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Lawrie has a background in teaching, human resource development, lecturing and research. His career spans over 35 years in education. His professional development activities include development, design and implementation of leadership programs for school administrators. Lawrie is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership in Centre for Educational Policy and Leadership, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, the University of Melbourne. He coordinates postgraduate courses in educational management. Lawrie teaches in leadership, human resource management, marketing, school effectiveness and improvement. His research interests are in marketing in education, and successful school leadership. Currently he is a member of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), which is a team of international researchers who are investigating successful school principalship in 14 countries. Lawrie is involved in consultancy work in the Victorian school system including conducting government school reviews and independent school inspections, and involvement in the following professional learning programs: Performance and Development Culture; Educational Leadership - Shaping Pedagogy; and, Capacity Building of Leadership Teams. He has published extensively in international and local journals. Lawrie has taught the University of Melbourne, Master of Education in Hong Kong, and taught about and conducted school reviews as part of this course in association with the Hong Kong Education Bureau.

