WELSmain 2021 - Abstracts

29.09.2021, 15.30 – 16.30 CEST

R7 Management of Crisis

Dr. Michelle Striepe and Dr. Christine Cunningham, Edith Cowan University Perth, Australia

Title: When crisis becomes crises: Turbulent times for educational leaders

Schools are increasingly facing crisis as the number of school violence incidents, extreme weather events, and natural disasters rise. In Australia, schools have had to deal with the crises of bushfires and cyclones in tandem with the crisis of COVID-19. In Bolivia, schools reeling from crises related to economic and political factors have had to contend with the implications of the ongoing health pandemic. Such circumstances have required school leaders to take on new responsibilities and roles to manage the crises. The aim of our ongoing international research study has been to explore how school leaders manage and respond to crisis and crises. Our data collection methods included document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and cognitive mapping, timelining and visual images. The described methods have helped us capture rich, in-depth insights on how school leadership team members and teachers employed leadership strategies and/or processes to manage and respond to crisis within their educational setting. This presentation draws attention to a neglected but important aspect of educational leadership and develops current understandings of how school leaders have dealt with multiple crises of an on-going, multi-faceted nature. More specifically we will examine how educational leadership is enacted during times of crises; how leadership roles change or adapt as a crisis evolves; how various contextual forces influence a leader's actions and the critical issues and lessons learned after leading through multiple or on-going crises.

Dr. Priscila Monge, Tecnológico de Monterrey Hermosillo, Mexico

Title: Distributed leadership in a changing educational context

The objective of this research was to analyze 24 school leadership practices developed during COVID-19 lockdown in kindergartens of two school zones in North of Mexico, located in marginalized urban and rural contexts, with limited access to technology and connectivity, and showing symptoms derived from educational change that developed during the pandemic, such as: uncertainty, fear and anxiety. Based on the distribution of leadership, a multiple case study was carried out to locate principals actions in three dimensions: 1) Establishment of direction, 2) Development of people and 3) Redesign of the organization; for this, open categorization and expert judgment were carried out, where it was found: 1) Establishment of direction: diversification of communication media and resources for monitoring and evaluation of students in distance education 2) Development of people: promotion of training spaces and strengthening of teaching leadership. 3) Redesign of the organization: generation of spaces for teacher collaboration and restructuring of the school organization according to their needs. The distributed leadership of the principals, with the support of their supervisors, made possible the continuity of academic activities based on a flexible organization. Therefore, it is concluded that the knowledge and practice of distributed leadership in situations of emergent and unplanned change, such as the case of the contingency due to COVID-19, is essential for education to be possible even in marginalized contexts.

Dr. Antonios Kafa, Frederick University Nicosia, Cyprus

Title: School leaders' support structure during the COVID-19 crisis: The case of the centralized educational system in Cyprus

The COVID-19 crisis affected education systems worldwide and disrupted the way in which students are educated around the globe. The centralized education system of Cyprus has certainly been no exception to this. As a consequence, teachers (with almost no training and preparation) and students were called upon to manage the inflow of new knowledge through the use of their own computers and were introduced to a new way of learning in their own home environment. However, in a larger context, the important role of the school leader in this current situation was omitted. In particular, school leaders in Cyprus had a vital role to play during Covid-19 which included the coordination of the staff and the new distance learning process, as well as the evaluation of the ongoing situation within the school organization. Therefore, school leaders needed more support from the Ministry of Education to coordinate this abrupt change. Having said that, in this presentation we will highlight the important role of school leaders in Cyprus during the pandemic crisis and argue about the significance of school leaders' support structure during the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, based on the centralized education system of Cyprus and the current literature, we will present some aspects of school leaders' capacity and support structure in order to support school organizations during the pandemic crisis. In fact, this conceptual framework could act as the basis of the professional development of school leaders in matters of crisis and uncertainty based on the centralized educational system in Cyprus.

Prof. Dr. Rodriguez Lorena, RIGE, Hermosillo, Mexico

Title: Executive Leadership in Crisis Processes

This project captures the experience of school principals and supervisors from the state of Sonora, northern Mexico. Its purpose was to document the exercise of the organization and operation of schools in the face of crisis processes at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was based on the multiple case study methodology; used in-depth and semi-structured interviews, directed at principals and supervisors; a questionnaire on teachers; the data gathering was carried out remotely through surveys and video calls due to the lockdown situation. The selection of principals was according to the latest ISSPP protocol. The analysis was conducted based on the following categories: a) ways of organization and school operation; b) actions implemented to generate a shared vision; c) school improvement strategies; and d) actions to promote the transformation of teaching practices. There is evidence of the ability of principals and supervisors to assure the continuity of the teaching and learning process through an innovative reorganization; common strategies were designed and ties of empathy were established in the face of the situation, to favor the learning of the students with assertive communication and shared vision in the school community.