

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

*Ian Craig*

In January 2021 I published an article in the journal *‘Management in Education’* entitled *‘Whatever happened to educational management? The case for reinstatement’* (Craig, 2021) which challenged the dominant use of the word ‘leadership’ in education over the past 20 years at the expense of the word ‘management’, even when it was the latter issue that was being discussed. This article repeats much of what I said in my earlier article, but updates some or it, particularly the statistics on which it was based.

In 2008, in the journal *‘Educational Management, Administration and Leadership’* (EMAL), one of the best known and most often referenced journals of its kind in the world, Professor Tony Bush (2008:272) commented that: ‘My review of papers in this journal in 1988 revealed only one mention of leadership, at the end of an overview paper by Tim Brighouse’.

In the years that have followed, ‘leadership’ has become one of the most used terms to be found in school the literature, so much so that it is now difficult to find mentions of ‘management’ and ‘administration’ anywhere. In his article Bush suggested that this focus was given a particular boost by (the then) New Labour’s emphasis on schools having more responsibility for their own futures, a new focus on head teacher training, and in particular the establishment in 2000 of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).

The term leadership is now dominant with, it seems, everybody in education aspiring to be a leader, even in the classroom. Simply being ‘managers’ or even ‘teachers’ is not enough. Principles of rational behaviour suggest that people will usually attempt to maximise their own power and prestige, so it is no wonder that the aspiration to be called a ‘leader’ is so alluring.

Leadership was a well-used term in the business world in the 1960s, although not common in the public sector, where the term ‘administration’ dominated. The twentieth century had seen a number of periods when ‘leadership’ was in vogue in business and at other times when ‘management’ was favoured. In the 1970s management again took the place of leadership (Czarniawka-Joerges and Wolff, 1991:532).

A sample over a two-year period – July 2018:46(4)–May 2020:47(3) – of article titles in EMAL – (note that this is a journal theoretically devoted to Management

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

and Administration and Leadership), the same journal that Bush commented on in 1988, showed the following:

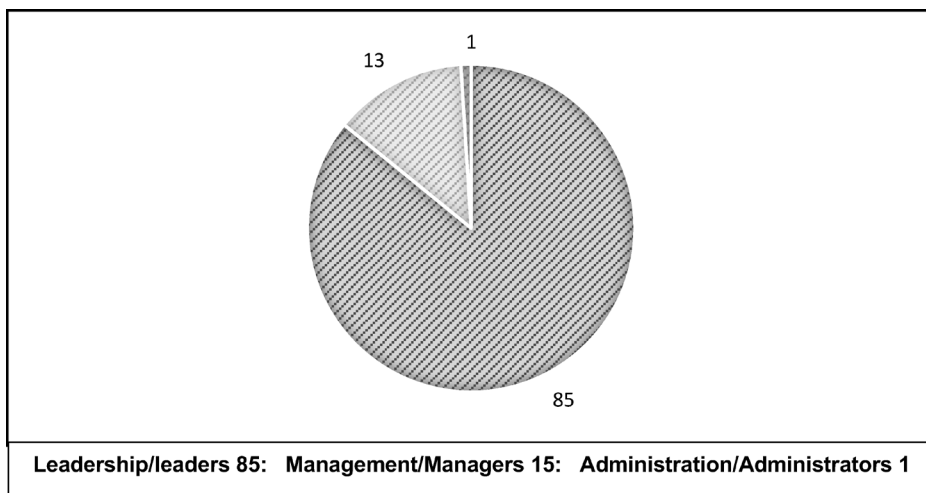
- Leadership/leaders was mentioned 61 times
- Management/managers was mentioned 12 times
- Administration/Administrators was mentioned 1 time

Of the 61 'leadership' articles, the content of many was at least in part 'management' focused and not just about 'leadership' in the strict meaning of the term.

In EMAL's sister publication *Management in Education* (MiE – again note the word 'management', and only Management is in the title), over a similar period (July 2018:32(3) – April 2020:34(2)), words in the titles of the articles reflected a similar, if not greater bias:

- Leadership/leaders was mentioned 24 times
- Management/managers was mentioned 1 time
- Administration/Administrators was mentioned 0 times

Over the two journals combined, the balance of mentions was as indicated in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1. Frequency of the words Leadership, Management & Administration used in titles of journals *Education Management, Administration and Leadership & Management in Education*, mid-2018 – mid-2020**

Leadership had obviously clearly taken the place of management and administration in organisational literature, certainly in the field of education.

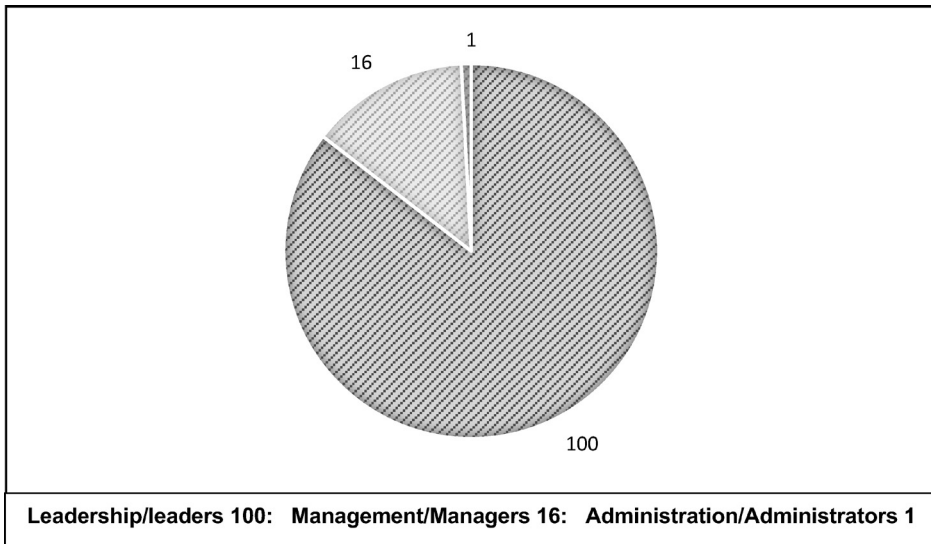
Reviewing the original article at the end of 2022 in order to see if things had moved on, I looked at a different spread of articles in the same journals over two full years from January 2020 to December 2021 (there is of course a slight overlap in these two review periods). The new data showed for EMAL:

- Leadership/leaders was mentioned 71 times
- Management/managers was mentioned 13 times
- Administration/Administrators was mentioned 1 time

and for MiE:

- Leadership/leaders was mentioned 29 times
- Management/managers was mentioned 3 time
- Administration/Administrators was mentioned 0 times

Again, a combination of the two sets of data over the new period provides the following totals:



**Figure 2. Frequency of the words Leadership, Management & Administration used in titles of journals Education Management, Administration & Leadership, and Management in Education. January 2020 – December 2021.**

This more recent set of data from the same journals, if anything shows even more use of the terms ‘leadership’ and ‘leaders’ than previously.

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

I do not believe that the terms *administration*, *management* and *leadership* have the same meanings, but they do share many of the same characteristics. To paraphrase Gosling and Mintzberg (2003), most educators have become so enamoured of the word '*leadership*' that '*management*' and '*administration*' have been pushed into the background.

We perhaps abused the words 'leader' and 'leadership' even more significantly when we began calling headteachers and principals 'school and college leaders' and even their deputies and department heads 'middle leaders'.

Apart from the obvious attractiveness of the term 'leader', how did this change of emphasis come about? It does of course reflect a general trend within all public sector organisations to move decision-making and accountability as close as possible to the 'customer' and certainly to the level of the individual institution, in accordance with the 'neoliberal' and 'new public management' (NPM) ideologies that have been prominent over recent decades. In education it was influenced in particular by the School Effectiveness and School Improvement movements in the 1990s which identified the importance of the school head/principal in these activities. In some of these works (for example those of Bert Creemers and Jaap Scheerens, working in mainland Europe) headteachers/principals were often referred to by the German term *Schulleiter* which was literally translated into English as 'school leader'. The inter-changeability of the terms headteacher/principal and school leader thus became embedded in the literature.

The term 'leader' does not seem to be used so freely in other organisations outside of education.

## DEFINING LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

### What is Leadership?

Raelin (2016:131) suggests that: 'the concept and practice of leadership have been overused and oversold to such an extent that the meaning of leadership is no longer conceptually intact, while its practice has become minimally suspect'.

There are probably as many definitions of leadership in education as there are people who use the term.

Bush and Glover (2003:10) offer the following definition:

Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. It involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school which is based on clear personal and professional values

Leaders are therefore people who shape goals, motivations and actions of others, and they do this through influence, setting missions, visions and values (Cuban, 1988; Bush, 2008)

Many writers over the past twenty-plus years, for example Harris (2005 & 2013), have suggested that educational leadership is not the sole province of the head of the school/college. Any member of staff can lead in some circumstances. Few would disagree with that view. However, most school and college heads/principals work within legislative and structural frameworks and are therefore constrained in their 'leadership' abilities. In order to set direction a 'leader' needs to be in control of the situation. At what point are these constraints such that 'leadership' cannot take place? Can a school principal within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) or a tight municipal or Board structure be a true leader, or is that the role of the MAT CEO or a designated senior officer outside the school or college? In terms of leadership, how do we define an 'organisation'? Can heads of departments be expected to 'lead' in, for example, the creation of missions, visions and values, or is that a recipe for organisational chaos? Even writers such as Laloux (2014), a clear advocate of distributed decision-making, suggest that even in organisations that have tried to dispense with traditional pyramid structures, there are times when one person, or a small group of people, must make key decisions. As it is the head/principal/CEO who is usually held accountable in most educational jurisdictions, either to a Board or to government for the delivery of targets, it is a very relaxed or foolish one who does not remain in ultimate control of that process. One could say that not to do so shows a lack of leadership.

Without strong structures to support it, leadership can be dangerous. Zaleznic (1977:201) considers that many 'leaders' show little interest in delivery and 'sometimes react to mundane work as to an affliction', and Fullan (1992:19) says that 'vision (a central element of leadership) can blind leaders in a number of ways' when they feel they must manipulate teachers and the school culture to conform to it.

In addition, for those in the 'middle' of a school or college who are encouraged in the belief that distributed structures will allow them to exercise their leadership skills, Kotterman (2006:16) reminds us that:

When newly trained leaders attempt to lead, they quickly discover that they are not allowed to do so, they are actually expected to manage. This only leads to confusion and reduced job-satisfaction.... In the case of modern organisations, too many leaders will spoil their effectiveness. Multiple leaders with different visions not only can confuse but they can also decrease subordinates' motivation.

Would it be better if we focussed less on distributed 'leadership' and more on distributed 'management'?

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

### **What is Management?**

As with leadership, there are many definitions of ‘management’. These can be generally summarised as: *the oversight, control and direction of processes and resources (especially people) to achieve the desired goals and objectives of an organisation in the most efficient and effective way.*

We need to differentiate the management environment of the twenty-first century from the generally discredited ‘Taylorism’ and ‘managerialism’ of earlier decades, which were, according to Pollitt (1993:188) above all concerned with control, and that control was to be achieved through an essentially administrative approach.

Management requires achievement of results and taking personal responsibility for doing so. Management objectives are defined predominantly by the language of economics, in particular relating to ‘output’ and ‘value for money’ (Pollitt, 1993). This has been the direction taken by the UK and other western government policies since the 1980s as a result of NPM, and reflected, for example, in the demise of the middle-tier of local government in education and the rise of Academy Trusts and their like. Now more than ever before, heads/principals and senior staff in schools and colleges are expected to be managers and strategic planners. They are no longer just expected to be educationists.

Management is therefore about carrying the responsibility for the proper, day to day functioning of an institution. In practice it entails delegation, which involves being assigned, accepting and carrying responsibility. ‘The manager’s role is to introduce and keep order in an organisation’, (Czarniawka-Joerges and Wolff, 1991:538), and ‘the management process reduces uncertainty and stabilises the organisation’ (Lunenburg, 2011:1).

A ‘manager’ needs a good grasp of budgetary and human resources issues as well as the specific issues relating to the organisation which makes it different to others. These are key requirements for a good head/principal of an educational institution.

In summary, a manager is accountable for putting processes and structures in place to achieve results, and management requires acceptance of personal responsibility for their achievement. Across most of the public sector (but maybe not at the moment in education), management is seen as a distinct function requiring its own skills and training.

### **What is Administration?**

It is surprisingly difficult to find a widely accepted and meaningful definition of administration. Sergiovani et al (1980) define it as the process of working with and through others in order to accomplish organisational goals efficiently. This, like many other attempts at the definition is fairly bland, but it is worth noting that it does not mention ‘accountability’, nor putting the processes and goals in place

initially. Essentially, administration is based on following instructions. Unlike management, administration has an inward focus and a short-term perspective.

Administration has traditionally been found widely in the public sector. Its history goes back thousands of years, but in the form that we now know it stemming from the works of Weber and Wilson in the early twentieth century.

In Weber's 'pure' form of administration he suggests that 'public servants' cannot, and should not, exercise leadership – they should be subject to the direction of leaders, usually political. Perhaps at this point we should consider whether heads and senior staff in schools and colleges regard themselves as public servants, as this will have a bearing on the framework within which they operate.

In many parts of the world the term 'administration' has traditionally been used widely within the education sector in preference to leadership and management, and more accurately serves hierarchical education structures operating within a system of strong government, often working through regional and municipal decision-making structures.

With increasingly more decision-making delegated to schools and colleges, managers are now far more accountable for their actions than they were in the past. The need for administrative training for managers in educational organisations is still necessary, but perhaps only in the context of underpinning the day-to-day management and structure of the organisations they are responsible for.

With this in mind it is perhaps an anomaly that the Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) is still one of the most prized 'management' qualifications, even for those working in education.

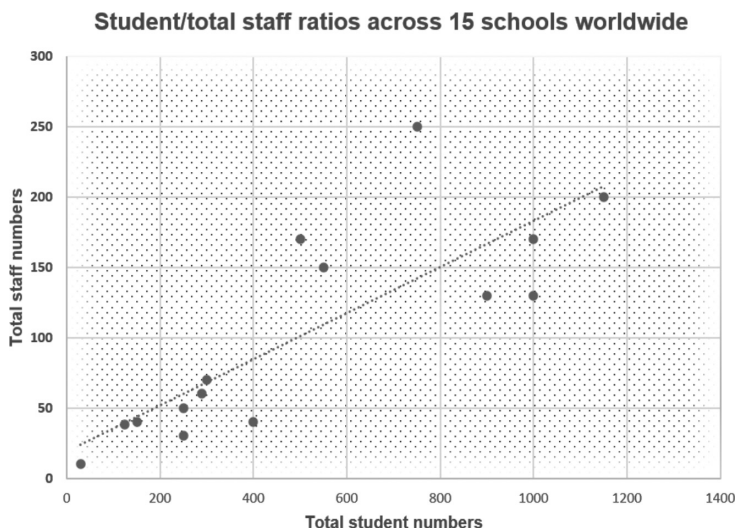
## **HOW DO THEY FIT TOGETHER?**

Schools and colleges are complex organisations. In a recent small-scale activity I asked the heads/principals and senior staff in 15 schools across the world to identify how many adults they 'managed' in any way during the course of a year. I did not ask them to count full-time equivalents, just a straightforward count of the number of people involved, even if it was only for a small period. I asked them to count all directly employed staff as well as visiting staff, including those formally employed by others, but delivering a service on the school site (for example grounds staff, catering, technical services). Although the results varied, they all demonstrated a similar complex pattern. As an example, Figure 3 shows that the head/principal of the largest school in the sample, with approximately 1150 students on roll 'managed' approximately 200 staff. This of course does not include the parents of the students, that the school also 'interacts' with, even though not formally managing them, nor of course the number of students themselves.

The leadership, management and administration of such a large number of people is of course essential if the organisation is to operate efficiently and effectively.



## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?



**Figure 3. Student/total staff ratios across 15 schools worldwide.**

Kotter (1990) argues that leadership and management are two distinctive and complimentary systems, each having its own functions and its own characteristic activities, but both necessary for complex organisations and for optimal effectiveness.

There is some confusion in the literature as to whether it was Warren Bennis or Peter Drucker who originally said ‘Management is doing things right, but leadership is doing the right things’, but it is a useful distinction.

Cuban (1988: xx) tells us that:

Managing is maintaining efficiency and effectively current organisational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall direction is towards maintenance rather than change... different settings and times call for varied responses.

He provides a clear distinction between leadership and management, linking leadership with change while he sees management as a maintenance activity and says: ‘I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either one’ (*ibid.*)

Distinguishing between leadership and management perhaps allows the importance of educational management to be acknowledged and its status raised. Connolly et al (2017:542) say ‘school failure is frequently blamed on a failure of leadership. We do not discount that but suggest that it could be a failure of management’. They argue that leaders are often needed to re-focus an organisation, but their need is often short-term and it is managers who usually get the organisation onto a stable footing

This view is supported by the work of Hill et al (2016) who examined different styles of headship and clearly concluded that heads of schools who focused largely



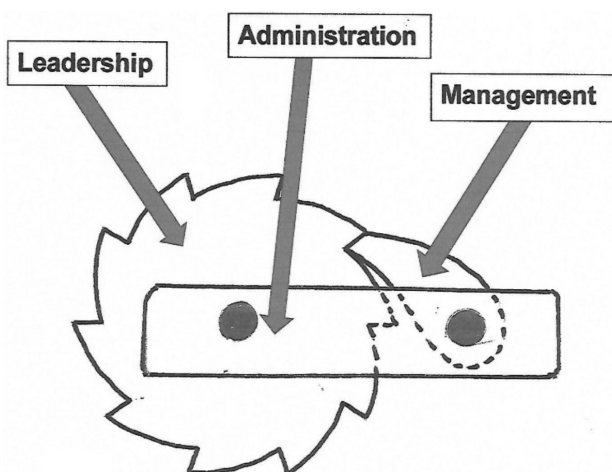
on managerial processes, although not often being seen as charismatic leaders, were the most effective in the long term. My own work (Craig, 2017) identifies that ‘leadership’ at the expense of ‘management’ can often result in a toxic work environment that has a detrimental impact on an organisation.

According to Fullan (1992:19) ‘the high-powered, charismatic principal who:

radically transforms the school in four or five years can also be blinding and misleading as a role model. A principal’s strategy is often fragile because so much depends on his or her personal strength and presence, which is relatively short-lived.

Edelman (1988:65) is of the view that ‘except as minor elements of a complex transaction, leaders cannot provide security or bring about change’, whereas Zalenik (1977) concluded that while leaders are needed in times of crisis and change, ‘managers represent the everyday rationality of welfare and affluence’. Southworth (2005:83) says ‘too much management and a school may run smoothly on the spot. Too much leadership and it may be running all over the place and never smoothly’.

My own view is that all organisations need to be led, managed *and* administered, and I often use the analogy of a traditional clock mechanism to illustrate their inter-reliance. In the diagram below (Figure 4) ‘leadership’ is represented by the cog-wheel required to drive a clock. Without it, the hands would not move forward. The ratchet-arm represents ‘management’. It is the stabilising factor. Without it acting as a regulator, the cog-wheel would spin out of control. ‘Administration’ is represented by the framework holding the whole structure, including the leadership and management, in place, and without it nothing would function.



**Figure 4. Clock mechanism representation of the relationship between Leadership, Management and Administration**

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

Scott (1995) reminds us that ‘In a successful organisation there are multiple levels each constraining and empowering the other’.

### WHAT’S IN A NAME? WHAT DO WE NEED?

Words are important, and as we have seen, the meaning of the term ‘leadership’ has become confused over recent decades, during which time educational leadership has been favoured with educational management becoming neglected and downplayed.

Connolly et al (2017:2) tell us that ‘the “fall” of educational management underplays its importance in organising in schools and colleges’. Important questions for all education systems across the world are: Can we afford just to develop leadership at the expense of management? Can we improve our education institutions with a re-emphasis of management? Have we lost our understanding of what is important?

Leadership and management are both needed in any organisation, but they often cannot be provided by the same person. You can however have a good leader who is not a skilled manager if (s)he has a strong management team working with her/him. It is more difficult, probably impossible, the other way round.

Is there such a thing as ‘middle leadership’ and is it important? All ‘leaders’ want senior staff working with them who are ‘aspiring’ and ‘inspiring’ and can get the best from their teams, but they also want good middle managers in their organisations, not competing ‘leaders’.

My own experiences suggest that in many countries the concept of individual school or college ‘leadership’ does not fit well within the culture – for example, where there is strong central policy direction. In much of the world the recognition of the training and development of ‘leaders’ is not a priority – the training and development of ‘administrators’ is, and ‘managers’ are slowly being recognised as necessary to develop, rather than just to maintain systems. Bush (2018), commenting on schools in parts of the developing world, says that there is evidence that many schools are dysfunctional, suggesting that a focus on management would be more appropriate. This would surely be the case everywhere!

So why are we, particularly in the UK, emphasising ‘leadership’ to aspiring heads and others rather than, or as well as, ‘management’. Although ‘leadership’ within the profession is important, are we losing sight of what most heads and senior staff in schools and colleges are expected to do every day, and for most of their time – administer, and manage? Headship, even good headship, is perhaps 80% management and only 20% leadership. Perhaps we should bear this balance in mind.

This view is certainly not an attack on the importance and necessity for ‘leadership’ in education – it is questioning its prominence at the expense of other, equally, if not more important functions.

Do we any longer expect every school and college head to set their own missions, visions and values, etc.? In many instances of course we do, particularly in terms of reflecting the particular communities they serve, but how do these relate to their government’s expectations, or to the mission, visions and values of their ‘middle-tier’ (whether it be MAT, Board or local government) CEOs and politicians? Is it appropriate, for example, for departmental heads in secondary schools be given a free hand to set their own directions, that may be completely different to other departments? If not, then the whole concept of ‘middle leadership’ may be unviable, or at least very limited. If we expect this, then we must also expect system failures.

Kotterman (2006:16) points out that the need for leadership above anything else is a view embedded in our consciousness – ‘corporations will continue to ask for leaders but need managers’. Systems cannot afford to ignore training and development opportunities for managers.

Let’s not confuse both ourselves and others by using wrong descriptors. For training providers that deliver work in other, particularly developing, countries, they should not confuse potential students or funding agencies by describing the qualifications on offer incorrectly. Apart from anything else, a focus on leadership may dissuade them from supporting the programmes. When we mean ‘leadership’ we should by all means use that term, but at other times maybe we should refer to ‘leadership and management’. It is not appropriate to use one very specific term to encompass both.

Ideally, what we need to create is what Gardner (1990) refers to as ‘leader-managers’ who are able to undertake both functions well, concerned with developing organisational visions and values, thinking and planning longer term and motivating and supporting others to achieve goals both efficiently and effectively. Some may get the opportunity to lead more than others, but they also need to be equipped with the skills of management to enable them to undertake what Belbin (2010) describes as completer/finisher tasks when necessary. More importantly, for the great majority of school and college senior staff, they need to be able to exercise high level management skills but also be able to take on leadership functions when and where appropriate.

Undoubtedly, all staff in schools and colleges can and should lead in certain circumstances, as not to be promoting this would be wasting talents, but we should not pretend that all can be ‘organisational and system leaders’. Let’s not totally abandon our current leadership focus but let us once more also focus on management. It is essential that we promote good leadership as a desired goal, but this should not be at the expense of effective management.

## CONCLUSION

Although good leaders and managers share many attributes, leadership and management are essentially different, but both are necessary for an effective organisation. We must recognise and support both appropriately and not focus on leadership at the expense of management. Let us no longer be cavalier with our use of the words 'leadership' and 'leaders'. Let us not diminish the need for better 'management' and 'managers' in our systems.

Kotter (1990) says that 'management is about providing the order and procedures necessary to cope with the everyday complexity ... leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change'. A good organisation needs both. 'If an organisation is run effectively, leadership and management will exist in tandem' Gosling (2013).

We could of course debate more how much ability there is to practise 'leadership' within most schools, where direction is now more and more 'led' by politicians and government, and where they exist, municipal and other 'authorities' (for example MATs) beyond individual schools.

As the meanings of the terms management and leadership are often so misunderstood, organisations seem to believe that they need many leaders when in fact what they probably need is a much smaller number of very good leaders and many more first-class managers.

Everybody in education should be clear about the differences between leadership, management and administration. Organisations and systems should be very clear about what they require of heads/principals and senior staff within them. Providers should ensure that relevant and clearly described and focused development opportunities can be accessed. We need to focus on both leadership and management for the future of the system. Good leaders should be encouraged to lead – others should support them by managing.

Simple administration is now a relic of the past. A re-focus on management within schools and colleges is essential.

Finally, Czarniawsl-Joerge and Wolff (1991:542) point out that crises are usually followed by a re-focus on the need for management and managers. The recent Covid-19 world crisis has certainly highlighted the need for good management as well as leadership across all public services.

**This article is based on an earlier article entitled 'Whatever happened to educational management? The case for reinstatement' published in the January 2021 issue of the journal *Management in Education* 25(1).**

## REFERENCES

- Belbin, R.M (2010) *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Heinemann
- Bush, T (2008) 'From management to leadership: Semantic or Meaningful Change?' *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 36(2), 271–288
- Bush & Glover (2003) 'School Leadership: concepts and evidence' (Full report). Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- Connolly, M., James, C. & Fertig, M. (2019) 'The difference between educational management and educational leadership and the importance of educational responsibility'. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership* 47(4), 504–519.
- Craig, I (2017) 'Toxic Leadership' in Earley, P & Greany, T (eds.) *School Leadership and Education System Reform*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Craig, I (2021) 'Whatever Happened to Educational Management? The case for reinstatement'. *Management in Education* 25(1), 52–57.
- Cuban, L. (1988) *The Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Czarniawka-Joerges, B and Wolff, R (1991) 'Leaders, Managers, Entrepreneurs On and Off the Organisational Stage'. *Organisational Studies* 12(4), 529–46.
- Edelman, M (1988) *The Construction of the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fullan (1992) 'Visions that Blind'. *Educational Leadership* 49(5), 19–2.
- Gardner, J.W. (1990) *On Leadership*. New York: Free Press.
- Gosling, J and Mintzberg, H (2003) 'The Five Minds of a Manager'. *Harvard Business Review*. 30 November 2003.
- Gosling, J (2013) 'What is the difference between Leadership and Management'. *The Guardian*. 29 June 2013.
- Harris, A (2005) 'Teacher Leadership: More than a Feel-Good Factor?'. *Journal of Leadership and Policy in Schools*. 4(3), 201–209
- Harris, A (2013) 'Distributed Leadership: Friend or Foe?'. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*. 41(5), 545–554.
- Hill, A, Mellon, L, Laker, B & Goddard, J (2016). 'The One Type of Leader Who Can Turn Around a Failing School' *Harvard Business Review*. 30 October 2016.
- Kotter, J.P. (1990) 'What Leaders Really Do'. *Harvard Business Review*. May-June: 103–11.
- Kotterman, J. (2006) 'Leadership Versus Management: What's the Difference?'. *Journal for Quality and Participation*. 29(2), 13–17

## SHOULD WE TALK MORE ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

- Laloux, F (2014) *Reinventing Organisations*. Brussels: Nelson Parker
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2011) 'Leadership versus Management: A Key Distinction – At Least in Theory'. *International Journal of Management, Business & Administration*. 14(1), 1–3
- Pollitt, C (1993) *Managerialism and the Public Services: Cuts or Cultural Change in the 1990s*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Raelin, J.A. (2016) 'Imagine there are no leaders: Reframing leadership as collaborative agency' *Leadership*. 12(2), 131–158.
- Scott, W.R (1995) *Institutions and Organisations: ideas, Interests and Identities*. London: Sage.
- Serrgiovani, T.J., Burlingame, M., Coombs, F.D. and Thurston, P.W. (1980) *Educational Governance and Administration*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Southworth, G (2004) 'Learning Centred Leadership', In Davies, B (ed.) *The Essentials of School Leadership*. London: SAGE.
- Wildavsky, A.B. (1984) *The Nursing Father: Moses as a political leader*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- Zaleznic, A (1977) 'Managers and leaders: Are they different? In Gibson, J.L., Ivancevich, J.M. & Donnelly, J.H, (eds) *Readings in Organisations*. Plano, Texas: Business Publications.