School Revitalisation
The IDEAS Way

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Preface

Australian schools – world-class and getting better

Professor Frank Crowther,
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Most readers will be very much aware of the frequent assaults that take place on our schools through the media. Public education, in particular, has been subjected to a barrage of criticism for most of the past thirty years. It is little wonder that studies of teacher morale and image across this period of time have shown a constant downward trend and that interest in teaching as a career dropped off seriously during the period of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

But that is history. We now know that our Australian education system is in fact world-class. And we can be quietly confident that the professional capabilities that will be needed to ensure success in the new, knowledge-based world of the 21st century are a definite feature of our Australian teaching profession.

In this monograph my colleagues in the Leadership Research Institute of the University of Southern Queensland provide evidence in support of these provocative assertions. They describe an educational initiative, the IDEAS Project, that schools across the country are using to enhance their achievements, to enrich their identity and to reinforce the image of teaching as a leading profession of the twenty-first century.

IDEAS is fundamentally different from conventional school improvement processes on a number of counts. These differences are documented in detail in the pages of this monograph. But before you proceed to explore them, and consider how you might perhaps integrate them into your own professional endeavours, let me offer a few additional preliminary thoughts.

As I write this Preface, I am also corresponding with school-based educators from across Australia and from several overseas countries who are interested in coming to the University of Southern Queensland to visit IDEAS Project schools and to dialogue with our staff. They are coming here because they are searching for ways to revitalise their own educational institutions and believe that the evidence that is emerging from the IDEAS Project indicates that we have found ways to do just that.

What these inquirers are seeking is a process that will enable their schools to become ‘world-class’. By this, I believe that they mean three considerations:

1. schools where students’ achievements are significantly above the norm for schools in similar socio-economic-cultural contexts;
2. schools where there exist very high levels of student, teacher and community support;
3. schools that have in place a professional learning and development process that will contribute to the sustainability of the successes that have already been achieved.

Each of these considerations is of course very complex. Until recently, we have not been able to clearly define the meaning of any one of them. But our research into highly successful IDEAS Project schools, undertaken under the auspices of the Australian Research Council, has given us insights that enable us to claim, with confidence, that we now know not only what each consideration means but also how to achieve it. We can now say with a degree of certainty that the results of OECD international testing programs that have established that Australian 15-year-olds achieve at internationally competitive levels of reading, numerical and science literacy should be sustainable, even improvable, in both the short and long term.

But our studies of highly successful IDEAS Project schools have established more than that. They have also shown that our schools have the potential to reshape their communities and in so doing demonstrate to their communities how ‘new knowledge’ is created. Based on our studies we have in fact been able to offer a definition of that very elusive concept, ‘knowledge society’:

communities of people working together so that their collective intelligence results in creation of new knowledge that enhances their personal efficacy and their quality of life and enables them to contribute to a more sustainable and better world for others.

It follows from this assertion that the IDEAS Project emphasises the creation of new knowledge and that this ACEL monograph will introduce concepts that are new to many readers – organisational alignment, parallel leadership and three-dimensional pedagogy, in particular. But each of these concepts can be quite easily explained and understood.

The reason lies in the IDEAS Project adage that our Australian language represents a very versatile and expressive medium for communication and generation of new knowledge. We do not need jargon or the language of bureaucracy when we have Australian English at our fingertips. Thus, in the IDEAS Project we do not rely on jargon to describe new concepts. Rather, we use ordinary English as well as metaphor, imagery and symbolism whenever possible. The net effect is an educational world that is colourful, creative and accessible to all.

In this year, 2004, there is cause for immense optimism regarding our Australian schools and our Australian teaching profession. This sense of optimism pervades the pages that follow. I am sure that you will find them inspiring.

Frank Crowther
May 17, 2004
What is IDEAS? Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) is a comprehensive approach to school revitalisation that values, above all else, the work and professionalism of the teachers in our schools and other educational institutions. In so doing it recognises the extraordinary complexity and subtlety of pedagogy and the capacity of the teaching profession to exercise forms of leadership that have historically been obscured.

IDEAS is distinguished by the use of four interdependent constructs, namely:

- the concept of organisational alignment (The IDEAS Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes)
- the ideas process of professional inquiry
- three-dimensional pedagogy
- parallel leadership

In this monograph we describe these four distinctive educational constructs to explain how the IDEAS Project works. In interpreting them, and in formulating your own interpretations of the relationships between them, it is important to note that our research indicates that school outcomes are enhanced when all four constructs are developed and implemented simultaneously in an educational setting. Enhanced outcomes recorded in IDEAS schools as part of our research under the auspices of the Australian Research Council include:

1. Student outcomes – significant improvements have been recorded in key learning areas and also in self-efficacy; engagement and motivation;
2. Professional outcomes – teacher morale and professional status, as well as processes of collaborative learning, have been shown to improve very substantially in conjunction with schools’ engagement in the IDEAS Project;
3. Community outcomes – public perceptions of schools and the teaching profession have recorded definitive improvements in the vast majority of IDEAS schools.

Additionally, IDEAS schools are enabled to create ‘new knowledge’ in the form of explicit processes of community enhancement and enriched community identities. In so doing, they model for their communities how knowledge building can occur. They become, in essence, what global change guru Peter Drucker predicted they would become – the key institution in the postindustrial world. And teaching becomes a leading profession.

IDEAS - A homegrown innovation

IDEAS began in early 1997 as a result of dialogue between senior staff in Education Queensland’s School-based Management Unit and their counterparts in the University of Southern Queensland’s Leadership Research Institute (USQ/LRI). The essential question that guided these discussions was deceptively simple: Can it be ensured that school-based management is implemented so that it has positive effects in classrooms? If so, how?

In its present form, IDEAS represents the product of more than six years of thinking, dialoguing and critiquing of this perplexing question by educators from a wide range of Australian schools, systems and universities. Of fundamental importance in guiding the developments that have occurred has been the compelling research evidence from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) that when teachers engage
as a professional community to shape their school’s philosophy, and when they then proceed to develop shared pedagogical principles and strategies that complements their school’s philosophy, the effects on student achievement, particularly for disadvantaged students, can be quite remarkable. This insight – that the professional community of the school must be accorded key responsibility for school revitalisation and reform – remains fundamental to IDEAS today.

In late 1997 the original USQ IDEAS team established a working relationship with Professor Fred Newmann and Dr Bruce King, the principal Wisconsin researchers. As further findings from the University of Wisconsin research projects and other American research initiatives (Stringfield & Herman, 1996) and Australian projects (Crowther, Hann & McMaster, 2000; Cuttance, 1998; Hill & Crevola, 1999) became available, they were explored in the context of the IDEAS trials with Queensland State schools. Additionally, the Australian Research Council, in conjunction with Education Queensland, supported the USQ research through two substantial research grants (1997-1999, 2000-2003). These grants engaged the services of a number of doctoral students as well as Professor Steve Kaagan of Michigan State University as an international research partner. Most recently, the Australian Government has lent further support to the research dimension of the IDEAS Project through a comprehensive trial involving 12 schools in three Australian school jurisdictions. The outcomes of the trial have served to confirm the transferability of IDEAS concepts and processes to a wide range of educational contexts.

Finally, the IDEAS Project in practice represents a unique, mutualistically beneficial relationship between those educators who work in schools and those who work in Faculties of Education.

IDEAS asks of teachers and school administrators that they collaborate with their University colleagues to interrogate and illuminate the values and practices of their schools as workplaces. IDEAS asks of university educators that they engage with teachers and school administrators on their (school) terms in their (school) workplaces. Whatever convictions or views of the world may guide university educators, those views are secondary in IDEAS to illuminating the work of schools and assisting teachers and school administrators to achieve clarified direction, shared pedagogy and aligned infrastructures. This unique professional partnership is captured in the vision, namely:

\[\text{to inspire IDEAS schools to engage in journeys of self-discovery which will ensure they achieve sustainable excellence in teaching and learning.}\]

**Exploration of the IDEAS concepts**

IDEAS has evolved through a series of conceptual stages and, in its current form, is underpinned by four essential components, all of which represent major extensions of mainstream educational reform literature of the past decade or more. These components are as follows:

**Concept One:**

**Organisational Alignment**

In 1946 Peter Drucker introduced the concept of ‘harmony’ to describe an effective
organisation. Such an organisation, he reflected, is like a tune: *it is not constituted by individual sounds but by the relations between them* (p.26). It was this same phenomenon that, almost fifty years later, Murphy (1992) asserted to be one of the sustaining legacies of school improvement – attention to consistency and strong structural, symbolic and cultural linkages. Crowther, Andrews, Dawson & Lewis (2001a) have more recently expanded on this concept, labeling it ‘alignment’ and noting its special importance in state schools:

Historically, public education has been synonymous with mass education. It has, for the most part, been extraordinarily difficult in individual state schools to create a meaningful alignment between school vision, community input, physical infrastructure, classroom practices and professional development, and in so doing, pursue a distinctive identity (Introduction, p. 4).

**An image of an aligned organisation**

The *Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes* (RBF) that is depicted in Figure 1 provides teachers and administrators with a way of thinking about their school as an organisation, of creating an image of what they want their school to become and of working collectively to build an envisioned future.

As a conceptual model for organisational cohesion, synchronisation and alignment, the RBF has been developed in full cognisance of significant global research findings about successful organisational reform (Crevola & Hill, 1998; Cuttance, 2000, 2001; Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). The RBF is constituted of five contributory elements that have consistently been shown to contribute to school success. These are: Strategic Foundations, Cohesive Community, Infrastructural Design, Three-Dimensional Pedagogy (3D.P) and Professional Supports.

Enhanced school outcomes in the form of student achievement, professional well-being and school/community relationships are postulated in the Framework to result from improved alignment between these contributory elements. Our research supports this claim, namely that as one element is examined in depth by the professional community, meaning is generated around each of the other elements. The net effect is described by Crowther (2002) as follows:

…schools that have generated both depth and integration across the elements of the organisation have been found to produce enhanced sense of identity and greater capacity to pursue high expectations for student achievement (slide 16).

**Using data to explore the degree of alignment in a school’s operations**

A 70-item survey (the IDEAS Diagnostic Inventory) is used at the commencement of a school’s engagement in the IDEAS Project to collect perceptual data from staff, students and parents regarding the nature of school outcomes at that point in time, and to gauge the effectiveness of each of the five RBF contributory elements. Exploration of the data through schoolwide professional conversations (Isaacs, 1999; Senge, 1994) provides a platform for the development of a collective responsibility for the welfare of the school, and generates for school community members a clear conceptual connection between pedagogical practices and the other four conceptual elements of the RBF.
Figure 1: The Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes
(LRI IDEAS Team, April 2002)

This framework has been developed through a five-year strategic alliance between the University of Southern Queensland’s Leadership Research Institute and Education Queensland. The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s longitudinal studies of successful restructuring in American schools (e.g. Newmann and Wehlage, 1995; King and Newmann, 2000) have been particularly helpful.
In this way, a school is able to establish its own benchmarks for the RBF elements and future outcomes. Through a re-application of the Diagnostic Inventory at a later date (we usually suggest a two year interval between administrations of the Diagnostic Inventory), an opportunity is provided to measure progress in terms of growth in the contributory elements and alignment between them. Schools are thus enabled to take control of their own destiny in ways that have historically been denied them.

Alignment through professional learning

IDEAS is grounded in the premise that teachers’ professional learning is a fundamental prerequisite of school revitalisation (Geijsel, Sleegers, Van Den Berg & Kelchtermans 2001; Newman, King & Youngs 2000). Basic to this thinking is that, in order to elevate the effectiveness of their work, teachers must operate as a professional learning community (Louis & Marks, 1998) – becoming actively involved in studying professional problems, making decisions as to what to do about them, and being committed to implementing those decisions (Owens 1998). The use of statistical evidence, as described above, is but one means to that end in the IDEAS Project.

The following illustrations demonstrate how one IDEAS Project school, Clearview College, built enhanced alignment through ongoing professional learning and action.

Clearview College is a large suburban secondary school located on the outer fringe of a large metropolitan area in Queensland. The school had undergone rapid growth emerging from a semi-rural focus to an area of low cost housing and students with challenging behaviours. When the IDEAS Project commenced at Clearview College, the Diagnostic Inventory outcomes were very disappointing to the principal and most staff. Staff saw themselves as providing a caring environment for the students and high quality educational experiences in a challenging and poorly resourced environment. Staff morale was low and an environment of blame was prevalent. The student body made it clear that they simply did not share the enthusiasm for the school that parents and some of the teachers did. They were not only alienated, but also hostile about what they regarded as exclusion from the school’s purposes and processes. Students demonstrated little pride in the school and they believed the school had a poor image in the wider community.

A comprehensive process of soul-searching followed, culminating in a new vision of Informed citizens building harmonious communities (Figure 2).

But how might such a vision transpose into classroom practices? How might students engage meaningfully with it? What professional support structures should be established to create and sustain alignment of the vision to pedagogical processes, curriculum developments and changing community aspirations? How might the vision of the school be used to build positive relationships across the school and the broader community? These questions consumed the time and thoughts of the Clearview staff for several months. Eventually, the Clearview College IDEAS Project management team, with significant student membership, developed a pedagogical response in the form of By different ways to excellence

to illustrate how teachers and students should proceed to nurture a way of working that reflected the new vision. The pedagogical response, in turn, was teased out into six
The ‘cog’ that features in Figure 2 represents Clearview College students’ interpretation of how these principles fit together for them.

Each teacher at Clearview now works across three pedagogical dimensions in their individual disciplines – their personal pedagogical talent; the Clearview schoolwide pedagogy (SWP); and, one or more authoritative pedagogies (AP). Professional learning activities also span these three dimensions, providing an ongoing focus on teachers’ work as the core function of the school. Students are actively engaged in an exploration of the SWP in their learning environments. These often extend beyond the school into real life learning within the broader community. And school decision making processes have been modified to ensure that they reflect the intents of the school’s vision and pedagogy and actively engage leadership roles across the teacher, student and parent bodies.

In essence, ‘By different ways to excellence’, provides a common language and a consistent value system for Clearview College that has enabled purposeful links across the school community. The re-administered Diagnostic Inventory (completed in late 2003) revealed significantly enhanced levels of organisational alignment. The net outcome has been a remarkable change in the school’s outcomes, particularly in relation to students’ sense of efficacy, teacher professionalism, and the image of the school in the broader community.

**Concept Two:**

The *ideas* Process

The *ideas* process is an organisational learning process that is constituted of five distinct
The five phases of the ideas process

**Initiating**
- How will we manage the process?
- Who will facilitate the process?
- Who will record our history of the journey?

**Discovering**
- What are we doing that is most successful?
- What is not working as well as we would like it to do?

**Envisioning**
- What do we hope our school will look like in the future?
- What is our conceptualisation of schoolwide pedagogy?

**Actioning**
- How will we create a tripartite action plan?
- How will we work towards the alignment of key school elements and processes?

**Sustaining**
- What progress have we made towards schoolwide pedagogy?
- What school practices are succeeding and how can we expand them?

Figure 3: The ideas Process

The five phases are linked in a conceptual sequence, as illustrated in Figure 3. The ideas process engages the school’s professional community in ‘collaborative learning in order to enhance the school’s approach to teaching and learning and to heighten the integration of teaching and learning with the school’s vision, values and infrastructures’ (Crowther et al., 2001a, Section B, p.37). In conceptualising ideas four main sources have been used:

- **metastrategy** (Limerick, Cunnington & Crowther, 1998)
- **appreciative inquiry** (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1996)
- **action learning** (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Kolb 1984; Zuber-Skeritt 1990)
- **organisational capacity building** (Newmann et al., 2000; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell & Valentine, 1999)

In the first phase of the ideas process (Initiating), the centrality of teachers to processes of successful school reform is asserted. That is, the school staff are asked to reflect on the potential value of the IDEAS Project to their aspirations for their school. They are reminded of the IDEAS principles of practice and are asked to commit to those principles if they are to proceed further. These principles are:

1. **Teacher leadership** in its various forms constitutes the foundation for successful school revitalisation;
2. **Collaborative learning**, through professional sharing and conversation, is basic to the pedagogical enhancement of individual professionals;
3. An attitude of **No blame** guides dialogue and decision-making in all IDEAS initiatives;
4. **Success breeds success** represents the psychological justification for the commitment and effort of school communities involved in the IDEAS Project;
5. Alignment of school processes and elements is a collective school responsibility, but is led by principals.

The Initiating phase of the ideas process usually requires the identification of one or more school-based facilitators and the establishment of an IDEAS school management team (ISMT) to manage the process with the assistance of the external (university) support team.

**Exhibit 1: IDEAS Vision Criteria and Sample Vision Statements**

- Performers for every stage, expressing talents in every field
- IDEAS criteria for a good vision statement:
  - Inspirational
  - Educational
  - Future oriented
  - Memorable
  - Vivid
  - Ethical
  - Achievable
  - Based on shared values and beliefs
  - Derived in the school community
- A community of forward thinkers
- Courage to dream... Opportunity to succeed
Exhibit 2: An Example of an IDEAS School Vision and linking Schoolwide Pedagogy

Discovery, the second of the five ideas phases, involves collecting information from teachers, students and parents about the current level of organisational alignment of the school in an attempt to discover the school’s successful practices and its key challenges (Diagnostic Inventories based on the RBF constitute the main source of data). This process represents the starting point in schoolwide IDEAS-based professional learning and usually opens up preliminary exploration of the concept of shared pedagogy.

The third ideas phase relates to Envisioning, that is, the imagining of ideals or dreams that the school community may aspire to achieve. At this stage, language becomes very important, with metaphor, symbolism and analogy emphasised (see Exhibit 1). The conceptualisation of Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP), reflecting the school’s vision, drawn from teachers’ most successful practices, and meeting the criteria for SWP (Table 1), usually marks the culmination of phase three (see Exhibit 2).

The fourth ideas phase, Actioning, involves application of phase three decisions within the school and the broader community, led by teacher leaders and administrators working in parallel. Principals focus on community-building and the coordination of within-school developmental efforts, while teachers (either as individuals or as work groups) explore and extend their SWP. The application of SWP in phase four activities usually involves one of three focus areas, namely:

1. a curriculum focus (for example, integrated study units, a whole-school reading program);
2. a structural focus (for example, middle years, cross-year grouping); and
3. a student focus (for example, a leadership program, a behaviour management plan).

It should be noted that, historically, processes of educational innovation have tended to commence with what in IDEAS is called the Actioning phase. In our view, the failure of much educational reform can be traced to this regrettable fact – that new school philosophies, structures and programs have been introduced before their pedagogical implications have been fully developed.

The final ideas phase is labelled Sustaining. It involves continuous refinement by teachers of the concept of 3-dimensional pedagogy (3D.P), systematic evaluation of the school’s level of organisational alignment (using the phase one Diagnostic Inventory
outcomes as the benchmark), and the building of enhanced school identity (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 59). The school’s IDEAS Management Team is critically important at this stage, particularly so because of the inevitability of staff changes. We sometimes refer to the Management Team as ‘custodian of the school’s vision and SWP’ and emphasise the need to encourage new staff – teachers, ancillary staff and administrators – to reflect on ways that they can use their special talents and expertise to add value to the school’s unique vision and SWP. We also emphasise that expressions such as, ‘I’m a new broom, here to sweep this place clean’, run contrary to our notion of capacity-building and have no place in IDEAS Project schools. The Sustaining phase has usually engaged teachers in IDEAS schools in an exploration of the relationship between priority systemic initiatives (such as productive pedagogies, new curriculum initiatives such as New Basics and Early Years, issues in the development of boys, and whole school literacy initiatives) and their SWP. It has also resulted in adjustments to school infrastructures (such as curricula, timetables, student organisation, spatial arrangements, and deployment of technology).

The *ideas* process is a process that can contribute in definitive ways to the creation of original knowledge, to the heightened alignment of school elements, to more professional and rewarding relationships, and to revitalised school environments.

**Concept Three:**

**3-Dimensional Pedagogy**

The component of the Research-based Framework (Figure 1) that is usually asserted by IDEAS Project participants to be the most challenging and most innovative, is that of 3D.P. This concept recognises different perspectives on pedagogy which, when taken together, provide what we regard as a plausible image of the 21st century teacher’s core work. In putting forward this claim we have written elsewhere that:

…3D.P teachers develop their personal pedagogical self at the same time as they engage with their school’s SWP and explore the potential of relevant authoritative theories of teaching and learning to both their personal pedagogy and their SWP (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, p. 101).

The concept of 3D.P provides a framework that enables IDEAS Project teachers to engage in dialogue where deeply embedded pedagogical practices are shared and new levels of pedagogical insight can be generated.

### Table 1: IDEAS Criteria for Schoolwide Pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS criteria for Schoolwide Pedagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It reflects the school’s agreed purpose or vision;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It comprises a balance of teaching, learning and assessment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is developed by the professional community of the school, based on distinctive student needs and community features and teachers’ successful practices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is grounded in authoritative theory (educational research e.g. authentic pedagogy, productive pedagogy, teachers’ practical theories);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is evident in teachers’ practices and students’ learning experiences;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It has sufficient capacity to be meaningfully applied to Key Learning Areas/New Basics/Rich Tasks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is continuously illuminated through processes of professional learning and shared practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of particular importance in the examples that follow is the use of language. We have observed in our work in IDEAS schools that shared language is fundamental to the development of shared meaning, and that language that is both simple and imaginative is more conducive to the development of new meaning than is language that, for whatever reasons, is exclusive, alienating or boring. We have also found that the use of visual and aesthetic stimuli quite often engenders imagery that enables teachers to communicate at a new level, enhancing and extending meaning beyond anything previously experienced.

Thus, in the two examples that follow, metaphor was used to articulate images of the future, and to capture teachers’ aspirations in shared visions and pedagogical principles. The first school to be described is Beckenham Primary School in Western Australia. The second is Currimundi State School in Queensland.
Beckenham Primary School:
A pedagogical snippet from their IDEAS story

When Beckenham looked at their Diagnostic Inventory data in the Discovering phase of the ideas process, interesting pictures began to emerge of a hard-working teaching staff where individuals experienced considerable success, but where clear communication was a perceived problem, and the school lacked a sense of overall vitality. Substantially as a result, no agreement had been reached by the staff about what constituted excellence in teaching or learning.

Grappling to produce a vision that captured both their shared aspiration and their unique context, the Beckenham IDEAS Facilitators used photographic stimuli as the medium to engage their colleagues in dialogue about the images conjured up for them by their personal experiences with their school. As reference points, they used the school’s location, its traditions, its size and distinct achievements, along with the demographics of the community (Beckenham IDEAS Team, 2003).

After lengthy deliberations it was agreed that an appropriate vision might reflect the image of the heritage railway site with which the school was closely associated (Figure 5) and might be stated as:

**Catch a Ride to Lifelong Learning**

With the school’s IDEAS Team driving the process, the teachers began to tease out possible links between the draft vision and their personal pedagogical preferences and successes. They found that the train’s carriages provided a cognitive framework for this process (see Figure 6).

**Figure 5: The Beckenham vision**

![Catch a Ride to Lifelong Learning](image)

— Beckenham Primary School, Perth, Western Australia, 2003

**Figure 6: The Beckenham vision and schoolwide pedagogy – the carriages on the train**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our different paths</th>
<th>Looking out windows</th>
<th>Our destinations</th>
<th>Have a safe trip</th>
<th>Staying on track</th>
<th>All aboard!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different ‘smarts’</td>
<td>Wonderings</td>
<td>Seeing the big picture</td>
<td>Share and care</td>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>Community involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different learning styles</td>
<td>Imaging</td>
<td>Personal responsibility for the journey</td>
<td>Respect your fellow travellers</td>
<td>Getting criteria</td>
<td>Sharing each others’ journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a variety of technologies</td>
<td>Reflecting</td>
<td>Navigating the journey</td>
<td>Show courtesy</td>
<td>Monitoring our journey</td>
<td>Partnerships in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciating/Valuing</td>
<td>Sharing what you learned on your journey</td>
<td>Creating a safe environment</td>
<td>Using rubrics for assessment</td>
<td>Community experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel and learn together to expand the journey</td>
<td>Healthy attitudes and habits to keep you on track</td>
<td>Learning from the worldwide community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have a safe trip</td>
<td>Staying on track</td>
<td>All aboard!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beckenham’s teacher leaders, working in parallel with the principal, have now taken on the challenge of embedding their vision and schoolwide pedagogy in their individual practices. The principles that are contained in the windows of the six carriages on the Beckenham train are beginning to appear in unit plans and student reports. Additionally, they are to be found in numerous locations around the school. Teachers at Beckenham Primary School believe that they have begun to create a new and very enervating identity for their school and community.

Currimundi State School:
A pedagogical snippet from their IDEAS story

Currimundi State School staff chose to join the IDEAS Project as a process for guiding whole-staff development through a curriculum change. The Currimundi vision, which draws its meaning from the exotic beachside location of the school, has provided teachers with imagery and language that enable them to connect their personal pedagogies to a shared school-wide pedagogy.

Three words from the Currimundi vision – Riding the Waves to Success (Figure 7) – now provide the structure of schoolwide curriculum planning. The ‘ride’ identifies learning outcomes in terms of what students should know and should do; the ‘waves’ represent individual teachers’ strategies to support students’ progress in the light of the systemic Productive Pedagogies; and ‘success’ focuses attention on the demonstration of what students have achieved. Thus, Currimundi students talk about the challenges facing them in terms of little waves and big waves and a wide range of other surfing images. The imagery of the vision is further manifested in classrooms through a shared language that has developed around the ‘waves of learning’:

• a thinking wave
• an investigating wave
• a reflecting wave
• a participating wave
• a creating wave
• a communicating wave.

The values that underpin these five schoolwide pedagogical principles can easily be imagined as they might occur in Currimundi school practices (see Figure 7). Currimundi staff provide simple illustrations of how it all comes together:
We’ve developed a schoolwide view of what each of the overall learning outcomes will look like at our school. For example, riding the ‘thinking’ wave means that the student needs to make decisions, to predict and to organise things. On the other hand if you’re riding the ‘creating wave’ you may need to manipulate materials to develop a new idea. (Currimundi Facilitator)

We have embraced the concept of the local environment to capture excitement and interest in our work. (Curriculum Coordinator)

We have the metaphor that surfers cut their own path through a wave depending on their skill, the type of wave and equipment used. This means that we value multiple pathways for student learning and a wide variety of assessment techniques so that students can show in different ways what they know and what they can do. (Year 5 teacher)

One might ask whether the use of language in this way transposes into forms of pedagogical practice that impact on school outcomes, and, if so, how does this occur? The answer to the first part is straightforward and indisputable, based on detailed evidence of student achievement, teacher morale and parent attitudes at Currimundi. The second part is more complex. We return to it in our concluding statement in this Monograph.

**Concept Four:**

*Parallel Leadership – the IDEAS Leadership Paradigm*

Traditionally, educational leadership has been associated with positional authority, and hence has tended to be seen primarily as the province and responsibility of the school principal. ‘Leading from the front/top’ has been perhaps the most popular leadership image in education since leadership became a priority of educational systems worldwide several decades ago.

But to construe educational leadership as a subset of educational administration and to link school leadership to positional authority is, in our view, looking through a lens that may have been justified in an industrial age, but is inadequate to the challenges of the post-industrial knowledge-based world. The IDEAS Project reflects the maturity of the 21st century teaching profession and places IDEAS Project participants at the forefront of international thinking about leadership.

The IDEAS leadership paradigm is best captured in the following three premises:
Premise 1: Teachers as Leaders

We know from our own, and other, authoritative educational research that where teacher leadership is flourishing in a school, there is substantive reform taking place. Our conceptualisation of teacher leadership captures this very significant research outcome:

Teacher leadership derives from the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth and adults. It originates in principled world views and manifests in processes of learning that engage the school community in concerted action. It contributes to enhanced quality of life of the community in the long term. It appears to reach its potential in contexts where system and school structures are facilitative and supportive (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 70).

Our research confirms that it is possible to describe teacher leadership in quite definitive terms, as outlined in the following summary framework:

Teacher leaders…

• Convey convictions about a better world
• Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning and assessment practices
• Facilitate communities of learning through organisation-wide processes
• Confront barriers in the school’s culture and structures
• Translate ideas into systems of action
• Nurture a culture of success. – Abstracted from Crowther et al., 2002

Premise 2: Parallel Leadership

The conceptualisation of educational leadership as 'parallelism' recognises the sophistication of today’s teaching profession and also reflects the uniqueness of today’s schools as learning organisations.

Parallel leadership, as we view it, encourages a particular relatedness between teacher leaders and administrator leaders that enables the knowledge-generating capacity of schools to be activated and sustained. The result takes the form of what King and Newmann (2000) have called enhanced organisational capacity, and of what some other researchers have called value-addedness. We believe that parallel leadership has relevance in a wide range of organisations that are striving to function in the post-industrial world, but is most naturally located in that particular institution – the school – where the creation of meaning out of processes of learning and teaching constitutes the core activity.

Parallel leadership has three distinct characteristics: mutualism, sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression.

The first characteristic, mutualism, in the form of mutual trust and respect between administrator leaders and teacher leaders, manifests most obviously in acceptance by each party of the responsibilities and expertise that are associated with the role of the other.

The second characteristic, a sense of shared purpose, appears to have its origins in a shared commitment to explicit values such as the integrity of teaching or the need for social justice. It tends to develop most effectively in contexts characterised by transparent decision making processes, collaborative problem-solving and positive communications.

The third characteristic of parallel leadership that we have observed relates to the allowance of a significant degree of individual expression (and action) by respective leaders.
for each other. This characteristic may be viewed as possibly contrary to some concepts that are prominent in current management literature – such as teamwork, collegiality and consensus decision-making. But each of the cohorts of highly successful parallel leaders that we have observed has manifested strong convictions and assertive capabilities as well as a capacity to accommodate the values of co-leaders and work collaboratively with them.

Our definition of parallel leadership incorporates these three characteristics:

Parallel leadership engages teacher leaders and administrator leaders in collaborative action, while at the same time encouraging the fulfilment of their individual capabilities, aspirations and responsibilities. It leads to strengthened alignment between the school’s vision and the school’s teaching and learning practices. It facilitates the development of a professional learning community, culture building and schoolwide approaches to teaching and learning. It makes possible the enhancement of school identity, teachers’ professional esteem, community support and students’ achievements (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 73).

Premise 3: The Principal’s Role in Nurturing Teacher Leadership

From our research into successful school revitalisation, undertaken largely in conjunction with the IDEAS Project, we have reached four fundamental conclusions regarding the principal’s leadership role in 21st century schools.

Our first conclusion is that the principalship is at least as critically important to educational success as it has historically been perceived to be. Our second conclusion is that principals who engender sustained success do so because they work in parallel with other school leaders, including teacher leaders. Third, we assert that a suitable single word to describe the principal’s leadership role and functions is *metastrategy*, along lines developed by Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998). Our fourth conclusion is that, since parallel leadership cannot be effected without teacher leadership, principals must be competent in nurturing teacher leadership and subsequent parallel leader relationships.

Principals whom we have observed building highly successful parallel leadership relationships have almost invariably done so through a deliberate emphasis on the development of teacher leaders. We have summarised their efforts in terms of seven leadership challenges, as outlined in Table 2. These challenges may pose difficulties for principals who continue to equate leadership with positional authority, or who rely mainly upon systemic support structures to provide the direction for their schools. But our overriding conclusion has been that the vast majority of principals derive deep satisfaction from their efforts to develop the leadership capabilities of teachers, and to establish new forms of co-leadership with them. They also find that the effectiveness of their schools increases in important ways.

Leading and managing the ideas process

Leadership in IDEAS Project schools is a shared responsibility that we have labelled *parallelism*. It is constituted primarily, though seldom exclusively, of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) working in a mutualistic relationship with the principal.
The composition of the ISMT varies from school to school, with a mix of teachers, parents, middle managers, non-teaching staff, deputy principals and sometimes students. The principal is not usually a formal member of the ISMT. Designated IDEAS Facilitators, usually teachers or middle managers, are of fundamental importance in all phases of the ideas process (as the process unfolds the facilitation roles change and depending on the nature of the task, different members of the ISMT may emerge in this role).

Table 3 summarises what we have found to be qualities that typify successful ISMTs and Facilitator(s). The close resemblance of these qualities to our framework for teacher leadership, referred to earlier, is of course no accident. It goes without saying that for these qualities to emerge and become embedded in the culture of the school, the ISMT and the facilitator(s) need organisational space in which to reflect, to develop a sense of themselves as leaders and to create new ways of working. They also need to be encouraged by their principals and provided with opportunities to link their developmental work to the counterpart (metastrategic) work of the principal. This is the essence of parallel leadership.

The thumbnail sketch on page 23 demonstrates how the members of the ISMT and the principal in one IDEAS Project school have reimaged their leadership roles in conjunction with an overall process of very successful school revitalisation.

**School Leadership – a creative process**

The three premises for school-based leadership that we have outlined in this section suggest that school leadership should be approached as essentially a creative process. Through leadership of the IDEAS type, new and powerful forms of knowledge can be stimulated,
revitalised identity in our school communities can be established, and challenging new professional roles for teachers can be activated. Images of this sort are far removed from the authoritarian control that was frequently associated with school-based leadership a generation ago, or even the hierarchical accountability that tended to dominate educational thinking just a decade ago.

**IDEAS create future schools**

The key components of IDEAS – the Research-based Framework, the ideas process, 3D.P and parallel leadership – represent a new conceptualisation of processes of successful school revitalisation and a new conceptualisation of teachers as leaders in a knowledge society.

The key IDEAS concepts can be linked together figuratively to demonstrate how successful school revitalisation occurs. This we have done in Figure 8.

In describing the components of this figure, Crowther et al. (2002) and Andrews & Crowther (2002) have demonstrated that through parallel leadership, three school-based

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**Table 3:** Facilitator and ISMT – Four ‘categories of individual and/or group action’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• engendering a sense of belonging and valued participation in others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• focusing discussion on processes, not people or positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• facilitating communication across diverse communities of interest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• knowing when to ‘step back’ and let others lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respecting and recognising individual initiative and contributions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• building heightened expectations and goals through shared learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Educative:**

| • being passionate about quality teaching and learning in state schools |  |
| • justifying personal values in terms of a better world |  |
| • being motivated to action by complex educational issues |  |
| • generating new educational meaning from individual contributions |  |
| • interpreting schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) from successful practices |  |
| • confronting organisational barriers with confidence and conviction |  |

**Strategic:**

| • articulating ‘big picture’ trends and understandings |  |
| • clarifying alignment in RBF elements |  |
| • linking ideas stages logically and purposefully |  |
| • encouraging the formation of links with outside agencies |  |
| • encouraging innovation |  |
| • enabling staff to conceptualise holistic images of the school |  |

**Operational:**

| • being well organised |  |
| • establishing realistic expectations attentive to detail |  |

– Adapted from Crowther et al., 2001a, Section B, p. 8
processes can be activated and integrated. These processes are culture-building, organisation-wide professional learning, and development of a schoolwide approach to pedagogy. Our research into the dynamics of Figure 8 in a range of school contexts has consistently shown that it is through the interaction and alignment of these processes that school communities are able to enhance their capacity to improve school outcomes.

Figure 8 is, of course, not the final word on successful school reform, but we believe that it represents an important step along the way. It leaves us with a deep sense of optimism that the next decade will be one of immense success and reward for the Australian teaching profession.
Welcome to the new world of knowledge-generation, of schools as the central institution in our society and of teaching as a leading profession. Welcome to IDEAS.
References


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