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Literacy to Manage Transition

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COMMON GROUND

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Abstract: Much of the literature about school leadership in recent years has focussed on many different interpretations of the leadership role. In particular, much has been written about the competing interpretations of transformative leadership, focussed on "developing the organisation's capacity to innovate" and "viewed as distributive in that it focuses on developing a shared vision and commitment to school change (Hallinger, 2003, pp. 330-331) and instructional or managerial leadership, characterised by "strong, directive leadership focussed on curriculum and instruction from the principal" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329). This paper explores the experiences of school leaders who moved from one school to another, part way through their involvement in the Learning to Learn Project, a project focused on developing transformative leadership. The transition from schools in which they were acknowledged leaders of learning, to schools where many members of the school community expected a managerial interpretation of leadership proved to be emotional and difficult work. During 2004 a study was conducted to capture the insights of these leaders about transition and constructing leadership in their new settings. It found that an important aspect of successful transition for all the leaders was their ability to develop "emotional literacy" in the form of strategies to understand and manage the emotions engendered by their experiences of transition.

Keywords: School Leadership, Educational Change, Emotional literacy, Leadership Transition.

Introduction

IN RECENT YEARS the role of school leader has been identified as one of the most critical factors in the success of educational reforms (Peters, Dobbins & Johnson, 1996). The term 'transformative' has been coined to describe leaders who focus on 'developing the organisation's capacity to innovate' and whose leadership is 'viewed as distributive in that it focuses on developing a shared vision and commitment to school change' (Hallinger, 2003, pp. 330-331). This view of leadership is in contrast to the depiction of leadership as instructional or managerial, characterised by 'strong, directive leadership focussed on curriculum and instruction from the principal' (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329).

In transformative leadership, the leaders' capacities for developing and managing relationships are seen to be central and there is as much emphasis placed on the intuitive and affective, as on the cognitive and intellectual (Ripley, 1997, p. 2). Such leadership is recognised as highly emotional work as shown in a study of 100 successful leaders which found they all had 'an awareness of their own emotions; an ability to recognize and acknowledge them without being swamped; driven by a degree of self belief (Higgs and Dulewicz, 2000, cited in Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001, p. 53). According to Davies and Davies (2004) effective leaders need to combine 'practical intelligence, analytical intelligence and emotional intelligence' (p. 35). Emotional intelligence has been defined as the ability to know one's own emotions; manage emotions; motivate oneself; recognize emotions in others; and handle relationships (Salovey & Mayer, 1990 cited in Goleman, 1995). Those who display emotional intelligence in the ways they interact with others and manage their own emotions are said to be emotionally literate (Park, 2003, p. 18).

Clearly, school leaders need to be emotionally literate, especially those who are engaged in the complex work of educational transformation. Yet there are few studies to date that explore this aspect of the role. This paper is based on a study of the experiences of school leaders who moved from one school to another, part way through their involvement in the Learning to Learn Project, a project focused on developing transformative leadership. The study found that the source of much of the emotional discomfort experienced by these leaders was the paradoxical nature of the expectations around leadership in their new settings. The findings also revealed that an important aspect of successful transition for all the leaders was their ability to use 'emotional literacy' in the form of strategies to understand and manage the complex array of emotions engendered.

Background

Since 1999, the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services has provided funding for selected schools to participate in a program of educational renewal through involvement in the Learning to Learn Project. Schools in the

Project receive funding to send school leaders and groups of teachers to a Core Learning Program which draws on the expertise of educational theorists from Australia and overseas. These experiences provide the stimulus for site wide programs aimed at systemic leadership of change to positively transform the learning environment, opportunities and outcomes for teachers and students.

In recognition of the central role played by school leaders in educational renewal, leaders in each site attached to the project meet together regularly in Learning Circles with project managers, Departmental Curriculum officers and university colleagues. Each Learning Circle encompasses between 6-8 of the sites involved in the project and provides the opportunity for participants to reflect on and share their insights, tensions, concerns, dilemmas and questions as leaders of learning in their schools. The researchers have been involved as university colleagues to three of the Learning Circles in the Project since its inception.

In 2002 thirteen primary leaders (including principals, deputy principals and assistant principals) who had been leaders in Learning to Learn funded schools were appointed to different schools. They formed a group, which they named the 'Stewards' Group', to share their experiences of, and learning about, developing leadership in new settings. The Learning to Learn Project Manager, Margot Foster, on behalf of these leaders, approached the researchers to conduct a small study to investigate and document their experiences and insights as they translated their learning about change and transformative leadership into new settings. The study was conducted as part of the researchers' ongoing consultancy work for the Project during 2004 and early 2005.

This study was qualitative in nature. According to Berg (2001), 'quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience' (p. 3). The aim was to achieve a rich and detailed representation of the 'what, how, when and where' of the transition experiences and learning of Learning to Learn leaders as they moved into new appointments. The research took the form of a small empirical study. The data collection procedures used were:

- observation and audio taping of the final two meetings of the Stewards' Group;
- an individual taped interview with six leaders (approximately forty minutes in length); and
- a group taped interview with five leaders (approximately two hours in length).

A collaborative approach to the research occurred through researchers and participants working together as much as possible, both in analysis and interpretations. Transcripts were returned to the participants for annotation and further elaboration. Meetings were convened to allow researchers and participants to scrutinise the data and to compare and contrast emerging interpretations.

The following section presents the key paradoxes that emerged as a source of the complex emotions experienced by these leaders in transition. This is followed by the findings about the emotional literacy strategies they used to understand and manage their own and others' emotions. The final section of the paper discusses the findings in relation to relevant literature.

The Paradoxes of being a Leader 'in Transition'

Early analysis of the data revealed a number of paradoxes that confronted leaders as they took up leadership roles in new settings. These paradoxes arose from the contradictions which they experienced as they tried to reconcile the multiple expectations of their roles. Many of the paradoxical aspects appear to relate to the leaders' perceptions of their roles as transformative, which was in contrast to some school community members' expectations being more in line with a managerial perspective of leadership. Analysis of the data revealed five main areas of paradox in these expectations. These are:

- leading learning *and* managing the site;
- acknowledging the past *and* initiating new directions;
- building relationships *and* challenging professional identity;
- routine ('surface') decision-making *and* reflective ('deep') decision-making; and
- responding emotionally *and* demonstrating confidence.

These paradoxes are not intended to represent dichotomies in terms of 'either/or' situations, but rather are an attempt to capture the competing pressures on the leaders as they tried to meet what, at times, seemed to be contradictory expectations.

Leader of Learning and Site Manager

Each of the leaders in this study had been on a personal journey over many years in which they had constructed multi-faceted conceptions of the leadership role and how it might be enacted in practice. Immediately prior to their current placements they had leadership roles in schools that participated in the Learning to Learn Project. This meant that for several years they and their staffs had received funding and professional development to help them to develop school cultures that maximised learning opportunities for students and teachers (including

school leaders). In describing the ways their leadership had evolved over recent years, the leaders revealed common issues around the notion of leadership for learning. They sometimes referred to this as 'invitational leadership', with a focus on learning. One leader described herself as 'leading learning' through:

> … a facilitative process of engaging staff in thinking and articulating their conceptions about what effective learning was and thinking/reframing their role as a teacher and as a learner. Setting up a culture where teachers were able to talk through issues of teaching and learning; and where teachers wanted to engage in discussions about learning and teaching. (C)

Central to this facilitative process was the development of a 'shared vision about the new cutting edge education' (A) through consideration of 'what we were doing, why we doing it and the learning outcomes' (B).

To varying extents, each of the leaders found that when they moved into their current schools, their prioritising of 'leading learning' as the most important part of their roles was at odds with the expectations of at least some members of their new school communities. They found that some teachers and parents placed most importance on the leader as an autonomous manager of personnel and resources. One leader reported on how she thought some parents initially viewed the leader's role:

> They saw a leader as being a person who told the staff what they needed to know, when they needed to learn it, how they needed to learn it. (F)

As a result of the contradictions that existed between their own and others' expectations of their role, most found themselves living with a paradox which one described as being expected to operate in a 'delivery' mode while personally believing that leadership is about 'co-creation' (A).

Acknowledging the Past and Initiating New Directions

All of the leaders had left schools in which they had worked with their school communities for several years to review and redesign their sites and programs with the intention of achieving better learning outcomes for teachers and students. In moving to new schools they faced the challenge of reconciling their interests in continuous improvement with the need to learn about and acknowledge the past experiences and cultures of their new school communities.

In the first few months in their new schools leaders found out about both the positive and negative experiences of past years that had shaped the context they were entering and the possible starting points for new directions. One described the challenge as 'learning about school-culture while being expected to know and live school culture' (C). Another came to understand that the negativity that seemed to emanate from some staff towards her wasn't personal, but rather the product of emotional responses to events before she arrived:

> …when you go into a new site you're opening up a whole lot of emotions that might have been trapped within the site before you've arrived and now they're coming out and emerging and you're dealing with a whole lot of contextual issues that you simply do have to patiently and respectively deal with because they're going to be there. (E)

In most cases the leaders found that they needed to put their own interests and ideas about new directions 'on hold' because they were contradictory to the needs and interests of school community members:

> That's been difficult for me because it's about trying to monitor the time and not rush things because in rushing things it would be totally ineffective and an absolute waste of time. People just weren't ready to talk curriculum and professional development. (D)

Time was needed for all parties to identify, acknowledge and reconcile their contradictory needs and interests before the focus could shift to moving forward together. It was only once they had been in their schools for considerable periods of time that leaders could begin to see such forward movement. As one said; 'I think now we are at innovation … but that's two years down the track (E).

Building Relationships and Challenging Professional Identity

All of the leaders agreed that the most important focus during their first year in the school was building respectful relationships amongst school community members and between themselves and their communities. In particular, as newcomers to their schools they needed to show staff, parents and students that they were trustworthy and had their interests at heart. For instance one leader told how she went out of her way to provide practical and emotional support at a personal level. She felt that the key to her success had been 'sincerity':

> I also knew that they were … pretty astute. I had to do something sincerely. It was about who was I really, because they would see through me if it was just about any false impressions. (D)

While realising the importance of building trust and open, honest relationships, the leaders were also keen to engage at an intellectual level with the teachers on their staff. In their previous schools they had been expected to play the role of critical friend in their staff's learning journeys by asking challenging questions, testing assumptions, analysing evidence and providing opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue. In their new contexts, they were looking for opportunities to work in similar ways but found that many teachers were not comfortable with such processes and in some cases, saw it as a threat to their professional identities.

> So the difficulty for me was, how do I convince them that I think that they are good teachers that could be even better teachers and have them believe the challenge is about moving them on and not pulling them to pieces. (D)

It was clear to leaders that teachers would only be ready to be challenged professionally when they had developed sufficient trust in the leaders and other members of the school community to open themselves to scrutiny.

Routine ('surface') Decision-Making and Reflective ('deep') Decision-Making

Some of the new leaders found that during their first months in their schools they were expected to adopt particular routines that were already established without questioning the underlying assumptions and values. This was contradictory to the kinds of decision-making they valued, which incorporated unpacking the assumptions, principles and interests informing particular decisions. The difference could be explained as the difference between routine or 'surface' decision-making approach and reflective or 'deep' decision-making. One leader described the dilemma this way:

> Staff were pushing for a quick decision on something without the dialogue and principles that underpin it…. It could be a really simple bit like, when … the relief teacher comes to our school they are not allowed to use the computer room. (A)

The leaders adopted a number of strategies to deal with the dilemmas created by the different decision-making models in place. One strategy that was a focus for most leaders in their first year was working with staff, students and community members to clarify and further develop the vision and values that would be able to inform decisions in the future.

> I worked very hard in the first year on the 'airy-fairy stuff' as they called it…value statements and we worked really hard, we did a lot of questioning children. Every child had input. (E)

However, in the interim period, before agreement about core values and principles had been reached, at least one of the leaders found that the only way forward in a disagreement about a funding issue was to 'reach a compromise' (A). Another learnt that acknowledging the importance of and attending to some of the routine matters was a way to build trust with her colleagues:

> I reckon I have learned to be more patient and to celebrate small movements towards shifts in culture at school. Also the importance of doing some of the 'small things' eg rosters, routines etc really thoroughly to ensure that people trust you enough to broach the bigger picture things like learning and curriculum is important. (C)

Through these strategies of developing a shared vision, compromising, and attending to seemingly small issues, the leaders were able to live with the inherent tensions associated with 'surface' and 'deep' decision-making.

Responding Emotionally and Demonstrating Confidence

For all leaders transition was an intensely emotional experience, but at the same time they realised that they needed to 'put on a brave face' (E) if they were to win the confidence of the school community. The emotions experienced by the leaders ran the gamut from heartening to disheartening. All were excited about assuming leadership roles in new settings and welcomed the opportunity for new challenges and new learning. Emotional responses that were more difficult to manage arose from the feelings of isolation that enveloped some leaders as they began the long process of establishing trust and relationships with an unknown group of people:

> The isolation – I felt at times very out of it as a leader – felt there were many things I wasn't being let in on and I wasn't used to this. (C)

As leaders became aware that there were some significant contradictions between their own perceptions of effective leadership, and those of some members of the school community, most began to have some

significant feelings of self-doubt and anxiety about their performance in the new role as exemplified in the following:

> I had lots of discomfort and feeling at some weak moments and uncertain moments, questions about my style. Maybe it is inappropriate to keep always going for the principles and underlying values and all of that. (A)
>
> My hope cycle turns into a despair cycle very quickly. (B)

The cumulative effect of such disheartening emotions spilled into to some leaders' lives outside of school at times affecting family, lifestyle, health and feelings of well being. At the same time they were aware that it would be damaging to reveal feelings of anxiety or self-doubt to members of their new school communities. As one said:

> Even with all the things you think that you have learned about learning being an uncertain process – the paradigm of a leader who knows where they are going and how to get there is very strong. (C)

In summary, the findings about school leaders' experiences of transition reveal that, for them, constructing leadership roles in new sites involved managing the emotional dimensions arising from the contradictions between their perceptions and expectations about what their roles should be, and those of some members of their new school communities. The leaders' emotional responses to their transition experiences were so strong that they needed to employ a range of strategies to understand and manage their own emotions and their interactions with others. These strategies are explored in the following section.

School Leaders use of Emotional Literacy to Manage Transition

According to Park (2003), emotional literacy:

> … is not something you are but something you do. And it is something you do with other people. It is a way of managing your interactions with others so that you can build an understanding of your own emotions and those of others, then find a way of allowing this understanding to inform our action. (p. 18)

The research found that the leaders employed a number of strategies to manage the emotions engendered by their transition experiences that are congruent with this definition of emotional literacy. These strategies can be summarised as:

- accessing support;
- developing empathy; and
- reflecting to reframe.

Accessing Support

All the leaders agreed that one of the key strategies they used to survive the difficult first year of transition was that of accessing support from a variety of sources. One leader felt that she was fortunate to have support from her co-principal:

> I'm fortunate in that the person I'm working with we get on really well. So I guess we've had one another to bounce ideas off of and to laugh and having a sense of humour really helps. Being able to laugh about what happens at the end of the day, just debrief with one another, that's helped. (D)

Another found that a change in the Chairperson of the School Council provided a source of support, while a third cited:

> Support from community, from the supportive staff at school and from personal and professional networks. The district team were also really helpful with the concrete challenges and in providing moral support. (C)

Others mentioned support from a partner, or from being able to tap into other networks of colleagues to support professional learning about particular issues.

The most important source of support for most of the leaders, however, was that generated through the formation of the Stewards' Group. Leaders gave a number of reasons given as to why the regular meetings of the Stewards' group were so helpful. Chief amongst these was the opportunity to debrief with other people who shared similar constructions of the leadership role and who were facing similar challenges in trying to develop leadership in a new setting:

> And when you're feeling frustrated and thinking, why am I doing this job, who cares, just to remember there are others in the same position. So that's been useful too. And hearing other stories…(D)
>
> The leadership in transition group was absolutely the most positive thing that could have come about I think. Because of that sense of loss in community, the sense of not having a single person who knows of your journey, who you can have conversations with anymore about common understandings. (F)

Trust was an important component in the success of the group. All of the leaders needed the opportunity to debrief with supportive colleagues about their experiences in their new settings, but were aware that they needed to be very careful to choose trusted confidantes.

> You could talk about people and what's been happening to you in a very safe environment, knowing that you have a sounding board and expertise and empathy from other people. (F)

Through their various interaction with supportive others, leaders were able to overcome the feelings of isolation which were inherent in moving into an unknown school community.

Developing Empathy

Feeling empathy, the ability to recognise and respond well to others' feelings, is seen as a central skill in emotional literacy (Goleman, 1995; Park, 2003) and was a key to leaders' success in building trust with the members of the school community. For example, one leader found that some staff members were initially suspicious about her motives in taking the placement, believing that she was there to promote District interests over their own. She found that she needed to make changes to the way she was responding, as the following extract illustrates:

> I enjoyed being part of a bigger team and even though there was a lot of tension, there were also some great pockets of support. This taught me to look for and attend to positive situations, relationships etc as levers for change. It would have been really easy to meet suspicion with suspicion – which I think I did for a while and this was very unproductive. (C)

As mentioned earlier, some leaders found that negative experiences before their arrival were informing the initial negative response of some members of their school communities. Understanding this enabled them to respond 'patiently and respectfully' (E).

All of the leaders acknowledged that the highest priority when starting at a new school should be the building of trusting and respectful relationships with and between the members of their school communities. Leaders, such as this one, quickly identified this priority and acted on it; '… the thing that needed changing was the notion of developing trust and honesty and openness and basically in the leadership' (D).

The leaders also used the Stewards group to explore questions such as 'How do we lead the transition respectfully (being respectful to staff and previous principal)?' One recommendation was:

> … to try really hard to adopt a position where you value everyone who has gone before you and know and trust that everyone has worked with a spirit of intent of wanting the best and why that might look different to us when we move in. While it might look different we have to find a very respectful and real valuing of what it was they did and what's happened before and that what we are going to do is add another layer and another bit. (C)

In addition to building empathy themselves, leaders also developed structures and a culture that valued and encouraged the empathic relationships between teachers:

> I have worked very hard to create a culture of peer mentoring between teachers to try and take away my role as the person that makes everybody do things and try and set up first partnered networks and now small group networks so that teachers are encouraging each other. (E)

By the end of the second year in their schools most leaders felt that they had been able to develop, through an empathic approach to relationships, the mutual trust and respect that were the basis for co-construction of leadership that was more transformative in nature.

Reflecting to Reframe

Reflection, or the attempt to critically analyse and make new meanings, was integral to leaders' abilities to manage some of the stressful emotions that they experienced early in transition. All were characterised by a commitment to their own learning and that of others. They had developed and were able to articulate a coherent personal philosophy about learning and leadership and used it to analyse challenges against key principles and values. This enabled them to reflect on the dilemmas the encountered in their new settings, manage their feelings of discouragement and find ways to move forward:

> I think a choice as a leader is that we remain true to ourselves and don't take the easy road of falling into the culture of the new school we go to, which would be the easier road. We continually in our heads go, where do I want to be at the end, in a couple of years time and what are the choices I've got to make or the decisions and the values I would hold and keep at it. (F)

All leaders felt their reflective skills had been enhanced by their participation in the Learning to Learn Project as the resultant learning enabled them to see meaningful patterns across their diverse experiences

of leadership. They felt that it was the opportunities they had had to develop new models of thinking about leadership that supported them to reframe difficulties as opportunities:

> That it's not as easy as what it seemed but I still love it. And I think that being part of the journey has been really important and you do have to put yourself back to being part of a beginner, to be a leader. And my philosophy has remained the same really despite the hiccups along the way. So I think that brings a much deeper learning and understanding of who you are and what education could be. And the more we know the less we know. (F)

For one leader, keeping a reflective journal over the year, culminating in a one-page overview representing the learning journey in her school, provided source of reframing and solace:

> It was cathartic. It was like putting the hundreds of pages of journal notes and all the readings and all the dialogues from the Learning to Learn leaders in transition work… into a simple one page for me to say, okay has there been a difference? (E)

Several of the leaders also commented on the power of an article ('John Sherwood's Dance' by Tim Dalmau) given to them by Margot Foster, the Learning to Learn Manager, which used the metaphor of 'dance' to explore the challenges of co-constructing leadership in a new setting.

> … it is so true and now I think I'm doing a Tango or I'm doing a waltz or a slow step. About people's perceptions about who you are, how their own personal learning journey impacts on that and then how you fit with the total dance. (F)

Finally, the debriefing sessions in the Steward's Group were not just about finding comfort and support. They found that it was through their dialogue in this group that they were able to detect common themes, enabling them to reframe their experiences in ways that helped them to learn more about developing leadership in a new setting:

> It helped because for me I could see some of the patterns. It helped me be more strategic. Definitely helped me sustain some optimism about the process. Helped give some courage to ride out of the discomforts and not to move quickly and fall back into old ways. (A)

Through these reflective processes, leaders felt they were able to 'reframe' their perceptions of difficult and upsetting experiences as learning opportunities. This enabled them to continue to move forwards, albeit slowly, in negotiating the kinds of leadership roles and learning cultures they valued.

Discussion

The findings about leaders in transition reveal important insights about the emotions engendered by transition, the source of these emotions and leaders' use of emotional literacy to manage them effectively. There is no doubt that all the leaders found that constructing leadership in new sites was intensely emotional work. Beatty (2000) suggested that a further paradox of leadership exists in the contradiction between the complex emotions it can invoke and the expectation that strong leaders should not show emotions. As they grappled with the many challenges in their first year, the leaders in this study experienced a wide range of exhilarating and potentially debilitating emotions, but felt enormous pressure to maintain a calm and rational front.

It appears that the source of many of these emotions was the paradoxical nature of the expectations they encountered. It is likely that such contradictions occur to some extent whenever leaders change sites. Dalmau (1994) referred to Sherwood's metaphor of a dance to describe the intricate steps that enable new leaders and their staff to gradually orient towards a shared construction of effective leadership. However, for these leaders, the paradoxes appear to have been exacerbated by their constructions of leadership as transformative and focussed on learning, challenge and continuous improvement, rather than as managerial, and focussed on acknowledging the status quo and maintaining levels of comfort and familiarity.

At the time they were living through the transition experience, the leaders were not consciously using a framework of paradoxes to reframe their thinking, but they were aware that they were subject to contradictory expectations. It was through their involvement in this research, and the collaborative identification and discussion of themes in the data, that the framework of paradoxes emerged as one way of understanding the challenging and emotional nature of their transition experiences. We would argue that this process, in itself, contributed to the leaders' emotional literacy, a position that is supported by Farson's (2002) view that it is through developing an understanding of the paradoxes which are intrinsic to their work that leaders may 'free their energies for more productive efforts' (p. 7).

However, the research revealed that leaders employed emotional literacy in a number of ways above and beyond that engendered by the research process. Firstly, they realised the importance of accessing

support from trusted others. In doing so, their actions were congruent with Park's (2003) view that 'emotional literacy involves using whatever relationships are available to help transform feelings that incapacitate into feelings that empower' (p. 19). The support from others provided them with an opportunity to share their emotional turmoil, making sense of it in the process. In these interactions they could critique their leadership and acknowledge mistakes without fear of reprisals, a process which Steiner (1999) purports to be the most difficult step in emotional literacy.

Secondly, they focussed on developing empathy and trust with and between members of their school communities. This finding has been supported by most recent studies of effective leadership (see for example Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000; Moos, 2003) and might appear to be common sense, but most of the leaders reported that it was easy to underestimate the amount of time and effort that should be spent on building relationships in the face of the many other competing priorities faced by leaders in new settings. By prioritising the building of empathy and trust they found that they were able to move forwards once relationships had been established. By listening to others' views and trying to understand their feelings, they were able to work towards co-constructing a form of leadership that was acceptable to the members of their school communities, while also being congruent with their own beliefs and values.

Finally, these leaders were able to 'put a larger frame' around their experiences through processes of debriefing and analysis. Individual leaders used a number of diverse strategies to help them analyse their experiences of transition, including using their key principles and values to analyse difficult situations, reading relevant literature and using writing as a reflective tool However, the strategy that was of particular significance and common to all of them was their participation in the Stewards' Group. It was in this group that they were able to explore and make sense of their experiences with colleagues who had some shared understanding of what it means to be a transformative leader. The power of such groups, often referred to as 'learning communities' in the teacher development literature, is that they provide an enabling context for professional growth and provide opportunities for participants to 'create as well as receive knowledge' (Lieberman, 2000). The Stewards' Group certainly did this, and in this way, acted as much more than a support group.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm the emotional nature of leadership and particularly when leaders are faced with contradictory expectations in new settings. They highlight the importance of leaders' emotional literacy and the support structures needed to achieve this. These leaders were fortunate in that their involvement in the Learning to Learn Project, and the creation of the Stewards' Group, provided them with the opportunities to share, reflect, analyse and plan, thereby honing their emotional literacy skills. This study highlights the need for all leaders to have access to professional development and support in the area of emotional literacy.

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