Second meeting
of the
Research and Development Team
of the
International Teacher Leadership project

University of Peloponnese
(Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου)
Department of Social and Educational Policy

Korinthos Campus
9th-10th May 2009

Hosted by
Prof. Giorgos (George) Bagakis
Thanks and acknowledgments

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We are also grateful to many institutions for financial support to meet the costs of travel to Korinthos, including the Open Society Institute, Barnwell, Birchwood and Sir John Lawes Schools (UK), Canterbury Christ Church University.
Pre-conference lecture

Some colleagues arrived early. On the evening of Friday 8th May, teachers, local education authority and university staff had been invited to a public seminar. About 80 people attended this event.

David Frost made a presentation which located the International Teacher Leadership project as a natural continuation from the Carpe Vitam Leadership for Learning project which still resonates within Greece.

David’s talk was ably translated by Natassa Diamantopoulou, a teacher currently working on her PhD with the University of Patras. The discussion with the audience was extensive. People showed a great deal of interest in the idea of teacher leadership.

The session featuring the ITL project lasted for 2 hours. Following this Giorgos, Thanassis Stamatis and Stavroula Kessari made a presentation about the Carpe Vitam project.
The Conference – Saturday 9th May

The venue for the project team meeting
We used a large, well equipped room in the Faculty of Social Science building next to the sea in Korinthos (Corinth).

We had easy access to a sunny terrace where we had coffee and lunch.

Who was there?
George Bagakis  Lefki Biniari  Ivana Cosic  Paul Barnett
Kiki Demertz  Judy Durrant  Maria Flores  David Frost
Sofia Georgiadou  Val Hill  Stavroula Kessari  Pavlos Kosmidis
Iris Marusic  Jo Myles  Jose Penalva  Ljubica Petrovic
Amanda Roberts  Thanassis Stamatis  Marianna Tsemperlidou  Lyndsay Upex

Also a group of about 6-8 Greek observers.

National sites represented
Croatia, Greece, Portugal, Spain, UK (HertsCam), UK (Cantarnet)

Who wanted to but couldn’t be there?
Ozgur Bolat (Turkey)  Mona-Lisa Chiriac & Iona Ursache (Romania)  Gordana Miljevic (OSI)

Welcome and introduction
George Bagakis welcomed us all on behalf of the Greek team. We all reminded ourselves who we were and where we come from. David thanked everyone for coming and made a few comments about the task ahead of us.
Activity 1: The Concept of Teacher Leadership

The purpose of this activity was to revisit our understanding and build a theoretical perspective on the concept of teacher leadership. Jo Mylles introduced the activity in which we were to work in groups to discuss the questions below.

We used flip charts to represent our discussions. It was noted that, in spite of quite different cultural contexts and policy environments, there was nevertheless a high degree of harmony between the discussions in each of the groups.

A summary of our discussion is set out below under 3 headings based on the 3 questions with phrases from the flip charts in italics.

What is teacher leadership?
Teacher leadership was seen as a means to strengthen teachers’ professionalism by enabling them to feel that leadership is part of their work. It is about teachers taking responsibility for leading change and making a difference to professional practice and to the development of professional knowledge. Anyone can be a leader because teacher leadership is not about hierarchical position. It requires teachers to understand their own potential, be aspirational and open to change. They need encouragement, inspiration and
practical support to help them realise this potential by being allowed to take initiative and being provided with support from headteachers and from the system. We see teacher leadership as being a fundamental part of a democratic way of life - social democracy – in which people express their human agency and feel a sense of empowerment to innovate.

The role of teacher leadership in educational reform
We share the view that there is an urgent need for reform in our educational systems but we know that we cannot rely on top-down policy and that reform needs to be from the base up with teachers playing an active role in the process. The policy environment currently is contradictory with some policies encouraging teacher creativity and others stifling it. Government agencies also need strategies for enabling policy makers to hear the teachers’ voice. We expressed optimism that we will be able to demonstrate that teacher leadership works in schools in a variety of cultural settings and then persuade policymakers to create the conditions that favour it. This re-professionalisation will combat the disengagement of teachers in educational research and reform and will raise teachers’ self-esteem.
The conditions that favour the development of teacher leadership

We have to begin by understanding the cultural context and the policy environment of a given setting. To flourish, teacher leadership needs key individuals such as ourselves and the headteacher and others we might collaborate with to take action to provide the strategies and tools that can begin to change the situation. Teachers need support from many directions – parents, headteachers, central organisations and so on. Teacher leadership flourishes best when there is support from collaborative school cultures. Teacher need to be awoken from complacency by being invited in to a process through which they have recognition and support and in which they are listened to and heard. Teacher leadership is nourished by respect for the profession and professional knowledge. Within such an environment teachers can have the freedom to experiment and to pursue their passion for learning.
Activity 2: The cultural contexts and policy environments

We had already shared papers about the contexts before we travelled to Corinth. Val Hill led this session and started by handing a guide sheet: ‘Thinking about the contexts’.

Val asked people to work in national groups to discuss the three questions about barriers to teacher leadership, opportunities to build support for it and the structures of support that can be provided - and to write down their thoughts. Each national group gave feedback and we discussed the questions in a thematic way.

The barriers to teacher leadership

In some of the participating countries there is said to be a lack of vision about change both on the part of central government and of teachers. In the UK the government have multiple strategies to stimulate and direct change. There are examples of strategies to mobilise the energy of teachers to support change, but there are still many schools and teachers where ‘learned helplessness’ is prevalent.

A common problem is that control of the education system is centralised with teachers constructed as mere ‘deliverers’. Teachers may perceive themselves to have little room for manoeuvre.

The status of teachers and the consequent level of salary are low. Working conditions are poor and teachers lack support. There is sense of low morale and self-esteem for many. This may undermine teachers’ own sense of their professionalism.

The idea of shared leadership is quite problematical for some. It may be interpreted as an interference or even subversion of the headteachers’ authority.

For most of us, there is a major challenge to convince authorities and schools that the idea of teacher leadership could be a positive force for good.
**Opportunities to build support for teacher leadership**

The predominance of a system of central government control could also be seen as an opportunity in that it is minimal and spaces are left for innovation.

At the level of political rhetoric at least there is a lot of support for innovation and reform. Countries such as Turkey have aspirations to join the European Union and others will be seeking ways forward that enable them to compete on the world stage.

Many teachers, particularly the young, are searching for a different set of values and norms as professionals. In any country there are teachers who care about learning and want to make a difference. In some cases teachers are looking for an alternative to the juggernaut of top-down reform that is gathering momentum. One comment was that teachers have *nothing to lose*.

We do have access to accounts of teacher leadership, particularly in HertsCam and Cantarnet, and these can be an inspiration to other teachers.

Having had this discussion it was agreed that the Context papers will be developed and used in the future as the basis for a paper analysing the cultural, political and policy context for our initiative.
Activity 3: The structure of support for teacher leadership

Paul Barnett led this session which was really an extension of the previous one. We considered the third question on the guide sheet:

**What structure of support for teacher leadership is necessary?**
*For example: a partnership between a research institute and a district authority which has a responsibility to facilitate reform*

This discussion focused on the key components of the provision of support: the schools / and teachers who would be participating, the roles of team members and the way they would collaborate, the resources needed.

**Issue – local authority involvement**
HertsCam has the backing of a local authority. This is not possible where control is centralised e.g. in Portugal. However, in the UK Judy Durrant’s programme doesn’t depend on local authority support. There the university is in partnership directly with schools.

**Issue - certification**
We thought that this would be helpful in that it could provide a framework for teachers’ planning and reflection and might act as an incentive. We agreed to explore the possibility of creating a ‘Teacher Leadership Certificate’ issued by the ITL project and endorsed by the participating universities. Such an award may not have official currency but may be attractive to participating teachers. David will draw up a proposal for this.

**Lunch**

The lunch was served by a catering company that George had employed. Lunch included many traditional Greek dishes such as Spanakopitta and Souvlaki. We ate lunch under a canopy on the terrace overlooking the sea.

Lunch time provided an excellent opportunity for informal support and networking. The environment created an ideal ambience for this.
Activity 4: Designing support for teacher leadership

Amanda Roberts led this session and began by reminding us of the principles for supporting teacher leadership we had discussed in November and had circulated in the April Bulletin. These were included in a document together with the cases we circulated at the same time. Amanda then introduced the idea of working on the design of a support programme and introduced the guide sheet below:

We worked in national groups with members of the HertsCam team acting as critical friends.
For some national sites the discussion was more like one-to-one coaching. In other cases such as the Greeks, there was a large team.

This session enabled each national group to clarify its plans and produce a poster. Val Hill modelled this for us.

Activity 5: Reviewing the day and clarifying plans for tomorrow

Paul Barnett led this session and asked us to consider what we want to learn more about?

A question arose about action research and TLDW – is it the same? David has been writing a paper about methodology for school improvement. He will send it to the team. David explained the difference between action research and inquiry. TLDW is not a research methodology but is a school improvement strategy.

Action points: Cambridge will:
- Send example of facsimile portfolio
- Point out articles etc. about HertsCam as a resource
- Send list of things / papers / tools that might be useful.
- Team members will tell Lyndsay what they want.
- Create an ITL project site as part of Teacher Leadership website
End of the day meeting with invited guests

George Bagakis had invited a range of local representatives of educational bodies including the past President of the Primary Teachers Association and staff from the University. George welcomed them and David gave them a brief summary of the project and our purpose in coming to Corinth.

After that we moved out on to the terrace to have informal conversations. The meeting broke up in the early evening to allow time to rest at the hotel before going out to dinner.

Saturday evening - A Greek dinner

The Greek team hosted a dinner at a local restaurant. We walked towards the sea and stopped to watch the sun go down on the way to the restaurant.

The food was traditional Greek including lots of small fish and sea food such as anchovies, whitebait, octopus and squid. We sat outside at a single long table.
Sunday – Conference day 2

Activity 6: Looking at action plans

Each national team put up their poster and Val Hill invited us all to look at them and write messages – questions or suggestions – on post-it notes and attach the to the posters.

Towards an action plan - Croatia

- Headteachers as allies
- Liaison person in school
- Resource pack (translated)
- Teachers: portfolio, articles
- Us: folder, things from the list ITL team support
- Meetings: once a month in school
- Croatian team – plan sessions, reflect
- 2 tutorials
- Email
- ITL community (schools getting together)
- Presenting their work: - website, county meetings

Could you hold an event maybe hosted by one school at start to help teachers connect and feel they belong to something? And again at the end?

Who will be responsible for the website?

Consider newsletter to share / promote the programmes

How are the teachers recruited? In how many schools?

When do teachers deliver their portfolio and what does it include?

Could have alternatives to portfolio, e.g. a booklet, each teacher writes a page under headings:
- What I wanted to change
- What evidence I gathered
- What went well
- What problems and issues
- Outcomes
- Helpful reading
- Contact details

Headteachers can:
- publish a bulletin for staff with updates of TLDW
- offer guidance on leadership strategies to teachers (one to one) to help them make changes happen
- invite teachers to present to colleagues
- make sure teachers can get to meetings (not timetable clashes)

How many meetings in total?

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Towards an action plan - Greece

**First year:** Engagement and beginning in the project
Finding of receptive schools
Good information for the project primarily for the headteacher and secondly to the whole staff
Decision of the school for the participation in the project
Formation of voluntary groups with a coordinator within the school
Multiple ways of gradual engagement of voluntary groups (short simple papers of one 2 pages, use of simple tools as tin openers to gather evidence from their school, sessions in each school, national networking)
A meeting in about every 3-4 weeks within each school the first month and later every 4-5 weeks (totally about 6 meetings)
International input
1 national meeting in the end of the year

**Second year:** The main production of the project
About 5-6 meetings in each school
Presentation of the school work (e.g. a poster of the school in a conference, presentation with members of the support group)
International input
1 national meeting in the end of the year

**Third year:** Maximum production and closure of the project
About 4-5 meetings in each school
Presentation of the school work (e.g. a poster of the school in a conference, presentation with members of the support group)
International input
1-2 meetings

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How long are the meetings?

Good to have national meeting at end – what about one at start to encourage ‘belonging’?

Too many schools?

How will the meeting be structured? What kind of activities will teachers engage in?

Who is supporting these meetings?

What is the international input?

Other than the poster, how will teachers evidence their work and participation?
Towards an action plan - UK South East

Three different models for TLDW

BBA and TWS – Twilight meetings every 3 weeks in term time
Individual schools where many teachers are / have been on leadership / school development MAS. Led by University tutors. JD research with tutors / graduates.

Local Authority project – 3 whole group meetings with critical friendships between
Teachers involved in curriculum development – leadership through action enquiry. Team of university critical friends / researchers.

SPHS (and local area) – Various meeting structures
- 1 School, many programmes…. Delivered at school
- Teacher-led literacy project
- MA school development (TLDW model)
- Leadership development (action enquiry)
- No accreditation
- Teachers as co-leaders (eventually) and 3 university people, JD leads research with Assistant Head.

Outcomes
Change in schools / Masters accreditation / Publication in network journal / Sharing and networking in group and through conferences / Change in schools / Strong professional network / Conference and published booklet to share knowledge, with contact details

What does SPHS and BBA TWS mean? Initials of schools.

Sorry, I feel confused….

How much say do teachers have in curriculum development?

How do you document change in schools?

What is MAS?

Does it have certification or not?
Towards an action plan – Portugal

University and several schools
HE / tutor and teacher to lead a group
ICT teachers
Monthly meetings – (9), 2 hours, twilight sessions (after school meeting) often in school
School based on rotation – one school hosts everyone in turn
Themes for sessions: guidance and action planning
Folder of evidence
Celebration event at the end of the teachers; professional associations; community reps
Newsletter (with photos) to encourage others to join

Will you limit number of teachers for the first cohort to keep it manageable? If so, how many?

How many? 1, 2, 3, 4

Do you know who this is yet? How will this session be identified?

Great idea!

What kind of rotation?

How will the teachers from different schools communicate (share ideas)?

I like the celebration and newsletter ideas. What guidance will teachers have in gathering the folder of evidence? Could they agree together what to include and what formal?

Will the project be based on teams and persons (more than ICT tasks which form professional perversion)?

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Towards an action plan – Spain

Headteacher Support
External person learning work from university – José
One to one discussion with teachers
Raise awareness of teacher leadership and make initial plans for change
5 school-based meetings a year – 2 hours
Online contact
Portfolio to be submitted for accreditation
Building up to Network Events

Will you have also tutors to support teachers in the schools?
Why one-to-one discussion? Maybe you could discuss it with the whole group?
Who is leading and delivering the programme?

How will others get to know about the work?

How many teachers / schools do you want to work with?

Could one of the schools host a Network event at the start to give the project status and help teachers feel they belong to something – and again at the end to share? Can colleagues in other countries help with this?

Do you need to talk to headteachers about the programme?

Is he / she going to be “excluded” from their colleagues? Too lonely maybe?

How many schools?
Activity 7: Proposals for funding

David presented a sheet which reminded us about the idea of seeing the project as having 3 layers and putting forward suggestions about ways to fund each layer.

We discussed the sheet and the question of local funding. George explained that he had been able to ask the University to fund our team meeting because David has given a public lecture on the day before the meeting and he and Amanda would lead a masters seminar on the day after. George also told us about sponsorship he has managed to secure from an Athens based commercial company and the advantage of collaborating with independent schools such as Athens / Psychico Colleges.

We looked at a guide sheet about the Multilateral Networks programme that was made available under the E.U. Lifelong Learning programme last year. To support the international networking we agreed that a Comenius bid would be sensible. Maria Flores believed she had some useful information which she will send to David. David will also pursue the idea of asking the British Council to fund a process that will lead to the Comenius bid.

Coffee and sunshine break
Activity 8: Re-energising

Paul led this activity which followed on from our discussions about funding. He asked us to work in pairs / threes to name a song with money in the title. We then shouted them out and he listed them on a flip chart. We even sang a few bars of some of them.

This activity was fun and helped to liven up our thinking.

Activity 9: Plans for international networking

Jo led this session in which we used the ‘envoys’ strategy to consider ideas about networking. There were 4 flip chart sheets around the room with the headings illustrated below:

We formed mixed nationality groups and visited each poster in rotation to add our ideas. Each group used a different coloured pen so we could see how the ideas were accumulating. We spent 10 minutes on each poster than moved on to the next. In the plenary session we discussed the highlights. The bullet points are listed below.
Conference for Headteachers and teachers

- Timing?
- Content? – teachers presenting their work
- Venue? – rotate round different countries
- First one in April / May 2010?
- Once a year?
- ITL meeting at same event at the meal
- Teacher and headteacher impact – project school culture
- Input from key speakers
- Depends on funding
- Banquets and social time
- Need careful and detailed planning
- Discuss with Gordana how to fund a first conference
- Gallery walk
- Presentations
- Papers written to evidence progress
- Discussion
- Workshops
- Different teachers from the material group attend each time to represent – bring back ideas
- Language – essential to speak English?
- Governors, LA / District / Ministry people to be invited and fund themselves
- Team members to be ‘Associates Tutors’

Staying in touch – website

- Section on leadership for learning? – Critical Friends…
- Email?
- Twitter?
- Blog / password protected
- Develop activities together
- Interactive tools (e.g. active collaboration),
- Password protected – upload of documents etc.
- Skype
- Old-fashioned visits
- Newsletters
- Bulletin
- Communication for feedback / on sessions planning
- Our team: monthly reports done by national team groups
- Teachers: Teacher Leadership Journal
- Each country send update for inclusion in the Bulletin – monthly – too frequent
Critical Friendship

- Individual support?
- Deployment of Cambridge team
- Support from David and other British team members
- Podcasts? (To capture what happens in visits)
- List of email contacts to allow critical friendships between countries by email
- Use of video of sessions
- Any team members
- Ask for help from people you think may help you
- Observing / participating in teacher group sessions
- Use technology and visits to keep momentum and links live
- ITL Anthem – “Money”
- Comparison between two countries
- Document and share by email
- Visitors give feedback to hosts
- Important that its regular, not a ‘firework’
- Sharing ‘top tips’
- Common format to provide support / feedback

Future Team Meetings

- Format? Activities?
- Update on group progress (National context)
- 2 day meeting is good – twice per year, once?
- Money? Time?
- Social programme! – and time to meet socially 2 ½ days?
- Location? – rotate if possible €!!
- Next steps – how we continue to develop as an international project
- Content: tight focus
- Croatia – November 2009 (?)
- Smaller team to write the bid
- Banquets (Sir) David to be knighted!
- Practical focus on how to lead groups: chance to interact with materials, ask QS etc, look at programme structure in detail
Activity 10: The next team meeting

Val Hill led this session which focused on where to hold our next team meeting. She asked us to discuss in small groups two questions:

Where will the meeting be held?
What would be on the agenda?

Location of the next team meeting

We considered the idea of holding the next meeting during or adjacent to the CARN conference in Athens (30th Oct-1st Nov). This would have the advantage that some of us would be there anyway and costs would be low. However, we decided against this because not everyone could be there, we would need to concentrate on the CARN conference and it may be a bit too early.

Another suggestion was to meet in Zagreb in November or the Spring. The Croatian team would explore this and it would depend on funding being available.

Maria Flores said that Portugal would be possible in the future and Jose Penalva said that Spain would also be possible in the future.

It was also suggested that Cambridge is attractive because it is cheap to fly there. Similarly, it was suggested that any major hub city might be shape to get to.

Content of meeting

• Real data from schools / teams
• Detailed project proposal ready to submit for funding
• Model workshop strategies that we would use with teachers
• Share tips
• Critical friend inputs on national programmes
• Reports on previous activities
• How to get teachers to think and act
• Summary of experience of process and draw on stories from journal
• More discussion of research side of project
• Sharing of resources
• Feedback / overview from teams
• Update on networking
• Dissemination of papers
• Funding update – draft ESRC bid
• Evaluating the process
Activity 11: The research dimension

This was a brief session in which David presented an outline proposal for a discrete but linked research project funded by the ESRC in the UK.

![Image of research proposal]

We discussed this briefly and David was given encouragement to put this idea into operation as soon as possible.
**Activity 12: Publications policy**

Another brief discussion with a sheet from David. It was agreed that:

- Any member of the team could initiate a conference paper, a journal article or a book. They may wish to collaborate with any other team members on such publications.

- Any publication arising from involvement to this project should carry a standard statement which acknowledges the project – David will send round a draft of this statement for consideration.

- There will be at least one whole project book produced shortly after the conclusion of the project, edited by David Frost with contributory chapters from team members or combinations of team members. We may want to have this translated into other languages.

We hope that there will be many books and articles in many languages.

**Activity 13: Review of the conference**

Paul Barnett led this final session which included both action planning and an opportunity to reflect on the 2 days of discussion and evaluate our experience.

First, national teams were invited to use a sheet to record short, medium and long term action.

Then, for the review, Paul provided two headings ‘What went well…’ and ‘Even better if….’. These were written at the top of empty flip chart sheets. We were invited to write on post-it notes and stick them on the appropriate flip chart sheet.

**Some general action points**

Form a small bid writing team for the Comenius bid  
Invite team members to visit the UK to observe TLDW programme  
Develop the TL website  
Consider an electronic Bulletin  
Begin to plan for the first whole project conference

Second, the review. Everybody wrote on post-it notes and stuck them on the flip charts. Paul read out some of them. See overleaf.
What went well….

Sophisticated understanding of the concept of teacher leadership

Amount of progress made was impressive

Feeling of friendship; warmth of welcome; wonderful venue; focus / concentration

A great opportunity to learn from one another

Fantastic venue and food

Unanimity of understanding and intentions

Things are getting clearer and clearer; great organisation; the flow of energy

Well organised content, issues and succession of issues; positive predisposition and good mood

Pace of the conference; discussions; concrete discussions; action plans

Timetable; atmosphere / food; methodology of sessions; people in tune with project

The welcome and hospitality

Food; hotel; collaborative atmosphere; sense of purpose; organisation; weather

Concepts understanding; the whole process

Great venue and excellent. Great organisation (we need to thank George for that!)

Fantastically organised – thank you George!

The support and collegiality in the team

Understanding the goals of the program; it is amazing how well we got on well with each other in this meeting

Wonderful colleagues on this project! It is always an important factor in collaborations

It was a very productive, yet relaxed weekend. I feel a strong sense of commitment to a common goal from everyone. This project is bound to succeed.
Even better if…..

- Time to see some of the city – we came so far and never saw it!
- A little more social time to see a little of sights
- There were more consensus within my national team
- The collaboration and friendly atmosphere; even better if we had money and if we had start on our programme
- Printing facilities; all project members present for whole time
- The last 2-3 paper sheets were too much!! We could close with a discussion concerning the issues we had to write on the paper
- I would have liked to spend more time with each other – we would definitely have a lot to say
- If we had two banquets; I can’t think of anything that should be better – organisation, structure of the meeting all impeccable!
- Both days were very productive and creative however the first day had more interesting themes.

Goodbye

Finally, we went out on to the terrace to have a group photograph although some team members had already left to catch an early train.
After the conference

Some team members had to leave on the Sunday afternoon immediately after the close of the meeting. Val, Jo and Paul had to be back in school on Monday morning for example.

In the late afternoon, the Croatian team and Maria visited Ancient Corinth. On the Monday morning David and Amanda made a similar trip to see the Archealogical Museum.

Monday afternoon – seminar at the University

David and Amanda went to the University again on the Monday afternoon to prepare for the seminar on the masters programme. Before the seminar David had a meeting with the head of department – Prof Koulaidi – about other opportunities for collaboration between the University of Cambridge and the University of Pelopennese.

The seminar focused on ‘Professional Learning’.

A final act of kindness: George took Amanda and David to the airport so they could catch a plane back to the UK early Tuesday morning.