

**The role of teacher leadership in educational reform:
mobilising moral purpose**

David Frost

University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and the HertsCam Network

and

Amanda Roberts

University of Hertfordshire School of Education

A paper presented within the symposium:
'Teacher voice, self-efficacy and leadership: an international perspective'

at

ECER 2013

Istanbul

10th-14th September 2013

Abstract

This paper draws on evidence from the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) initiative which involved partners in 15 countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Turkey & UK). The project established programmes of support for teacher leadership which were evaluated and developed through an action research-based process. The initiative contributed to a theory of educational reform in which school improvement is achieved by mobilising the massive untapped potential of teachers as leaders of innovation. Here teacher leadership is conceived as a key dimension of teachers' professionalism rather than a function of special roles and responsibilities within organisational structures. The paper focuses on the mobilisation of moral purpose explores the data in order to illuminate the nature of the intervention and to demonstrate how teachers were able to contribute to change and improvement in their schools.

Note: We would like to acknowledge, with grateful appreciation, the support of Open Society Foundations both financially and in many other ways.

Globally there is an urgent need to find effective approaches to educational reform. At the recent 'Cambridge Seminar' jointly hosted by LfL, OECD, EI and OSF, speakers focused attention on the issue of equity in educational provision and the need to look beyond the global race for economic supremacy in order to achieve the millennium development goal of quality education for all. A report on the seminar concluded with this.

The goal of quality will not be realised unless we can enable policy makers to turn their attention to the principles and strategies that enhance professional growth – in the end a matter of moral purpose.

(Frost, MacBeath and Swaffield, 2013)

In the research and development work discussed in the papers presented in this symposium, we have been concerned with the challenges faced by teachers, schools and systems in a wide range of countries including economically developed ones such as the UK, but also those in transition or experiencing relative poverty. It is tempting to restrict consideration to the kind of reform strategies familiar to teachers in the Anglophone countries, those that emanate from the centre. They may either be focused on specific educational content such as literacy or on procedural matters such as the use of assessment data. However, what tends to have the most dramatic effect on professional practice are the more indirect policy interventions such as high stakes testing and the publishing of data about school performance. Policies such as these saturate practice in ways that are difficult to regulate. For example, the present Secretary of State for Education in England may express dismay because of the time devoted to putting students in for multiple examinations and seeks to limit this practice, but he has to take responsibility for the climate of performativity (Ball, 2003) which leads schools to adopt such tactics.

The reform strategies referred to above are problematic globally for at least two reasons. The first problem is that they are expensive and depend on elaborate administrative structures and processes. For example, tasks such as the specification of levels of professional competence and the attendant design of career structures, performance management systems and adjudication procedures are costly and rest on the existence of well-developed systems of administration. In some countries it is impossible to establish sophisticated systems of differential salary scales and attendant performance review procedures that, it is argued would incentivise teachers. There simply isn't the money. The second, and arguably more important problem, is that centrally devised interventions have a distorting, and some would say, corrupting, effect on the process of education. For example, if teachers are judged according

to the test results of their students, many of them are likely to spend time helping their students to memorise stock answers to predicted test items rather than enabling them to develop mastery of the subject. The distortion also involves a narrowing of curricular aims. There is an easy consensus about the need for mastery of subjects such as mathematics and science, but we struggle to agree on the relative merits of learning to manage domestic finance or personal relationships. Nevertheless, the goal of policy should be human flourishing in its broadest sense rather than the pursuit of economic dominance through a concentration on human capital.

For the purposes of ensuring ‘quality education for all’, we need a different model. It is not sufficient to give researchers the task of telling practitioners what works. Nor is it helpful simply to try to copy a practice that may be established in what appears to be a successful country as indicated by PISA results. Policy borrowing has in fact been demonstrated to be harmful (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Philips & Ochs, 2003).

Ultimately there is no substitute for authentic reform, which we take to mean actual improvements in the quality of educational provision and learning outcomes resulting from actual changes in teachers’ practice rather than changes in systems and curriculum. For practice to change, governments need to be able to mobilise teachers’ moral purpose because practice refers not only to what teachers do, but also to what they think, underpinned by their pedagogical values. Reform strategies have never really addressed the question posed by Susan Rosenholtz: ‘Education Reform Strategies; will they increase teacher commitment?’ (1987). In spite of repeated observations from writers such as Michael Fullan such as the following:

Managing moral purpose and change agency is at the heart of productive educational change (1993: 8)

- re-professionalisation as a strategy for educational reform has not been adequately conceptualised or operationalised.

So what does ‘mobilising teachers’ moral purpose’ mean? A common mistake on the part of senior leaders is that it is about ‘getting them on board’ by relentless focus on the mission statement backed up by the carrots and sticks high stakes testing, performance related pay and other instruments of incentivisation.

Mobilising moral purpose

To understand ‘mobilising moral purpose’ we need to understand a number of key concepts and the relationship between them. Here we focus particularly on: conceptions of practice, professionalism / professionality, justice and equity in educational contexts, human agency, leadership and knowledge building

Many people may easily be persuaded that mobilising the moral purpose of teachers is desirable. The words suggest things like greater commitment or putting the needs of students first. However in order to be able to devise policies and strategies to operationalise this mobilisation we need a deep understanding of a conceptual framework that constitutes a productive foundation.

Conceptions of practice

We begin with the question of how practice is conceived. The term *practice* has been interpreted differently. To some, a practitioner is one whose occupational actions are disciplined by a framework of standards specific to a context such as a company or a service. However, if we are concerned with reform, we need a conceptualisation of practice which features both knowledge creation and ethical choice. Here the term ‘practice’ refers not only to what teachers do, but also to what they think, know and value. Alisdair McIntyre’s Aristotelian account of practice is that it is:

...any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions to the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.

(MacIntyre, 1985: 187)

There are clear implications in this conceptualisation of practice for teacher professionalism.

Professionalism / professionality

The concept of practice is strongly associated with that of professionalism, a term preferred here because the alternative – professionalism - has become associated with matters of status, esteem and governance (Hoyle, 2008). For the purposes of reform, we want to concentrate on the way the role of teacher is perceived and enacted. In particular, it is important to focus on how it might be possible to nurture a professionalism in which teachers see themselves not

only as having skills such as presentation of information and facilitation of classroom-based learning activities, but also seeing themselves as developers of pedagogical knowledge and activists (Sachs, 2003) within their schools and communities.

Justice and equity in educational contexts

The conceptualisation of professionalism we are proposing here calls for a focus on the fundamental moral purpose of education, one that transcends the narrow concern for enabling individual students to succeed at the game of schooling for purposes of economic gain or advancement. For some, the term practice is inadequate; the concept of praxis more obviously encompasses a concern with morality and the pursuit of justice.

When a person's action is praxis they are striving to do something right, ethical, proper, the best that could be done under these particular circumstances, a right and principled thing to do.

(Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 9)

Human agency

The concept of agency is used in social science to explain that fundamental human capacity for 'self-directedness' (Giddens, 1984). This capacity is essentially transformative in that it allows humans to be aware of their actions, to reflect on and evaluate them (Bruner, 1996). Moral choices are clearly possible when action is self-directed. In professional contexts the concept of agency has been commandeered in recent years to illuminate a range of important behaviours which could be said to centre in making a difference through deliberation and strategic action; in short, the capacity to make a difference (Frost, 2006).

Leadership

The term leadership is commonly misconstrued as decision-making by those with the authority that is assumed to flow from high position in an organisation. In the last ten years however there has been a flow of research and professional discussion that focuses on a more transformational model (Burns, 1978) in which the aims of leadership are more to do with setting direction and exercising influence (Leithwood & Rheel, 2003). This conceptualisation of leadership raises two questions: one is about the nature of leadership practice and the other is about what categories of people within a learning community are able to engage in that practice. If leadership practice involves activities such as modelling desired behaviours, holding others to account and providing support, it is easy to see how a distributed perspective on leadership can be applied. We have argued elsewhere (Frost, 2011) that any

member of a learning community has the capacity and arguably, the right, to exercise leadership. The discussion within the Leadership for Learning network (www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl) foregrounds the link between shared leadership and moral purpose in a learning community.

Knowledge building

Teachers' professional knowledge is: 'the cognitive resource which a person brings to a situation that enables them to think and perform' (Eraut, 2000: 114). Building on whatever is learnt in initial teacher education programmes, it is developed both through everyday trial and error as well as through reflection arising from enquiry and deliberation. Such personal knowledge remains tacit unless it is shared, discussed and documented; this can lead to what Argyris and Schon (1978) called 'double loop learning' in which organisations adopt new routines and collective practices. It is commonly assumed that knowledge is created through research and then disseminated through initial teacher education, continuing professional development and official guidelines. However, it is important to recognise what was heralded in the early 1990s as a new paradigm of knowledge production which is socially distributed, application-oriented, trans-disciplinary and subject to multiple accountabilities (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994; Nowotny *et al.*, 2003). A key to the mobilisation of moral purpose in the teaching profession is enabling teachers to see themselves as having the right as well as the capacity to create professional knowledge.

We are arguing here that in order to mobilise teachers' moral purpose, policy makers need to think differently about the nature of professional practice, seeing it not as matter of deploying the skills gained through training, but as the enactment of pedagogical principles arising from enhanced professionalism. Such professionalism would include the exercise of leadership and an active role in the creation and collective development of professional knowledge. Rather than undermining teachers' morale and disempowering them with top-down accountability strategies, policy could enable teachers by adopting strategies that both draw on and enhance their human agency.

The ITL approach

The alternative offered through the ITL initiative is based on the idea of 'non-positional teacher leadership' (Frost, 2012). In outline, the approach was developed over many years

(Frost and Durrant, 2003), most recently in the context of the HertsCam Network (www.hertscam.org.uk). It involves building a team of facilitators who enable teachers to identify a professional concern which reflects their position, experience, values and perceptions about issues that need to be addressed in their schools. By using tools such as vignettes, formats and guide sheets within workshop activities, and through one-to-one supervision, facilitators are able to support teachers' reflection, planning and discussion which supports them in designing and leading development work projects. The teacher's collection of evidence of participation in this process – the portfolio - makes possible certification to recognise and celebrate the teachers' achievement. The organisation of network events enables teachers to build knowledge together (Frost, 2013).

The report of the International Teacher Leadership project (Frost, 2011) includes evidence to support this claim, proposing non-positional teacher leadership as having a significant contribution to make to both the development of teachers' practice and wider educational reform. This report gives evidence of the impact of teacher leadership, drawn from a large scale, collaborative action research process across 15 countries. Members of the international project team included activists from a range of backgrounds, including school teachers, senior leaders in schools, civil servants, NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) staff, researchers in universities and research institutes and post-graduate research students.

Evidence of impact

The ITL report is the main source of evidence of the impact of teacher leadership drawn upon here. That report was based on evidence drawn from the national teams in the participating countries to provide an assessment of the impact of the project on teachers, students, schools and systems. Impact is reviewed here under the following headings:

- a) teacher development
- b) professional practice
- c) inclusion
- d) students' learning
- e) schools as organisations
- f) educational systems
- g) wider community / society

The discussion in this section also highlights the variables that contribute to the maximisation of impact.

a) Impact on teacher development

The defining feature of the ITL project's approach to teacher leadership is that it enables teachers to initiate and lead development projects. The enthusiasm and sense of moral purpose released through emphasising the teacher's personal agenda is fundamental to the impact of this form of development.

Reports from all the countries participating in the ITL project highlight the impact on teachers' self-efficacy and self-confidence. Teachers not only become more confident as classroom practitioners but also develop the confidence to exert influence over the forward movement of their schools. National reports include plentiful evidence of improvements in confidence regarding classroom practice. In Moldova, changes to teachers' dispositions were noted, despite a challenging professional climate.

The teachers' projects made a difference not just to classroom practice, but more widely. It made a difference to their colleagues' capacity – their teaching, their understanding, their dispositions and their work motivation, in spite of teacher low status and salaries in our country.

(Evidence from Moldova)

Partners' reports similarly gave ample evidence of positive impact on teachers' professionalism of gathering and reflecting on evidence. Beginning to take the initiative has increased teachers' confidence both inside and outside the classroom. For some teachers this was evident in more active engagement with pedagogical debate within schools.

The work on the project and in the group encouraged me to think and actively participate in work and discussions on issues I previously hadn't paid attention to. Instructions, suggestions, discussions and comments particularly had positive influence on my work.

(Teacher, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

For others, it manifested itself in developing confidence to lead innovative work with colleagues. This awareness of the capacity to influence and to exercise leadership underpinned a change in self-concept.

I learned that everything was easier through teamwork and that changes were definitely possible, although sometimes they seemed impossible. I learned that we should appreciate ourselves and our work more, because every change, no matter how small, is very important and big.

(Teacher, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Teachers in all countries participating in the ITL project appear to be developing confidence in their nascent leadership abilities. In some cases, this is due to a change in the way teachers both perceived the idea of leadership and their own capacity to lead, as illustrated by these teachers.

The ITL project helped me to change the way I understood leadership.

(Teacher, Croatia)

At the start teachers were sceptical about the idea that they can change schools. . . . At the end of the sessions most of them said that change could be achieved, and it is teachers who can make that change.

(Facilitator, Montenegro)

b) Impact on professional practice

An important emphasis in the teacher leadership project is embedding new practices in the school as an organisation rather than focusing simply on the practice of individual teachers. It is clear from the evidence from the project partners, that teachers involved in the ITL project are already having a positive influence on whole school policy and practice. In Macedonia, for example, changes in teachers' professional practice is particularly noted.

The set of practical instruments and tools give the teachers the much needed resources to promote and implement improvement of their practice. These characteristics are the most challenging: developing a practice of taking initiative and leading change in a profession that is used to following orders and using digested solutions, is no small thing. This project has helped teachers to show initiative, develop a habit of thinking about the learning process and documenting, activities that strengthen teachers as professionals and intellectuals.

(Facilitator, Macedonia)

Such whole-school influence is particularly challenging in some counties in the ITL project due to their cultural context. This capacity develops as teachers become more confident in the practice of teacher leadership. Sometimes whole-school change has to be secured through informal means. Sometimes the take-up is more formal. In Bulgaria, for example, one of the issues explored by teachers – ‘managing noise in the classroom’ – was adopted as a new priority in the whole school development plan for the next academic year. In some cases teachers take the initiative to address a concern which affects the way the organisation works. For example: a teacher in Macedonia became aware that recording students' achievements was very time consuming so he devised a computer programme which would allow him and

his colleagues to record information about students' grades, attendance and comments about progress in their learning. His idea was adopted with enthusiasm by his colleagues. He shared this with teachers from other schools in the municipality at a networking event.

c) Impact on inclusion

At the beginning of 2010-11 the scope of the ITL project was extended to include the APREME project which focused on the inclusion of ethnic minorities in schooling in several countries in south east Europe. Those leading this project saw teacher leadership as a useful strategy which would help to take the aims of the APREME project forward. Teachers were able to take the initiative to draw parents of minority communities into the life of the school, as outlined in the paper presented by Ivona Celebivic and Jelena Vransejevic in this symposium

The impact of teacher leadership on inclusion in the ITL project was not limited to those linked to the APREME project. It is axiomatic that teacher leadership will foster inclusivity because the teachers involved feel a direct benefit from their own enhanced sense of participation and voice. There is a world-wide trend towards governments, NGOs and local educational authorities promoting education which extends beyond the school building and includes parents and the local community. This trend combines with the promotion of the value of self-evaluation and inquiry in the ITL project in which students' and parents' voices are solicited to create an environment which nourishes inclusion in its broadest sense.

d) Impact on students' learning

It is difficult to access direct evidence of improvement in students' learning, but members of the international ITL project team are confident that teachers' development projects have made very significant contributions to such improvement. Teachers' portfolios provide evidence not simply of current development, but also enhanced capacity to learn. Such impact was not confined to the more motivated students, but was also reported in those less likely generally to engage in the learning process. For the teachers, it was clear that these benefits were because of increased collaborative working and a revitalised pedagogical approach.

Better results are also noticed at the end of the year, which was one of my goals too. Impact on me relates to my view of planning lessons, and my future work, as well as the work of possibly interested colleagues. I will try to make my lessons as diverse as

possible, and connect with as many colleagues as possible with the purpose of joining ideas.

(Primary school teacher, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

This positive picture illustrated in the extract above was echoed in the reports from all the project partners. Despite our inability to establish clear causal links between particular innovations and student learning outcomes, it is appropriate, given its methodology, to proceed on the assumption that teacher development leads to improvements in students' learning. We would argue that the development of teachers' capacities and the nurturing of professional learning communities in which the values of inquiry, improvement, innovation and self-evaluation are cultivated, inevitably leads to improvements in the quality of classroom practice, which in turn leads to improved student outcomes.

e) Impact on schools as organisations

Evidence provided by our partners in the ITL project suggests that the teacher leadership programmes described above have supported the development of schools as professional learning communities. These programmes influence not only the teachers who are directly involved in undertaking projects but also the colleagues with whom they work by means of influencing both the practice of others and the wider professional culture. Partners observe that participating teachers' projects have led to their colleagues experimenting with new ideas and practices. In Greece, for example, school principals note that the process in which teachers encourage one another to innovate has been influential in establishing new norms and expectations of professional practice.

Such collaboration often takes place within unfavourable organisational structures in ITL partner countries. One report talked of an 'enhanced team spirit amongst staff' and others reported that the collaboration fostered by the ITL project was seen to be a key factor in avoiding teacher burn-out. Networking events had opened up new opportunities to collaborate across school and district boundaries. The latter has the effect of generating excitement and stimulating a sense of moral purpose.

School principals in countries across the project have seen the potential for teacher leadership to support whole-school improvement. It is common practice for members of TLDW groups to run in-school professional development for colleagues at in-house staff conferences or similar events. This is often referred to as '*sharing good practice*' and sometimes '*learning from each other*' which implies a more empowering concept. According to the HertsCam

Evaluation Report, such events are seen as particularly ‘*authentic*’ and ‘*more powerful*’ because it comes from a colleague within the school and supports the teaching and learning culture of the school (Wearing, 2011).

f) Impact on education systems

This type of impact can be seen most obviously through the network events which are a central feature of the ITL programme.

Sometimes schools can be fairly insular places therefore it is motivating and stimulating to hear that others are facing barriers and trying to find solutions. Good to link with others as I personally feel working as a partnership is so important to towns such as Stevenage – collaborative work can work so well if it has the foundations to work upon.

(Teacher quoted in HertsCam Evaluation Report, 2011)

Evidence from Macedonia demonstrates how developing teacher leadership can bring about systemic change in the ways in which teachers are professionally developed, guiding teachers within their own professional environments and giving them the freedom to choose projects and tools for different purposes are new and authentic ways of promoting professional development that makes this type of support better than other types. This project promoted teachers self-confidence, awareness of their leadership potential by forming strong teams of teachers which further connect into networks to share and build on their ideas.

Network events have proved to be very successful in many countries both as opportunities to celebrate the impact of teachers’ work and as opportunities to involve others in teacher leadership.

g) Impact on the wider community and society

Schools across the ITL project have made a significant difference to the involvement of parents in the life of the schools. This has occurred in the APREME project, as indicated above, and also in Bulgaria for example where a website created by the teachers themselves adopted the slogan: ‘Teachers who offer support, trust and mutual assistance to build a team with students, parents, teachers and experts.’ Teachers reported increased level of parents’ participation and motivation to be involved in different aspects of school life. Parents were very glad to be informed about different opportunities for their involvement, they were motivated to participate and they attracted more parents to become involved.

The ITL project has also been seen as a key lever in increased democratisation. In Moldova for example, an audit tool was used to demonstrate rising levels of democratic communication and decision-making during the course of the ITL project. It is generally too early in the ITL project's history to claim a discernable impact on democratisation. However, in many countries, project leaders believe that the preconditions for such profound impact are being created through the building of teachers' self-confidence and capacity to effect change.

Further, and more detailed evidence arising from Ozgur Bolat's doctoral study of the development of teachers leadership in Turkey, has become available and is summarised in his paper in this symposium and is set out more fully in his thesis (Bolat, 2012).

As we have said earlier in this paper, we believe that teachers can achieve substantial influence, but only if they have appropriate support. We now summarise the kinds of support and environmental factors that contribute to the mobilisation of teachers' moral purpose.

Conditions and strategies to mobilise moral purpose

As briefly outlined above, a key feature of the ITL approach is that teacher leadership is construed as the leadership of development work, specifically in form of a development project. The act of inviting a teacher to identify a professional concern and then to design and lead a process to address that concern is in itself empowering. Teachers generally report that it is unusual for their views to be respected and recognised in this way. This invitation is the step in mobilising their moral purpose. It is a step in building their capacity to pursue matters of concern. Typically, these concerns will rest on matters of fairness and equity, for example: 'some students don't seem to be able to overcome the obstacles to learning arising from the language of instruction not being their mother tongue'.

For the purposes of this paper, the question concerns the conditions that enable teacher leadership in this form to be enacted. There are two broad dimensions to these conditions. One is concerned with the professional culture that prevails in the school; the second concerns the nature of the support programme.

The role of the professional culture in the school

As indicated in Caroline Creaby's paper in this symposium the school and the actions of its senior leaders make a substantial difference to the extent to which teachers are able to pursue their moral purpose. More detailed evidence from Judy Durrant's more recent doctoral study indicates that the landscape of the school helps to cultivate a particular kind of professionalism (Durrant, 2013).

The role of support programmes

What is most distinctive about the ITL approach is the design of programmes of support which have been provided by a team of expert facilitators - individuals in NGOs, universities and other organisations who are interested in supporting teacher leadership. The support they have provided has five key dimensions: workshops, the use of tools, supervision, certification and networking.

Workshops

A series of workshops usually held at the end of the school day in the school itself or in a public building nearby, support teachers' reflection and planning. This enables them to design their own development work projects. Within these workshops they are also able to provide each other with both encouragement and challenge by sharing accounts of their innovations, and more importantly, of their attempts to lead collaborative processes linked to their development projects. It is through these workshops that teachers are supported, inspired and guided in the leadership of development work.

The use of tools

The second dimension of this support is a collection of tools used by facilitators to enable teachers to engage in systematic reflection, planning and sharing. Such tools are used both within the workshops and by individual teachers, but critically their use is mediated by the expert facilitators. These tools provide structures, formats and exemplars which help to shape both reflection and discussion. The evidence from the ITL project is that they are powerful in enabling groups of teachers both to be effective leaders and collectively to build knowledge together.

Supervision

In addition to the programme of workshops, facilitators typically have a number of one-to-one meetings with members of the teacher leadership group in order to discuss their action plans

and the process of documenting their projects. This might be regarded as a form of mentoring which helps the teacher to maintain momentum, but also provides an opportunity to guide the teacher in relation to the leadership of their project. Teachers who are not used to having scope for identifying a focus for development find this individual support invaluable.

Certification

The fourth plank of the support is the process of recognition and affirmation through certification. Certification in the ITL project began as the province of academic institutions i.e. universities but the inherent conservatism of those institutions limited the extent to which this could be provided. In the light of this, a variety of organisations stepped forward to provide certification. The award of the certificate is based on the submission of a portfolio of evidence; evidence of having participated in the process of reflection and discussion, and evidence of having led a development project.

Networking

A fifth dimension of the support enables teachers to benefit from engagement and interaction with colleagues in other schools and in many cases in other countries. Across the ITL project we have seen examples of different network events, some of which are limited to teachers from a cluster of schools in a particular region coming together to share practice and discuss teacher leadership, but in other cases there have been teachers from a number of different countries making challenging journeys in order to benefit from the exciting opportunity to participate in cross-cultural sharing and debate. There is no doubt that such opportunities impact on teachers' capacity for moral purpose. A now much-quoted comment by a teacher in Sarajevo testifies to this.

I caught myself participating in discussions with all my heart, getting excited about the most ordinary talk between colleagues from our school and the colleagues from Hrasno. Exchanging ideas, listening to each other with respect, giving support to each other, one gets tremendous self-esteem, and that is all I need. So I managed to go beyond the limits of my previous work, I set my goals on a higher level. Having seen the results of what I initiated, in cooperation with my colleagues, I am encouraged to make new ways to continue something that improves the quality of work with children, which encourages me personally, thereby making me happier.

(Teacher, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

This teacher is clearly inspired and encouraged by her experience of networking and her comments are not untypical.

Conclusion

The ITL initiative was not a one-off project. In fact the word ‘project’ barely fits the case at all. So far the initiative constitutes just the first stage of a long term endeavour to persuade both practitioners, researchers and policy makers and shapers that the only approach to educational reform that will truly address the millennium goal of quality education for all is one based on a transformation of teacher professionalism.

The evidence referred to here and in the other papers presented in this symposium supports five main claims each of which is outlined in brief below.

The first and most important claim is what we might call the ‘sleeping giant’ assertion which was expressed in the ITL report in 2011 in the following way.

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)

Secondly, it is evident that there is a perceived need for and an appetite for an enhanced professionalism amongst teachers in many different national and cultural contexts. This claim is supported also by the evidence from a survey commissioned by Education International (Bangs and Frost, 2012).

A third claim is that it is possible to provide effective support at very low cost by devising tools and techniques that can be used by a variety of professionals including those based in universities, government and NGO staff in different parts of the world.

In addition the evidence supports the claim that teacher leadership of the sort we have described in this symposium tends to cultivate a sense of hope and enhanced moral purpose which leads to action to address fundamental issues of social justice.

Finally, it is evident that international links and networking can enhance this because it enables and encourages teachers to think beyond the limitations of their particular contexts. Further evidence to support this claim can be drawn from the paper by Ivona Celebivic and

Jelena Vranjesevic also presented in this symposium.

Although we believe that evidence from the ITL initiative and related activities is sufficient to support the claims listed above we are under no illusions about the enormity of the challenge to persuade those policy makers who currently rely on the usual assumptions. We know that currently dominant approaches to education reform rest on the assumption that central authorities need to decide on what matters and then instruct teachers accordingly whether this is by means of regulations or training. We have proposed a viable alternative; we have demonstrated how it works and have strong evidence to support our claim that it can impact strongly on the quality of practice. However, we accept that more needs to be done to support our advocacy. What is needed now is larger scale experimentation involving many more teachers, schools and facilitators in a wider range of countries. This of course would need coordination and leadership which would require modest funding. In addition, there is a need for research that can provide the sort of evidence that sceptical policy makers will find convincing. Enlightened professionals will recognise the value of this approach when they see it in action; they will apply their professional judgement and acumen, but others may require what they perceive to be harder evidence.

References

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1978) *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*, Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley.

Ball, S. (2003) The teachers' soul and the terrors of performativity *Journal of Education Policy* 18, (2) pp. 215-228.

Bangs, J. and Frost, D. (2012) *Teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership: towards a policy framework for Education International*, Brussels: Education International.

Bolat, O. (2012) A non-positional teacher leadership approach to school improvement: an action research study in Turkey, unpublished PhD Thesis, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

Bruner, J. (1996) *The Culture of Education*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Burns, J. M. (1978) *Leadership*, New York: Harper and Row.

Durrant, J. (2013) Portraits of teachers in landscapes of change: exploring the role of teachers in school improvement, unpublished PhD thesis, Canterbury: Canterbury Christ Church University.

Eraut, M. (2000) Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work, *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 70, pp. 113–136.

Frost, D. (2013) *Teacher-led development work: a methodology for building professional knowledge*, HertsCam Occasional Papers April 2013, HertsCam Publications, www.hertscam.org.uk.

Frost, D. (2012) From professional development to system change: teacher leadership and innovation, *Professional Development in Education* (special issue on Teacher Leadership and Professional Development) 38 (2) pp. 205-227.

Frost, D. (2011) *Supporting teacher leadership in 15 countries: the International Teacher Leadership project, Phase 1 - A report*, Cambridge: Leadership for Learning, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

Frost, D. (2006) The concept of 'agency' in leadership for learning *Leading and Managing* special issue on the Carpe Vitam Leadership for Learning project, 12 (2) pp.19-28

Frost, D. and Durrant, J. (2003) Teacher Leadership: Rationale, Strategy and Impact, *School Leadership and Management*, 23 (2) pp. 173-186.

Frost, D., MacBeath, J. and Swaffield, S. (2013) Sustaining Teachers' Professional Growth, *inForm 15*, May 2013 accessed at www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/current/inform/

Fullan, M. (1993) Why teachers must become change agents, *Educational Leadership*, 50 (6) pp. 12-17.

Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P. and Trow, M. (1994) *The new production of knowledge: the dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Hoyle, E. (2008). Changing Conceptions of Teaching as a Profession: Personal Reflections. In D. Johnson, & R. Maclean (Eds.), *Teaching: Professionalization, Development and Leadership* (pp. 285-305). London: Springer.

Kemmis, S. and Smith, T. (eds) (2008) *Enabling Praxis: challenges for education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers

Leithwood, K. and Riehl, C. (2003) *What we know about successful school leadership*, Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University

MacIntyre, A. (1985) *After virtue: A study in moral theory*, 2nd ed. London: Duckworth

Nowotny, H., Scott, P. and Gibbons, M. (2003) 'Mode 2' Revisited: The New Production of Knowledge, *Minerva* (Special Issue)

Phillips, D. and Ochs, K. (2003) Processes of policy borrowing in education: Some explanatory and analytical devices. *Comparative Education*, 39(4), 451-461.

Rosenholtz, S. (1987) Education reform strategies: Will they increase teacher commitment? *American Journal of Education*, 95(4), 534-562.

Sachs, J. (2003) *The activist teaching profession*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Ed.) (2004) *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Wearing, V. (2011) *HertsCam: an evaluation*, a report commissioned by the HertsCam Steering Committee, www.hertscam.org.uk/publications