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The West Wind vs. The East Wind: Understanding Leadership for Teacher Learning

東風、西風：促進教師學習的教育領導



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Leadership for Teacher Learning in Singapore Primary Schools

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The school principal is typically the most influential and thus powerful position in the school organization, and rightly so by virtue of the authority and resources that are given by school governing boards and the state. Their influence on teachers' teaching and students' learning can therefore be significant. However, although their influence on student learning is second only to classroom teaching (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006), their indirect effects on student learning can be highly pervasive and encompassing. For example, school principals can have significant influence over the design of physical and virtual learning spaces to support rich student learning experiences. They can also significantly influence the overall school culture and ethos which have significant impact on the aspirations and motivations of key stakeholders for student achievement. They do play a critical role in the development of staff members in terms of their personal and professional development in the teaching domain. Their indirect influence on student learning via the development of teachers' teaching competences is apparently salient due to the direct impact that teachers have on their students' learning. Notwithstanding the salience of these roles, school principals are now faced with new demands (e.g., increasing accountability processes; widening networks, collaborations and partnership; improving communications with parents to satisfying their growing demands and expectations; and addressing disruptions on a daily basis), which compel them to relinquish these roles to other staff members in school such as middle leaders or teacher leaders. The indirect influence on teaching and learning has become more indirect. The growing interest and value in distributed leadership over the years is therefore understandable. Nevertheless, their involvement in teacher learning in general is still essential – albeit more indirect and lesser in quantitative terms. This paper seeks to present how school principals can positively support the development of teacher learning in the context Singapore primary schools.