Breathing life back into leadership: adjusting to the realities of the leading in education

Robin Precey

Canterbury Christ Church University, England

Abstract

This article argues that the current approach to education that is spreading across the world is managerial in its approach and as a result leadership within schools is being stifled. It asserts that many leaders of schools feel suffocated and unsure about whether to just do as they are told or to display real leadership and do what they feel is morally right. The Standards Agenda of many governments is based on a simplistic notion of organisations and the real world is much complex. Complexity is explored and the implications for effective leaders in an increasingly complex world are explained. These arguments are built on to helpfully layout some important qualities that school leaders in the rest of the twentieth century require. These can be learnt and so there are implications for leadership development that require further exploration.

Keywords: managerialism, leadership, Standards Agenda, GERM, PISA, transactional, transformational, complexity, complicatedness, values, trust, integrity, ambiguity, adaptability, flexibility, resilience

1. Pushing down the pillow of managerialism on the face of headteachers: the suffocation of leadership in schools

It is an obvious truth that we all need leadership that is effective to help us enjoy life's benefits. Where would we be without talented, committed people who take on leadership roles to help us see a view of a better future and steer us towards it whether this is in politics, health care, banking, government or more particularly in education? We also need managers who can realise that vision and use their skills to try to make the hopes of a better future a reality today. This has always been so from time immemorial. However in recent years, as leadership and management have increasingly become a focus for research in order to gain greater understanding of what they are about, the landscape in education has been changing. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of leadership specifically at all levels in schools, not just the most senior, in order to bring about organisational improvement. The leadership competencies of middle leaders who are in strategically significant pivotal roles as well as those of teachers working on a daily basis in classrooms with students are increasingly seen as important and in need of development. Our greater understanding has come through the work of, for example, Frost & Durrant (2003), Harris (2004), Moller

(2005), Hallinger & Heck (1998), Leithwood et al (2005), Horner et al (2003), Marsh (2000) , Marzano, Waters & MacNulty (2005).The conclusion? Leaders do make a difference – for better or worse.

But language can be confusing. Generally writers distinguish between *"leadership"* and *"management"*. The former is often referred to as creating a vision, developing a strategy, keeping an organisation on track to realise its values. Bennis (1989) refers to it as *"doing the right thing"* underlining the importance of moral purpose and actually ensuring the activity is carried out. Management on the other hand is seen to be more to do with ensuring the operational systems work, putting into place day-to-day procedures that deliver the strategy. Bennis (1989) calls it *"doing things right"*. Others also refer to administration which is dealing with the detail of checking systems, what might be called *"checking things are done right"*. These are not three separate hands…clearly they are touching and ideally gripped together in order to ensure the strategic plan based on values happens and that it does so effectively and efficiently within the allocated resources.

If these are the inter related terms – leadership, management and administration – that can be identified and agreed upon, it is arguable that in many countries what is referred to as leadership in schools is in fact management. The values and vision for what happens inside schools is increasingly across the world set by policy-makers (usually politicians) frequently following a *Standards Agenda*. In broad terms this Standards Agenda involves mechanisms that feed off and into each other such as a prescribed national curriculum, standardised testing, publication of results to the world, parental "choice" over schools for their children, national inspection systems with grading of schools and publicly available reports, performance pay, the erosion of local authorities and establishment of the direct control of schools by central government. In such a situation all that is left for school "leaders" to do is in fact manage the school through the hoops that get increasingly smaller and over the bars that are raised higher and higher and set for them by the politicians. Sahlberg (2010) calls this the *Global Education Reform Movement (GERM)*.

It can be argued that *GERM* has had a number of consequences. First it has encouraged Governments to believe that if schools run like businesses then they will be better places of learning. In the world of economics, it is believed that competition leads to an improvement of service and product. Competition between businesses also drives prices down as businesses compete for a share of the market. So it is argued that the quality of education improves with competition and becomes more cost effective. Second, schools need more autonomy in order to compete. Co-operating schools cannot compete as easily as schools that behave like businesses, selling the same product to a finite number of consumers. The best school is the one that is performing better than its competitors. So the first symptoms of an educational world affected by *GERM* are isolation and competition. Third, in order that schools can be compared to see which are best, then ways of measuring and comparing have to be designed. These are often based on school inspections, standardised testing and evaluation of teaching effectiveness. These tests allow schools to be compared to each other, reduce the education of our children to a collection of attainment targets connected to literacy and numeracy. These are the easiest bits of education to compare schools within countries and between countries. The things that are easiest to measure and test have little to do with creativity and the human spirit. A consequence of this is that schools narrow their curricula in order to prioritise the subjects against which success is measured. For example the arts, creativity, sport, debate and languages will be lost in this race for success (Robinson 2009). Teaching may well move from an art of pedagogy to a mechanistic instruction designed to deliver outcomes. Fourth, *GERM* positions parents as consumers of a product and allows them to choose the schools that are best and so mirror market style forces. This increase in choice (which is in fact an illusion for many) leads to greater segregation of students. Fifth, as a consequence of competition, isolation, standardised testing, public access to test and inspection data and a belief in free choice of schools for parents, another sign of *GERM* is an increase in 'accountability'. If policy-makers apply pressure and make teachers fearful then results will improve although professionalism may decline. The Ofsted regime in England for example spawns a *"name, blame, shame and tame"* culture akin to that of football man-

agement. Sahlberg makes the point that the *GERM* is spreading like a virus across the world. It is seductive to politicians who may be obsessed with their position in international league tables such as *PISA* (Programme for International Student Assessment). After all they are elected and are responsible for the public purse. So why should politicians through their agencies not lead and indeed manage education? Has this not always been the case in education across the world? To some extent perhaps, depending on which country you are in and when? However in recent years a number of factors have exacerbated the spread of *GERM*. These include a global recognition that education is a keystone for economic and social development. If a country wishes to become wealthier and happier then education standards need to rise. This is a popular mantra for politicians seeking to be elected: for example in the UK Tony Blair fought a general election on the policy of *"Education, Education, Education"*. It touches and emotional as well as a rational nerve with parents/carers and all who have experienced or missed out on schooling. Greater and speedier sharing of information across the world about education standards partly due to technological developments have meant that politicians are made more aware of what is happening in other parts of the world. As a result of these reasons, in many countries educational leadership is seen to be far too important to be left to professional in schools.

So one might argue that leaders in schools in many countries that are affected by *GERM* do not in reality lead …they manage. Language has been corrupted. The externally set strategy and even modes of delivery combined with the high levels of public accountability enjoyed or endured by those in charge of schools means a particular approach to leadership is now dominant – that of transactional leadership. Headteachers merely decide how their schools should climb the ladder positioned against the wall by others. They no longer, if they ever did, decide where to locate the ladder and at what angle. The heads of Headteachers are on the block awaiting execution so they in turn need to control tightly. This transactional approach means that human interactions, whether they are adult to adult or adult to child, are founded on exchange with an emphasis on immediate cooperation through mutually agreed benefit. You scratch my back and I will scratch yours but if you do not scratch me then tough. So-called leaders tend to manage their schools through reward for hitting ever more challenging, externally prescribed targets or punish for failing to so do. Today this means not so much the stick or carrot, more the redundancy and career stiflement or performance payment and promotion. These head managers and those who work for them in management roles tend to be autocratic and can be bullies either benign or otherwise. Such an approach is based on a Tayloresque scientific view of organisations with "one best way" to do things so the headteachers job is just find it (unless they are told by those outside their school what this has to be) and make everyone do it like that. Bureaucracy is the handmaiden of this scientific mistress. This picture painted may be a caricature but the point is that the current dominance of a centrally controlled Standards Agenda in many countries that is spreading means that leadership within schools is being suffocated and management is being nurtured. *Do as you are told not what you think is right* is the drum beat to which those in charge of schools are now forced to march. If one falls out of step s/he is pushed in line, relegated or removed from the inexorable march towards the externally imposed targets.

2. Schizophrenic headteachers: to push the pillow away or give into slow suffocation?

School leaders and managers, like all human beings, may be motivated by a combination of many factors – power, status, a need to please people, money - but most school leaders chose to do the job because they want to make a positive difference in children's lives through the effective deployment of adults also in their charge. Most wish to run schools that are inclusive and are built of high quality, effective relationships. Thus, there is currently a deep schism and hence fundamental problem with the way many would like schools to be led and the top-down externally imposed performance culture which pushes leadership towards autocratic, transactional, often demeaning and immiserating approaches. This is tearing many leaders apart in countries such as England in a very real sense – morally, emotionally, psychologically and physically. A healthy work-

life balance is but a forgotten dream. They and those whom they lead are being damaged and often leave the profession (Farber 2010). This will continue to be so until the policy agenda understands the complex nature of schools and their leadership and changes to a more person-centred approach (Fielding 2004).

There are better ways to run schools than the transactional approach described. Shields (2003) describes two other approaches to leadership that nurture individuals and put relationships at the centre of the organisation. Transformational leadership is based on meeting the needs of complex and diverse systems. It sets direction and develops people with the leader developing common purpose. She sees this approach related to school effectiveness, reform and improvement and instructional leadership. Since the values and vision are set within the school community, albeit influenced by external factors, it involves leadership and not just management of someone else's agenda. She also argues strongly for a third way – that of transformative leadership and asserts that we *"live in a world in which the promise of schooling as an agent of change remains unrealised"* (p57). Hence Shields states a case for transformative leadership that is built on critique and promise, emphasising deep and equitable change in social conditions with the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge as an intrinsic process. It is related to leadership for social justice theories and critical theories (gender, ethnicity, class). Such leaders live with tension and challenge and require moral courage and activism for social justice. Education is seen by such leaders fundamentally as a social project not just limited to the building we call school. This third way is extremely challenging and potentially transformative for schools and their communities. It involves real leadership.

Unlike transactional leadership, which takes a more simplistic view of the human world, the last two approaches examined by Shields both require competencies to embrace complexity and diversity as well as operational knowledge and skills. Klemp (1980:21) defined competence as *"an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/ or superior performance on the job."* While a more detailed definition is *"a cluster or related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflects a major portion of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with*

performance on the job, that can be measured with well-accepted standards, and that can be improved with training and development" (Parry, 1996 p50)." It is about what you do rather than what you think or say and for leaders to possess the elixir of leadership that is integrity, all three need to be aligned. Leaders who talk the talk and do not walk the walk lose trust. Thinking the talk you walk is also vital for leaders who wish to lead their schools with integrity.

In summary, in terms of relationships transactional leadership that characterises many schools pursuing the Standards Agenda tends to use (and some would say abuse) people. Transformational leadership respects, engages and works with people within a school. Transformative leadership does so with the whole community both inside and outside the school.

3. It's not as simple as they think: the necessity for leaders to understand complexity

"Life is what happens to you when you are making other plans". [John Lennon]

There is more recognition and better understanding of the complexity of the world of schools (Day 2001). On one level public services and particularly schools can be viewed as predictable being governed by regular routines – schools have terms, semesters, plans, schedules and timetables. The prevailing culture in many countries (Bottery 2004) with a language of performance, targets, attainment, inspection, inputs, and outcomes rests on a belief that the variables in relation to school improvement are known, understood and can be controlled by leaders and managers. As the words of John Lennon remind us, reality tells us this is not true. Collins (2001) has pointed out the "Doom Loop" associated with such cultures of reactive, quick-fixes to problems. Solutions cannot be downloaded. We all know from our own experiences that organisations, like human beings and their lives are complex, unpredictable and on occasions messy. Moreover, schools are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of function and membership. Leadership that fails to recognise this complexity and diversity and, more especially, is uncomfortable with this reality is destined to frustration and tears.

What does the term *"complexity"* mean? When

living beings come together and act in a group as in schools, they do so in complicated and unpredictable ways: societies often behave very differently from the individuals within them.

Complexity was a phenomenon little understood a generation ago, but research into complex systems now has important applications in many different fields, from biology to political science. In the late 1940s Ilya Prigogine in Brussels researched chemical reactions and won the Nobel 1977 prize *„for his contributions to non-equilibrium thermodynamics, particularly the theory of dissipative structures"*. He later went on to write (1997) about traffic management and how complex reactions can be predicted. We can create order from disorder. His ideas are now increasingly being used to explain how large groups of individuals behave collectively. Today complexity theory is being used for example to try to explain how birds flock, how a large crowd moves through a building, movements on the London Stock Exchange, the spread of diseases, the impact of the internet and to better understand how organisations such as schools function. With increased globalisation it has become more popular since phenomena move around the world speedily today e.g. the SARS epidemic moved from Hong Kong to Toronto due to air travel and, indeed, the spread of *GERM* across the world (Sahlberg 2010). Some important aspects of complex development are:
• Uncertainty
• Unpredictability
• Evolution

Complexity theory is both a mathematical technique and a point of view. It is critical in terms of managing and leading complex organisations. Leaders need to understand complexity theory and adopt attitudes and styles that embrace this point of view.

4. Complexity theory's relationship with complicatedness

"Complicated" entails three elements working together: design, prediction and control. A leader who takes this view of the organisation for which they are responsible recognises that like a machine e.g. jet engine, it may be difficult to understand but ultimately it is understandable and thus, through intelligent design, predict and control. You just need to be clear enough

to take it apart and put it back together again better.

This does not apply to complexity. Unlike complicated systems complex ones can create new order. When there is a significant change a complex system is pushed away from equilibrium and cannot carry on operating under the old regime. It needs to explore new ways of being and adapt. If it does not, it will die. It cannot be predicted or controlled or designed. It may be understandable but only in hindsight. Cities are good example of complexity theory at work. They evolve in both planned and unexpected ways through the ages. Schools are also in reality complex organisations. They may be seen like Russian dolls with social, cultural, economic, technical, and physical as well as community forms and also nesting in whole-school, department, year group and so on incarnations. Complex systems are often multi-dimensional and nested. The components of a complex system may themselves be complex systems. For example, an economy is made up of organizations, which are made up of people, which are made up of cells - all of which are complex systems. The same is true of schools.

Does this mean that leadership and its handmaidens of management and administration go out the window? No. We handle complexity all the time. It is a way of thinking and of understanding the reality of our world and leads to an attitude and different leadership styles and competencies. It is also a young area of research and we have much to learn.

5. Complexity in the school context.

Increasingly, as we have seen, it makes more sense to see schools as complex rather than simple or even simply complicated and this has resultant implications for their effective leadership. Radford (2008) has questioned the dominant discourse of prediction and control in education. *"This discourse assumes that education, though complicated, nevertheless takes place within a bounded system of relatively stable, linear and balanced causal interaction"* (p1). He argues that a more realistic approach is one based on the *"complexity"* paradigm (requiring transformational and transformative rather than transactional leadership). Under this paradigm schools are seen as *"open systems, subject to non-linear and dynamic interactions among the multiple*

factors of which they are constituted, and often unpredictable." He argues that this paradigm is subversive of our ambitions of predication and control.

Scharmer (2007) drawing on the work of Kahane (2004) defines three types of complexity:
• Dynamic – where the cause and effect are far apart. This is certainly true of schools where there are very few quick fixes.
• Emergent– in which the future is unfamiliar and unpredictable. Again, schools find themselves increasingly in this world of rapid change including that of government policy
• Social – here are many different perspectives. Schools are made up of many individuals some passing through the trauma of adolescence. There are myriad interactions happening at any one moment. These may be seen in relationship as below (**Figure 1**)

Schools themselves have always been complex organisations but they are becoming more complex as the twenty first century speeds towards us. This is despite the political paradigm of complicatedness or even simplicity in relation to schools. There are a number of reasons for this. First, within many countries of Europe, free movement of peoples, particularly for employment, has led to increasingly diverse communities. Linguistic, religious, economic, cultural and ethnic differences may be viewed as opportunities or threats. As a school's community, mainly in urban areas, becomes more heterogeneous, then complexity grows and the demands on leadership change. Second, education leaders work not only with increasingly diverse student, school staff and parent/carer populations but they also may lead other professionals from diverse backgrounds in relation to multi-agency working. 2008). Third, in many countries, there are rapidly changing and varied arrangements for the provision of education. For example, in England marketisation has led to an increasing number of federations with executive leaders (sometimes called executive head teachers) leading more than one school which may all cater for one age range (phase) or be cross-phase. Recent legislation (2010) encourages popular schools to become larger and for "successful" schools to become Academies and take on responsibility for "failing" schools. Interest groups such as parents are encouraged by the government to set up "free schools". The research into systems leadership (Hopkins & Higham 2007), Hargreaves and Shirley (2009)) reflects this growing diversity and complexity in leadership. The rapid and recent change in the role of many leading in schools puts these people in a context beyond the traditional school. Leaders need to be more culturally aware and proactive in leading values of respect and social justice in action. The articulation, modelling and monitoring of such values become very important in order to facilitate relationships that are positive and productive. If / when other countries catch the GERM from England then such complexity may well grow for them also.

This world then (including schools) is becoming more complex but this is often not recognised in education policy nor leadership.

Figure 1. Complexity
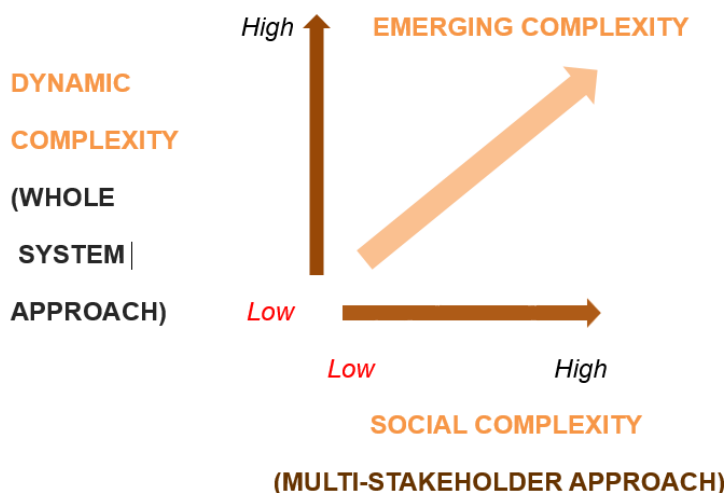
Source: own elaboration

6. The Implications of this for school leadership

We handle complexity all the time in intuitive ways and often fall foul to its consequences. For leaders including those working in highly complex systems such as schools much is not unknowable. But we can be smarter. To be so, leaders (and managers) need to try to recognise and respond appropriately these essential elements of complexity theory. This is a way of thinking and understanding the reality of our world. It is an attitude. We need to change the way we lead schools and the way we prepare leaders. Leaders need to be freed and trained to deal with real life and all its rich complexity. Leaders, Scharmer (2007) maintains, need to be able to understand and work in situations of emerging complexity where:
• The solution to the problem may well be unknown
• The problem itself is frequently still unfolding and
• The key stakeholders are often not clear
What are the leadership qualities needed to be a successful leader in this real complex world? They are many and varied but a few stand out:

Leaders with thought-through values that enable them keep the organisation on course with a sharp focus. Most important in such complex situations is that the leader has a sharp focus on the school's core purpose and in particular student learning. This may well be infused with other fundamental values such as liberation, democracy, equity and justice depending on context (Shields 2010). Biesta (2013) helpfully distinguishes between the current responsive management and the need for responsible in a global networked society. Responsive approach is where education adapts to the demands of a global networked society. A responsible approach demands a more critical position *"vis-a-vis the different manifestations and demands of such a society"* (p733). He argues for the latter from school leaders on the grounds that education should always be understood as more than just a function of existing social and societal orders because it comes with a duty to resist. This is inherently both educational and democratic.

Leaders who are hard headed with a focus on making a positive difference. Shields (2010) expresses this as school leaders needing to effect deep and equitable changes. Karsath (2004) uses the term "Robust" in that they can tackle challenges in a climate of uncertainty and a spirit of critique. This is different from the hard hitting term *"impact"* which suggests immediate, imposed, easily discernible often destructive relationship between an aggressor and a victim…a word found in much of the Standards Agenda literature. Making a positive difference is pre-occupied with the care of other human beings, longer term transformational change and a co-operation and emulation.

Leaders following at least a transformational and ideally a transformative approach. Leaders who recognise complexity build trust, openness. Karseth (2004) calls this propensity to be open and inclusive "Raus". Such a leader values diversity, practical approaches and new ways of thinking. There work is characterised by generosity rather than greed (Gronn, 2003). They make room for experimentation and taking risks. *"The paradoxical conditions necessary for educational transformation are individual freedom of choice and collective responsibility for the whole - and individual and group autonomy and interconnections."* Marshall (1966). Leaders celebrate this and closely matched the conditions for transformational and transformative ways of working outlined in section 2.

Leaders consciously develop trust in their schools. Trust is an essential key component to transformational leadership (Covey (2006), Bottery (2004), Precey (2013;2012) and this needs to be consciously developed by leaders.

Leaders with integrity – this means that leaders do what they say and say what they think. Shields (2010) makes the point that leaders have to demonstrate moral courage and activism. A Norwegian writer Karsath (2004) calls this *Redelig* where ethical and democratic rules are followed. People are treated with respect. This can enhance learning: *"Instead of presenting content/information/knowledge in a linear sequential manner, learners can be provided with a rich array of tools and information sources to use in creating their own learning pathways. The teacher or institution can still ensure that their critical learning needs are achieved, by focusing instead on the creation of the knowledge ecology. The links and connections are formed by the learners themselves".* Mc William (2008)

Reflective Leaders – Scharmer (2007) suggests that leaders of organisations need to provide space for

and facilitate a shared seeing and sense-making of the newly emerging patterns. He calls this *"co-sensing"*. This requires leaders at all levels to establish places of deep reflection (*"co-presencing"*). In the busy life of school leaders this is difficult but, he would maintain, essential. He also suggests that we need places and infrastructures for hands-on prototyping of new forms of operating in order to explore the future by *"co-creating"*. In an increasingly complex world leaders need to create opportunities for shared observation and reflection. Without this, Scharmer argues, we will continue to have schools that prevent our children from unfolding their capacity for deeper learning as we will be relying on past experiences to solve new, previously inexperienced problems. Shields (2010) agrees arguing that leaders need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that generate inequity. Such leaders are more likely to spot black swans (Taleb, 2012) and avoid being a turkey.

Leaders who are critical and cultivate a culture of healthy scepticism –Such leaders who can work with complexity do not unquestioningly accept the status quo but are ever watchful. Wheatley (2007) explains that such watchfulness is accomplished by developing a set of questions that leaders throughout the school ask regularly and with discipline. Quantz, Rogers and Dantley (1991) argue that transformative leadership "*requires a language of critique and possibility"* (p105) and "a transformative leader must introduce the mechanisms necessary for various groups to begin conversations around issues of emancipation and domination" p112). In the same vein, Shields (2010 p58) maintains that transformative leaders, "in addition to the more traditional aspects of their work (creating budgets, overseeing instruction, achieving accountability etc.) need to balance both critique and promise and challenge inappropriate uses of power and privilege. Karsath (2004) calls this *Reflekterende:* Such leaders encourage critique and scepticism. They create collective spaces for knowledge building through professional discussions where all parties participate. But these leaders are open to change. They do not look at the world around them purely to prop up their beliefs but their views may change when they have learnt what is really going on.

Leaders who are flexible, adaptable, entrepreneurial and maverick. Smart leadership that thrive

in increasing complexity are clever. Such people have their fingers all over the political, economic, social and psychological pulses. They scan the horizon looking for the elements of complexity – points of bifurcation, connectivity, feedback, evidence for self-organisation and emergence, attractors and recursive symmetries, lock-in, feedback and post-event rationalisation. They exploit their benefits and try to reduce their dangers.

Leaders who are comfortable with ambiguity. So much of the predict and control managerial culture is based on the false notion of certainty in education. This lulls leaders into a false sense of security and means they and others are surmised or resigned when events do not follow a script. Much is in realty unknowable. Leaders who are effective in the real world of complexity are comfortable with the not knowing. They have to learn this and this is often by trial and error and reflection and analysis. It may well also involve *"failure"* in managerial terms.

Leaders who learn quickly from mistakes and encourage that learning in others. They do not resolutely punish failure. At present, in GERM infected countries, this is counter-cultural and here a football manager culture has developed where results matter and failure means swift removal of managers and coaches from high profile jobs. In the Championship football league in England for example as of May 2014 only 3 out of 18 managers have held onto their jobs for 3 seasons. The name, blame, shame, tame of culture has been a consequence of Ofsted and the Standards agenda in education as perceived mistakes within this tight agenda are not tolerated. Yet this approach is unintelligent and wasteful. All leaders make mistakes at some point and it is these that provide the most valuable learning experiences. In their book *"Wounded Leaders"* Ackermann and Ostrowski (2002) explore what happens to leaders who are disoriented (Mezirow 1978) by events and the ones that get stronger as leaders and people do not ignore them or let them overwhelm their professional and personal sense of self but rather use the events with support to grow as better leaders. Joseph Campbell (2008) describes in "Hero's Journey" describes how a hero "*ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with*

the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (p2). In laying out his monomyth, Campbell describes a number of stages or steps along this journey which we can use to try to understand the realities of leadership in schools today. The hero (headteacher) starts in the ordinary world , and receives a call to enter an unusual world of strange powers and events - *a call to adventure* (to become a school leader). If the hero accepts the call to enter this strange world (of school leadership), the hero must face tasks and trials (*a road of trials*), and may have to face these trials alone, or may have assistance. At its most intense, the hero must survive a severe challenge (school accountability systems), often with help earned along the journey. If the hero survives, the hero may achieve a great gift (the goal or „*boon*"), which often results in the discovery of important self-knowledge. The hero must then decide whether to return with this boon (*the return to the ordinary world*), often facing challenges on the return journey. If the hero is successful in returning, the boon or gift may be used to improve the world (*the application of the boon*). Along the way the hero learns from their mistakes but importantly with support from mentors usually those who have been on the journey themselves before. Sadly in high accountability school systems, too many ledvers find themselves removed from the journey or decide that the pressure is such that they want to leave the journey themselves. If they survive, their skills and knowledge are not always appreciated or disseminated. Mistakes maketh man and woman. It is wise to acknowledge how the fallen are often mighty.

Leaders who develop resilience and an inner strength. Resilience is increasingly seen as a key part of an effective leaders make-up in the twenty first century. Resilience is strength of character, adaptability, buoyancy, flexibility and the ability to bounce back. This crucial aspect of leadership is very much linked with the former point about learning quickly from poor decisions. Through the trials and tribulations of leadership resilience can be developed (Ackermann al 2002). The journey can make one a better leader (Campbell 2008). In his important work *"Reservoirs of Hope"* (2003) Flintham tells us of the importance of hope in school leadership. *"The successful headteacher, through acting as the wellspring of values and vision for the school thus acts as the external*

'reservoir of hope' for the institution. In the face of burgeoning demands for change, colleagues look to the headteacher for spiritual and moral leadership, to provide the necessary coherence and unity of vision and to maintain its underpinning integrity of values".(p3). This reservoir has a spiritual and moral basis and may come from a combination of background and upbringing (generational imperative), religious beliefs (religious imperative), egalitarian imperative and a belief that everyone should have the chance to benefit from education, a vocational imperative and desire to do the job to the best of their abilities, and a transference imperative (*"Would I be happy if this were happening to my own children?"*). The reservoir of hope needs to be constantly refilled as leaders are giving hope to others all the time especially in a world of complexity. The reservoir can be topped up by self-belief, faith, feedback, support networks (family, friends, colleagues and sometimes external sources. *"This study worked to the principle that school leaders develop best when given the opportunity to reflect on their existing practice, to analyse in detail critical incidents within their on-going leadership story with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses, to examine alternative models of good practice and to identify developmental ways forward appropriate to their existing contextual situation......Successful engagement with this principle enables development of leadership qualities not by directive input but by reflective awareness and consensual agreement, leading to ownership of action and a thirst for further engagement"* (Flintham p26). Linked to point 9 that successful leaders in complexity are learning leaders as well as leaders of learning, they grow in self-confidence, self-awareness, capacity to take risks and in *"being"* rather than simply *"doing"*. Critical incidents are particularly important in powerful learning.

Resilient leaders have realistic goals in their lives. They are thoughtful rather than impulsive and they are good communicators. They feel positive about themselves and others for whom they care. They are energetic optimists. They take control of their own minds and lives. They develop effective support networks which they use and contribute to. They have a sense of humour. In a follow-up piece of research "*When Reservoirs Run Dry*" (2003) Flintham looks at the human and

professional costs when these support networks are inadequate or even non-existent and leaders leave their jobs early. *'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?'* - who cares for the carers? is a very important question in the real world of schools today.

Leaders who keep themselves fit for purpose. The prevailing Standards Culture in many countries has produced a self-sacrificial leadership culture. Leaders are worked relentlessly by the system and its manipulators and are often physically, emotionally and intellectually exhausted as a result. To be effective in the real world of school complexity requires leaders to place the oxygen mask over their own faces before applying them to others on the education flight. This is a tough mind-set change for leaders and even if minds change then action often does not follow. But unless leaders ensure they are fit for purpose and ready for action then they are doomed to disappointment and disaster. Senge (2004) argues that *"... if you want to be a leader, you have to be a real human being. You must recognize the true meaning of life before you can become a great leader. You must understand yourself first. "* (p186) *"...In this sense, the cultivated self is a leader's greatest tool...It's the journey of a lifetime."* (p186). Effective leaders are effective people and as Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) express it: *"...the process of becoming a leader is much the same as the process of becoming an integrated human being...leadership is a metaphor for centeredness, congruity and balance in one's life".* (p8). So leadership development is a process of 'Self-Invention' (Bennis 1989, p50) that is directly linked to the creation of personal authenticity. Guignon (2004) describes this as: *"...centering in on your own inner self, getting in touch with your feelings, desires and beliefs, and expressing those feelings, desires and beliefs in all you do...defining and realizing your own identity as a person".* (p162)

In other words, it is important that leaders 'get a life" and balance personal development and happiness with professional growth and enjoyment. An important aspect of this is intrapersonal intelligence or 'meta-learning' – the ability to become profoundly reflective and change and grow as a result of that reflection.

Well-being and achieving a balance between the professional and personal entail a deliberate personal strategy to ensure that all aspects of a fulfilling life are met. School leadership is socially, emotionally and physically demanding work so it is essential that leaders invest time in their own personal development and growth.

". . . high levels of wellbeing mean that we are more able to respond to difficult circumstances, to innovate and constructively engage with other people and the world around us. As well as representing a highly effective way of bringing about good outcomes in many different areas of our lives, there is also a strong case for regarding wellbeing as an ultimate goal of human endeavour." (www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org p1). Wellbeing is not just about the leader. It is important that the leaders with integrity model appropriate strategies, for example *"Do as I do"* rather than *"Do as I say".* This may require major life style changes from existing leaders.

7. Conclusion

It has been argued that the current approach to education that is spreading across the world is managerial in its approach and leadership within schools is being stifled. Those in charge of schools often feel suffocated and unsure about whether to just do as they are told or to display real leadership and do what they feel is morally right. The Standards Agenda is based on a simplistic notion of organisations and the real world is much more about complexity. Effective leaders in an increasingly complex world need to understand the principles that we know about complexity. It is a way of thinking and of understanding the reality of our world and if school leaders take this on board then they will change the way they lead their schools. This is tough as often those in charge of schools today have been trained and told to work in a managerial manner.

There are some important qualities that school leaders in the rest of the twentieth century require. These can be learnt and so there are many implications for leadership development. It is time to stem the GERM and this requires smart, skilful leaders across the world to work on all levels and most particularly the political ones to create schools that are person-centred and promote human happiness and fulfilment for all involved in the education process. Without this our children and teachers face a future that is educationally impoverished and bleak.

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