

Non-positional teacher leadership: a perpetual motion miracle

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Abstract

This paper explicates a theory of non-positional teacher leadership which is embedded in a new book – *Transforming Education Through Teacher Leadership* - which is written by teachers and professionals who facilitate and support teacher leadership programmes in the HertsCam Network in the UK and in sister networks linked together through the International Teacher Leadership initiative. The book is edited by David Frost, but all the chapters are narratives of practice.

This paper arises from my endeavour as a teacher, a scholar and what I perceive to be a moral obligation to embrace the conception of my role as that of a public intellectual (Goodson, 1999). In putting forward this idea Ivor Goodson reflected on the history of the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, where I was privileged to pursue my doctorate. His account highlights the focus of many CARE projects on matters of social justice and in particular the proposal from Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE's founder, that educational researchers should see themselves as public servants. In the 1970s Stenhouse put it like this:

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).

Much later on I heard this sentiment expressed by Michael Apple who told a large audience of academics at a conference in Florida that we should act as 'story tellers and secretaries' for teachers who inhabit a highly-pressured and immensely time-consuming professional world. It is up to us, he said, to ensure that their voice is heard (Apple, 2006). For me, this was welcome confirmation.

Unfortunately, following through on the values indicated above makes a poor fit with the contemporary orthodoxy about the role of the academic and the nature of scholarship with Faculties of Education. Nevertheless I am committed to working with the teaching profession not only to help articulate and amplify the teachers' voice within public discourse in education, but also to develop approaches to the creation of professional knowledge other than through academic research and publication. My choice has been to collaborate with teachers and others who wish to support them in order to develop strategies that enable teachers to become agents of change and creators of professional knowledge. I have done this by establishing and coordinating networks that enable teachers, regardless of any organisational position or special role of responsibility, to exercise leadership. For me, being a public intellectual is about making my contribution to public discourse about education but from a position based on practical experience and scholarship.

The book published in October 2014 arises from the work referred to above. 'Transforming Education Through Teacher Leadership' (TETTL), edited by myself, contains 18 chapters: accounts of teacher leadership which, collectively, explicate a theory about teacher professionalism and educational transformation. This theory has been enacted and operationalised by teachers and those who facilitate teacher leadership in the HertsCam Network and sister networks linked by the ITL initiative. The theory was not antecedent, not the product of research. It was not predetermined or designed and then implemented and tested in the field. Rather, it emerged and was developed through a process of practical experiment, scholarship and evaluation in collaboration with many practitioners over many

years. This is why it seems appropriate to explicate the theory through teachers’ narratives and accounts of their leadership practice. Of course it would be disingenuous to claim that my role has been merely to coordinate and curate; it is undeniable that I have exercised leadership in both a practical and an intellectual sense in order to push the process of development forward, but the process was only successful because of the contributions by practitioners. Some of these have played key roles over a number of years (see for example Durrant, 2004; Hill, 2008, 2014; Mylles, 2005, 2006) and many more have participated and helped to refine the theory through their action and engagement in critical discussion about it.

In order to explain the theory of non-positional teacher leadership I discuss below key elements as indicated by the diagram below:



I draw on illustrations from the book referred to above (Frost, 2014) to show how the theory has been enacted.

The vision

The word vision is used instead of ‘theory’ in this paper partly because of its emergent, and therefore constantly developing nature, but also because of the function it serves. If a network is to be successful it needs a reasonably coherent account of its values and beliefs which can be articulated and voiced by many. As Jo Mylles, a deputy headteacher, says in the Foreword to the TETTL book:

Schools of today and in the future, both here in the UK and across the globe, need to build a vision of teacher professionalism that can help us all to address the challenges ahead (Mylles, 2014).

My initial attempts to work with teachers, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, were framed by the language of practitioner research (Frost, 1995). What I had learned about action research,

largely through inspirational colleagues at CARE, gave me hope. The language was peppered with terms like ‘emancipation’, ‘action’, ‘praxis’ which seemed encouraging, but, as I discuss elsewhere (Frost, 2013), the rhetoric of action research was rarely successfully enmeshed with the dominant discourse in the school system. Subsequently my practitioner colleagues and I explored other terminologies, ones that might be more productive, and eventually found that ‘teacher leadership’ had the potential to encapsulate the values and ideas I was striving to articulate. However, an ongoing difficulty is that teacher leadership is a term used more frequently to refer simply to what teacher leaders do. This is reflected in the substantial review offered by York-Barr and Duke (2004) in which they chose to focus on the question: ‘What do teacher leaders do?’. It is by no means clear that such a formulation necessarily implies a focus on teachers who have particular positions of responsibility. The idea of ‘informal positions, roles and channels of communication in the daily work of schools’ (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 263) seems to me to muddy the waters. Does the word ‘informal’ suggest that teachers exercise leadership but without the benefit of the legitimacy or authority that might stem from holding a designated position? Their review does include a consideration of the idea that leadership is a potential capacity for all. They cite Neuman and Simmons (2000) who said that in effective schools ‘as every member of the education community has the responsibility—and the authority—to take appropriate leadership roles’. Still this suggests role-taking rather than leadership practice being a dimension a teacher’s professional identity. York-Barr and Duke go on to cite Fullan who, in the early 1990s argued in a very straightforward way that teacher leadership should be for all. He is quoted as saying that the majority of teachers must become ‘new professionals’ (Fullan, 1993, 1994). This message resonated with my own values as a teacher making the transition from being a school teacher to the role of university academic. My own attempts to develop, through a collaborative action research process, a method of enabling teachers to become agents of change drew encouragement from Fullan’s position.

A cornerstone of our vision is that leadership can become part of the professional identity and practice of any education practitioner whether or not they hold a position in the organisation or have a role of special responsibility. This is expressed well by Val Hill in the new book (TETTL) referred to above:

In HertsCam we took the view that this places unacceptable limits on the development of leadership capacity. A more promising approach for us was to build on Hoyle’s idea of ‘extended professionalism’ (Hoyle, 1975, 2008) to propose that leadership could be a dimension of all teachers’ professionalism. Consequently we argued for an approach to teacher leadership, which does not assume that leadership is linked with positions in the organisational hierarchy of the school. Instead it recognises the potential of all teachers to exercise leadership as part of their role as a teacher. We believe that all teachers and education practitioners have some leadership capacity. After all, leadership is a dimension of being human. In HertsCam and the wider International Teacher Leadership (ITL) network, we argue that it should be seen as an essential part of teachers’ professionalism (Hill, 2014).

When I was a teacher in the 1970s and 80s, and subsequently a teacher educator, the concept of leadership has been problematic. The organisational structures used in English schools have not changed a great deal in the last 40 years. The list of roles of responsibility listed on the current Department for Education website includes: a senior leadership team (headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers), a group of subject leaders (head of department, head of faculty, curriculum coordinator) a group of pastoral (head of year, Key Stage coordinator). The language in which this list is presented is all about ‘being responsible for’ an area of the school and ‘managing’ it. This Weberian model of rational organisation continues to have a tight grip on the imaginations of many people in the teaching profession. It assumes the value of hierarchical accountability and borrowed from the world of business procedural norms that deemed to be required particularly as schools became more autonomous and responsible for their own management following the Education Reform Act in 1988 (Bush, 2008). The problem with this development was its lack of focus on change and the need for those with management positions to influence the behaviour and practice of others. In the period since then there has been a concerted attempt in the UK to embrace the idea of leadership. This was reflected in the fact that leadership was explicitly identified as a priority in the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers in the late 1990s and in the creation of the National College for School Leadership in 2000. However, in spite of a plethora of courses, discussion papers, research reports, professional standards and inspection framework, the focus on positionality and the dominance of managerialism persists.

The vision portrayed in the book, *Transforming Education Through Teacher Leadership*, features an approach which is inclusive and democratic in that it offers the means to enable any practitioner to develop their leadership capacity. This is operationalised through the idea of the development project whereby individual teachers are invited to identify a professional concern and then act strategically to address it. Leadership in this context is conceptualised as influence which is widely identified as being the defining characteristic of leadership practice (Yukl, 2010). In a valuable contribution to the teacher leadership literature, Fairman and Mackenzie (2013) focus on the way teachers have influence and they suggest that the term teacher leader needs to be questioned.

Context

I say above that the vision has been developed within a context and in collaboration with practitioners within that context. Initially this was developed within a network in another part of England – CANTARNET – and was documented in a number of publications (eg Frost & Durrant, 2002, 2003) but the model has been developed further within the context of the

HertsCam Network (www.hertscam.org.uk) and the International Teacher Leadership initiative which grew out of that (Frost, 2011). HertsCam began as a collaboration between the University of Cambridge and a local education authority – Hertfordshire – but has since become an independent entity with charity status (www.hertscam.org.uk). HertsCam provides a range of programmes to support teacher and school development and is governed by a committee of headteachers and teachers.

Facilitation

The defining characteristic of the HertsCam network is that it is self-supporting; its programmes of support, its courses, the organisation of its events and its administration is all done by teachers in the network. This is illustrated in the extract below from the new book in a chapter written by a number of network members.

Six networking events now take place each year. These events are entirely teacher-led. They are organised by a team from a host school and continue to feature teacher-led workshops, poster displays and innovative networking activities. These events not only help to sustain a sense of community through the sharing of teacher-led development work, but provide a vehicle for mutual support, encouragement and inspiration. This is due to the teachers' enthusiasm and active participation of course, but a careful structuring of network events maximises the impact of this (Anderson, Barnett, Thompson, Roberts & Wearing, 2014).

These teachers have developed the capacity to organise and create the infrastructure for professional development and support for teacher leadership. The authors of the chapter from which the extract above is taken are all members of the network's Tutor Team – currently 30 or so individuals – who facilitate what we call the Teacher Led Development Work (TLDW) programme. This is a one-year provision consisting of a series of workshops based at the participants' schools, together with one-to-one supervision and participation in network events. This supports the teachers in initiating and leading their development projects. At the end of the year, participants present a portfolio of evidence which is the basis of the award of the Certificate in Teacher Leadership.

Members of the Tutor Team facilitate TLDW groups in their own schools by drawing from a common set of tools and techniques which have been developed and refined over many years. The tool kit includes facsimiles, guide sheets, workshop protocols, formats for planning documents, prompt sheets for dialogue and so on. Tutors access these tools online; they select and adapt them when planning each 2 hour school-based session. Other programmes and activities are facilitated and supported by members of the Tutor Team who are all experienced practitioners rather than external advisers, consultants or trainers. This represents an enormously valuable capacity within the network. The fact that events and programmes are

run by teachers from within the network means that the approach is self-sustaining and very low-cost.

Since the launch of the ITL initiative in 2008, the non-positional approach to teacher leadership has flourished in many countries including Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Turkey and in many Balkan countries including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Below is a vignette that appears in one of the chapters in the book written by Mona Chiriac who was a teacher in Hertfordshire, UK, but works with colleagues in Romania to build support for teachers there. She organised an event in Bucharest in collaboration with colleagues in Bucharest and in the Republic of Moldova. Below is a vignette which portrays the development work led by a teacher from Moldova who was one of the participants in the Bucharest event.

Vignette – Feodora’s project

Feodora had wanted to develop her students’ creativity. She taught them to write stories and understand how stories are constructed. She got them to experiment with stories; for example by changing endings to make them happy or sad, inventing new characters, creating new environments and places where the story took place. She presented students with problems and dilemmas and asked them to produce solutions. In a staff meeting, she told her colleagues about the project; she asked for their opinions and invited them to collaborate. They agreed to use some of the activities she had designed. They would observe each other’s lessons and reflect on the way these activities affected students’ attitudes to learning. The teachers met to discuss what they had seen and it was clear that this way of learning could make students more sociable, creative and imaginative. The project continued and a few months later, Feodora and her colleagues noted great changes: students’ attitude and behaviour had become more positive, they were enjoying school more than they had ever done before. Even the quiet students were participating more in class. Feodora told her students that she would talk about the project at the conference in Bucharest and she asked them to help her create a display. They chose to tell the story of the project in the shape of a book with each page showing the steps taken and the activities used. They selected clip art images to symbolise the progress of the project.

(From Chiriac, 2014)

At the time of writing, the ITL network continues to grow with the imminent launch of new programmes in Palestine and in Egypt (see Eltemamy & Ramahi, 2014). In the majority of cases these programmes of support have been established by people external to the schools concerned, typically people from NGOs and in some cases universities, but the goal is to enable these facilitation roles to be undertaken by teachers themselves. This is beginning to happen for example in Turkey and in Bulgaria and is built-in to the design of the new programmes in the middle-east.

Practice development through projects

Another cornerstone of the non-positional teacher leadership approach is the idea of a development project initiated and led by teachers. In the HertsCam programme participants are supported in this endeavour through a process explained in the book by Val Hill:

The TLDW model assumes that, in order to be able to lead change, teachers need to work sequentially through a number of key steps. In this step-by-step approach tools and techniques are used to model and guide the process.

- Step 1: the teacher clarifies their professional values
- Step 2: they identify a concern
- Step 3: they negotiate with colleagues to explore that concern
- Step 4: they design and produce action plan for a development project – a process of change
- Step 5: they negotiate with colleagues to refine the practicality of the project

The first five steps are essential to ensure that projects have maximum impact. In Step 6, teachers lead projects that draw colleagues, students and their families into collaborative processes – the project itself. Each project enhances professional knowledge within the individual's school, but Step 7 enables project leaders to contribute to knowledge building in their networks and educational systems.

(Hill, 2014)

It is this through this individualised process that participants feel a strong sense of empowerment and voice. Their human agency is enhanced. In a workshop activity at the beginning of the process teachers have that rare opportunity to reflect on their values and how they might contribute to the development of practice in their schools. We have found that, for some, this is an emotional and life-changing experience. It tends to have the effect of mobilising and refreshing their sense of moral purpose.

The design of their projects is shaped by discussion in the TLDW group and through dialogue with their Tutor but also with other colleagues who they have been encouraged to consult in order to begin to secure the collaboration necessary for the project's success. This dialogic process for many is a new beginning; it puts their professionalism on a new level. They experience themselves being taken seriously by colleagues and find themselves becoming influential. Below is an extract from the chapter in the TETTL book by Helen Foy.

(My) project would enable colleagues to work collaboratively to share good practice and learn from each other. My aim was to ensure that all students would benefit from extensive and appropriate provision in PE that would inspire them to raise their aspirations. I planned to engage my colleagues in a process of development in which we would plan and refine our curriculum and teaching and learning practices to meet the needs of all of our students (Foy, 2014).

Helen was not the Head of Department. She was not designated as a ‘teacher leader’ at the time she carried out the project she writes about and her leadership cannot be described as ‘informal’. She acted strategically in a deliberate and planned way to achieve goals that she had clarified in consultation with colleagues. This is not informal; it is non-positional. Subsequent to this project work Helen was appointed to the role of ‘Lead Practitioner’ in her school.

Another example is taken from a chapter in the TETTL book which is about Sophie Scott’s project. The difference here is only that whereas Helen wrote the chapter herself, the account of Sophie’s project was written by a member of the HertsCam Tutor Team on the basis of evidence submitted by Sophie. This reflects the commitment outlined at the beginning of the paper to articulating and amplifying the teacher’s voice and it is a goal shared by the HertsCam Tutor team.

Sophie then invited colleagues who were already using ICT in inventive ways in their subject areas to a lunchtime discussion to share expertise. This discussion revealed a shared interest in the use of blogs to support the development of both teacher and peer-assessment practices, which had been shown to be effective elsewhere (Ripp, 2011). With the support of this shared agenda, Sophie began her own exploration of using blogs for students’ work and as feedback tools (Scott, 2014).

By practicing leadership and having opportunities to discuss the challenges involved, teachers like Helen and Sophie are able to develop their leadership capacity. They were both members of TLDW groups in which they were often asked to reflect on these questions: What are we learning about learning? What are we learning about leadership?

Extended professionalism

The mainstream literature on teacher leadership tends to be concerned with how to prepare teachers with particular aptitude for leadership roles but, in the TETTL book the central assumption is that it is possible and desirable to enable teachers to extend their professionalism to include a strong leadership dimension. The opening editorial includes the quotation below from the HertsCam website:

We believe that all teachers and education practitioners have some leadership capacity. After all, leadership is a dimension of being human. In the ITL network, we argue that it should be seen as an essential part of teachers’ professionalism (www.hertscam.org.uk).

This conception of teacher professionalism also embraces the idea of scholarship. The chapters by Laura Rawlings (2014) and by Lia Commissar and Caroline (2014) demonstrate very well

how research can enrich teachers' development work. However the conceptualisation of research can be hazardous because, published texts – those focused on substantive pedagogical issues or on processes of innovation - are likely to have been written by university based academics. Inquiry in these texts is construed as research, driven by the values of objectivity, reliability and validity. The arguments for teacher research and evidence-based practice have come in waves over the past 3 decades. We have had Stenhouse's proposal for the teacher-as-researcher (1975), Elliott's action research (1991), Hargreaves' evidence-based practice (1996) the idea of the research-engaged school (Handscomb & MacBeath, 2003). More recently calls for evidence-based practice have promoted random control trials (Haynes *et al.*, 2013) a notion that is antithetical to the sort of professionalism portrayed in the TETTL book. What all this represents is an assumed division of labour in which teachers are expected to be curious, reflective, interested in data and willing to engage in self-evaluation whilst leadership is left to those who have been designated as leaders.

In contrast to this research orientation, the focus on development as portrayed in the TETTL book emphasises initiatives that begin with the teacher's professional concern. Teachers' are well placed to reflect on their everyday practice and in the right circumstances are well able to identify the gaps between their professional values and what happens in the classroom. The non-positional teacher leadership approach assumes that support should focus on this in order to mobilise commitment and moral purpose. The chapter that documents Cristina Paige's development work exemplifies how an individual teacher's passion can be a driver for significant change at the institutional level.

Cristina joined the TLDW programme where she found the emphasis on vision, values and collaborative development empowering. She embraced the idea that capacity building at the school depended on everyone seeing the school's transformation as their responsibility. With this in mind she planned a development project that, although focused on her own concern with Dance, would nevertheless have a 'whole school' perspective. In discussions with colleagues, Cristina explored the possible link between students' engagement with extra-curricular activities and the development of their work ethic and enthusiasm for school in general. The central role of self-efficacy beliefs in learning and achievement was well established in the psychology literature (Bandura, 1997). Cristina's development project aimed at helping students to acquire the values associated with being a dancer: for example being well-organised, committed and striving for success artistically, academically and professionally (Paige, 2014).

The dance focused project drew on Cristina's passion for dance, which some may assume to be a marginal aspect of the curriculum, but the dialogic framework Cristina inhabited enabled her to see how her project could contribute to massive change in the school by focusing on students' dispositions. It is interesting to note in so many chapters of TETTL the link between the enhancement of teachers' human agency and that of their students.

Cristina, referred to above, is one of the many teachers who took part in the international network event held at Fruska Gora in Serbia described in Chapter 18 of the TETTL book (Miljević, Herbert & Ball, 2014). Amongst us at that event was a researcher who was investigating the way in which involvement with international networking shapes teachers' professional identity. This is explored in another paper in this symposium (Underwood, 2014).

Educational transformation

The most obvious benefit of non-positional teacher leadership is that the kinds of projects described above can lead to school improvement, which is commonly understood in terms of increased levels of student attainment, and sometimes perceptions of under-achievement are what leads to the identification of a teacher's concern. However, the focus tends to be on the contributory factors rather than on the results themselves. This is exemplified well in the chapter about Louise Steel's development work. Louise was a Science teacher in a school with low levels of attainment. She looked at the level of literacy demanded of the new Science examinations for 16 year olds and committed herself to gathering resources to support improvements in literacy. In this extract from the chapter it is clear that teacher leadership is about maximising influence.

(Louise) introduced the use of writing frames with Year 11 students and used them when setting homework assignments. These approaches have now been adopted by almost all members of the Science Faculty who routinely use writing frames to support students in writing up experiments. Louise regularly shared what she had learned with her colleagues in the Science Faculty. She also continued to meet with the literacy-coaching group to help the development of literacy in the school. Particular recommendations included the need to develop further opportunities where pupils can develop writing skills through more in-depth, extended writing tasks, the embedding of more active reading exercises into lessons and the further inclusion of students in the development and evaluation of strategies to develop literacy competence and confidence (Steel, 2014).

Louise began with her concern that the students she taught were struggling to cope with the demands of their exams but as the project progressed it involved layers of collaboration which made a significant contribution to the development of practice right across the school. Again, Louise was not the Head of Department, nor was she the Literacy Coordinator or an Assistant Headteacher responsible for monitoring attainment. She had no such position; she was simply a teacher acting strategically to address her professional concern.

Projects of the kind described above also build organisational capacity. In Louise's case, patterns of collaboration were extended. Similarly in Laura Rawlings' chapter, we have an

account of how a focus on the issue of ‘talk for learning’ led to the creation of capacity for further change and improvement.

I planned a process that could influence colleagues’ practice and develop a ‘dialogic’ approach that would become part of the teaching and learning repertoire in our classrooms. I wanted to encourage colleagues to engage in reflection and analysis of classroom practice in order to promote opportunities to develop talk for learning. I wanted to encourage them to become ‘change agents’ (Fullan, 1993). I decided to introduce a ‘Talk for Learning Development’ group, which would provide a key opportunity for sharing ownership with colleagues. It would steer the direction of developments and secure commitment (Rawlings, 2014).

Transformation is therefore complex, embracing school improvement, practice development and capacity building.

Building professional knowledge

Teacher-led development projects leave a legacy in the school. Whether this is a mere trace or a visible dimension in the professional knowledge shared within the school depends on how effective the collaboration has been. The drawback of the lone innovator is always that impact may last only as long as the teacher remains in the school or as long as their interest in the particular issue persists. The most successful projects are the ones which lead to what we might call ‘knowledge in situ’ when new norms of practice become shared and embedded in school as a professional community.

Knowledge that is retained within the professional community of the school is valuable of course, but it is also important to enable teachers to contribute to what is known in the education system more widely. Part of the solution is to publish written narratives about what has been developed, as we have done in the TETTL book, but perhaps of as much value is to continuously enrich the professional knowledge that is shared within the networks to which teachers belong. In one of the chapters in the book, the authors - all teachers - talk about knowledge-building as a social activity.

This knowledge-creation activity is not like traditional, university-based research, which is validated by academic peer review. Instead, it is more like Mode 2 knowledge production, which is socially distributed, action-focused and subject to multiple accountabilities (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994; Nowotny *et al.*, 2003). Through our networking activity we take our tacit knowledge, acquired through individual experience (Polanyi, 1967) and make it visible. This is knowledge, which is shared and documented in a continual process of revision and growth. Accounts of development work lead to insights, which others can apply to their own situations; they may adopt specific tools or techniques for use in their own practice, but perhaps more importantly they may acquire new ideas, understanding and value positions. In

other words they might gain the ‘practical wisdom’, which is validated through its impact on classrooms and students’ learning. Such knowledge-building is essentially a social activity (Anderson *et al.*, 2014).

Through such networking activity, teachers build knowledge collectively so that it exists or rather, can be discerned in the flow of the dialogue. This is of course an ongoing conversation, revisited at each network event, always provisional, constantly revised and adjusted. It is a live knowledge base rather than a codified body of explicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994).

It might be assumed that knowledge-building amongst teachers is all about passing only know-how, but there is another dimension that we have observed in the networking activities in both HertsCam and the related networks linked through the ITL initiative. This dimension is essentially concerned with the inspirational value of what is shared. The message is a moral one rather than a technical one. This is particularly well exemplified in the chapter in TETTL about Marie Metcalfe’s work from this extract is taken.

Over half of the pupils in Marie’s school had English as an additional language, with 29 different languages being spoken by the school population. Marie was concerned that there was very little contact between the school and the families from these different ethnic groups and thought that a focus on the children’s first languages might help with the learning of English and literacy skills in general. It seemed to Marie that raising awareness of the different languages spoken by pupils would help to affirm and celebrate the children’s cultural background and promote their self-esteem. Marie was also keen to reach out to the different language communities in the school and encourage their participation in school life (Metcalfe, 2014).

Unfortunately, Marie became and ill died shortly after she led this project but her moral message lives on. The story of her project has been told in different ways in many parts of the world and it continues to inspire other teachers to address matters of social justice.

Advocacy for teacher leadership

I started this paper with a comment about my own endeavor and moral purpose as an academic. Clearly I do not see myself as a dispassionate researcher or commentator on the social world. Rather, I strive to be an advocate for a particular form of teacher professionalism. However, lasting impact depends on teachers advocating for themselves and for the future of the profession. Others can play their part: academics, social activists and teacher unions can all contribute to this advocacy, but in the long run it is the teachers’ voice that must be heard. This is why *Transforming Education Through Leadership* - the first in the new LfL Teacher Leadership book series - is important, because it articulates and amplifies this voice.

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