The impact of positional leadership on secondary school captains

This item was submitted to Loughborough University’s Institutional Repository by the/an author.


Additional Information:

- This paper was published in the journal Leading and Managing, the original publication can be found here: http://www.acel.org.au/acel/ACELWEB/Publications/Journals/_Leading___Managing/ACELWEB/7ed5-41bc-ac59-e023430a41c

Metadata Record: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/20335

Version: Published

Publisher: © Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Rights: This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

Please cite the published version.
Volume 15 No. 2 Spring/Summer 2009

LEADING AND MANAGING

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Editorial

Marian Lewis
Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland
Editors:
Dorothy Andrews & Marian Lewis

Articles

01 The Impact of Positional Leadership on Secondary School Captains
Regan Neumann, Neil Dempster & James Skinner

16 Leadership Understanding and Practice in Girls’ Schools: A review of web based public documents
Nicole Archard

31 Taking up the Reins: The first year for deputy principals
Karen Anderson, Simon Clarke & Lesley Vidovich

44 How Secondary Principals View New Zealand’s Leadership Preparation and Succession Strategies: Systematic professionalisation or amateurism through serial incompetence?
Reynold Macpherson

59 Leading from Head Office: Framing education system leadership in Catholic Education
Joyce Spy & Helga Neidhart

72 How the School Review and Improvement (SRI) Framework Strengthens Schools as Professional Learning Communities – A case study from the Catholic school system, Sydney
Mark Turkington

88 Leadership Development in Support of Inclusive Education in Ukraine
Charles F. Webber & Shelleyann Scott

Book Review

104 Leading Change in your School: How to conquer myths, build commitment, and get results - Douglas B. Reeves
Lindy-Anne Abawi
Leading & Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Patron: Emeritus Professor Hedley Beare, The University of Melbourne

EDITORS
Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews & Dr Marian Lewis
Leadership Research Institute
Faculty of Education
The University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350
Australia
Email: dorothy.andrews@usq.edu.au; Marian.Lewis@usq.edu.au

EDITORIAL BOARD

Professor Lawrence Angus
Head, School of Education
University of Ballarat
P O Box 663
Ballarat, Victoria, 3353, Australia

Professor Richard Bates
Dean, Faculty of Education
Deakin University
Waurn Ponds, Victoria, 3217
Australia

Professor Les Bell
Centre for Educational Leadership and Management
The University of Leicester
162-166 Upper New Walk
Leicester
LE1 7QA, United Kingdom

Dr David Gurr
Senior Lecturer, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne
Victoria, 3010, Australia

Associate Professor Pam Christie
School of Education
The University of Queensland
St Lucia, Queensland, 4072
Australia

Professor Neil Cranston
School of Education
University of Tasmania
Hobart, Tasmania, 7001
Australia

Professor Frank Crowther
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Dean, Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350
Australia

Professor Neil Dempster
Dean, Faculty of Education
Mt Gravatt Campus
Griffith University
Nathan, Queensland, 4111, Australia

Professor Patrick Duignan
Director, Flagship for Creative & Authentic Leadership
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield, New South Wales, 2135
Australia

Professor Colin Evers
Associate Dean (Research)
Faculty of Education
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, China

Dr Michael Gaffney
Head of Education Services
Catholic Education Office
P. O. Box 3317
Manuka, ACT, 2603
Australia

Professor Gabriele Lakomski
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne
715 Swanston Street
Victoria, 3010, Australia

Professor Viviane Robinson
Head of School of Education
Faculty of Education
University of Auckland
New Zealand

Dr Lisa Ehrich
School of Learning & Professional Studies, Faculty of Education
Queensland University of Technology
Kelvin Grove Campus
Victoria Park Road
Brisbane, Queensland, 4059
Australia

Dr Gayle Spry
School of Educational Leadership
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo)
Virginia, Queensland, 4014,
Australia

Professor Louise Stoll
Visiting Professor
Institute of Education
University of London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1 H OAL
UK

Professor Charles Webber
Graduate Division of Educational Research
Faculty of Education
University of Calgary, T2N 1N4
Canada

ISSN 1329-4539
Leading & Managing

Volume 15          Number 2     Spring/Summer         2009

CONTENTS

Editorial

Marian Lewis
Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland

Editors:
DOROTHY ANDREWS & MARIAN LEWIS

Articles

The Impact of Positional Leadership on Secondary School Captains  1
REGAN NEUMANN, NEIL DEMPSTER & JAMES SKINNER

Leadership Understanding and Practice in Girls’ Schools: A review of web based public documents  16
NICOLE ARCHARD

Taking up the Reins: The first year for deputy principals  31
KAREN ANDERSON, SIMON CLARKE & LESLEY VIDOVICH

How Secondary Principals View New Zealand’s Leadership Preparation and Succession Strategies: Systematic professionalisation or amateurism through serial incompetence?  44
REYNOLD MACPHERSON

Leading from Head Office: Framing education system leadership in Catholic Education  59
GAYLE SPRY & HELGA NEIDHART

How the School Review and Improvement (SRI) Framework Strengthens Schools as Professional Learning Communities – A case study from the Catholic school system, Sydney  72
MARK TURKINGTON

Leadership Development in Support of Inclusive Education in Ukraine  88
CHARLES F. WEBBER & SHELLEYANN SCOTT

Book review

Leading Change in your School: How to conquer myths, build commitment, and get results  104
Douglas B. Reeves
LINDY-ANNE ABAWI
Editorial

The final edition of Leading and Managing for 2009 offers a diverse collection of articles though clear themes can be seen to emerge when the issue is considered in its entirety. The challenges, the learning and the growth that come from taking on a new leadership role are explored in two of the articles, while a third raises some potential pitfalls with learning on the job. Three of the articles centre on the use of frameworks to guide action. Of the two relating to leadership, the first uses a competency model that makes expectations explicit while allowing for context and freedom of expression. The second is used to link leadership action with social justice outcomes. Both have the potential for wider application and to be adapted for new contexts – something perhaps that may be reported in future editions.

In the first article, Neumann, Dempster and Skinner focus on an area relatively unexplored in the literature – the positional leadership of school captains in secondary schools. The experiences, both positive and negative, of six school captains in Queensland are reported from a study that looked at the perceived impact of school captaincy on the incumbents. Drawing on the lived experience of these school captains, along with the views of parents and teachers, the article presents an emerging understanding of the impact on students in a range of areas. Much of the effect is positive, in the life skills these student leaders develop and the deepening level of maturity they display. The findings are captured in a model that the writers suggest may be a useful basis for discussing the role with student leaders. The article also notes that in the role of school captain, students gain insights into school operations. In a sense, these school leaders inhabit the middle ground between students and teachers – in a position where they can meaningfully participate in and contribute to school processes and decision-making.

The second article also looks at students and the importance of leadership preparation – this time from a gender perspective. Noting the under-representation of women in leadership positions, Archard argues that if the participation of women at all levels of society is accepted as important to our future, then schools have a significant role in addressing this gender imbalance. In an analysis of the web based documentation of 123 girls’ schools in Australia and NZ, Archard looked at how leadership preparation was expressed and what links were being made between student leadership and various dimensions of school practice. Reporting that student leadership was acknowledged in many of the school documents – though there was diversity in how this was understood and practiced – Archard seeks to raise awareness with her study so that leadership preparation for girls may be built on more mindfully.

In the third article, the focus moves to another under-researched area in the literature, how newly appointed ‘novice’ deputy principals adjust to their role. Anderson, Clarke and Vidovich report on a study which tracked a diverse group of eight primary school deputy principals in Western Australia through the first year of their appointment. Data were gathered at three junctions during the year, and different themes emerged at these different junctures – marking different phases of adjustment. The initial steep learning curve, followed by a focus on relationship building, led to the development of a stronger sense of ‘inhabiting’ the role of deputy principal, and operating at that level. It is interesting, too, that deputy principals in the study conceptualised their role as being the intermediary between the principal and the staff, a location not without its tensions. In a way, with echoes perhaps of the experiences of the
school captains described by Neumann, Dempster and Skinner, this study provides an example of an intense learning experience that brings both challenges and rewards along with an increasing professional maturity. The authors conclude that the distinctive and significant position of deputy principal justifies a greater level of attention. This research may be particularly significant for novice deputy principals and teachers aspiring to take up that role. More ‘learning on the job’ is indicated in the next article, this time problematically, and in relation to educational leaders in New Zealand. Macpherson notes the imminent retirement of a number of baby boomers in educational leadership positions and argues for effective national leadership development and succession strategies to meet this challenge. In the study reported, 14 secondary school principals were surveyed about what they regarded as appropriate preparatory and succession strategies. While acknowledging that the sample size is small, and the findings indicative, Macpherson argues that the study highlights issues that need to be addressed if ‘serial incompetence’ is to be avoided, particularly where people are fast tracked into educational leadership positions. The importance of treating the ‘planned professionalism’ of educational leaders as a policy matter is stressed and five issues identified as needing to be addressed if a ‘substantial and sustained national policy’ (p. 45) informed by research, is to be developed.

The next article, also concerned with leadership succession, focuses on a participative research project designed to develop a framework for Catholic education system leadership in Australia. Here the policy approach adopted is the development of a framework that establishes expectations for leadership in Catholic Education offices and acts as a reflective tool, a guide for individuals and for those employing, managing and developing system leaders. The research, reported by Spry and Neidhart, explores the nature and purpose, domains and capabilities of system leadership in Australian Catholic education. It is significant (and heartening) that the framework uses capabilities rather than competencies – the intent being ‘to allow freedom of expression whilst providing some guidance about expectations’ (p. 65). This is indeed a framework that prompts reflection – a picture of leadership is constructed that is ethical, caring and collaborative, responsible, focused and inspiring… Who could fail to be inspired by leadership which ‘uses intuition as well as logic and reason’, ‘exemplifies honestly and integrity and, ‘is morally courageous’. It will certainly be interesting to see how this framework may be taken up – appropriately adapted – in other contexts.

In the sixth article, taking a slightly different tack, Turkington reports on a case study from the Sydney Catholic schools system working with a different framework, the school review and improvement framework (SRI). Noting this is part of an effort to more closely align system processes with student outcomes, Turkington describes how the SRI framework can strengthen schools as professional learning communities. The article is based on the premise that schools, operating in times of rapid change, and always seeking to improve their service to students, are better able to meet these challenges if they operate as professional learning communities. The operation of professional learning communities in individual schools can be supported and enhanced through the use of the SRI framework. Additionally, the use of this framework provides the system with some assurance about the level and way its schools are operating.

Finally, a change of location, as Webber and Scott, from the University of Calgary in Canada, report on a leadership framework being used in the advancement of a social justice
initiative in the Ukraine. This is the *Life-Long Learning Leader (4L)* leadership development framework which has been used, with appropriate consultation, to design a course for principals in the Ukraine on leading inclusive education for principals. As described in the article, the course maps the 4L framework against a range of core topics that are clustered into three categories: understanding educational leadership, leading people, and supporting members of the school community as inclusive education is implemented. The structure of the course is premised on the belief that if school principals have an understanding of inclusive education, they are able to support inclusive classroom practice and facilitate cultural change. As the authors indicate, the 4L framework in this context is being used as a means of achieving socially just outcomes in the area of inclusive education. As such it may have broader applicability as a means of action in other contexts, in relation to this and other social justice issues.

Volume 15 of *Leading and Managing*, appropriately enough, concludes with a review of *Leading Change in Your School: How to conquer myths, build commitment and get results* by Douglas Reeves.

**Dr Marian Lewis**

*Leadership Research (LRI) Faculty of Education*

*University of Southern Queensland*

*Email: marian.lewis@usq.edu.au*
The Impact of Positional Leadership on Secondary School Captains

REGAN NEUMANN  
Harristown State High School, Toowoomba  
Email: rneum4@eq.edu.au

NEIL DEMPSTER  
Griffith University (Mt Gravatt Campus)  
Email: n.dempster@griffith.edu.au

JAMES SKINNER  
Griffith University (Gold Coast Campus)  
Email: j.skinner@griffith.edu.au

ABSTRACT: This article examines the impact of positional leadership on secondary school captains in a group of 'like schools' in Queensland, Australia. Through six studies, using document analysis, interviews, observations and focus groups, with school captains, parents and teachers, a number of perceived areas of impact on the students holding these positions emerged. These impacts involve relationships, roles and responsibilities, personal well-being, learning skills and learning management, self-management and self-confidence. The study suggests that through the status and responsibilities associated with the position and the self-awareness that grows during school captaincy, the young person is likely to experience deepening maturity more quickly than might otherwise be the case.

Introduction

Although leadership amongst principals and teachers in schools has been given persistent attention by researchers over the last two decades (Andrews & Crowther, 2006; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Fullan, 2002; Grace, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; Harris & Townsend, 2007; Leithwood, 1992; MacBeath, Moos, & Riley, 1996;Muijs & Harris, 2003; Riley, 2004; Sergiovanni, 1991, 1999), student leadership in secondary schools has been relatively unexplored. The impact of incumbency on students who hold a recognised leadership position in the school community has been given even less attention.

It goes without saying that students should be at the centre of education systems. Traditionally, their role in school has been to learn from teachers in a classroom setting. However, educational researchers over recent years have given a higher level of attention to schools as learning organisations and social organisations where interaction between all participants influences the potential for students to learn and develop through the early parts of their lives (Bernstein, 1977; Grace, 1995). School life for students involves activities and
experiences inside classrooms, within the school, and in the wider community (Nordgren, 2002). Increasingly, students are being seen as a key stakeholder group and, therefore, are being encouraged to be contributors to organisational arrangements, learning procedures and processes and strategic decision-making (Levin, 1998). Creating organisational structures where leadership is built on collaboration is fundamental to facilitating student participation.

Beyond the classroom and within the school community, students in today’s schools assume many roles: helpers, partners and leaders. The expectations of student leaders in contemporary schools make the role now much more than symbolic. Indeed, the position of school captain is likely to become more demanding over time, as shared leadership becomes the new currency in educational institutions (Gronn, 2008; Spillane, 2006).

This article presents the outcomes of a study aimed at explaining how the position of school captain affects students. It uses six school captains in the final year of their secondary education in Queensland, Australia as cases. Before examining the results of the study however, a brief scan of relevant literature on student leadership from tertiary settings is undertaken to substantiate the claim that secondary school leadership is under-researched. This is followed by an explanation of the school captain’s position in secondary schools and a description of the study, including its methods, data management processes and overall findings.

**Student Leadership in Tertiary Settings**

Greater attention has been given to student leadership by researchers in the tertiary sector than in schools. Positional student leadership in tertiary settings is common in many universities, particularly in the United States. The roles performed by these students vary, depending on the organisational structures within the university and the value placed on student leadership by the academic council or board. A number of studies have indicated both positive and negative effects on students who have held positions such as student president. The findings suggest that when leadership skills from out-of-class activities practised by positional student leaders are applied in the classroom, real academic benefit is experienced (Christensen, 1969; Downey, Bosco, & Silver, 1984; Kuh, 1994, 1997; Ross-Power, 1980).

Some researchers (Astin, 1984; Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005) claim that student leadership experiences, such as holding a university or college position of responsibility, or active membership in a group, directly influence personal development and the richness of learning experiences. It also appears there might be a number of factors, such as previous experience in leadership (Astin, 1984), training (Cress et al., 2001), achievement orientation (Erwin & Marcus-Mendoza, 1988) and gender (Whitt, 1994), that influence the quality and benefits of leadership experiences for the students who assume a recognised role and contribute through out-of-class activities to their college or university.

Kuh and Lund (1994) believe ‘learning and personal development are enhanced when students are more actively engaged in educationally purposeful out-of-class activities’ (p. 5). This includes student leadership activities. They suggest that students who are actively involved in student government are more likely to engage in other activities that also contribute to learning and personal development. Moffat (1989) asserts that a majority of what students learn during college is attributed to out-of-class activities. Involvement, according to
Astin (1993), leads to greater than average increases in political liberalism, hedonism, artistic interests and a positive impact on occupational choice, humanitarian interests, self-esteem, self-concept, and persistence. Kuh and Lund’s (1994) study claims that student government participation yields benefits in the areas of practical and social competence (decision-making ability, organisational skills such as time management, and budgeting), dealing with systems such as bureaucracies, teamwork, interpersonal relationships skills, leadership, flexibility and communication skills.

Overall, there is substantial evidence from research in tertiary education settings of a range of positive effects on those occupying leadership roles as students. Research into student leadership in secondary settings is not as robust. Although there has some interest in examining leadership development and training for secondary school students, Dempster and Lizzio (2007, p. 282) claim there is ‘little evidence that leadership is a concept that has been adequately described from the student’s point of view’. In short, to explore and develop a knowledge of what adolescent school captains see as the impact of their leadership position on them is worthy of further examination.

**Positional Student Leadership in Secondary Schools**

The paucity of student leadership research in secondary schools is matched by the lack of attention paid by Australian school system authorities to defining clearly the role of school captain. Although there is acknowledgement of student leadership in most state and territory internet Education Department websites, through such programs as Student Voice and Student Councils, no state government website has policies specifically related to school captaincy. The absence of policy about the position is surprising given that the school captain is a significant student leadership position common to most secondary schools in Australia. The position is also sometimes called head boy/girl, or student president. Students who hold this position have usually taken part in a selection process and upon appointment, have accepted particular roles and responsibilities.

Many schools appoint students to the position through a formal process. These appointments are made according to a multiplicity of school-based criteria depending on the expectations held of the role. It is common for schools to expect much more of their school captains than of other students.

Student leaders’ roles vary from school to school. These roles are usually recognised formally within the school community. The responsibilities of student leaders might include representing the school at functions and events, organising student-based activities, helping staff with co-curricular activities and assisting in the maintenance of school routines. Some of the responsibilities are similar to those undertaken by positional student leaders in tertiary settings. These involve participating and leading student government groups, committee membership, co-curricular activities and public speaking. Such activities provide an opportunity for these students to acquire and practise leadership and associated skills in real-life situations.
A Study of Secondary School Captains

The study reported here examines some of the stories told by six school captains, in three ‘like schools’ in Brisbane, Australia. The study followed the students during the final year of their secondary schooling. It aimed to identify the perceived impact of positional leadership on them from their own point of view as well as from the points of view of parents and significant others within the school setting. Both positive and negative impact were examined.

Method

The investigation used a qualitative approach based on the theoretical principles of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). These principles aim to explain the significance of interaction in shaping human thought and action. In short, individuals act on the basis of the meanings they take from their social situations and circumstances. In this study, interest lay in the meanings school captains attached to their experiences in the position, particularly their understanding of the impact of the position on them. The investigation used case studies of six school captains from three metropolitan schools in Brisbane. It focused on real-life events and used the perceptions held by these students and ‘significant others’ (teachers and parents) to formulate tentative propositions about the impact of the role on a young person’s life.

The schools used were classified by the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (known as Education Queensland in the State of Queensland) as ‘like schools’. There was no specific focus on gender differences – both male and female school captains were included. ‘Like schools’ groupings, used by Education Queensland, are determined on the basis of the schools’ Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED), their proportion of students of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background and their Band level, influenced by ‘size and complexity’ (Education Queensland, 2005). The IRSED index used in the like school determination for 2005 is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data collected in 2001.

Data were collected by reviewing documents, undertaking observations, interviews, and by conducting focus group discussions. These techniques created the opportunity to obtain information by various means – written, seen and spoken. The texts describing the roles and responsibilities of school captains from each school provided statements of intent and expectation. Classroom observations provided the opportunity for the researchers to see the school captains in their role and as learners, interacting with peers and teachers in a formal setting. Multiple perspectives were used in the analysis and verification process. The grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) of open and axial coding were used to help derive thematic and propositional meaning from the data.

Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of eight months, collecting data at the beginning of the students’ appointment and again six months after assuming the role, with several points of contact through email during that time. Constant contact facilitated relationship building with the students and their families. Data collection occurred at each school site over a week both at the beginning and towards the end of the study. During the first month of the school year documentary information was collected about the role and selection processes associated with the appointment of a school captain. An interview with each student and his or her parent, and
a focus group discussion with each student’s English and mathematics teacher and year level coordinator were also undertaken. Member checking (verifying ‘scripts’ of recorded data with the data source) occurred immediately following observations and within two weeks of other data collection activity. Participants, through email contact, authenticated these ‘scripts’. Adjustments were made based on informants’ feedback.

**Discussion**

The major findings of the study show that there were six areas in which the impact of the role of school captain is evident. These were: relationships, responsibilities, personal well-being, learning skills, self-management and self-confidence. A discussion of each follows.

**Relationships**

The six school captains felt that relationships with various groups of people were affected during the period they held the position. These included relationships with staff (including school administrative staff), other adults, peers and younger students. Female school captains reported significant impact on close peer relationships.

*a. Staff*

Most school captains believed that their relationships with the staff were stronger as a result of their position in the school, when compared with other students. The contributing factors identified by school captains for this positive impact included: working co-operatively on school events; working with some staff on student-run events; representing the school at community events with some members of staff; regularly meeting with some staff members, such as the administration; working on projects within the school; working individually with classroom teachers to catch up on missed lessons; and negotiating with staff about deadlines. These activities created the opportunity for the school captains to deal with staff in different contexts, leading to deeper personal relationships.

At times these situations created a level of tension for the students, particularly over assessment and missed lesson time. In general, the students felt that the relationships in which they engaged contributed to their personal growth and maturity. In addition, these relationships enabled them to build skills of negotiation, persuasion, advocacy and persistence. The students believed the position helped them feel more assertive and thereby more capable of dealing with issues within the school. They also reported greater sensitivity to the perceptions of others, while their extended relationships helped them enhance their capacity to work in partnership with the staff.

Through extensive involvement with staff in school activities, each school captain believed he or she had developed a better connection with the school. This was particularly fostered by the requirement to represent the school in the wider community. Family members confirmed this. Examples given by the students included intervening when observing inappropriate student behaviour in the playground, commenting on school uniform presentation in public areas, encouraging participation, and contribution to school events or competitions.
b. Adults
Constant interaction with members of the public was common to each school captain’s experience. The position required them to represent the school at community events, to interact with government officials and business people at school events, and mix with parents from their own school and others.

As a result, students believed they had developed the capacity to interact casually, to communicate and speak informally with unknown people and small unfamiliar groups. They felt that this had helped them build confidence and deal with new situations. Two female school captains expressed the view that these experiences helped them to gain an understanding of body language in their interactions with others.

c. Peers
Generally, the school captains in the study found a change in relationships with their peers. For two of the three male captains this was not reported as of concern. However, the females recounted their perception of a deterioration of close peer relationships. These students disclosed their exclusion from some peer group activities both at school and in other social contexts, such as not working together on class work, not reciprocating in sharing notes and assessment preparation, name calling, negative comments, and refusing to assist with some school activities where the captain needed student assistance. Each female captain identified a range of situations, in the second formal interview conducted in the latter part of the study, where they had felt disappointed by the impact the role had on these close relationships.

Some of the students claimed that the deterioration in peer relationships had occurred as a result of being busy with school captaincy activities during lunch times or after school, when they would normally have time with their friends. This was more common with the males. One male captain aptly described this as a ‘lack of playground moments’. Relationships with the general Year 12 student group did not appear to be affected by holding the position of school captain. Some students said that the position required them to make broader social contact beyond their normal friendship group, as they were required to organise student assistance or participation for some school activities. Three students felt that the position had resulted in them being invited to more social events outside school.

d. Younger students
All students involved in the study believed that their relationships with younger students were enhanced as a result of their tenure in the position of school captain. This they said was, in part, because of the activities, roles and responsibilities of the position, but also through informal contact in the school grounds. The activities that required interaction with younger students included orientation programs, buddy programs, lunchtime activities, breakfast clubs, year level assemblies, and leadership activities. These responsibilities involved the captains in organising and planning activities, public speaking, resolving conflict between students, communicating about school activities and facilitating social interaction between unknown younger students. Some identified that these responsibilities assisted them to develop listening and interpersonal skills. Interacting with younger students involved working with primary school students through induction ceremonies, primary school leadership days and open days.
e. At home

Although student and parent comments did not include any apparent negative impact on the home environment, each parent said that holding the position of school captain required their home life to be more organised and that they had to consider the needs of the school more. The female captains’ parents commented that their children talked about the tensions in their peer relationships. This suggests an enhanced level of discussion between parent and female students about impact outside the family rather than within it. A further illustration of this phenomenon became evident when family members indicated that they constantly reinforced the importance of the school captain as a role model at school and in the wider community. This was a point of discussion with both older and younger siblings. When siblings were enrolled at the same school, each parent said that they had noticed a strong sense of pride from the younger child.

Responsibilities

The second impact area that emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data was responsibilities. Documents outlining the position descriptions, selection criteria, and processes of appointment were the main sources of data used in defining the responsibilities related to the role of school captain. Each school document provided the framework for the kinds of experiences position holders could expect. A summary of the roles and responsibilities distilled from the six schools is displayed in Table 1.

The selected documents succinctly told the story of who a school captain was at these schools, what their expected behaviours were to be, and how they were expected to interact with others in and outside the school community.

### TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FROM ALL SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Role and Responsibilities for School Captains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal well-being

The third impact area that the data analysis exposed was personal well-being. This included physical, financial and social aspects of the student’s life.
a. Physical impact
The majority of school captains, and their parents, indicated that the students had experienced illness during the year. Each attributed this, in part, to the demands of extra activity in a year with additional responsibilities. Key comments included terms such as anxiety and imbalance, being run down, and stressed. One parent said that she had already put her son on vitamins, as she could see the signs of lethargy. Time away from school to recover from illness was longer than expected in most cases and this added to the lost lesson time caused by the extra responsibilities of school captaincy. Students reported more pressure on meeting assessment deadlines. Each focus group discussion and most classroom teachers in post-student observation discussions commented on time lost (as a result of official duties) as a point of tension between the school captain and members of staff.

b. Financial impact
All except one school captain claimed that they had made the decision either to reduce their hours of paid employment or to withdraw from part-time employment during their term of office. Some of the captains made that choice after a couple of months when they believed that the position commitments might have an effect on their academic results. This decreased the financial freedom felt by the students and increased financial dependence on parents.

c. Social impact
Some of the school captains said they decided to reduce their involvement in outside community activities as a result of the increased number of school responsibilities. Each of the students talked about reduced contact with friends. Students, at times, made the decision not to participate in outside school social activities with peers because of ever-present study commitments or the perception that the event might produce negative reactions in the wider community. Participation in some family activities was reduced because of school and study. Parents acknowledged that the position required reprioritising school, family and social life during the term of appointment. Captains often needed time at home for study to compensate for the impact of their duties on their academic achievement.

Learning skills and management
The fourth impact area identified during the study was learning skills and management. School captains divulged a number of effects of their occupancy of the position on their learning skills, specifically communication within groups, verifying information, listening, and problem solving. In the management of learning they reported effects on their planning, organising, time management, priority and goal setting. These were not always enunciated by students in the interviews, but they were the subject of comment following lesson observations. Class teachers confirmed many of these effects during the post-observation member checking process. Each is now discussed.

a. Learning skills
All students believed that their experience as school captain had helped improve their oral presentations, particularly in those for assessment. Other learning skills that had developed included written communication, working in groups, verifying information, clarifying with
teachers and peers, checking from source materials, problem solving, working under pressure and listening. The most common skills students felt they had developed included working under pressure, listening, verifying, and problem solving.

With the exception of oral presentations, most students did not talk about an application or transference of these skills to their classroom learning environment. Only through probing did disclosure about how this had contributed to the management of their learning emerge. The interviews with classroom teachers and post-observation discussions revealed that some teachers believed that there were noticeable changes in student skill development in these skill areas.

b. Learning management
Students perceived that their learning management had changed while they were school captains. Learning management skills identified included:

- planning events and activities and assessment schedules;
- organising materials and resources for activities;
- balancing competing demands such as study time with outside school commitments;
- managing time and deadlines to cope with school responsibilities and classroom learning;
- putting in place systems and techniques to catch up on missed lessons and class work;
- assisting other groups to achieve goals;
- coaching peers in the classroom;
- setting project goals and managing resources required to achieve an outcome; and
- setting academic goals and working out ways to achieve these.

The most common concerns raised about learning management were planning, organising, and balancing priorities between school and individual learning responsibilities. Students said these were essential components of their strategies to deal with the stress of the additional captaincy responsibilities.

Self-management
The fifth area of impact identified by school captains was self-management. This included developing a better understanding of self and others and the capacity to prioritise competing demands.

a. Understanding self and others
School captains at one of the study schools which had a program emphasis on student leadership said that the experience enabled them to develop a more critical understanding of themselves, especially in relation to their own strengths and weaknesses. This occurred through project management, application of leadership knowledge, interaction with a range of people in a variety of situations, and personal reflection. It was claimed that a strong self-concept developed through these experiences. Identification of others’ strengths to achieve tasks and the capacity to make better choices in decision-making processes were identified by
some of the school captains as adding to their self understanding.

All female school captains said that they had become more aware of other students’ negative behaviours – particularly with their peers. Their personal skills and coping strategies to deal with interpersonal conflict developed during the leadership experience. A higher level of sensitivity to issues faced by staff was evident with all school captains, especially concerning the often tense issues of missing classes, work in class and assessment. With their deeper understanding of others, the students felt that they could make better decisions when undertaking their school duties and when negotiating class activities with their teachers.

b. Prioritising competing demands

Each school captain indicated that the position required them to be more organised and better planned than they had found necessary in previous years. Both males and females believed that this was necessary in order to cope with the additional responsibilities and stress points during the year. Organisational strategies included keeping a diary, planning ahead, keeping an assessment schedule, having regular meetings with the administrative staff to plan events and maintaining study buddies.

Some parents commented that their children had become better planned in their personal lives outside school. This suggests that captains may have learned and applied an holistic approach to organising key activities in their lives – school, family and community. Some students also reported that the process of negotiating flexibility in participation and assessment with their teachers assisted them in managing the competing demands of the position.

Self-confidence

Self-confidence was the final area that the data showed was affected by school captaincy. Students identified public speaking, improvising when confronted with unexpected situations, dealing with unknown people, and developing interpersonal skills as important indicators of enhanced self-confidence. Findings related to each of these are now discussed.

a. Public speaking

The position of school captain requires students to be involved in public speaking in the school and in the wider community. Activities where this occurred included assemblies and school events such as opening new buildings, ANZAC Day, Open Day, first term welcome to parents and the introduction of guest speakers. Each of these public events required students to communicate with large groups of people, both known and unknown.

As a result of these experiences, all students felt more confident and that they had improved in their capacity to perform well in oral presentations in the classroom setting. Students described this in various ways, such as, ‘(I) could speak now with only notes compared to a full page of words’, ‘speaking to a class group is not as scary as a hall full of people’ and ‘giving speeches is what we do all the time – it’s much easier now’. All school captains commented that the regular practice of speaking and conducting assemblies had been a major contributing factor to their developing confidence.
b. Improvisation – unpredictable situations
Most school captains spoke about dealing with unexpected situations as a part of their role. This happened with assembly changes or malfunctions, giving an unanticipated vote of thanks, welcoming outside people, or having to perform a duty suddenly at a school event. These unknown, unpredictable situations created a high level of anxiety and required the students to improvise and, at times, problem solve rapidly. Students did not say that having to cope with these events was easier, but that they became used to dealing with unpredictable situations. This, they said, helped them to feel more confident in public situations.

Problem solving and improvising were also seen as a part of managing and organising projects in the school community. When people did not follow through with their responsibilities or an unpredicted problem arose, the school captains were required to work out other ways to achieve task outcomes. As a result, the students felt more confident in their ability to achieve goals.

c. Interpersonal skills
Meeting new people and dealing with adults in school and community contexts was identified as a contributor to building better communication skills, developing confidence and maturity, according to most of the captains. Being able to handle a conversation with unfamiliar people was a common role for each of them. At times, when the people were perceived as ‘important community leaders’, captains felt that a higher level of confidence was called into play. Female school captains indicated that dealing with the teaching and administrative staff in school activities and events fostered self-belief and confidence in their abilities.

Having described some of the specific findings of the study, the task of crystallising them as major messages from the research remains. This is now done in the final part of the article which presents conclusions about the impact of school captaincy in two interconnected themes: role and status and self-awareness.

Role and status and self-awareness
By grouping common elements of the specific areas of impact explained above, two overarching themes emerged. These were the role and status that accompanies the position and the self-awareness that develops by fulfilling the responsibilities of the office.

Giddens (2001) argues that status is the difference between two social groups; it is attributed by others and is reflected in symbolic ways. In the case of school captains, it is reflected in the way they stand out from other students in formal assemblies where their profiles are high, abroad in the school community where they meet and interact with civic dignitaries, and in the time they spend with members of staff, the school principal and members of the administrative team in planning and decision-making activities. The role played by school captains is recognised and valued by students, teachers, parents and the local school community thus adding to its status. This high regard has ramifications for each captain’s ready relationship with staff, peers, younger students, and members of the public.

The second key impact theme, self-awareness, captures an amalgam of effects associated with the position, namely the enhancement of significant personal capacities able to be applied in school and at home.
Conclusion

To conclude the article, a model capturing the anticipated impact of school captaincy on students is presented and explained (see Figure 1). This is done to provide a framework for discussing with young people what they might expect when they are appointed to these positions. An added purpose of Figure 1 is to provide a depiction of the study’s analytical outcomes and their interplay in the production of a central theoretical proposition – that the position of school captain is likely to lead to a deepening sense of maturity.

Central to Figure 1 is the idea of ‘deepening maturation’ to which the role and status of school captains and their developing self-awareness contribute. These twin concepts in turn reflect growing skills in learning and learning management, general self-management, enhanced self-confidence, expanding relationships, coping with demanding responsibilities and handling personal well-being concerns.

The model presented in Figure 1 is consistent the work of Tilton-Weaver, Vitunski and Galambos (2001), who suggest that maturity is a multifaceted concept that involves physical, social, psychological, emotional, and behavioural elements. They claim that adolescents themselves commonly acknowledge that maturity comes from responsibility, power and status, balance and privileges, and that maturity is demonstrated through ‘competence at individual, interpersonal and societal levels’ (p. 154). The model illustrates the claim that the status and self-awareness that come with the position of school captain impact on adolescent lives to deepen their maturity.

Overall, the study suggests that when a student is appointed to a leadership position such as school captain, he or she can expect to experience a change in his or her relationships with others as well as an impact on personal well-being. In fulfilling the expectations of the position, school captains are likely to gain a better understanding of themselves, a higher level of confidence, and an increased capacity to manage and organise their own lives. They are also likely to develop processes and skills useful in their learning. These real-life experiences as school captains, more likely than not, will result in a deepening sense of their own maturity. The thrust of the findings of this study should prove helpful to teachers acting as mentors for school captains, for parents whose children are appointed to these positions, but more importantly, for the students themselves who are selected to carry out this important leadership role.
FIGURE 1: A MODEL OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF POSITIONAL LEADERSHIP ON SECONDARY SCHOOL CAPTAINS
References


The Impact of Positional Leadership on Secondary School Captains


°“like schools’ groupings used by Education Queensland are determined on the basis of the schools’ Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage, their proportion of students of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background and the size of the school, influenced by complexity
Leading & Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Notice for Contributors

The use of two active, present participles in the journal title appears, perhaps, slightly unorthodox, but the choice is deliberate. Leading & Managing (L&M), for us, assumes that while leading and managing are qualitatively different activities, in reality they complement one another, and are vital to the effective performance of complex organisations and groups. We think managing is best thought of as tied to the performance of specific roles and organisational responsibilities. While this may also be true of leading, it is invariably not the case.

Instead of providing just one more scholarly vehicle for concentrating on leadership and management as conventionally understood and statically defined functions we believe L&M highlights two key organisational processes: the acts of leading and managing.

Specifically, we have aimed L&M at personnel working at all organisational levels and in all sectors and systems, principally, but not exclusively, in the sphere of education, with that word understood in its widest sense. We have set two goals for L&M: (1) to advance understanding of what it means to lead and to manage, the experiences of organisational personnel while engaged in leading and managing and the experiences and reflections of those who find themselves being led and managed; and (2) to improve the practice of leading and managing through empirical research and theoretical analysis.

In the belief that no one particular school of thought ever has a monopoly on wisdom or truth, we want L&M to be eclectic in its scope and tolerant of diverse standpoints. Accordingly, we welcome manuscript contributions from a plurality of perspectives. These may report empirical research, best practice and pedagogy, propose intervention and consultancy strategies, or comprise discussions of theory and methodology.

We ask contributors to bear in mind the following broad indicators of quality writing when preparing manuscripts for submission. Above all, we seek significant contributions to L&M which advance understanding of leading and managing. We ask that authors should demonstrate their familiarity with current developments in the field and strive to bring to bear distinctive and new perspectives on their chosen topics. We expect arguments to be tightly structured, clearly presented and written in prose that is accessible to a diverse readership.

Leading & Managing is the official journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. It is published twice each year by the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, National Office, PO Box 4268 Wimmalee NSW 2777, and is printed by DAI Rubicon, 17 Capital Court (PO Box 535), Braeside, Victoria 3195, Australia.

© Copyright, Australian Council for Educational Leaders. This issue published 2009. All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.
Leading & Managing Subscription Form  
For Non-ACEL Members

TO:   ACEL National Office  
P.O. Box 1891  
Penrith, N.S.W.  2751  
Australia

Please begin my subscription to Leading & Managing, in one of the following categories commencing with the next issue:-

WITHIN AUSTRALIA

*Individual subscriptions to be paid by personal cheque or personal credit card only.*  
*Institutional subscriptions to be paid by cheque or credit card only.*

Individuals:   □ $40, including postage: two issues.
Institutions:  □ $64, including postage: two issues.

OVERSEAS

*To be pre-paid in Australian dollars; cheques must be drawn on an Australian bank.*

Individuals:   □ $50, two issues, air-mail postage.
Institutions:  □ $80, two issues, air-mail postage.

PAYMENT

□ Payment encl.   □ Renewal – Charge to:  □ MC  □ VISA

Card No:     Expires:   /

Signature:  

Name:  

Address:  

City:     State:     Postcode:
Preparation of Manuscripts

**Leading & Managing** is a scholarly, refereed journal and observes the normal processes of blind review. All manuscripts should be sent to the editors, Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews & Dr Marian Lewis, Leadership Research Institute, Faculty of Education, The University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350, Australia. To facilitate the review process an electronic version is to be sent as an email attachment to andrewsd@usq.edu.au or marian.lewis@usq.edu.au in a Word .doc format. Contributors should note that papers accepted for publication in *L&M* become the copyright of the Journal.

**Manuscripts** should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length. They must be typed, double-spaced and with ample margins, on A4 paper, on one side only and with all pages numbered. The front page should bear the manuscript title, the author’s name and institutional affiliation. The second page should carry the title and an abstract of 100-150 words. Avoid the excessive use of dot points.

**Spelling** will be checked to conform to the most common usage found in *The Macquarie Dictionary* (4th Edition, 2005). For **style**, the *Style manual* (Commonwealth of Australia, 6th Edition, 2002) will be used as the reference document.

**Headings** should appear in lower case and bold type and should be centred. Sub-headings should be in lower case, underlined and be left justified. The first sentence of the initial paragraph under headings and sub-headings should be left justified; thereafter indent the first sentence of succeeding paragraphs.

**Notes** appear at the end of the article, but authors are urged to avoid excessive footnoting.

**Illustrations, tables and figures** should be numbered and included in their preferred position included within the text.

**References** should be indicated in the typescript by giving the author’s surname, year of publication and page numbers, e.g., (Smith, 1995, pp. 1-2). Several papers by the same author and published in the same year should appear as Smith 1993a, 1993b, 1993c etc. All references cited should be listed in alphabetical order, by year and with page numbers, on a separate page headed **References** at the end of the article, in the following form:

Referencing your own work – to ensure that anonymity is preserved, the author should replace in both the text and reference his/her name and replace it with “author” or “author(s)”.

**For articles:**

**For books:**

**For chapters:**
Edited by

Marian Lewis

Editors:

Dorothy Andrews & Marian Lewis

Articles

01
The Impact of Positional Leadership on Secondary School Captains
Regan Neumann, Neil Dempster & James Skinner

16
Leadership Understanding and Practice in Girls’ Schools: A review of web-based public documents
Nicole Archard

31
Taking up the Reins: The first year for deputy principals
Karen Anderson, Simon Clarke & Lesley Vidovich

44
How Secondary Principals View New Zealand’s Leadership Preparation and Succession Strategies: Systematic professionalisation or amateurism through serial incompetence?
Reynold MacPherson

59
Leading from Head Office: Framing education system leadership in Catholic Education
Gayle Spry & Helga Neidhart

72
How the School Review and Improvement (SRI) Framework Strengthens Schools as Professional Learning Communities - A case study from the Catholic school system, Sydney
Mark Turkington

88
Leadership Development in Support of Inclusive Education in Ukraine
Charles F. Webber & Shelleyann Scott

Book Review

104
Leading Change in your School: How to conquer myths, build commitment, and get results - Douglas B. Reeves

Lindy-Anne Abawi

ISSN 1329-4539