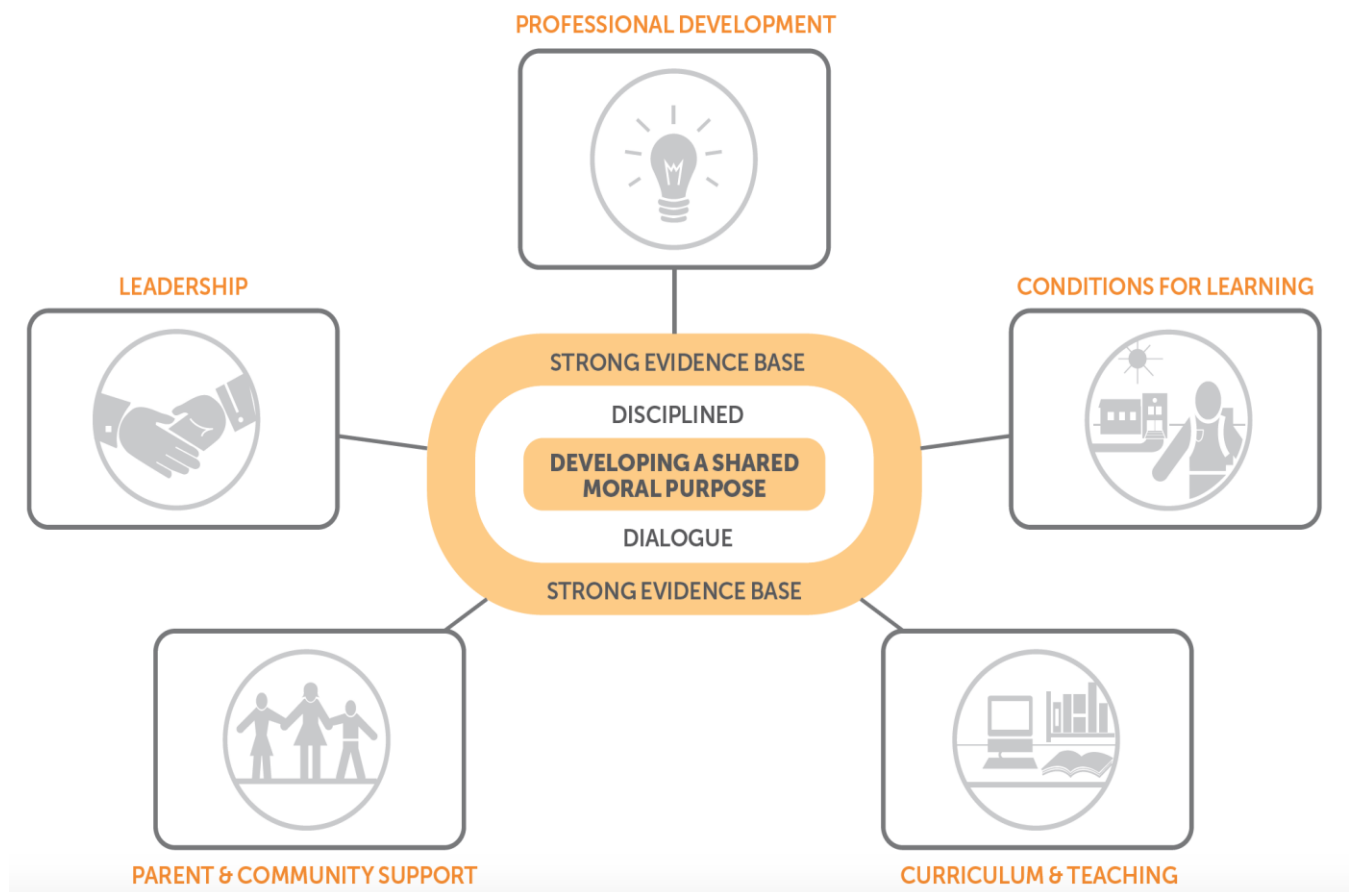


Dempster's Leading for Learning Framework

Dempster's (2009) synthesis of contemporary research into 'leading learning' found that student learning is best achieved when:

- There is an agreed and shared **moral purpose**;
- '**Disciplined dialogue**' about learning in the school takes place;
- Planning, monitoring and accountability uses **a strong evidence base**;
- Everyone, including staff, are active **professional learners**;
- The **conditions for learning** are enhanced;
- The **curriculum and teaching** are coordinated, managed and monitored;
- **Distributive leadership** is the norm; and
- The school context is understood and connections with **parent and wider community support** are established.

The resultant framework as depicted graphically below comprises five domains that impact on the central purpose of improving student learning through a rigorous examination of valid and reliable evidence.



Although represented (and described overleaf) as individual domains, they are inter-related, with each impacting on the other. Collectively they significantly improve student learning.

Moral Purpose is defined as the improvement of student lives through learning and achievement, to which all actions are directed. Efficiently running a school financially and legally is not enough. The school must add value to its students through learning.

Evidence Base is the qualitative and quantitative data that has been (or could be) gathered about each of the domains and the learning taking place (moral purpose). The data needs to be contemporary, valid and reliable.

Disciplined Dialogue is the process of focused conversations on the moral purpose of the school using the qualitative and quantitative data available and three generic questions:

1. What do we see here?
2. Why are we seeing what we are seeing?
3. What should we be doing about this?

Such conversations are not 'trivial, trite, piecemeal or sporadic. They are not derogatory, censoring, destructive or coercive' and they are 'not irrationally based on stereotype or hearsay, but on reason and values, stimulated by helpful qualitative and quantitative data.' (MacBeath and Dempster, 2009, p 107).

Good quality data about students' learning and performance should be coupled with disciplined dialogue to ensure improvement actions are realistically grounded.

Conditions of Learning is all factors that enhance the quality of the physical, social and emotional learning environment. This includes the suitability of the buildings and learning spaces; student-student, staff-student and staff-staff relationships; student health and well-being; student and staff attendance and engagement; financial resources; and any other dynamic that sets up conditions conducive to learning.

Curriculum and Teaching is the planning and coordination of the mandated curriculum (Australian Curriculum) and extra-curricular offerings; and the planning and coordination of teaching to ensure it has the greatest effect on student learning.

Professional Development is all professional learning by all staff and community members associated with improving students' learning and therefore life-chances. Of significance is a 'hands on' approach to professional development by school leaders, such that active involvement in professional learning with teachers is the most powerful influence on the quality of teaching and therefore on the quality of student learning and achievement.

Parent and Community Support is the way in which the school and community interact to ensure the overall learning and life-chances of students are enhanced. This includes engaging with others whose knowledge, experience and skill may be harnessed in the interests of the school and extends into associations with other schools, to professional networks, systems authorities (government and non-government agencies alike), people in the wider community with expertise, university researchers, politicians, civic leaders and so on.

Leadership is more than the formal leaders; it is a shared process that recognises that the school's moral purpose can only be achieved by mobilising human agency through collective activity. It is also about knowing and growing personal capability and capacity to be a leader among leaders. In addition, it is about participating, and leading leaders, in each of the domains and the processes of data gathering and discipline dialogue.

If you would like to learn more, please refer to the following books:

Dempster, N. (2009). *Leadership for Learning: A framework synthesizing recent research*. ED Ventures: Australian College of Educators.

MacBeath, J. and Dempster, N. (2009) [Eds] *Connecting Leadership and Learning*. London, Routledge.