Developing teacher professionality through teacher leadership

Convened by David Frost

Contributors

Maria Assunção Flores
Gisela Redondo Sama
Hanan Ramahi
Val Hill
Sarah Lightfoot

A symposium at CARN 2015
Bom Jesus, Braga
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What connects us?

A teachers’ network with international partners.
Core ideas

Teacher professionalism can be enhanced / extended.

The key strategy is to empower and enable teachers to exercise leadership in the development of practice in their schools.

Teachers can be enabled to design and lead development projects.

They are supported by workshops and tools that structure reflection, planning and discussion.
Maria Assunção Flores’ book

‘Professionalism and teacher leadership’
Restoring teachers’ self-esteem through teacher leadership in Portugal

Maria Assunção Flores
University of Minho, Portugal

CARN Conference 2015
6-8 November 2015 | Braga, Portugal
Action Research Across Disciplinary Settings
Challenges for change and empowerment
Teacher Leadership and Professionalism

Research on teacher leadership

the way professionalism is constructed within policy and institutional settings, and in particular in the Portuguese context which has been critical for the teaching profession over the last few years due to the economic, financial and social crisis.
The Portuguese context

• The economic and financial crisis in Portugal

• High unemployment levels, salary cuts, and higher taxes (affecting also the teaching profession)

• Strikes and demonstrations (workload, retirement, teacher evaluation)

• Changes at the policy level:
  • new mechanisms for teacher evaluation;
  • new protocols for school governance;
  • reduction in the school curriculum;
  • introduction of national exams from the primary school upward, etc.

In general, more pressure is placed on schools and teachers to increase teaching standards and student achievement.
The wider research project

3-year research funded project (2012-2014) by National Foundation for Science and Technology

(PTDC/CPE-CED/112164/2009)

http://teachersexercisingingleadership.com
Research goals

i) to understand the wider social, cultural and political setting and the policy environment in which teachers’ work is framed, especially in terms of challenges and opportunities;

ii) to analyse the professional and organizational culture and structures of the schools in which teachers work;

iii) to understand the ways in which teachers construct their professionalism;

iv) to develop strategies in order to enhance teacher leadership in schools.
## Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of data collection</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Online Questionnaire</td>
<td>2702 teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>February-April 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>11 schools involved (nationwide)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2012-April 2013</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>11 headteachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Professional development course in 5 schools</td>
<td>5 schools involved (located in northern Portugal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2013-July 2014</td>
<td>Questionnaires with open-ended questions</td>
<td>66 teachers</td>
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<td>Portfolios</td>
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<td>Reflective tools</td>
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<td>Artefacts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
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Findings: Teachers’ Current Motivation

- Very Low [155] (3.8%)
- Low [458] (17.4%)
- Moderate [1194] (27.4%)
- High [719] (5.9%)
- Very High [99] (45.5%)
Worsening of conditions at school

- Increasing individualism and competetiveness due to teacher evaluation
- The merging of schools (cluster of schools)
- Number of students per class and classes per teacher
- Bureaucracy and intensification (meetings, administrative work, ...)
Teachers’ voices

“As a teacher you feel unmotivated with all that is going on in Education, but you need a positive attitude in order to motivate your students for learning.”

“I try to make an effort to carry on keeping in mind the goal that has made me choose this profession, I mean, my students!”
Teachers’ voices

“My participation in the project ITL made me realise that it is possible to show that with small things great changes can be operated.”

“Sharing experiences contributed to believe and invest in the development of projects in partnership with my peers, involving the pupils, within the classroom and beyond.”
Teachers’ voices

“The meetings were spaces for the construction of professional knowledge and opportunities for sharing experiences. They have enhanced reflection, thought-provoking discussion and debate of ideas on the projects that are being developed by the participants in their own contexts of work... The meetings have helped me to develop abilities and strategies to foster my leadership skills and to make a difference in the context in which I work.”
Conclusions and discussion

- Importance of learning networks and teacher leadership in fostering professional development.

- Issues such as the possibility of building professional knowledge together, sharing experiences and ideas and enhancing professional motivation and morale through discussions about the teaching profession and the conditions in which teachers work.

- Structural and cultural aspects also emerged namely the professional and school culture and leadership and the personal and professional values as teachers as key mediating influences on teacher professional development.
FINAL THOUGHTS

- The deconstruction of the leadership concept.
- Factors that influence the practice of teacher professionalism and leadership.
- Development and evaluation of leadership strategies (co-training project).
- The potential of learning networks.
- Current conditions of the teaching profession.
THANK YOU!
The Teach-in Project: teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Gisela Redondo-Sama
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Teacher leadership for school improvement: community capacity building towards effective leadership, educational success and social cohesion

Marta Soler, PhD by Harvard
Joana Leinonen, Primary teacher
Ania Ballesteros, student
Wincey Boachie-Donkor, secondary teacher
Dr. David Frost, University of Cambridge

Communication Methodology

Non-positional teacher leadership
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Conceptualisations of teacher leadership

- **Principals’ support for teacher leadership** (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Blase & Blase, 2004)
- **Positions** (Taylor, Goeke, Klein & Onore, 2011; Mangin, 2007)
- **Teachers and followers** (Kellerman, 1999; Gardener, 1990)
  - Interaction of leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004)
  - Teacher leaders (Spillane & Min Kim, 2012; Foster, 1986; Reitzug, 1994; Neumerski, 2012)
- **Aptitudes and particular dispositions of certain people with the potential to lead** (Borko, Wolf, Simone & Uchiyama, 2003; Newmann, King & Youngs, 2000)
- **Professional development programmes** (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster & Cobb, 1995; Youngs & King, 2002)
A theory of non-positional teacher leadership explicated through practitioners’ narratives

Teachers can

- lead innovation
- build professional knowledge
- develop their leadership capacity
- influence colleagues and practice in their schools

...if they have supportive structures and strategies
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Parents and community
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Teacher Leadership for Inclusive and Diverse Societies

Division K - Teaching and Teacher Education
Section 2: Teacher Leadership
Within and Beyond the Classroom
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

Research visits to Macedonia and Bulgaria

- the aim of the visit
- definition of “themes”
- ...

Interviews and group discussion with teachers and facilitators
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

ITL COLLABORATIVE WORK
## Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milena</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidora</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentin</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aneta</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katerina</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<td>Silvana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irena</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monika</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penka</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elena</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniela</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violeta</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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</tbody>
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- The case of Mirce Acev School (Skopje, Macedonia)  
- The case of OU Grigor Prlcev-Ohrid (Ohrid, Macedonia)  
- The case of Levsky (Varna, Bulgaria)
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

SKOPJE, Macedonia
Teacher leadership that mobilises communities

VARNA, Bulgaria
Towards a more dialogic school-home relationship

You have the preconception that there is no one to get involved but if you ask them, they are going to be involved in the activity that you ask for. Maybe not all of them, maybe just a few

Angela (Macedonia)

At the end, they want to get involved. They are going to get involve, if you ask them, explain which is going to be their task

Penka (Bulgaria)
Participation in learning and classroom activities

*For example, when a parent has a certain profession, they come to teach to kids about their profession.*

Aneta (Macedonia)

*I have a kid in the school and at the beginning he didn’t know the language in which he was taught. So, the parents came and translated.*

Daniela (Bulgaria)
Being part of the school life, sharing knowledge

We knew what other schools developed. And it became clear and we made “the school for parents” (..) And it happened (…) and we love it

Daniela (Bulgaria)

They (parents) are welcome to stay in classrooms, inside the classrooms

Isidora (Macedonia)
Together we organised workshops with parents and children on topics related to Roma culture, Roma identity and problems Roma face in our country.

Dzenita, teacher
Sarajevo
Emancipatory education for Palestine: the power of teacher leadership

Interim results from an intervention in one school in Ramallah, Palestine

Hanan Ramahi
Director of the American School of Palestine, Ramallah
Palestine
Palestine is a beautiful place rich in culture

But.....
Emancipatory education

- counter-hegemonic
- enables critical thinking
- raises awareness of the root causes that lead to social, economic and political exclusion
- facilitates meaningful knowledge building that relate to local realities
- collectively empowers oppressed peoples to transform their living conditions
- pedagogic tools include dialogue, reflection, collaboration, engagement and action
The non-positional approach views leadership as a form of strategic influence exercised by all teachers. Hence TL is not exclusive to hierarchical structures or delegated roles. All teachers are invited to collectively mobilise their creative forces through a deliberate, self-directed activity to create change at the professional, organisational and policy levels. Rooted in principles and based on strategies that involve activities and tools, leadership activity leads to teacher empowerment, self-efficacy and professional transformation.

(Frost, 2012)
Palestine

• education historically controlled by foreigners

• in 1994 Palestinians inherit an antiquated and dysfunctional education system

• education reconstruction internationally funded - unrelated programmes and foreign agendas

• reform efforts have had limited impact

• change viewed as requiring outside intervention
Ramallah
One school in Ramallah

• author is the founder and director of an all through (Kindergarten – secondary) school in Ramallah

• she is familiar with Western and Arab education systems and cultures

• moral imperative to enable authentic learning, development and growth

• evident dissatisfaction with teacher preparation and professional development

• starting with the teachers in the hope of transfer to students, entire school and beyond
Teacher leadership

'Teachers really can lead innovation; teachers really can build professional knowledge; teachers really can develop the capacity for leadership, and teachers really can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. However, what is abundantly clear is that teachers are only likely to do these things if they are provided with appropriate support.'

(Frost, 2011: 57)
Teacher-led development work

The TLDW programme supports teacher leadership through:

- belonging to a school-based group
- participation in a series of workshops
- using tools for reflection and planning
- certification through a portfolio of evidence
- internal support from senior leadership
- participation in the network

(Frost and Durrant, 2003)
TLDW group session
Emergent themes

Opportunities

• relevance
• enhanced agency
• structured support
• collaboration
• change in teaching practice

Challenges

• time
• process-led development
Relevance

This is the first time that I have a problem that concerns me and I’m working on finding a solution for it… [Before the programme] I didn’t have the means for solving problems. Now I feel that any problem I face I can inquire into and find solutions to. (Before) I would search for a ready-made solution, or ask someone older… Now I feel the need to search for a solution that is better than what’s available, which suits my needs.
Enhanced agency

Our society doesn’t allow us to think on our own or express our individual thoughts. All of a sudden I’m going to solve my own problems. I’m the owner of the idea and the solution… I’m doing this for the first time.
I’m not used to doing something and evaluating it for myself. Usually, we’re used to being asked to do something by someone and to have someone else evaluate it. For me to change in the way I find information on my own makes me re-evaluate my confidence… this will give me inner strength.
Structured support

I have now developed a deep understanding that solving problems requires mechanisms and isn’t done haphazardly. You need to create a strategy and proceed accordingly.

Before the programme a person was working in an unclear, haphazard way... Once the strategy became available now you present your problem in a methodical way. Now you can deal with a problem by following steps.
Collaboration

Now we feel like a team. When we run into each other we ask about each other’s progress. We learn from each other… We support each other regardless of [project] focus.

I am actually working with my colleagues to improve my practice. This is new and a great thing.
Change in teaching methods

I started thinking that we need to involve students in the learning process. How do I get them to become part of the lesson, not just me explaining things to them… I never thought that they could suggest a new method… Before the programme I didn’t know how to do this.
Criticality

In the past if a person said something that didn’t help me I would stop there. Whereas now I will stop and think that this is not working for this person maybe it’ll work for me. I analyse it.
Emancipation

It’s like someone who was shackled and this program removed these restraints and opened the door for me to work freely. I will obtain outcomes that I want without being afraid … Now, this program opened the way for my ideas to be investigated in practice.
A major transformation has taken place in my thinking.

The idea now has to emanate from me and not be ready made from elsewhere. This for me is the biggest thing. I am the source of ideas. After I’ve collected the information properly then I will come up with some correct solution.

I now feel that I can face any problem.
It’s time. The project needs time. And what with work, it gets tight. But it’s not the project pressuring me.

As a project it’s not difficult. However, in our circumstance the limitation of time is creating the biggest challenge, as we’re employees.
I don’t know if I’m working right. There continues to be a lack of confidence on the personal level because this is the first project I work on where I conduct the inquiry and search for the information, and evaluate my work. It’s as though I make my own exam and correct it myself. For me this is the challenge.
What next

- How to **sustain** teacher empowerment
- How to **embed** teacher leadership
- How to **legitimise** emancipatory learning
Thank **YOU** for coming
Presentation by Val Hill and Sarah Lightfoot

A paper will follow and be posted on our website
A teacher-led masters degree programme:
A breakthrough in support for school and teacher development

David Frost, Val Hill and Sarah Lightfoot
with Sheila Ball, Tracy Gaiteri, Clare Herbert, Jo Mylles and Paul Rose

A paper presented within the symposium: ‘Developing teacher professionalism through teacher leadership’
at
CARN 2015, Braga, Portugal
Underpinning values and beliefs

‘Non-positional teacher leadership’ (Frost, 2014)

‘Teacher-led development work’ (Frost & Durrant, 2003; Frost, 2013)

Teachers can be enabled to lead change and improvement through the medium of a well-planned, time-bounded development project.
What is distinctive about the HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning?
Our ‘pedagogical principles’

1. Cultivating moral purpose
2. Enabling participants to lead development projects
3. Building community in which critical friendship can flourish
4. Enabling reflection on experience through dialogue
5. Critical narrative writing - scholarship illuminates problem solving
6. Conceptual tools that deepen understanding of how to develop practice
7. Professional knowledge building through networking locally and internationally
Principle 1:

The cultivation of moral purpose as a dimension of extended professionality

Clare Herbert, on the left, is a primary school headteacher and she is the academic supervisor of Deb Harris who is a senior leader at a different primary school.
Principle 2:

Enabling the development of professional practice through the design and leadership of development projects

Here Neil, a senior member of staff in a special school, explains his project design to another participant on the MEd programme.
Development work is:

strategic, focused, planned and deliberate, attempts to improve an aspect of professional practice through incremental steps largely featuring analysis, data collection, reflection and deliberation in collaborative contexts.
Principle 3:

Scaffolding the development of the learning community in which enhanced social capital allows critical friendship to flourish
Principle 4:

enabling reflection on experience and thinking through participation in dialogic activities
Principle 5: building the capacity for critical reflection and narrative writing in which scholarship illuminates problem solving in professional contexts
Jo Mylles, one of the teaching team on the masters, leads a workshop about writing which is both academically valid and about the teachers’ own experience of leading change.
**Principle 6:**

Facilitation and support through the use of discursive and conceptual tools that deepen understanding of themes relevant to the development of educational

These topics are not the content to be taught but a resource that helps course participants to make sense of their development work.

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**The Leadership for Learning Topic Framework**

**Topic group A: Leadership and professionality**
- Topic 1 - Teacher leadership, innovation and knowledge building
- Topic 2 - Teacher-led development work
- Topic 3 - The concept of leadership
- Topic 4 - Professionalism, professionality and professional cultures

**Topic group B: Organisations and change**
- Topic 5 - Models of change and innovation
- Topic 6 - Schools as organisations: structures, roles and cultures
- Topic 7 - Schools as learning communities: voice, participation and leadership
- Topic 8 - Community, governance and accountability

**Topic group C: Pedagogy**
- Topic 9 - The concept of learning
- Topic 10 - Learners: variables and needs
- Topic 11 - The framework of curriculum and policy
- Topic 12 - The school as a learning environment

**Topic group D: Project design**
- Topic 13 - Practice development: project design and planning
- Topic 14 - Practice development: impact and legacy
- Topic 15 - Practice development: tools for reflection and deliberation
- Topic 16 - Practice development: tools for inquiry
Principle 7:

Building professional knowledge and fostering mutual inspiration through the organisation of networking and opportunities for international engagement.

A group of teachers from HertsCam participated in a network event in Braga last year.
This was the first HertsCam Network Event of this academic year. It started with a welcome from Val Hill in a school hall. Notice the time on the clock to the left.
Teachers made this poster to explain the different ways in which teachers' projects can make a difference.
Transforming education through teacher leadership
Edited by David Frost
Explaining non-positional teacher leadership through practitioner’s narratives

To order this book please use the URL below:

https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/
Our conference papers will soon be available here:

**Teacher Leadership website**
www.teacherleadership.org.uk

You may also want to look at our other sites:

**The HertsCam MEd website**
www.hertscammed.com

**The HertsCam website**
www.hertscam.org.uk