A profession-led masters programme:
a breakthrough in support for school and teacher development:

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with
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Abstract

This paper introduces a new masters programme for teachers. It begins with an outline of the rationale based on a view of teacher effectiveness in relation to educational reform. It goes on to discuss the key characteristics that make this programme distinctive, for example that it is entirely taught by serving teachers and adopts a pedagogy for empowerment. It then offers an evaluation of the programme in action in its first term and concludes with consideration of the challenges and aspirations of the programme, most significant of which is the intention to develop this masters as an international programme able to contribute to educational transformation globally.

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The value of education is hardly disputed. The recognition of its transformative power has underpinned initiatives such as 'Education for All' and the 'Global Campaign for Education'. We know that education is the key to economic viability for individuals and societies; it is not surprising therefore that policy-makers across the world are concerned with the role education plays in global economic competition. Some are also keenly aware that education can contribute to peace, democracy and international security (Sen, 2011). In addition, some of us continue to cling to the belief that the overarching aim of education as set out for us by John Dewey is about human fulfillment or self-realisation (Roth, 1962). Nevertheless, 15 years on from the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) the global situation is catastrophic with around 60 million children having no access to schooling and 250 million more who, although they are in school, are nevertheless failing to achieve a basic level of learning due to the poor quality of provision (UNESCO, 2014). The question of the quality of provision is of course relevant for every education system whether developed or developing. Any measure of student achievement indicates unacceptable variations in educational outcome for children and young people and the attention that governments increasingly pay to international comparisons such as PISA underscores the importance of questions about quality.

So, what is to be done? In this paper we offer a strategy that hinges on a masters degree programme which is owned by and taught by serving teachers and designed to empower teachers and other educational workers as agents of change.

What can make the difference?

There are many factors that determine educational success: socio-economic factors are hugely influential; the relevance and appropriateness of curriculum is important; the way schools are organised is a factor and the quality of leadership has a bearing on just about all the other factors. However, there is a strong consensus emerging that the most influential factor is the quality of what teachers do (Hanushek, 2011; OECD, 2005, UNESCO, 2014). Teacher effectiveness is of course a matter of skill, know-how and repertoire, as specified in a recent report for the Sutton Trust in the UK (Coe et al., 2014). Increasingly there is research evidence that links particular practices to quantifiable outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Muijs et al., 2014). However, studies that concentrate on the correlation of particular practices with test results generally seem to be missing something. The recent review by Muijs et al. (2014) comes close to what might be the essence of the issue when it talks about teachers as 'adaptive experts'.

> Solving old problems with new approaches, such as embedding meta-cognitive instruction in classrooms, often means stepping outside of these frameworks and requires teachers to think and act differently. The cycle of inquiry and knowledge-building has at its core the notion of teachers as adaptive experts, alert to situations where previous routines are not working well and seeking different kinds of solutions.
>
> (Muijs et al., 2014: 248)

The authors say that this 'conceptualisation of professionalism and development' is gaining ground in the research literature, which is encouraging, but in our view it does not go far enough.

In order to think about this clearly perhaps it might be helpful to see teacher effectiveness as having four layers: at the surface is the technical skill and know-how; underpinning that is what Muijs et al. refer to as being 'adaptive experts' using inquiry to build knowledge about teaching. However, without a strong sense of moral purpose, the first two layers are relatively meaningless. Ultimately, what is needed are teachers with the commitment to the best possible outcomes for young people. Moral purpose and commitment are essential, but another important dimension of a truly transformative conceptualisation of teacher effectiveness flows from Michael Fullan's warning in a very influential article for the ASCD in the early 1990s.

> Moral purpose without change agentry is martyrdom; change agentry without moral purpose is change for the sake of change. In combination, not only are they effective in getting things done, but they are good at getting the right things done.
>
> (Fullan, 1993: 3)

So we can say that teaching quality requires both the commitment that flows from a heightened sense of moral purpose, together with the strategic nouse (noûs) that enables the teacher as a change agent to exercise leadership purposefully and skillfully in order to develop practice.

The view of change outlined above stands in stark contrast to the tired old mantras that currently tend to shape teacher policies. The common recommendations are that governments need to recruit more teachers; attract better qualified recruits; train new entrants to the profession so that they have the right skills. Once in post, teachers are to be deployed to the places with the greatest need; serving teachers are to be held to account and incentivised with career structures, differential salaries and other benefits. Reports from bodies such as UNESCO make these sorts of recommendations (eg UNESCO, 2014), but they routinely neglect questions of moral purpose and change agentry. Calling for a shift in the sort of policy perspective outlined above seems hardly imaginable in a climate in which the denigration of the teaching profession has become commonplace (Millar, 2014). However, at the core of this paper is an approach which policy makers have not yet tried.

Professionality is the key

The approach on which our new masters programme is based seeks to promote and actively cultivate a particular type of professionality (Hoyle, 1974) whereby a teacher's professional identity has these dimensions:

- a member of a professional community rather than an individual practitioner;

- agential, engaging in innovation rather than complying with prescription from above;

- guided by educational principles and sense of moral purpose rather than by standards, rules and externally defined deficits;

- being a creator of professional knowledge through inquiry, development work and networking rather than relying on initial training and continuous updating provided by expert outsiders;

- seeking to influence others by exercising leadership rather than simply being led.

It may seem paradoxical that at the core of this specification of professionality is the agency of the teacher as an individual, yet collegiality is also essential. This position is informed by what we know about school improvement which is that consistency in values, expectations and practices are key to effectiveness (Sammons *et al.,* 1995). We could also link this to the idea of collective self-efficacy whereby teachers within a given school develop a shared sense of what they can, and should be able to, achieve and this is evidentially linked to levels of attainment (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

The question arises: what kind of strategies can be used to cultivate the kind of professionality outlined above? It is often assumed that support can come from outside the school perhaps in the form of training programmes provided by local government organisations. In many countries participation in such programmes will enable the teacher to accumulate points which are essential for periodic re-licensing. There are many difficulties associated with such external provision of continuing professional development programmes, a subject for another paper, but our basic assumption in HertsCam is that the support has to come from within the profession. We are aware of a range of profession-led opportunities for professional learning such as TeachMeet, now a global phenomenon, which is very encouraging, but the HertsCam MEd is a significant and distinctive breakthrough as explored below.

The HertsCam MEd as breakthrough practice

The HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning is a masters degree programme for serving teachers and other education practitioners, and although there are many part-time masters degree programmes on offer in the UK, we believe this one constitutes a significant breakthrough. Superficially, it is comparable with other programmes in that it meets

European-wide quality standards (ENQA, 2009; QAA, 2015); it is assessed through the submission of written assignments linked to a structure of Level 7 credits in harmony with regional agreements (SEEC, 2010); it has been validated as an external programme by a UK university and so leads to the award of a masters degree by that university.

However, our MEd is a distinctive provision because of the following key characteristics:

- Its institutional context is an organisation that is run by teachers
- The programme is taught entirely by practicing teachers
- It is transformative because it is based on development rather than research
- The teaching of the programme is based on a pedagogy for empowerment
- It is embedded in a network

We now explain and discuss each of these characteristics.

HertsCam as the providing institution

Although the degree is awarded by the University of Hertfordshire (UH), the institution that is the provider of the programme is the HertsCam Network, which is an independent entity, a company with charity status. Long before HertsCam registered as a company it had been gradually taking shape as an organisation. Its activities and programmes, including the MEd, can be traced back as far as 1998 when Hertfordshire County Council proposed a partnership with the University of Cambridge to support schools in the region. Once the masters course was established, a school-based certificate level programme was launched, the 'Teacher Led Development Work' programme. Over time this partnership matured and changed in response to the pressures on both the local authority, with funding being diverted directly to schools, and the university, with the impact of the University's aspirations as an intensive research institution. Meanwhile, under the leadership of David Frost, the masters programme developed ways of working in keeping with a partnership-based approach, for example employing graduates of the MEd as supervisors and contributors to the taught programme. The first step towards independence was the setting up, in 2005, of a Steering Committee which included representatives such as headteachers and participants in HertsCam programmes. In 2011, the Steering Committee decided to register as a company which then became a charity with a Board of Trustees on which are headteachers are in the majority. HertsCam then took over the running of the TLDW programme, awarding the certificates itself. Later, when the University raised fee levels and insisted that it was not legitimate for practitioners to teach on the masters course, the Committee took the bold step of bringing the relationship with Cambridge to a close and looking for a more suitable academic partner. The proximity of the University of Hertfordshire was obviously a factor in the choice of academic partner but, much more

importantly, UH has a commitment to partnership which is stated explicitly on their website (http://www.herts.ac.uk/apply/schools-of-study/education/partnerships-in-education).

A masters degree course taught by practitioners

When the MEd for Hertfordshire schools was founded it was taught entirely by senior academics at Cambridge including luminaries such as Mary James and David Hargreaves, but as it matured it became increasingly the practice for the teaching team to include what could be called 'scholar practitioners'. This term has been used in the US to refer to the idea that engaging in scholarly activity is a good way to engage in training to be a clinician (Schultz, 2010). Here, we use the term 'scholar practitioner' to denote that, although teaching and school leadership are their dominant concerns, team members also have experience of research, writing for publication and engagement in public discourse about education, as explained in a recent blog post (http://www.lflteacherleadership.org/the-scholar-practitioner-in-action/#more-441). By 2012, the only Cambridge academic involved in the HertsCam MEd was David Frost with the rest of the team being teachers occupying full-time teaching positions in schools.

When it came to putting forward the proposal for re-validation with the University of Hertfordshire, the HertsCam management team were able to argue that the teaching team had considerable experience of teaching at masters level and their students had consistently achieved a high standard when compared with those on other Cambridge masters courses. In addition, feedback from graduates of the programme under the aegis of Cambridge, was categorically supportive of the course being taught by practitioners.

The current teaching team comprises seven individuals employed by the HertsCam Network on a part-time basis. The team is led by Val Hill, Assistant Headteacher at Birchwood High School, as Course Director, with help from Sarah Lightfoot as Deputy. The team also includes Tracy Gaiteri and Clare Herbert, both primary headteachers, and Jo Mylles, Sheila Ball and Paul Rose who are members of senior leadership teams in other secondary schools in the region.

Knowledge creation through development

The HertsCam MEd programme is bound by the terms of the Network's charitable objects 'to advance education for the public benefit through the provision of programmes for teachers to improve the quality of education in schools'. Some years ago, the network as a whole embraced the rhetoric of teacher leadership as the means to express the proposal put forward by Michal Fullan in his paper titled: 'Why teachers must become change agents' (Fullan, 1993).

The over-arching aim of the masters programme is transformative. It is designed to enable teachers and other education professionals, regardless of status or position, to enhance their moral purpose, to secure improvements in the quality of practice and better learning outcomes for students in their schools, and, in so doing, develop their leadership capacity. The design draws on the tradition of 'non-positional teacher leadership' (Frost, 2014) and 'teacher-led development work' (Frost & Durrant, 2003; Frost, 2013; Hill, 2014) in which it is assumed that teachers can be enabled to lead change and improvement through the medium of a well-planned, time-bounded development project. Development work can be defined as:

> 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.

A number of key assumptions underpin this approach. For example, it is assumed that:

a. Development projects are likely to be successful when they are designed to address professional concerns identified by individual teachers themselves because this maximises the potential for human agency, with all that implies about enthusiasm and commitment.

b. Innovation in schools is unlikely to be successful if it is entirely individualistic and uncoordinated; therefore teachers are expected to engage in consultation and negotiation within their institutional context to ensure that projects are sufficiently congruent and that project plans are adjusted to harmonise with institutional realities.

c. To be successful, development projects require leadership, i.e. 'intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization' (Yukl, 2010: 21).

d. Successful development work is informed by scholarship in which the teacher concerned explores relevant literatures and knowledge domains in order to conceptualise the aspect of professional practice that is of concern and become aware of previous research and development work in that regard.

e. Development work should feature the use of inquiry as a basis for the collaborative process of reflection, evaluation, dialogue and deliberation that leads to improvements in professional practice.

f. Accounts of development work must be shared within networking scenarios and subject to critical friendship in order to build professional knowledge in the education system.

A pedagogy for empowerment

Over many years the course team have developed an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to empower programme participants. It might be supposed that post-graduate study is of itself empowering, but there is evidence that, because of the way some masters programmes are taught, they are experienced by teachers as lacking in relevance and, at worst, infantilising. In re-designing our MEd programme we wanted to articulate and express for ourselves as clearly as possible the characteristics of our preferred approach to teaching and learning. We began by asking the participants in the final cohort under the Cambridge validation to tell us what approaches they valued. The course teaching team were then able to develop these ideas into the seven 'pedagogic principles' set out below.

Principle 1: The cultivation of moral purpose as a dimension of extended professionality
We teach the course on the basis of a shared understanding that improving the life chances of the young people in our schools is our central purpose. Enhanced moral purpose is a key dimension of the type of professionality the course promotes.

Principle 2: Enabling the development of professional practice through the design and leadership of development projects
The concept of development work is introduced and revisited throughout the programme. The term refers to the process through which practice is improved. It is the antithesis of the concept of implementation in that it assumes that such processes unfold over time and that they involve strategic planning in order to enable professional reorientation to take place. Typical features include collaborative discussion, review, consultation, trialling, evaluation and joint planning.

Principle 3: Scaffolding the development of the learning community in which enhanced social capital allows critical friendship to flourish
The development of the MEd group as a learning community involves building sufficient trust and interpersonal ease to allow for robust discussion in which each member of the group is able to offer challenge and critique. This facility depends on the rapid growth of familiarity and mutual acceptance.

Principle 4: Enabling reflection on experience and ideas through participation in dialogic activities
The HertsCam MEd is concerned with the development of professional knowledge in which the participants are knowledge creators. Their experience of practice is interrogated through reflection, comparison and analysis, which are scaffolded by the tools applied in the programme sessions and online. Conceptual frameworks and accounts of research derived from the literature are brought into the discussion in order to enhance participants' understanding.

Principle 5: Building the capacity for critical reflection and narrative writing in which scholarship illuminates problem solving in professional contexts

In the HertsCam MEd the study of relevant literatures is used in the context of academic writing that is rigorous and critical, but the writing is purposeful in relation to professional problems arising from the individual participants' concerns and strategic action. Each participant's writing begins with their own professional identity and situation and develops along with their unfolding strategic action.

Principle 6: Facilitation and support through the use of discursive and conceptual tools that deepen understanding of themes relevant to the development of educational practice

HertsCam MEd taught sessions typically feature reflection and discussion activities in which structure and focus are introduced through the use of tools devised for the specific purposes. Such tools may be in the form, for example, of a list of categories or perhaps a set of procedural steps.

Principle 7: Building professional knowledge and fostering mutual inspiration through the organisation of networking and opportunities for international engagement

Building professional knowledge through networking involves participants having opportunities to share narrative accounts of their development projects. Knowledge is built when narratives are subject to discussion, which leads to an enriched understanding of particular aspects of practice and the process of change. Alongside the development of technical know-how and insight is the building of collective self-efficacy and enhanced moral purpose.

The statement of pedagogical principles above has already been used as part of the validation process through which a panel appointed by the University of Hertfordshire was able to judge the viability and validity of the proposed programme. The panel met some of the teachers who had been consulted about the design of the programme and tested out the fidelity of the principles.

Networking context

The fifth of the key characteristics of the HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning is that the masters programme is embedded within a wider network which comes together at HertsCam Network Events, an Annual Conference and an Annual Dinner. These events also include teachers who are enrolled on the Teacher Led Development Work (TLDW) (Hill, 2014) programme and those who have completed either the TLDW or the MEd in the past. A

proportion of the required 'attendance' for the masters is taken up with participation in these events.

The value of networking has been well established in the UK and, on the national level, a great deal was learnt through Networked Learning Communities initiative led by the National College for School Leadership (Katz & Earl, 2010). The most spectacular growth in teacher networking has been through dedicated online sites and the big social networking facilities. In contrast the networking dimension of HertsCam's activity has evolved over many years and has been conducted largely in a face-to-face manner.

There are 6 Network Events a year hosted by schools in the network. These take place at the end of the school day, last for only a couple of hours and involve between 50 and 150 participants. For each event there is a programme which usually identifies any particular theme, the person who will be making the welcoming remarks and the schedule for the various activities. It will then list the posters to be displayed in the poster session and the workshops included in the parallel breakout sessions, giving details of the focus of the workshops and the teachers leading them. At each event there will be refreshments served by volunteers at the school. Being given a cake, a cup of tea or even a glass of wine on arrival helps participants to become re-energised and more sociable.

The most important aspect of these events is the exchange of experience and the dialogue about the issues that arise from the teachers' stories about their development work. All network members are provided with guidance about how to prepare a workshop or a poster, enabling them to maximise the dialogue. We are ever mindful of the need to avoid the 'top tips' approach which is characteristic of many networking activities, especially the online ones. We aim to help teachers to engage in knowledge building which is not merely knowledge transfer. As Hargreaves highlighted some years ago, professional knowledge is not easily transferred – it is 'sticky' (Von Hipple, 1994) and it is in the flow of teachers' practice in their particular school settings where it is transposed through adaptation (Hargreaves, 1999). What we observe in our network events is teachers telling stories about their leadership of development projects and facilitating discussion by asking the other teachers in the room for advice or comparable experiences.

Through the sort of process described above, we see teachers working together in dialogue to create shared professional knowledge, developing their know-how and understanding, but we also see two other important effects. First, within these community activities we see practitioners creating and reinforcing a sense of common cause in which they offer each other challenge and support and develop shared beliefs about recurring concerns. This builds collective self-efficacy (Bangs & Frost, 2015; Bandura, 1995) which is the sense that 'people like us can do this sort of thing'. The second effect occurs when teachers talk about the

'professional concern' that their project began with. They will have been asked to reflect on their concerns at the start of their involvement with HertsCam and when they rehearse these with other teachers it raises questions of equity and justice. For example, a teacher leading a workshop might begin their narrative with something like: 'I was concerned that there was a group of students who seemed always to be on the margins of classroom discussion and even in small group activities seemed to be passive'. The effect is to spread the virus of moral purpose through mutual encouragement to identify and face issues which are essentially moral ones.

Since the launch of the International Teacher Leadership initiative in 2008, members of HertsCam have been able to engage in networking internationally (Frost, 2011). This does not involve all members of the network all of the time but significant numbers of teachers have been able to travel to countries including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece, Portugal, Macedonia and Serbia, in order to engage with teachers who, while working in quite different cultural mileux, nevertheless seem to be engaged in project work which is recognisable and comparable. Research currently underway indicates that this seems to build a sense of what might be called universal professionalism whereby teachers come to see themselves as belonging to a wider, global professional community (Underwood, 2014).

So far so good

What follows is critical reflection on the programme in action in its first term, drawing on data collected by Gisela Redondo-Sama, the Research Fellow attached to HertsCam, observations carried out by David Frost and feedback from the course participants gathered in the normal course of the programme. The discussion is presented in narrative style.

The HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning began recruiting as soon as it had been validated, which was in April 2015. We had designed our own applications forms and protocols for gathering employers' references and then invited applicants to interviews held in in a school where one of the members of the Teaching Team is the Headteacher. Interviews were conducted by two people - the outgoing course director, David Frost, and Val Hill, who would be taking on that role - to ensure continuity of standards. A critical first question focused on the question of commitment.

> You might normally expect a masters course to be entirely devoted to participants' own learning, but this programme is different. On this MEd you are expected to lead the development of practice in your school and contribute to knowledge building in the professional community by participating actively in the network. Is that OK with you?

This question was met with enthusiastic affirmation every time, even though most of the applicants were likely to be paying their own fees. It was evident that applicants had chosen this programme because it offered the opportunity to draw on their strong sense of moral purpose and pursue their agendas for change. This transaction is just one of the many ways in which Principle 1 (see 7 Pedagogic principles above) is addressed. Having made our selection and done the usual credential checks, we were able to invite the first cohort of 16 to the first Residential Conference. In this first cohort there were 7 primary school teachers, amongst whom 4 have senior leadership responsibilities, and 9 secondary school teachers.

The Residential conference was on a Friday and Saturday at a hotel adjacent to the University of Hertfordshire. In addition to our 16 participants, there were three members of the Teaching Team present and our Research Fellow to observe and conduct interviews in the margins of the conference. David Frost was also on hand as an advisor. Amongst the Teaching Team there was a degree of anxiety about the question of our perceived credibility, but when the participants had the opportunity to talk about this to the researcher, they affirmed their approval as the following extracts illustrate.

> *They* (the Teaching Team) *understand the challenges and the problems that we have and it is not just someone spouting idealism to us. They understand the issues that we face around this.*
>
> (Victoria)

> *They understand what we going through, they've been there, they done it and they understand any difficulties that we come across.*
>
> (Nancy)

Our first challenge was to begin the process of becoming an operational learning community, so it was important to establish a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere with coffee, pastries and wide smiles on arrival. However, such strategies are commonplace and their effect can quickly dissipate unless built on through a particular approach to teaching and learning which is discussed below. Part of the welcome process was a visit from the Dean of the School of Education at UH who expressed her good wishes and told us how pleased she was that HertsCam had become a partner organisation. It was symbolic that in order to make her brief remarks, she left her building and walked across to visit us in our hotel venue. The first workshop activities focused on community building; the paired introduction activity enabled participants and teaching team to get to know something about each other very quickly. Personal identity is key to building trust and the degree of empathy necessary for critical friendship and robust dialogue. Even within this first Residential Conference there were signs that the participants were already becoming a learning community with comments such as the ones below.

I think the group is really lovely and it helps to have lots of like-minded people doing similar things.

(Elsie, interview, Day 2 Residential Conference)

You can sit next to anybody, you can ask anyone a question. Everyone is really, really interested.

(Charles, Day 2 Residential Conference)

Another major feature of the first Residential Conference was the introduction to the resources that enable participants to bring scholarship to bear on their professional concerns. Immediately following their initial community building activity, the team distributed a compendium of documents which included the 'Topic Framework' and the 'Annotated Bibliography'. The Topic Framework is structured according to four headings: a) Leadership and professionality; b) Organisations and change; c) Pedagogy and d) Project design. Each category contains four topics. The Annotated Bibliography follows the same structure so that for each topic there is one or more illustrative reading lists. The document includes a total of approximately 750 references which are illustrative of the fields and knowledge domains relevant to the study of 'leadership for learning'. Both the topic groups and the component topics within each group are introduced with commentaries which help the participants to orientate and navigate their way through this resource.

The specifications in these two documents represent, not course content that has to be taught and learnt, but the knowledge domains and literatures that can be drawn upon as resources to illuminate and explain the processes of development that participants will lead. In the HertsCam MEd, the 'course content' is personalised (Demos, 2004; Pollard & James, 2004). Each participant determines the course content for themselves; it is shaped by their professional values and identity, their position in the school, their view of what problems need to be addressed and the particular challenges of their institutional context. Fundamental to the design of the MEd programme is the concept of the spiral curriculum which Jerome Bruner argued for in his seminal book, 'The Process of Education' (1960). The proposal is that students should continuously revisit a set of ideas with increasing degrees of depth and complexity in order to achieve mastery. In the MEd programme, the 'students' are professional practitioners, which means that they are already knowledgeable. The programme aims to enhance, develop and enrich that professional knowledge. Students are co-opted into a collaborative knowledge creation process by being enabled to problematise aspects of professional practice and then lead development work to improve them.

The rest of the term comprised three Twilight Sessions and two Network Events. Twilight Sessions take place at the end of the school day between 4.30-7.30 pm; this timing allows participants time to drive from their schools as soon as their teaching commitments are fulfilled and arrive in time for a cup of tea, a cake and a few minutes to unwind and reconnect with their

fellow MEd participants. These sessions take place in a school classroom, which is of course a very familiar environment for these participants. The school hosts provide refreshments and food for which they submit a modest bill to HertsCam. The approach to these sessions is characterised in the vignette below. The Teaching Team consists of the authors of this paper, Val, Sarah, Jo, Tracy, Paul, Clare and Sheila. David Frost was in the role of observer and what follows is an extract from his notes.

> Jo then takes over and refers us to the idea of professional cultures. She makes detailed reference to the input in the previous session by Paul about the use of tools for analysing school culture…. She introduces a new tool for 'examining the culture in your school' – the one with vignettes A, B & C ….. Participants are asked to use the tool to reflect on the professional cultures in their own schools and then share in pairs, then on the table. Jo debriefs this discussion activity and asks for contributions from the class. For example Kevin points out that aspects of each of the A, B & C cultures are evident in her school. Jo interprets and builds on Kevin's point and highlights the distinction between social capital and intellectual capital. The beauty of this is that Jo, as a serving practitioner, can respond from a base of shared experience and understanding of school reality as well as familiarity with the Topic Framework of this programme. Another contribution is about sub-cultures and it is significant that the comment from Mildred is qualified with the point that this may only be true of a large secondary school such as the one in which she teaches, but a comment from one of the primary participants highlights that this happens in both primary and secondary schools. Her comment was that you see differing sub-cultures between for example the Early Years team and the Year 6 team. Jo is still leading this part of the session but Val chips in to comment about how this discussion of professional cultures relates to the consultation the participants are doing in preparation for their assignment. Jo joins in this point and again draws from her own experience of her own school. Val mentions that at her school's Senior Leadership Team's residential conference, she had tabled a document summarising teachers' views about life in school to illustrate that different categories of people can have different perspectives on the same school. Tracy joined in this discussion and commented about the importance of the students' perspective.

The extract above illustrates how members of the Teaching Team are able to draw on both their practical experience and their familiarity with concepts and discourses that help to illuminate and explain the MEd participants' experience and endeavours as agents of change.

The assignment for this first module is designed to support the first stage of the development process, which is a situational analysis. This is reflected in the vignette above, the workshops being focused on questions of the institutional contexts for the planned development work.

Participants are asked to engage in consultation with colleagues and to carry out a variety of data collection and structured reflection exercises in order to develop their understanding of the potential obstacles and affordances as they begin to plan a process of development. As the school term unfolds, participants gather more intelligence about their schools as organisations and develop the piece of writing they began even before they enrolled on the course. A few weeks prior to the first Residential Conference, they were asked to write a brief statement about their core values, their role in school, their perceptions about aspects of practice that might need to be developed and improved. During that first conference, they were introduced to a member of the team designated as their supervisor for the duration of the two-year programme. The dialogue between these two teachers – the supervisor and the participant – is what enables the participant to develop their writing which becomes a five thousand word essay: 'A critical analysis of the institutional context of my development work'. The essay includes reflections on the writer's professional identity and their initial views about possible foci for development work. It also includes an account of the process of consultation and inquiry which has led to a greater understanding of the school as an organisation. Through this process they develop a high degree of micro-political awareness (West, 1999) which enhances their strategic nouse, an essential element of change agentry as discussed at the beginning of this paper.

Challenges: near and medium terms

At the time of writing, the participants are facing the challenge of submitting their first assignment. It is hoped that the programme has enabled them to engage in authentic writing that helps them to prepare the foundation for the development work to come. They are already looking forward to the next module in which we will explore dimensions of pedagogy such as the nature of learning, the variations on learners' dispositions and orientations and the conditions that constitute effective learning environments.

Meanwhile, the teaching team continue to develop ways of planning and operationalising this programme while also fulfilling their obligations as serving teachers in a school system known for its relentless intensification. The management of time is a key issue of course; not just the time to teach the course but also the time for joint planning and evaluation. We do at least have the advantage of technology, so through our teaching team website we can engage in virtual meetings and share resources.

Continued monitoring and evaluation is of course part of the commitment to the HertsCam Steering Committee and to our academic partner, the University of Hertfordshire. Full reports based on feedback from our participants and stakeholders such as headteachers will ensure that the team is held to account for the quality of the programme. Beyond this, the Teaching Team

is committed not only to researching our own practice, but also to arranging more independent scrutiny by researchers and evaluators from other organisations such as the Centre for Educational Leadership at UH. We are also in the process of inviting colleagues from other organisations interested in teacher and school development to visit us in order to act as critical friends.

Developing the team is also a priority. This is partly about the professional development of the current team; we are keenly aware of the need to maintain our own scholarship and to update our knowledge of relevant fields of research. In the coming months our registration with the Higher Education Academy will provide structure and impetus for this. We are also inviting expressions of interest within the network from graduates who might consider being inducted into the role so that we can sustain our capacity to teach the course.

In the new year, our recruitment campaign begins again. The plan is to recruit a second cohort which will be taught alongside the first so that there is continuous overlapping. The participants in Year One will benefit from working with the more experienced and they will benefit in turn from the critical friendship of the new recruits who will be keen to ask them to explain what they have done and why.

In the longer term, we aspire to develop the HertsCam MEd: Leading Teaching and Learning as an international programme and have already begun to develop partnerships with suitable organisations in many parts of the world; those that have experience of working closely with the teaching profession. The point is to develop a programme that can unlock the potential of members of the teaching profession to contribute to educational reform. The extract from the Global Monitoring Report echoes what many other reports have said.

> An education system is only as good as its teachers. Unlocking   their   potential   is essential to enhancing the quality of learning. Evidence shows that education quality improves when teachers are supported – it deteriorates if they are not.

> (UNESCO, 2014, p. i)

We hope that the development of our masters programme will show how teachers can be supported in such a way that their professionality is enhanced and their sense of moral purpose - something that most teachers have to some degree – can be cultivated and mobilised in order to improve the quality of provision with education systems globally. In this way, we hope to be making contributions towards improving the life chances of young people wherever they are.

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