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Conflicting Priorities: the dichotomous roles of leadership and management at TVET colleges



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Leadership vs Management

- **Debated since 1970s**
- **Broad distinction:**

Leader	Manager
Visionary, inspires followers, obliged to change direction and culture	More task-orientated, operational, general management functions (e.g.)
Plans for the future	Operationalises the present
Creates new approaches and imagines new areas to explore	Maintains the balance in the organisation
Designing is the function	Responding is the function

- **Two roles overlap functionally: leader has to manage and a manager also has to lead.**



TVET Leadership vs Management

- **Internationally: blurred**
- **Leadership acknowledged at different levels**
- **Roles not clearly demarcated, creating competing priorities:**
 - **Operating across different sectors**
 - **Dealing with diverse demography**
 - **Balancing internal and external roles**
 - **Dealing with competing operational pressures**
 - **Facing external pressures**
- **Dichotomous relationship**



I. Operating across different sectors

- **Post-school education and training (HE)**
- **Vocational not purely educational:**
 - **Business**
 - **Community**
 - **Government**
- **Different contexts and complex situation**
- **Leaders have to have a number of different competencies**



2. Dealing with diverse demography (I)

- **At different life stages, needs, levels**
- **Wide range of educational opportunities:**
 - **Second chance to finish school**
 - **Bridging for access to HE**
 - **Vocational programmes to access work**
 - **Upskilling and reskilling programmes**
 - **Contextually relevant and personally enriching learning opportunities (local communities)**
- **Significant number are disadvantaged.**



2. Dealing with diverse demography (2)

- **Challenges:**
 - **Variety of teaching methods (online etc.)**
 - **Timetabling: flexible learning in terms of time and place**

Leaders:

- **Balance multiple missions and functions to meet the needs of the individual, community and the state**
- **Responsive to multiple needs, inspirations and limitations.**



3. Balancing internal and external roles

- **Internal:**
 - **Head of college**
 - **Needs of staff**
 - **Needs of students**
 - **Requirements of the Board**
- **External:**
 - **Government mandates**
 - **Needs of business and industry (partnerships)**
 - **Fund-raiser**
- **The one should not be at cost to the other.**



4. Competing operational pressures

- **Pressure to provide evidence of effectiveness (not always of T&L) – busy!**
- **Accountability: use of resources**
- **Balance administrative aspects with educational**

Result:

- **Reactive rather than proactive**
- **Lack of ownership – inertia - dilemmas:**
 - **education vs business strategy,**
 - **national policy vs local reality,**
 - **entrepreneurship vs accountability,**
 - **managerialism vs professionalism.**



5. Facing external pressures

- **Nationally imposed funding methodology**
- **Increases in inspection and audits**
- **Requiring specialist managers (directors of finance, HR and quality)**
- **Over-regulation**
- **Unrealistic deadlines and targets (inconsistent and/or contradictory)**
- **Trade unions**



Who is this TVET leader?

- **Diverse educational and occupational backgrounds (school teaching to artisanal trades)**
- **No specific vocational education or context-specific leadership training**
- **Expected to function in complex and demanding sector**
 - **Frustrated by what s/he views as perpetual changes (national education policies)**
 - **Distracted from core purpose of their work (improving T&L)**



Challenges for TVET College leader in SA

- **CEO + Academic leader**
- **Complex and difficult**
- **Expected to play a transformative role**
- **Colleges placed in the spotlight as the panacea to all our economic woes**
- **To ensure responsiveness and flexibility adds to an already full workload**
- **It's hard to think about draining the swamp when you are up to your chin in crocodiles**



New skills needed for TVET leaders

- **In this new, complex sector, there is a need:**
 - **for new knowledge,**
 - **new skills,**
 - **new aptitudes****to run these multi-million rand operations.**
- **Leaders are not born to the task, depending on tacit knowledge - they need to be developed to become:**
 - **Visionary and transformational**
 - **With people and negotiation skills**
 - **Able to cope with operational pressure etc.**



Research has shown:

- **Leadership development is thus essential.**
- **Four focus group workshops with 71 TVET current leaders (7 provinces, 9 colleges)**
- **Followed by 15 one-on-one interviews**
- **Confirmed that they had lost sight of reforming & transforming in order to conform**
- **They knew who they should be and where the colleges needed to go**
- **Focus had shifted to operational matters and conforming to legislation**



Leadership development

Transformation of the TVET sector will only take place once its leaders have been developed

20th Century skill sets and life experiences are obsolete and counter productive

Throughout the world, vocational leadership development has become a national priority



Key strategies for leadership training

Succession planning

World wide, 84% of first generation community college leaders were retired by 2011

Average age range of Australian TAFE college principals is, for example, between 50 and 59 with 7% over 60

Career path

To ensure a pipeline of future leaders – few articulated career paths from teaching to leadership – no TVET-focused leadership training programmes

Skills to be kept current

Constant identification of necessary skills and capabilities to keep leadership development up-to-date



The rest of the world?

Naming is framing

The word 'leadership' is now included in educational development organisations in New Zealand, USA, Australia, the UK and elsewhere

- **Australia: TAFE Leadership Scheme which provides financial support for planning and implementation of leadership development programmes**
- **UK: Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) which develops leaders in the FE sector**
- **USA: too many programmes and initiatives to list**
- **Yet, in SA, there is nothing - despite Green Paper's promise in 2012.**



And nothing is about to change soon!

Draft National Plan For Post-school Education And Training (NPPSET): ‘leadership’ is only used when referring to universities [‘HELMP or Higher Education Leadership and Management Programme plans to develop staff in leadership and management positions at universities (at all levels)]. Leadership and management development is key to capacity building.

Colleges:

- **Staff development will ... focus on college management. (p. 68)**
- **A key focus of capacitation of college management and governance structures is in understanding enrolment planning and PQM. (p.68)**
- **... key management positions are filled (p. 69)**
- **Little capacity ... within [DHET] to analyse plans and hold colleges accountable for these (top down?)**
- **Strategy of DHET: develop capacity development framework for managers (by whom?).**

What about the LEADERS?



Leadership development in SA: priority?

Unlike the rest of the world:

South African TVET sector has no history of identifying, recruiting and training TVET college leaders (who are viewed by their employers as being only managers).

And THIS is the real challenge.



Leadership development criteria I

Must be identified as a national investment and strategy

Deliberate, planned and driven by strategic objectives – not a collection of ad hoc policies, mandates or outcomes of crisis management

Custom-designed for national TVET colleges

Not part of other qualifications, not add-ons to MBA or MPA degrees, not imported from overseas

Complete and rigorous

Neither fragmentary nor parcelled out in bits & pieces



Leadership development criteria II

Long-term, regular instructional interaction

Not once-off, not in-service training with short-term, external training providers

Mode of delivery

Experiential learning (learning through doing) including mentoring, job shadowing, internships and secondments

Otherwise, these courses are ineffective in changing attitudes or behaviours.



Proposed curriculum framework I

Leaders identified the following broad categories to be included in a leader development qualification:

Legislation drives the system

College leaders need to understand the legislative process and how to implement the outcomes

Communication drives the governance process

Not only should DHET communicate with the college leaders, but college leaders need to learn to communicate effectively with staff and other roleplayers

Management awareness

Leaders are not managers but they own the process and are accountable for the outcomes (manager support)



Proposed curriculum framework II

Leadership = credibility not coercion

21st Century leadership is transformational, shared and distributed

Strategic perspective

College leaders are proactive not reactive, forward looking not backward looking, systematic not haphazard

An unwavering focus on the core business

A TVET college leader's sole reason for being is making teaching and learning happen



In conclusion:

**In order to get rid of the stigma of
dysfunctionality,**

and

**If TVET must become the public's first-choice
post-school institution,**

**Focused and well-prepared leaders will be
necessary – and this spells customised
leadership development.**



Thank you

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