Building Relational Trust
Leadership relationships that impact on student outcomes
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Relational Distrust

But we were wrong. We had a mindset that led to that action and it carried such a heavy cost.


Relationships Matter

The single most important factor common to successful change is that relationships improve.

If relationships improve, schools get better.

If relationships remain the same or get worse, ground is lost.

Michael Fullan (2002). The Change Leader. Educational Leadership, 59 (6), 16-20
Critical Questions

1. What could we do differently to improve equity and excellence of student outcomes?

2. How could we create an alignment of strengths in ways that could make our weaknesses irrelevant?

The Ruler for Evaluating Leadership

• We should judge leadership primarily by impact on students rather than on adults

Effect of Leadership Types

Five Dimensions of Effective Leadership
Derived from Quantitative Studies Linking Leadership with Student Outcomes

1. Establishing Goals and Expectations
2. Resourcing Strategically
3. Ensuring Quality Teaching
4. Leading Teacher Learning and Development
5. Ensuring an Orderly and Supportive Environment

Effect Size

0.42
0.31
0.42
0.84
0.27


Leadership capabilities

- Integrating educational knowledge into practice
- Solving complex problems
- Building relational trust

Leadership dimensions

- Establishing goals and expectations
- Resourcing strategically
- Ensuring quality teaching
- Leading teacher learning and development
- Ensuring an orderly and safe environment

Leadership as interpersonal effectiveness

Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, knows and does. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks.

Determinants of Relational Trust

- Interpersonally respectful
- Personal regard for others
- Competent in role
- Personal integrity

Consequences of High Relational Trust

- Positive attitude to innovation and risk
- More outreach to parents
- Enhanced commitment
- Enhanced professional community

- Improving academic outcomes in high trust schools
- Higher likelihood of positive social outcomes

What are some tough issues to tackle?

A senior teacher who dominates group discussions & leaves little time for others to express their views

A teacher who always sees & focuses on the negative side of a new initiative, & distrusts its real purpose

A teacher who doesn’t see, or believe, why a new teaching strategy could or should apply to their teaching

A teacher who’s in cruise mode, doing well but is reluctant to use initiative to be an even better teacher

Schools are full of what I call nondiscussables—important matters that, as a profession, we seldom openly discuss. Actually, we do talk about the nondiscussables—but only in the carpark and at the dinner table. Consequently, the issues surrounding adult relationships in the school, like other nondiscussables, litter the school, lurking like landmines. School improvement is impossible when we give nondiscussables such extraordinary power over us.

Roland Barth. In Relationships Within the Schoolhouse 2006

How do we typically respond? Take 1

“Nine out of 10 people disagree with my idea, which sends a very clear message — nine out of 10 people are idiots!”
How do we typically respond? Take 2

“My goal is to be a failure, if I reach my goal, I’ll feel successful and if I don’t reach my goal, I’ll feel successful too.”

When do I use an Open-to-Learning Conversation?

- All Conversations
  - Values applicable at all times

- Tough Conversations
  - Giving and receiving hard messages
  - When people’s views differ
  - When a lot is at stake
  - More deliberate and explicit use of strategies

Background to Meeting

Prior agreement reached at meeting of Heads of Learning Areas that all Heads will prepare an analysis of their department’s external examination data.

After the above meeting the Principal has noticed that the English results appear to be particularly weak, so…

Asks to meet with Head of English to get his perspective before next scheduled meeting of group.

At meeting with Head of English, learns that the preparation has not been done so Principal ends the meeting.

This is the follow-up meeting…
Effective change requires uncovering the theory or belief behind the current practice and resistance to the proposed change. This is what effective leaders of change do.

From closed to open-to-learning conversations

**Closed to learning**
- Win don’t lose
- Keep control of task and process
- Avoid negative emotion

**Open-to-learning**
- Respect for self and others
- Valid information
- Internal commitment to decisions
Conversations that promote learning to improve student outcomes

Open-to-Learning Conversations

More student social and academic progress

Build trusting interpersonal relationships

Stronger school community

The Big Message

The more leaders focus their relationships, their work and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes.

Our team.....

- Professor Viviane Robinson
  Academic Director

- Linda Bendikson
  UACEL Director

- John Locke
  Director, First-time Principals Programme

- David Eddy
  Principal Associate

- [Profiles of team members]
UACEL current programmes

1. First-time Principals Programme

2. Educational leaders seminars; Ministry of Education seminars; Governance Facilitation to New Schools; School-based leadership team development; research contract/s/reports


4. Individualised mentoring and coaching for educational leaders

5. International projects:
   - Australia – ELM Leader Institute: Leading Learning; Beginning Principals Programmes; Conference keynotes & workshops; Seminars
   - Educational Tours – week in New Zealand: visiting schools, half-day seminars, link practice in schools to leadership knowledge & skills
   - Research and development contracts to support district-level schooling improvement efforts

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Best intentions to better outcomes

**What is troubling is not just being average but settling for it.**

Everyone knows that averageness is, for most of us, our fate. And in certain matters – looks, money, tennis – we would do well to accept this. But in your surgeon, your child’s paediatrician, your police department, your local school?

When the stakes are our lives and the lives of our children, we want no one to settle for average.