

sibility for professional development having an impact on students (and not only on teachers), and a renewed urgency to create more debates about learning. A lot of my own work is spent helping systems and schools to devise 'dashboards' of what success looks like and where on the pathway to this success is the school. The emphasis on a daily basis is more on progress and less on levels of proficiency, but the targets of proficiency are clearly exhibited in the dashboards. As always, the key component is providing quality evidence to create the right debates; the systems do not resolve the debates. Professional judgement is key and it is important to focus the accountability more on the overall teacher judgements that are made about progress. The two key questions here are: what is the quality of evidence that informs the teacher judgement, and what is the quality of the consequences for the teaching and learning from this evidence? Note that the attention is not on the data, not on reports of the data, but on the professional judgements and consequences of the key person in the student learning debate over whom we have some influence: the teacher. The sobering comment is that some schools do not like these debates about their impact – because it is easier not to know.

As has been noted, the reward is teachers knowing, in a dependable and public manner, the quality of their impact (see Amabile & Kramer, 2011), and the New Zealand system rewards schools that are engaging in their debates with 'earned or supported autonomy'. There is a quasi-inspection system (the Educational Review Office, or ERO), which visits schools and then provides a public report on the quality of the school in many aspects. If the inspection finds major evidence of schools having dependable systems about their impact and they are having positive impact, then the school earns a degree of autonomy – that is, inspection every four or five years; if not, the inspection is more frequent (in one case, every four months, and the ERO provides direction for these schools to improve knowing their impact). This is the focus that was referred to in early chapters: a focus on having dependable knowledge of the impact on student learning by evaluating and esteeming the quality of the teachers' professional judgements.

## **A model for school leaders**

A major reason why teachers stay in a school or stay in teaching relates to the support by the school leaders so that teachers can have a positive impact. Think of reasons why a teacher would stay in teaching: teacher autonomy; leadership; staff relations; the nature of the students; facilities; and safety. The factor that explains the decision to stay or not – by a long way – relates to the nature of leadership (Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011). It is the leaders' motivation of teachers and students, identifying and articulating high expectations for all, consulting with teachers before making decisions that affect teachers, fostering communication, allocating resources, developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning, and regularly collecting and reviewing with teachers data on student learning. Learning leadership is the most powerful incentive to stay in teaching.

To give permission to teachers to engage in evaluating their impact and then using this evidence to enhance their teaching requires leaders who consider that this way of thinking and acting is valuable. The core lever with which to create schools that lead to enhanced impact is the leader's beliefs about his or her role. There are many ways in which we can consider how school leaders think and work. Two well-used ways are 'transformational' and 'instructional' leaders.

- *Transformational* leaders are attuned to inspiring teachers to new levels of energy and commitment towards a common mission, which develops the school's capacity to work together to overcome challenges and reach ambitious goals, and then to ensure that teachers have time to conduct their teaching.
- *Instructional* leaders attend to the quality and impact of all in the school on student learning, ensure that disruption to learning is minimized, have high expectations of teachers for their students, visit classrooms, and are concerned with interpreting evidence about the quality and nature of learning in the school.

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) conducted a meta-analysis comparing these two forms of leadership. Based on 22 studies and 2,883 principals, the impact of transformational leadership on student achievement was 0.11, whereas the impact of instructional leadership was 0.42. The effects were strongest on promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (0.84), establishing goals and expectations (0.42), planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum (0.42), aligning resource selection and allocation to priority teaching goals (0.31), and then ensuring an orderly and supportive environment (0.27). The authors concluded that the reason for these enhanced effects is that transformational leaders are more focused on the relationship between leaders and teachers, and that the quality of these relationships is not predictive of the quality of student outcomes. In contrast, instructional leaders are more focused on the quality and impact of teaching in the school, and on building appropriate trust and a safe climate in which teachers can seek and discuss this evidence of impact.

These findings align with the fundamental argument in this book that leaders in schools (teachers, principals, boards) need to be fundamentally concerned with evaluation of the impact of all in the school. In schools that regularly have evidence of high levels of impact on students, the leadership can be more indirect in supporting teachers in their work towards higher levels of impact. Conversely, schools with lower levels of impact are more in need of direct leaders creating an orderly and safe environment, working directly with teachers in the school to set appropriate goals and expectations, and explicitly providing resources that help teachers to know their impact and to discuss the consequences for change to improve this impact (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2011; Robinson, 2011).

The argument is that such instructional leaders can truly make the difference, and it is the beliefs and construction of their role that serves to make this difference and inspire all in their schools. The important distinction, however, is to move from the notion of 'instructional leaders' (which places too much emphasis on the instruction) to 'learning leaders' (which places the emphasis on student and adult learning). The focus is not 'Was it taught?' and 'How was it taught?', but 'Did students acquire essential knowledge and skills?', 'How do we know?', and 'How can we use that evidence of student learning to improve instruction?'

A key role of learning leaders is to construct the learning of the adults in the schools. There are features of teacher learning or professional development that we know have an impact on student achievement. Such features include coaching over an extended time, the use of data teams, a focus on how students learn subject matter content, and teachers working collaboratively to plan and monitor lessons based on evidence about how students learn in light of this planning (see Bausmith & Barry, 2011). Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) completed a synthesis of the effective professional development systems, and they promoted a five-step process (see also Timperley, 2012).

1. What knowledge and skills do our students need?
2. What knowledge and skills do we, as teachers, need?
3. How can we deepen our professional knowledge and refine our skills?
4. How can we engage students in new learning experiences?
5. What has been the impact of our changed actions?

The arguments in this book are aligned with this process – except that we work the other way around. Instead, we *start* with discussions and evidence about the impact of our actions, and then move to the other dimensions.

The topic of staffroom conversation needs to move towards a collective understanding of the adult's effect on the students rather than the 'presentism', privacy, and personal preferences that are so often the norm. This notion of 'presentism', coined by Jackson (1968), relates to the relative emphasis on current and immediate classroom needs, problems, and satisfactions instead of on long-term impact and plans. Jackson noted, as did Lortie (1975), the way in which teachers relied on their own independent observations of their students to gauge how well they were doing, and that there was little significant sharing of common understanding and techniques (see Hargreaves, 2010). Hence the importance of school leaders creating an atmosphere of trust and collegiality to allow the debates to turn to the evidence of the effect on student learning – on a regular basis. It requires strong 'learning leaders' to permit, encourage, and sustain the discussions on impact.

I witnessed one large high school begin this journey, during which the principal took some two or three years to convince teachers that the focus was on student learning and improving every student in the school. If there had been one whiff of accountability, the mood would have turned counter-productive. He provided a school-based reporting engine to help teachers to keep track of their effects on individual students, provided resources to help teachers to build graphs of the individual trajectories of all students from the previous five years through to the end of the current year, at the start of the year created targets for the end of the year for each student based on these trajectories, and created time for teachers to meet to prepare common assessments and then monitor their individual effects on students. This led to rich conversations in which these teachers had engaged and the school is now renowned for the quality of evidence about its success in raising achievement.

I have worked closely with one elementary school, close to my home, over the past eight years. The impact of these teachers is stunning, and every year I see their effect sizes of 1 and 2 for all students; well in excess of the  $d = >0.40$  for which I am asking in this book. I know the dedication, the commitment to each student in this school, the absolutely driven hard work that all put in at this school. Most critically, the group most committed to getting the effects are the students. Many of them know more about assessment than university students. They know how to interpret assessments, know about standard error, know how to set tests for themselves, and are constantly seeking answers to 'Where to next?' The school impact is so well known that our prime minister frequently visits the school, and even brings international guests and other leaders to the school; it is one of the more impressive schools that I have visited. On my visits, the students interrogate me, have asked for improvements to the resources that we have provided, and exhibit so much pleasure in their 'known' success.

Developing a defensible model for change is important if the messages in this book are to be achieved. It is important to note that there is nothing new in this book or in *Visible Learning*. The messages and evidence are based on a study of prior literature, on what has worked successfully in so many classrooms. As noted in the introduction, there is no new program, no new acronym, no new 'Gee whiz, let's do this for a while!'; instead, it is a recognition of the critical importance of understanding how excellent teachers think! It is about change, leading to all teachers in the schools thinking in powerful ways about their role, their impact, and their collegiality in assisting all to have high expectations of success. It is about having multiple sources of evidence about impact on all students, and esteeming – and publicly and privatively valuing – this evidence of impact.

The good news is that teachers are often driven by having information about their impact. Amabile and Kramer (2011: 22) noted that 'of all the things that can boost emotions, motivation, and perceptions during a workday, the single most important is making progress in meaningful work'. They noted the power of catalysts (actions directly supporting work – especially from fellow workers) and nourishers (events – again especially from others – that show respect and words of encouragement). Negative influences include inhibitors (actions that fail to support or actively hinder work), and toxins (discouraging or undermining events). The notion of meaningful work for teachers, I would argue, is having positive impacts on students learning. Yes, some may see it more as getting through the curriculum, keeping kids busy until the bell rings, doing one's best . . . Effective school leaders, however, support teachers in their daily progress in this meaningful work, and thus set a positive feedback loop into motion. Amabile and Kramer (2011: 80) concluded that if leaders:

facilitate their steady progress salient to them, and treat them well, they will experience the emotions, motivations, and perceptions necessary for great performance. Their superior work will contribute to organizational success. And here's the beauty of it: They will love their jobs.

Fullan (2012: 52) echoes this claim: 'It is the actual experience of being more effective that spurs them to repeat, and build on the behaviour.'

## A model for change

Learning leaders need clear processes for implementing the mind frames outlined in this book. So often, we spend too much time on saying what leaders ought to be, ought to do, and ought to value; instead, we need to spend more time considering how to effectively create schools in which leaders are responsible for, allow, and encourage all to know about and have positive impacts on student learning. So many good ideas fail due to low levels of degree of implementation, fidelity, or dosage. Michael Barber (2008) has developed a most effective set of methods with which to accomplish successful delivery of such missions, unfortunately termed 'deliverology'. While there has been criticism of the policies that may have been introduced via this method, the method is the message. The following is based on the principles developed by Barber and it is worth reading more about them (because, of course, there is no one way in which to achieve 'deliverology' – see Barber, Moffit, & Kihn, 2011). There are four steps, as follows, to which I add a fifth.