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Leading for impact

Dr Pauline Thompson-
pauline.thompson@unimelb.edu.au



Today's workshop – introductions

Dr Pauline Thompson



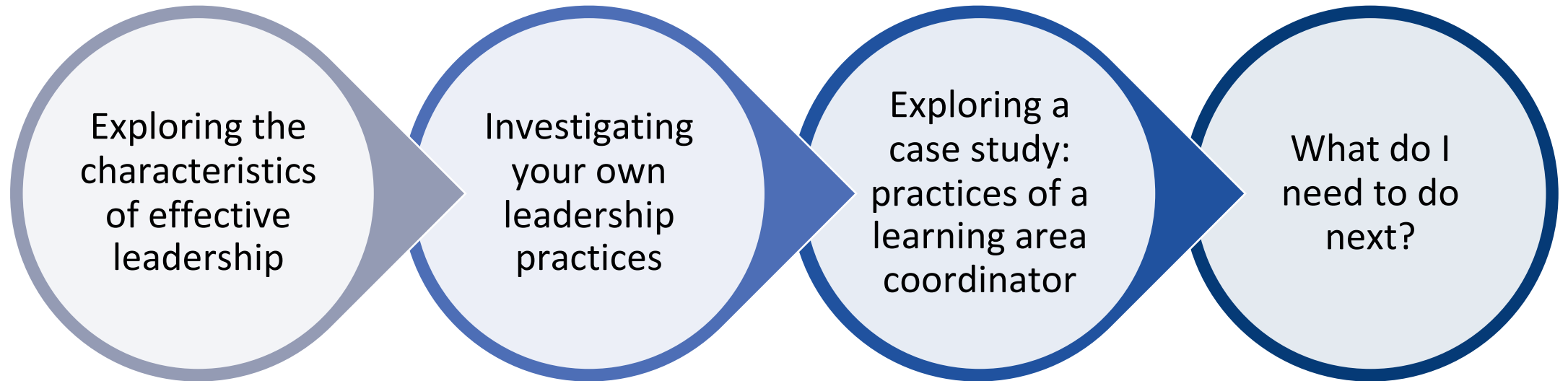
Dr Pauline Thompson is a lecturer in educational leadership at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne.

Middle leaders play a very important role in improving learning outcome for students as they have a direct and positive influence on teachers' classroom practice. However, it is well known that middle leadership roles can be challenging as these leaders combine an important leadership role with a significant teaching allocation. This workshop offers the opportunity to explore current research on effective leadership practices and then consider what this means for current or future leadership in schools.



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Overview of today's workshop





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What do good leaders do?





Let's have a look at what good leaders do?

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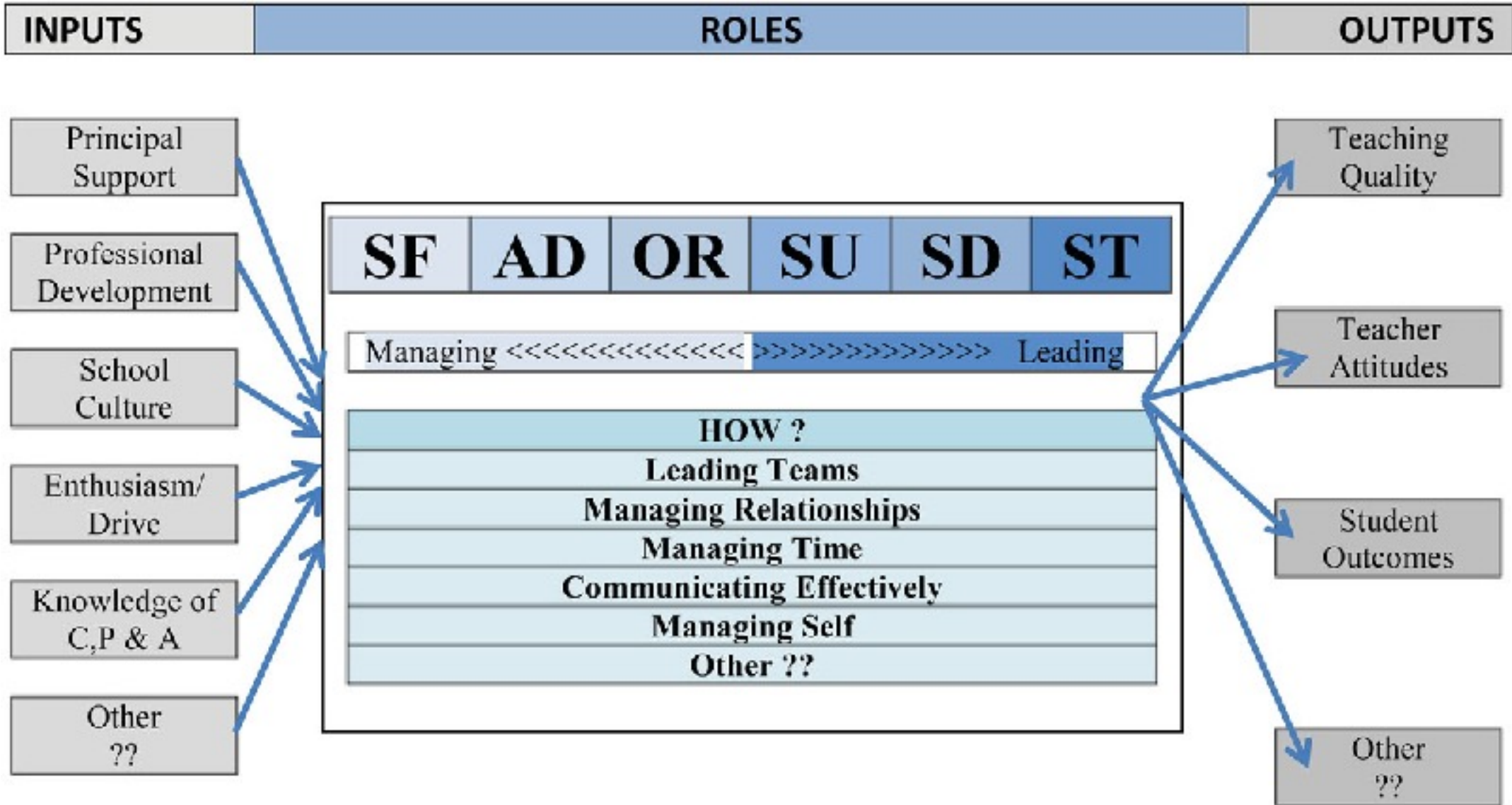


Seven strong claims about successful school leadership (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019)

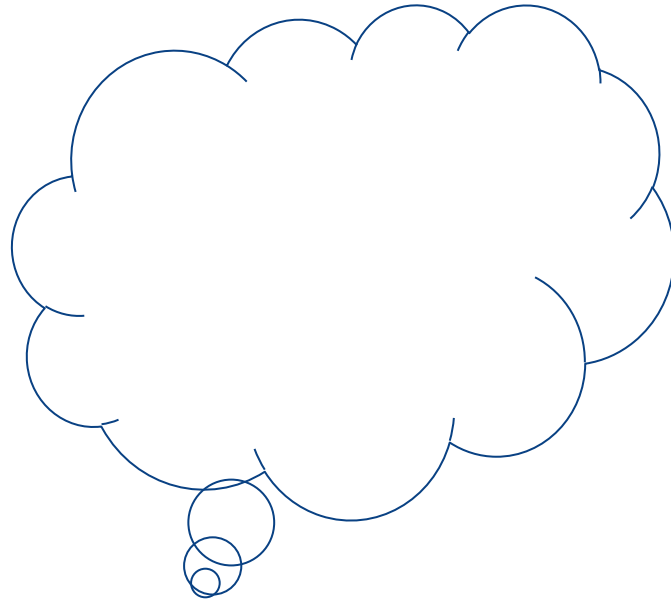
1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning
2. **Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices**
3. The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work
4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, ability and working conditions
5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed
6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others
7. A small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness



DeNobile (2019) – Towards a theoretical model of middle leadership in schools



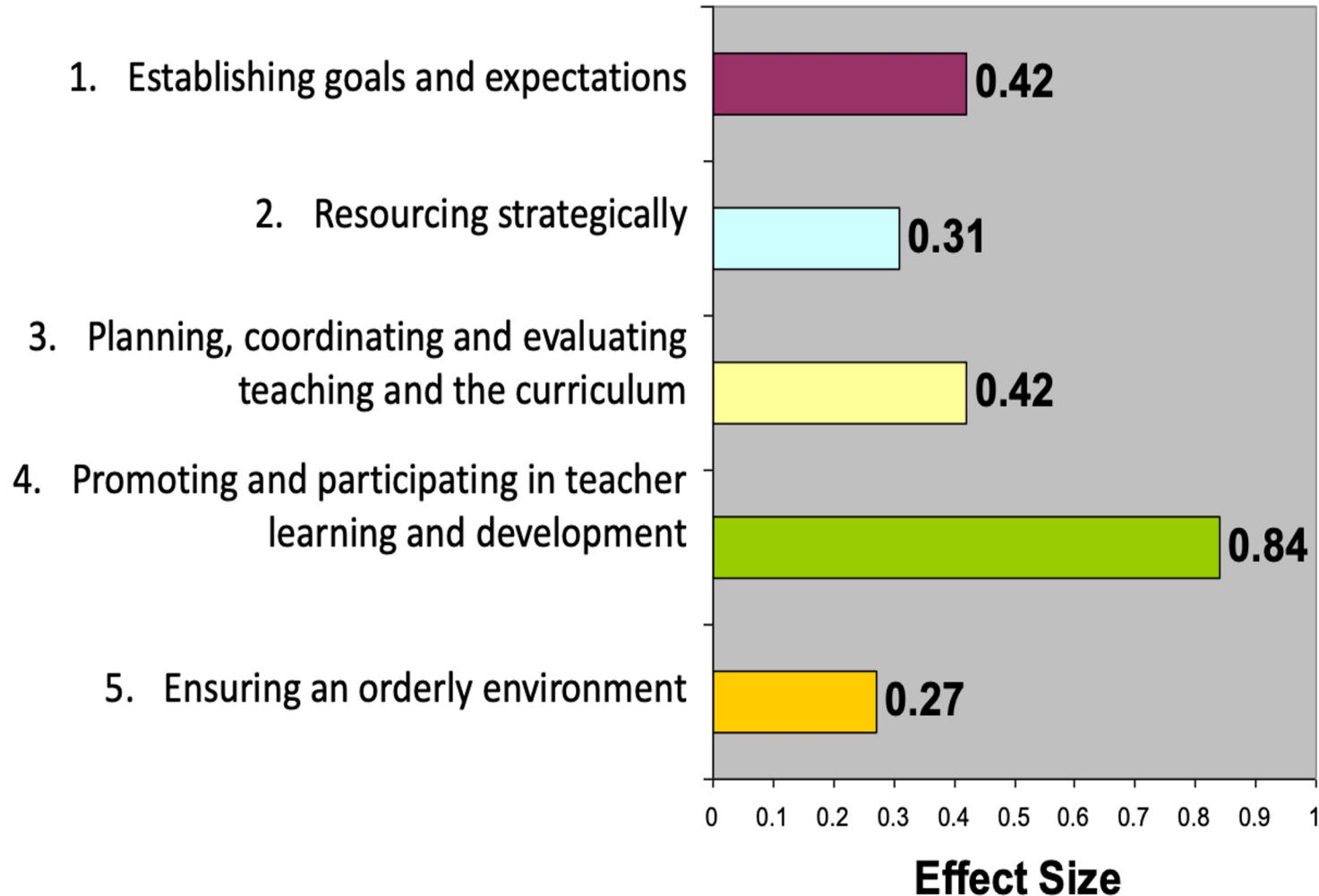
How does your experience compare with this research?





The importance of leadership

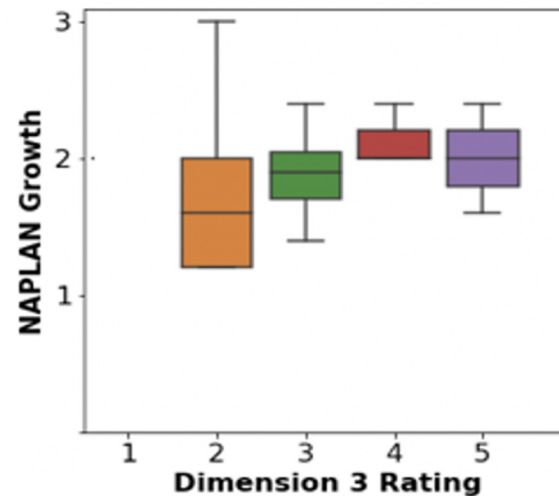
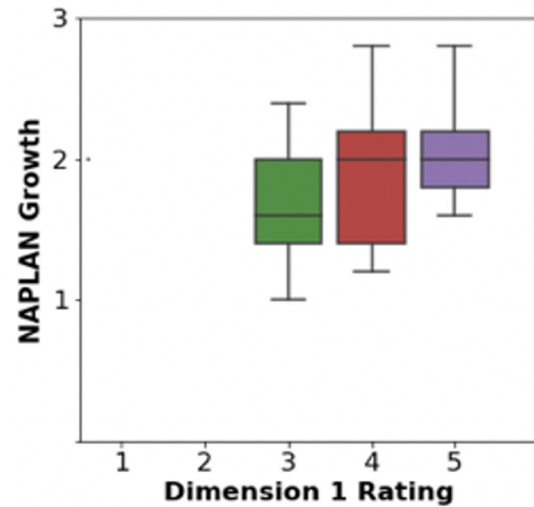
Robinson, V., & Gray, E. (2019). What difference does school leadership make to student outcomes?. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 49(2), 171-187.





Boxplots for mean NAPLAN growth score across dimension 1 & 3

Thompson, Stokes
and Kirley - paper
under review



Dimension 1:
Setting goals & expectations

Dimension 3:
Ensuring the quality of teaching



Ontario Leadership Framework

Leithwood, K. (2012). The Ontario leadership framework 2012. Retrieved from the Institute for Education Leadership website: http://iel.immix.ca/storage/6/1345688978/Final_Research_Report_-_EN.pdf.

Four Domains of Practice

Twenty Specific Leadership Practices

1. Set Direction

1. Build a shared vision
2. Identify specific, shared, short-term goals
3. Create high-performance expectations
4. Communicate the vision and goals

2. Build Relationships and Develop People

1. Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff
2. Provide support for individual staff members
3. Model the school's values and practices
4. Build trusting relationships among staff, students and parents
5. Establish productive relationships with teacher federation representatives

3. Develop the Organisation to Support Desired Practices

1. Build a collaborative culture and distribute leadership
2. Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration
3. Build productive relationships with families and communities
4. Connect the school to its wider environment
5. Maintain a healthy school environment
6. Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals

4. Improve the Instructional Program

1. Staff the instructional program
2. Provide instructional support
3. Monitor student learning and school improvement progress
4. Buffer the staff from distractions to their instructional work
5. Participate with teachers in their professional learning activities



Contemporary research on effective leadership practice .. How might I enhance my own leadership?

Leadership practice to focus on	Why have you selected this practice?	How will you develop your skills in this area?	How might you know if there has been a change in your leadership practice?

Case study: Practices of a subject area leader

Part of a current research project

Middle level leader for 5 years, large secondary school
(1500 students)
Previously held role of Year level leader





research project

PARTICIPANTS & RESEARCH PROCESS

- Schools across Australia (NSW, Victoria, QLD, SA and WA)
- City/rural & regional
- Co-ed, boys' and girls' schools
- Survey on leadership practices (have about 750 responses at the moment)
- 50 interviews with middle leaders, principal and assistant principals

QUESTIONS

- How do learning area leaders enact their leadership to support effective teaching and learning?
- How do the leadership practices of middle leaders vary between schools?
- What role does senior school leadership play to support middle leaders to improve teaching and learning across a school?

Setting vision and have a plan to achieve it

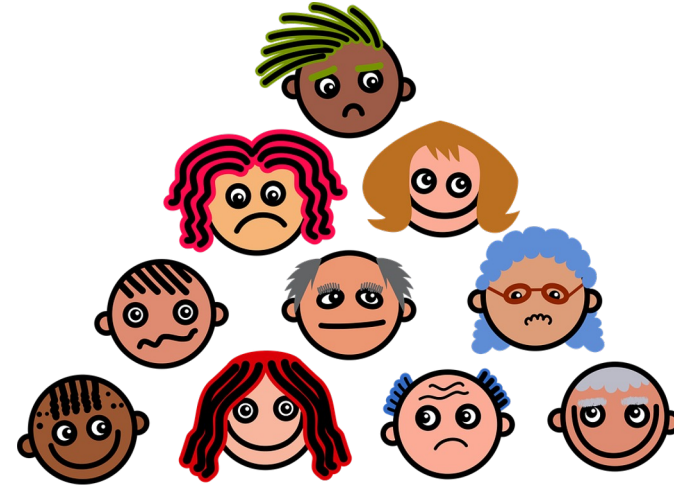
I still set the vision in terms of this is our shared understanding of what science looks like at school, and I think I have to establish that first. Then at the start of each year I set the goal for professional development across the year and what things should look like by the end of the year.

The five-year plan involved doing everything backward planning and making sure that we had every unit backward planned, success criteria, learning intentions, assessments and activities that addressed those essential understandings. Then we looked at – and how we were rolling it out year by year. Looked at the skills, how we pull those skills apart, where we're going to embed them across – so, science skills across the curriculum.

What resonates for
you?



Working with staff



So, I think, one of the first things I learnt was very early in the job. I tried to fix everything. People would come, they'd – and email me and I would try and fix it immediately.

It took me a while to realise that by fixing it for them, I wasn't actually helping them at all.

Also manage your team's stress. You're the conduit between leadership and the coal face, and you need to support your senior leaders even if you disagree.

Is this your
experience of being a
leader?

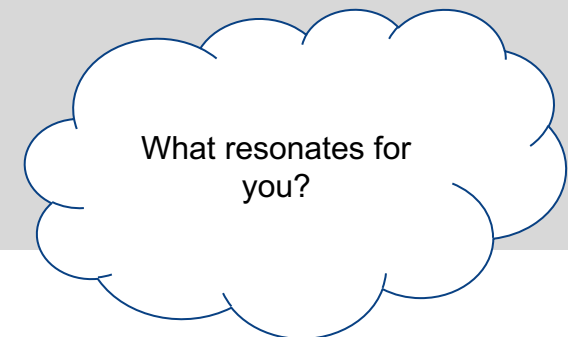


Set expectations and provide support

I set very clear expectations.

For example, this year we are working on differentiation. I give them some theory and fundamentals behind philosophy of differentiation. So, rather than just going okay I'm going to expect you to differentiate your learning, I don't think a lot of teachers actually know what that looks like.

Then we do some work in the learning area meeting where I teach them how to do it and give them the theory behind it. Then I will put an exemplar up for staff. This is – if you're doing this, I expect yours to look like this.





What are the qualities of a good learning area leader?

I think they need to be really clear and very organised. I think they need to be very approachable. Yeah, I think staff need to be able to feel like that if they don't understand something or they haven't done something or whatever that they can come and you're not going to go a little bit crazy at them.

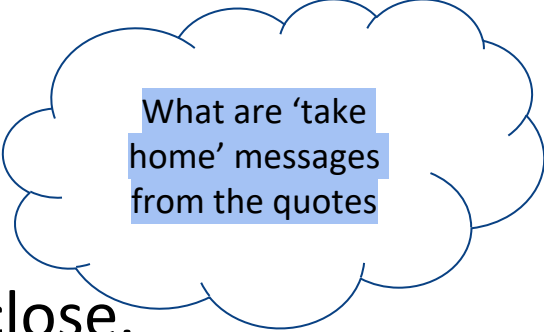
You know what, part of it is just that how good are you at liaising with people up and down.





What advice would you give someone starting out in the role?

- Everything takes longer than you think it will. Everything.
- If you've got a two-year plan, stretch it to five and you might be close.
- Be prepared that things won't work and that you will have to go back to the drawing board, and that's okay.
- Use your team to support you, you don't have to do everything.
- Make people accountable and get them to do what you need them to do.
- Be as approachable and as happy and as enthusiastic as you can because it – people feed off that enthusiasm. If you're flat your department will be flat.
- You need to be present and engaged and excited if you expect them to be like that.



What are 'take home' messages from the quotes



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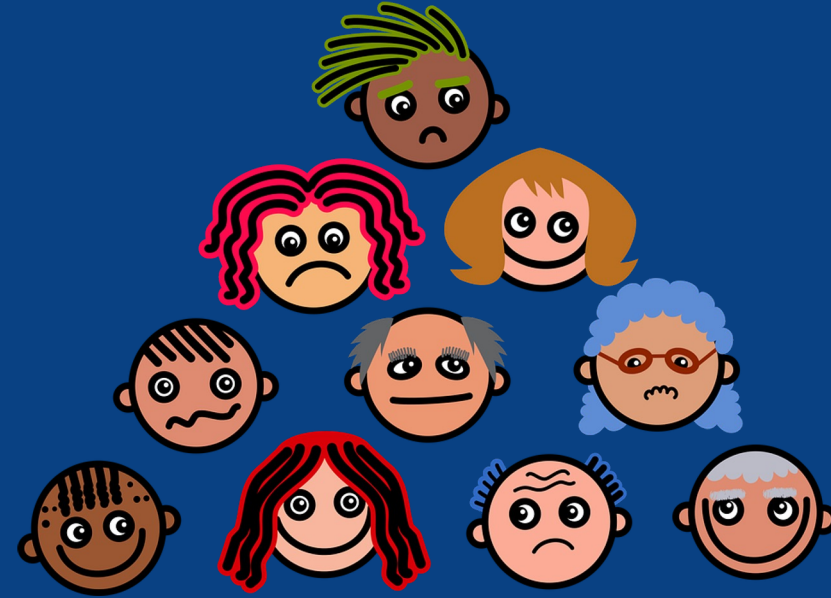
Questions? Comments?





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Thank you



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