

Six assumptions lie behind the thinking which created this study and interaction set:

1. Learning requires the individual to actively construct meaning and knowledge on the basis of reflecting on experience and engaging interactively with others.
2. This view of learning requires that members of the school community gather data systematically on the key processes they are endeavouring to develop, and reflect collectively on the significance of those data.
3. Change and development, for school leadership staff and students, will be a steady constant process characterised by an interactive exchange of learning narrative rather than a dramatic, revolutionary reorientation.
4. Staff, students and parents in schools where learning is a priority for all participants, demonstrate a sense of commitment through building a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
5. The primary objective for the principal is to create and then maintain an expert and focused learning and teaching incubator.

It has become popular to characterise effective leadership development as a research led process. Research, of necessity, seeks to find understandings in existing practice. Schools also need leaders who step beyond the present and engage in visionary and unique behaviours which have particular resonance with the kind of challenges which appeared today and which are likely to emerge tomorrow. This programme aims to build on the available research evidence but to also encourage participants to create their own future fashioned from the interactions and critique that form the dominant part of their professional lives. It is in precisely these behaviours that future researchers will take a lively interest.

David Stewart

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