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Thirty years of leadership in New Zealand education: From the shadows of management to *sine qua non*

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Abstract
Leadership is now promoted as the sine qua non (essential ingredient) for maintaining and developing effective education in New Zealand. It was not this way in the latter years of the 1980s and through the 1990s, when educational management was the preferred nomenclature. Since the turn of the millennium, management has subsided into the shadows of leadership in New Zealand education as part of a global shift in the education policy lexicon and the Educational Management, Administration and Leadership (EMAL) field. Rather than argue whether leadership should be preferred over management, or vice versa, this article focuses on the rise of leadership in New Zealand education over the last 30 years.

Keywords: *Educational leadership; educational management; New Zealand education reform; New Public Management; leadership development; process ontology*

The positioning of leadership as a *sine qua non* (essential ingredient) of and for education practice and development is commonplace, not just in New Zealand, but also in education systems across the world. Leadership has experienced an elevation in New Zealand education over the past 30 or so years and is now promoted as a core capability that should be developed by all registered teachers (Education Council, 2018). In response to the aim of this Special Issue of the *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, I look back over the past 30 years, at aspects of educational leadership practice, policy, and research in New Zealand informed by the following questions:

- How are your experiences or understandings of leadership now different, compared to when you started? Have you had to do any 'unlearning'?
- What theoretical shifts have occurred with how we understand and research educational leadership?
- What do you think needs to happen next in leadership practice, policy, and research?

The article has three sections. The first section is an overview of my own journey through times where preference was given first to educational management and then educational leadership. The following two sections each build on from the previous one. I discuss how management took centre-stage following major education reforms, followed by the rise of

(educational) leadership since the millennium and the consequent conclusion of leadership as a *sine qua non* in New Zealand education. The sections broadly follow a chronological order, shaped by my own engagement in the New Zealand education system. To provide some bounds to the focus of this article, I give more attention to school leadership than to early childhood and higher education leadership, which I discuss near the end of the final section.

Throughout the article I refer to some terminology associated with the Leadership Studies field. Many leadership studies focus on individuals, usually elevated through the location of their role near or at the top of organisational structure and responsibility, and/or an individual's actions that have resulted in the promotion of the individual as having exceptional qualities and skills labelled as leadership. A focus on individuals as leaders is known as leader-centrism and relies on an entitative ontology, where leadership is assumed to reside in or with an individual. This leader-centric focus usually requires the construction of others as followers and is evident in theoretical constructs such as traits/styles, charismatic and transformational leadership. A broader locating of leadership is evident in post-heroic forms, such as shared leadership and distributed leadership. If an entitative ontology underpins these post-heroic forms, then leadership exists across and with many individuals, rather than the few (Youngs & Evans, 2021). Conceptually, leader and follower then become interchangeable labels attributed to individuals. In general, leader-centrism and post-heroic forms respectively assume that a leader or more leadership is a catalyst to bring about positive transformation. Leadership assumes an inherent goodness.

The application of a lesser used ontology in leadership theory, process metaphysics (Rescher, 1996), turns the leader or leadership as a catalyst for change assumption on its head, and repositions leadership as an ongoing and resultant practice (Youngs & Evans, 2021). In line with this, Leadership-as-Practice (L-A-P) is an emerging approach to understanding leadership that is based on an "underlying belief that leadership occurs as a practice rather than from the traits or behaviours of individuals" (Raelin, 2016, p. 3). This lesser known ontology informs my recommendation of where to next for leadership in education.

My journey (1985–present)

In 1985, I started secondary school teaching at Howick College. It was a period in the New Zealand secondary school sector, where sometimes, there was actual or threatened industrial action from the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) union in relation to low pay and in response to the release of *Tomorrow's Schools* (Minister of Education, 1988) in the late 1980s. One of those strikes was used to write letters to the Minister of Education, The Right Honourable David Lange—who was also Prime Minister at the time—regarding *Tomorrow's Schools* (Openshaw, 2009, p. 143). Three aspects of practice stood out for me during these times and play a part in how I view the purpose of education practice today: the support I

experienced in the school as a beginning teacher; the activist professional views and values of my colleagues during actual or threatened industrial action; and the innovative thinking of other mathematics teachers in the school as they broadened mathematics into an applied learning space for students. The following period of 1989–2000 was a time of transition as education in New Zealand adjusted to the Education Act 1989 and the self-managing reforms associated with it. This period was one of personal transition as I continued to teach and move into management roles, each one with a broadening of responsibility, at Whakatane High School. A focus on the learning and application of educational management was reinforced through completing the applied *Certificate of School Middle Management* and *Diploma of School Management* at Unitec Institute of Technology. During this period, leadership was yet to feature in the title of any major New Zealand education-based qualification, and these Unitec programmes designed by Carol Cardno and Eileen Piggot-Irvine played a significant part in my own professional learning. Leadership, when used, usually came under the umbrella of management, which also reflected the emphasis on self-managing education organisations during the 1990s.

The coming of the millennium coincided with a significant side-step in my education journey as I transitioned from the secondary sector to the tertiary sector. This started with a four-year period as an initial teacher education lecturer at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, a Private Tertiary Establishment (PTE). The need to upgrade my qualifications to one above what I taught, resulted in the completion of a *Master of Educational Management* with a mixed-methods thesis about the tensions that were clear in practices the research participants called servant leadership (Youngs, 2007). Leadership was increasingly coming to the fore, and my shift to a postgraduate education lecturer position at Unitec for the next ten years reflected this. A turning point came with the renaming of the *Master of Educational Management* to the *Master of Educational Leadership and Management*, an addition in line with nomenclature changes of similar programmes in New Zealand universities at the time. Leadership did not always have the profile it does today in New Zealand education.

The emphasis on (educational) management

Management takes centre-stage through major education reforms

The New Zealand public sector underwent extensive and radical reforms through the 1980s. In the education sector, a quality agenda grew through bringing together the questioning of the quality of teaching, and a lack of education system accountabilities. It was a time globally where the OECD argued, "concern for the quality of education in schools is today among the highest priorities in all OECD countries. It will remain so for the foreseeable future" (OECD, 1987, p. 123). New Public Management (NPM) agendas for the public sector were sweeping

through many OECD countries, with the breaking up of large government public sector units into smaller units, with an emphasis on accountability systems, performance measures, outputs rather than inputs, efficiency, and the use of "proven" private sector styles of management to operationalise these components (Hood, 1991). According to Lodge and Gill (2011), NPM ideas were entrenched in New Zealand by the late 1980s, and the Treasury's (1987a,b) twin volume, *Government management: Brief to the incoming Government 1987*, with one volume devoted to education, was viewed at the time as the closest any OECD country came to developing "a coherent NPM 'manifesto'" (Hood, 1991, p. 6). The brief included an argument that the incoming Government must be concerned "with the effectiveness and 'profitability' of its expenditure on education" (Treasury, 1987a, p. 133) and the efficiency costs of state intervention could be minimised through "ensuring that management, accountability, and incentive structures cohere and are performance and target related" (p. 139). I do recall the public did not appear to be very aware of the Treasury brief and its potential implications for education.

There was more public awareness of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration's (1988) report, *Administering for excellence: Effective administration in education,* more commonly known as the Picot Review, named after the chair of the Taskforce, Brian Picot. The main finding of the Taskforce was that the education system at the time, administered through the centralised Department of Education, lacked effective management practices and was "overly complex by having too many decision points" (p. xi). These were days when the public across developed nations had a "daily exposure to educational aerosol terms like … quality" (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 21) fuelling doubts about whether the quality of education in their nation was sufficient. Some of these doubts emerged in New Zealand a couple of years earlier through the Education and Science Select Committee's (1986) report into the quality of teaching, where it was claimed "many parents and communities have lost confidence in how teachers and principals are held to account for the quality of teaching" (p. 6).

These three reports preceded the Minister of Education's key reform document, *Tomorrow's schools: The reform of educational administration in New Zealand* (Minister of Education, 1988). The outcome of the reforms "was a new focus on self-management" (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 15), legislated through the Education Act 1989, where education organisations were expected "to manage their own affairs" (Minister of Education, 1988, p. 39). At a system level, the "large state Department of Education which had come to assume executive responsibility for virtually all significant educational and resourcing decisions has been replaced by a Ministry whose founding directive was to restrict its attention to policy and funding" (Stewart & Prebble, 1993, p. 15). Schools, now governed by elected Boards of Trustees from a school's community, included the principal as the "board's chief

executive and its professional leader" (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 17). Principals became responsible for the management of the school, including its budget, appraisal of teachers, and development of staff (Ministry of Education, 1993). In the initial years following the passing in Parliament of the Education Act 1989, this larger management role, became principals' major preoccupation (Stewart & Prebble, 1993). This preoccupation continues in the decades since the 1989 reforms, usually at the expense of focusing on supporting and developing learning and teaching (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005; Riley, 2017).

The style of management enacted by principals in their schools was expected to be collaborative (Minister of Education, 1988). One of the first New Zealand based educational management books, *Collaborative Management in New Zealand Schools* (Cardno, 1990), acknowledged the new required accountability practices expected of principals and set out to assist principals and their school how to be collaborative, especially with decision-making. The greater emphasis on management practices became personal, when from 1990 I started to have more responsibility in the Mathematics Department and Computing Department at Whakatane High School.

Personal experiences of managing

During the 1990s I realised the skills and knowledge I tried to utilise in the classroom with teenagers did not always translate well to working with colleagues, overseeing curriculum development, trying to keep to a budget, running meetings, appraising colleagues' teaching, dealing with interpersonal dilemmas (not all that well at times), and arguing for more departmental resources, not realising in my first year or two as a departmental budget holder that if we got more, then another department got less. In the early 1990s it seemed like I was learning so much as I came across new situations. For example, when it came time to implement the new Mathematics curriculum around 1993, all we had was one Ministry of Education document, very few dedicated support resources, and no internet. The sharing and development of resources and emerging pedagogies came through the *New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers* (NZAMT) and our local NZAMT Bay of Plenty branch. Heads of Department (HoDs) looked to work with other HoDs; across-school collaboration occurred through our subject associations, and still does today.

In the mid–1990s, my first experience of school-wide management was helping to co-ordinate the school's application for quality assurance approval so that we, along with all other secondary schools, could be recognised as a New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) accredited site of student assessment for the first time. We had been assessing students for qualifications in the years prior to this, but now the requirement, in line with the NPM principles outlined previously, was to provide assurance of our quality practices. The Wedge and Wheel model (Figure 1) was supposed to illustrate how the managing of quality

assurance worked. “The wheel represents the management systems developed to provide all staff with opportunities to contribute to ongoing improvement… The wedge represents the documented system that ensures that current best practice is used until the next improvement is made” (NZQA, 1993, p. 17)

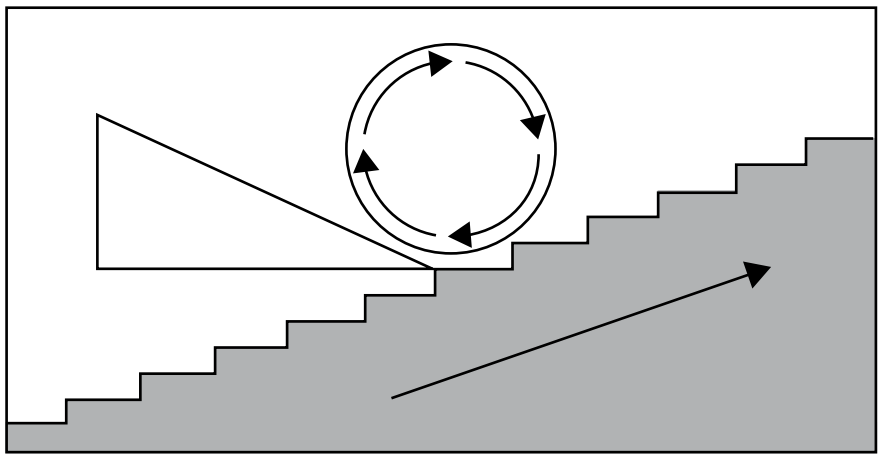

Figure 1. Wedge and wheel model (NZQA, 1993, p.17)

If the intent of this Total Quality Management (TQM) informed wording is taken at face-value, then the assumption is that the managing of certain systems provides an inclusive culture where staff are always improving. The added emphasis on documents is then supposedly meant to capture all that is good in terms of practice, so management systems, plus opportunities, plus documenting best practice, equals continuous improvement, hopefully resulting in improved student learning.

Secondary schools, around 1995 scrambled to have this accreditation documentation ready, consisting of school policies and processes. I recall during an Education Review Office (ERO) visit to our school hearing from the visiting Reviewer how some other schools had a glossy quality assurance document sitting on a shelf in the staff room, that very few staff knew anything about. This is an example of impression management related to developing a veneer called school image, as well as reducing an external requirement to a tick-the-box compliance activity.

All we could show was a pile of sub-committee minute books and policies that were under review by the staff whose departments would be most impacted by them. If we needed policies, then they had to work for us. The ERO Reviewer’s response is one I will never forget: “so this is a living document, not one that will become a doorstop or sit on a shelf gathering dust?”. In the decades since, I have argued that any policy and management system

should enhance our practice and not add any stress through unnecessary demands. This is where management differs from managerialism, the latter driven by principles of NPM, where "the increases in effort and time spent on core tasks are off-set by increases in effort and time devoted to accounting for task work or erecting monitoring systems, collecting performative data and attending to the management of institutional 'impressions'" (Ball, 2003, p. 221). My personal view is that managerialism has given management "a bad rap" and has contributed to the favouring of leadership over management that we experience across EMAL and the New Zealand educator sector today.

Education professionals can still look to influence and limit the extent to which NPM principles permeate into day-to-day practice. For example, in relation to mandated teacher appraisal, our research of schools in one region in New Zealand during 2002 found the one key factor that contributed to teachers experiencing a professional agential experience of mandated appraisal, rather than a bureaucratic managerial one, was they had agency and voice in shaping and reviewing their school's appraisal policy (Fitzgerald, Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). The importance of staff agency and voice in shaping how policy informs practice and vice versa shows the need for democratic inclusive processes. Whether these processes are labelled as (collaborative) management or (distributed or democratic) leadership is not a "game-breaker" in the field of education. Inclusivity is the key.

The field of Leadership Studies and its smaller cousin, EMAL, have become caught up the habit of adjectival descriptions of leadership, rather than defining leadership (Eacott, 2018). The proliferation of adjectival descriptions has contributed to the elevating of leadership as a *sine qua non*. The following two sections explore some aspects of how this elevation of leadership developed in New Zealand since the millennium.

The rise of (educational) leadership

During the public sector reforms starting in the late 1980s and the emphasis on self-management with a dual emphasis on quality management and human resource management of the 1990s, the Leadership Studies field saw some significant development with theoretical constructs. For example, from the 1980s, transformational leadership and charismatic leadership constructs became commonplace. This strengthened the focus on individuals who had organisation-wide management responsibility and when labelled as leaders, placed emphasis on them influencing followers in the quest to meet and exceed organisational goals. The resultant leader-followers-goals framework was and still is consistent with performative education systems, especially where leadership is assumed to be associated only, or mainly with, a select group of executive and senior level managers. In addition to the rise of transformational leadership and charismatic leadership, the EMAL field during these decades,

particularly in the United States, gave increasing prominence to instructional leadership, the leading of instruction taking place in classrooms. In New Zealand, professional leadership and educational leadership first became an often-used term associated with the role of school principalship (Ministry of Education, 1993), an essential aspect of practice expected of the most senior role in a school. Equating leadership with the most senior individual role, meant transformational leadership became a good fit with what was expected of principals at the time.

In the period 2000–10 a new adjectival description became commonplace in New Zealand education, strong leadership, which sometimes expanded to strong professional leadership. This begs the question, what is strong leadership? Is it the opposite of weak leadership and is strong leadership any different from leadership? Or does it mean individuals labelled as leaders need to be strong? My own view is that using "strong leadership", emphasises the focus and assumed need for leadership and so elevates its position in education. The Ministry of Education (2005, 2006) *Statement of Intent* for 2005–10 and 2006–11 illustrate this "strong" adjectival approach:

> Providers … demonstrate strong leadership which ensures the development of a culture of continuous improvement … Leadership ensures the creation of a strategic vision for teaching and learning within the organisation to which everyone can relate and recognise. Effective teaching and continuous professional improvement can only occur where strong leaders create an environment conducive to improved learning outcomes. (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 32)

> Strong leadership focuses on raising the achievement of all students. It involves setting ambitious but achievable goals. It aims to create an environment with clear expectation and a culture that supports and encourages learning through everything that happens. (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 41)

The Minister of Education in his introduction to the 2006–11 *Statement of Intent,* asked the Ministry of Education to focus on "strong professional leadership" (p. 2) as one of eight areas to meet the Government's goals for education. What ensued, especially for the school sector in New Zealand, was a period of intensification related to leadership development and research focusing on what leaders should do to improve student achievement. Supporting this intensification was the OECD (2008) *Improving school leadership: Country background report for New Zealand,* which notes the then early stages of the Best Evidence Synthesis of *School Leadership and Student Outcomes,* and the *Kiwi leadership for principals* initiative, the coming together of key stakeholders with interests in principal development, improvements made to the *First Time Principals* (FTP) induction programme, and recommended the Ministry of Education improve support for aspiring principals, especially given the "need

for a greater rate of (principal) recruitment in the next decade" (p. 72). The coming together and focus of key stakeholders broadened the focus beyond principals and aspirant principal pipelines to also include middle and other senior leaders, as well as supporting experienced principals. The *Professional Leadership Plan 2009–2010* (Ministry of Education, 2009), or PLP, was what I and some others considered a breakthrough. The PLP is appended at the end of this article.

I was fortunate enough to attend the latter meetings in Wellington where Ministry of Education representatives, all related Government education agencies, the School Trustees Association, New Zealand Council of Education Research, teacher unions, educational leadership researchers, principal professional groups and other key stakeholders collaborated together. The Ministry of Education at that time had a small team dedicated to leadership development. In addition to the FTP, a pilot *National Aspiring Principal Programme* (NAPP) was redeveloped, as well as a pilot *Experienced Principal Development Programme* (EPDP). The Best Evidence Synthesis of *School Leadership and Student Outcomes* (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009) and *Tū Rangitata – Māori medium educational leadership* (Ministry of Education, 2010) were published and attention turned to how middle leaders could be supported in their leadership practice. I was asked to be part of an advisory group tasked with helping develop a Ministry of Education middle leadership development publication. Then came cutbacks and the advisory group stopped.

The Ministry of Education was instructed by the Minister of Education to cut $NZ25 million from its budget. This led to a reduction of Ministry staff positions, restructuring and the removal of some programmes (Garner, 2010; Hartevelt, 2010). The small dedicated Ministry team focusing on leadership development was disestablished. Despite what I still consider to be a major national education setback because of the cutbacks, due to the collaborative efforts of a wide range of stakeholder groups, some good still came during and after these cutbacks.

Prior to the cutbacks, several educational leadership academics and their university teams, as well as some professional learning and development providers were awarded Ministry of Education development and delivery contracts related to the revised NAPP and EPDP. The postgraduate educational leadership team I was part of at Unitec at the time was awarded the evaluation contracts for the delivery of both programmes. Those delivering these programmes established their curriculum on the *Educational Leadership Model* that was first published in *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008) and the eight leadership dimensions that emerged from the *Best Evidence Synthesis of School Leadership and Student Outcomes* (Robinson et al., 2009). Both of our evaluations recommended the continuation, funding and further development of the programmes, with a majority of the principals who participated in the regionally based EPDP asking for a programme tailored

for experienced principals to be rolled out across New Zealand (Cardno & Youngs, 2013; Piggot-Irvine & Youngs, 2011; Youngs & Piggot-Irvine, 2012). Our recommendations were made at the time of the cutbacks and the EPDP faded into obscurity. The NAPP continued at the University of Waikato and then through Te Toi Tupu, a professional development collaboration across institutions, and the FTP continued at the University of Auckland, though both programmes now no longer exist. The *Best Evidence Synthesis of School Leadership and Student Outcomes* (Robinson et al., 2009) became commonplace in school leadership professional learning and development.

For approximately 18 months after the cutbacks, the planned middle leadership publication also seemed to fade into obscurity, until some of us on the advisory group were contacted by the Ministry of Education. It was encouraging to see collaboration again, this time with more middle and senior school leaders helping shape the publication, *Leading from the Middle* (Ministry of Education, 2012). A number of educational leadership Master's degree theses completed by New Zealand middle and senior school leaders featured in the references and some featured through story and video on the Ministry of Education's website, *Educational Leaders,* for school leadership (https://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/). The use of the term leadership, once the sole focus on one aspect of a principal's role just after the late 1980s reforms, 20 years later had now become commonplace with other senior school positions, such as deputy principals, and middle manager roles such as heads of departments in secondary schools. Middle managers increasingly became known as middle leaders, and Senior Management Teams became increasingly known as Senior Leadership Teams.

A number of school middle and senior leaders over the last 20 years or so have been able to complete their Master's degrees because of the Government funded TeachNZ Study Awards, where a successful applicant is granted leave from their school responsibilities for a period of time so they can undertake full-time study. This is particularly helpful when completing a thesis or dissertation as a means of in-depth professional learning and development.

However, this has not been the case for practitioners in Early Childhood Education (ECE), who have not experienced parity with school practitioners in relation to professional learning and development. In comparison to the resources given to the school sector for leadership development, not that they have been adequate, the Early Childhood sector has been much the poorer "cousin". Unlike in the school sector during the 1990s and 2000s, the term professional leader was rarely used in the ECE sector (Thornton, Wansbrough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aitken & Tamati, 2009). The New Zealand Teachers Council's Occasional Paper, *Conceptualising leadership in Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Thornton et al., 2009) argued there was "a lack of research focusing on leadership in ECE" (p. 5) and in contrast to the school sector, leadership and leadership development had a low

profile while also suffering from a lack of support from the Ministry of Education. Thornton's (2019) recent review of the New Zealand ECE sector reveals "leadership concepts and practices do appear to have a much higher profile in the early years' sector in 2019 than they did in 2009" (p. 45), in conjunction with an increase of empirical research. There is still room however, to improve leadership development opportunities, and for greater acknowledgement of leadership in ECE by the Ministry of Education, so its recognition comes into line with the importance promoted by the Education Review Office and the Teaching (formerly Teachers and then Education) Council (Thornton, 2019). A challenge across EMAL is, that despite the accumulation of empirical research and leadership development opportunities in the school sector, these are not easily transferable to ECE, due to differing contextual complexities. This challenge is also valid for special education (Taylor & Youngs, 2018) and higher education.

Higher education in New Zealand continues to be characterised by the principles of NPM discussed at the beginning of this article. New Zealand higher education institutions, like others in developed nations, "are expected to face the complexity of balancing the need to operate according to market pressures, teach an increased number of students despite diminishing financial means" (van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & van Meurs, 2009, p. 764) and operate in an audit culture. Leadership then takes on a dual expectation: on the one hand, academic leadership related to qualification development and delivery, teaching and learning as well as research leadership (Evans, 2014), while on the other hand, managerial leadership. Managerial leadership,

> must be focused on efficiently managing the various contracts and relationships between government and institutions, between management and staff, and between teachers and students … Using increasingly corporate structures to reward and penalise, audit society leaders set performance targets, fashion procedures and, through an array of managers, micro-manage the institution top to bottom. In New Zealand, this form of leadership has achieved almost hegemonic status, as most commentators seem to accept it as natural. It affects financial, organisational, research, instructional and relational facets of higher education. (Zepke, 2007, p. 302)

Looking at a decade of change from the early 2000s through the early 2010s, Howse (2017) compared the changes that three polytechnics experienced. She found an increase in middle leadership infrastructure, increased strategic management, rising academic accountability, enhanced research focus and an increase of excessive workloads. Similar issues are experienced by middle leaders in New Zealand universities, where Heads of Department particularly operate in an environment with complex and competing demands (Carroll, 2019; Thornton, Walton, Wilson & Jones, 2018).

For all three education sectors, there is another factor contributing to the elevation of leadership: the rise and promotion of distributed leadership in New Zealand and across EMAL from around the start of the millennium (Youngs, 2009, 2017, 2020). This combined with the rise of (educational) leadership discussed in this section has contributed to leadership as a *sine qua non* of education.

Conclusion: (Educational) leaders(hip) as a *sine qua non* – where to from here?

Official documents in the early 1990s framed a New Zealand principal as *the* professional leader. Postgraduate qualifications in the 1990s had one or both of management and administration in their nomenclature, but not leadership. Much focus was on operating self-managing organisations and delegation was referred to instead of distributed leadership. How things have changed. Thirty years later, the Education Council (2018), now Teaching Council, have a leadership strategy to enable every teacher in New Zealand to develop their leadership capability. Terms like distributed leadership are commonplace and management appears to have shifted into the shadows of leadership. Attention has gone into trying to identify dimensions of (educational) leadership most associated with enhancing student learning. There are many positives with these shifts, yet I also have a lingering concern. Could there be an over-elevation and over-use of leadership? Alvesson and Spicer (2012) argue any broadening of leadership to include "increasingly varied processes" (p. 370) leads to conceptual blunting.

For over 10 years I have asked educational leaders and teachers from across all sectors, *what is educational leadership*? For almost all, the educational aspect is a focus on learning and teaching and enhancing the conditions that promote these. The leadership aspect usually ends up with a list of qualities a person is expected to have. When I ask *how do you know leadership is occurring*? responses are less frequent and take a lot longer to emerge. There is a broad acceptance that leaders(hip) in education is a *sine qua non* and the educational intent of leaders(hip) is usually clear. I have used leaders(hip) here because the terms leaders and leadership are sometimes used interchangeably, and I need to then ask people which one they are referring to when they use the term leadership. This is one form of possible conceptual blunting.

As a leadership educator and learner, I am not just interested in how people (leaders) can develop and learn, I am also interested in how leadership, or perhaps what Crevani (2018) calls ***the ongoing production of direction***, emerges and is sustained as people work together. It is here where I find drawing on a process ontology for understanding leadership can help challenge a person's assumptions about leadership and lead to a sharpening of conceptual understanding. A process ontology, combined with the learned skill of reflecting-in-practice, can help practitioners become more aware of how leadership (direction forming) is occurring in the moment.

I have had the privilege of working with more or less the same group of schools over the past five years who can identify, not just the focus of their leadership practices (for example identifying and supporting collaborative teacher inquiry), but also name and recognise the (leadership) processes in use, such as ideating, clarifying, revealing, meshing, and dissolving, that support these practices. In addition, they can locate the social spaces in their school where these processes and practices are needed most. The implication here for leadership development is that the leadership learning process must be co-developmental, ongoing, and reflexive between a leadership educator and the group they work with. Reciprocal learning is at the heart of this process, rather than a leadership development programme set in advance that can be sold and delivered as a marketable package. Over the last thirty years there has been a lack of leadership development, all the while as some effective programmes have been developed, delivered and some closed. Now I wonder if there is another phase about to grow: tailor-made, co-developmental approaches where we surface and challenge understandings of what leadership is and what it looks like as it is occurring. This would require application of a process ontology of leadership, as well as emerging constructs such as Leadership-as-Practice.

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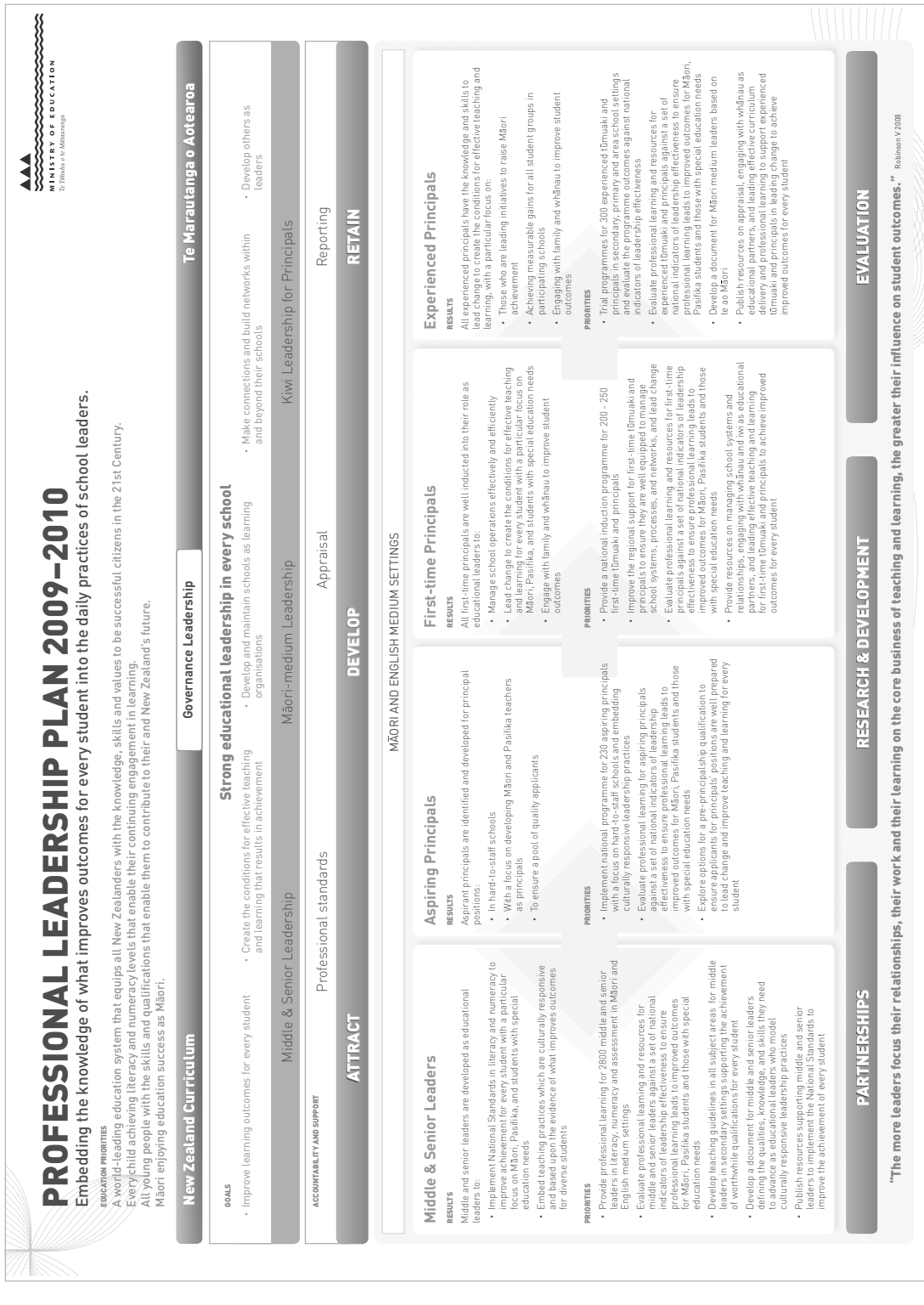
Appendix A: Professional Leadership Plan 2009-2010 (Ministry of Education, 2009)



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Howard Youngs PhD is a senior lecturer in educational leadership at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and became a member of NZEALS in 1995. His education journey started in secondary schools, followed by a shorter period lecturing in pre-service teacher education. For the last fifteen years he has taught applied postgraduate courses in educational leadership and development, first at Unitec and then at AUT. He has been fortunate to have supervised many amazing education professionals with their research. Howard's research has spanned servant leadership in higher education, teacher appraisal, school board chair leadership development, evaluation of the NAPP and EPDP, distributed forms of leadership, and the emergence of collaborative practices. His work at AUT also includes international development and relations in ASEAN nations, related to teacher and leadership development. He currently divides his time between mostly working for AUT, and as a leadership development facilitator / consultant in his own time.
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