

Together the terms have been used to *name* a particular field of knowledge about theory and practice within the discipline of education. This gives rise within the field to some confusion for those not familiar with the terminology because scholars use the terms variously in theorising about and examining the application of these concepts to educational organisations. Further confusion is inevitable because in practice the terms have often been used to denote functions, roles and tasks in ways that have little connection to the original and conceptual meaning(s) of the terms. Take, for example, the job title of 'administrator', which is often used in higher educational institutions to identify staff in clerical roles. This meaning is also common in many British-influenced contexts where for example, according to Dimmock (1999a), leadership is described as higher order tasks, management is described as routine maintenance and administration as lower order duties. Yet, in contrast, a completely different type of role is performed by those in 'public administration' which is the academic field from which educational administration has evolved as a separate entity.

Historically, the oldest term in our field is educational administration and it has a strong North American affiliation which is reflected in the naming of textbooks, book titles, scholastic journal titles (*Educational Administration Quarterly*), journal article titles and specialist qualifications (Master of Educational Administration). In the USA, degrees in educational administration span a broad spectrum of career choices which may or may not be related to engagement in instruction per se. For example, many academics with master's and doctoral degrees in educational administration choose non-instructional administrator career pathways in American universities and community colleges in roles related to such areas as financial management, admissions or student services.

Bush (2003) says the term educational administration is also much in evidence in Australia. On the other hand, in England for example, the term educational management is more prominent. Around the world, the term educational leadership rose to popularity in the mid-1990s for a number of reasons which will be discussed further on. One consequence of this deification of leadership is evidence of a flurry of name-changing to replace the terms administration and management with 'leadership'. One example of such a name change is the renaming of the journal of the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society from *Educational Management and Administration* to *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership* in

the early years of the millennium. Owens (2004) makes reference to the 'rhetoric of reform chic' (p. 275) which contends that schools need leadership, not mere management – suggesting that the terms are mutually exclusive. Yet, he goes on to say, 'Educational leaders must – as must all leaders – be able to manage' and while we can argue strongly that what schools need is excellent leadership, it is 'false to argue that, therefore, principals should be leaders not managers, because they need to be both' (p. 276). There is certainly evidence that the term administration has also been replaced with leadership.

In my reading of the literature that deals specifically with attempts to unravel the semantics and conceptual shifts associated with the concepts of administration, management and leadership, I have been deeply influenced by the philosophy of Hodgkinson (1991). His provocative thinking has provided me with a platform to develop my own understanding of and continuing reflection on the concepts based on my reading, research of practice and ongoing interaction with the praxis of educational administration, management and leadership.

Educational administration

Here I must make it clear that I am inferring that administration is a higher-order task – not using the connotation that administration means clerical work. First, there is leadership *in* administration. In fact, it has been suggested that one term can easily replace the other – and we find in current writing that this is often the case. Secondly, we cannot talk about administration without also talking about management. This is because management is subsumed *in* administration. Thus the field term 'administration' incorporates aspects of the other two terms: management and leadership.

Hodgkinson (1991) has suggested certain aspects of administration that differentiate it from management. Administration is the highest form of systemic activity and is associated with policy, values, strategy, top management, involves art and deliberation, and above all requires a philosophical position. Administration is a large concept, most often associated with executive or governance functions and is systemically the highest point in a hierarchal sense, although there has been an elision of administration and management in many descriptions of organisational work. It would appear that the North American system still maintains the supremacy of administration. For example, school superintendents see themselves as administrators rather than managers because they are associated with the large values-based decision-making that is the hallmark of administration (Owens, 2004). Confusingly, the term management is used in a British context to describe administration functions such as policy formulation and organisational transformation which also imply a focus on vision and values (Bush, 2003).

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One of the key dimensions of educational administration has been a focus on values. A value is defined as, 'a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action' (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 102). He identifies what he calls the *metavalues* – the imperatives that 'pervade the organization but are most potent and close to the surface of consciousness in the administrative/managerial subsystem' (p. 104). These are identified as the values of maintenance (for example, preserving the existence of the organisation), growth (which can mean power over competitors for example), effectiveness (exemplified by the accomplishment of desired ends) and efficiency (which requires maximising use of resources). There are, of course, myriad other philosophical positions and beliefs from which values that are seen as desirable by administrators are derived (Begley, 1999; Haydon, 2007). The challenge that arises for administrators at this high level of system and organisational leadership is a matter of sometimes having to choose between these desirables and deal with the conflict among established desirables and other values in order to make decisions about what is right and good. These are moral conflicts and as Hodgkinson (1991) states, 'educational leadership is especially difficult, especially challenging and especially moral' (p. 63) because in educational contexts there is often a lack of goal specificity, ends and means are often unclear, and the raw material of education in contrast to other fields of administration is 'intractably mysterious, for it is human nature itself' (p. 62).

For administrative leaders in education there will always be problem complexity creating moral or ethical dilemmas that arise and challenge practitioners at central and local system levels. An understanding of the nature of these dilemmas and the role of productive relationship-building between stakeholders in resolving them is what this book is about.

Educational management

A synthesis of definitions drawn from both generic and educational management theorists defines management as the act of working with and through others to achieve the organisation's goals. The emphasis is on action and authority relationships with others, implying that managers need to be engaged in managing *people* (Razik and Swanson, 1995). Another view contrarily suggests that not only are management and leadership different; they are also mutually exclusive. According to Owens (2004, p. 275), 'This view correctly derives from the fact that one manages things, not people, and one leads people, not things. We manage finances, inventories, and programs for example, but we lead people'. So, at the very outset it is necessary to accept that there are competing definitions.

In my view, leadership is subsumed within management in the context of educational settings where the formal work demands management. Here, management differs from the lofty, philosophical and value-based practice of administration to be more action focused. And for management to be effective there must be leadership, in the sense of being able to influence change that impacts on practice and, ultimately, on the organisation's capacity to learn and improve.

The aspects of management that place it at a lower level than administration are, according to Hodgkinson (1991) 'subtended from and subsumed by the larger concept of administration' (p. 51). These aspects are execution of tasks, dealing in facts rather than values, professional specialism, tactics, middle management, activity and concern with detail. These aspects of management dovetail with administration aspects. In reality, neither set of functions can exist in isolation from the other. Because both sets of processes permeate the entire organisation they are joint administration/management aspects. A principal, for example, might find themselves engaged in administration in the morning and management in the afternoon if they were interested in drawing such distinctions between their activities. In higher education settings academic leaders such as deans and department heads experience the constant pull between attending to matters of policy and matters of people.

Linking administration and management

An illustration of the link between the concept of administration and the concept of management is provided in Figure 1.1 which is replicated from the work of Hodgkinson (1991). This conceptual framework shows the key activities of administration encompassing philosophy, planning and politics which are related to *policy making*, while the key activities of management are mobilising, managing and motivating and are related to the function of *policy implementation*.

Figure 1.1 illustrates how the monitoring phase feeds back in a systems theory sense to the philosophy phase to create a dynamic cycle of policy-making (administration) and policy implementation (management). This total process, Hodgkinson argues, 'can be conceived as the general field of leadership' (1991, p. 64). He draws attention to the central problem of administration when he says:

The principle is always the same: a movement from ideas to things or events via the mediation of people. That is, the intellectual realm modifies the reality realm of the physical or natural world by human action. The central problem of administration, then, becomes the motivation of this action, and, more precisely, since administration is always of a collective, it is to reconcile the self-interest of the individual organization member or client with the collective interest of the organisation. (pp. 64, 65)

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It is at the point of implementing policy and plans that managers most often encounter complex problems related to motivating action. Here the work involves reconciling individual self-interests and collective organisational interests which lie at the very heart of dilemmas that must be both recognised and managed by leaders to achieve effectiveness.

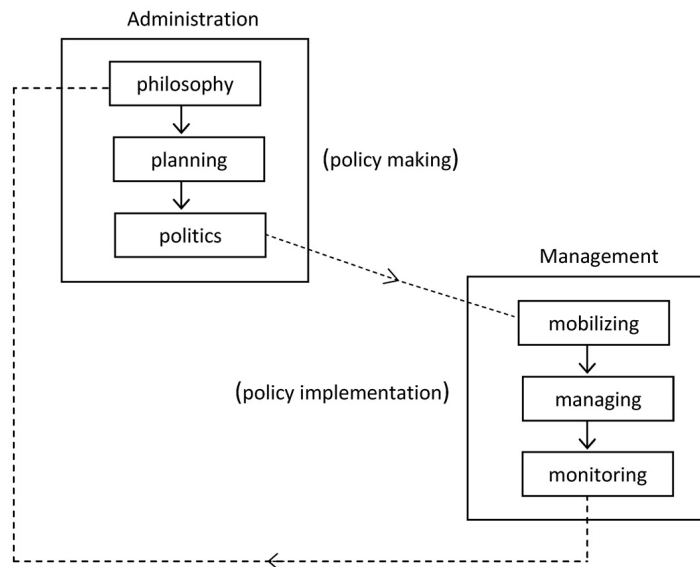


Figure 1.1 Administration and management (source: C. Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 64, *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art*, State University of New York Press with the permission of SUNY Press)

In the language of systems, Hodgkinson asserts that 'leadership is administration' (1991, p. 53). And leadership is in management too. If leadership is a concept that relates to influencing people, then, Hodgkinson's view of management as being concerned with *mobilising*, *managing* and *monitoring* of policy implementation surely requires the manager to act with and through other people. And, when the organisation functions to encompass both the administration and management dimensions of the processes delineated in Figure 1.1, there is a need for leadership to be embodied in singular or distributed forms, in formal and informal ways that can impact directly or indirectly on the core work of an educational organisation, namely, teaching and learning.

Across the developed world, moves to make schools and higher education institutions more autonomous through forms of decentralised site-based management (see Bush, 2003, for example) have highlighted the need for improving the quality of internal administration and management. This self-management (and in some cases self-governance) trend in many countries such as Australia, England and Wales, Hong Kong and New Zealand, has also contributed to a blurring of boundaries. Consequently, boundaries between the broad functions of educational administration and educational manage-

ment are less defined, with administration functions often being performed at both a central national level and a local institutional level.

An example of the elision between educational administration and educational management can be seen in the following example of New Zealand. Here the sweeping reform of education administration in the late 1980s led to the establishment of self-management and self-governance for schools and higher education institutions.

The case of reforming education administration in New Zealand

In the early childhood, compulsory (schools) and tertiary sectors, the 1980s was a decade of considerable reform in this country (Parliament of New Zealand, 1988a, 1988b, 1989). Across the sectors the government agenda was to decentralise and empower the institutional unit with the ability to self-manage and, in the case of school and post-school education, to engage in self-governance. One consequence of what is popularly called the self-management reforms was a blurring and blending of the previously distinctive functions of administering and managing education because the disestablishment of central bureaucratic control devolved aspects of both policy-making and policy implementation to the local level. In the case of tertiary education institutions and schools, the establishment of councils and boards of trustees respectively vested the policy-making (administrative power) that had hitherto been more distant from the institution, within the institution itself in a partnership that was intended to give the governing bodies control over the management of the school or tertiary institution and the chief executive the power to carry out day to day management functions (Government of New Zealand, 1989). In both cases an expectation to chart the course of the organisation via strategic plans and charters was used as an accountability and developmental mechanism. This has not meant an abrogation of central administration by the Ministry of Education as it functions to provide the highest level of bureaucratic control and policy development for the system as a whole. Thus educational administration and management occur at both the system level and the local unit level, but with much greater emphasis on the ability of these educational organisations to determine the desirable values and vision for their future while they manage the complex problems in day-to-day practice. This is ultimately the field in which educational leadership occurs.

Educational leadership

Because the concept of educational administration is concerned with the large and all-pervading executive and governance level matters of vision, values, strategy and goals, it is not difficult to connect these to conceptions

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of leadership when it is defined as power to determine and influence the aims and purpose of education (Bush, 2003).

Undoubtedly, the notion of leadership implies some sort of influence. Yukl (2002), writing about leadership in organisations, states that, 'Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over other people [or groups] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation' (p. 3). The view that leaders influence others' actions to achieve desirable ends is also linked to the initiation of change (Cuban, 1988; Gronn, 2003; Hunt; 2004).

There are many examples of distinctions drawn between leadership and management. Bush (2003) suggests that leadership is linked to values or purpose, while management relates to implementation and technical issues. Owens (2004) alludes to managers who manage 'things' and leaders who lead 'people'. Spillane and Diamond (2007) say that management practice centres on maintenance, while leadership practice typically focuses on initiating change.

In contrast, a number of writers argue for a less firm distinction on the grounds that there is an intimate connection between leadership and management, and considerable overlap in respect of motivating people to work towards a common purpose (Fidler and Atton, 2004). Both leadership and management are necessary (Bolman and Deal, 2008; Owens, 2004). Leadership itself is viewed as one of the tasks of managers (Hunt, 2004). While leadership and management tasks may be performed by different people, they may also be vested in one person where, in many situations, leadership and management activities occur in tandem. For example, 'The same leader can pursue both management and leadership in the same organizational routine' (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 154).

I have stated elsewhere (Cardno and Fitzgerald, 2005) that I have a view of 'management that encompasses the notion of leadership within it rather than a separation where leadership is often elevated and management denigrated to a level of mere managerialism' (p. 317). Gronn (2003) reminds us that the work of managers in educational organisations is what they are contracted to do. He says, 'Leadership, on the other hand, while it may be part of what managers do, is by no means the whole of it. Nor do managers have a monopoly on leadership ... which is open to any organisation member' (p. 6).

So, it could be said that leadership overlaps with two similar terms: administration (when it means higher-order thought and action related to whole systems and organisations) and management (when this relates to working with and through other people to achieve the organisation's goals). Ultimately, the work of an educational leader will involve leading and managing, and doing this with a focus on the key task of the organisation, which is learning and teaching.

It is important to note that the context for discussing leadership here is an

educational context related to the organisation of educational institutions across a system that encompasses several sectors: early childhood education, schools (primary and secondary) and higher education institutions. First, we need to narrow our conception of the leadership concept to the context of the organisation because the body of knowledge about leadership is enormous, and even in relation to the context of educational organisations it is complex and confounded with confusion. While, as Hodgkinson (1991, p. 50) says, 'The term leadership is elusive, ambiguous, much abused', and may even be discounted as 'a mere incantation for the bewitchment of the led' (p. 53), it is nevertheless the expectation that both leadership and management occur in educational settings. In reality we will need to live with these terms that can be used synonymously, used to express different sides of the same coin, and used to indicate the scope of activity that influences and implements change in educational organisations.

In the process of leading and managing in educational organisations it is inevitable that complex and conflicted situations will arise where multiple stakeholders, multiple values and multiple goals may create tensions that become challenging. The leader's role is to reconcile conflicting demands and desires to achieve what is best for the organisation and for the individuals in it; and to do so in ways that reflect allegiance to the building of respect, trust and true partnership in the endeavours focused on the achievements of learners. Hence, it is the people that are managed and led, and all who contribute to management and leadership who are the subjects of the ideal of achieving productive relationships. I believe that building and then utilising productive relationships as the basis for effectively resolving complex problems of educational leadership and management is the most powerful means we have at our disposal to make a difference.