

## **The future of leadership: New directions for leading and learning**

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### **Introduction**

The chapters in this book raise a great number of critical issues about leader-centrism that scholars of leadership need to address. It is important to recall that the primary motivation for *Questioning Leadership* was to investigate, if not restore, the balance in explanation that since the 1980s has favoured leader-centrism as the dominant, *a priori*, account for organisational functioning, at the expense of organisational–institutional factors that have provided both the context for leadership and exercised their own constraints on al performance (e.g. Perrow, 1986 [1993]). Different answers and solutions have been offered in the chapters of this book on how to address, or redress, leader-centrism, from a variety of theoretical and philosophical perspectives.

The three sections of this final chapter discuss some key issues we think will contribute to knowledge of how to create effective learning in schools, individually and collectively, on the assumption that student learning is the core

business of schools and that it is the role of principals to make that happen. First, Lakomski proposes that a new direction in leadership studies is called for that would recalibrate the explanatory balance in that cognition as a dynamical system (see Chapter 1) locates leadership as part of the ‘cognitive ecology’ (see Hutchins, 2010) of organisational functioning. In the context of this broader conception of cognition, it is important to emphasise that cognition is fundamentally *social* and integral to human learning in general, and to classroom learning in particular. How knowledge of social cognition might improve classroom learning is briefly discussed at the end of this part of the chapter.

In the second part, Evers looks at a number of constraints that shape what might be required to meet the onus of proof in demonstrating the importance of leadership in explaining and advancing an organisation’s performance. Taking note of Hutchins’ (2014) distinction between the extended mind thesis and distributed cognition as being primarily about the centredness of the cognitive unit, Evers argues for a continuum of centredness from none to strong. This both explains the possibility of shifting levels of influence between the three elements comprising Lakomski’s account of social cognitive neuroscience – the social, cognitive, and neural – and shows that there is no one answer concerning where leadership might be located, and whether it is present at all. Determining whether or not leadership obtains, depends on the degree of centredness a cognitive unit requires to accomplish tasks and solve problems, something that will vary from issue to issue.

In the final section, Eacott challenges the educational leadership research community to engage with one another actively, and to move beyond the parallel monologues that fill journals, books, theses, and conferences. Such a move connects to the social epistemological arguments of the preceding sections of this book, albeit from a different perspective in that knowledge production is seen a relational activity. Central to Eacott's argument is that any contribution to knowledge must be able to demonstrate how it relates to the arguments of others if it is to advance the growth of knowledge.

### **Leadership as part of the cognitive ecology of organisational functioning –**

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#### *Cognition as a dynamic system*

In leader-centric views, so we argued in Chapter 1 (also Evers and Lakomski, 2015), the individual principal is mistakenly imbued with cognitive autonomy (if not hegemony) and accorded a conception of agency, the 'self-as-controller', based on traditional understandings of 'self'. 'Context' in the form of organisational, institutional or environmental features, is not considered to exert control or constraint over principal autonomy and 'degrees of freedom' for action. We raised a number of objections against this view and suggested a more nuanced way to recast the interrelationship between individual and context/world. Understanding the nature of human cognition as 'social' (e.g. Gillett, 2009), that

is, as constituting a dynamic system that includes non-biological resources as well, offers a coherent and unifying explanatory framework of organisational functioning *as a cognitive ecology*. School leaders and principals are natural parts of this larger cognitive web (Lakomski, 2005). Adopting this approach brings with it several advantages. First, it is based on real knowledge of human cognitive functioning and capacity (leaders are not omniscient and knowledge does not flow downhill). Second, it includes as potential causal factors non-neural components such as artefacts, the built and natural environments, organisational and institutional factors. Third, and most importantly, it sanctions a radical re-direction of educational leadership research – away from a myopic focus on ‘what leaders do’ as represented, for example, in the school effectiveness and student learning literature – to – what are the conditions that are most advantageous for the design of learning environments?

This question supports the development of a progressive research programme worth investing in as it has the capacity to deliver real, empirically defended, results that will help improve, in effect, lifelong learning (Evers, 2012). For the moment, we can only discuss in brief what lies at the core of all human learning: social cognition. The specific contribution that non-biological components make in the cognitive ecology, as indicated in Chapter 1, is a complex and controversial question that needs more time and space than is available here.

*Social cognition*

Social cognition is the research focus of *social cognitive neuroscience* (SCN) (Adolphs, 1999; Ochsner, 2007; Ochsner and Lieberman, 2001; Lieberman, 2010). SCN is less a departure from cognitive and affective neuroscience as an explicit recognition of the social level of human (inter-) action, which appears to make it particularly useful for education. Social cognition is largely compatible with theories of cognition, variously described, or expressed as *the extended mind* (a comprehensive overview can be found in Anderson, 2003; Clark, 2008, 2010). Specifically, social cognitive neuroscience wants to understand the interactions between three levels of analysis, the social, cognitive, and neural, not in the sense of just adding neuroscientific data to social psychology, but by trying to understand ‘how contexts impact the way on which socioemotional contents are construed, thereby providing invaluable data about the functions associated with specific brain systems.’ (Ochsner, 2007, p. 59). Interaction between these three levels, according to Adolphs (2006, p. 27), ‘involves loops of processing that are extra-neural. It involves the bodies, and the social environment, in which brains are embedded’, as well as a third feature: ‘mechanisms for exploring the social environment and for probing it interactively’. What is particularly important is that such processing is to some degree specialised in that the processing of faces and empathising with others is domain specific.

Importantly, the ability to empathise with another means that emotion is closely related to social cognition, as both share processing strategies and are supported by shared neural substrates. As Adolphs (1999, p. 477) concludes, ‘The common

ingredient may be what we commonly call ‘feeling’: the representation of emotional body states, either in regard to one’s own emotional reaction, or in regard to the empathy for, or simulation of, another person’s internal state.’ (Damasio, 1999). Social cognition, then, is ‘feeling’ as described above. If the neural substrates supporting both emotion and social cognition are healthy; we are able to judge situations in the world as either advantageous or not, with a natural preference for choosing the good over the bad. Where neural pathways are impaired, as shown in autism research (e.g. Baron-Cohen, et al., 2013) and in studies of patients with brain lesions (Bechara, 2004; Damasio, et al., 1991), ‘feeling’, or the ‘emotional rudder’ (Immordino–Yang and Damasio, 2011) that normally guides decision-making is seriously compromised and leads to bad choices because of an inability to learn from past experience.

*We feel, therefore we learn<sup>i</sup>*

One interesting way to highlight the importance of social cognition in (school) learning is to consider research on educational attainment. Lieberman (2012) makes the point that in over 75 years of research, there has been consistent evidence that children retain only a small fraction of classroom learning ‘even a year after learning’ – after having undergone about 20,000 hours of classroom teaching by the age of 18 (in US contexts). This outstrips the amount of time children spend on any other activity over the course of their development. This result hardly represents ‘value for money’. So can knowledge of social cognition both help understand and possibly ameliorate this outcome?

Our brain contains a relatively large-scale network, the *mentalizing network* (Lieberman, 2012; Baron-Cohen, 1994; Baron-Cohen, et al., 2013) that allows us to track our own feelings, motives, thoughts and those of others who might differ from our own. An interesting feature of this network is that it keeps in active ‘wandering’ mode even when we are asked to execute a specific mental task; this network is known as the *default mode network* (Buckner et al., 2008). It keeps operating in the background by scanning the environment in order to increase our social cognitive grasp and how to deal with it – which is precisely the function for which evolution has been designing it.

In classroom learning, analytical reasoning, attention, and memory are the aspects of cognition most emphasised, and these rely on the *working memory network*. The problem, as Lieberman (2012) explains, is that the social brain is biased towards ‘free-wheeling’ (my term) and that this state of activation competes with the working memory network. Such neurocognitive competition, says Lieberman (2012, p. 5) is unfortunately treated ‘as a zero-sum battle between actual learning and social distractions like note passing or texting during class.’ But there is evidence that using the social brain’s natural tendencies can improve (classroom) learning, and retention, especially in non social subjects that do not naturally draw on the mentalising network, such as STEM subjects, when a non-social task is learned for the benefit of teaching someone else (e.g. Bargh and Schul’s 1980 *learning-for-teaching* study). Lieberman (2012) also suggests that *peer tutoring*

might be another fruitful strategy in that it encourages student interaction that when suitably guided is likely to improve educational attainment for both parties, especially when the roles of tutor and tutee are exchanged, as there is evidence that tutors often benefit more (Rohrbeck et al., 2003). There is preliminary neuroscientific/neuroimaging evidence that social motivation alone may indeed engage the mentalising system (rather than the traditional memory regions) during encoding of non-social information. (Lieberman, 2012, p. 7).

The long and short of this brief excursion into social cognition and (classroom) learning is that closer attention to how the social brain learns provides the best possible foundation for improving school learning and retention beyond the classroom. The social, affective and cognitive neurosciences open up many exciting avenues for future research that will enhance our knowledge of learning (and teaching) by getting a better grasp on such central topics as memory, attention, motivation, and importantly, the complex area of social interaction so fundamental to understanding what happens between students and students and teachers. Although there is as yet no formal *social* neuroscience of education, there is increasing and rapidly growing recognition of the importance of the neurosciences for education (e.g. Blakemore and Frith, 2005; Byrnes, 2001; Sylvester, 2000) and educational administration and leadership studies (Evers and Lakomski, 1996, 2000; Lakomski, 2005).

From the perspective of social cognition, school effectiveness and student

learning, for example, would be determined ‘from the ground up’, be studied naturalistically in the context in which learning happens where a school’s socio-economic status, composition of student body, gender, languages spoken, qualifications and experience of teachers and principal, and the built and natural environments may all be part of the causal picture that makes up the cognitive ecology of organisational functioning. School principals, as always, have an important role to play, and they are part of this larger picture.

**The leadership no–leadership continuum – *Colin W. Evers***

In my contribution to this discussion I want to add to and develop an aspect of one of Lakomski’s key points. The main focus of her argument is highlighting the importance of a particular approach to theorising social cognition, notably through the lens of social cognitive neuroscience (SCN). As she notes, this involves understanding ‘the interactions between three levels of analysis, the social, cognitive, and neural’. At first glance there appears to be a significant tension among these levels. Hutchins (2014, pp. 35-38) formulates the issue in terms of whether a cognitive system has a centre or not (although this can come in grades). If the centre is the individual brain, then the interaction between the social and mind as brain will need to be theorised in terms of the skin functioning as a boundary between inside and outside. It will deal with how the inside is shaped by the outside and vice versa. For a system with a centre in this case, the system can still be described with the language of leadership construed individualistically.

But if a cognitive system has no centre, that is, if cognition is thoroughly distributed, matters are different.

Resnick (1997, pp. 3-19) takes aim at what he calls the 'centralized mindset' (p. 4) and offers examples of decentralised systems, some of which are obviously cognitive. The functioning of markets is one of his examples. There is no one telling producers how much to produce, what products they should produce, or how much to charge. Nor is anyone telling buyers what to buy, how much or, in the case of bargaining, how much to pay. Price-setting, production and consumption are cognition-laden decisions that are made within a cognitive system that arguably has no centre. No one is in charge of these decisions. A cognitive system that has no centre fails to comport with the more individualistic discourses of leadership.

This formulation of the tension between the three levels of analysis characterising SCN is in part an artifact of Hutchins's way of drawing a distinction between the extended mind thesis as centre-oriented and distributed cognition which can deal with systems that have no centre. In addition to the centredness of a cognitive system, another useful metric that Hutchins draws attention to is its spatial scale. Thus a brain is not centred in the sense that it contains some homunculus constituting the 'I' of a person. No such homunculus exists, the 'I' being an emergent feature of aggregate neural activity. But it is spatially confined. Given the above accounts of centre and space, it is worth elaborating a bit more how

they are used in the work that Lakomski and I do, and what aspects we consider to be most important.

The main reason for not drawing a sharp distinction between the extended mind and distributed cognition is because educational organisations such as schools contain cognitive systems that come in grades of both centredness and size. With regard to size, the scale can run from individual brains all the way up to school communities that articulate with wider communities well beyond the boundary of a school community. With regard to the presence of a centre, classrooms are best characterised as having a centre in the person of a teacher and, in some of their administrative functions, school principals are a centre. But some school cognitive systems are relatively de-centred. Informal groups of parents, especially in primary or elementary schools, can be like this, as can faculty staff rooms. And the practice of aiming for de-centred school self-evaluation systems has merit where there may be conflict of interest issues for the school's leadership, or where there is a desire to minimize the possibility of confirmation bias. This can also be extended to models of organisational learning when applied to schools. In addition, members of the school community may participate in multiple systems varying in both size and degree of centredness.

There are two points I want to emphasise here in thinking about leadership in cognitive systems. The first concerns what is known as the Royal Family result, a result derived from computer simulations of cognitive processes in social

networks. (Hutchins, 1995, pp. 250-262; Zollman, 2007, p. 583 ) Strong leadership, in the sense that an individual leader has a strong influence over what other members of the system think, while it makes for rapid decision-making, also makes confirmation bias more likely. Errors, when they occur, are hard to correct. Weak leadership, in the sense that members of the system have more autonomy over what they think, engenders cognitive systems that can more readily resist confirmation bias, but at the expense of slowing decision-making. Degree of centredness can thus affect a cognitive system's learning.

The second point is conceptual. In talk of the extended mind, it is customary to see a person and a cognition supporting artifact, such as a calculating device, as part of a whole cognitive unit. That is, we don't say that the person is calculating in the context of a calculating device. However this parsimony of usage fails to carry over when we shift from artifacts to other people. A leader-centric mindset tends to posit an individual as leading in such and such a context: school leadership, departmental leadership, military leadership and the like. But task achievement in organisational contexts is mostly distributed and can sometimes be described in the explicitly epistemic terms of a social epistemology. Here is an example.

Suppose a school has an identified problem, say low student achievement scores or low staff morale, or difficulty in reaching enrolment targets. We see the problem defined as a set of constraints plus the demand that something be done.

(Evers, 2015.) Let us further suppose that, given the limits of social science and the complexity of school environments, any theory that is proposed for implementation to solve the problem will be a tentative theory, one that may turn out to be unhelpful. During the process of implementation, more often than not, weaknesses in the theory, or errors, are discovered. In trying to boost enrolments, a proposed publicity campaign may turn out to be ineffective because the school is held in poor regard by the local community, thus implying another problem that needs to be solved in addressing the enrolment issue.

The social epistemology here can be regarded as having the same structure as that proposed by Popper (1979) in accounting for the growth of scientific knowledge. (See Evers, 2012). Popper's schema captures the various components and the order in which knowledge building proceeds as follows:

$$P_1 \Rightarrow T_1 \Rightarrow EE_1 \Rightarrow P_2$$

$P_1$  is the problem to be solved,  $T_1$  is the first tentative theory to be tried,  $EE_1$  is the process of error elimination that comes from the implementation of the theory, and  $P_2$  is some new problem that emerges (although it could be just the original problem again). Calling Popper's schema a Popper Cycle, it is quite common for the solution of a particular problem to emerge only after a series of Popper Cycles have been undertaken. This social epistemology thus takes the form of a trajectory through time.

Viewed from the perspective of leader-centrism, this example of cognition can be described as a leader attempting to solve a problem in the context of their school and (outside) environment. The trouble with this characterisation is that it lumps together a whole lot of epistemic processes and their constituents into a single background entity called 'context'. When we look carefully at each of the elements in Popper's schema, it is possible to identify many constituents that comprise them. Thus, in organisational life, a problem owned by just one individual is less likely to elicit change than one owned across the organisation. Similarly, effective theories need to be formulated with an eye to how they might be implemented and implementation in organisational life is almost always a collective matter, one that requires a range of participants. The processing of feedback that provides evidence that the problem is being solved or not can also be a collective matter. What this means, therefore, is that the unit of cognition is more likely to be spatially extended and, given the possibility of problem solving requiring a trajectory of Popper Cycles, more likely to be temporally extended. This is the reason why leadership, where it is practiced, is only part of the ontology of a cognitive system, and why it is better to conceive these systems in the same inclusive way that applies to the person plus calculator cognitive system. With numerous actors involved in this exercise of distributed cognition, does it nevertheless have a centre? There is no one answer to this question for it will depend on the nature of the problem and the ontology and dynamic configuration of the unit of cognition required by the trajectory to solve it. The three levels of analysis posited for social cognitive neuroscience will also be variously engaged.

The upshot of this discussion is that if the conditions for leadership require a cognitive system to possess some identifiable centre, and if this changes from problem to problem, then for a wide class of plausible social epistemologies an onus of proof will exist in maintaining the explanatory merits of leadership in accounting for organisational performance.

In Chapter 1, it was argued that leader-centrism is biased towards agency-oriented accounts of organisational performance at the expense of adequately accounting for structural constraints. I conclude by noting a difficulty in providing good empirical research evidence for meeting the onus of proof requirement. Roughly speaking, quantitative research designs that seek to give a result on, say, the influence of principal leadership on student learning outcomes must make some assumptions about what descriptors of leader action can function as variables to be investigated. But this selection process will, in turn, embody assumptions about the scope of leader agency. The widely cited meta-analysis by Robinson et.al., (2008) that seeks to measure the effect sizes of transformational versus instructional leadership on students' academic performance, posits categories of leader actions with almost no reference to structural factors. Even those factors that looked structural, such as resource acquisition, were presented as the result of agency related principal actions (p. 661) with the studies in the meta-analysis mainly taking the form of using teacher views of principal leadership and then relating these to student learning outcomes. A closer examination of the

assumptions about the scope of leader agency in these kinds of research designs, and what it means for justifying the importance of leadership, is a challenge for some of our future work.

### **Beyond parallel monologues – *Scott Eacott***

Continuing the focus on social epistemology, although from a sociological rather than cognitive science perspective, I argue for purposeful dialogue and debate in the educational leadership scholarly community. Critical dialogue is something that we have aspired to embody in this book as an overall project, including the contributions by the commentators.

For the student of educational leadership or those new to the area, the volume of research generated means that one is spoilt for choice. Millions of words are generated annually yet as far back as the 1960s and Taylor (1969) questioned the scholarly value of much that was written. With the expansion of information technologies that can be said to constitute a globally distributed cognitive system one can only guess what Taylor would say today. This production of ‘new’ knowledge obscures a major issue, one less concerned with the volume of work and more with the organisation of scholarly communities and activities. Despite all of the conceptual attention to shared visions, collective responsibility, and group/organisational performance, educational leadership is a fragmented and

piecemeal domain of inquiry. Although I am against the pursuit of a single overarching meta-narrative of what is educational leadership, or declaring how research should be conducted forevermore, the fragmentation of scholarship or absence of meaningful dialogue and debate across research communities is a major impediment to advancing knowledge. For the most part, educational leadership research is little more than a set of parallel monologues.

The question that drives my contribution in this chapter is ‘Where are new theories of educational leadership coming from?’ My use of the term ‘new’ here requires some, albeit brief, attention. I mobilise the label not in the sense of appropriation or novelty, as importing, overlaying or mapping a terrain leaves the received terms remain intact. I am less interested in the logic of validation (e.g. the current trend of meta-analyses) and more in the logic of discovery – mindful that such artificial partitioning is not always helpful (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, 1991). As would be expected in a book questioning the explanatory value of ‘leadership’, the grounds on which knowledge claims are based is of particular interest. The epistemological preliminaries of research, how we come to know something and the legitimacy of knowledge claims require explicit attention and engagement with alternatives – and this is a point shared by all three of us in this chapter. To contribute, one must be able to demonstrate a distinction between their ideas and those of others. This can only be achieved by engaging with differing arguments and developing claims that can be defended in the face of critique. Parallel monologues constrain the advancement of knowledge courtesy

of their self-sustaining rhetoric and selective – if any – engagement with different approaches.

While there exist some forms of commentary (e.g. Oplatka, 2010), or classification work (e.g. Gunter, 2016) on the field at large, it is infrequent that educational leadership researchers seriously engage with scholarship emanating from scholarly traditions different from their own. The most notable exceptions are Greenfield (e.g. Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993) and Evers and Lakomski (1991, 1996, 2000) who explicitly engage with different approaches to justify how their programmatic approach to scholarship offers a productive means to theorise educational administration. Greenfield drew particular attention for his questioning of the central logic of the *Theory Movement* and the validity of its knowledge claims. However the complexity of his scholarly argument is often reduced to constructing a binary between objectivist and subjectivist knowledge production. Evers and Lakomski adopted a systematic approach to illuminating what they saw as limitations in the perspectives of leading thinkers at the time before offering their own version of a more appropriate means of researching educational administration – natural coherentism. Unlike most ‘new’ perspectives, following the first book, Evers and Lakomski invited those they critiqued to comment/reply in a series of special issues, leading to a second book. The final contribution to the trilogy represents a refined version of their approach, built upon the dialogue and debate with alternatives. Whether you align with the perspective of Evers and Lakomski is less important than what their approach to

scholarship demonstrates. First and foremost, it is programmatic as opposed to project-based. Significantly, this research programme is built upon systematic engagement with the epistemological / methodological preliminaries of alternate approaches. That is, Evers and Lakomski sought to understand contemporary ways of knowing and through the analysis of their strengths and limitations, proposed an alternative – and in their view better – way of approaching work. Unlike the parallel monologues that plague educational leadership research, this is an example of seriously engaging with alternatives for the purpose of advancing knowledge.

Despite these examples of engaging with the other, at scale, educational leadership research continues to take place in parallel discourse communities. There is a well-recognised lack of engagement across differing traditions and at best, a benign neglect of those with whom we disagree (Donmoyer, 2001; Thrupp and Willmott, 2003). This becomes problematic when end-users – including graduate students – are only exposed to a particular literature (Thrupp, 2005) and/or research training remains within the confines of a single tradition.

It would be naïve to assume that as a scholarly community grows in size and scale that different discourse communities do not emerge. These communities develop their own networks, journals, conferences, and arguably citation patterns. The emergence of such communities is not problematic, and arguably evident in all forms of the social sciences. What is problematic for the quality of research, and

thus the advancement of scholarship, is the absence of dialogue and debate across different traditions. A once fertile scholarly field of research and inquiry (Smyth, 2008) has broken down to a series of self-sustaining communities advancing their own trajectories irrespective of thought and analysis developed elsewhere. This is not about constructing imperialistic boundaries around educational leadership as a domain of inquiry – although that, too, is arguably worthy of attention – but a genuine lack of engagement with other ways of knowing educational leadership.

Such a lack of engagement denotes a break from the logic of scholarship.

Argument and refutation are the basis on which scholarly activity is based. The book, book chapter, article, even the lecture can constitute an argument. This argument is built upon a set of claims grounded in previous work (by an author and others) and defensible in the face of critique. This is more than locating in the field – a role often limited to the literature review – as it is only possible to have a position in the presence of alternatives. In other words, without the many, the one would not be possible. Having a defensible position is a relational activity. It can only be understood in relation to others. The markers of an argument are spatio-temporal. Ideas have a history, or more specifically histories, the moment of genesis is the coming together in a particular space. Having these ideas locates one within a field. Positions are dependent on the abstract systems of distance – distinctions - between ideas, and these ideas travel beyond geographic boundaries. Unlike the particular claims of the empirical studies, ideas are a global enterprise

and therefore to advance them requires attention to a breadth of literatures and perspectives.

Beyond any strict content work within research, the social scientist engages in the craft of social analysis. Scholarship is not simple reporting but arguing. To this end, scholarship is pedagogical. However educational leadership journals are somewhat notable for the absence of commentaries, responses to papers and genuine dialogue and debates. Even special issues frequently lack a critical response, instead opting for the concluding or summative piece by a sympathetic reader. Debates such as those between Gronn (1982, 1984, 1987) and Thomas (1986; Thomas, et al., 1981) over the value of observational studies, primarily through the pages of *Educational Administration Quarterly*, rarely take place anymore, at least publicly. Possibly this is done during the peer review process – another process worthy of attention in educational leadership – but if so, it remains behind closed doors. The pedagogical value of refining and extending arguments is lost. The work of scholarship becomes a rare undertaking in the context of rapid knowledge production.

Moving beyond parallel monologues and explicitly engaging with alternative approaches is about asking questions about where knowledge of educational leadership's frontiers lie, building on its successes, and pushing those frontiers further. This is difficult work. It is risky work. After all, editors and reviewers are to some extent the custodians of a field's traditions, challenging prevailing views

and trends is difficult (Natriello, 1996), and theoreticians often have few peers (Tsang, 2013). To overcome potential scepticism about new claims and/or substantial departures from the orthodoxy, arguments need to be grounded in the logic of academic work – argument and refutation. If we embrace the notion that scholarship is pedagogical, then the publication of an argument is not the end of it. Publication serves, as Berger (1966) argues, as an invitation – an invitation to think with, through, and where necessary against, in the spirit of the scholarly enterprise. Through the composing of a systematic argument others can engage with your knowledge claims to support, extend or challenge them. This is only possible through engagement. By engaging with counter claims, refinements lead to greater clarity. With greater clarity come advances in knowledge. If educational leadership aspires to advance knowledge and not simply produce more, then it is imperative to engage with the other and move beyond parallel monologues.

### **Endnote**

1 This heading is part of the title of an article by M. H. Immordino–Yang and A. Damasio; see references.

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