

**Developing school leadership:
Trends, concepts, approaches and impact**

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Abstract: School leaders play an important role in ensuring and enhancing the quality of schools. Continuous professional development and training of school leadership has for this reason become increasingly important in many countries. This article presents trends in the development of school leadership. Examples from selected European countries and curricula are presented. Trends that are identified pertain to the domains of leadership practices; leadership and sustainability; and leadership needs. The article elaborates on two domains: (1) the use of self-assessment and feedback as part of the professional development of school leaders, (2) the impact of professional development, that is, the ways in which theory and knowledge is translated to practices. Moreover, approaches to research on, and evaluation of, the quality of school leadership development are described as well as the World School Leadership Study (WSLS) and its potential for international comparative research as it, seeks to inform practices and contribute to policy and academic discourses on the provision of professional development for school leadership.

As a result of our comparative review of professional development of school leaders, we propose for the design and implementation of professional development to use multiple learning approaches. We also propose for the evaluation of the quality of professional development to take a wide range of didactical aspects and different levels of impact into account, from the increase in competence to the change in performance and its consequences in the school. Furthermore, ideally speaking, the evaluation draws on various sources, besides participant perception also the views of others, like, for example, the staff in school.

Keywords: professional development, professional learning, feedback, evaluation, assessment, development, leadership, management, professionalisation, impact

Introduction

In view of the responsibilities of school leaders for ensuring and enhancing the quality of schools, school leadership has become one of the central concerns in the school system in many countries, in the last decades (Huber & Muijs, 2010; Hallinger & Huber, 2012). There seems to be a broad international agreement among scholars, policy makers and practitioners in the field of education, about the need for high quality leadership and thereby continuous professionalisation of school leadership.

In a rapidly changing society, education in general and schools in particular are faced with diverse challenges. Over the past decades, global policy ideas have shaped national education policies, school reforms, and school improvement in many countries. A recent review of school leadership research (Tian & Huber, 2019) in the period from 2007 to 2017 has identified five thematic strands:

1. School leadership for enhancing the academic achievement of students and teacher effectiveness
2. Leadership for change, accountability and the promotion of democratic values in education
3. Leadership for social justice, equality and equity in education and narrowing achievement gaps
4. The role of school leaders in instructional leadership for school improvement
5. Distributed leadership and its impact on organisational climate, teacher attitudes and stress

Tian and Huber (2019) identified tensions and dilemmas related to the above themes; for instance, the dynamics between leaders and teachers in school management; issues related to distributed leadership and changes in the governance of education. The latter has been brought on by a global spread of New Public Management ideas and neoliberal education policies. Such travelling policies are shaped by national contexts and are manifested in systems that monitor the quality of education in terms of tests, reporting, and accountability practices aiming to boost the performance of school actors, particularly school leaders and teachers (Verger, Parcerisa & Fontdevila, 2019). Failing to perform on targets leads in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States to school sanctions, at worst in school closures, but also in strategic behaviours among school actors to avoid such severe consequences (Welsh, Graham & Williams, 2019). In this logic, school leaders and teachers are expected to constantly look for ways to improve education. This has created a market for private companies offering digital systems and tools, for synthesising and monitoring various types of results and programmes in literacy and other forms of competence. Systems and tools that aim to improve student outcomes. At the same time, school leaders are faced with challenges to accommodate the needs of increasingly diverse groups of students and fluctuation in the numbers of teachers.

Professional development plays an important role in the professionalisation of aspiring and established school leaders. Promotion of high professional standards in school leadership and practices is the aim of many professional

development efforts. Extensive and comprehensive programmes have for this reason been developed in many countries. On one hand, for accompanying the different career phases of school leaders with preparation and induction programmes and continuous professional development. On the other hand, various short-term interventions for particular development needs identified by leadership in specific school contexts.

Professional Development

The past decade has witnessed a growing knowledge base in the field of education leadership development. Distinct characteristics of leadership development programmes are beginning to form and there is a growing demand for studies on associated effects and outcomes (Young, Crow, Ogawa, & Murphy, 2009).

There are quite a few international trends in professional development that can be identified. We have followed up on an earlier study on the professional development of leaders in fifteen countries (see also Huber, 2013a; 2013b; 2019). We draw also on the project "Professional Learning through Reflection promoted by Feedback and Coaching" (PROFLEC, see CPSM.EduLead.net), funded by the EU (2012-2014). PROFLEC reviewed international trends focusing on the training and development of school leaders in ten countries; Australia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, the German speaking countries Austria, Germany and Switzerland, Norway and Sweden (Huber et al., 2015¹).

Key perspectives in professional development curricula demonstrate increasing attention to the needs of participants; also, that demands derived from school evaluations are taken into account and practices are improved by bridging theory and action. This orientation towards needs and application is expected to improve the impact and the sustainability of professional development (Huber, 2011a, 2011b). In an effort to become better aligned with the needs of participants, a few professional development approaches integrate diagnostic means, audits, needs assessments and feedback opportunities as components of training and professional development.

Using diagnostics can reveal previous knowledge, subjective theories, attitudes, attributes, expectations, goals, skills, abilities and observed performance. Diagnostics provide relevant information for those who plan a professional development programme or intervention and support participants to make good use of different learning approaches. Hence, professional development is expected to be better aligned with programme specific goals and the prior competence of participants. The use of diagnostics aims to improve the fit between the didactic features of a programme and the needs of participants. A better fit supports the transfer from knowing to acting, from professional development activities to day-to-day practice; as a consequence, the impact and sustainability of professional development are increased (Schön, 1983, 1984; Kolb, 1984; Bridges and Hallinger, 1995, 1997; Wahl, 2001; Huber, 2001, 2011a, 2011b; Huber and Hader-Popp, 2005).

¹ With the following country reports about CPD programmes and existing use of feedback system and coaching: Flückiger, B. and Dempster, N.: Australia, Gómez-Delgado, A.M., López-Yáñez, J., Montero, A. and Nieves, O.: Spain, Höög, J. and Törnsen, M.: Sweden, Huber, S.G.: Switzerland, Moos, L.: Denmark, Nicolaidou, M., Karagiorgi Y. and Petridou, A.: Cyprus, Pol, M., Sedláček M. and Lazarová, B.: Czech Republic, Skedsmo, G.: Norway, West, M.: England.

In general, there is not one strategy or method in professional development that is above others; the use of a wide range of different strategies and methods is likely to be most effective. Those responsible for planning and implementing professional training and development are best advised to use a variety of methods. This helps individual participants to learn, and to be motivated to use what has been learned, for improving performance.

3 EXAMPLES FROM SELECTED FROM SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

School leadership is important for the achievement of schools and pupils; the associated professional field of school leadership is complex. These insights are reflected in the fact that single courses in school leadership development are being replaced by more extensive professional development programmes. This is an international trend which generally aims towards developing programmes that cover a broad range of requirements and skills. These programmes are typically structured using multiple phases and are developed for specific target groups. Moreover, preparatory and continuing professional development for school leaders is increasingly mandatory. Voluntary professional development serves as an important selection criterion when hiring school leaders in countries where continued professional development is not yet mandated.

Although general trends are largely uniform, the implementation of trends varies at the national level. Even within individual states (in the case of federal structures) there is a range of training and further education offers that vary by organisation, scope, content and degree of formality.

3.1 Provision of Training and Continuous Professional Development

The organisation of professional development alternatives for school leadership can be differentiated by types, hereafter referred to as models. School leadership professional development models that support policy implementation and quality assurance range from centrally organised approaches to decentralised approaches. The latter have been observed e.g. in Cyprus and the United Kingdom.

The National Principal Programme in Norway outlines requirements according to which institutions in Norway are invited to tender and develop their own profile. This is an example of a decentralised strategy. In addition, universities and university colleges in Norway offer master programmes in educational leadership. Institutions are responsible for the quality of programmes; quality is assessed by an independent state agency (NOKUT). The model used in Norway is similar to the approach in Sweden.

In the Czech Republic, professional development is comparatively more centrally controlled. Professional development of school leaders is carried out by national authorities or universities that have been approved for the implementation of programmes in a selection process.

A decentralised organisation of professional development can also be found in Australia and Spain, where the framework conditions between the

autonomous communities (Spain) and the individual territories (Australia) differ significantly.

In Switzerland, the universities of teacher education and other providers, such as the Academy for Adult Education (AEB), increased their provision of professional development since 2005. In the German federal states, in particular the state institutes for teacher training, but also a few publishing houses, increased their provision of professional development as well as some fifteen years ago. In Austria, the Ministry of Education initiated and financed master's programmes about five years ago; universities of teacher education applied with concepts for implementation; currently, universities of teacher education offer these courses.

3.2 Targeted participants

A large number of professional development offers respond to a range of requirements that are based on functions (middle management or school site or school network responsibility) and experience (novice or experienced). One target group for professional development observed (for example in Australia, Spain, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Switzerland) consists of teachers aspiring to leadership positions, newly appointed school leaders and school leaders with few years of professional experience. Professional development for this target group focuses on orientation and accompanying measures when starting a leadership career.

Professional development courses are increasingly aimed at specific target groups. The courses are structured by stages or phases. Some courses are developed specifically for potential or prospective school leaders or newly hired school leaders before starting their position. Some courses are developed for school leaders in their first term; other courses provide training after the first two years in office. Some courses provide continuous professional development for established school leaders who already have experience. Examples of school leader professional development that is structured in this manner can be found in Sweden and in central Germany, particularly in the federal states of Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia. Concepts by which the qualifications for leaders in education are defined were renewed in 2009 in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, and in 2006 in Thuringia. Education leader qualifications were structured into four successive and conceptually coordinated phases:

- Phase 1: Orientation
- Phase 2: Preparatory qualification
- Phase 3: Inaugural qualification
- Phase 4: In-service qualification

The definition of education leader qualifications in Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia are similar. However, there are differences in subject matter content, methods of instruction and how instruction is organised.

Initial education leader qualifications are in Sweden managed by the municipalities. Professional development for school leaders with experience is provided by the National Agency for Education, or accredited universities —

similarly as in Australia. In Norway, universities and university colleges provide professional development for inexperienced education leaders, experienced leaders as well as teachers. The National Principal Programme in Norway and Sweden caters to newly appointed principals and mid-level leaders.

In systems that do not align education leader career paths with further training, provision of professional development has focused on school leaders with little professional experience. This is the case for example in the Czech Republic, but also Austria and Switzerland.

In many countries, the target groups for initial training and continued training are different. Initial training is, for the most part, mandatory before taking office; this is the case for example in Germany (see Tulowitzki, Hinzen & Roller 2019). Initial training is in some cases mandatory shortly after taking over leadership of a school; this is the case for example in Denmark, Spain and Czech Republic. Advanced training is usually offered on an optional basis and is intended for a broader target group.

The German federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Hessen have mandated special qualifications as prerequisites for taking office. Since 2008, teachers who want to become school leaders in North Rhine-Westphalia have had to participate in a competence-oriented, four-module school leadership qualification (SLQ); teachers demonstrate their suitability in a two-day assessment procedure, the aptitude assessment procedure (EFV). The EFV is a central component of the official assessment. Further components of the leadership qualification in North Rhine-Westphalia are orientation seminars for teachers who are interested in taking on managerial functions in schools; introductions to management for mid-level managers; thematic courses for experienced school leaders; and shorter interventions such as school management coaching (SLC).

Hessen has also integrated a suitability assessment procedure (EFV) to its preparatory qualification and has organised services for advising school managers. In addition to a three-day EFV assessment consisting of five exercises, prospective school leaders are required to do a day of reflection. The reflection entails a comparison of self-image and external image and a feedback discussion. Additionally, participants are required to do five modules over a period of approximately twelve months and complete project work. From 2016 to 2017, a first pilot project was carried out and evaluated in Hessen by the Cooperation Network Center consisting of state school authorities from Gießen, Marburg, Friedberg and Weilburg. After a transition period of several years, the qualification and the aptitude test in Hessen will become obligatory.

Staff other than the school leader could provide greater support for the management of schools. However, our international comparison shows that access to professional leadership development remains limited for staff. Denmark offers individual modules of a diploma course for personnel in the social sector. The Rectors' Education in Sweden is a programme for superintendents. It has been provided since 2014 as an optional programme for experienced school leaders who have already completed the National School Leadership Training Program (NSLTP).

3.3 Duration

Training and professional development is provided at universities for example in Denmark, Norway and Switzerland. Programmes differ by credit (ECTS) and hours. Table I shows selected courses and programmes in different countries.

Table I.

Country	Type	Scope / ECTS
Switzerland	Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS)	15 ECTS
	Master of Advanced Studies (MAS)	60 ECTS
Czech Republic	As part of the EU Comenius Lifelong Learning Programmes	350 hours within 4 semesters (with 30 working hours per credit point, this corresponds to approximately twelve ECTS)
Sweden	National School Leadership Training Programme (NSLTP)	In total 30 ECTS (10 ECTS per topic ²)
	Rektorslyftet (voluntary programme for school leaders who have already completed the NSLTP and have at least one year of professional experience)	7,5 ECTS
	Recruitment training at University	No credit
Denmark	Diploma course for executives in the education sector, mandatory for persons in "middle management" of the social sector	60 ECTS
Norway	Master Programme in addition to full-time employment	120 ECTS within 4 years
	Professional Development Programmes (e.g. National Principal Programme)	30 ECTS
	Separate modules which can be built into a degree.	7-15 ECTS

Source: Huber, Skedsmo, Aas, Fluckiger, Dempster, Lovett, Moos, Sánchez Moreno, López Yáñez, Brandmo, West, Olsen, Nicolaidou, Törnsèn, Petridou, Hiltmann, Schwander, Johnson, Lazarová, Höög, and Sedláček, 2015.

² The three topics of the NSLTP are: Legislation on schools and the role of exercising the functions of an authority, Management by goals and objectives, and School leadership.

3.4 Content

School leaders are required to attend to many different kinds of tasks given the function embedded in system level demands and needs in the local context. Therefore, a whole range of competences is needed (Huber and Schwander, 2015). Accordingly, professional development covers a wide spectrum of topics.

The development of organisational and administrative skills and knowledge remain important in the professional development of school leaders. Notably, as part of initial qualifications and as part of in-service training. Common subject matter content areas include legislation, regulations, quality management and school development as well as personnel management and development. However, programmes prioritise subject matter areas differently. For example, in Norway, prominent programmes components include globalization and international trends in education, school law, and research methods.

Figure 1. Model for school management and school development



Source: Huber, 2022
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Figure 1 demonstrates a general leadership model in the fields of action in school management which is used as part of the curriculum framework for a comprehensive leadership professional programme for 5400 schools and their

leaders in Germany (Huber, 2022).

3.4 Methods

Workshops, case reviews and discussions of current cases are frequently used for school leader professional development; the professional development of school leaders tends to focus on management and implementation. Self-study is common; for example, in the UK, modules were divided into one-third contact hours and two-thirds self-study. In Sweden, Norway and Spain, web-based learning platforms (Learning Management Systems) for exchanging and providing materials are an important part of learning. A variety of methods for delivering school leader professional development are in use; new delivery methods have in some countries replaced lecture-based programmes.

Feedback and coaching are used differently in different programmes. Whilst feedback and various feedback systems are a part of leadership development programmes in most countries, coaching is used in some programmes only. Some form of feedback is usually part of professional development; either in the form of group feedback or feedback from multiple sources (360 degree feedback). Observed examples in Sweden provided feedback at three levels: self-reflection, group feedback and feedback or coaching from the course instructor. Coaching, a less frequently used method for delivering professional development, was used only in connection to a few programmes. As demonstrated by an example in the Czech Republic, coaching can be delivered by independent external providers.

At the University of Oslo in Norway, in the national programme, a coach was assigned to groups of up to six students. Three-day sessions were held in which the participant worked on feedback and cases from their leadership practice. In Cyprus, since 2012, mentors have been used for supporting the professional development of primary school leaders once a term in acute and problematic situations. Mentors were selected on the basis of their experience as school leaders and skills to support colleagues.

3.5 Performance records

Exams are required for the completion of professional development programmes; exams are used for example in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Czech Republic. Participants can be required to complete specific modules as a prerequisite for an examination or a thesis. The NSLTP in Sweden does not include a comprehensive final examination but requires written or oral exams in all subject areas of the programme. Another option is the use of portfolios for documenting self-study, self-reflection or project work over the entire duration of the course or programme. Portfolios can be submitted for examination. Alternatively, a presentation on a given topic can be part of an oral exam as for example at the University of Oslo in Norway.

Spain and most of the states in Germany have no final examination. Where professional development was provided by universities in the observed cases, as in Germany and Switzerland, the ECTS system was used to define the workload for modules and programmes.

3.6 Evaluation and quality assurance of the programmes

Programme participant surveys were usual for gathering feedback on the quality of the components or the overall programme. In practice, surveys were conducted as small surveys online or by using paper and pencil questionnaires. Surveys measured, for example in Cyprus, participant satisfaction with the organisation, content and usefulness of a completed seminar. An anonymous, online survey of completed training was used in the Czech Republic.

A master programme in Norway includes a detailed procedure of programme evaluation. At the end of the course, participants respond to an online survey. In addition, participants are asked to discuss feedback in groups; a representative for each group reports the feedback. This allows participants to bring up new issues. Survey results serve a continued development of the programme.

The brief insights of various training and further education systems makes it clear that despite a uniform idea of the need for further training and support for school leadership, a complex and diverse landscape can be found internationally as far as implementation of evaluation or quality assurance is concerned.

3.7 School Leadership Development in Norway

In Norway, school leaders can complete a full master programme (120 ECTS) part-time. An alternative is to complete the equivalent of the first year of the master programme (30 ECTS) such as the National Principal Programme ('Rektorutdanningen'). The duration of the latter is three semesters. Table II illustrates the two alternatives.

Table II.

	The National Principal Programme	Master Programme in Education Leadership (MPEL), offered by the University of Oslo
Type of training	Practice-oriented training, part-time	Preparatory and in-service training programme ³
Target group	School Leaders who currently have a leadership function in the school	Teachers (prospective school leaders), school leaders, others with leadership functions in the education system
Requirements for admission to the programme	5-year teacher training or Bachelor, 10 ECTS in education, 2 years of practice	5-year teacher training or Bachelor, 10 ECTS in education, 2 years of practice
Scope and duration	30 ECTS in 1,5 years	120 ECTS in 4 years
Aims	Defined by knowledge, skills	Defined by knowledge, skills and

³ The first year of the master's programme can be viewed as an independent further education.

	and competence (described in detail for each year)	competence (described in detail for each year)
Learning approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courses in 3 modules - Collegial work - Self-study - Coaching/Feedback on study requirements - Learning Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courses in modules - Collegial work - Self-study - Coaching /Feedback on study requirements - Learning Management System
Workload	<p>30 ECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75-80 hour courses - Around 4 study requirements (with feedback from the lecturer) - Tasks for preparation and post-processing (3 coaching-sessions, 360 degree feedback) - 2100 pages literature 	<p>120 ECTS (30 ECTS each year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75-80-hour courses - 3-4 study requirements each year within the first 3 years - Master thesis (30 ECTS) in the last year - 8400 pages literature (700 pages literature for 10 ECTS)
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogical leadership, learning outcomes and learning environment - School development, Change management and Communication - Quality development in school - Educational governance - School Law - Schools as learning organisations 	<p>Year 1: 3 Modules (each 10 ECTS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogical leadership, learning outcomes and learning environment - School development, Change management and Communication - Quality development in school - Educational governance - School Law - Schools as learning organisations <p>Year 2: 3 Modules (each 10 ECTS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionalisation and quality in educational leadership - Knowledge management and organisation development - Current challenges, globalization, law, democracy, optional studies abroad (Erasmus). <p>Year 3: 3 Modules (10 ECTS each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research design, methods and analysis strategies in educational science,

		<p>introduction to statistics (10 ECTS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project seminar and applied methods for the master thesis (20 ECTS) <p>Year 4: Master thesis (30 ECTS)</p>
Performance records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 study requirements - oral exam (15 minutes presentation, 15 minutes discussion) 	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 study requirements - oral exam (15 minutes presentation, 15 minutes discussion) <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study requirements which are continuously improved and handed in as portfolio. It is one per module and it is a mixture of group and individual work. <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students work on different study requirements which are integrated in a project proposal for their master thesis (e.g. Description of topic and research questions, methods, literature review etc.) <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master thesis - Oral exam

Source: Huber, Skedsmo, Aas, Fluckiger, Dempster, Lovett, Moos, Sánchez Moreno, López Yáñez, Brandmo, West, Olsen, Nicolaidou, Törnsen, Petridou, Hiltmann, Schwander, Johnson, Lazarová, Höög, and Sedláček, 2015.

The Master programme in education leadership (MPEL) at the University of Oslo is special in that prospective school leaders as well as representatives from authorities are admitted. The programme focuses on developing a system perspective and understanding leadership and how to exercise leadership in complex and diverse contexts. The programme requires a high level of commitment, as demonstrated by the study requirements. The programme builds on lectures, participation and feedback. Participants are entitled to six hours of individual feedback per academic year.

4 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Despite differences in cultural and institutional traditions, a number of internationally shared trends in the professional development of school leaders can be observed. Common features are listed in the following.

Provider

- Centralised planning and decentralised implementation of programmes.
- Central quality assurance and decentralised provision.
- New forms of cooperation and partnership.
- Dovetailing theory and practice.

Participants

- Qualifying teachers and teacher teams at school level.
- Grouping participants according to professional criteria to gain homogeneous groups.
- Promoting collegial support (e.g. professional learning communities, peer coaching).

Timing and pattern

- Extensive and comprehensive programmes.
- Multi-phase designs.
- Modularisation including preparatory qualification.

Aims

- Adjusting the programme to explicit aims and objectives.

Contents

- Holistic approaches (not only content instruction but also promotion of motivation and reflection).
- Personal development instead of training for a role.
- Orientation towards the school's core purpose.

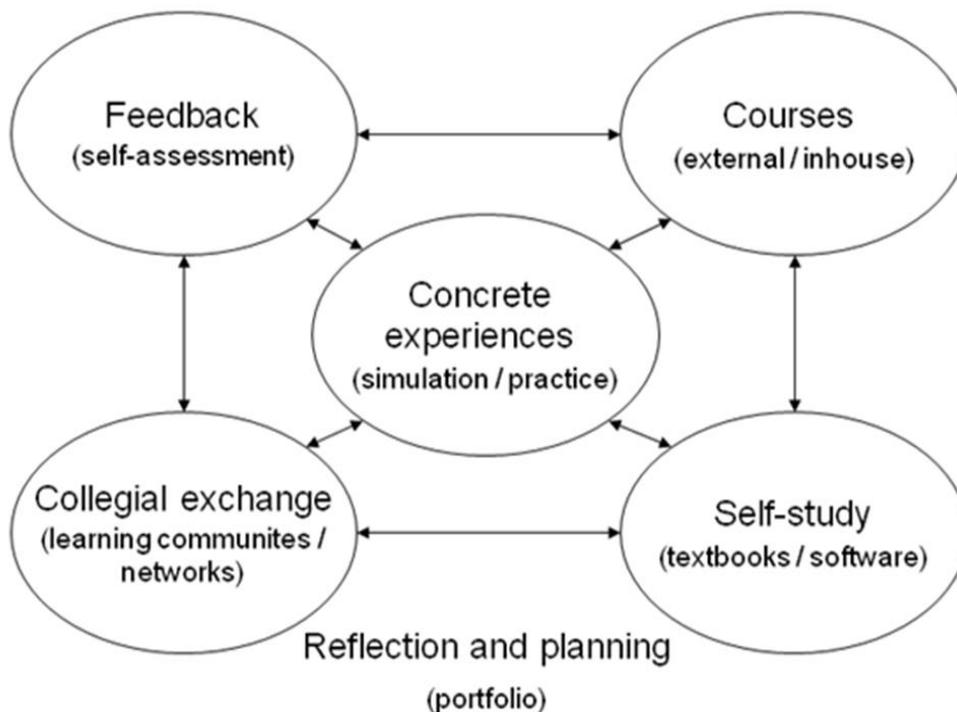
Methods

- Aligning methods to contents.
- From knowledge acquisition to creation and development of knowledge.
- Experience and application orientation.
- Multi-method using more different ways of learning, e.g. workshops and the workplace.

5 SELF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK IN MULTIPLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

School leaders are increasingly integrating self-assessment and feedback to professional development activities. This supplements the multiple learning approaches that are already in use, such as locally and externally provided courses; self-study using textbooks and computer software; learning in the context of simulation or practices, and peer learning in communities and networks (see figure 2, Huber, 2011b).

Figure 2. Approaches to learning in professional development



Source: Huber, 2011b

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In order to use all learning opportunities, reflecting upon them seems to be crucial. Such reflection can take place before and after participation in professional development. Reflection prior to professional development can help to identify relevant courses and programmes. Following up professional development with reflection can help to modify conceptualisations. At the beginning of several programme, participants are asked to start a portfolio. The portfolio can be used for combining teaching and learning with self-evaluation. It documents the development process and supports individual planning of professional development.

In all these programmes – particularly if they are linked – emphasis is put on transfer, reflection and the exchange of what has been learnt with peers. A focus on the implementation of practices and actions is central for achieving sustainable learning outcomes. Assessment-based feedback is an important element that is missing from Figure 1; it is yet another important learning approach that should not be underestimated. It is highly recommended that participants in professional development go through self-assessment and analyse individual potential. Participants can subsequently receive feedback on relevant areas of development. Formatively used, self-assessment provides a good start for planning professional development. If done in the right way it can, in addition to charting prior knowledge, have a great impact on the motivation for learning.

Some countries implemented needs assessments or other forms of assessment and feedback to promote individual or group reflection. This helped to motivate the professional development of participants, to set personal goals and in some cases to identify areas of specialisation. In the PROFLEC project, ten countries implemented self-assessment and used it as a starting point for coaching.

Assessments were included in the professional development programmes in the German states of Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt and Saxony. These programmes were provided in modules over four subsequent phases. In phase 1, orientation was provided for teachers interested in school leadership. Phase 2 consisted of a preparatory programme for aspiring school leaders. Phase 3 was the induction phase for newly appointed school leaders. In phase 4 a variety of smaller programmes were offered to experienced school leaders. The specific goal in the initial phase was to provide the participants with opportunities to reflect on their individual competence and interests. Also, to compare competence and interest with demands and challenges to school leadership. The intention was to support the participants in their career decision to apply for school leadership positions and to identify their own strengths and learning needs.

Modules in phase 1

- "School effectiveness, school development, and school management", one-day course with lectures and group-work.
- "Competence profile school management", a web-based self-assessment and a one-day workshop for reflecting on the self-assessment.
- "Practice perspectives", short internships, discussions with peers and superiors, and a one-day course.

This phase is spread out over 6 months and includes course formats, self-study methods, working on individual projects in practice, establishing professional learning communities and networks, and starts with self-assessment and feedback. Hence, it contains all the approaches described in the theoretical model above.

The orientation phase is based on the premise that there is good reason to support future school leaders as early as possible in the leadership orientation process. The modules provide a brief overview of the empirical knowledge base in the field and stress the fact that there are different approaches to school leadership. By doing this, specific values underpinning school leadership are promoted. Values that do not necessarily reflect the normative approaches to competence and standards-based development of leaders in a number of countries. The aim of this phase is on one hand for participants to reflect on themselves. On the other, that participants reflect on school leadership. Recruitment and selection in the states which run the programmes were often seen as one-way processes. As processes in which the education administration selected suitable candidates for school leadership positions. In contrast, the new approach seeks to attract candidates who have a better sense of whether a school leadership position will suit them, as they have participated in phase one. Feedback is followed up with development exercises and is intended to improve self-selection as part of school leadership recruitment.

Providing support in orientation and self-selection is important for enhancing the quantity as well as the quality of school leadership recruitment. Internationally, there have been very few tools specifically designed for schools to help determine how well applicants fit to leadership positions. What matters is the “fit” between job characteristics and a person’s skills, attitudes, and ability or potential to learn (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Caldwell and O’Reilly, 1990; O’Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Holland, 1997; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005; Sekiguchi, 2004; Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006; Edwards, 2008). The Competence Profile School Management programme (CPSM; in German Kompetenzprofil Schulmanagement [KPSM]) is the first web-based self-assessment for school leadership in German. The aim of CPSM is to analyse the potential of individuals to take on school leadership roles (Huber and Hiltmann, 2011). It can serve as an introduction for teachers who are interested in school leadership tasks or as a basis for clarifying personal strengths and weaknesses for newly appointed or experienced members of school leadership teams.

The self-assessment offers participants the possibility to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of school leadership that CPSM assesses. The results of the self-assessment are compared with the results of peers, who provide a relevant reference point. The CPSM provides an opportunity for participants to compare abilities and self-perceptions with peers.

Following self-assessment, participants receive an email with instructions on how to download the personal feedback report, which is password protected. The feedback report contains extensive feedback on all six areas and 24 dimensions required in the CPSM. The email includes explanations for how to read the report, understand the test scores, interpret test scores (percentile rank), and a description of the individual results. The assessment has a formative purpose, it does not provide a summative score or statement about a person’s actual fit for a leadership position. Rather, the feedback texts describe possible advantages and disadvantages that come along with the personal score in a given test dimension. Thus, it is still up to the participant to reflect personally on the results and to form an opinion (with the help of workshop exercises, and a coach or trainer, if desired) on fitness for leadership positions.

Self-assessment of participants in the first phase of the professional development programme is followed up with a workshop. The workshop includes lectures, group work and discussions regarding the individual feedback report, and provides additional information on the background of the assessment tool, for example, how the test scores come about or how to interpret test scores and overall results. Individual and group reflection is stimulated with individual, pair- and group-assignments. These activities encourage discussions about one’s own behaviour and individual professional development planning. All CPSM self-assessment participants take the workshop after getting their feedback report.

Participants experience self-assessment and feedback as an enriching learning opportunity. It promotes reflection and the motivation to gather more information about their behaviour in day-to-day practices. It promotes other learning opportunities as well, in both innovative forms and in established course formats. Participants identify specific courses as helpful for improving practices;

this is helpful for the continued development of their professional competence.

Surprisingly, some participants change their career plans after participating in professional development. Besides impact on competence (for impact models, see Kirkpatrick, 1994; Guskey, 2000, 2002; Muijs, Day, Harris and Lindsay, 2004; Muijs and Lindsay, 2007; Huber 2011a, 2011b) self-assessment affects school leader motivation and their subjective theories of career planning. One must be well aware, however, that we report on data provided by the participants themselves. Self-reported data need verification in order to make definitive statements. It would be interesting to triangulate further data provided by others and a follow-up to ascertain if those saying they would or would not want to apply for leadership roles actually did so.

To the extent that the professional development programme seeks to develop competence and promote job applications for school leadership positions, our findings suggest that the programme is not successful. Fewer participants overall state that they will immediately apply for a position as principal. A different outcome presents itself if the professional development programme is understood to promote applications for all different kinds of school leadership positions. Our findings suggest that there were more participants willing to apply for a leadership position after the programme than there were prior to the programme. In a time when many school leaders are retiring – in German-speaking countries around 30–50% of the school leaders will retire within the next three years, particularly in these three German states from which we gathered the data – our finding could be interpreted to suggest that the programme is successful, not in the short term but in the long term. It is positive that starting from the simple career perspective question of “becoming a school leader or not” professional development supported school leaders to develop a more nuanced and complex subjective theory of school leadership careers and different career possibilities or career steps to principalship.

The selection and recruitment of leadership personnel may be affected by professional development programmes that use various learning modes including self-assessment and feedback. It would be interesting to look into this related research area as a further consequence of our study. We propose that professional development leads in the shorter term to fewer applications to the position of principal; however, it leads to more applications to middle-management positions. This might change over time as professionals move from middle management to positions of principal. Second, we propose that professional development promotes system leadership on various levels in the school system as well as in the individual school organisation. Distributed leadership only works if there are motivated people who are willing to take on leadership roles in middle-management positions. At the same time, these people can be observed in their new roles, and a long-term monitoring is possible which in turn increases the validity of data from observations. Third, we propose that professional development programmes support the availability of applicants who have reflected more rigorously on what will be expected and what the roles, tasks, required competence, and even the challenges may be like. This could increase the quality of applications.

We conclude that it is not only the use of different learning approaches

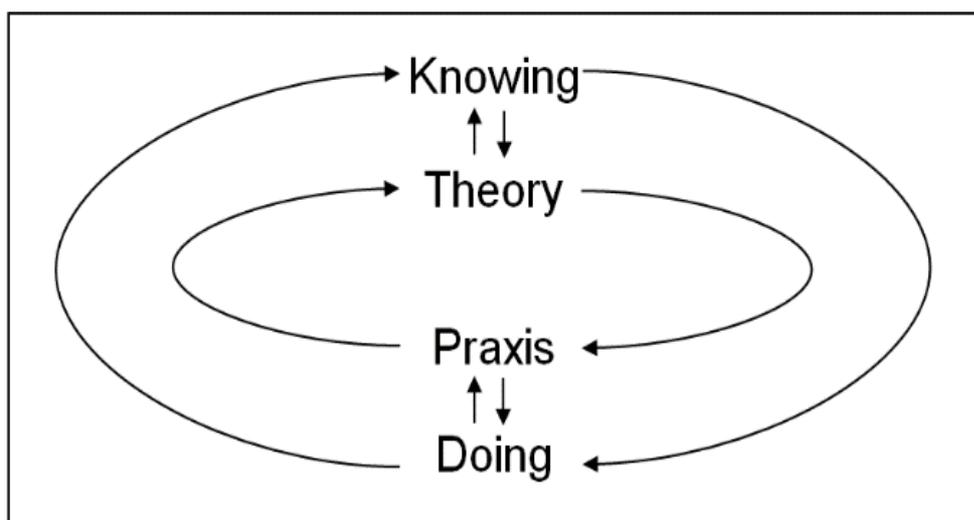
that matters, but particularly how they are conceptually linked and how this linkage is implemented and then experienced by the participants. This linking is what makes a difference in the learning of adults, and in this case of aspiring school leaders.

To sum up, feedback in the form of a self-assessment provides a valuable contribution to supporting the processes of career planning for potential candidates for leadership positions. The use of web-based self-assessments on a voluntary basis allows participants to receive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in a time- and cost-effective manner. It is an easy-to-access starting point for a structured personal reflection on individual willingness and preparedness to take on a leadership role in education. The participants consider this to be a positive opportunity. Different individuals experience different benefits, which is not surprising as they have different needs. The learning approach of self-assessment and feedback as part of a professional development programme seems to help balance heterogeneous needs and promote different forms of professional development among participants, according to their respective experiences and needs.

6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MOVING FROM KNOWING TO DOING

The premise for all professional development is its impact. What leads to the experience of professional effectiveness; professional competence; gaining expertise by reflecting on experiences; and professionalism? What makes one confident in working in a professional context, what increases job satisfaction, motivation, and job performance (in terms of professional achievement)? According to Gruber (2000), gaining experience for professional competence is to learn in complex application-relevant and practice-relevant situations (see figure 3, and also Joyce & Showers, 1980). New competence is gained by practice followed by feedback and reflection.

Figure 3. From theory to praxis, from knowing to doing



Source: Huber, 2011b

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Professional development has changed over the last few years. Important current considerations pertain to demand, practices and sustainability. This calls on professional development to respond to the following two demands.

Firstly, professional development has to integrate diagnostic means as a starting point for training and development programmes (to develop differentiated approaches to professional development aims and goals). In order to provide specialised programmes adjusted to the needs of individual persons, groups or particular schools, first the previous knowledge, subjective theories, attitudes, expectations, goals and motivation of the potential participants have to be determined. These provide the starting point for the planning of professional development and pertinent approaches to learning.

Secondly, professional development needs to focus on practices in order to move from knowledge to action (see Huber, 2001; Huber & Hader-Popp, 2005; Wahl, 2001). This is necessary in order to move from theory to praxis and for transferring what has been learnt into everyday teaching.

7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Different levels in the evaluation of professional development have been described. Kirkpatrick (1994), for instance, describes four levels of evaluation:

- Level 1. Reaction (participant satisfaction based on setting, content, methods etc.)
- Level 2. Learning (cognitive learning success and increase of knowledge)
- Level 3. Behaviour (success in transferring content to action)
- Level 4. Results (positive organisational changes as a result of the above)

Guskey (2000, 2002) as well as Mujjs and Lindsay (2007) and Muijs, Day, Harris and Lindsay (2004) describe a model of evaluation comprising five levels:

- Level 1. Participants' reactions,
- Level 2. Participants' learning,
- Level 3. Organisational support and change,
- Level 4. Participants' use of new knowledge and skills,
- Level 5. Student learning outcomes.

The studies and models presented contribute to our theoretical framework; hereafter referred to as the theoretical model for theory-based empirical research and evaluation. In determining the different levels of impact, we assumed that the perception of the programme – in terms of its expected relevance for practices, its expected usefulness and expected participant satisfaction with the programme – should be considered as processes in the participants themselves. The perception of the programme thereby does not

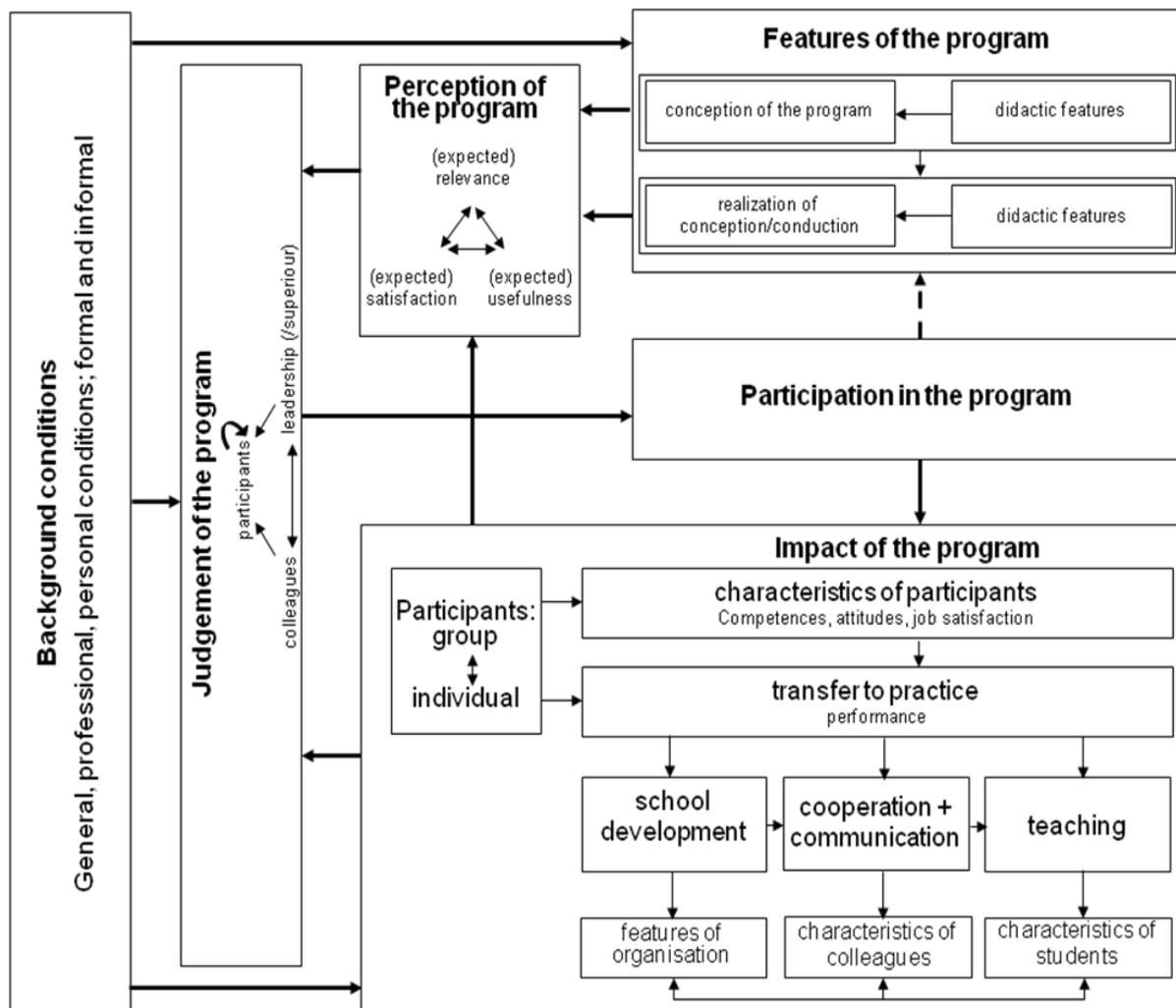
represent the impact of the programme. Our definition of impact goes beyond the subjective views of participants; it includes an external perspective and measurable indicators.

Three levels of impact are differentiated in the proposed model: (1) changes in the characteristics of participants, (2) changes in the performance of participants, as well as (3) changes in the areas of application. The first level – changes in the characteristics of participants – represents the learning success of participants and aspects such as competence, attitudes, job satisfaction, etc. These characteristics must be clearly distinguished from the modified performance of the participant. Third level changes imply that a modified behaviour means that the classroom teaching of the participants changes. Too. That in turn leads to a change in the learning behaviour and eventually to a change in the learning success of students. Besides, there is also a change in the communication and cooperation behaviour with colleagues. The participants may also influence the development of the school as an organisation, by their modified competences, attitudes, knowledge and skills.

The proposed model provides a framework and structure for analysing research. The proposed model provides also a framework for evaluation and for the assessment of professional development needs. Specifically, by taking into account plurality and the need to choose which factors should be considered (see pilot studies by Huber, Schneider & Radisch, 2008; Huber & Radisch, 2008; Huber, 2009, 2020).

The framework for empirical research and evaluation illustrated in Figure 4 draws on theoretical principles. The framework can be used for framing research; for evaluation; for informing practices, for use at the school level; and finally, it can be used for providing an overview of various important aspects.

Figure 4. Theoretical model for empirical research, evaluation, planning and conducting training and development programmes



Source: Huber, 2011b

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Features of the programme: Features of the programme do not concern only the conception of the programme but also its actual implementation. Features are determined especially by background conditions and surveyed needs and demands. The didactic features may be divided into macro-didactic and micro-didactic features. The macro-didactic features are for example the provider (i.e. central or decentral, state-run teacher training institute, or an independent provider), the purpose of professional development with respect to its main goals, the instructor (the professional background of instructor), considerations of the formation of the teams (i.e. mixed background or focus on one expert group), the status of professional development (mandatory vs. optional), the duration, the timing, the time structure (i.e. in multiple phases, modularisation, sequencing). Micro-didactic features are for example the concrete aims of teaching and learning situations, the format, the content, the method and the media used, as well as the programme instructors.

Background conditions: The features of the programme are influenced by the general, professional, personal, formal and informal background conditions that include aspects of the job profile, goals for professional development, requirements and policies of the school board, the characteristics of the education system, legal requirements, resources (financial, temporal and special), as well as general requirements concerning professional development and the interest in professional development. The personal background conditions are, for instance, individual learning and professional biography, moral values or family and health aspects. These background conditions have an obvious impact on the design (the conception and realisation) of the programme, on the judgement of the programme by the participants as well as on its impact.

Perception of the programme: The perception of the programme is influenced by the way its didactic features are promoted. This depends also on how the programme is carried out; how it is experienced by participants (judgement, secondary experience); also, by what is spoken about the programme among participants. The congruency between conception and implementation are important factors; and so are the expected relevance, the expected usefulness and the expected satisfaction.

Judgement of the programme: Initially, the participants themselves judge the programme in which they participate. However, the colleagues (in the same school and in other schools) and superiors judge the programme as well. The perception of others may influence the participant. The judgement of the programme influences the actual participation in the programme. If the judgement by the triad consisting of participants, colleagues and superiors is positive, the programme appears to be useful and participation is supported.

Participation in the programme: Besides participation in terms of attendance, further features may be formulated to evaluate participation in the programme, for example intensity (actual learning time) and the active (visible) participation in programmes (activity level of participants).

Impact of the programme: The impact of the programme can be observed on two levels: (1) the level of the entire group of participants (collective impact) and (2) the level of the individual participant (individual impact). Two further kinds of impact may also be observed: changes in participant characteristics (i.e. competences, attitudes, job satisfaction) is one; a second form of impact is manifested in changes in practices that draw on the application of what has been learnt. Here, three different kinds of impact on professional action may be observed: (1) direct or indirect impact on the development of the school as an organisation; (2) impact on the content and process of communication and cooperation among staff; (3) impact on teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the expected and experienced impact influences participants' judgement of the quality of the programme, which, again, influences the motivation for (further) participation in the programme.

The model does not imply that every single professional development programme should have an impact on all levels.

For further reflection, the following characteristics might serve as criteria to analyse and compare professional development for school leadership (see also UCEA, 2016, p. 16-17):

i. Programme Inputs:

Features that reflect the programme's ability to recruit and select high-potential aspirants and to diversify the pool of aspiring school leaders and features that reflect organizational aspects of the programme:

- Costs
- Funding
- Target Group
 - Teaching experience of admitted candidates
 - Strength of instructional expertise of admitted candidates
 - Demonstrated leadership potential (through experiences leading adults) of admitted candidates
- Recruitment and selection processes
- Prestige (admission rate)
- Number of participants (Group/cohort size)
- Marketing
- (Provider collaboration)

ii. Programme Processes:

Features that reflect the formal and experienced curriculum, i.e. the quality of instruction and learning setting:

- Aims
- Content
- Quality of faculty
- Time Pattern
- Instruction and Learning setting
- (Learning Approaches & Instructional Method (didacts))
 - Needs assessments
 - Self-Study
 - Peer learning
 - Courses
 - Learning in clinical setting
 - internship/residency hours
 - coaching
 - shadowing
 - Experience and expertise of instructors
 - Use of a defined competency framework aligned to leadership standards
 - Use of research-based content, curriculum, instructional and assessment practices

- Quality of peer interactions

iii. Programme Outputs:

Features that reflect the impact on graduate characteristics

- Level 1 "Successful completion of programme"
 - Programme graduation rate
 - Licensure rate
- Level 2 "Personal Reflection", e.g.
 - understanding own leadership role, challenges, strength
 - and weaknesses,

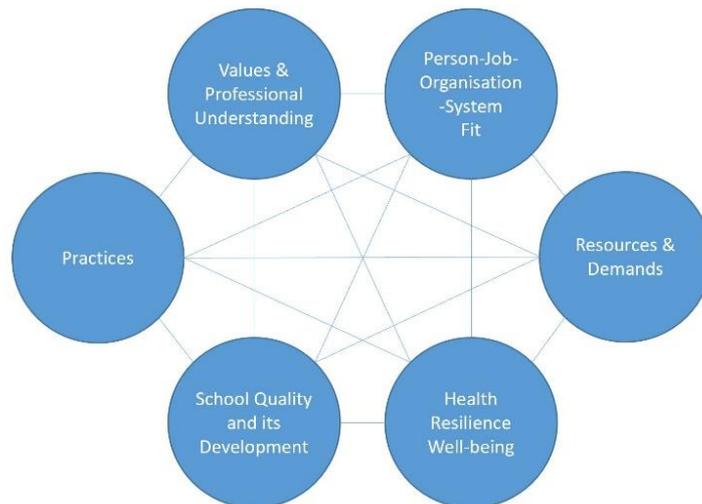
- goals and ambitions
- Level 3 “Continuous Professional Development”, e.g.
 - identification of new personal goals
 - taking part in further cpd activities
- Level 4 “Personal Growth”, e.g.
 - increased job satisfaction
 - work motivation
 - professional self-confidence
 - perceived effectiveness
- iv. Programme Outcomes:
Features that reflect the impact on graduate performance and consequences of performance
- Level 5 “Career”
 - success of aspirants in completing a rigorous programme and being hired into principal and assistant principal roles
 - Placement (in school leadership roles) rate
 - Retention (in school leadership roles) rate
- Level 6 “Performance”, e.g.
 - personal leadership practices/behavior/performance and consequences of behavior
 - review of work priorities
 - Measures of graduate knowledge and skills developed through participation in the programme
 - Graduate perceptions of readiness for leadership roles based on participation in the programme
 - 360° evaluations of programme graduates
- Level 7 “Changes”, e.g.
 - organizational features structures and processes
 - relations within school
 - relations with others outside of the school
 - Leadership effectiveness of graduates
 - Improvement in school climate in schools led by graduates
 - Improvement in teacher effectiveness in schools led by graduates
 - Student Outcomes
 - Improvement in non-cognitive measures of student outcomes in schools led by graduates
 - Student achievement growth in schools led by graduates
 - Climate
 - Student engagement
 - Discipline levels
 - Teacher morale

8 THE WORLD SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STUDY

We are currently preparing an international comparative study. The purpose of this study, the World School Leadership Study (WSLS), is to research and monitor the profession of school leadership nationally and internationally. This study has a potential to inform practice and contribute to the policy and academic discourses in many countries. The data will be analysed and reported nationally using an ideographical perspective and internationally with a

comparative perspective. A comparative perspective will promote discussions and potentially lead to outcomes in the form of better training and development opportunities.

Figure 5: Research area-specific questions of the World School Leadership Study



Source: Huber, Skedsmo, Mischler and Schwander, 2019, see also WSLs.EduLead.net

As Figure 5 shows the different areas of research, there are two levels of research questions:

Level 1 Research area-specific questions:

- i. Resources & demands: What kinds of resources and demands are available on personal, organisational and system levels that support or restrain school leader practice? How are these resources and demands experienced by the school leaders?
How is the balance between resources and demands?
- ii. Health, resilience, well-being: What are the school leader perceptions on their own health? How resilient are school leaders? How is school leaders work-related well-being?
- iii. Values and professional understanding: How are different professional values and professional understandings deemed important to school leaders, organisation and system? How do they align or misalign with each other?
- iv. Practice: What practices do school leaders prefer? What practices do school leaders experience as strain?
How do school leaders spend their time at work?
- v. Person-job-organisation-system fit: How do school leaders fit to their job, organisation and system?
How is the balance between different fits?
- vi. School quality and its development: How do school leaders perceive school quality and its development?

Level 2 Cross research area questions (some examples):

- vii. What is the cognitive appraisal of school leaders of the resources and demands on personal, organisational and system levels?
- viii. How do demands and resources impact school leader practices, health, resilience, well-being and their efforts to develop school quality?
- ix. How is the person-job-organisation-system fit related to school leader practices, to health, resilience and well-being, as well as to school quality and its development?
- x. How do the professional values of school leaders and their understanding correspond to the demands and resources on the three levels?
- xi. How are school leaders' professional values and professional understanding related to school quality and its development?
- xii. How does the health of school leaders, their resilience and well-being transform into resource, affect their practices and affect school quality and development?
- xiii. How can the findings be compared in a cluster of countries or internationally? (Possible perspectives for comparison: high stakes versus low stakes systems, centralised versus decentralised systems, autonomy of schools, market orientation versus public system perspective, key values)

The results of the World School Leadership Study are expected to have implications on different levels. First, the findings will illuminate how different resources and demands at the system, organisational and personal level affect the health and well-being of school leaders and the quality of schools. Second, the data will allow us to compare international similarities and differences. Third, WSLs aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to inform policy makers, to inform school leader recruitment, training, professional development, and to support the improvement of working conditions for school leaders in various countries.

Data available on request from the authors.

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