

EMSSA Leadership Development in other countries (and cultures)

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The situation in other countries

Looking at the situation in the USA and the UK did not result in much information on changes in the content of Educational Management Training. The concerns were more on formats and context of training

So two questions seem to be relevant when looking at the content of Educational Management Training in other countries:

1. Is there much difference in the content between those countries or in those countries compared with the USA and the UK?
2. If there is not much difference is there a need to have more difference?

For answers to the first question amongst others the publications of Huber are useful. For answers to the second question the publications of Walker are very enlightening.

Sameness and differences in the content in different countries

In many publications on the content of educational management training in other countries than the USA and the UK the same concepts on leadership are seen. Leadership should be transformative, instructional, distributed, collegial, etc. For different concepts and other approaches one has to carefully search in recent publications.

The sameness

Bush and Jackson (2002) concluded:

'The content of educational leadership and development programmes has considerable similarities in different countries, leading to a hypothesis that there is an international curriculum for school leadership preparation.' (P 421) (Cited by Bryant 2008)

Huber in 2004 did a systematic review of 15 countries across Europe, Asia, Australasia and North America (Preparing school leaders for the 21st Century) and published the essences of it in the International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (Lumby 2008).

Huber mentions some 16 international patterns in school leader development seen from a global perspective.

The trends having a relation with the content are (p 164):

- Personal development instead of training for a role (nr. 7)
'It is the personality and the personal development of the (aspiring) school leader that become the focal point of the programs'.
- The overall focus of school leadership development programs is no longer on administration and legal agendas...but has shifted to agendas focussed on communication and cooperation (nr. 8)
- From administration and maintenance to leadership, change and continuous improvement (nr. 9)
- There is a trend towards qualifying teams and developing the leadership capacity of schools instead of attracting individual aspiring school leaders (nr. 10)
- Preparation programs more and more reflect the new conceptions of leadership, such as organizational-educational leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, post-transformational or 'integral leadership'. (nr. 15)
- School leadership development programs are more strongly oriented towards the schools' purpose, namely teaching and learning, and the specific aims of schools within society today and in the future. (nr. 16).

¹ This paper is written to support LEAD-link in the development of new training courses on educational leadership and management. LEAD-link is a Sub-Saharan African network of organisations each having a leading role in the field of Educational Management Development in their respective countries (Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique). The complete set of paper can be found on the website of LEAD-link. (<http://lead-linknetwork.org/>) and on the site of Jan Arend Brands (www.freeman.nl).

EMSSA is short for Educational Management Sub-Saharan Africa.

Bryant (2008) states:

'The reality of leadership development globally is that western approaches dominate. Individuals from developing countries are sent to study at universities in Europe, the United States, Australia, and Hong Kong. Educational policy makers turn to the experts in these countries for information about preparation programs and approaches.'

And:

'In a similar way, simply accommodating tacit knowledge, the knowledge that is created from the immersion in the experience of working in a school and local culture is typically given limited space in most leadership development programs. This may be positive in the sense that often such tacit knowledge means a high level of comfort with the status quo. (p 9).'

The changing sameness

It is interesting however to notice that the sameness of the content has shifted over the last decade. Instructional leadership does not mean by definition any longer that the principal takes the lead. He or she also might hold the teachers accountable for their results. The message is not anymore that schools have to compete on a market, they are now supposed to work together. Leaders of schools are supposed to be(come) system leaders taking responsibility for the wellbeing of other schools (OECD 2008). Even distributed leadership is just from the last decade. It originated as a description of what happens in schools, what it is that principals show in their actions (Spillane) and very quickly became normative. The principal should not do it alone. Leaders should also be concerned about who will be the next leaders in their schools. They have to think about sustainability of their leadership.

The differences

Bryant et al (2006) describe situations from Minsk, Belarus; Baku, Azerbaijan; West Bengal, India and China's Yu-zhong District. From the descriptions it is clear that it is not everywhere the same.

When reordering the descriptions one sees reflected how the preparation of headteachers has developed over time in other countries.

West Bengal, India:

'There is no particular training or course work to become a Head Teacher. The District Inspector's office organizes training sessions and workshops from time to time in order to update Head Teachers on changes in rules and regulations or any other administrative factors. There are also yearly workshops that focus on the ways to better school administrative procedures. For new Head Teacher there are no direct orientation programs.'

Baku, Azerbaijan:

'The principals in Azerbaijan do not receive training in such subjects as finance, leadership, school law, facilities planning, or school-public relations. Principals mainly assure adherence to curriculum requirements, student learning and maintaining order at school (Reilly & Brown, 1996). In the Soviet times there were school-community relations but since the collapse of the system those ties have vanished.'

Minsk, Belarus: The content of training.

'The interviewees mentioned that many of the courses offered by the Academy of Post Diploma Education do not equip school administrators with practical skills. They cover general ideas of managing organizations but do not go into specific details of school management. Courses offered for training should be more diverse and cover all areas of administrative work, not only personal growth and personnel management. There is a need to prepare school administrators in such areas as policy, leadership, financial administration, organization structure, personnel appraisal, communication and community/public relations, etc. There is a need for school administrators to be vocal about their needs and concerns.'

China's Yu-zhong District (one example taken):

'One training program in the Yuzhong District Training School has the following subjects:

- Modern educational development, which includes two fields: the contemporary development of educational theories and theories and practices on the all-rounded development education.
- Professional role of principal. Participants may develop their research on how to promote the school image, or what the changes on the qualifications and duties of a principal, or how to develop a school strategic plan.
- Reforming the fundamental coursework, which refers to identify the new demands for coursework reform, establish the standards for course adjustment and assessment, and estimate the potential problems that may occur.
- Educational administration, which covers changes in the role of administrators, new challenges for the principal, balancing the party's leadership and democratic management, reforming personnel system, and improving the financial management.'

Bush' Leadership and Management Development in Education (2008) presents a global overview of developed and developing countries. (book ordered)

Part III of the International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders (Lumby 2008) is dedicated to Leadership Development in different regions of the world.

It includes good examples how underlying values of what constitutes good principalship can be different or that societal problems experienced by principals look the same but that practice solutions should be different.

- It is remarkable that 'Canadian researchers have been skeptical that the research on social problems and issues of diversity in United State schools can inform practice in Canada' (Young, p 313)
- In Mexican schools a global collective approach to solving problems is important in contrast to the more individualistic approach found in the United States (Young, p 317)
- Mexican students identified teamwork, trust, change that emerges in the organization, humility and honesty as important characteristics of leadership, while the United States participants emphasized involvement, technical communication, innovation and learning (Young, p 318)
- The paternalistic attitude of the 1990 (Latin American) governments have led teachers to wait and not act until they know what the administration sees as the right solution to the different problems...Furthermore, schools and teachers continue to ask for instructions and "recipes", but at the same time protest against them. (Ventura, p 338)
- European countries differ widely in the kind of autonomy principals have; in the balance between political power and professional power or in the balance between learning from practice or learning from theories. Principals wrestle with new autonomy or recentralisation. Møller, p 359)
- Un uncritical transfer of school leadership competencies from Western sources may prove helpful in a technical managerial sense, in the short term. On the other hand, such a transfer may also bring intercultural and ideological challenges to deeply embedded aspects of Islamic cosmology, epistemology and culture...
The third caution is that the normal patterns of Western knowledge production regarding educational leadership have a proven limited technical capacity to accommodate diversity as a norm in pluralistic societies (Macpherson, p 406)
- Leader development policy and activity across the three (Chinese) societies are deeply rooted in ordered social relationships and connections...Seniority and the importance of ordered social relationships are apparent in a myriad of forms of all levels, from policy formation to program enactment....First, broadly understood relational norms and connections determine who should become a principal and therefore, who is involved in leader development; including the order of this involvement... (Walker, p 429)

So there are differences that are relevant while designing a head teacher training. After presenting some examples from Africa authors will be presented that are very outspoken on this.

The situation in Africa

The chapter on School Leadership Development in Africa in Lumby (2008) includes relevant information on context (E.g.: Long-term violence in a society) and task (E.g.: A principal in Africa needs to be aware of the various tribes' (or clans') religions, political ideologies, gender and social classes). But unfortunately the chapter in fact is completely outdated. Most studies referenced are from before 2000. No use is e.g. made of recent studies for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA.) LEAD-link could have done a better job.

Much more up-to-date is the book Education Management and Leadership: A South African perspective (Naidu et al 2008). It covers all key areas of the pilot programme for the Advanced Certificate in Education (Educational Leadership). This book thus presents the content of the programme and as such is a very interesting example. The book, one is inclined to believe, stands in the UK tradition. Already in the third chapter (after describing the context and the legal framework) the focus is on assuring quality and securing accountability (these are seen as the core responsibilities). In contrast to a UK tradition it is only the last chapter that discusses leading and managing teaching and learning in schools.

The South African context is sketched rather depoliticised in just three pages (p 2-4). The four pages on "African perspectives" (The "" are in the original text) do not seem to have much relation with the rest of the book. (p 11-15). There is a warning about the devastating effect of bureaucratic accountability as in the US (p 41), but the book unintended seems to be a contribution to that development with a paragraph on: "Dealing with the inherent threat to quality assurance and accountability systems"(p 43). The last chapter does not explain why specifically in South Africa it is so necessary to restore school cultures that emphasize and enable teaching and learning. The text is more on the theoretical meaning of culture than e.g. about principals and teachers who with reason were being afraid of students revolting earlier against apartheid and still now against not having the same opportunities.

It might be interesting to ask why against own warnings about managerialism the authors have produced a rather managerial book. The answers might be rather discomforting. It might be self-censorship ('do not talk about political issues'), it might be the case that this approach fits well with the bureaucratic management style South African schools were used to, or it might be too difficult to define a new (South) African approach². It also might be that for a country starting with training in educational management training this is a rather normal stage. In the Netherlands in the seventies and decades after the training was neutral in its values, just going along with the then current opinions on democratisation but trying to avoid direct services to the educational policies of the Ministry of Education.

On the positive side, the book states: 'Again these (characteristics of a chief) are of course not exclusively 'African characteristics' (p 13) and 'What is being described as "ubuntu management" is also based on human relations theory'.

Bush et al (2008) in a presentation of the recent Mid-Term evaluation of the first cohort of the ACE state: 'Materials are too long, 'too dense' and with inappropriate content (MGSLG different)'. And: 'The materials should be shorter, more practice-based and relevant to SA schools.' (ZENEX ACE).

² One can see the last phenomenon in much larger studies such as 'Our Common Interest; Report of the Commission for Africa' (Blair 2005) where the paragraph on Misunderstandings about Africa (3.4 5 pages) is longer than the paragraph about Cultural heritage (3.5 1 page).

Should there be more difference?

Walker is one of the main authors who warn against taking over concepts on leadership without taking into account the (cultural) context of the countries involved.

His major focus are (Southeast) Asian countries but his message is a more general one.

Walker (2006) presented in the new *Journal of Research on Leadership Education* of the UCEA an example that also seems to be very relevant for some African countries.

'Leader programs aligned with Western norms increasingly promote participation across the school community. This calls for a culture that values open and sometimes critical dialogue throughout the school; one that is underpinned by ongoing professional talk, experimentation, and in many cases, shared leadership. Promoting such collaborative forms requires principals even within congruent cultural platforms to challenge their own and existing organizational value structures about what comprises an educative community, what learning means, and how we relate to each other in schools. This challenge is magnified when cultural notions are even further removed from the source. This does not mean that the ideals promoted are 'wrong', within themselves or they are difficult to argue with, but when applied within cultures that continue to place a premium on collectivism and group harmony, and are more accepting of societal and organizational power inequities, unadulterated, they have little chance of making successful change. In simple terms, participation happens in East Asian cultures but is usually bound by formal and informal hierarchical relationships, demands for at least surface harmony and a strong collectivist orientation. Thus participation and even dissent are valued across cultures, but they take very different, often more subtle, forms.' (p 2)

This is just a short citation out of the 3-page article. But there is much more. Walker with Dimmock edited and wrote classical books on Educational Leadership and Culture (2002 and 2005). A central message is that what is seen as good educational leaders is different in different cultures. For that reason leadership development programmes also have to be different. (Another important theme is that educational managers all over the world have to deal with cultural diversity in their schools or districts).

In a recent chapter (2009) Walker again presents two striking examples:

'The first relates to the current popularity in the some societies of the concept of distributed leadership. At least as often conceptualized, this makes little sense to leaders in high-power distance societies where hierarchical inequities are accepted and leadership is closely tied to position and ordered responsibilities. This is true throughout the Middle East, Southeast and East Asia, and also in many African societies (Jansen, 2006). The second example is that of democratic school communities. Democratizing reforms call for teachers to openly assert their views, even if they dissent with community values. Such notions may be flawed in cultures where the open expression of diverse views is believed to unnecessarily complicate decision situations and challenge smooth relationships. This does not mean that people do not hold or communicate diverse views; rather it is a matter of how, when, and why they do it. It is here that cultural nuance emerges and challenges the relevance of theory and associated knowledge included in many LDPs.' (Chapter 4 page 29).

Law (2009) notes from his research that the differences should not be over-stressed:

'The paper has demonstrated the coexistence of Chinese and Western management values in Chinese school leaders' styles and preferences, particularly when dealing with different types of relationships, promotion, and delegation of power. Chinese school leaders' leadership and management approaches had been shaped by aspects of contemporary Chinese culture, comprising traditional Chinese culture, communist politico-ideological culture, and Western cultures. Broadly speaking, Chinese school leaders in this study had been more shaped by Chinese traditional culture in school administration and the school-government relationship, and by Western culture in social networking, promotion, and delegation.' (p 15)

'Making it different, but how much' might seem to be problems for (Southeast) Asian and African countries. But that is not the case. Even in a Nordic country different stakeholders can have different views on good leadership.

A recent publication of Tjeldvoll (2008) about Norway presents the example. Tjeldvoll describes what he calls a HEAD-ache. The Norwegian government wants an active leadership that supports their educational policies to achieve higher PISA-scores but such leadership does not fit the current relations between headmasters and teachers in Norway. 'Most of the present adult population has been socialised to see relevant education as characterised by stressing the learning processes, participation, project work and the teacher more as a facilitator than an authority of knowledge. In this tradition there is scarcely room for a leader as manager.' The "relevant" leader is seen as a facilitator for the teachers. The leadership, in this tradition, ought to be carried out by democratic decisions in the teacher staff meetings.

Training of head teachers is not successful in making the change from the current style of management toward what is seen as effective management (that is feared to become 'managerialism'). The government's ideas which are more in line with current 'Western ideas' about transformational leadership are cornered by traditional notions. Trainers of head teachers are strongly divided along the same lines.

Conclusion:

There are differences between countries and cultures (and even within countries and cultures) and these have to be taken into account in Educational Leadership Development, but in practice it might be rather difficult to realise.

Further thoughts

There is another major reason for not too easily taking over common Western ideas on management and leadership. That is that several of those ideas are based on research into the field just in the USA and the UK and even that research is less hard in its conclusions than sometimes is presented. (More about that in the chapter about leadership).

Major publications from the last years are:

- Bryant, Miles, et al. (2006), 'Patterns in Leadership Preparation: Four Case Studies of Educational Leadership Preparation in Minsk, Belarus; Baku, Azerbaijan; West Bengal, India; and China's Yu-zhong District', *AERA*,
- Bryant, Miles (2008), 'Variation in Leadership Preparation around the Globe', *CCEAM*,
- Bush, Tony, et al. (2008), 'ZENEX ACE: School Leadership Research Interim Findings', PPT
- Bush, Tony (2008), *Leadership and Management Development in Education (Education Leadership for Social Justice)*, (Sage Publications Ltd).1412921805
- Dimmock, Clive and Allan Walker (2000), *Future School Administration: Western and Asian Perspectives*, (The Chinese University Press).962201917X
- Dimmock, Clive and Allan David Walker (2005), *Educational Leadership: Culture and Diversity*, (Sage Publications Ltd).076197170X
- Huber, Stephan G. (2004), *Preparing School Leaders for the 21st Century: An international comparison of development programs in 15 countries*, (London: Routledge Farmer).9789026519680
- Huber, Stephan Gerhard (2008), 'School Development and School Leader Development: New Learning Opportunities for School Leaders and Their Schools', in Lumby, Jacky, Gary M. Crow, and Petros Pashiardis (eds.), *International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders* (New York: Routledge), 163-75.
- Law, Wing-Wah (2009), 'Societal Culture and Educational Leadership in China', *ICSEI*,
- Lumby, Jacky, Gary M. Crow, and Petros Pashiardis (2008), *International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders*, (Routledge).0805863877
- Lumby, Jacky, et al. (2009), 'Chapter 4: Research on Leadership Preparation in a Global Context', in Young, M. D., et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders*
- OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008), *Improving School Leadership: Volume 1: Policy and Practice*, (OECD Publishing).9264044671
- OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008), *Improving School Leadership: Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*, (OECD Publishing).9264033084

- Tjeldvoll, A and A Welle-Strand (2008), 'HEAD-ache in Norway', *CCEAM*,
- Walker, Allan (2002), *School Leadership and Administration: The Cultural Context (Reference Books in International education)*, (RoutledgeFalmer).0415932947
- Walker, Allan and Clive Dimmock (2004), 'The International Role of the NCSL', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 32 (3), 269-87.
- Walker, Allan David (2006), 'Leader Development Across Cultures', *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 1 (1),

Questions for the curriculum development of the Sub-Saharan African head teacher course

- What are major challenges in designing a training course that not simply goes along with current notions on educational management but reflects national or cultural values?
- What would be essential differences in the content of training courses for head teachers in Malawi, Southern Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania?
- Should training of head teachers support national policies on education?