

School leadership and governance

Seven practices for school performance

Presentation for schools and stakeholders, May 2014

Nicholas Abbey, Victorian Council of School Organisations



A key question - which way forward?



Dedication

To the principals, teachers, parents, students, researchers, school business managers, community members and policy shapers and developers – the innovators and pioneers – who are pushing the education envelope and renewing school leadership and governance



**PUSHING
THE ENVELOPE**

GOING BEYOND THE NORM; OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING;
STRETCHING THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE...

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2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97.

Introduction

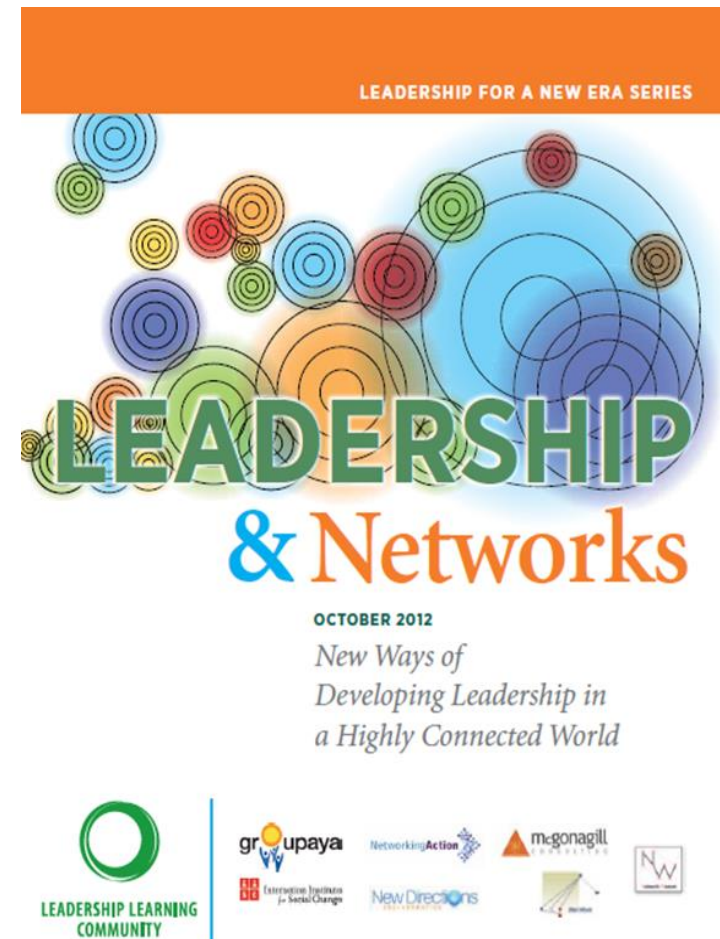
Using a mix of research insights and practical examples from schools, the following things are discussed:

- **Learning communities** built by schools around partnerships within and beyond the school, supported by **digital tools**
- The power of **personalised learning** and **seven practices of publicness** to bring about big gains in school performance
- How this work is led and governed, and how **school leadership and governance** are also renewed through this work



Effective leadership

- We live, learn and work in a world of vast collaborative potential – such as school communities
- To realise this potential, effective leadership is increasingly shared, involving many people both **within** and **across** groups and organisations coming together to achieve more
- Leadership can still be constrained by the assumption that individuals on their own as well as groups and organisations as ‘silos’ are able to significantly improve performance



The ‘nexus effect’

- The nexus effect refers to the great possibilities and inspiring results that people realise together, far exceeding what they may be able to achieve on their own or within their own groups and organisations (Ernst and Chrobot-Mason, ‘Boundary Spanning Leadership’, 2011)
- The nexus effect is enabled by boundary-spanning, system, collaborative, networked and shared leadership and governance

FROM THE GREAT DIVIDE TO THE NEXUS EFFECT

The spiral depicts how boundary spanning leaders increase intergroup collaboration — by first managing boundaries, then forging common ground, and ultimately discovering new frontiers at the nexus between groups.



A universal challenge

- Leadership is always a mix of the so-called ‘traditional’ and the more ‘collaborative’; leaders are not purely one or the other and the traditional still has value
- But it is a universal challenge: all organisations need more leaders with the knowledge and skills (and the time and resources for doing this) to build ever-stronger communities, teams, networks and partnerships that can drive ‘next generation’ performance



School leadership and governance

- The leadership role of principals and teachers is pivotal; schools also rethink what it means to be a ‘leader’ in a school or learning community and what it means to build ‘leadership’
- Leadership will become even more dispersed and involve many more students, parents and community members, and the question of how best to develop **widely shared goals** among educators, students, families and communities will come to the fore
- This is all about **better governance**; indeed, collaborative leadership - by its very nature - **is** great governance

Schools and Communities

Working together to transform children's lives



John West-Burnham, Maggie Farrar
and George Otero



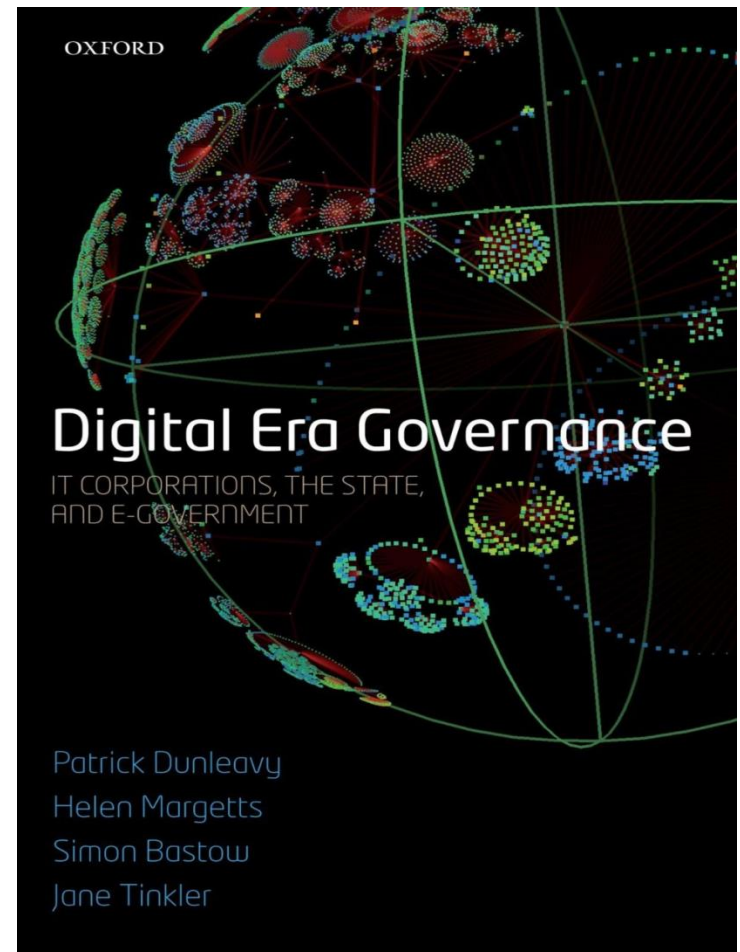
The word ‘governance’

- Governance is rooted in the Greek *kybernan* (and the Latin *gubernare*), meaning to steer or pilot a ship
- Just as there are natural forces such as wind, rain and currents that affect a ship’s course, forces both outside and within an organisation obviously affect its direction and performance
- Better governance is needed if an organisation such as a school or a learning community is to have more control over its own destiny and a greater impact on performance



Digital-era governance

- New technologies and applications are yet to really impact on school governance but will be significant
- Digitally-enabled practices include:
 - On-line self-assessment tools that assist boards to readily identify their strengths and weaknesses
 - Blended learning ‘anytime, anywhere’ training for councils that also supports ‘learning-by-doing’
 - Policy, planning and partnership knowledge banks
- Supported by the digital revolution, many boards will become vehicles for advancing learning communities and joined-up thinking and working – for, in a word, greater publicness



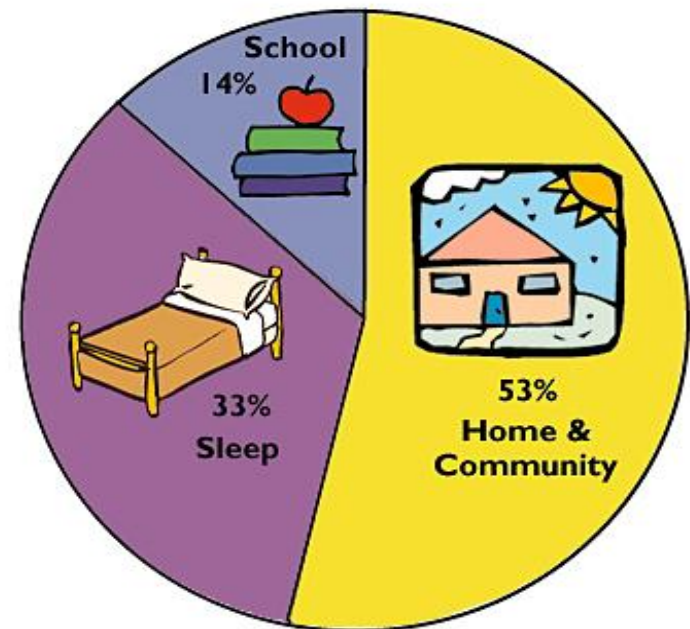
How school governance is evolving

- A personalised, joined-up approach to student learning (supported by digital technologies) increasingly makes collaborative leadership and governance of a learning community fundamental to performance
- This community governance model is all about building a learning community that is bigger than a school, reflecting an on-going shift:
 - From a tradition which locates learning and governance largely within an institution
 - To schools, families and communities (local and increasingly on-line) sharing greater responsibility for all learners' personalised learning (Stewart Ranson, 2010)



New learning and new governance

- A narrow focus on the time that students spend in school can stifle opportunities for linking classroom learning to other aspects of students' lives and learning
- Enabled by new technologies and tools, schools look at how best to develop a joined-up, personalised, 'anytime, anywhere' approach to student learning
- The Harvard Family Research Project (<http://www.hfrp.org/complementary-learning/overview>) uses the term 'complementary learning' for this work
- Joined-up learning and personal growth – at home, in school and in the community – comprise **the basis of co-leadership and governance in a learning community**



From 'How People Learn' (Bransford et al., 2004)

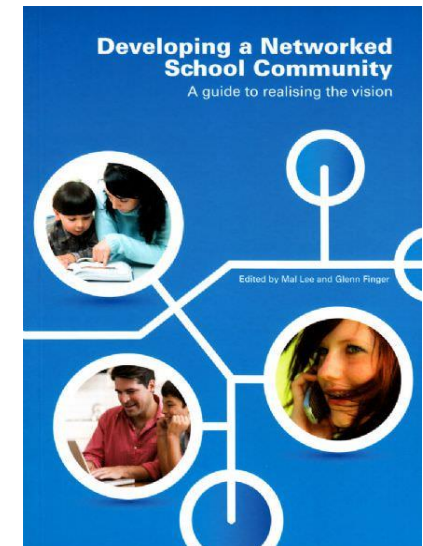
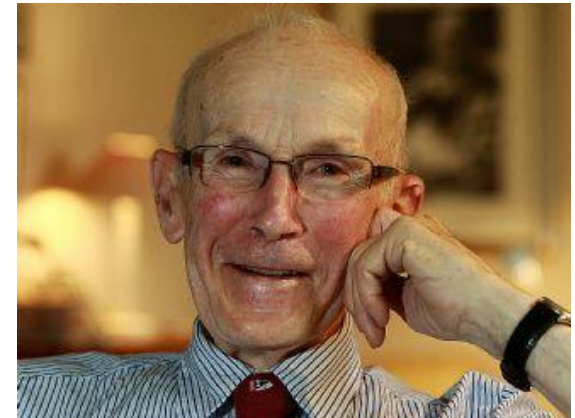
A long history of joining up learning

- In 1974, Hedley Beare (a visionary thinker who later became Professor of Education at the University of Melbourne) delivered a landmark speech at an ACSSO conference:

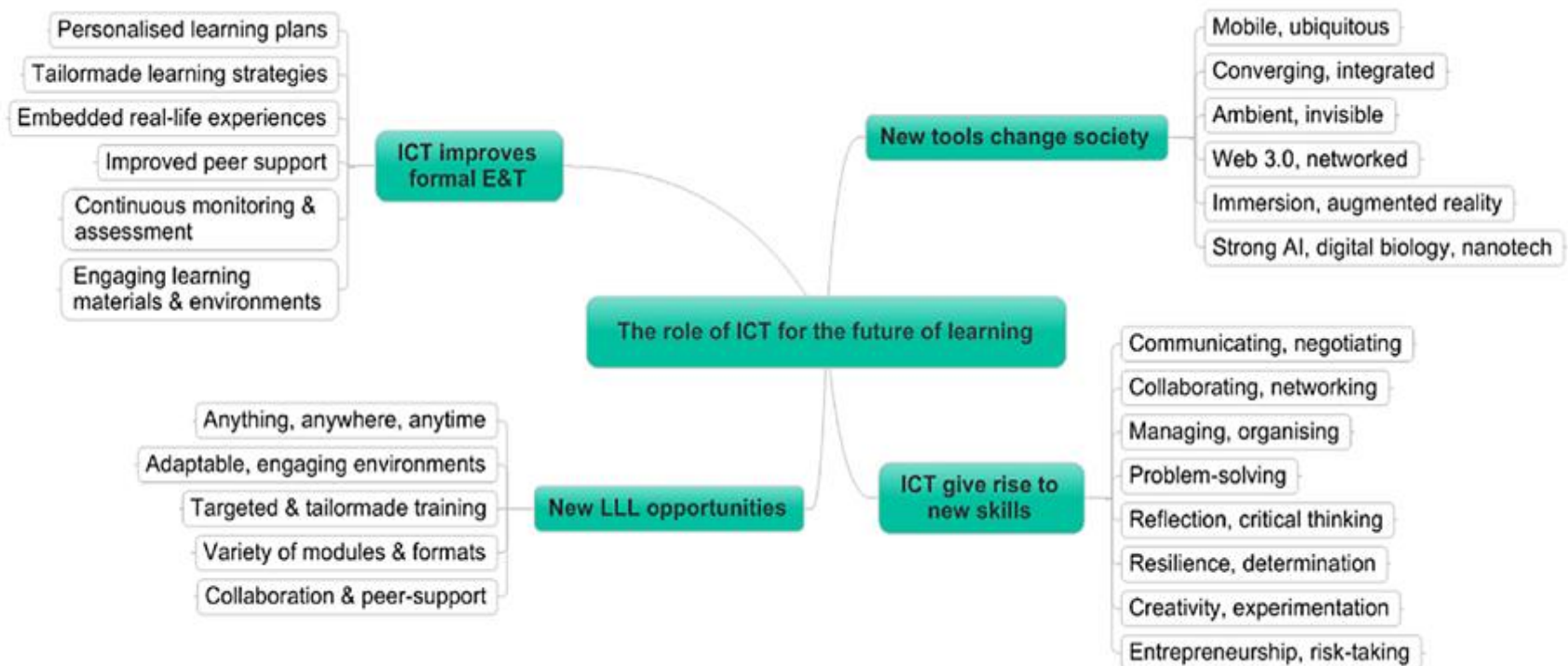
We now know that educators will not greatly improve a child's academic progress unless they find ways of getting the school and home into harmony

- Mal Lee (a key contemporary leader of educational transformation) explores how “normalising the use of digital technology” in all aspects of schooling can support

... authentic collaboration with students' homes together with the provision of an increasingly collaborative, networked, holistic education for all students



How learning continues to evolve



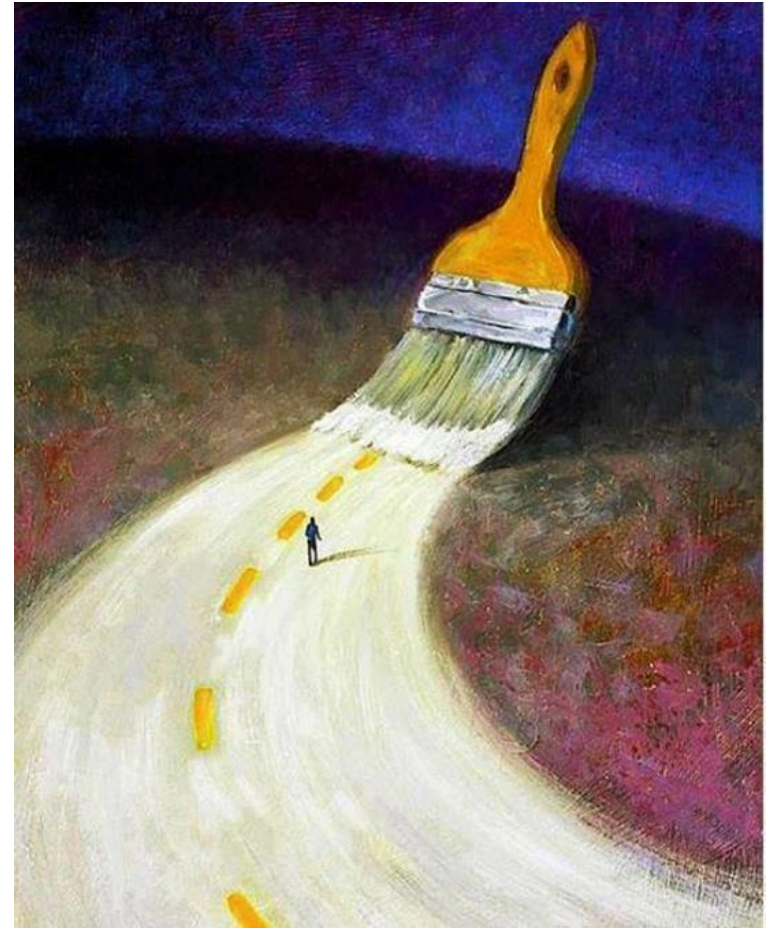
From the 'Future of Learning: Preparing for Change', European Commission, 2011

An effective board

As learning evolves and more boards play a pivotal governance role in a learning community, it becomes even more important to manage councillors' most valuable assets – their capabilities, time and insights – by ensuring five things:

1. A good mix of capabilities and the use of these skills
2. Real engagement in the school's strategy development and impact assessment
3. The focus of discussions on important topics
4. A positive relationship with the principal
5. Opportunities for influence and respectful dissent in board meetings

See 'Beyond Compliance: the Trustee Viewpoint on Effective Foundation Governance' at http://evpa.eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/CEP_BeyondCompliance.pdf



What is governance work?

The two parts of governance work that dovetail with each other are:

- **Performance work** – how an organisation as a whole including through the work of its board:
 - Sets a vision, direction, purpose and goals
 - Develops plans, policies and strategies
 - Explores and manages risk and opportunities
 - Supports and promotes strong partnerships between all stakeholders and with the wider community

- **Accountability work** – how an organisation as a whole including through the work of its board:
 - Assesses that it is performing effectively, efficiently and ethically in the interests of all stakeholders
 - Reports this information to stakeholders
 - Uses this information to inform future improvements



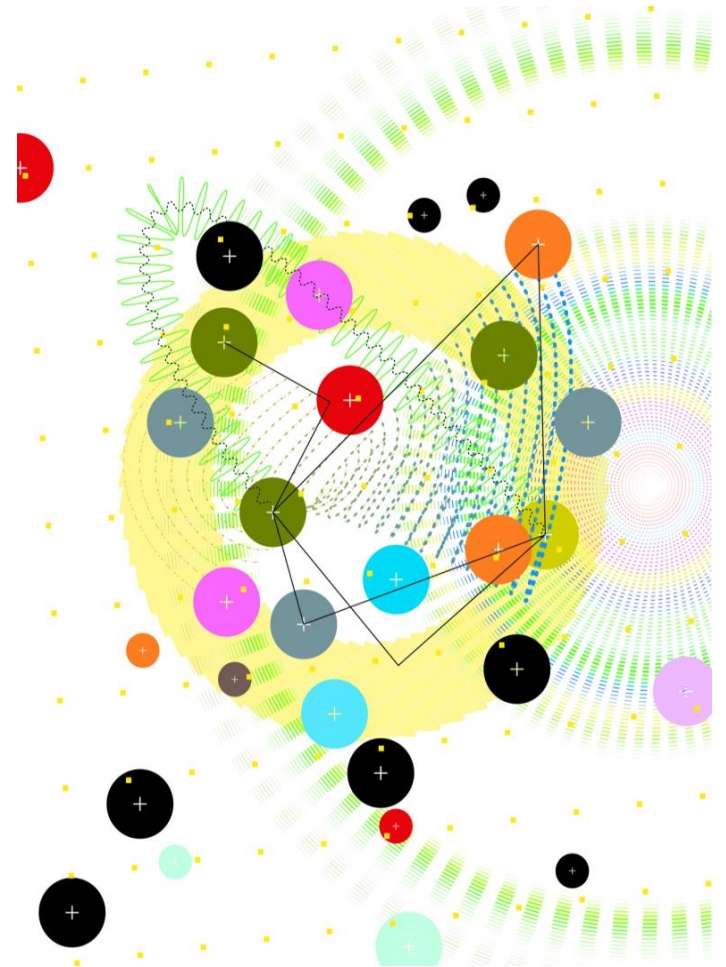
Getting the balance right

- Many boards have long used Robert Tricker's governance model to carefully assess:
 - What proportion of their meeting agenda is spent in each quadrant
 - Where their board may need to spend more time
- Modifying the model to make it more relevant to schools, principals find that this model is useful in shaping the balance between their board's performance and accountability work



The two parts in practice

- Accountability is always an important work in progress but can overshadow a boards' performance work
- Boards may not add significant value to a school in part because of pressures to shrink the very idea of governance, turning it into mainly an oversight or policing function (Chait et al., 'Governance as Leadership', 2004)
- A board's performance work is also a part of a **broader governance system**: how the board, principal and leadership team, staff committees, parent group and SRC/JSC **interact** with each other

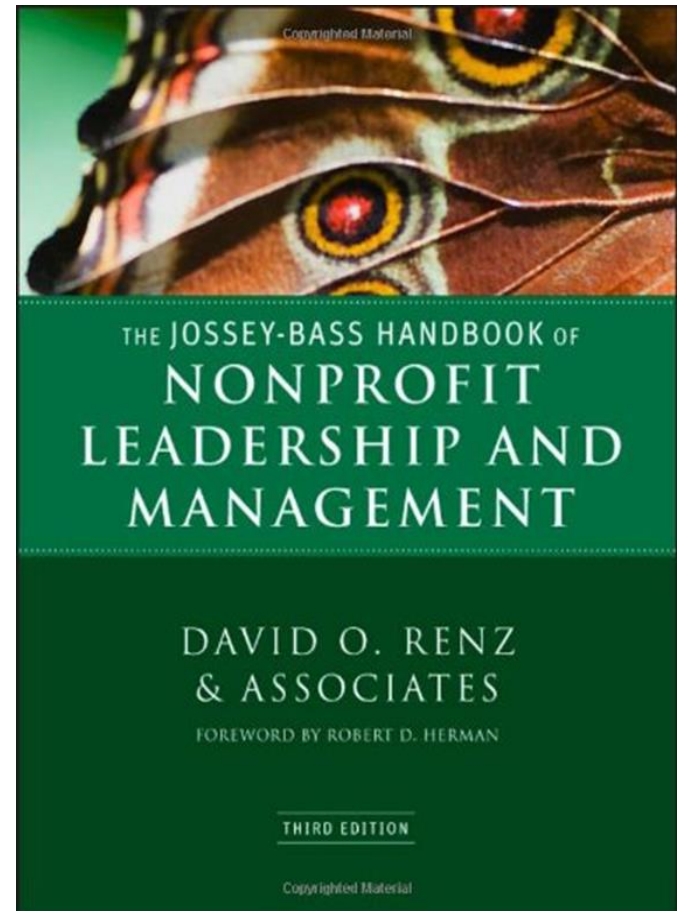


Bigger than a board

- Governance (especially in a context of building a learning community) is more than a board. As David O. Renz writes:

It used to be that boards and governance were substantially the same. ... But with time and a radically changing environment (e.g., changes in complexity, pace, scale, and nature of community problems and needs), the domain of 'governance' has moved beyond the domain of 'the board'

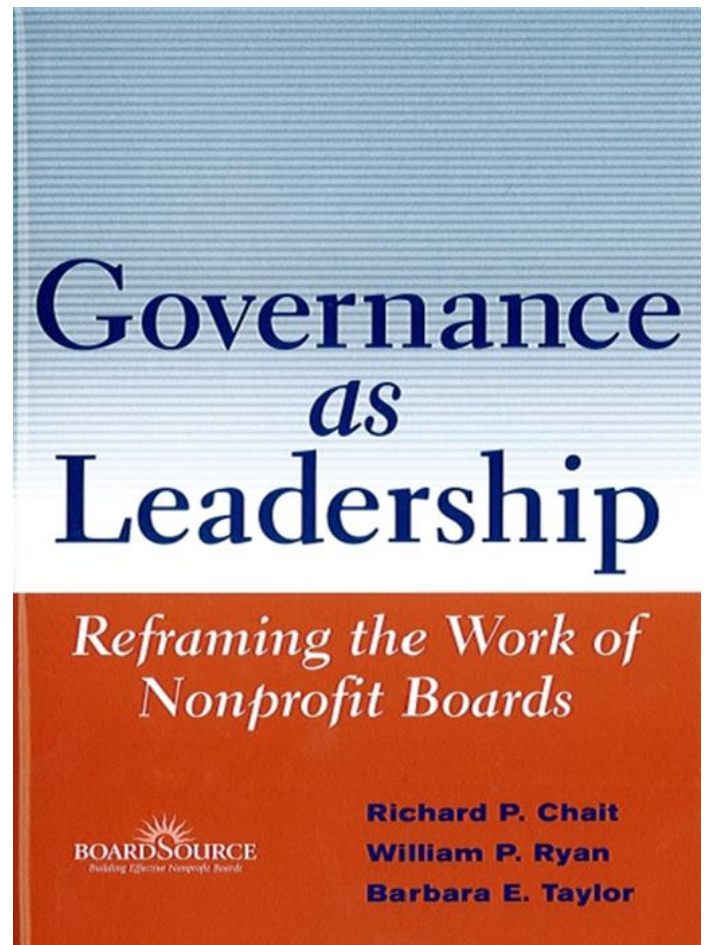
- Governance **pivots** on a board's work but is also increasingly about how the whole school community tackles issues such as:
 - How teachers, students and parents can further integrate their distinctive contributions to achieve greater success
 - How board members and other school community members can co-lead the building of a learning community



Governing as co-leaders

- In contrast to some board practices that may even unwittingly prompt board members to think and act like managers, the challenge is how best to support board members to work as co-leaders
- This challenge can be addressed through what Chait and others (2004) call ‘generative’ thinking - putting aside time for board members to do things such as:
 - Identifying assumptions and routines that get in the way of improvement
 - Having a fresh look at key strategic issues such as building a learning community

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Pew_Fund_for_HS_in_Philadelphia/Governance%20as%20Leadership%20summary%20final.pdf



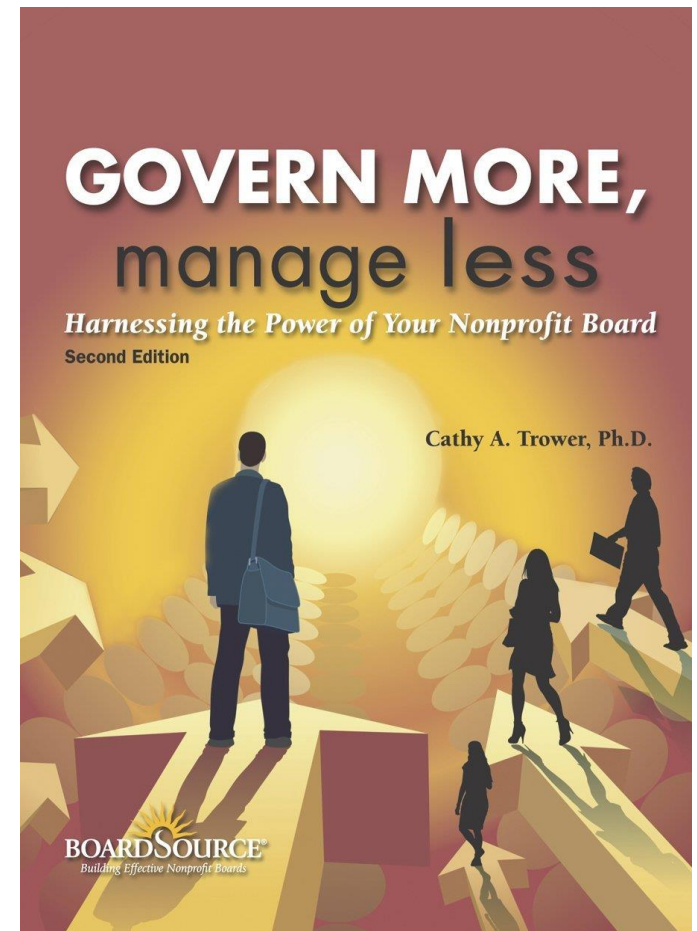
Where a governing body may sit



Adapted from ‘Improving Schools and Governing Bodies: Making a Difference’ (Creese and Earley, 1999)

It's about governing, not meddling

- A concern from principals can be: “Help! My board is disengaged.” But equally it can be: “Help! My board is engaged.”
- In the first case, the board is bored and in the second the board micromanages; board members may ‘cross the line’, however well-intentioned, into school management and operational matters
- How does a board tilt the scales from micromanagement to governance? By developing governance as co-leadership of building a learning community and making time for performance work



School performance

- School performance (as well as the performance work of a board) will depend increasingly on discussing and developing policy and practices around what Alan Reid terms:
 - the publicness of key aspects of schooling such as curriculum, governance, pedagogy, systems, accountability and funding ...
- In a technology-rich society, **all schools** across the government, Catholic and independent sectors face the challenge of **developing higher levels of publicness**, as the main source of performance gains



What is publicness?

How people engage and include each other and work and learn together to improve outcomes for all, and how this publicness in education evolves:

1. **Deeply** – developing deeply engaging, personalised learning through school-family-community partnerships
2. **Vertically** – school leaders and staff working collaboratively across year and management levels
3. **Horizontally** – educators working collaboratively across areas of expertise, subject and curriculum areas, etc.
4. **Among stakeholders** – including the principal, teachers, parents, students and members of the wider community
5. **Across government** – joined-up working within an education department and with other departments
6. **Across social and cultural differences** – such as SES, gender, age, ethnicity, culture and language
7. **Locally and globally** – in a local learning community (with other schools, businesses, local government, etc.) and in an increasingly connected and on-line world



BE THE
CHANGE
YOU WISH
TO SEE IN THE
WORLD

Practices of publicness

Based on the research and experience of schools, the connection between **publicness** and **school performance** comprises a set of seven practices:

1. A clear and common higher purpose

Being in the service of something larger than our selves and our own organisational and professional silos, and contributing to community betterment

2. Personalisation through partnerships

How learners, schools, families and communities work and learn together and use new technologies and tools to shape a personalised, networked, joined-up, 24/7 approach to student learning

3. Digital-era sharing and learning

The extent to which ideas, information, knowledge, goals and resources are shared to improve learning outcomes and life opportunities for all learners, and the extent to which technologies are used to do this



Practices of publicness

4. Co-creating tools and content

Principals, teachers, parents, students and other community members creating things together such as the school strategic plan and policies as well as tools such as personalised learning plans

5. Joined-up thinking and working

How teams of people build strong connections and co-lead within a school, among the 'parts' of education such as a K-12 learning community and between a school, families and community

6. Openness and communication

Being transparent and accountable, being open with others and to new ideas and practices, and ensuring open and consistent communication

7. Inclusion and participation

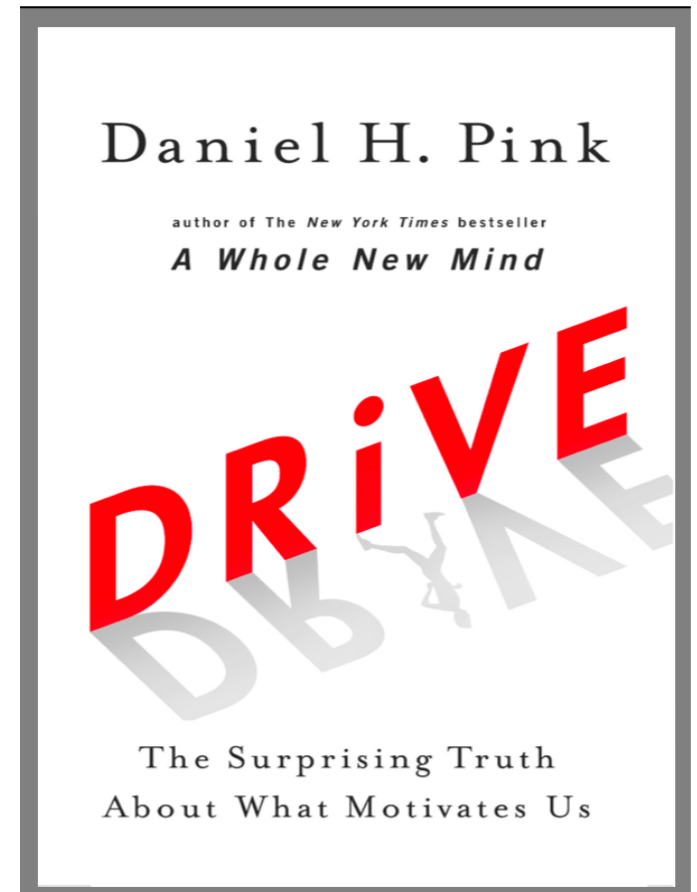
How people deeply engage and include each other, and build inclusive and diverse learning communities (both at a local and global level and on-line) and participatory decision-making



Publicness and school performance – practice 1

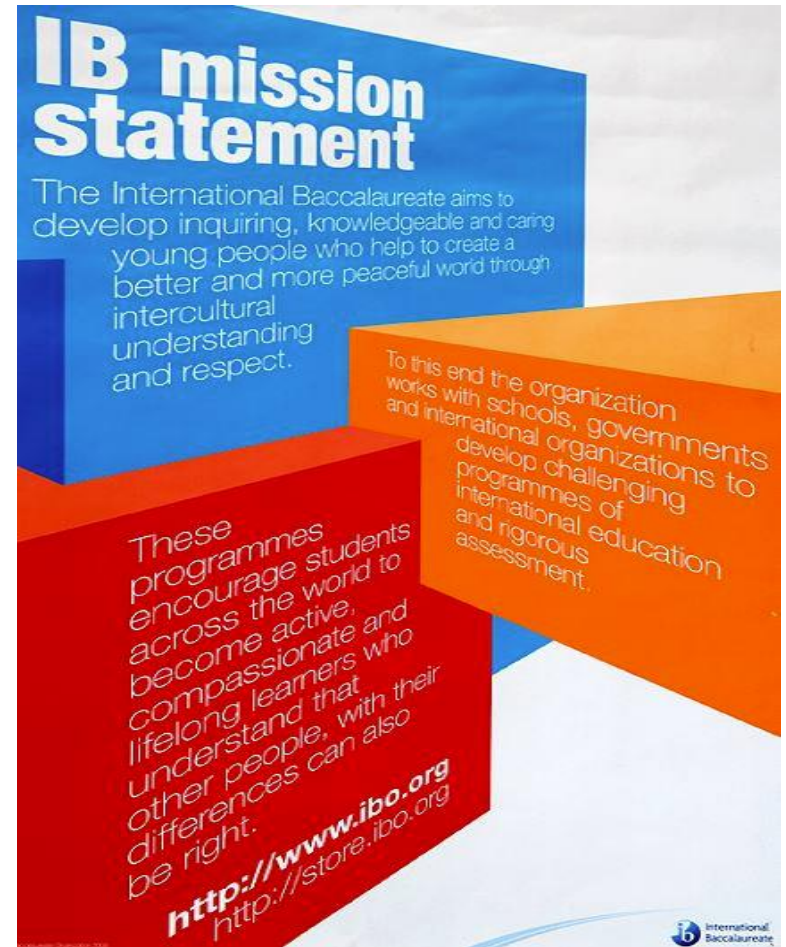
A clear and common higher purpose

- It refers to a purpose that can be achieved only by working together
- The benefits of creating a purpose statement include:
 - Supporting contributions to the greater good from all school community members
 - Bringing priorities into focus
 - Highlighting widely shared goals
 - Providing inspiration
- For school councillors, it can mean identifying with the school's purpose and relating all governance work to it



A school's purpose

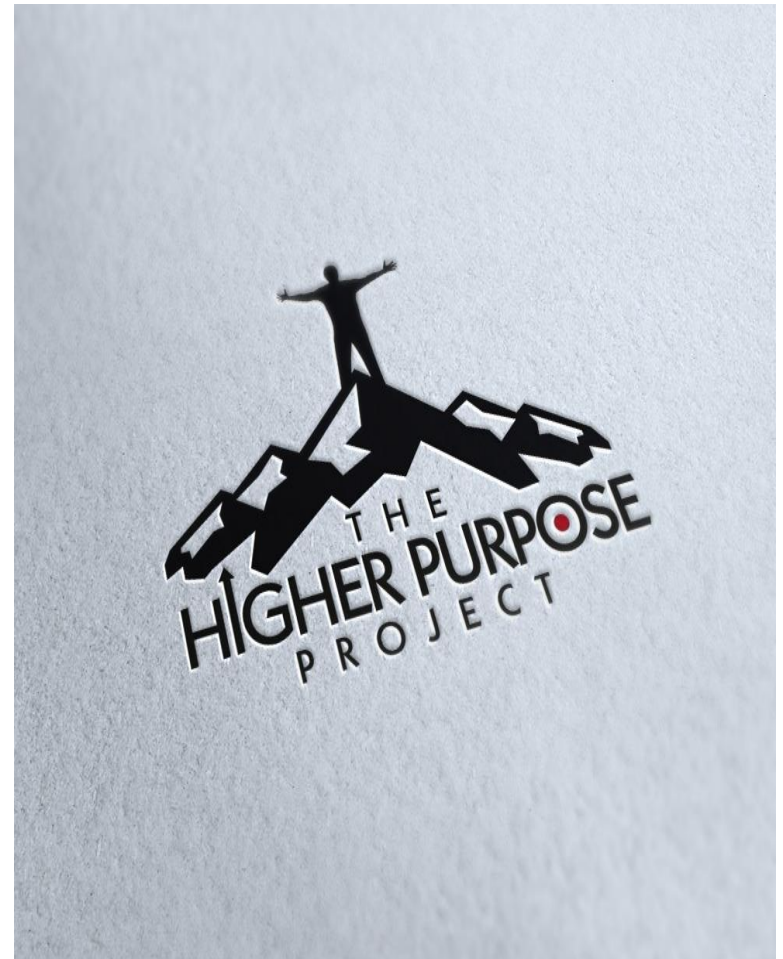
- A purpose statement created by a school or cluster of schools should simply and clearly (in 30 words or less) state:
 - Who you are
 - What you do
 - Why you do it
- The higher the purpose (in the public interest) and the more inclusive of **all** school and community stakeholders, the greater the performance impact



Higher purpose statements

- Some examples include:
 - **Google:** To organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful
 - **Country Education Project:** To collaboratively use its resources in rural education and communities to challenge and support them in their planning and delivery of high quality learning and the provision of opportunities for all students
 - **A secondary school:** To develop a collaborative learning community which supports and extends all students as powerful, autonomous, lifelong learners

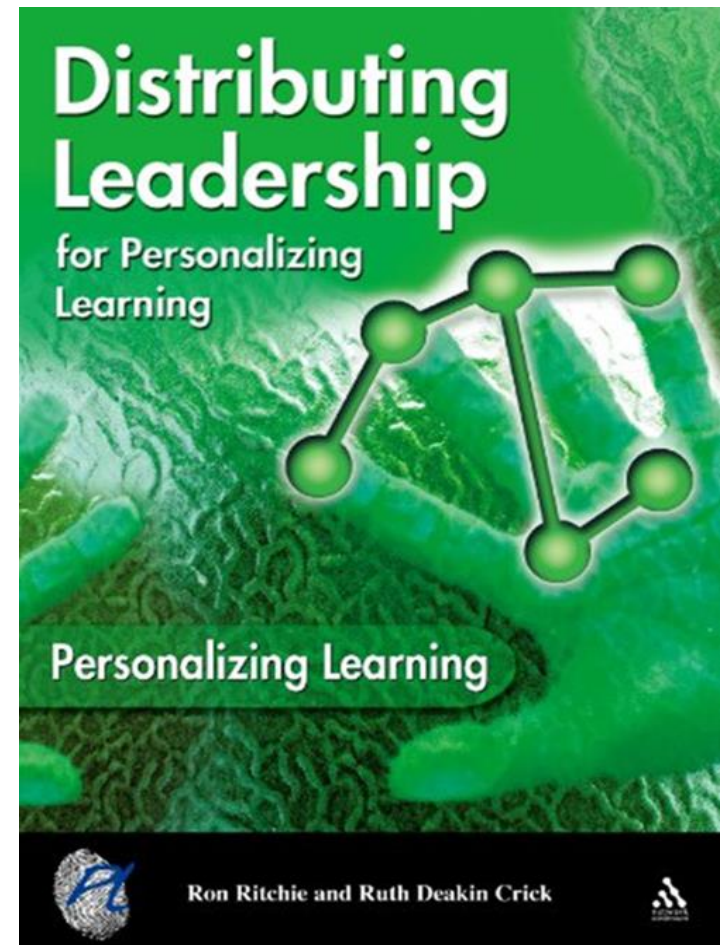
- What is your school's higher purpose project? How does it *really* underpin your school's and board's work? How is its on-going impact monitored?



Publicness and school performance – practice 2

Personalisation through partnerships

- How schools, families and communities work together in learning communities and use new technologies to shape an increasingly:
 - Personalised
 - Networked
 - Joined-up
 - 24/7 approach to student learning
- As student learning continues to evolve and become more personalised, the implications for the leadership role and performance work of a council are obviously significant
- A council may become a think tank for looking at how best to support and promote an increasingly whole school **and** whole-of-community approach to personalisation



Personalised learning plans

On-line personalised learning plans can support students to draw upon, and make strong links between, the areas of their life, learning and knowledge that include:

- The school
- Extracurricular settings (as part of core provision, not only as extras)
- Home
- Workplaces
- Face-to-face and on-line (and global) communities and networks of knowledge
- Culture, identity and language/languages
- Community organisations
- Public libraries providing greater digital content



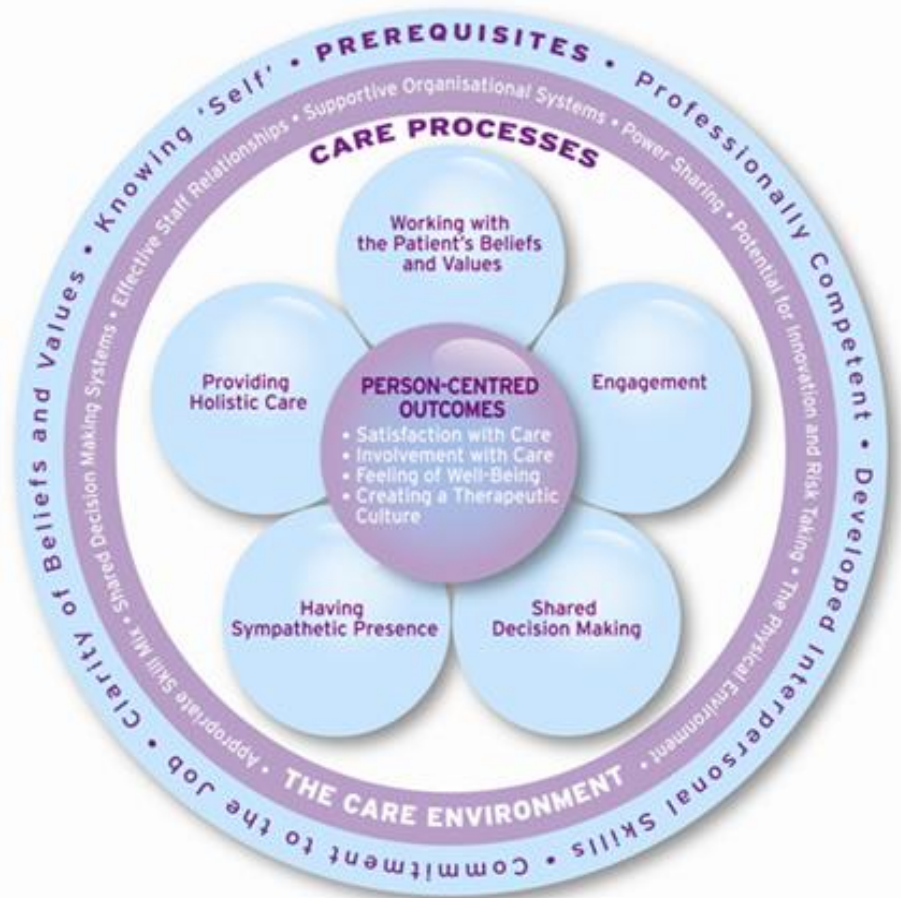
Insights from healthcare

- Personalisation through partnerships continues to evolve in other areas, of course, such as healthcare:

The current focus on person-centredness in practice illustrates society's drive to redress the current imbalance in care, moving away from an ethos that is medically dominated, disease orientated, and often fragmented toward one that is relationship focused, collaborative and holistic

From McCance et al., 'An Exploration of Person-Centredness in Practice' OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing Vol. 16
<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Vol-16-2011/No2-May-2011/Person-Centredness-in-Practice.html#Table>

- Education and healthcare provide mutual insights into how this shift is best led, governed and managed

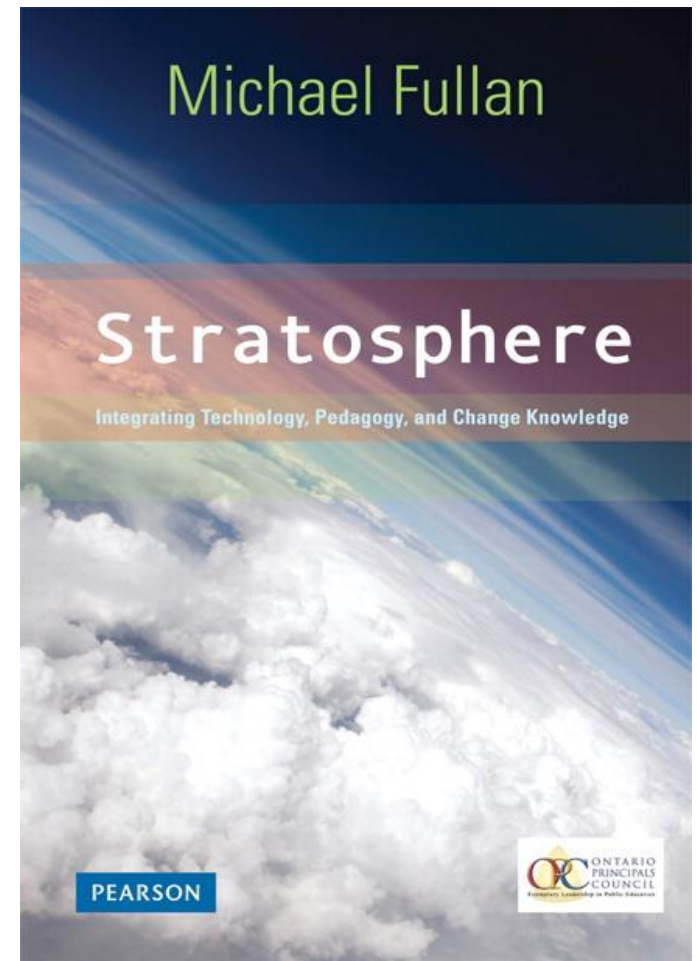


Questions for a board

- Highlighting the interplay between personalisation and partnerships, Michael Fullan writes that:

Personalisation is about individuals, but it is relational – between the teacher, the student, the home and the school. Personalisation is as much a collective as an individual phenomenon

- A council may want to discuss this quote and look at questions such as:
 - What is our school already doing by way of personalised learning?
 - What does the board need to do to help support and promote greater personalisation?
 - What policy and school-family-community partnerships do we need to renew or develop?



A school policy team

- Some schools have appointed a personalised learning coordinator
- Led and supported by the school principal and the personalised learning coordinator, the board may form a policy team that:
 - Involves teachers, parents and students
 - Develops a personalised learning policy framework and action plan
- The team may do several things:
 - Review the extent to which student learning is already personalised
 - Consult with school community members about what may be co-created and how
 - Look at models (from other schools) of on-line personalised learning plans



Publicness and school performance – practice 3

Digital-era sharing and learning

Personalised learning requires technologies (data systems, digital content, blended learning, online learning plans and Web 2.0 resources such as blogs and wikis) so as to:

- Better share information and track the learning needs, preferences, interests, goals and progress of all students
- Provide a means to efficiently access all kinds of learning content, resources and opportunities to meet the needs of a student as a whole person learning at school, at home and in the community
- Enable learners to have greater control over content knowledge - selecting content that interests them while ensuring that students benefit from the breadth, depth and richness of a common curriculum (Yong Zhao and others)



COLLABORATION IN LEARNING

Transcending the classroom walls

MAL LEE AND LORRAE WARD



CONFIRMED
KEYNOTE

DR YONG ZHAO

ONE OF THE TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD
ON EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY



Schools' practices

- Councils develop an on-line repository of key documents (the strategic plan, meeting minutes, etc.) for ready access
- Online conversations such as through <http://www.talkandaction.org/> will become more important for boards
- Schools develop **shared school-family-community goals** such as the better use of technologies to personalise learning, and publicly display the shared vision and goals to the school community in a variety of ways (e.g., through the website and posters on classroom walls)



Publicness and school performance – practice 4

Co-creating tools and content

- Personalised learning puts greater emphasis on co-creation - the joint creation of educational value by school leaders, teachers, students, parents and community members
- It includes how people co-create:
 - School strategic plans
 - School policy
 - Curriculum content
 - Personalised learning plans and tools
- Co-creation in schools will become more and more central and has huge implications for a board's work

Co-Creation of Value – Towards an Expanded Paradigm of Value Creation



Co-Creation of Value – Towards an Expanded Paradigm of Value Creation

Co-creation is the process by which products, services, and experiences are developed jointly by companies and their stakeholders, opening up a whole new world of value. Firms must stop thinking of individuals as mere passive recipients of value, to whom they have traditionally delivered goods, services, and experiences. **Instead, firms must seek to engage people as active co-creators of value everywhere in the system.**

VENKAT RAMASWAMY

In the late 1990s, C. K. Prahalad and I began discussing the importance of co-opting customer competence when developing new products and services, and even experiences. In a Harvard Business Review article in 2000, we noted that, thanks largely to the Internet, the active, engaged customer was dramatically transforming the industrial system as we know it. We went on to emphasize how companies had to learn to “co-create” value with customers. In 2004, C. K. Prahalad and I wrote a book defining the implications of the shift in modern society towards the centrality of individuals and their human experiences. This book was titled *The Future of Competition*, and it was recognized by BusinessWeek as one of the top 10 books of 2004. In many ways, *The Future of Competition* anticipated the digital and consumer universe we know today. In just three years, a galaxy of new businesses capitalized on the so-called “Web 2.0” evolution, with Time magazine designating “You” as the Person of the Year in 2006.

The conventional firm-centric view of value creation has expanded beyond the activities of the firm towards one whose locus is now a function of interactions anywhere in the system – the underpinning of the new source of value (the “WHERE” of value creation) as shown on the right side of Figure 1.

Beyond Activities to Interactions

Consider Nike whose Nike+ “experience” kit consists of a wireless device that transmits speed and distance information from a sensor-equipped Nike running shoe to an iPod Touch or special wristband. Then, through a website (nikeplus.com) runners can track their progress, set personal goals and challenge friends to races. With over 1 million runners and over 130 million miles uploaded as of June 2009, Nike+ has been a runaway success. For Nike, its market share has increased by as much as ten share points, not to mention increased revenues through the Nike+ ecosystem, in partnership with Apple and others. As shown on the left side of Figure 2, the “strategic capital” of Nike has also increased – the accumulated knowledge and insights it gains from continuous interactions with runners through Nike+, which enables Nike to engage better with the running community at large. Nike+ also reduces the risks and costs for Nike, through word-of-mouth marketing and experimentation with new value propositions. And as shown on the right side of Figure 2, Nike+ enables runners to have new valuable experiences, while reducing risks and costs to individuals using the system as well. In short, Nike+ has expanded the value creation pie in “win more – win more” fashion.

Co-creating a strategic plan

- True strategic planning is co-creation
- It brings together everyone's best efforts in building a consensus about where a school is going and how it will get there, and may begin with board and other conversations around:
 - Where do we want to be in 3-5 years time?
 - What will we be doing?
 - How will the school be different to now?
 - Student learning
 - Technology
 - Partnerships
 - Demographics
 - Physical lay-out and use of space

Wikimedia Strategic Plan

A collaborative vision
for the movement
through 2015



February 2011

Co-creating learning plans

- ❑ Co-creating personalised learning plans is a powerful way to deeply engage students and parents and community members in student learning
- ❑ Everyone is involved - teachers, students, parents and others - and all have a direct stake in what is happening and can increasingly fit the pieces of 24/7, 'anywhere, anytime' learning together
- ❑ The 'What Works. The Work Program' at www.whatworks.edu.au has been a leader of this kind of co-creation

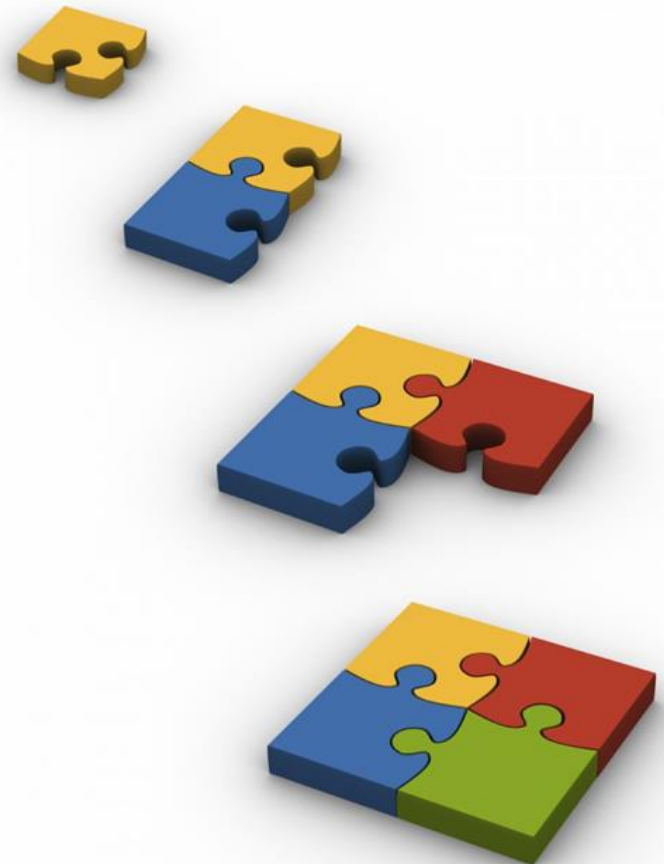


Publicness and school performance – practice 5

Joined-up thinking and working

- A key question is how schools and boards progress joined-up working:
 - Within a school community (such as linking new technologies and students' personalised learning)
 - Among the primary and secondary 'parts' of education (such as continuing to develop a more coherent K-12 model of learning and schooling)
 - Between the school and the wider community (including parents, health agencies, workplaces, businesses, local government, community groups and organisations, sporting clubs, etc.)

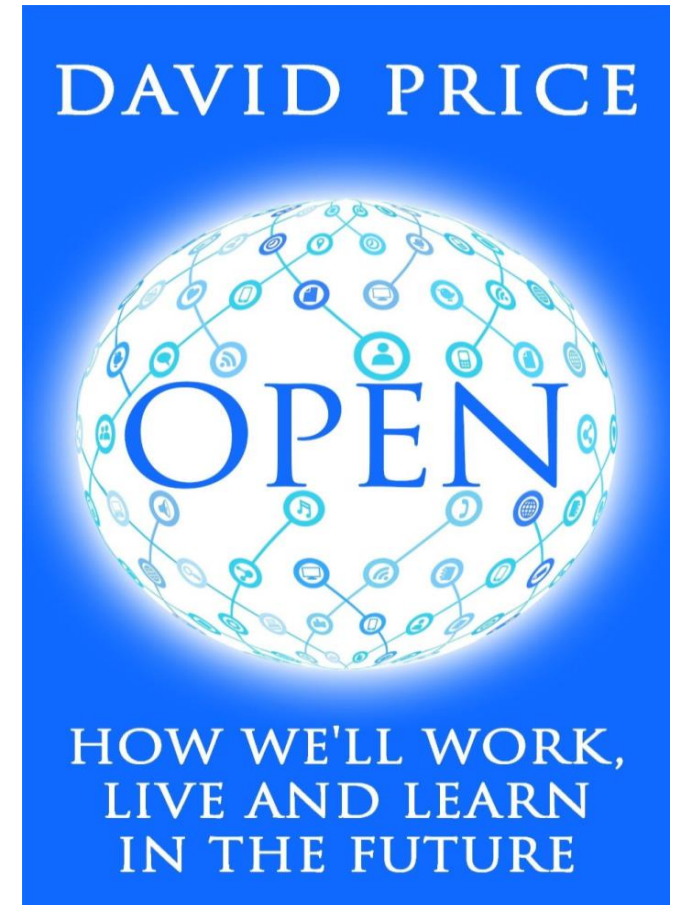
- You may also ask yourself: as a board member, what leadership role can I play or which specific partnership or community link can I help build or strengthen?



Publicness and school performance – practice 6

Openness and communication

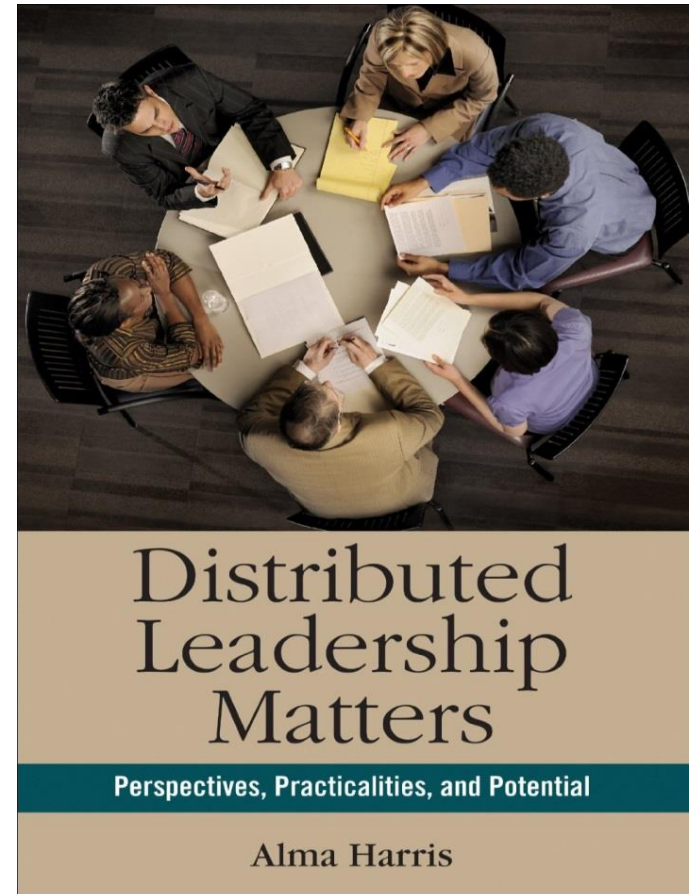
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
Constant and clear communication is critical to building strong school-family-community partnerships that can make a major difference
- Among the key questions that school leaders, staff and boards explore are:
 - How often do teachers, parents, and students talk together about learning? What may improve communication? Does the school have a plan for teacher and family communication?
 - Which technologies do we use to facilitate fast, effective communication between teachers and parents? Does the school have a technology plan with input from the school community?
 - Is there a school technology team that brings together teachers, parents and students to plan for improvements in the development and use of learning technologies within and across the school, home and community learning areas?



Publicness and school performance – practice 7

Inclusion and participation

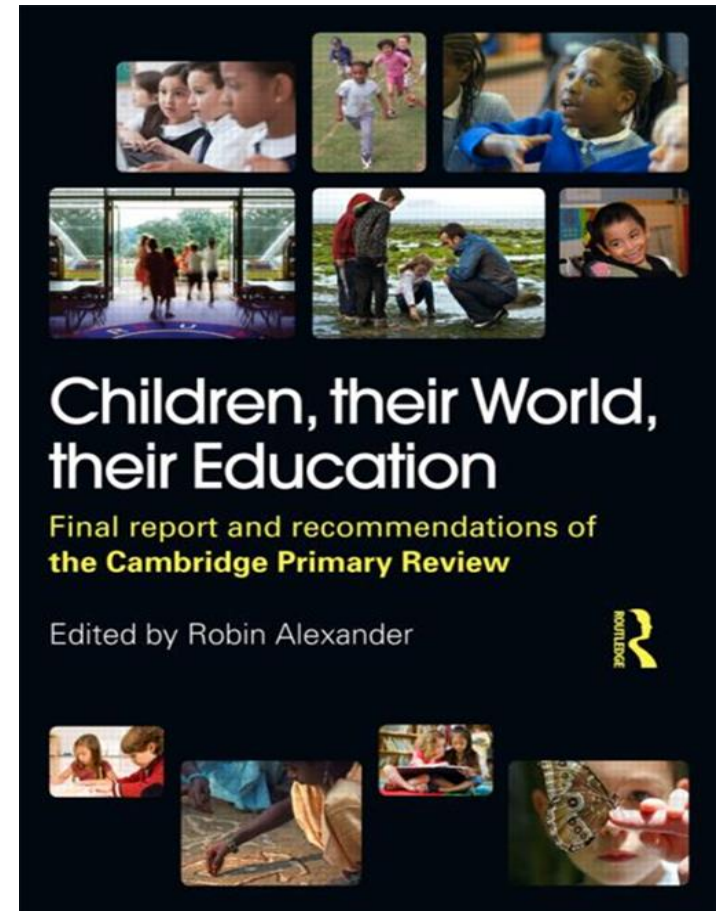
- Inclusion is about *making connections* among people while participation is about *increasing input* into decisions (Quick and Feldman, 2011)
- Some boards create a matrix in order to list the knowledge, skills, diversity and experience of current members, and to look at the opportunities to reach out to new members (if gaps are identified)
- Some schools also appoint a co-ordinator for inclusion and participation who can take overall responsibility for improving work around inclusion and participation



Policies and practices

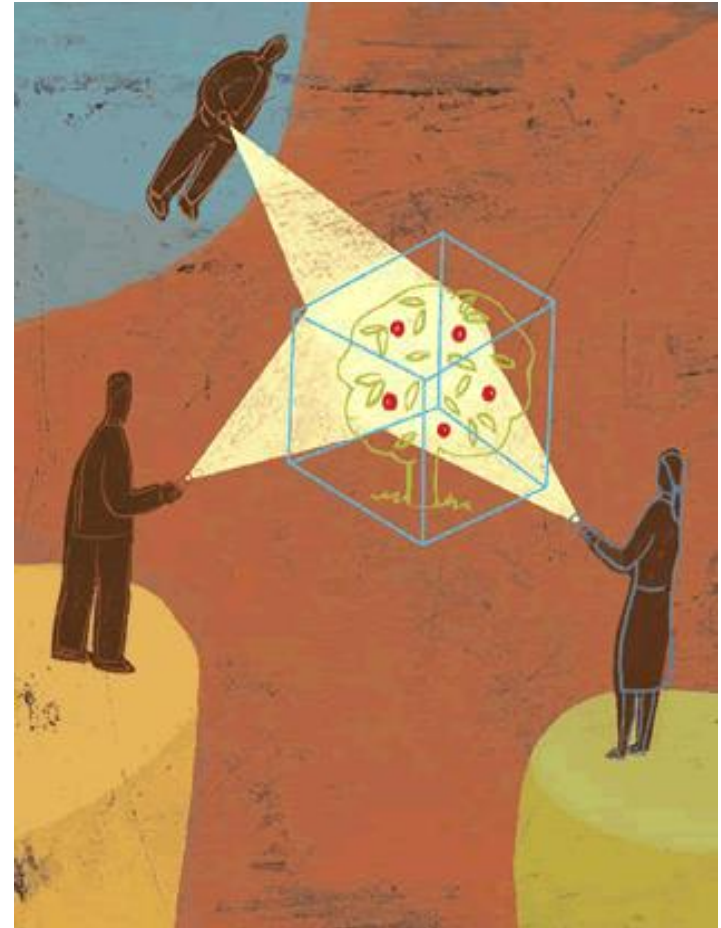
Schools have long been at the forefront of inclusion and participation work, and schools, including school councils, develop policies and practices around:

- Making issues of inclusion and participation and the achievement of learners of diverse backgrounds integral to school improvement
- The more systematic and robust use of data to monitor the changing profile of learners and the implications for teaching and learning
- Professional development and planning sessions about how best to create culturally and socially inclusive learning environments



Conclusion

- The practices of publicness can sometimes mean having to buck conventional wisdom and trends, but the seven practices together can produce extraordinary results
- Researchers and practitioners may look increasingly at what connects the two variables of ‘publicness’ and ‘school performance’
- Links between the two variables include how the seven practices of publicness are led and governed



Further information

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