

Editorial

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Our regular readers may have been perplexed by the delay in the publication of this issue, for which I sincerely apologise. The reason for this is that the journal has been a victim of its own success in that it has played a part in developing the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) project. This has involved a wide range of events and activities in the 15 countries now taking part and has taken up all available time. However, the attention of the editorial team is now fully on the journal and the next two issues will follow quickly on the heels of this one.

The *Teacher Leadership* journal began as an outlet for the work of teachers in the HertsCam Network, but the inspiration carried by the stories and articles we published has led to a flowering of such work elsewhere in the world. This is reflected to a modest extent in this issue by the inclusion of material from, or about, teachers who belong to different networks. We carry a story from a teacher who was supported through her membership of a 'Learning Circle' facilitated by the National Union of Teachers in the UK; another comes from a network in Istanbul which is affiliated to the ITL project. One of the articles comes from a teacher who belongs to Cantarnet¹. We expect this widening of the scope of the journal to gather momentum in future issues to reflect the way the concept of teacher leadership, as it is represented here, is increasingly adopted in many parts of the world as the key to educational transformation.

The scope of the journal may have expanded to include a wider range of teachers, but the focus remains the same. In the very first editorial I said this.

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.

We are also continuing with the policy of publishing two different types of material: one category is brief stories written on behalf of teachers who have led development projects or innovations; the other is more substantial articles written by teachers who have submitted their work for an academic award and have been edited by members of the editorial team.

Stories

In this issue we begin with a story about Marie Metcalfe's project in which she intervened to improve the engagement of families from ethnic minorities and to promote pupils' self-esteem by developing a 'language of the week' programme. It is interesting to note how a teacher who is provided with support to identify and address her professional concerns naturally turns her attention to questions of inclusion, diversity and social justice. The idea of respecting the students' perspective is also evident in Andrew Whiteway's work on learning poetry, but in his case the creativity of the teachers who are drawn into Andrew's project was more to the fore.

Creative solutions to the problem of how to engage young people in learning is again

¹ Cantarnet – The Canterbury Action Research Network

explored in Kristina Barczy's development project which focused on Mathematics. It is interesting that a key learning point for Kristina was that the changes she made seemed very modest to her but were very significant for her students. The availability of new technologies in recent years has enabled teachers to become very creative in the classroom. The Mary Niven story illustrates this well. Her use of video cameras to enable her young students to develop their communication skills is very innovative, but it is interesting that her creativity also extended to the way she consulted them – by asking them to debate the merits of using ICT.

Student choice is at the heart of the story about a development project in which Elizabeth Edwards and Sophie Gilbert collaborated. These two primary school teachers led a ground breaking project in which children were given many opportunities to exercise choice and to participate in curriculum planning. Student choice and the exercise of leadership continues to reverberate in the story about Penny Richardson's work. She led the development of an externally generated programme called 'Learning to Lead' which enables students to form and manage their own project teams in order to tackle a range of concerns that they have identified themselves.

The stories section concludes with a contribution from a teachers' network in Istanbul. Here we see an account of Nerin Kabaalioglu's initiative to develop active learning approaches in a Turkish primary school. Her influence is widened when the parents are drawn into the discussion about how students become engaged through active learning.

Articles

The four articles included in this issue of *Teacher Leadership* cover both substantive classroom innovation and matters concerned with the processes and contexts within which teachers are able to make such a difference. Andrew Emms' account of developing the use of the radio station in a primary school explores in greater depth the issues about creativity and the use of ICT that appear in some of the stories mentioned above. Again it is interesting to see both a focus on the use of new technology, such as the Audacity software, and also more well-established pedagogical principles such as the power of dialogue in curriculum development.

The dialogue theme is taken up in the article by Matt Roberts and Amanda Roberts² in which they discuss their project focusing on a 'knowledge creation and transfer' initiative that seeks to foster inter-school collaboration. In the present policy environment it is instructive to read about a deliberate attempt to enable teachers to share knowledge across so many schools in the same town.

Most of the material in *Teacher Leadership* has something to say about the affective dimension of learning, but in Corrine Harris' article we have a very explicit and direct focus on emotional literacy as the key to enabling both teachers and pupils to improve the way they deal with the emotional challenges of school life, classroom learning and relationships. Corinne, an early years teacher, was supported in her work through her membership of a network facilitated by Canterbury Christ Church University. Like the other teachers referred to above, she had explicit support and encouragement that enabled her to exercise leadership.

The final article in this issue of *Teacher Leadership* focuses on the evaluation of such a programme of support. Val Hill is not only an Assistant Headteacher in a secondary school but she is also a member of the team that supports the International Teacher Leadership project. She is one of a growing band of experienced teachers who have dedicated their

² There is no family connection

creativity to the question of how we can enable teachers to exercise leadership and be maximally influential in their schools. She has built her own expertise through a scholarly, inquiry-based approach which enables her to share robust insights.

The material described above is another powerful body of evidence that demonstrates and illustrates the miracles that can be achieved by teachers. I believe that these accounts serve as an inspiration to other teachers who want to pursue their vocation and lead the way to better teaching and learning strategies. It has been evident for some time that this kind of inspiration works well within localised networks, but it is very encouraging to discover, as we have done in the last year or so, that it can also work globally. The ITL project includes networks in countries as diverse as New Zealand and Moldova and what is remarkable is that stories of teacher leadership can be inspirational across national and cultural boundaries. A summary of the ITL project can be found on the journal website – www.teacherleadership.org.uk