

## **Hope and educational leadership: A case study of Senior Learning reform in Queensland**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to identify leadership qualities involved in reform of Senior Learning through the introduction of vocational education and training in schools (VETiS). This research is situated in relation to the current literature theorising hope and its relationship with leadership. A case study methodology is used. The data analysis begins with an examination of the five leadership capabilities identified in Queensland's *Leadership Matters* which are interpreted in terms of the theoretical dimensions of hope. Further, given that this Senior Learning reform is multi-layered and cross-sectoral, interviews have been conducted with educational and training leaders at the school, regional and State levels, along with officials in registered training organisations and technical colleges. Data from interviews with 40 leaders in Queensland have been analysed with the aid of NVivo and explored for what they reveal about the concept of hope as a defining attribute of leadership, especially in times of significant cultural change. The data analysis focuses its theorisation on the issues leaders meet, the solutions they pursue, the qualities they display in the process of reform Senior Learning through VETiS. This paper concludes with a discussion of the value of theorising educational leadership from the perspective of hope, rather than just mentioning it as is often the case.

Key Phrase: Educational Policy, Leadership and Management

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to identify leadership qualities involved in reform of Secondary Schooling in Queensland. Queensland's Government started the reforms to education and training system, Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF), in 2002 because at that time there were about 10,000 young people who are disengaged from learning each year in Queensland (Harreveld & Singh, 2007). There are also students who could not find a job after leaving school. This school disengagement problem can become a social problem. "Youth disengagement from school-based learning is a growing matter of public concern" (Harreveld & Singh, 2007: 1). There was a three-year trial period. New registration was introduced to require all young people aged 15-17 be engaged in compulsory participation of either learning or earning (Queensland Government, 2002). A new qualification Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) was introduced to replace the former Senior Certificate. "The QCE is an academic qualification with specified minimum

requirements. It includes recognition of VET, university, school subjects and other approved learning” (Harreveld & Singh, 2007: 40). New learning pathways and new leaning options were introduced into the secondary school system.

## **2. Theorising hope and its relationship with leadership**

This research is situated in relation to the current literature theorising hope and its relationship with leadership.

### ***Mentioning hope***

When we write we need to pay attention to whether we write what we claim. Many researchers do not write what they claim. In his book, *Writing to Reason*, Mogck (2008) discusses difference between the properties of words and properties of objects (Mogck, 2008: 48-49). He explains that the difference between these two is an issue of using a term and mentioning a term in writing. The issue of using/mentioning difference in writing also exists in many writings of literature on education and hope. A range of researchers mention hope but do not develop it as a fully developed theoretically construct. Many articles about hope for education are just mentioning. Their writers did not use hope and its concept in their writing as they claim to.

Te Riele and Crump (2002) use the word “hope” in the title of their article. Readers assume that the article will talk about “hope”. The word “hope” appears only three times in the text of the whole article excluding once in the title and once in the subheading. The word “hope” did not appear until near the last section of the article (Te Riele & Crump, 2002). The authors are mentioning hope yet not using hope to theorise their research. They only mention a concept of hope, they do not actually define and use the concept as a theoretical tool. When researchers identify concepts as key aspects of their work, for example in titles and headings, then these concepts need to be used in a substantive way, and not just mentioned. Lavia (2006) argues for a pedagogy of hope in education Caribbean area. Lavia (2006) narrates how the word Caribbean came into being and the meaning of Caribbean. She quotes Freirean’s notion of hope, but did not explain the meaning of hope (Lavia, 2006). The words

“hope” and “hopefulness” only appear in the introduction and in the conclusion part. There is no discussion on or even mentioning of hope or hopefulness in the main body of the article. The author intends to theorize her research with hope but did not define and discuss on it. Lavia (2006) did not explain the meaning of hope. She uses the term of “a pedagogy of hope” and does not illustrate clearly what “a pedagogy of hope” is. This is another example of “mentioning hope”.

Nixon (2006) reviews the tradition of “philological hermeneutics” and argues that Said’s hermeneutics and his politics are all of a piece. Nixon uses the word “hope” in the title of the article. The word “hope” appears only once in the article in the conclusion part. The only occurrence of “hope” in the whole article is in the phrase of “hope for the future” and not in Said’s “hermeneutics of hope” (Nixon, 2006), not hope of his philological hermeneutics and democratic humanism. Nixon’s (2006) article provides another case of mentioning hope in scholarly writing.

Apple (2001), in the end of his book, *Educating the “Right” Way: Markets, standards, god, and inequality* (Apple, 2001), wrote his last section of the book with the subheading, “HOPE AS A RESOURCE”. This section has two paragraphs. “Hope” did not appear in the first paragraph of this section. He mentioned hope in the second paragraph of his section and also the last paragraph of his book. He put his contacts in the last section to wish others will reach him with questions on his arguments and continue the debates. These possible future questions raised by readers will be his resources. It is not hope that is his resources for the ongoing resources in the future. His resources are readers’ questions and responses. He mentions “hope” without using it for his arguments. He uses “hope” to mean his wishes. This case of “hope” in Apple (2001) is a case of mentioning hope. Apple (2001) does not define hope, in a way that is theoretically and conceptually useful. However two writers did conceptualise hope and used it as a theoretical tool.

### ***Sergiovanni’s concept of practical hope***

Leadership may be analysed in terms of the concept of hope. Sergiovanni (2005: 77), for example, contends that “the most important and perhaps the most neglected leadership virtue is hope [because] hope can change events for the better.” It is

“hopeful leaders [who] recognize potentials in persons and in situations” (Sergiovanni, 2005: 82). Sergiovanni’s (2005: 77) hope is the most powerful virtues of leadership. There is a need to distinguish between hope and wishful thinking. Sergiovanni (2005: 76) warns that “hope is often confused with wishing. But hope is grounded in reality, not wishful thinking.” Hope could help leaders to clarify their commitment to a cause, forming strong beliefs based on significant ideas, and from other convictions. It is necessary to avoid wishful thinking. There is no hope without taking action.

Hope compromises goals, pathways, and agency (Sergiovanni, 2005: 81). Goals and efforts are integral to turning hope into reality: “Realizing our hopes in a deliberate way requires that they be transformed into goals—goals that lend themselves to the development of practical pathways” (Sergiovanni, 2005: 81). Sergiovanni (2005: 82) suggests that wishful thinking may be avoided “by deliberately taking action and deliberately providing the context for both organizational and individual efficacy.” Sergiovanni (2005) quotes Gompers Elementary School<sup>1</sup> in Detroit as the example of a school of hope, in which hope encourages the school. To turn hope into reality, this School uses the Comer process<sup>2</sup> to develop pathways to meet students’ needs. These developmental pathways are: cognitive-intellectual, physical, speech and language, psycho-emotional, moral, and social-interactive. Sergiovanni (2005: 88) commented that

“Members of the Gompers community ... have high hopes for the academic success of their students ... At Gompers hope has become a reality... teacher leadership was an important factor in this success. But wise leadership from the principal... was critical too. Wise leaders are important bearers of hope... hopefulness can provide the margin of encouragement, the margin of clear thinking, and the margin of informed action that make difficult situations manageable and challenging goals attainable” (Sergiovanni, 2005: 88).

Sergiovanni (2005) argues for practical hope which can be turned into reality through effort, action and developmental pathways. This may be the kind of hope needed in

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<sup>1</sup> Gompers Elementary School has about 350 students in an economically distressed neighbourhood in the city of Detroit.

<sup>2</sup> The Comer process is based on the philosophy and work of James Comer and his colleagues at Yale University’s Child Study Centre. Nine components of the process provided the structure and means for the key questions in the process of turning hope into reality. The nine processes are: School planning and management team; Parents’ program; mental health team; Comprehensive school plan; Staff development needed to implement plan; Periodic assessment and modification of plan; No-fault policy; focus on problem solving; Consensus decision making; Collaboration; leading and learning together (Sergiovanni, 2005: 83).

dealing with the challenges schools face when reforming senior secondary schooling into the Senior Phase of Learning.

### ***Radical hope***

Another writer who uses hope as a theoretical tool is Jonathan Lear (2006). He presents new insights into leadership, manifested in the story of Plenty Coups<sup>3</sup>. Two hundred years ago the Crow lived a relatively nomadic life. Gradually, more white men (and women) came to occupy their land. Their land for hunting and living decreased. Finally, the remaining Crow were moved into a reservation during the period of 1882-1884. The Crow population decreased too. The young Crow people did not know what to do on the reservation. There was no beaver and buffalo for hunting and intertribal war was prohibited. Both were the core of the Crow's traditional life. These became impossible. Their traditional way of life was gone. Their culture as once it had been was becoming a memory. That culture was disappearing. What insights might the concept of radical hope provide leaders who are faced establishing and sustaining the challenges of new pathways and new learning options for young adults?

For Lear (2006) the concept of radical hope is mobilised at a time of cultural devastation or in extreme circumstances. The main quality of the radical hope is courage. The key theoretical concepts in Lear's (2006) construction of radical hope and their relationship are drawn by us and illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Plenty Coup: the last great Chief of the Crow Nation

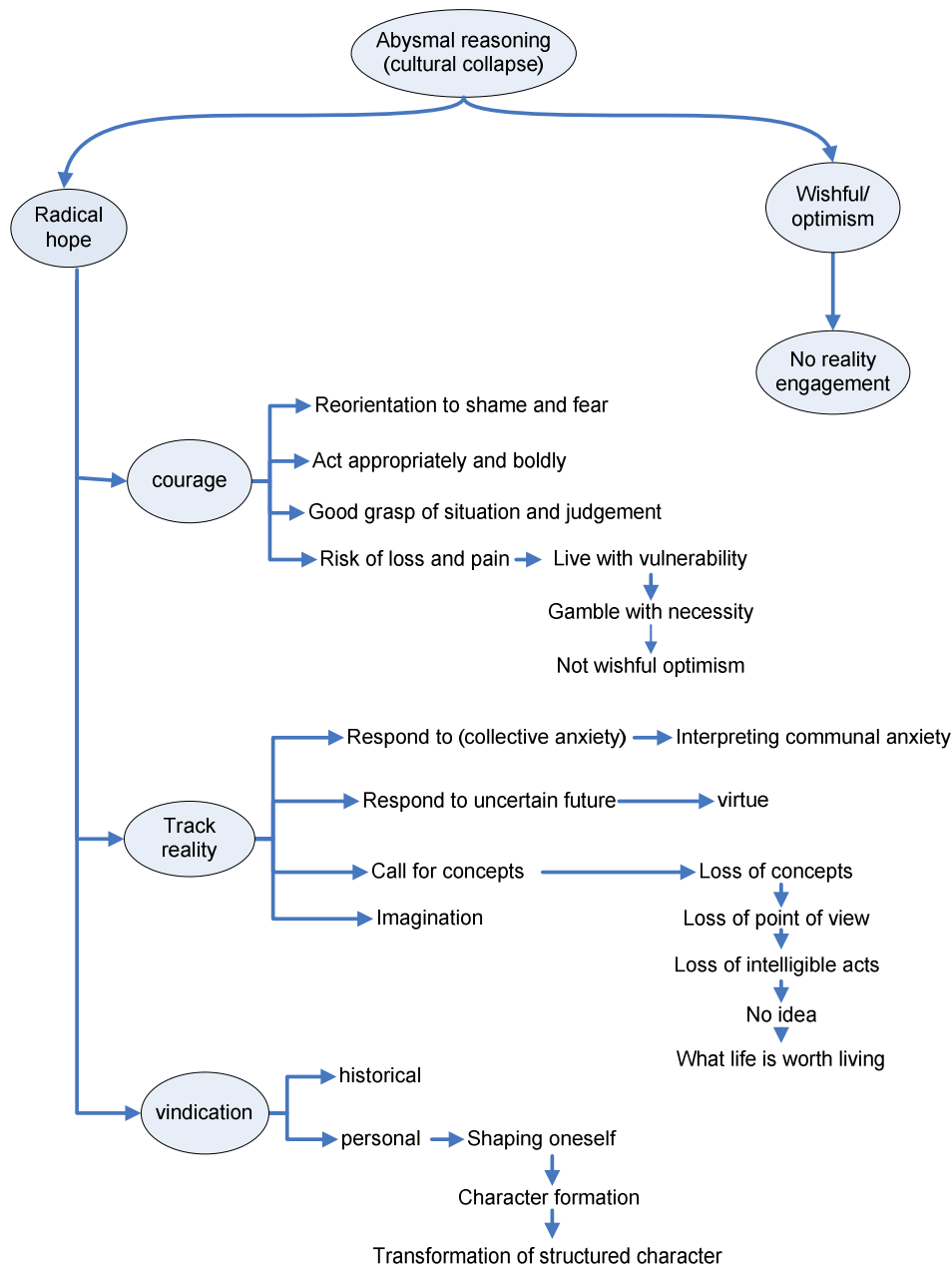


Figure 1 Concept map of radical hope  
Source: Constructed from a reading by Lear (2006)

In this paper, we will be focusing on the first part of this conceptualisation of hope, namely “courage”. We will use this concept to conceptualise our research.

### 3. Method

This research is part of a large research project of investigating the multi-level leadership in Queensland’s Senior Phase of Learning. A case study methodology is used. Interviews are used for the collection of data. Data began to be collected from early and middle of 2008 and July-August 2009. The data for this paper are composed

of 46 interviews undertaken in Queensland. These 46 interviews were undertaken in 7 areas in Queensland metropolitan and regional centres. 66 interviewees were recruited in the 46 interviews.

The interviewees are all leaders from different levels of educational and industrial leadership across the above-mentioned seven areas in the reform of Queensland's ETRF to the Senior phase of Learning. Figure 2 displays the multi-level cross-sectoral leadership positions of these interviewees.

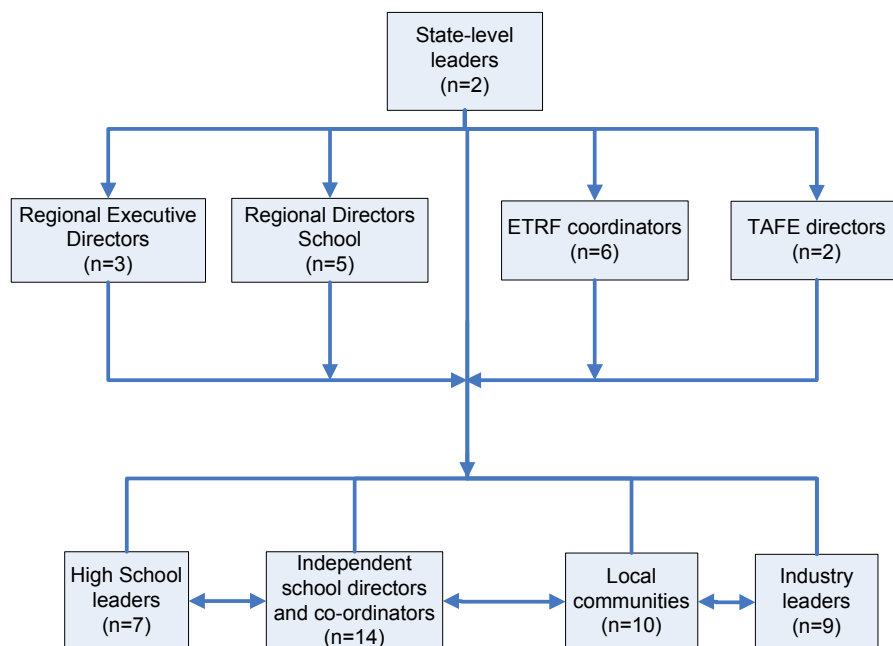


Figure 2 Multi-level cross-sectoral interviewees

Data from the interviews have been analysed with the aid of NVivo and explored for what they reveal about the concept of hope as a defining attribute of leadership, especially in times of significant cultural change.

The following sections present leadership context in Queensland, an analytical understanding of Lear's radical hope, especially the quality of courage, and the ways in which how the concept of hope and courage is displayed in the work of leadership.

## 4. Conceptualising of leadership in Queensland

Leadership is an important element to success of Queensland's reform to the Senior Secondary phase of Learning. **The concept of leadership will be abstract, without looking at the capabilities of leaders.** State-level leaders of the day developed a new leadership framework *Leadership Matters*<sup>4</sup> “to define the desired knowledge, skills and behaviours of State school principals” (DETA, 2006). It is used in the professional leadership development for school leaders of Education Queensland. It identifies five capabilities that are required for principals and school leaders to possess to be a present-day leader in Queensland in the globalised world. This framework is also used to offer guidance in all leadership development activities.

“Five related leadership capabilities form the basis of *Leadership Matters*. They are aimed at principals and aspiring leaders. The Educational, Personal, Relational, Intellectual and Organisational leadership capabilities combine to form a shared understanding of outstanding leadership of Queensland state schools. Highly effective school leaders strive to achieve mastery in each capability area” (DETA, 2009).

As mentioned on the website of DETA,

“This new framework represents a synthesis of current research and literature as well as the views of Education Queensland principals of what it means to be a successful leader in Education Queensland schools” (DETA, 2009).

These five leadership capabilities are demonstrated in Figure 3

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<sup>4</sup> *Leadership Matters* was developed under the leadership of the (then) Deputy Director-General, Education Queensland, Jenny Cranston after 12-month consultation phase.

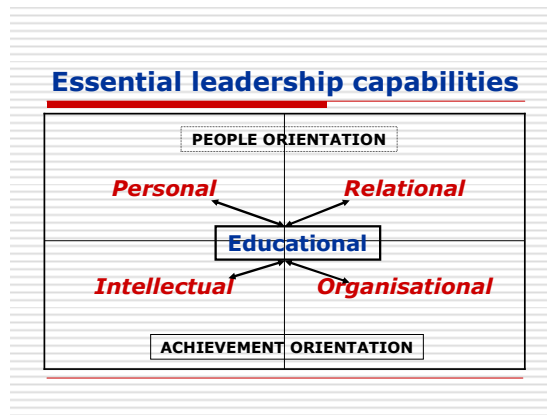


Figure 3 Leadership capabilities  
(Source: DETA, 2006)

The content of these five capabilities are summarised in Table 1

**Table 1 Leadership capabilities contents**

<i>Type of capabilities</i>	<i>contents</i>
Educational Leadership	Educational capabilities encompass professional knowledge and understanding of the art of teaching and learning to inspire commitment and achieve quality outcomes for students. Principals seek to evoke a passion for learning and believe that every child is important and every school day makes a difference to the achievement of outcomes.
Personal Leadership	Personal capabilities are the inner strengths and qualities that underpin ethical and professional practice. Principals demonstrate integrity and commitment to professional, moral, and ethical behaviour. They possess the courage to make difficult decisions; the ability to balance their personal and professional lives; and the capacity to model these capabilities to others.
Relational Leadership	Relational capabilities are the interpersonal skills required to develop and maintain quality relationships with a diverse range of people.
Intellectual Leadership	Intellectual capabilities require clever thinking, reasoned judgment and wise decision making. Principals enact the mission of public education. They seek to understand and to influence the strategic agenda; and to recognise emerging local, national and international trends.
Organisational Leadership	Organisational capabilities support continuous school improvement through effective management of human, financial and physical resources. Principals build efficient and effective processes and structures to lead and manage high performing school communities.

(Source: adapted from <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/docs/leadershipmatterspdf.pdf>)

Among the five capabilities necessary for leaders, the educational leadership quality includes professional knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning. As an educational leader, this type of capabilities is the fundamental and core abilities. Personal leadership capabilities are the “inner strengths and qualities that underpin ethical and professional practice”. The relationship capabilities are necessary for leaders to maintain quality interpersonal relationships with different kinds of people. Intellectual leadership capabilities are the good thinking and reasoning in making judgement and decision. This type of abilities actually decides the innovative potentials. Organisational capabilities decide the effective leadership in the organisation and influence the sustainability of the organisation. The categorising of leadership capabilities help develop leadership ability for leaders professional development. It also helps the evaluation of leadership in educational reform. One important capability of personal leadership is courage. Courage is one distinguishing constituent of hope.

## **5. Radical Hope in the leadership of VETiS**

### **5.1 Courage**

Lear’s radical hope is the hope for survival and it flourishes at a devastating time. Courage is one element in radical hope. In their extreme circumstances, Plenty Coups’ collaboration with whites displays his radical hope which may plays “a crucial role in a courageous life” (Lear, 2006: 107). Thus, there is a need to understand what courage is in such extreme times:

“If we can persuade ourselves that even in these extreme circumstances courage is a genuine virtue—that is, a state of character whose exercise contributes to the living of an excellent life—even if we can also show that radical hope is an important ingredient of such courage, we have thereby provided a legitimation of such hope” (Lear, 2006: 107).

At the critical moment of a nation’s survival, courage is needed. For Plenty Coups and his people, courage is deeply embedded in the Crow culture. “Courage was bravery related in battle—above all, planning a coup-stick and counting coups” (Lear, 2006: 59). But for the Crow after moving into reservation, the traditional concept of courage cannot be applied in the new environment:

“either they had to give up the idea that there was any longer a courageous way to live, or they had to alter their conception of what courage was. How might one viably take this latter option?” (Lear, 2006: 64).

Courage is a virtue. Aristotle (cited in Lear, 2006: 17) says that

“true excellences of character—what are called the virtues—have in common that they tend to strike the mean between excess and defect. Given a particular life-challenge, a courageous person will act in a way that avoids the excess of foolhardy recklessness, on the one hand, but also the defect of cowardliness on the other. The courageous person will in any given circumstances be able to find the appropriate way to behave courageously” (Lear, 2006: 17).

Thus, courage is an attribute of the excellence of character: “Courage is a state of character that is manifested in a committed form of living” (Lear, 2006: 65).

Transformation of psychological structure is difficult:

“It would seem that the very traits of character that make for a courageous person would place such a person in an especially disadvantaged position to make a courageous transition out of traditional forms of courage. The courageous Crow warrior willingly gave up his life so that his coup-stick would not be uprooted; all his training and encouragement from early youth was directed toward producing such character. It would seem that he more than most would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to uproot what he had learned about courage” (Lear, 2006: 82).

Courage is a virtue needed at all time. But courage is a generic concept. Its content will change with the time and differ in different time. At the extreme of cultural change, it has to be transformed into a new type with new meaning. Radical hope indicates as part of its content the concept of courage. For the leader of the Crow facing their cultural devastation:

“In a robust culture a courageous person will take risks, but he will have an established framework for understanding what those risks are. And it is in terms of that framework that he will develop an excellent capacity for risk-assessment and the ability to act well in the light of those risks. But at a time of cultural collapse, the courageous person has, as it were to take a risk on the framework itself” (Lear, 2006: 112).

People have a concept of what courage is and what the risks are related to courage. People can expect that. People will judge the capacity of courage on the basis of those expected risks. In circumstances of extreme cultural change, people lose their concept of what risks are and then lose the concept of what courage is. A real leader with courage has to figure out what risks are and find a light in the thick fog. That is the real courage. At such time radical hope is the light a courageous leader uses to frame a new concept of courage.

“We do not need to agree with Plenty Coups’s theory of dreams in order to see his hope as a manifestation of courage. But we would need to see his dream as somehow responsive to reality; and responsive in ways that manifest human excellence” (Lear, 2006: 113).

Plenty Coups stuck to his childhood dream he had at the start of cultural change. This dream was thought to be predicative of the Crow nation’s future because of its engagement with reality. The implication derived from the interpretation by the Crow leaders guides Plenty Coups and the Crow. The point of being responsive to reality based on his dream actually displays human excellence:

“What is it about courage that makes it a virtue—that is, a human excellence? Courage is a virtue, I think, because it is an excellent way of coping with, responding to, and manifesting a basic fact about us: that we are finite erotic creatures” (Lear, 2006: 119).

Courage is not just boldness. Courage is virtue of bravery showing human excellence, which engages risking realities in a move towards living a good life:

“What it is about courage that makes it a human excellence, the answer...is that courage is the capacity for living well with the risks that inevitably attend human existence” (Lear, 2006: 121).

At different times, courage is understood differently. Courage was once understood as “in terms of the risks of battle... in terms of standing alone with one’s conscience before God” (Lear, 2006: 121). In different times and spaces:

“there may be different risks; but as long as we are alive and human we will have to tolerate and take risks. The courageous person is someone who is excellent at taking those risks. That is why courage counts as a virtue: it is

an excellent way of inhabiting and embracing our finite erotic nature” (Lear, 2006: 121).

There are always risks for human beings. There are different risks for different cultures at different times. As human beings, we have to face risks. Some will lose in taking risks and end up in disaster and even extinct. A courageous leader is good at taking risks and leads to success, not failure:

“...in times of radical historical change ... there may be demands made on a courageous person that outstrip traditional training and traditional patterns of character-formation. At such time, to *remain* courageous one might have to endure or bring about significant psychological changes. One might need a kind of psychological flexibility that goes beyond anything the culture was trying to instill when it taught the flexibilities of change” (Lear, 2006: 124).

However, due to the radical change of culture and society, people may have demand on a courageous person which is different from traditional understanding. Such demand may be related to the transformation of courage to accord with engagement in the new reality: “Courage, Aristotle tells us, requires the ability to face up to reality, to exercise good judgment, and to tolerate danger in doing so” (Lear, 2006: 133). The courage needed to engage with reality so that correct and good decisions are made and the risks taken are worth it:

“The Crow were not able magically to turn the tide of history. The onslaught of the white man was a force that no Indian tribe could resist. That outcome is just as the dream predicted. The question is whether the hopefulness manifest in the dream facilitated a courageous response to the new challenges the Crow would face” (Lear, 2006: 136).

For Plenty Coups, his dream predicts the fate of the Crow nation. The reality gives credibility to his dream. They are not able to resist the onslaught of the white man. Plenty Coups’s dream also predicts that his nation, embodied in the Chickadee, could survive if they listen and learn. There is hope for the nation to survive. Lear (2006: 145) raises the question that whether this hopefulness equips Plenty Coups to respond to the new challenges that his nation faces:

“The radical hope that was embedded in the ideal of the chickadee helped Plenty Coups throughout his life to make creative decisions in radically new historical circumstances. And his fidelity to hope fits all of Aristotle’s

hallmarks of courage. With the virtue of the chickadee he was able to reorient himself to what was genuinely shameful...and to teach others ... Plenty Coups did not merely give himself and his people the psychological resources to adapt to a new situation; he also gave them an ideal in relation to which they could aim for something fine. The aim was not merely the biological survival of the individual members of the tribe...but the future flourishing of traditional tribal values, customs, and memories in a new context. This is an admirable goal. (Lear, 2006: 145).

Plenty Coups as a leader was loyal to the hope embedded in the Chickadee symbol. This loyalty leads him to make good decisions that reflect his courage in terms of radical hope. He transformed himself in what was really shameful into something new. He shows his people what is to strive for, in terms of the good life, and the survival and flourishing of the nation:

“Plenty Coups’s radical hope was not mere wish-fulfilling optimism...but was rather a radical form of hope that constituted courage and made it possible. After all, through a series of canny decisions and acts, the Crow were able to hold onto their land, and Plenty Coups helped to create a space in which traditional Crow values can be preserved in memory, transmitted to a new generation, and one hopes, renewed in a new historical era” (Lear, 2006: 145).

The courage constituting Plenty Coups’s radical hope makes possible to transform the traditional Crow values of courage into a new form and makes its Crow possible for the Crow to own their lands even under the onslaught of white colonists: “...we are inquiring into the legitimate roles that hope and imagination might play in the formation and development of courageous ways of living” (Lear, 2006: 148-149). Lear (2006: 109) cites Aristotle to explain courage:

“even if courage began as a paradigmatically military virtue...it might have more general marks and features that would allow for a thinning out of the virtue. If the world shifts, there maybe concomitant shifts in what can count as courageous, but for anything to count as courage, it must fall within this framework” (Lear, 2006: 109).

## 5.2 Courage in leaders of senior phase L/earning in Queensland

For leaders in VETiS in Queensland courage is valued greatly. Courage is understood to be able to find the appropriate way to behave bravely. Upper level leaders encourage the lower level leaders to be courageous and act appropriately in the

reforms to senior learning. The following quotation is from Interviewee 6. S/he is a state-level leader.

“the second part of their [Executive Directors Schools] role has got to be school performance. They’ve got to work with school principals. They’ve got to work with under-performing school and it’s not about blame, it’s about capacity building. And work again, have a look at the data but don’t let the data rule, but use the data in a really substantive way for school improvement, and to make sure that the data is being used for the purpose that we gather the data, and not used to beat people up about the head, but certainly for genuine school improvement. And to make the decisions that need to be made in terms of resourcing and sometimes that takes a lot of courage. But really get in there and monitor with the principal the performance of the school” (Interviewee 6).

This top leader encourages the next level leaders to use data appropriately and make decisions based on the data innovatively, which needs courage.

“I think as a public education system we have to stop working, if we indeed do, to middle of the road, mediocre, lowest common denominator, and start to cut some principals loose. Not so that they are no longer part of the public education system, because I don’t want that, but lets build in flexibility for these schools who are really our top schools. Some amazing schools, just wonderful principals. Let’s let them continue to be creative, and fly. And we’ll be there with them and support them and understand their work, be in there with them as they try new things, and not saying well you’ll be alright, and we’ll just be over here, because nothing might change over here. So, inherent in that third area is the development of our top people and those people who are close to it and feel the capacity of the system, make principalship attractive, talk it up, and then have the courage to deal with those people who are keeping us ordinary” (Interviewee 6).

For this state-level leader, the courage also exists in dealing with mediocre leaders, who keep the education system ordinary.

“It’s about professional development commitment, it’s about how important they see performance management, again what do you do to support your great teachers ... how much time do you invest listening to the talking about their aspirations, what’s your capacity to focus your professional development in your people that we need to become top principals? How do you develop your aspirants, I mean how courageous are you about monitoring teacher under performance and what strategies would you have or do you currently in your school, and making sure that the best possible core activity happens in the classroom” (Interviewee 6).

Courage has different forms in different contexts, but all have the feature of bravery showing human excellence. For this state-level leader, courage for a leader also lies in monitoring teacher under performance and being able to introduce new concepts in engaging realities towards a good life for kids. Courageous leaders sell the vision of doing schooling differently. One the state-level leader had the vision and saw that it is a new way for doing comprehensive learning in secondary school for some young people.

“I learnt the clearest lesson in developing X College is that you can’t innovate beyond the community acceptance if you are in the public service because you will be inundated with people. They don’t want to be parts of it so you have to do it, you know you have the compelling vision and everything else and you do the buy in, but the issues is they have to fundamentally understand the change, not in the academic sense but just intuitive sense ... because I have to go and reintroduce some reading before I was game enough to get up in City Hall in front of 600 people and tell them why they could enrol. But we’ve had no staff; no curriculum, no buildings, and we just got up and sold the concept of the academy. I reckon it was the most courageous night that public education’s ever had in this state. Because we just got up and said we want you to enrol in this, here’s our vision ... But I was not that stupid! And we were on. And we enrolled exceptional kids, and we enrolled exceptional parents. We gave our cover of 60%, I think it was 46-46% came from the private sector” (Interviewee 7).

This is a demonstration of personal leadership especially courage.

### **Reorientation to shame and fear**

A leader needs to avoid what is thought to be shameful. A courageous leader also understands how truly fearful it is to act courageously. “A courageous person has a proper orientation toward what is shameful and what is fearful” (Lear, 2006: 109). It is painful to reorientate the concept of shame and pain. Such reorientation needs courage. It actually takes courage to alter one’s conception of courage. “Courage requires that one be able to regulate a sense of honor and shame” (Lear, 2006: 84). The concept of shame becomes part of a person during his/her socialization experiences. A courageous Crow avoided doing shameful acts because they knew

they were shameful and wouldn't do them. They knew the difference between shame and grace.

In face of the death of a traditional way of life, a leader needs to reorient herself/himself including what is shameful and fearful. While a leader reorients what s/he takes to be shameful, he/she also reorients her/himself to what is good:

Reorientation is important in a new context. Like Laozi, an ancient Chinese philosopher says, “曲则全，枉则直，洼则盈，敝则新，少则多，多则惑”， that is to say, “To yield is to have the whole. To be crooked is to be straightened. To be hollow is to be filled. To be wore out is to be renewed. To have little is to get more. To have a lot is to be confused” (Laozi). Yielding and surrendering may help a leader achieve her/his goal. This is like character of water. Water has quality but no form. Its form depends on other physical environment in which it is found. Water is good at change. When water meets obstacles, it will endure and withdraw but will go forward after going in a twisted way until it wins.

Courage is contextual. The concept of courage changes with time. During the VETiS reform Education Queensland partner with Boeing Australia Ltd and Aviation Australia and set up Aviation High school near Brisbane Airport in a existing secondary school site. The school focuses on education related to Aerospace for Year 8 to Year 12 students. The school became a "Gateway to the Aerospace Industries" campus in 2004 (Aviation High, 2009). Students of Year 11-12 enrol in the school and doing general education as well as enhancing knowledge and skills within aviation VET subjects in aerospace and aviation industries. Education's cooperating with aeroplane company which makes war planes would be criticized and even condemned by some people.

“And see I don't think anyone's understood the courage that it takes to do that stuff ... partnership with Boeing for goodness sake they make war planes! Saying we don't want a partnership with people who support war. I'd say it is a changing world, it's a great...we are innovating with kids lives so you know and rightly so we should have to justify it. And so what I used to say to my team they'll argue about this, if this was me and my eldest daughter's doing a PhD, if this was me and someone was trying to see this for her, I reckon I would've said go and get stuffed! And yet we are selling it and it's up and working so (Interviewee 7)”.

For this state-level leader, he have reoriented to shame and fear. It is not a shame to partner with Boeing which also makes war planes. It is different time now. What he has to do is to justify for their decision. Aviation High has now eight partners: AirForce Cadets, Australian Aerospace, Aviation Australia, Boeing Australia Ltd, Brisbane Airport Corporation, CAE, GE Aviation, Griffith University, Qantas, QUT, Thales, University of Qld, Virgin Blue (Aviation High, 2009). It is courage of hope that let the state-level leader have vision which aims for something fine.

### **Act appropriately and boldly and have good grasp of situation and judgement**

Aristotle's second quality of courage is "Courage aims toward what is fine" (Lear, 2006: 110). People act appropriately and boldly for survival on many occasions because of pressure. They just fight for survival, which is not for something fine. Aiming for something fine for Plenty Coups was not merely the biological survival of the individual members of the tribe, but the future flourishing of traditional tribal values, customs, and memories in a new context. (Lear, 2006: 145). For a leader, acting appropriately in a certain situation requires courage. To act appropriately is part of the courage needed for any leader at unusual times.

Aiming for something fine in leadership is to act not just for survival but also aim for so flourishing. The former Australia Federal Government set up 24 Australia Technical Colleges (ATCs) across the country in areas where there are skills needs, a high youth population and a strong industry base. ATCs cater for Year 11 and 12 students. ATCs are important role for expanding Australian School-based Apprenticeships, especially in the traditional trades areas such as electrotechnology, building and construction, engineering (Metal Trades), automotive (Australia Government, 2009). In Queensland, there are four ATCs. ATCs are funded by federal government but just for three years. When three-year funding ends, there is no source of funding from federal government. This is a survival issue. ATC North Brisbane enrolls Year 11 and 12 students, but also enrol post-secondary students to expand the scope of VET. It also explore international market so that it could survival and

flourish after the stop of federal funding. The leader of ATC North Brisbane has a good knowledge of its situation.

Courage is closely related to good knowledge of one's situation and making good judgments based on well-informed, expert knowledge. A leader is courageous if he/she faces reality boldly: "A courageous person must grasp the situation he or she is in and, through experience, exercise good judgment"(Lear, 2006: 111). Plenty Coups's environment and situation has changed dramatically. The former expert knowledge about courage is not applicable. A leader has to understand and make judgement about what situation he/she is in. If the situation is changed, the acts related to courage need to be transformed too. Plenty Coups stuck to what the chickadee in his dream instructed him to do, that is, "developing good judgment, and making decisions on how to act that are based on knowledge" (Lear, 2006: 145). Integral to Plenty Coups' leadership is courage based on his knowledge of his situation.

### **Risk of loss and pain**

A leader will often face different kind of risks. In the time of warriors, the risk is related to the death of life in a war. When there is no war and when an extreme socio-cultural change comes, the meaning of risk may change: "Courage paradigmatically involves the risk of serious loss and of enduring certain pains" (Lear, 2006: 111). The courageous leader takes the risk of losing what he/she think is fine:

"In a period of cultural devastation ... there would have to be a radical transformation in the risks associated with courage. At ... historical moment, traditional examples of risk ... have become weirdly irrelevant. ... the risks that do arise are of a different order: the risks of facing a future that one as yet lacks concepts to understand" (Lear, 2006: 111-112).

So the risks posed by cultural devastation call for a change in the courage exercised by leaders. The meaning of risk undergoes a radical renovation. It is risk of facing a different unknown future that a leader does not have conception about. It is a risk of loss, not risk of death. The leader could not use traditional notion of courage to take such risk. A courageous leader has to take risks at the times of cultural devastation or radical change. Such risk is greater. A leader has to reorient oneself in what is shameful and what is fine. The strategy the leader

uses might not work in the end. By nature we are vulnerable as human beings. Leaders face even greater risks at those times when civilisation itself is vulnerable.

In Queensland, leaders of VETiS also meet the risk of loss, the loss of the way in which education is conducted. Education is used to be conducted in schools by teachers. With the change of context, some kids do not want to stay in the schools because schools are not fit for them. On the one hand some kids do not want to stay in schools; on the other hand we want to engage these kids. Facing this challenge, how leaders of VETiS deal with this situation? They have to reorient themselves in what is fine. In Queensland, some technical colleges were established to deal with this situation. They include Queensland College of Wine Tourism (QCWT), the Queensland Energy and Minerals Academy (QEMA), Aviation High. These schools are result of partnering between schools, universities, and industries. Schools do not just teach students literacy and numeracy. Schools now are providing pathways to work. The notion of pathways comes into the language of school system.

Today's educational leaders face great change in education. For instance, senior secondary education is no longer just undertaken as done traditionally in schools where students study only in one educational site for a certain fixed long period of time to get their Certificate. This traditional way of education is changing in Queensland. While students are enrolled at a school they can be at other schools, colleges, universities or industrial sites. The traditional way of having education changed. Some leaders, teachers may not adapt to this new way of educational life. Their concept of education is one where students are taught in classrooms in the school in which they are enrolled. These leaders have endured a breakdown in the traditional way of schooling.

For them, the education reality has changed. Leaders may have the risk of loss. Courage is the character of taking the risk of loss and pain to face the reality. Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope needs to engage reality to create good futures.

One capability of the capabilities required by upper lever leaders of Education Queensland for leaders is personal capability. Courage is part of this personal

capability. Here is an example of a leader at school/college level in the Senior Learning.

“Hope is all about creating your future, and I hope that this is going to happen – I’ve changed my languaging around that, and I don’t say “hope” anymore. Because it’s not about whether or not it’s going to accidentally happen. It’s not about accidentally happening. The hope is built around the fact that you then develop an action plan. So the hope is your action plan. So if you say, “I hope this is going to happen,” and you stand back and do nothing, it won’t happen ... So what you’ve got to do is – creating hope and developing hope, is all around about making sure that you are positioning yourself and giving yourself the skills that you’re going to be able to achieve your vision. And it’s about having the vision and the hope is the way that you go about it” (Interviewee 21).

For radical hope, hope and action goes hand in hand, hope with action and action with hope. Leaders of Senior Learning in Queensland actually manifest the concept of radical hope raised by Lear (2006).

## **6. Conclusion**

In this paper, we’ve looked at the leadership issue in Queensland for its education and training reform agenda. We do not just mention hope, but use it to theorise our research. Hope is not just wishful thinking or pure optimism. Hope engages with reality and in doing so it requires courage. Courage is part of leadership quality. Courage is one important feature of radical hope. Hope is especially needed at the time of devastation for leaders to lead to success. Leaders at different levels in Senior Learning display this quality of hope and courage in their leadership work. Theoretical understanding of hope tell us that it is practical and radical. This paper investigates the utility of the latter—radical hope—to interpret leadership in Senior Learning in Queensland.

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