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# The new work of educational leaders: changing leadership practice in an era of school reform

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*The New Work of Educational Leaders* by Gronn aims at providing readers with a theoretical framework for understanding and practising leadership in a school-based educational setting. The book is structured around two major themes of "the architecture of leadership" and the "ecology of leadership" and is written into eight chapters, some presenting the new framework and others attempting to position this framework in the wider body of knowledge on leadership.

In the introduction, Gronn notes that the aim of the book is to detail "what it means to be an educational leader in the new millennium" and to deal with the emerging trends that is said will dictate much of the work of educational leaders in the future. These trends are said by Gronn to be: *Designer-leadership* – the notion that educational policy makers have formulated explicit standards and competencies for those aspiring to become educational leaders and to benchmark or measure the performance of those already undertaking leadership roles in school settings. *Distributed practice* – the truism for members in all organisations that role statements and other artificial position boundaries are being replaced by the need to exploit informal means and relationships to increase performance and accomplish goals. *Disengagement or abstention* – the world-wide phenomenon where there is a shortage of leadership talent due to an increasing reluctance of employees of all organisations to consider careers in leadership positions due to the onerous nature of the work and the wish to better balance work and life. In the first three chapters, Gronn expands these emerging trends and dissects their impact by examining the intensification of work, the division of labour and work practices generally and providing some useful and interesting graphs and charts to support his analysis. The three factors are then used as the architecture for the remaining book in that they impose limits and constraints on the practice of leadership in educational settings.

In chapters four to seven, Gronn attempts to synthesis the body of knowledge in leadership research and addresses some well-worn notions about what leaders do, leaders and committees and meeting and the leadership of teams. There is nothing new or significant in these chapters. However, Chapter seven does review some of the more recent work done on emotions and leadership and provides some insights into how this work might apply to school principals.

Chapter eight concludes the book and is titled "Leadership as greedy work" which is meant to be a metaphor to characterise the increasing demands on senior leaders and extend on a 1974 study on "greedy institutions" but in the educational context. While some questionable analogies are drawn between the work of senior CEO's who run large private sector organisations and the work of educational leaders in schools, no real answers are provided in the book for educational leaders and many good research questions are raised which might be pursued.

In summary, this book, which examines educational leadership and provides some case studies, is a welcome addition to the literature on the subject. The book adds to the literature surrounding educational leadership and is an important resource to those seeking to enter or improve educational leadership.