

Leadership Identity, 31 May 2017

Edu-Lead

Education Leadership

ACADEMICAL DISCUSSIONS: ELAD

Prof Jacky Lumby (guest speaker); Jan Heystek; Kobus Mentz; Lloyd Conley; Dr Aaron Nhlapo; Anna Pelser; CP Van der Vyver; Herman Van Vuuren; Jan Khumalo; Mark Bosch; Sipho Kwatubana

We started the morning off with an insightful presentation from Professor Jacky Lumby, one of the authors of the article: "From simplicism to complexity in leadership identity and preparation: exploring the lineage and dark secrets", where she collaborated on South Africa currently dealing with the racial topic on identity of school principals. She also pointed out that there is a huge complexity in identifying these identities but sometimes it is useful to focus on one aspect like this. Research paradox, to think in binaries and away from binaries at the same time

In the discussion that followed, by the members of Edu-Lead, Professor Lloyd Conley stated that all schools face challenges and schools face different challenges depending on their community. The environment wants all to achieve the same results/ level of academical states Professor Conley also pointed out that it will be dishonest if we just assume all can achieve the same level.

This led to the discussion on multiple identities depending on the roles that is expected to be fulfilled by the principals. We are labelling schools. Doctor CP van der Vyver brings in the question: Do we have a core identity for principals that can be universal? Are we putting them in a mold? Is it fair putting the standards and we don't take the challenges into consideration when the context is different?

Then followed, Doctor Sipho Kwatubana explains that we are focused on just the academically results produced from the matric results which is a western approach. African approach: if the community is doing well then we are doing good as well. Developing the community. Training principals: construction of identity is a system on its own. Doctor Anna Pelser enlightens that the best way to approach is to set an example by teaching and not just applying it. Let the staff in to teach. A team needs to

work together. The focus is not just on the principal. He plays an integral part, not just by showing up when needed but by being intermeshed. Leadership needs to lead without putting yourself on the floorplan.

Professor Kobus Mentz starts to question: Do we have a core identity in our country? We need to expand the core for principals to buy in. We need to find common core identities to find similarities. We are not living and working in a mono-cultural environment in our country. Why are expecting to have the same level in privileged and under privileged schools. We are afraid to admit the problem lies within our own systems. Context and strengths need to be studied. Doctor Herman van Vuuren explains that the core values of our country are present, the basis, we just need to better it. We need to look at the need as well. Not just the principals need to be the focus. What about departmental heads.

Within this discussion a new research opportunity has been pointed out by Professor Jan Heystek: A case study should be done on what criteria is used to determine the socio-capital of a principal. What do they use to make the choice?

Article:

Jacky Lumby & Fenwick English (2009) From simplicism to complexity in leadership identity and preparation: exploring the lineage and dark secrets, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 12:2, 95-114, DOI: 10.1080/13603120802449678