
As may be expected of a third edition, this is a book which provides an updated view of leading and managing people to take account of the many changes to education that have emerged since the first version was published in 1997. The intention of all three editions is to provide a primer for people wishing to familiarise themselves with aspects of human resource management in educational settings. Consequently the book explores the key concepts and processes relevant to the leadership and management in the current era and will provide a more than useful resource to those entering senior leadership positions in education.

The book is laid out in three parts, the first of which is described as ‘Setting the Scene’ where the authors explore a number of generic themes which, they suggest, affect most educational organisations across the world. Leading and managing adults within organisations (not just academic staff) is the core theme, but since the publication of the second edition in 2005 the authors argue there has been a worldwide shift towards decentralisation of education with more emphasis laid on leaders to now take more direct control of the people within their own organisations. This, coupled with concepts of globalisation and understanding of their specific culture and context, has created new challenges which are explored in the opening chapter. There then follows an excellent overview of models of leadership in Chapter 2 and an overview of the implications to consider when leading and managing the whole workforce. Parts 2 and 3 of the book both describe and evaluate key concepts and processes commonly associated with leadership and management of people with the added bonus of exploring these issues in relation to the nature of education in the second decade of this century.

The book should be essential reading for all with formal leadership responsibilities in educational organisations and to those who aspire to such positions. It not only provides a comprehensive exploration of relevant concepts and processes, but has also been written sensitively in so far as it recognises leadership in educational settings as an activity best based on influence rather than the use of power. Consequently the book works towards the development of an organisation where leadership is shared, there is organisational learning and professional development is the norm in the search for succession planning.

The first major issue recognised as central to a new edition is the concept of leadership itself, given that the first edition did not even mention it and concentrated only on management. I was pleased, however, to also see such a focus on the
potential for societal and organisational culture to be a major influencing factor when dealing with people. It is vital for leaders to recognise that educational organisations are unique and that leadership behaviour should be contingent on context and circumstance. Thus this edition makes a significant contribution to that understanding.

On the other hand, although the authors claim to be working with all phases of education, it is clear that the default position is with schools as virtually all examples, particularly in Chapter 2 refer to just that type of educational organisation, something I found a little irritating as someone who works in higher education. I am also a little disappointed that the otherwise excellent overview of leadership models in the same chapter did not seek to explore the evolution of instructional leadership more fully. Since the first identification of such an approach in the mid-1990s we have seen further discourse and research on learning-centred and learner-centred leadership and the development of tasks, behaviours and skills that promote more personalised learning environments for students. Indeed there is no mention of pedagogy, viewed by some commentators as the one aspect of education that sets it apart from other occupations, nor of the concept of pedagogical leadership as it is being reconfigured in the new era to recognise the importance of the local community in student learning. Such discussion would have strengthened this chapter even more and provided overview of elements of leadership that are distinctive to education.

In conclusion, therefore, I consider this is a book to which all students on education studies courses should have access to on an ‘as and when’ basis and for those with aspirations to take on leadership roles it should be a part of their personal collection. Consequently I recommend schools, colleges and universities ensure it is in their library and, where appropriate, students should have their own copy.

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