# Editorial

*David Frost*
*University of Cambridge Faculty of Education*

---

Welcome to this, the first issue of *Teacher Leadership*, a new journal which aims to publish teachers' accounts of their leadership of development work in schools. The journal addresses the need to bring into the spotlight teachers' heroic efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For too long such leadership has been either completely invisible or it has been compartmentalised and sidelined under headings such as 'continuing professional development'. Real school improvement, that has real impact, does not occur without such teachers leading change.

*Teacher Leadership* has come into existence to assist members of the HertsCam Network in their effort to build knowledge about teaching and learning in Hertfordshire schools. The membership of HertsCam consists of teachers from all phases of schooling, some of whom are employed by the local authority as Teaching and Learning Consultants or Advisers. All members of the Network have participated in a programme that began in 1999 and includes the 'Herts. M.Ed in Teaching and Learning' and the linked, school-based 'Teacher Led Development Work' (TLDW) groups (Frost *et al*., 2006). The network is supported through the alliance of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and the local education authority in Hertfordshire, now known as CSF (Children, Schools and Families). The journal is part of a wider strategy to extend the influence of members of the HertsCam Network beyond their own classrooms and schools. The network can be seen as a 'knowledge creation engine' which enables us to work together to accumulate professional knowledge based on rigorous inquiry and to make that knowledge available to all schools in Hertfordshire and beyond. This is not just a matter of dissemination however; rather, the journal constitutes a forum in which we can clarify and synthesise what has been learnt and invite others to participate in critical reflection on the development of pedagogical practice.

*Teacher Leadership* breaks new ground in that it provides a forum for teachers to present credible yet accessible accounts of their learning-centred leadership work. In the main, academic journals have tended to publish papers written by professional researchers working in the university sector, but *Teacher Leadership* is exclusively for teachers. The university does play an important part, but it is an enabling and support role. Lawrence Stenhouse argued the case for this twenty years ago.

> In order to offer support for schools, the 'educationist' needs to assume a consultancy role in the fullest sense. He needs to see himself as notionally employed by the teacher, and as accountable to him.
>
> (Stenhouse, 1975: 192)

More recently, Michael Apple argued that the academic world has to recognise that teachers work in increasingly intensified conditions and that this demands a form of research in which university academics act as 'story tellers and secretaries' for teachers to enable their voices to be heard (Apple, 2006).

The articles and stories presented here are case studies of teacher-led development work. They are not making generalisable claims but are offered as relateable accounts (Bassey, 1999) that could provide other practitioners with valuable insights and starting points for their own improvement strategies.

The articles are all based on masters theses which have been subject to the rigours of the University assessment system. They have not been subject to the sort of peer review that we are accustomed to seeing in academic journals, but the material has been defended and scrutinised in a way which may be even more demanding than the traditional peer review system.

Jo Mylles' article focuses on a thread that runs throughout all of the work of the HertsCam Network. She homes in on *teacher leadership* and the ways in which that has been nurtured in her school. Her account also reveals how a school-based Teacher Led Development Work group can be established. Both Jill Jones' and Jackie Johnson's articles focus on whole-school change processes and how specific learning-centred projects can draw colleagues into reflection and review of pedagogical practice. Jill led an investigation into the use of the ICT Suite in her primary school; this transformed her own understanding of how pupils collaborate around the computer, but more important perhaps is the account of how the enquiry enabled her to raise issues with her colleagues and work with them to improve practice. Jackie's account is remarkable in that it demonstrates how she and her fellow strategists were able to influence almost the entire staff of a large secondary school. She played a key role in leading the Learning Preferences Profiling project which drew teachers and students into a pedagogic dialogue that made a major contribution to the school being named as one of the most improved schools in the country. Kate Healer's article is more tightly focussed on a small number of classrooms and a particular strategy for promoting thoughtfulness among the students. It is in itself a very thoughtful account and one which provides a very useful set of tools for improving learning. Robert Good's account of his work in a Special School has resonance for us all. Robert focuses on how modern technology can be used to free up students from whatever constraints affect them, enabling them to have a voice and to exercise some control over the process of their own learning.

The 'stories' presented here are quite different in character to the articles. They have all been written on behalf of the authors rather than by them directly. These brief case studies have been drafted by the Editorial Team on the basis of the authors' portfolios of evidence of their development work.

**2**

The portfolios had been assessed for the purposes of the award of the Certificate of Further Professional Studies. They can be said to constitute 'case records' (Rudduck, 1985) which are valuable sources of evidence although, in that format, not particularly accessible beyond the particular schools. The stories represent a way of broadcasting the news so that other practitioners can enquire further if the development activity interests them.

The stories all indicate how teachers are pursuing in different ways the major contemporary themes in classroom practice. Debbie Davies and Elizabeth Clarey both work in a secondary school that is a hotbed of classroom experiment and they belong to a large group of colleagues who have engaged in such work. Debbie's work focused on the development of a 'Learning to Learn' course which complements very well Elizabeth's experiment with De Bono's Thinking Hats. These are two interesting examples of strategies to support metacognition. The Nobel School has also fostered a great deal of *teacher leadership* having sustained a school-based TLDW group with twelve members. Susie Hoad experimented with a way of taking account of older students' learning styles using a quite different approach to the one used by Jackie Johnson at Barnwell School in the same town. Jill Borcherds' story about interactive whiteboards draws further attention to the way technology is impacting on classroom practice and Richard Cave's development work makes some interesting connections between self-assessment and collaborative relationships in the classroom.

Overall, it is an impressive body of work which demonstrates that, in spite of the unprecedented pressure that teachers are under, there is still an enormous capacity to take on the challenge of change and improvement. These accounts show us that, given the right opportunity and appropriate frameworks of support, teachers will devote considerable enthusiasm and energy to the business of investigating, evaluating, reflecting on, and most importantly, acting strategically to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools.

## References

Apple, M. (2006) *Markets, Standards, and Inequality - Keynote Address to ICSEI* (International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement) Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA audio recording retrieved from the world wide web on 10th March 2006 http://www.leadership.fau.edu /icsei2006/archive.htm

Bassey, M. (1999) *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Frost, D., Roberts, A. with Lightfoot, S. & McCrorie, M. (2006) *Teacher leadership and knowledge building: the experience of the HertsCam Network*, a paper presented within the symposium: 'Leadership for Learning' at ICSEI 2006, the 19th International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 3rd–6th January.

Rudduck, J. (1985) 'A Case for Case Records?: A Discussion of Some Aspects of Lawrence Stenhouse's Work in Case Study Methodology' in R. Burgess (ed.) *Strategies of Educational Research*. Lewes: Falmer Press.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.