

## Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue of the second volume of *Teacher Leadership*, the journal that showcases and disseminates teachers' leadership of development work. This issue contains another remarkable collection of accounts of teachers leading change. Here we see teachers striving to extend their pedagogic repertoires and improve their own and their colleagues' practice. More significant perhaps is that these accounts reveal the enormous potential that teachers have to build and embed new ways of working in their schools and carry their influence forward into wider professional networks and even policy arenas.

The teachers featured in this journal often start with a particular concern about aspects of pupils' learning, but as they proceed along the developmental path they soon discover the need and the potential for professional and institutional learning. In the discourse about schools, the concept of learning is commonly reserved for children and young people. Learning is what kids do when they go to school – right? By the same token, teachers engage in professional development and school improvement is the goal of educational leadership. However, supposing we dissolve these clumsy constructions and just use the term 'learning' to refer not only to what pupils do, but also to refer to what teachers do when they want to improve their effectiveness and to refer to what schools do when they want to develop and embed new and better practice. The accounts included in this journal provide vivid illustrations of the way themes such as values, voice, agency, self-esteem, narrative and feedback arise in both pupil and teacher learning. They are all of crucial relevance in a school that aspires to be a learning community (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007).

Tracey Gaiteri's article deals with how young children can use drama to develop empathy and insight into the human condition. Their sense of narrative and their understanding of other people is enhanced and they find themselves able to write with a new sense of purpose. Their creativity becomes so much more than an empty

academic exercise. Their engagement in dialogue leads to them being 'no longer frightened of their own voice'. The concept of voice is echoed time and again in these pages, not least in the article by Sheila Ball in which she reflects back on her attempts to introduce strategies for student voice at a time when it had yet to become not only fashionable but the subject of official guidance from the UK government. Her experiments with strategies such as photo-evaluation were creative and productive inasmuch as they enabled students to articulate their perspectives on the experience of doing school, but Sheila's reflections are perhaps even more significant in the way they reveal something about teacher voice and the challenge of teacher leadership. Her account includes a courageously honest and sharp analysis of what can stand in the way of achieving influence and some wise observations about the leadership of change. In this story there is no separating the issue of student voice from teacher voice. Both hinge on the question of human agency.

The concept of human agency has arisen with persuasive frequency in *Teacher Leadership*. Colin Gladstone's article is another in which a teacher looks back to the early stages of his career as an agent of change. In pursuing the inclusion agenda he too identifies the connection between voice and human agency when he says: "being human is about being an agent". He applies this to the context of special education needs where young people with severe learning difficulties are given the opportunity not only to be creative entrepreneurs but also to form relationships with other young people in mainstream schooling.

Lucy Bolton's article is likely to leave the reader feeling uncertain. Are we reading about a case of professional development through coaching or is it more a case of collaborative development work through co-inquiry? The blurring of the boundaries in this account is a blessing. Here we can see the interweaving of pupil learning, teacher learning and institutional learning as a Drama teacher works with colleagues in the Science Department to help improve classroom effectiveness. This article also highlights the way a direct focus on classroom practice can contribute to the raising of self-esteem and a wider enhancing of the teacher's professional role. Self-esteem has been a recurring theme in *Teacher Leadership*. In previous issues it has been spotlighted quite explicitly – for example by Janet Ollerenshaw (Volume 1 Number 3), but in Lucy's article it emerges as an essential ingredient in the cultivation of learning for both pupils and teachers. In the same way that the teacher 'Sarah'

gained confidence in herself as a practitioner when the coaching made her gains in learning visible, the students in Helen Hill's project made rapid progress when a simple progress review device made their learning visible to them. Self-esteem is also at the core of the problem that Richard Moore tackled in the context of physical education for young people who tend to be the losers in competitive sports. The project provides a counter weight to Gordon Brown's call at the Beijing Olympics for more competition in sport (The Guardian, 2008). Richard's work offers vulnerable young people an opportunity to improve their physical capability through individual sport within which their self-esteem can be protected and nurtured.

Assessment for learning practice has developed rapidly over the past 5 years as accounts in this journal have testified to (see Sue Lyons article in Volume 1, Number 3 for example). In this issue we hear about a collaborative project in a primary school which again has a strong pupil voice element. This project led by Alyson Mitchell, Liz Sims and Hetal Sitaram is an excellent illustration of how a whole school can develop practice when a group of teachers solicit the views of children and use them to create new strategies to support learning. Listening and responding to the voices of students is the focus of Steve Mackenzie's project. He started out with a focus on assessment but found that the students had so much more to say about their experience of school. His 'off-loading' sessions enabled students to express their views – to comment on what they wanted to comment on. This resonates well with Sheila Ball's article referred to above.

In secondary schools pastoral work has largely moved away from a concentration on welfare towards support for learning. The role of form tutor has always been an additional one for teachers but now we are beginning to see creative strategies in which non-teachers can become form tutors as the story of Joanna Heasman's development work illustrates. This clearly helps to free up teachers' time, enabling them to focus their energy on teaching, but it is also about making better use of the strengths and talents that can be found among the administrative staff who tend to have wide ranging skills including data management.

The use of new technologies is addressed in the story of Zoe Ross's development work. Her project reminds us that the main challenge for the development of ICT is the leadership of professional development and the time and ingenuity that this demands. Here we

have a glimpse of what can be achieved using technological solutions to professional learning.

The final story in this issue of *Teacher Leadership* focuses on the quest of a group of Croatian colleagues. Ljubica Petrovic is one of a number of young professionals who are determined to find a new professionalism in which teachers find their voices and take responsibility for innovation and change. She is a member of the International Teacher Leadership project team which came together in 2008 to work collaboratively to build support for teacher leadership globally. A strong feature of this project is the contrast between different cultures and contexts which echoes some of what Colin Gladstone says in his article about the value of looking outwards and comparing educational systems across the world.

Since the launch of our new website in 2008, it has been possible to download articles and stories from *Teacher Leadership* free of charge. We know that this material is being used across the world by teachers looking for inspiration and information about how to lead the development of practice in their schools. It is evident also that the material is being used in the context of professional development seminars for teachers. We are committed to publishing accounts of teachers' leadership of development work wherever it is to be found and hope that future issues will reflect this increasingly international perspective.

If you would like to comment on what you read in this journal or would like to search for and download material from previous issues, please visit our website [www.teacherleadership.org.uk](http://www.teacherleadership.org.uk). If you would like to know more about our editorial policy you can either read the Editorial in the second issue of the journal (Volume 1 Number 2) or you can email Lyndsay Upex ([lju20@cam.ac.uk](mailto:lju20@cam.ac.uk)) and ask her to send you a guidance document.

## References

Stoll, L. & Seashore Louis, K. (eds.) (2007) *Professional Learning Communities: Divergence Depth and Dilemmas*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

The Guardian (2008) 'Competitive sport puts pupils off exercise, study says', 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/sep/05/schools.schoolsports>.