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Editorial: Educational Leadership to Change the World

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Editorial: Educational Leadership to Change the World

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In the last issue of IJELM we suggested that, in order to obtain good outcomes, educational leadership should be at the same time instructional, transformational and distributed. This new issue of IJELM expands some of these concepts, specially the last two, and it also expands the context in which leadership is performed: from the top to the middle and bottom of organizations.

Two of the articles of this new issue of IJELM are related to distributed leadership and the development of Professional Learning Communities in schools. Another article deepens into the world of transformational leadership offering a new perspective of this type of leadership, the transformative perspective. In a very similar sense, the last article develops the transformative nature of dialogic leadership, a concept that is at the same time new and old and which possibly we are going to hear about a lot from now on.

With each new article, it becomes clearer that leadership is not a position: a person is not a leader because he or she has been appointed to the top of an organization but because she (or he) has been serving other's needs. Leadership is something that followers give to some other persons on a day-

to-day basis and something that can be found all over the organization and not only right at the top.

All the articles share the extraordinary potential of leadership to change the lives of people (children, parents, teachers, principals, deans) and ultimately to transform the world. This can be the leitmotiv that penetrates all this new issue of IJELM.

This is the thesis defended in the first article by Professor Carolyn Shields. Shields expands the idea that leaders matter defending that a transformative leader can make a difference on the war against poverty and illiteracy. Shields adopts an optimistic and proactive point of view and overcomes the deficit thinking that abounds in the educational profession. She converts the negative discourse into a new kind of thinking plenty of possibilities for those less fortunate children. Justice, passion, inclusivity and democracy are other features that impregnate the article, and the idea of a more equitable distribution of power inside the schools.

Shields illustrates her clear argument with two splendid cases of two different children in the United States which share a label, that of being poor and disadvantaged. Her argument is that education and transformative leadership can overcome these difficulties.

In the second article, Antonio Bolívar from University of Granada, in Spain, proposes a research related to shared leadership and Professional Learning Communities. The professor from Granada suggests that schools should provide opportunities to share knowledge and experiences among teachers in order to become Professional Learning Communities. Bolívar is concerned about how to generate collectively the capacity of improvement inside the workplace and how to make this improvement last for a long while. So, he writes about building school capacity offering opportunities to learn within a particular context and focusing on results. Bolívar relates this building of school capacities to leadership and observes that leaders should take care of the development of capacities within their educational settings. Using a mixed methods research, he proposes some tools in order to describe if the school leaders are creating the conditions and capacities that their schools require to be Professional Learning Communities.

As it is the policy of our journal to permit articles in English or Spanish, we are publishing for the first time an article in this last language. We think that our Spanish readers from Spain or Latin- America will enjoy reading

Bolívar, one of the best known Spanish academics on leadership, in his own language. We apologize for the inconveniences.

David DeMatthews, in the next article, explores also distributed leadership in Professional Learning Communities but in this case from El Paso, in Texas (USA). He writes from a different geographical context but shares a lot of ideas in common with Bolívar's article. This is one of the most amazing things than happens when editing a Journal: we can observe from first-hand how the academics from different parts of the world reach the same conclusions and how consensus is made little by little all over the world. DeMatthews presents a research based on a comparative case study of six schools in the United States that have been identified for having effective Professional Learning Communities. The findings are related to distributed leadership.

Last, but not least, is the article by María Padrós and Ramón Flecha from University of Barcelona, in Spain. They explore the concept of dialogic leadership well related to the transformative leadership that proposes Carolyn Shields. Padrós and Flecha are internationally recognized academics and researchers with a deep interest in educational change and in the development of strategies to help solve the problems of schools and communities. They define dialogical leadership as a kind of leadership based on dialogue, inclusion and in the involvement of all community members in order to transform schools, neighbourhoods and societies.

As usual, we always finish our journal with a Book Review. In this case, María Rosel Bolívar-Ruano comments a recently published book from Alma Harris: *Distributed Leadership Matters: Perspectives, Practicalities and Potential*. Again, the concepts of distributed leadership and Professional Learning Communities are mixed and combined in Harris's book showing that a more distributed leadership implies new ways of organizing schools.