Leading & Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Patron: *Emeritus Professor Frank Crowther AM, The University of Southern Queensland*

Leading & Managing

Volume 29   Number 1   Autumn/Winter   2023

CONTENTS

Editorial

An Exploration of Teachers Leading in Many Ways Across Varying School Contexts

Interest in teachers as leaders, teachers leading, and teacher leadership has, for several decades, attracted prolific publication in varying forms of labelling and role description, particularly from the viewpoint of Western ideology. At a time when the teaching profession is under scrutiny like no other, and the respect for leadership in the profession is less than desirable, the voices and influence of teachers who step up in a myriad of ways need to be heard, recognised, and supported amidst the incessant noise of enhancing school success, improving student achievement, and labelling the roles of teachers who lead. This special issue called for current research from the field of teacher leadership, middle leadership, and other such versions that have examined new theory and knowledge in support of broadening the clarity of meaning and appreciation for teachers who are leading in varying contexts of leadership in schools.

The ongoing academic wrangling over what constitutes teacher leadership might, for some, be deemed to have had its day in the realm of publications: one might utter, "how many more versions of teacher leadership can be coined?" As Lovett suggests in the first article of this special edition, we have "wrestled with the concept of teacher leadership" (p. 1) for decades. However, with the keen response to this call for contribution to a special issue of the journal, exploring ways in which teachers lead across varying school contexts from different parts of the world, it is apparent there is still enthusiasm for untangling the interpretations and applications of the concept of teacher leadership. An interesting version of this conundrum is the recent release of a publication about teacher leadership in international contexts (Webber, 2023), an edited research-based text contributed to by academics from 10 different countries. If there is one message from this publication, it is about the importance of acknowledging the context in which each of the versions of teacher leadership is presented. Beyond the geographical context of the usual Western ideology, this text includes the nuances of social, cultural, and economic perspectives in the uniqueness of varying historical and political settings. In appreciation for the authors' contributions in this special issue, we are assured of the importance of teachers who step up: those who lead in many ways across varying school contexts.

The first article by Lovett provides a useful starting point as an historical account over the last three decades of influential writers about teacher leadership – Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), York-Barr and Duke (2004), Wenner and Campbell (2017) and Hunzicker (2022). She terms these four as "anchor points" for her literature review and succinctly summarises the key findings of each in order to reach a conclusion. According to Lovett, the significant message emerging from her review of the literature is that "[c]ontinued reference to leadership according to position has served to block out the emergence of a non-positional conception of leadership" (p. 7). Subsequently, she proposes a definitional difference between "leader" and "leadership". It seems that the initial "awakening" metaphor used by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) and followed in their subsequent two editions is still at the core of realising what constitutes teacher

leadership searching for something akin to what Hunzicker (2022) has provided as a practical tool for teachers' self-assessment of their teacher leadership work. Following the sentiment that educational leadership comprises more than senior and middle leaders in positional appointment, De Nobile sets the case for growth and succession of leadership in schools in three levels: specifically giving credence to the rise of first level leadership. Of interest in the literature review, and in the development of the conceptual framework of what comprises First Level Leadership is De Nobile's selection from non-education professions/industries in gaining a clearer scene of how leadership growth and recognition is nurtured and accepted. He is adamant that the First Level Leadership recognition will enable emergent leaders to have clear pathways to formal leadership roles, and opportunities for relevant professional development that support leadership growth and promotion.

The next two articles contributed by authors from two different continents are reminders of the important role of principals in support of teacher leadership. Using a common metaphor like a well-oiled machine, all parts need to operate with independent clarity and purpose, whilst simultaneously aligned to the overall functioning of the machine. Bixler and Ceballos have searched the literature and presented five principal actions and practical examples in support of the growth and development of teachers as leaders adding value to a culture of leadership for enhanced school success. This is followed by a powerful narrative in the McGlade article of a principal's account in recognition of those teachers who rose to the opportunity of leadership during a whole school improvement process. He claims that the recorded success of the school's achievements was due to the leadership of the principal in concert with the teacher leaders. It was the principal's confidence in supporting teacher leadership capacity building that resulted in a "symbiotic relationship …[of] … two powerful forces, each occupying a space quite distinct, yet equally important" (p. 41) for the culture of mutual leadership.

Multiple claims about teachers being the key to enhancing student achievement and whole of school success have emerged in many ways. Yet, the conundrum of how to recognise teachers as leaders continues, and so it is probably not surprising that one of the dominating versions is in the emergence of middle leadership and the roles of middle leaders. Grootenboer et al. pose that middle leaders are key to ongoing school development, but how teachers move toward middle leader positions varies. The authors suggest three different ways as "accidental", "aspirational", and "anointed" with the overall key appearing to be that it is all part of a teacher's professional trajectory of development and learning. Maybe there is some suggestion that teachers need to be in the right place at the right time, step up to opportunities, and/or be seen by senior leadership in their quest for professional growth as leaders. Following is an article by O'Neill that shares the way in which middle leaders are being supported to build capacity in their respective roles in one particular school. The author's development of Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors has been purposefully designed to meet the national standards (AITSL, 2011, 2014) and yet be of specific relevance for implementation with those teachers who are specifically positioned in middle leader roles. Further to the notion of teachers as leaders in varying contexts is a viewpoint by Taylor and Thompson in their exploration of non-mainstream school settings, often referred to as "flexi" schools. They emphasise the importance of ensuring a continuity of leadership for students of vast and varying needs in these schools and recommend actions that might be taken at

school and system levels to support teachers as middle leaders in flexi schools for enhanced teaching and learning environments.

It might not be inexcusable to accept that teacher leadership and teachers as leaders emerge "on the job" in varying contexts. However, the Ungarean et al. article calls to attention a deliberate focus on preparing teacher leaders to become future school leaders by completing a targeted internship task in postgraduate studies. In this case, teachers as students during a Masters program focus on the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards pertinent to leadership in P-12 schools in Florida. In conclusion, the authors pose that teacher leaders gain experience in liaising with their principal and university professors, leading the implementation of professional development initiatives to support others, supporting safety and diversity initiatives, and communicating effectively. Finally, in the quest for what is teacher leadership, who are the teacher leaders, and how did they get there, is the voice of those who have in this Webber article been identified by their peers, school and district administrators, and former students. Four stories reveal the richness of leading by teachers who individually recognise their own strengths and aspirations for professional development and learning, and advocate for enhanced improvement, but are reluctant to describe themselves as leaders or be appointed as formal school leaders.

Overall, this collection of articles presents a varied range of perspectives both confirming and adding value to the notion of teacher leadership. Further, given the contribution by many authors in many contexts, dare we neglect the importance of teachers leading in many ways across varying school contexts.

References

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2011). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.* AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2014). *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles*. AITSL.

Hunzicker, J. (2022). Is it teacher leadership? Validation of the five features of teacher leadership framework and self-determination guide. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 11*(1), 5-28.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (1996). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Leadership development for teachers.* Corwin Press.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2009). *Awakening the sleeping giant. Helping teachers develop as leaders* (3rd ed.). Corwin.

Webber, C. F. (Ed.). (2003). *Teacher leadership in international contexts*, Volume 25 in Studies in Educational Leadership. Springer. ISBN: 978-3-031-25763-6

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of

Associate Professor Joan M. Conway
School of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba, Queensland

The Continuing Call to Awaken the Sleeping Giant: A Teacher Leadership Progress Report

SUSAN LOVETT

Faculty of Education, University of Canterbury

Email: susan.lovett@canterbury.ac.nz

ABSTRACT: Katzenmeyer and Moller's (1996) metaphor likening teacher leaders to sleeping giants in need of awakening has received frequent citation over the years. Its call for action remains. This article acknowledges two previous substantive literature reviews of scholarly work to assess progress in understanding covering the years 2004–2018. It then proceeds to examine a recent research-informed framework developed by Hunzicker (2022) in the United States of America. Hunzicker's framework is underpinned by five features to reflect the purpose of teacher leadership activity, where it occurs and how it is undertaken. This framework with its constituent features is intended as a practical self-assessment tool to be used by teachers to realise what counts as leadership work by them. The article concludes by offering suggestions to break the current impasse on what constitutes teacher leadership and the difficulty reconciling what counts as formal and informal leadership. Here I suggest the need to make a clear distinction between "leader" and "leadership". I propose limiting the term "leader" to a person who has a named leadership position, role and responsibility recognised with a title. I prefer delimiting the term "leadership" to signify collective actions and practices to emphasise the work being done with, by and for others.

Introduction

This article uses as anchor points selected publications by researchers who have wrestled with the concept of teacher leadership over the last three decades in order to determine progress made in answering the call initially made by Katzenmeyer and Moller to awaken this "sleeping giant". Four sections are devoted to the work of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), York-Barr and Duke (2004), Wenner and Campbell (2017) and Hunzicker (2022). The final section of the article provides insights into what still needs attention, what is standing in the way, and what additional action needs to be taken and why.

Section 1: Katzenmeyer and Moller's Work

Katzenmeyer and Moller's call to awaken the sleeping giant of teacher leadership provides the impetus for this article and is why their work is the first anchor point to be discussed. That these authors have produced three editions using the same title is a call for others, including me, to notice, ponder and act. Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2009) thinking about teacher leadership is based on 20 years working with teacher leaders to advance both the scholarship and practice of teacher leadership. Their metaphor of a giant in need of awakening is still apt today, evidence of which is the frequency of citation by others writing and researching about teacher leadership. Four examples are Crowther et al. (2002), Fairman and Mackenzie (2012), Conway and Andrews (2016), and Hunzicker (2022).

From Katzenmeyer and Moller's corpus of research, the key messages I take are found in their third edition, in 2009. The importance of the teacher leader is made abundantly clear throughout their work. They argue compellingly that teacher leaders are "the key to sustaining meaningful change in schools" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. vii). This is why much of their scholarly work is a quest to identify the knowledge and skills of outstanding teacher leaders themselves. Coupled with this is the notion that teacher leaders do not develop leadership skills by their own efforts alone. Actions are also required by schools to support and encourage the input of teachers as leaders. However, the responsibility for action goes further than the local school. They contend that teacher leadership warrants being an intentional component of initial teacher education programs as well as career-long efforts by school districts and regions.

Katzenmeyer and Moller pose four challenges to advance teacher leadership in their third edition. The first of these challenges is an acknowledgement that teachers make choices to lead or not. Therefore, finding out what factors help and hinder those decisions necessitates taking a closer look at what it is schools are able to do to foster an interest in leadership work by teachers. A second challenge concerns the relationship between the principal and teacher. Here Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009, p. 2) argue, "there cannot be significant progress within an educational system in which hierarchical control separates managers [school principals] from workers [teachers]". If opportunities for leadership are restricted only to those given formal titles and positions, then this suggests one cannot lead without a formal leader's role. This challenge needs to be overcome for leadership to appeal to and be seen by teachers as an essential activity. A third challenge relates to the work teachers do alongside their peers to deepen understandings of practice. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) suggest teachers develop teacher leadership skills when they have opportunities to converse with colleagues about practice concerns and support one another to make improvements. This kind of action, they maintain, can awaken these sleeping giants (potential teacher leaders) to realise their colleagues are a source of expertise to which they can also contribute. The remaining challenge concerns how to facilitate professional learning for oneself and others by seeing pedagogical learning as the pathway opening up opportunities for the reciprocal sharing of expertise, learning with and from each other.

That teachers may not necessarily be thinking about leadership work as their careers' progress quite likely affects the growth of the pool of future positional leaders. Use of the terminology "leadership as a formal role" may well be a reason why some teachers are not attracted to those opportunities. This conception of what constitutes leadership suggests there is

only one way leadership can be practiced and it is within a designated formal role. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) indicate teachers may be hesitant "to be called leaders even when they are active in leadership activities" (p. 5) simply because they do not have a leadership role which is recognised with a title. An alternative conception of leadership beyond positional roles can embrace and give value to sporadic and early examples of leadership by teachers. The profession could help teachers see leadership as interactions between colleagues about practice in the first instance because this is where leadership as influence begins, close to practice.

Influence reaching out beyond oneself is a feature commonly associated with leadership. Teachers who share insights and questions of practice with each other demonstrate a professional maturity which intersects with and is manifest through leadership actions. Their sharing of influence can benefit others as well as provide satisfactions at a personal level, when learning is a mutual activity made in the interests of students and their learning. Leadership work should not be considered a unilateral activity motivated solely by individual career advancement and recognition. Instead, when leadership is viewed as collective activity, contributions by all teaching professionals regardless of their status are recognised. This inclusive conception of leadership as work or activity undertaken co-operatively also draws in teachers who may be leading without necessarily acknowledging that work as leadership. This is an important point. It demonstrates the simultaneous connection of teaching, learning, and leading as intertwined professional actions rather than separate entities. It is recognition that teachers can lead and learn at the same time. In other words, such activities are not mutually exclusive. They do not require teachers to leave the classroom behind to become a positional leader. Such a defined role is not necessary for involvement in leadership activity.

In summary, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) favour a career-long continuum of development for teacher leaders. This begins within initial teacher education programs. Then, in the early years of teaching, self-assessment using a variety of tools, including standards frameworks, can provide indicators and strategies for planning next steps in leadership development and growth as teachers. Continuous learning and support is required throughout one's career. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) say "leadership relies on building relationships and developing shared capacity to reach desired goals…. Denying teacher leaders opportunities to learn leadership skills places their ability to lead at risk" (p. 61).

Section 2: York-Barr and Duke (2004)

The second anchor point by York-Barr and Duke (2004) for this article has been included because it presents findings from two decades of scholarly work on teacher leadership. Like the previous anchor article, it too appears in most reference lists of publications about teacher leadership.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) claim some momentum in the concept and practice of teacher leadership across 20 years, albeit, with the call for more work to operationalise it and provide evidence of its impact. Interrogating the research design from available studies documenting teacher leadership, they suggest the largely qualitative and small-scale nature of the published empirical research is a limitation for the field of teacher leadership. The studies reviewed

nevertheless provide plenty of information about "dimensions of teacher leadership practice, teacher leader characteristics and conditions that promote and challenge teacher leadership" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255). They acknowledge "the concept of teacher leadership has become increasingly embedded in the language and practice of educational improvement" (p. 255). Schools do benefit from teacher leadership.

How to capture the diversity of teacher leadership is a challenge York-Barr and Duke faced in their review. Leadership by teachers included teachers with full-time formal leadership responsibilities and those who were full-time teachers with additional leadership responsibilities. There were also three domains of leadership work: organisational, professional development, and instructional.

The need for teacher leadership in schools was acknowledged. Uncertainty about the scope of teacher leadership work and who constitutes a teacher leader remained. York-Barr and Duke (2004) referred to teacher leadership as a unique form of leadership "not necessarily vested in a formal hierarchy or role description" (p. 263) and noted its similarities with other leadership theories (shared, distributed, participative, organisational, and parallel). This similarity they suggested hid its distinctive features. The notion that a person could teach and lead at the same time also made it harder to specify what leadership constituted. What was resonating through the studies reviewed was that success in the classroom is a forerunner to gaining the respect and trust of colleagues furthering Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001) criteria for teacher leadership readiness (competence, credibility, and approachability).

The review also showed that the bulk of teacher leadership literature resides in naming the conditions which cultivate and support teacher leadership. Here, categories related to school culture and context, roles and relationships, and structures. The call for intentional teacher leadership preparation also featured. Examples of planned programs revealed the work possible by school and university partnerships, districts and schools.

In summary, the contribution made by York-Barr and Duke's review is a further reminder of the areas requiring further clarification and agreement. That teacher leadership can be formal/positional and informal/non-positional prevents a clear distinction. This conflation fails to make the difference between position and leadership practice clear.

Section 3: Wenner and Campbell (2017)

The third anchor point for this article has been chosen because it follows on from the York-Barr and Duke review critiquing over a decade of publications on teacher leadership since 2004. This review explores meanings given to the term "teacher leadership", the preparation of teacher leaders, their impact as well as knowledge about what helps and hinders their work.

Their review highlights four matters. As per the other authors featured in this article, a lack of clarity about what counts as teacher leadership work persists. A second finding suggests teacher leadership research often lacks a theoretical base. Then the importance of principals, school structures and norms reinforces the earlier York-Barr and Duke review. The remaining finding notes the absence of social justice and equity issues in teacher leadership research. This

signals an agenda for teachers as leaders, who because of their closeness to classrooms, are deemed as the people best placed to attend to all student needs in classrooms.

Wenner and Campbell (2017) note little change in the scope and methodologies of research on teacher leadership from 2004 to 2013. They attribute this lack of progress to the continuing search for what counts as teacher leadership and explain:

> If researchers are not explicit in articulating how they are defining teacher leadership or the specific roles teacher leaders in their research do or do not take on, it seems unlikely that consistent evidence can be collected to ground knowledge claims about teacher leadership or that connections will be made between the current climate or organization of schools and teacher leadership. (p. 158)

To further the impact of teacher leadership research, Wenner and Campbell (2017) urge action on three agendas. One is for teacher leadership researchers to focus on the components and outcomes of teacher leadership programs and "discuss best practices related to issues of equity and diversity" (p. 159). A second is to undertake further subject-based (disciplinary) studies of teacher leadership and a third for researchers using distributed leadership theory to identify central features of that theory to avoid multiple interpretations.

In summary, Wenner and Campbell's (2017) review shows the call for teacher leadership is still pertinent whilst struggling to determine what it is and the conditions that support or inhibit it. They suggest future research agendas could usefully address the school level enactment of teacher leadership, particularly the effectiveness of models claimed to improve teacher practice and student learning, how teacher leaders can shape equity and diversity matters and how to encourage more teacher leaders from underrepresented groups.

Section 4: Hunzicker (2022)

A recent publication by Hunzicker (2022) is the fourth to be discussed. Its selection for inclusion is because it explores issues of teacher leadership identity, preparation, and development which are common threads across the three studies previously discussed as anchor points for this article. Like Katzenmeyer and Moller, Hunzicker's contribution to the field is a further practical tool enabling teachers to self-assess whether their work constitutes teacher leadership. This tool furthers the concept of teacher leadership with five clearly articulated features around which questionnaire items are framed.

The five features of Hunzicker's teacher leadership framework are about leadership work needing to be student-centred, action-oriented, beyond one classroom, having a positive influence, and collaborative. These features resonate with the moral purpose of teaching and the work of teachers together. In Hunzicker's framework, each of these core features is accompanied by questions requiring a yes/no or what must be modified to achieve a confident yes to yield the self-assessment results enabling respondents to make decisions on what counts as teacher leadership. Interestingly, this tool places the responsibility of determining what counts as teacher leadership on teachers themselves. In doing so, it signals the importance of professional agency in educational leadership. The article is primarily a report on the validation of this framework by 25 teachers who gave it a favourable review. Hunzicker (2022) sums up their reactions to the tool

as helping them to self-determine "to whom or what they are committed (relatedness), what they know and can do (competence), and when and how to act (autonomy)" (p. 21).

In summary, the five features underpinning Hunzicker's self-assessment tool are reflective of key aspects from the selected work I have discussed on teacher leadership. They highlight that teacher leadership work is for the improvement of student learning and occurs close to classrooms. It is leadership which emanates from collegial interactions around matters of mutual interest for students. It is also work which occurs beyond one's own classroom reinforcing teacher leadership as influence moving to and from colleagues rather than being determined by those with title, position, and status.

Conclusion

The researchers cited in this article have all been challenged to define teacher leadership. The call to awaken this sleeping giant resounds repeatedly, despite the passage of time. Whilst work to support quality teaching has highlighted the value of professional learning communities for the sharing of practice amongst colleagues, the prevailing view of positional leadership is still given prominence. With this mindset, leadership lies only in individuals with formal roles. The title Teacher Leader marks a separation of those individuals from their teaching colleagues. This view reinforces a well-trodden pathway to career advancement in which rewards are associated with defined positions in a hierarchy with status, recognition, and prospects of further remuneration. Such a trajectory is problematic because the profession has a limited number of positions for formal leaders. Since classroom teachers constitute the bulk of the profession and opportunities to become formal leaders are limited, this sharpens the reality that many teachers will never seek nor ever have a career path beyond the classroom. Given this truth, I propose an alternative conception in which teachers deepen their teaching expertise and begin leading whilst teaching from day one. Rather than teachers seeing advancement in the profession as a choice to distance themselves from the classroom to become a positional leader, they can retain their links to teaching and lead at the same time, albeit as informal opportunities arise. This then connects and synchronises the actions of teaching, learning, and leading. It is recognition too that teachers should be conscious that they are leading in the flow of everyday activity and this is important if the profession is to grow the next generation of school leaders of whatever kind: those appointed to formal positions or those leading without a formal role.

My conclusion emphasises the notion that the teaching profession needs to value two kinds of leadership – formal/positional and informal/non-positional. I suggest a way to break the current impasse is to make a clear distinction between the terms: "leader" and "leadership", the former is person-centred, the latter is trans-action-centred (Simpson, 2016). I propose limiting the term "leader" to a person who has a named leadership position, role, and responsibility recognised with a title. I prefer delimiting the term "leadership" to signify collective actions and practices to emphasise the work being done with, by, and for others. When teachers engage in shared conversations with colleagues in the flow of daily practice, their reciprocal dialogue creates the impetus for actions which can be undertaken together. This is an ideal time to develop leadership capacity broadly throughout a school and indeed throughout the profession at large.

Wenner and Campbell's (2017) concern that research on teacher leadership lacks a theoretical base ignores the considerable work done to understand leadership as a practice, activity, or collective work not reliant on positional roles. Here the work of Raelin (2016), Simpson (2016), MacBeath and Dempster (2009), and MacBeath et al. (2018) seems to have gone unnoticed. Agency is a key feature underpinning the work of these authors. MacBeath et al. (2018) suggest:

> … role and status say little about agency which lies at the very heart, not only of teacher professionalism, but also of young people's engagement with learning, while "activity" and "practice" take us closer to the essence of leadership and to the essential purpose of education. (p. 87)

Continued reference to leadership according to position has served to block out the emergence of a non-positional conception of leadership. For MacBeath et al. (2018), "leadership is about people in everyday settings, whether or not holding positions of power, working together on common goals" (p. 88). When leadership is understood in terms of activity or practice, the connections blur between teaching, learning, and leading thereby avoiding the need to decide whether to move in increasing distances from classroom teaching to advance in the profession.

I argue that education systems and schools, when appointing teachers to the position of leader, must also take responsibility for developing their appointees' understanding of leadership as a collaborative activity manifest when colleagues work together as equals. The way forward lies in implementing an action-oriented conception of leadership in every school but also in initial teacher education programs to sow the seed that every teacher can lead.

References

Conway, J. M., & Andrews, D. (2016). A school wide approach to leading pedagogical enhancement: An Australian perspective. *Journal of Educational Change, 17*, 115-139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-015-9258-0

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S. S., Ferguson, M., & Hann, L. (2002). *Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*. Corwin Press.

Fairman, J. C., & Mackenzie, S. V. (2012). Spheres of teacher leadership action in learning. *Professional Development in Education, 38*(2), 229-246. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657865

Hunzicker, J. (2022). Is it teacher leadership? Validation of the five features of teacher leadership framework and self-determination guide. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 11*(1), 5-28.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (1996). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Leadership development for teachers.* Corwin Press.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant. Helping teachers develop as leaders* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2009). *Awakening the sleeping giant. Helping teachers develop as leaders* (3rd ed.). Corwin.

MacBeath, J., & Dempster, N. (Eds.). (2009). *Connecting leadership and learning: Principles for practice.* Routledge.

MacBeath, J., Dempster, N., Frost, D., Johnson, G., & Swaffield, S. (2018). *Strengthening the connections between leadership and learning. Challenges to policy, school and classroom practice*. Routledge.

Raelin, J. A. (Ed.). (2016). *Leadership-as-practice. Theory and application*. Routledge.

Simpson, B. (2016). Where's the agency in leadership-as-practice? In J. A. Raelin (Ed.), *Leadership-as-practice. Theory and application* (pp. 159-177). Routledge.

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316.

Neither Senior, nor Middle, but Leading Just the Same: The Case for First Level Leadership

JOHN DE NOBILE
School of Education, Macquarie University

Email: john.denobile@mq.edu.au

ABSTRACT: *In recent years a considerable scholarship has developed in relation to non-principal school leadership. This can be useful to inform policies and practices ranging from professional development for aspirant leaders to succession planning, recruitment, and job design. However, educational leadership is not just about senior and middle leaders. Other leaders exist in all educational contexts who may be regarded as neither senior nor middle level, but who lead all the same. This article makes the case for first level leadership in schools. At present such leadership is barely visible in educational policy and research. Using evidence from literature in education and other contexts, as well as insight from recent research, the case is made for first level leadership comprising emergent leaders and junior leaders who have formal responsibilities but a smaller sphere of influence than middle leaders. The article concludes with implications for theory and practice.*

Introduction

Research and theory building in educational leadership have developed at a steady pace over recent decades. This work focused initially on principals and then more recently on middle leaders (De Nobile, 2021; Wattam, 2021). Subsequently, there has been a strong scholarship emerging in relation to non-principal school leadership that can be useful to inform policies and practices relating to professional development, job design and role descriptions, recruitment, and succession planning. A perusal of the literature on educational leadership in schools might indicate to those on the outside looking in that leadership in schools comprises senior leaders (including principals, deputies, and others) and middle leaders (mainly subject and cohort leaders). Someone looking at educational governance from outside might indeed ask: What about leaders who exist between teachers at the chalkface and middle management?

There is good reason for this. The scholarship relating to leadership and management in the corporate and other sectors suggests at least three broad levels: first line, middle, and senior (Aflaki & Lindh, 2021; Griffin, 2014; Hales, 2006; Samson & Daft, 2005; Stromberg et al., 2019). So, are schools different?

My own research and the evidence available in the school sector suggest that schools are not different (De Nobile et al., 2020). Educational leadership is not just about senior and middle leaders. Other leaders exist in all educational contexts that may be regarded as neither senior nor middle level, but who lead all the same.

This article makes the case for first level leadership, proposing two forms: emergent leaders and junior leaders. At present such leadership is barely visible in theory and research, especially in the context of schools and it certainly does not have a name, so I am giving it one. The case for each type of first level leadership (FLL) is made initially from the perspective of the literature outside of education to help frame the concepts, as well as any educational literature that does exist, and secondly from evidence gained from my recent research in educational leadership.

Why is it important to put these ideas forward at this time? It is important to explore the idea of first level leadership because these leaders do operate in schools, despite little mention. In addition, theorising FLL provides a frame for subsequent research that can provide information about who these people are, how schools can identify and nurture them so that they may develop capacities to become effective middle and senior leaders, inform school systems what their development needs are, and inform more formal recognition and job design architectures to support accreditation, remuneration, and sustainable leadership recruitment.

First Level Leaders in Literature and Research

Literature searches for this article made use of the educational research databases ERIC/ProQuest and A+/Informit as well as Google Scholar. Key search terms included "junior leadership", "junior leaders", "emergent leadership", "emergent leaders", "front line leader*", "line manag*" and "first level leader*". The results included scholarly books, research and professional practice articles, and policy documents from educational jurisdictions in Australia and worldwide.

Most academic books on leadership and management describe three broad levels of leadership in organisations: senior or top, middle level, and line, first-line or front-line managers. The latter are said to enter the leadership echelon from the ranks of non-promoted employees (Davidson et al., 2009; Griffin, 2014). These first level leaders are usually experiencing their first formal promotion within the organisation (Kinnie et al., 2005; Townsend et al., 2012) and work more closely with employees than middle or senior leaders do (Cole, 2019; Robbins et al., 2009).

In general terms, these first level leaders are typically responsible for the work performed by the people they are assigned to oversee and key tasks include supervising work quality, coordinating activities, and assisting staff with skill development and building capability (Griffin, 2014; Hales, 2006; Samson & Daft, 2005). Typical formal position names may include supervisor, coordinator, section manager, and team leader (Davidson et al., 2009; Griffin, 2014; Samson & Daft, 2005). Looking at specific occupational contexts was helpful in confirming and elaborating on these initial findings. As the contexts are similar to education in that they are "helping professions" (The New England Journal of Medicine, 1955), literature relating to nursing and aged care were examined.

In their study of nurses in Australian hospitals, Townsend et al. (2012) described senior nurses who had a line managerial role. These individuals supervised and organised the work of junior nurses. The more recent role of ward manager appears to have adopted these responsibilities in addition to providing ward level training to nursing staff in their unit and managing resources and budgets. A Swedish study of head nurses found coordinating care of patients and quality of care to be key responsibilities of these first level leaders (Hybinette et al., 2021). Other studies have revealed similar responsibilities for FLL in nursing, as well as supporting staff (Duffield & Franks, 2001; Ericsson & Augustinsson, 2015; Gunawan et al., 2020; Skytt et al., 2008).

In the related field of aged care, Stromberg et al. (2019) noted similar responsibilities of first line managers in addition to responsibility for services and providing a healthy work environment. While studying similar facilities, Dahlkvist and associates (2021) described first line managers in those organisations as leaders and managers of small teams. Interview data revealed these leaders were engaged in setting expectations around key care activities as well as the behavioural expectations held by the wider organisation. They were also engaged in supporting and encouraging staff in relation to work challenges. This facilitated the other role they played, guiding staff to try new methods to address resident needs (Dahlkvist et al., 2021).

Across nursing and aged care, FLL existed alongside middle and senior leadership echelons (Eriksson & Augustinsson, 2015; Gunawan et al., 2020; Stromberg et al., 2019; Townsend et al., 2012). This can occasionally create a "grey area" of overlap and ambiguity in relation to responsibilities or put plainly, who is responsible for what (Eriksson & Augustinsson, 2015; Figueroa et al., 2019).

In relation to schools, reports from national bodies have not recognised FLL. The recently released report on the Australian teacher workforce (Australian Teacher Workforce Data, 2021) devoted a 42-page chapter to leadership positions, but only referred to principals and deputies, other leaders and teachers with leadership responsibilities. They did, however, distinguish the latter group from middle leaders (defined only as heads of department) elsewhere in the report. Could they be referring to FLL?

An extensive search of reports from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) revealed no references to emergent or junior forms of FLL. However, there is recognition that potential school leaders should be identified and nurtured early, including the provision of opportunities to lead (AITSL, 2018) and experience leadership at different levels (AITSL, 2015). First level leadership can provide that opportunity.

Research literature provides more tangible evidence of the existence of FLL in schools. Ridden and De Nobile (2012) described junior leaders, citing assistant coordinators and senior teachers as examples. Hairon et al. (2015) described professional learning team facilitators as informal leaders working under the aegis of formal middle managers. Grootenboer (2018) explained how middle leaders may delegate some leadership responsibilities to teacher colleagues. Other evidence involves teacher leaders. Gurr (2015) differentiated between senior, middle, and teacher leaders, explaining that middle and senior leaders are not the only teachers who have leadership roles. More recently, Lipscombe et al. (2023) differentiated between middle leaders and teacher leaders stating the former are in formal positions while the latter lead

informally through influence. These last two findings point, at least theoretically, to the possibility of emergent and junior leadership.

In addition to previous literature, I recently led a team of researchers in an investigation funded by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) that aimed to study leadership career pathways for teachers and the relevance of teaching and principal standards (De Nobile et al., 2020). More than 80 job descriptions and leadership frameworks from government and non-government schools across Australia were examined for role expectations and required capabilities. This resulted in schemas of roles and capabilities for senior and middle leaders. In the process, some evidence of emergent leadership (EmL) and junior leadership (JrL) was uncovered. This is shared in the following sections.

Emergent Leadership

Emergent leadership has been identified by Watson and Scribner (2007) as existing "independently of formal leadership structures and positions" (p. 465). It has its basis in the notion of "leadership emergence" which has been investigated in the fields of group, social, and managerial psychology. Leadership emergence is reported to occur when groups accept or recognise a member with no formal position of authority to be a leader (Emery et al., 2011; Stein, 1975) or perceive their influence or authority (Hanna et al., 2021). Emergent leadership has been defined as the relational and social influence of individuals that supplements or substitutes for formal leadership (Cox et al., 2022). Emergent leaders are those individuals who do not hold a formal position of authority, but who influence others (Badura et al., 2022) and are recognised by their colleagues as leaders (Barker, 2003; Bissessar, 2018). Emergent leaders may initially operate as informal leaders, but may also be promoted to formal positions of authority (Badura et al., 2022). Indeed, educational scholars have described emergent leaders as those who can be identified as, or show potential to be, a future middle or senior leader (Barker, 2003; Henning & McIver, 2008; Reding et al., 2016). This could include teachers who have demonstrated expertise in a given area (Wattam, 2021).

Historically the concept appears to predate the related notion of distributed leadership (Beck, 1981; Bolden, 2011). Although they have been discoursed together under the umbrella of shared forms of leadership in recent scholarship (Bolden, 2011; Cox et al., 2022; Watson & Scribner, 2007), they are distinct concepts (Zhu et al., 2018). In addition, unlike junior leadership, emergent leadership does have a presence in the educational literature. Therefore, the descriptions of emergent leader behaviours in the following section encompass this work.

Although EmL has been investigated for a long time, the research is disparate and the key indicators of the concept under-theorised (Gerpott et al., 2019; Hanna et al., 2021). Nevertheless, research in schools and elsewhere has identified some behaviours indicative of EmL. Emergent leaders have been identified as substantial contributors to group or team discussions (Sanchez-Cortes et al., 2012). They have been observed facilitating group action by coordinating or organising people (Carte et al., 2006; Sanchez-Cortes et al., 2012; Stein, 1975), especially when there is a task to complete (Hanna et al., 2021). Relatedly, they are known to initiate or encourage goal setting (Carte et al., 2006). A propensity to try out new methods (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017; Dickerson, 2012) or initiate new ideas (Carte et al., 2006; Hanna et al., 2021;

Muijs & Harris, 2007) has been a widely reported source of EmL. Emergent leaders are also known to mentor and coach colleagues as well as provide encouragement and affirmation to members of their teams (Bissessar, 2018; Bradley-Levine, 2018; Carte et al., 2006; Hanna et al., 2021). They are commonly recognised by their peers as being skilled or competent in given areas (Sanchez-Cortes et al., 2012). Emergent leaders can improve the performance, and ensure the success of teams (Carte et al., 2006; Gerpott et al., 2019).

In educational research, EmL is often linked to teacher leadership and they are occasionally conflated for reasons that are understandable (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017; Hangul & Senturk, 2020). After all, teacher leadership reflects an emergence of leadership qualities from teachers who are either empowered to develop them (Safir, 2018) or are motivated regardless of the level of support from the school (Danielson, 2007). Scholars in teacher leadership have referred to EmL as the earliest manifestation, or form of, teacher leadership (Cheng & Szeto, 2016; Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017; Gonzales & Lambert, 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Rutten et al., 2022; Safir, 2018; Shah, 2017; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Parallels have been found between the roles that emergent leaders and teacher leaders carry out in schools. Examples include sharing new practices (Altae, 2022; Danielson, 2007; Safir, 2018) and mentoring peers (Crowther & Boyne, 2016; Strike et al., 2019; Werner & Campbell, 2017). However, EmL and teacher leadership are distinct concepts and, indeed, some teacher leader activities have been described as middle leader behaviours (De Nobile, 2021; Fleming, 2019).

During the AITSL funded project, evidence for EmL was identified from the Australian Professional Teaching Standards at Highly Accomplished level. Teacher behaviour expected at this level included supporting colleagues in use of up-to-date teaching strategies, modelling and sharing effective practices in teaching and assessment, encouraging peers to reflect on practice, and engaging in innovative practices (AITSL, 2011). All of these are behaviours that align to the descriptions of EmL identified previously.

Junior Leadership

The quest for evidence of "junior leadership" revealed its wide use in military and health care literature. Leadership is a key feature of work in the armed services given the existence of a dense hierarchy of ranks necessary for the communication, coordination, and success of collective actions (Matilla et al., 2017). Leadership is an inevitable consequence of rank in the armed forces because those of lower rank look to those above for direction (Moyer, 2016). What makes the military distinct from other types of organisations besides the nature of the work is the vast number of junior leaders.

Although military doctrine will distinguish leading and managing (influencing people and organising resources) from command (compelling subordinates), these appear to be shades of the same cloth as effective leaders might well encourage the submission inherent in command (ADF Joint Doctrine Centre, 2018; Mansford, 1994; Moyer, 2016) and leadership and command are all implicit in the notion of rank (ADF Centre for Army Lessons, 2016; Matilla et al., 2017). As with emergent leaders, it is clear that the actions of junior leaders can be crucial to the success of their teams, which in this case is the unit or battalion (Budihas & Bove, 2013; Howard, 2009).

Junior leaders in the military are generally understood to be those ranked at captain or below in the army and equivalent ranks in other defence forces (de Bock & Olsthoorn, 2016; Donaldson, 2012; Hale, 2001; Mansford, 1994). They are recognised for having well developed knowledge and skills as well as an ability to take initiative and assume control when those of superior rank are preoccupied elsewhere (Budihas & Bove, 2013; Mansford, 1994). Key functions of junior leaders in the military include: setting a good example, encouraging and motivating subordinates (including being open enough for team members to share their concerns), being responsible for the performance of the group under their command (including training and mentoring), and seizing the initiative, including taking over when someone of superior rank is incapacitated (ADF Centre for Army Lessons, 2016; ADF Joint Doctrine Centre, 2018; Budihas & Bove, 2013; Mansford, 1994; Moyer, 2016).

There are other examples of JrL evident in the wider literature. In the field of health care, junior clinical leadership teams were reported to be assisting more senior medical staff on projects while also enhancing their own emerging leadership skills (Fung & Sayma, 2020). In medicine there are occasional, but explicit references to JrL through opportunities for early career doctors to take clinical leader roles (Nicol, 2012) and delegation of authority from senior doctors to junior team leaders in cases when the former are absent or unavailable (Klein et al., 2006). No explicit references to JrL as a concept or practice were found from educational research other than research relating to student leadership.

The evidence for JrL from the AITSL study was found in role descriptions examined during the funded project. In one example, the Middle Leader Tier 1 position from Queensland Catholic schools required mostly coordination of a portion of a curriculum area and pastoral support of staff and was deemed relevant to less experienced teachers (IEU/QCEC, 2014). The sphere of influence was small and they were working under a higher tiered middle leader responsible for the subject area, which is congruent with the conceptualisation of JrL described previously. Role descriptions for Senior Teachers from Northern Territory and Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) from New South Wales involved modelling effective practices and developing the skills of colleagues: behaviours that are also in line with JrL as conceptualised here. A Band–B1 coordinator position from South Australia, requiring management of a specific area under the supervision of a higher-level leader, was described as an "entry level to leadership positions" which seems very much in line with the notion of JrL.

In preparation for this article, 125 Australian school websites (across sectors and states) were randomly selected and searched for organisational charts that showed staff and leadership team structures. Fifty of them offered staffing descriptions that uncovered examples of possible JrL positions that support middle leaders. These included: assistant coordinators, assistant heads of department, and assistant leaders as well as positions of special responsibility, such as "gifted education mentor" and "external sports coordinator". Any of these positions could be an initial formal leadership step from EmL to JrL.

A Conceptual Framework for First Level Leadership

This section introduces a conceptual framework reflecting how the literature and research reported above have portrayed each type of FLL. This is presented in Figure 1. Included in the descriptions are indications of span of influence. Span of influence is similar to the concepts of "span of control" and "span of management" (Cole, 2019; Griffin, 2014) alluding to oversight of staff, but based more specifically on Jennings' (1937) seminal work concerning the development of leadership structures in groups. Span of influence as applied here indicates how many individuals in broad terms may be influenced by, and attracted to work with, first level leaders. For emergent leaders this might be as few as one or two colleagues, but may expand as they attract more colleagues (Emery et al., 2011) and their work is encouraged to be shared across the school (Dickerson, 2012; Safir, 2018). Junior leaders may experience a greater span of influence, especially if they oversee staff.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of First Level Leadership

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">First Level Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent (EmL)</td>
<td>Junior (JrL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>

- **Early career teachers' initial influences on colleagues**
- **More experienced teachers' influences on peers**
- **Taking on minor managerial tasks for the group**
- **Span of influence = small number of colleagues at first**
- **Largely informal**

</td>
<td>

- **Minor position of responsibility in the school**
- **Assists/supports the work of a middle leader**
- **Can step into the middle leader role with experience**
- **Span of influence = same or larger than that of emergent leader**
- **Largely formal**

</td>
</tr>
</table>

The framework is meant to suggest a gradation of responsibilities between EmL and JrL. Whilst EmL is theorised as initial leadership behaviour from new (or even more experienced) teachers and is mostly informal in mode, JrL is theorised as the more officially recognised application of leadership skills to specific responsibilities and mostly formal in mode. The formality of JrL may reflect promotion to minor positions of authority (such as an assistant

coordinator or head within a middle leader's portfolio) or special responsibility in the school without promotion but with formal duties (such as the resource person for a curriculum area). The arrow in the centre suggests that EmL may lead to JrL (Barker, 2003; Cheng & Szeto, 2016) and JrL could be a springboard into middle leadership (Ridden & De Nobile, 2012).

Implications

First level leadership does appear to exist in schools. The teaching standards point to EmL while many formal job positions are more likely to be congruent with JrL than middle leadership. First level leadership needs to be a part of the recognised leadership structure of schools as is the case with many occupations outside education. Accordingly, leadership in education should be theorised in three broad levels (first level, middle, and senior) and the behavioural expectations and capabilities for each level clearly defined. This would then enable the creation of job descriptions that better reflect responsibilities and span of influence, which in turn requires the job design of many positions to be re-examined so that the differentiation between first level and middle leadership is clear and avoids the "grey areas" reported earlier.

There are two obvious benefits of such work. First, emergent leaders have access to a clearer path to formal leadership roles and can therefore develop their skills with greater focus. Second, professional development efforts to nurture aspirants as well as provide leaders that are better equipped to perform their duties can be more precisely designed and ultimately more effective as the pipeline for leadership succession. The ultimate benefit, though, should be better performing schools that are able to progress student outcomes with greater ease because of the work of well-developed, and (to borrow military terminology) more effectively deployed first level leaders.

A final implication is the provocation the notion of FLL may cause. Policy and scholarship in educational leadership appears to have accepted senior and middle as the main levels of leadership in schools without question. Indeed, one of the reviewers of this article doubted the need for the idea of FLL, based on a conception that leader positions and behaviours attributed here as EmL or JrL should be regarded as middle leadership. This thinking has to change. It is my hope that the examples from literature in education and other contexts, as well as my own findings, promote the idea that leadership in schools is not just about senior and middle. The time has come to recognise first level leaders in schools.

References

ADF Centre for Army Lessons. (2016). *Junior Command Handbook*. Department of Defence.

ADF Joint Doctrine Centre. (2018). *Leadership* (2nd ed.). Department of Defence.

Aflaki, I. N., & Lindh, M. (2021). Empowering first-line managers as change leaders towards co-creation culture: The role of facilitated sensemaking. *Public Money & Management*. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2021.2007636

Altae, M. (2022). Teacher leadership and teacher identity in turbulent times in Iraq. *Management in Education, 36*(4), 178-185.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). (2011). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Education Services Australia.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2015). *Preparing future leaders: Effective preparation for aspiring school principals*. AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2018). *Leading for impact: Australian guidelines for school leadership development*. AITSL.

Australian Teacher Workforce Data. (2021). *National teacher workforce characteristics report*. Education Services Australia.

Badura, K. L., Galvin, B. M., & Lee, M. Y. (2022). Leadership emergence: An integrative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 107*(11), 2069-2100.

Barker, D. (2003). *Lost quality in emergent leadership: The identification and development of inexperienced teachers as future school leaders*. National College for School Leadership.

Beck, A. P. (1981). A study of group phase development and emergent leadership. *Group, 5*(4), 48-54.

Bissessar, C. (2018). An application of Hofstede's Cultural Dimension among female educational leaders. *Education Sciences, 8*(2), 77. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8020077

Bolden, R. (2011). Distributed leadership in organizations: A review of theory and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 13*(3), 251-269. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2011.00306.x

Bradley-Levine, J. (2018). Advocacy as a practice of critical teacher leadership. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 9*(1), 47-62.

Budihas, C., & Bove, B. M. (2013). Success or failure: The importance of junior leadership in the decisive-action training environment. *ARMOR*, (July-September), 48-51.

Carte, T. A., Chidambaram, L., & Becker, A. (2006). Emergent leadership in self-managed virtual teams: A longitudinal study of concentrated and shared leadership behaviors. *Group Decision and Negotiation, 15*(4), 323-343. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10726-006-9045-7

Cheng, A. Y. N., & Szeto, E. (2016). Teacher leadership development and principal facilitation: Novice teachers' perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 58*, 140-148.

Cherkowski, S., & Schnellert, L. (2017). Exploring teacher leadership in a rural, secondary school: Reciprocal learning teams as a catalyst for emergent leadership. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 8*(1), 6-24.

Cole, K. (2019). *Leadership & management: Theory & practice* (7th ed.*)*. Cengage.

Cox, J. W., Madison, K., & Eva, N. (2022). Revisiting emergence in emergent leadership: An integrative, multi-perspective review. *The Leadership Quarterly, 33*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101579

Crowther, F., & Boyne, K. (2016). *Energising teaching: The power of your pedagogical gift*. ACER Press.

Dahlkvist, E., Wallhagen, M., Bergsten, E. L., Larsson, J., & Enmarker, I. (2021). First-line managers' leadership behavior profiles and use of gardens in residential care facilities: An interview study. *Journal of Aging and Environment, 37*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/26892618.2021.2001707

Danielson, C. (2007). *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*. Hawker-Brownlow Education/ASCD.

Davidson, P., Simon, A., Woods, P., & Griffin, R. W. (2009). *Management* (4th Australian ed.). Wiley.

De Bock, P., & Olsthoorn, P. (2016). Leadership development of junior Army leaders: A Dutch perspective. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, 16*(4), 155-170.

De Nobile, J. (2021). Researching middle leadership in schools: The state of the art. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 49*(2), 3-27.

De Nobile, J., Barr, J., McCulla, N., Hay, I., & Ryan, M. (2020). *Non-principal leadership: An investigation of roles, knowledge, skills and capabilities of middle and senior leaders in Australian schools.* Unpublished report to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Dickerson, M. S. (2012). Emergent school leadership: Creating the space for emerging leadership through appreciative inquiry. *International Journal of Learning & Development, 2*(2), 55-63.

Donaldson, M. (2012). Junior leadership in the ADF. *Australian Defence Force Journal*, (187), 5-6.

Duffield, C., & Franks, H. (2001). The role and preparation of first-line nurse managers in Australia: Where are we going and how do we get there? *Journal of Nursing Management, 9*(2), 87-91.

Emery, C., Daniloski, K., & Hamby, A. (2011). The reciprocal effects of self-view as a leader and leadership emergence. *Small Group Research, 42*(2) 199-224.

Ericsson, U., & Augustinsson, S. (2015). The role of first line managers in healthcare organisations – a qualitative study on the work life experience of ward managers. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 20*(4), 280-295.

Figueroa, C. A., Harrison, R., Chauhan, A., & Meyer, L. (2019). Priorities and challenges for health leadership and workforce management globally: A rapid review. *BMC Health Services Research 19*, Art. 239. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-019-4080-7

Fleming, P. (2019). *Successful middle leadership in secondary schools: A practical guide to subject and team effectiveness* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Fung, C. Y., & Sayma, M. (2020). Case for junior clinical leadership teams. *Postgraduate Medical Journal, 96*(1141), 645.

Gerpott, F. H., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., Voelpel, S. C., & Van Vugt, M. (2019). It's not just what is said, but when it's said: A temporal account of verbal behaviors and emergent leadership in self-managed teams. *Academy of Management Journal, 62*(3), 717-738.

Gonzales, S., & Lambert, L. (2001). Teacher leadership in professional development schools: Emerging conceptions, identities, and practices. *Journal of School Leadership, 11*(1), 6-24. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460101100102

Griffin, R. W. (2014). *Fundamentals of management* (7th ed.). South-Western/Cengage.

Grootenboer, P. (2018). *The practices of school middle leadership: Leading professional learning*. Springer.

Gunawan, J., Aungsuroch, Y., Fisher, M. L., McDaniel, A. M., & Marzilli, C. (2020). Managerial competence of first-line nurse managers in public hospitals in Indonesia. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare, 13*, 1017-1025.

Gurr, D. (2015). A model of successful school leadership from the International Successful School Principalship Project. *Societies, 5*(1), 136-150. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc5010136

Hairon, S., Goh, J. W. P., & Chua, C. S. K. (2015). Teacher leadership enactment in professional learning community contexts: Towards a better understanding of the phenomenon. *School Leadership & Management, 35*(2), 163-182.

Hale, M. T. (2001). *Mentoring junior leaders: Leadership tools for our 21st century army*. United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 17013-5050.

Hales, C. (2006). Moving down the line? The shifting boundary between middle and first-line management. *Journal of General Management, 32*(2), 31-55.

Hangul, S., & Senturk, I. (2020). An investigation of teachers' advice networks and emergent leadership through social network analysis. *European Journal of Education and Psychology, 15*(1), 1-27.

Hanna, A. A., Smith, T. A., Kirkman, B. L., & Griffin, R. W. (2021). The emergence of emergent leadership: A comprehensive framework and directions for future research. *Journal of Management, 47*(1), 76-104.

Henning, D., & McIver, C. (2008). Nurturing new leaders: Emergent leadership program. *Australian Educational Leader, 30*(2), 36-38.

Howard, R. D. (2009). *Educating Special Forces junior leaders for a complex security environment*. Joint Special Operations University.

Hybinette, K., Harenstam, K. P., & Ekstedt, M. (2021). A first-line management team's strategies for sustaining resilience in a specialised intensive care unit—a qualitative observational study. *BMJ Open, 11*(3). https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-040358

IEU/QCEC. (2014). *Queensland Diocesan Catholic schools middle leadership structure: Explanatory notes & EB7 schedule*. Independent Education Union (Queensland & Northern Territory) & Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

Jennings, H. (1937). Structure of leadership – Development and sphere of influence. *Sociometry, 1*(1/2), 99-143.

Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J., Rayton, B., & Swart, J. (2005). Satisfaction with HR practices and commitment to the organisation: Why one size does not fit all. *Human Resource Management Journal, 15*(4), 9-29.

Klein, K. J., Ziegert, J. C., Knight, A. P., & Xiao, Y. (2006). Dynamic delegation: Shared, hierarchical, and deindividualized leadership in extreme action teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 51*(4), 590-621. https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.51.4.590

Lipscombe, K., Tindall-Ford, S., & Lamanna, J. (2023). School middle leadership: A systematic review. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 51*(2), 270-288.

Mansford, G. (1994). *Junior leadership on the battlefield*. Commonwealth of Australia (Australian Army).

Matilla, J., Tukiainen, S., & Kajalo, S. (2017) Meanings of military ranks. *Defence Studies, 17*(4), 359-378. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2017.1364967

Moyer, D. (2016). Roles and responsibilities of the non-commissioned officer: Tactical to strategic. SHAPE CSEL. https://shape.nato.int/command-senior/blog/roles-and-responsibilities-of-the-noncommissioned-officer-nco-tactical-to-strategic

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007). Teacher leadership in (in)action: Three case studies of contrasting schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 35*(1) 111-134.

Nicol, E. D. (2012). Improving clinical leadership and management in the NHS. *Journal of Healthcare Leadership, 4*, 59-69. https://doi.org.10.2147/JHL.S28298

Reding, T. E., Dorn, B., Grandgenett, N., Siy, H., Youn, J., Zhu, Q., & Engelmann, C. (2016, October 13-15). Identification of the emergent leaders within a CSE professional development program. In *WiPSCE '16: Proceedings of the 11th workshop in primary and secondary computing education* (pp. 37-44). https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/2978249.2978254

Ridden, P., & De Nobile, J. (2012). *Keys to school leadership*. ACER Press.

Robbins, S., Bergman, R., Stagg, I., & Coulter, M. (2009). *Management* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Rutten, L., Doyle, S. L., Wolkenhauer, R., & Schussler, D. L. (2022). Teacher candidates' perceptions of emergent teacher leadership in clinically based teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education, 44*(4), 308-329.

Safir, S. (2018). The emergent power of teacher leaders. *Educational Leadership, 75*(6), 69-73.

Samson, D., & Daft, R. L. (2005). *Management* (2nd ed.). Thomson.

Sanchez-Cortes, D., Aran, O., Mast, M. S., & Gatica-Perez, D. (2012). A non-verbal behavior approach to identify emergent leaders in small groups. *IEEE Transactions on Multimedia, 14*(3), 816-832. https://doi.org/10.1109/TMM.2011.2181941

Shah, S. R. (2017). The significance of teacher leadership in TESOL: A theoretical perspective. *Arab World English Journal, 8*(4), 240-258.

Skytt, B., Junggren, B., Sjoden, P., & Carlsson, M. (2008). The roles of the first-line nurse manager: Perceptions from four perspectives. *Journal of Nursing Management, 16*(8), 1012-1020. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2834.2006.00684.x

Stein, R. T. (1975). Identifying emergent leaders from verbal and nonverbal communications. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32*(1), 125-135.

Strike, K. T., Fitzsimmons, J. C., & Meyer, D. K. (2019). *The impact of teacher leaders: Case studies from the field*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Stromberg, A., Engstrom, M., Hagerman, H., & Skytt, B. (2019). First-line managers dealing with different management approaches. *Leadership in Health Services, 32*(4), 543-557.

The New England Journal of Medicine. (1955). The "helping professions". *The New England Journal of Medicine, 252*(21), 917-918.

Townsend, K., Wilkinson, A., Bamber, G., & Allan, C. (2012). Accidental, unprepared, and unsupported: Clinical nurses becoming managers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 23*(1), 204-220.

Watson, S. T., & Scribner, J. P. (2007). Beyond distributed leadership: Collaboration, interaction, and emergent reciprocal influence. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*, 443-468.

Wattam, C. (2021). Understanding the role of middle level leader in New South Wales (NSW) Catholic secondary schools. *Leading & Managing, 27*(2), 39-49.

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171.

Zhu, J., Liao, Z., Yam, K. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2018). Shared leadership: A state-of-the-art review and future research agenda. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 39*, 834-852.

Promoting Teacher Leadership: Principal Actions to Promote and Facilitate Teacher Leadership for Enhanced Student Outcomes

KRISTA BIXLER
Florida Gulf Coast University

Email: kbixler@fgcu.edu

MARJORIE CEBALLOS
University of Central Florida

Email: marjorie.ceballos@ucf.edu

ABSTRACT: As schools implement improvement initiatives, teachers hold expertise that can support effective decision making and the actions related to school improvement efforts (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Incorporating teacher leaders into school improvement initiatives is a way for principals to harness teachers' expertise and empower them in schools. Teacher leaders provide insight into the collaborative decision-making process that informs organisational development oriented toward student outcomes. Principals' distributed leadership practices related to teacher leadership have the known potential to improve overall instruction in schools. Therefore, principals are central to developing the entire school organisation by engaging in actions to remove barriers to teacher leadership and create structures to facilitate teacher leadership. In this article, we briefly describe teacher leaders, explore existing teacher leadership barriers, and describe five principal actions to augment teacher leadership in schools, providing practical examples of the principal actions. Through these actions, principals can overcome barriers, mobilising the power of teacher leaders to enhance student outcomes.

Introduction

To ensure the success of the entire organisation, schools benefit from the expertise of various school stakeholders. In this article, we focus on tapping into the expertise of schools' most valuable stakeholders: teachers. As schools implement school improvement initiatives, teachers hold expertise that can support effective decision making and the actions related to school improvement efforts (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leadership is advanced when

school culture and context, roles and relationships, and structures are designed to facilitate teacher leaders, formally and informally (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Principals influence teaching and learning in schools, through their distributed leadership actions in schools (Leithwood et al., 2020), including how they work with others in pursuit and attainment of school goals, and how they create an environment for all staff to achieve success (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Therefore, principals promote teacher leadership and organisational development when they engage in actions that remove barriers to teacher leadership and create structures that facilitate teacher leadership. To set the context of teacher leadership within schools, we will begin this article with a brief description of teacher leaders, followed by barriers that may hinder teacher leadership. We conclude by presenting five principal actions drawn from the literature, coupled with practical examples, to facilitate and support the development and success of teacher leaders.

Teacher Leaders

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that leadership is a "function rather than a role … leadership encompasses a set of functions that may be performed by many different persons in different roles throughout a school" (p. 2). Leadership, the authors argued, is defined by two main functions, "providing direction and exercising influence" (p. 2). Further, leaders are those individuals whose actions and activities lead to the attainment of school goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Teacher leadership fits within this conceptualisation of leadership because teacher leaders support principals in providing direction to achieve school goals and use their influence with teacher peers to increase overall instructional expertise in pursuit of school goals. As effective teachers, teacher leaders increase positive student outcomes through school mechanisms that maximise and augment the reach of their instructional influence and expertise (National Center for Great Public Schools, n.d.). Thus, teacher leaders undertake activities outside of their classrooms to overcome teaching and learning obstacles present in schools and/or school districts and to engage in continued professional growth (Cosenza, 2015).

Teacher leadership may take on various forms in schools based on how principals empower teacher leaders within their school contexts, either formally or informally, through their distributed leadership practices (Spillane, 2005). Principals may opt to create formalised teacher leaders, which may include teachers who have titles such as instructional coach, grade-level or content-level leader, or other teacher leadership titles that present them as leaders among their peers. Likewise, principals may empower informal teacher leaders who draw their leadership not from a given leadership title, but instead are recognised as leaders by other teachers. Informal teacher leaders earn this recognition due to several factors, including instructional expertise, content knowledge, collaborating with others, trying new instructional strategies, and sharing information with other teachers (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). Each of these teacher leaders contributes in various ways to schools' organisational development and improvement.

In the literature, teacher leadership has been linked to positive school improvement outcomes (Chang, 2011; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Jambo & Hongde, 2020; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that teacher leaders ranked six out of nine direct influence factors on decisions made in high-performing schools. Further, the researchers posited

that there was a relationship between principals' distributed leadership practices and student achievement due to the influence of teacher leadership on teacher motivation (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Specifically, teacher leaders contribute to creating learning school organisations where there is a focus on the relationship between teachers' increased instructional capacity and student outcomes (Seashore Louis et al., 2010).

Teacher Leadership Barriers

For teacher leaders to be successful, identification of barriers to teacher leadership must occur first, followed by principal actions that support teacher leaders' development and work. Researchers have examined barriers to teacher leadership in schools. Using the framework created by York-Barr and Duke (2004), Acton (2022) identified teacher leadership barriers, which included teacher dissatisfaction with their work environment, "adversarial" or "ambivalent relationships" (p. 9) with teacher peers and principals, underutilisation of distributive leadership elements by principals, barriers created by school structures, and lack of interest from the principal in teachers' projects. Further, teacher leaders in Acton's (2022) study indicated that a "traditional hierarchy" (p. 10) pervaded the organisational structure, where principals did not share decision making or use distributive leadership as a form of delegating the workload. Muijs and Harris (2007) found similar barriers to teacher leadership, including teachers' willingness to see themselves as leaders outside their classrooms, teacher time for leadership activities, teachers' preparation for leadership, and a school culture supportive of teacher leadership.

Principal Leadership Actions to Facilitate Teacher Leadership

As Leithwood and Riehl (2003) noted, principals exercise leadership through actions that facilitate collaboration with and among others to improve the school organisation and create an environment for success. School improvement efforts are reliant upon a distributed leadership environment where teacher leadership is facilitated and valued (Harris, 2012) to orient teachers toward sharing of instructional expertise, working toward attaining school goals, and increasing feelings of self-efficacy (Amels et al., 2021). Therefore, a key consideration for principals is how to remove teacher leadership barriers within schools to ensure teacher leaders can operate successfully within the school organisation. Principals, however, may not have the knowledge and concomitant skills needed to support and foster successful teacher leaders (Gates & Sisken, 2001, as cited in Acton, 2022). Therefore, principals may benefit from understanding and implementing specific leadership actions to promote teacher leadership to contribute to school improvement, teacher growth, and increased student outcomes.

In this section, we discuss five principal leadership actions that facilitate teacher leadership within schools. For each leadership action, we provide supporting literature to provide context for the action. Then, we use a Grade 5 reading achievement school improvement case to provide a practical example of what the principal actions might look like in schools. We chose

the Grade 5 reading achievement case for demonstration purposes because increasing reading achievement is a common school improvement goal in elementary schools. Furthermore, we chose an elementary school setting for the case to focus on the principal actions in practice in a smaller and less complex school organisation. However, no matter the grade level or size of the school organisation, the actions described here can be utilised and adjusted as needed by all principals to support teacher leaders in their schools.

Action 1: Create a Vision for Teacher Leadership and Embed it in the School Culture

Creating a vision for teacher leadership within schools and then enshrining it in the school culture is critical to teacher leaders' success and sense of effectiveness. A vision of teacher leadership is most effective when it is situated within the broader context of a school's improvement goals (Weiner, 2011). Conversely, teacher leadership is least effective when the vision is ambiguous and not linked concretely to school improvement goals (Weiner, 2011). Principals can lessen or remove ambiguity by conceptualising teacher leadership within their schools and determining how teacher leaders may exert influence beyond their classrooms to contribute to school improvement goals to address student needs (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

Principals may start by considering how teacher leaders could support a school's improvement goals in various capacities. For instance, an elementary school's goal may be to increase reading achievement in Grade 5, where reading achievement is lagging. Based on the goal of increasing reading achievement, principals could determine teacher leadership needed to accomplish this goal, including literacy instructional coaches, professional learning community leaders in Grade 5, and teachers with literacy expertise who may be able to provide professional learning to staff. To embed the teacher leadership vision within the school's culture, principals may first consider how various teacher leaders within the school complement one another and contribute to the school improvement goal. Communicating the primary role of teacher leadership in achieving school improvement goals to all stakeholders through various platforms and channels can further embed teacher leadership into a school's culture. Returning to the Grade 5 reading example, principals could include grade-level reading teacher leaders in school leadership meetings and highlight the role of teacher leaders in achieving the school's reading goal in faculty and parent meetings. Through this action, principals would provide direction by communicating a clear vision for teacher leaders, a shared understanding of who teacher leaders are (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), and how they contribute to school improvement efforts.

Action 2: Building Trusting Relationships with Teachers

Building trusting relationships with teachers is closely linked to a principal's vision for teacher leadership and embedding it within the culture of the school. Tschannen-Moran (2014) argued that for principals and teachers to have trusting relationships, the five facets of trust must be present in principal-teacher relationships, including: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence. Principals who display the five facets of trust create trusting principal-teacher relationships, enhancing trust among teachers and positive student outcomes (Handford & Leithwood, 2013). Further, teachers' affective trust (i.e., benevolence) in the

principal is linked to teachers taking on additional responsibilities outside of their roles in service of other teachers, students, and/or the school (Berkovich, 2018). Principal-teacher trust also supports a school climate where teacher professionalism and instructional excellence are at the fore (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). In short, trust is integral to principal-teacher relationships and critical to the work of teacher leaders.

In the Grade 5 reading achievement example, the principal can cultivate trusting relationships by exhibiting the five facets of trust as they work with teacher leaders. First, principals can display benevolence by supporting teacher leaders' work, being respectful and cognisant of teacher leaders' needs as they strive to improve reading achievement, and sharing teacher leaders' accomplishments with faculty and staff. Moreover, principals can display honesty and openness by honouring commitments (e.g., time, resources, etc.) they made to teacher leaders' efforts to improve reading achievement and by maintaining two-way communication where teacher leaders can share successes and challenges to discuss potential solutions. Reliability can be established by a principal's consistency and dependability through regular interactions with teacher leaders to discuss overall progress toward reading improvements and responsiveness to teacher leaders' requests following those discussions. Lastly, a principal's competency in reading instructional improvements can be demonstrated by deconstructing challenges and engaging in collaborative solution seeking with teacher leaders. By displaying the facets of trust, principals can build supportive school environments that lead to success (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In turn, the supportive school environment created will also foster trusting relationships between teacher leaders and teacher peers.

Action 3: Provide Leadership Development and Mentoring for Teachers

To undertake leadership tasks, teachers require leadership development, leadership opportunities, and leadership mentoring where they come to understand the needs of a school beyond their classrooms and begin to identify as leaders (Carver, 2016; Hunzicker, 2017). Effective teacher leader professional learning is a conduit to creating teacher leaders who will then go on to create professional learning opportunities for teachers within their schools (Poekert, 2012). Teacher leaders can be developed through professional learning that includes book studies, guest speakers, leadership learning tasks, train-the-trainer models, among other components that prepare teachers to lead initiatives in schools (Carver, 2016; Gerstenschlager & Barlow, 2019). Additionally, mentoring is essential to teacher leadership development because teacher leadership is developmental, requiring support throughout the process. Teacher leaders need time to develop leadership capabilities, opportunities to collaborate with other leaders, professional learning for leadership, and time to reflect on their leadership practice (Hunzicker, 2017). While leadership preparation is a key component of educational leadership programs, it is likely that the majority of teacher leaders have not received formal leadership preparation and, therefore, would benefit from leadership training and principal mentoring to navigate potential challenges such as resistant colleagues (Acton, 2022). Teacher leadership development, mentoring, and opportunities should happen simultaneously. Principals can accomplish this by identifying formal and informal teacher leadership opportunities in school improvement initiatives.

In the Grade 5 reading achievement example, the first principal action may be identifying potential reading teacher leaders in the school and then discussing leadership opportunities related to improving students' reading achievement. Then, principals can commit resources for teacher leaders to develop expertise in leading improvements in reading achievement through professional learning opportunities or through leadership coaching. Moreover, principals can assist teacher leaders in their leadership development by situating the teacher leader role within the larger context of school-wide reading achievement improvement and in individual interactions with other stakeholders. For example, a principal may discuss the potential actions and impacts of the reading instructional coach's work on school-wide reading improvement and work undertaken with specific Grade 5 teachers. Further, the principal could collaborate with the reading instructional coach to identify foci for the instructional coach's future leadership development and commit resources to identified leadership foci. By providing leadership development and mentoring for teachers, principals contribute to the overall growth of the professional organisation, while also providing a model of how to contribute to others' professional growth (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Action 4: Collaborate with Teachers on Decision Making

Teachers place high value in participating in the decision-making process within their schools (Ross et al., 2016). Teachers' participation in collaborative decision making with principals fosters the development of teacher leadership skills such as communication and curriculum planning (Ross et al., 2016). However, collaborative decision making requires principals to move away from the traditional hierarchical leadership model to "a form of leadership that is more concerned with brokering, facilitating and supporting others in leading innovation and change" (Harris, 2012, p. 8). Collaborative leadership by the principal is critical as it may promote commitment to the school, increased job satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Thien, 2019). Furthermore, collaborative leadership promotes a positive work environment by developing supportive relationships that negate adversarial interactions some teacher leaders encounter from peers and the principal (Acton, 2022). Principals' action that can achieve this is actively seeking input from staff, respecting their input, trusting the teachers leading the work, validating their positive contributions, and being a vocal proponent of their work to other faculty and staff (Acton, 2022).

Returning to the Grade 5 reading achievement example, the principal could engage Grade 5 teachers and school reading teacher leaders in collaborative decision making regarding the best program to increase reading achievement by actively seeking their input. The teachers in this example may have chosen a computer-adaptive reading program, but also identified increasing reading strategies throughout content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, and social studies) as a focus. Principals can then engage teacher leaders in developing a year-long professional learning plan on how to implement the new program and strategies on reading instruction throughout all content areas. As the professional learning plan is implemented, teacher leaders could collect feedback from teacher participants and collaborate with the principal on improvements based on teacher feedback. The principal could involve teacher leaders in finding solutions to challenges that arise during reading improvement efforts. Through collaborating with teacher leaders on

decision making, principals ensure that teacher leaders have a voice in the decision-making process, so their expertise is included in the pursuit of school improvement goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Action 5: Provide Resources to Teacher Leaders

To support the vision of collaborative decision making and supporting teacher leaders, resources must be allocated and arranged to support the vision. Resources such as time, funding, planning, scheduling, space for collaboration, and/or support personnel are commitments principals can guarantee for effective implementation of teacher leader initiatives, depending upon teacher leaders' needs (Acton, 2022; Weiner, 2011). For instance, lack of time for leadership activities has been one of the largest barriers identified by teacher leaders (Weiner, 2011). In a case study of teacher leaders in three school districts, Firestone and Martinez (2007) found one teacher leader was charged with improving mathematics instruction, yet had lunchroom and additional duties that inhibited supporting maths instruction successfully. In other instances, it may be that teacher leaders need additional personnel support to implement initiatives. Therefore, aligning personnel support such as a co-leader, mentor, or other instructional personnel with expertise is another way principal action can support teacher leader initiatives. Acton (2022) interviewed teacher leaders and found it was beneficial to have a co-lead as a resource in implementing initiatives as this provided motivation, support, and lessened the workload for full-time classroom teacher leaders.

Referring back to the Grade 5 reading example, the teacher leaders identified a computer-adaptive reading program as a needed resource to improve student achievement. Therefore, the principal needs to determine how to utilise the school budget to obtain the needed computer-adaptive reading program software, computers, internet connection, and other implementation needs. If training and support are necessary for implementing the computer-adaptive reading program, funding and time for professional learning must be allocated with input from teacher leaders. Next, once professional learning is completed and the program is in place, time for the teacher leaders to support and provide coaching to teachers must be provided. Principals can show support of teacher leaders by allowing time to monitor the computer-adaptive reading program implementation. Finally, as the computer-adaptive reading program implementation continues, principals can be responsive to teacher leader needs by making adjustments throughout the implementation process to account for additional professional learning, planning time, or personnel support. By providing resources to teacher leaders to achieve goals, principals attend to organisational structures or strategic planning aspects to achieve school goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

The principal leadership actions described here and supported by the literature can help to eliminate barriers to teacher leadership that may be hindering school improvement efforts and student outcomes. Principals who engage in these five actions will advance teacher leadership because they will develop teacher leaders' capabilities to pursue school improvement goals, involve teacher leaders in setting the direction for the school, and expand the reach of teacher leaders' expertise to the entire school organisation. In Table 1, we summarise the leadership actions, a description of the action, and the barrier removed.

Table 1

Leadership Actions to Remove Barriers

Leadership Action to Promote Teacher Leadership	Leadership Action Description	Barrier(s) Removed
Create a Vision for Teacher Leadership and Embed it in the School Culture	Situate the vision for teacher leadership within a school's improvement goals and define how teacher leaders may exert influence beyond their classrooms (Lia & Cheung, 2015; Weiner, 2011).	Teacher dissatisfaction with work environment and resistance from other teachers when implementing school improvement initiatives (Acton, 2022; Alegado, 2018).
Build Trusting Relationships with Teachers	Display the five facets of trust (e.g., benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence) to build principal-teacher trust and trust among teachers (Handford & Leithwood 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).	Teacher perceptions of low levels of support and respect from the principal (Acton, 2022; Alegado, 2018).
Provide Leadership Development and Mentoring for Teachers	Provide leadership development and mentoring for teacher leaders to understand school-wide needs and identify leadership opportunities for teacher leaders (Carver, 2016; Gerstenschlager & Barlow, 2019).	Lack of professional learning in leadership that impacts teacher confidence and effectiveness in leading school improvement (Acton, 2022; Alegado, 2018).
Collaborate with Teachers on Decision Making	Engage with teacher leaders on collaborative decision making on instructional matters (Harris, 2012; Ross et al., 2016; Thien, 2019).	Adherence to traditional hierarchies that hinder school improvement and do not involve key stakeholders (Acton, 2022; Alegado, 2018).
Provide Resources for Teacher Leaders	Commit resources (e.g., time, funding, etc.) to support teacher leaders' initiatives (Acton, 2022; Weiner, 2011).	Insufficient allocation of resources such as time, funding, and human resources to lead school improvement initiatives (Acton, 2022; Alegado, 2018; Weiner, 2011).

Conclusion

It is evident from the research literature that principals influence teacher leaders' success (Acton, 2022; Harris, 2012; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; York-Barr, 2004). Likewise, the literature demonstrates that teacher leadership supports organisational development and change through teacher professional growth and empowerment (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Principals can ensure organisational change and school improvement by engaging in leadership

actions that remove barriers to teacher leadership (Acton, 2022), focus on teacher leadership development over time (Hunzicker, 2017), and implement distributed leadership practices and attending dispositions (Harris, 2012). Cultivating teacher leadership through discrete leadership actions to develop teacher leaders can further overall leadership in schools at various levels of the school organisation. By removing barriers and creating support for successful teacher leadership, principals can amplify the collective instructional expertise of teachers to enhance student outcomes.

References

Acton, K. (2022). Environmental teacher leadership: Overcoming barriers posed by school culture, school structure, and the principal. *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* (ahead-of-print), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2032369

Alegado, P. J. E. (2018). Breaking the barriers: Teacher leadership in the heart of educational reform in the Philippines. *Bulgarian Journal of Science & Education Policy, 12*(1), 15-30.

Amels, J., Krüger, M. L., Suhre, C. J. M., & van Veen, K. (2021). The relationship between primary school leaders' utilization of distributed leadership and teachers' capacity to change. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 49*(5), 732-749. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220915921

Berkovich, I. (2018). Typology of trust relationships: Profiles of teachers' trust in principals and their implications. *Teachers and Teaching, 24*(7), 749-767. https://doi.org/10.1080.13540602.2018.1483914

Carver, C. L. (2016). Transforming identities: The transition from teacher to leader during teacher leader preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 11*(2), 158-180. https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775116658635

Chang, I. H. (2011). A study of the relationships between distributed leadership, teacher academic optimism and student achievement in Taiwanese elementary schools. *School Leadership & Management, 31*(5), 491-515.

Cosenza, M. N. (2015). Defining teacher leadership: Affirming the teacher leader model standards. *Issues in Teacher Education, 24*(2), 79-99.

Fairman, J. C., & Mackenzie, S. V. (2015). How teacher leaders influence others and understand their leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 18*(1), 61-87. https://doi.org/10.1080/136031 24.2014.904002

Firestone, W. A., & Martinez, M. C. (2007). Districts, teacher leaders, and distributed leadership: Changing instructional practice. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 6*(1), 3-35.

Gerstenschlager, N. E., & Barlow, A. T. (2019). Transitioning from practicing teacher to teacher leader: A case study. *Teacher Development, 23*(1), 18-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2018.1515106

Handford, V., & Leithwood, K. (2013). Why teachers trust school leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration, 51*(2), 194-212. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231311304706

Harris, A. (2012). Distributed leadership: Implications for the role of the principal. *The Journal of Management Development, 31*(1), 7-17. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711211190961

Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2009). Assessing the contribution of distributed leadership to school improvement and growth in mathematics achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*(3), 659-689. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209340042

Hunzicker, J. (2017). From teacher to teacher leader: A conceptual model. *International Journal of Teacher Education, 8*(2), 1-27.

Jambo, D., & Hongde, L. (2020). The effect of principal's distributed leadership practices on student academic achievement: A systematic review of the literature. *International Journal of Higher Education, 9*(1), 189-198. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n1p189

Lai, E., & Cheung, D. (2015). Enacting teacher leadership: The role of teachers in bringing about change. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 43*(5), 673-692. https://doi.org/10.1177%2 F1741143214535742

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership and Management, 40*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077

Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 529-561. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0013161X08321221

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

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007). Teacher leadership in (in)action: Three case studies of contrasting schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 35*(1), 111-134. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 1741143207071387

National Center for Great Public Schools. (n.d.). *Teacher leaders*. National Education Organization. https://cgps.nea.org/greatteaching/career-phases/teacher-leaders/

Poekert, P. E. (2012). Teacher leadership and professional development: Examining links between two concepts central to school improvement. *Professional Development in Education, 38*(2), 169-188. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657824

Ross, L., Lutfi, G., & Hope, W. (2016). Distributed leaders and teacher's affective commitment. *NASSP Bulletin, 100*(3), 159-169. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636516681842

Seashore Louis, K., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21*(3), 315-336.

Spillane, J. P. (2005). Distributed leadership. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 143-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 00131720508984678

Thien, L. M. (2019). Distributive leadership functions, readiness for change, and teachers' affective commitment to change: A partial least squares analysis. *SAGE Open, 9*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440198 46209

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Gareis, C. R. (2015). Faculty trust in the principal: An essential ingredient in high-performing schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(1), 66-92. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2014-0024

Weiner, J. M. (2011). Finding common ground: Teacher leaders and principals speak out about teacher leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*(1), 7-41. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461102100102

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership literature: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171. https://doi.org/10.3102/ 0034654316653478

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307 4003255

One School's Journey of Revitalisation Using the Power of Teacher Leadership: A Principal's Parallel Narrative

SIMON MCGLADE
Mackellar Primary School

Email: Simon.McGlade@education.vic.gov.au

ABSTRACT: *A principal relates a revitalisation process undertaken over a two-year period amidst a leadership change, a looming financial deficit, and in the middle of a global pandemic. These challenges were potentially disastrous and were certainly damaging in the short-term. There were obvious opportunities that needed to be explored that would build staff trust in leadership whilst also improving student achievement. The principal was determined to make use of the school's greatest asset – its staff, and their eagerness to improve. Revitalising the school was the longer-term goal and empowering and building the capacity of staff was the vehicle to get there. With a degree of trepidation, yet boundless optimism, a core group volunteered to create an IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) with the principal's promise of greater collaboration and inclusive practices. This, coupled with their own willingness to improve, saw the ISMT take a leap of faith and embark upon the IDEAS project. Over the next two years this talented group focused on building the teacher leadership capacity of staff in a parallel model of school leadership. Two years on, data indicate a significant improvement in school culture, student connectedness, parent satisfaction, teaching, learning, and student achievement.*

Background

This account is one principal's narrative of a journey through the revitalisation of a school amid a range of compelling factors, many of which were beyond the school's control. It is a personal account of a school using a well-known and research-based revitalisation program to bring about significant improvement from a groundswell of staff support. It is the story of the successes, challenges, and learnings of this experience from the perspective of the principal and the team members willing to share their account.

Context

Mackellar Primary School in Melbourne's western suburbs had a rich tradition of engaging students in their learning and was well known for supporting students at risk. However, the 2020 school year was particularly challenging. Like all schools, the pandemic presented a difficult environment for learning. Coupled with that, Mackellar Primary School experienced a notable change of leadership within a short space of time including the principal, the subsequent acting principal, and the assistant principal. The newly appointed principal also faced a potential staffing deficit close to $1M in the coming year which required a sizeable number of staff to be supported to find employment elsewhere. This culminated in 25 of 78 staff leaving the school and resulted in a major shift in the school's culture. The outcome left the school in need of direction from a newly formed leadership team, and a shift from focusing on job security and remote and flexible learning to refocusing on improving student outcomes. Due to the leadership change and the imposed lockdowns resulting during the time of the pandemic, there were core elements of the school that needed attention such as developing a school-based curriculum, an agreed and research-based pedagogy, an instructional model, and an assessment schedule. This was reflective of Hargreaves and Finks' (2006) work noting that, "transformational leadership moves schools beyond first-order, surface changes to second order, deeper transformations that alter the 'core technologies' of schooling such as pedagogy, curriculum and assessment" (p. 99). It was this second order change which required strategic planning, and clear change processes.

However, crucial to this consideration was a need to build the capacity, empowerment, and ownership of the staff, as data would indicate the school culture had suffered over recent years. As a solution, one might suggest "hiring for purpose" (Fullan, 2008, p. 71) to then improve the school's culture by "seek[ing] people who are not only individually talented but also *system* [or school] talented - that is, they can work in and keep developing cultures of purposeful collaboration" (Fullan, 2008, p. 71). However due to the potential deficit and subsequent limitation on employing staff, the strongest tool the principal had was the strength of the staff. The goal was to capitalise on their desire and tap into their enthusiasm to improve the culture for themselves, their students, and the community.

As Owens (2001) stated, "human resources are valuable. In fact, in the case of educational organisations, they are often the most valuable resources available to create a high performing organisation" (p. 121). Thus, to improve the school's culture whilst addressing those second order change elements required for transformational leadership (Leithwood et al., 1999, as cited in Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 99), the principal had to harness this human capital, build the capacity of teacher leaders and use this enhanced capital to drive school improvement. In short, the school needed a new vision and a mechanism to harness the momentum and drive present amongst staff to achieve second order and sustainable change.

The newly installed principal had faced a similar circumstance in previous years as assistant principal at another school. At the time (2004–2008), the Victorian Department of Education had supported several schools in need of revitalisation to undertake a project by the University of Southern Queensland's Leadership Research International team. The project titled IDEAS - **I**nnovative **D**esigns for **E**nhancing **A**chievements in **S**chools (see https://lri.usq.edu.au/)

was the culmination of two decades of research and had "been developed by school and university-based researchers working together to make meaning of the complex processes for school improvement" (Andrews & Conway, 2019, p. 2).

This principal's experience of IDEAS as assistant principal at the time was one of significant challenge whilst also experiencing significant success in the short to medium term as noted by Andrews et al. (2009). In relation to the Victorian schools in the IDEAS program they stated that:

> … over the 2004-2007 period case study schools overall showed a significant upward trend in all [Staff Opinion Survey] items. In most cases it was not until the third year of involvement that across-the-board improvement occurred. In 2008 the four continuing schools sustained, or extended, the improvements in question. (Andrews et al., 2009, p. 130)

However due to a change in schools at the end of 2009, the then assistant principal was unable to determine the sustainability of this change into the longer term at that setting. As noted by Hargreaves and Fink (2006):

> Change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement, and extraordinarily difficult to sustain […] extraordinary effort and extreme pressure can pull underperforming schools out of the failure zone […] they quickly fall back as soon as the effort is exhausted and the pressure is off. (p. 1)

Thus, with a postgraduate degree in Education (Leadership and Management) from the University of Southern Queensland, and further years of leadership experience, the principal now recognised the current set of circumstances and formed the view that this school was suitably placed to capitalise on the success IDEAS had to offer. This was particularly poignant with the principal being new to the school, self-committed, and well positioned in planning for improvements. Committing time to sustain improvements is crucial, for, as Likert (1963, as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993) found, "it takes from three to seven years, depending on the size and complexity of the organisation, to effectively implement a new management theory" (p. 157).

The mechanics of implementing IDEAS required the *ideas* process (see Figure 1). This process of five phases – **i**nitiating, **d**iscovering, **e**nvisioning, **a**ctioning, and **s**ustaining – initially seemed to be straightforward. However, the principal was aware from previous experience that more than mechanics was the requirement of a critical mass of staff to influence the cultural change. The principal alone could not hope to create and sustain meaningful change; only as a collective could that be achieved.

Figure 1

*The **ideas** process*

The **ideas** process

-	*initiating*:	How will we manage the process?
		Who will facilitate the process?
		Who will record our history of the journey?
-	*discovering*:	What are we doing that is most successful?
		What is not working as well as we would like it to?
-	*envisioning*:	What do we hope our school will look like in the future?
		What is our conceptualisation of schoolwide pedagogy?
-	*actioning*:	How will we create a tripartite action plan?
		How will we work towards the alignment of key school elements and processes?
-	*sustaining*:	What progress have we made towards schoolwide pedagogy?
		What school practices are succeeding?

Note. From "A research report on the implementation of the IDEAS Project in Victoria, 2004-8" by D. Andrews et al., 2009, p. 17.

A key principle of IDEAS is that of collective responsibility (Andrews & Conway, 2019). However, in addition to such collectivity, staff needed what Fullan (2008) called "purposeful peer interaction" (p. 41). It required a clear statement and stance that teachers as leaders, not the principal, held the keys to successful revitalisation (Andrews & Conway, 2019) and only together could change be successful and sustainable. The principal was cognisant that through circumstance rather than fault, the school's culture had been altered and now staff were both cautious and dubious of new initiatives, especially those of a top-down imposition. Many felt their "unique pedagogical gift[s]" (Crowther et al., 2013; Crowther & Boyne, 2016) were not being recognised or used and there seemed a disjointedness to the organisation and a lack of collective purpose and drive.

Therefore, precipitating any involvement in IDEAS, the first course of action in a formal way was to listen, to establish avenues for discussion, and to create "the why" (Sinek, 2011) whilst establishing trust within and between staff led by the principal. Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that "leaders who are trusted make themselves known … [and] … make their positions clear" (p. 44). By meeting with each staff member to discuss their Mackellar story, by being transparent with staff about the financial state of the school, and by sharing previously unseen

data sets with staff and governance bodies, these strategies supported the transparency of the position of the principal and laid the framework for a shift to what became known as "parallel leadership". Conway and Andrews (2022) defined parallel leadership as "the combined strengths of clarity of role description, interlaced with varying forms of distributed leadership, together with the overwhelming evidence of relational leadership, [which] form a robust state of leadership in schools of success" (p. 397). For us at Mackellar, this involved the meta-strategic leadership of the principal working in parallel with teacher leadership to achieve change, and the first meta-strategic decision of the principal was to present to the staff in a whole of staff forum a case for change.

It would appear that the case for change as initially presented by the principal was the cultural turning point for the staff who, with time, began to realise that the norms and values inherent in the presentation aligned with their own: several reflections highlighted the recognition by staff of being aware from the outset of the what, when, why, and how of the proposed change. They appreciated the values of transparency, trust, honesty, and integrity espoused by the principal in the presentation. This approach of linking actions to values is reminiscent of Stogdill (1993) who stated that "followers are most likely to support the leadership of the individual who most clearly verbalises their own norms and values" (p. 222).

This case for change generated an awareness amongst staff of the current situation and sparked a journey of discovery, reflection, and direction. Using the IDEAS process, the community set about reimagining itself and in the process defied the 2021 trend of network, state, and similar school data in making remarkable achievements in staff climate by building trust, by first building a team, for as Reese (2003) noted "if employees [or educators] don't trust, they don't innovate" (p. 19).

The Power of Teacher Leaders

In creating a case for change and seeking out those teachers with the capacity and desire to be teacher leaders, the principal trialled a conversational tool used as part of the IDEAS process - "professional conversations" (Conway & Andrews, 2021). In embarking upon an exploration phase, the principal spent time asking questions of staff, hosting workshops, discussing the school's current standing with school council, and listening whilst reserving judgement. It was hoped that through a no-blame and open-ended approach staff would commence dialogue in a safe space. Upon reflection, these conversations would suggest they were not in the least successful. Perhaps this was due to a lack of facilitation expertise by the principal, or perhaps because the staff did not yet feel safe to share. The principal realised this format had overestimated their readiness. It relied too heavily on one person, the principal, and so another way had to be found.

The initiating Phase

After reflection on a false start, the principal reconstructed what had been the school's leadership team into a new entity for this school – a School Improvement Team (SIT). This team was established by combining staff of appointed positions of leadership, such as the Assistant Principal and Leading Teachers with those who took on teacher-based leadership roles. These

roles were offered through a transparent, merit-based process where staff were provided with a range of leadership opportunities. This ensured the outcome was beyond reproach, and demonstrated the principal's determination to ensure an ethical, respectful, and consultative culture, whilst presenting staff with opportunities they had not previously experienced. On reflection, this approach had led staff to realise there was a belief in and amongst the staff.

Once leaders were selected, the principal cultivated a belief that they, along with all staff at the school, held the keys to success. The principal achieved this in part through simple, yet symbolically powerful, what Conway and Andrews (2022) referred to as "'within-school' capacity for ongoing improvement of the organization's priority goals (Parallel Leadership in Action) [providing] a strong foundation for the principal's 'commitment to the visionary action' in a collaborative, collegial, and connected manner" (p. 402). Staff reflection revealed a realisation that the time to acknowledge and embrace where the staff had come from, rather than just adding new things, had built on the successes already present whilst acknowledging there was work yet to be done: a key principle of IDEAS known as success breeding success (Andrews & Conway, 2019).

Taking time and moving at a pace suited to the staff development, yet maintaining positive momentum, was also recognised in reflection on the process as a positive aspect of the principal's approach. This notion was a highlight of Heifetz and Laurie's (1997) work where they stated that "a leader must realise that people can only learn so much so fast … they cannot learn new ways when they are overwhelmed [or unsafe], but eliminating stress altogether removes the impetus for doing adaptive work" (p. 127).

To maintain the impetus and to keep staff at the forefront of the process, the principal also amplified the role of the school's leadership body (SIT) privileging the committee time and collectively holding a lens to school processes to ensure transparency of decisions, integrity of process, and accountability for actions. Resulting from this allocated time "together", the SIT presented a range of data sets to staff including student achievement, staff and parent satisfaction results, instructional leadership data, and financial data. To say the presentation was a sombre affair would be an understatement. Yet with enormous credit to the staff, it was also a call to arms, an impetus for change, and a starting point for improvement.

This call to arms and enthusiasm for action required the SIT to think strategically about the change that had been collectively sought, and how best to engage all stakeholders. From the principal's perspective this period required an approach that might, "guide the process of organizational alignment […] to emerge from within the context in recognition of the contemporary and futuristic needs of the community" (Conway & Andrews, 2022, p. 402). A key intervention to start breaking down walls of opposition, resistance or mistrust and replace them with inclusion, team building, and fun was to arrange a series of activities involving all staff members.

One such activity that was a defining moment of this reimagining and trust building was a history walk undertaken by staff where each was asked to reflect upon their time at the school and share their perspective of the school's successes, challenges, changes, and achievements. This walk back in time evoked tears of joy, tears of sadness, feelings of importance and acceptance, and feelings of inclusion. It was a turning point for staff as they came to realise their input was not only sought, but required and necessary. It was crucial to tell the narrative of the

school up until that point, and it was crucial to ensure the next chapter of the narrative was collective. It was crucial, yet for this staff an unfamiliar way of operating. It was this unfamiliar way of operating that led to such buy-in from staff, for, as Issacs (1993) advised, "[b]y deliberately not trying to solve familiar problems in a familiar way, dialogue opens up a new possibility for shared thinking" (p. 32).

The results took time, but they emerged and helped develop a critical mass of support amongst staff. The principal recalls a staff member mentioning that everybody had had the chance to say something, to share ideas, and to show vulnerability. It seemed they had relished the opportunity as they felt they had not been afforded that opportunity in the past. Through the work of the principal and School Improvement Team, Sinek's (2011) "why" had been created, and those who held the keys to success had the determination to achieve improvement. The *initiating* phase of the school's IDEAS journey had begun and a volunteer committee called the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) was formed.

The discovering Phase

The ISMT included the already established SIT as well as staff keen to offer and build their teacher leadership skills. The structure of this team required an ISMT leader, a facilitator. The teacher chosen to lead this team had the least number of years in the profession, was the youngest, and was at the beginning stages of her leadership journey, yet the choice for her as the ISMT leader/facilitator was unanimous. This was due to her enthusiasm and personality, and it was due to what they saw in her at that point in time, probably akin to what Fielder (1983) had stated, "the right person for a particular job today may be the wrong person in six months" (p. 171). Whilst she would not have been the "wrong" person at a different time, she was certainly deemed the right person by the ISMT then.

As an ISMT, quite deliberately all members had a pivotal role when facilitating workshops with staff, and the principal, whilst on the ISMT, had to allow the other members of the ISMT to take the lead. However, as noted by Harris (2008), "changing structures alone will not bring system transformation [and that] rearranging structures without some consideration of cultural change is unlikely to secure improvement" (p. 67). Thus, it was important to delve further into perceptions of the school to reveal the current state of the culture and work towards its improvement. As the discovering phase continued, there was a realisation of the need for change, and subsequently the need to know where to: the revelation of needing a school vision for learning.

The first step in discovering this school vision was undertaken through the completion of a diagnostic survey (see the Diagnostic Survey for School Alignment (DISA) in Andrews & Conway, 2019) by staff, students, and parents to determine successes and challenges of the school community, and what might be initiated or further developed. The data from this survey formed the basis of remarkable discussions. The ISMT led staff through a workshop that analysed the data, interpreted results, and collectively authored a report card depicting the community's response. The principal's role prior to this stage had been instrumental in the planning and coordinating of available time and other resources. On the day of the workshop, the principal's role centred on highlighting the importance of the work undertaken by the teacher

leaders of the ISMT leaving centre stage as the domain of the teacher leaders. The atmosphere was electric as were the contributions from staff. All opinions were listened to and valued which, as recalled by members of the ISMT, allowed for visible and transparent leadership supporting staff to open-up and express themselves. Everyone contributed to the report card and the level of collaboration, respect, and integrity was remarkable. Staff wanted to know how they fared and wanted a path to collective improvement, thus enabling a transition toward the *envisioning* phase of the *ideas* process.

The envisioning Phase

Focusing on staff was placed as a priority. Whilst living through unprecedented times, the staff were understandably feeling the effects of disruption. Any hope of revitalising a community where "teachers are the keys to success" (Andrews & Conway, 2019, p. 5) would surely struggle if care was not taken regarding staff wellbeing. The SIT therefore engaged a third party, professionals in the practice of wellbeing, to support staff with the challenges of the past 18 months. Whilst professionals in this area supported staff emotionally, the ISMT focused on continuing the IDEAS journey.

The principal and the ISMT had discovered what made the community special and, combined with the work of all staff, were also discovering what was required to make the future a successful one. As knowledge increased, so too did the clarity around where the community wanted to go. Each ISMT member contributed to setting the foundation for the new school vision through their contribution to the group, and each added more to the group than the sum of their parts. As a result, the meta-strategic work of the principal was crucial in "lead[ing] with a commitment to visionary action enabling the capacity building potential for social, intellectual, and organizational capital of the organization" (Conway & Andrews, 2022, p. 403). Reciprocally, it was important that the teacher leaders of the ISMT realised their part in leading the development of pedagogical knowledge and action, thus heightening their part in the building of social and intellectual capital.

Over the next 12 months, the ISMT led staff through a series of workshops. These workshops resulted in staff dreaming possibilities for the future of Mackellar Primary School. This information was distilled through a series of visioning activities and resulted in the creation of a powerful school vision – *Empowering Global Citizens*. Indicative of the cultural change amongst the staff, an IDEAS champion coined the definitive version of the vision statement with one of the staunchest initial resisters to change.

The actioning Phase

With a compelling and collectively owned vision, the *actioning* phase of the IDEAS journey required bringing this vision to life. The challenges that 2021 had presented also brought opportunity, and it was the opportunity to use the work being pursued in curriculum, assessment, and instructional modelling that provided a vehicle for the vision to take shape. Through consultation, heightened involvement of teachers, and the leadership of the ISMT, a curriculum and assessment audit was undertaken. Areas for alignment and improvement were identified and thus required alignment of the IDEAS work with curriculum work. Whilst the vision had not yet

been formed in the initial stages of this work, the capacity and empowerment of the teaching staff had continued to build to a point where it was possible to deliberately map the curriculum into a comprehensive Teaching and Learning Plan. It was recalled that the creating of this plan was stimulated by the principal "asking" teachers how, rather than "thrusting" a process upon them. Once again this approach led to buy-in, capacity building, and leadership from unexpected places and people.

In doing so, the principal discovered that he had unlocked a raft of principles similar to that of the principles common to distributed leadership as presented by Harris (2008) and interestingly, it was also noted that there was a strong synergy with parallel leadership (Conway & Andrews, 2022). Firstly, the School Improvement Team burgeoning into an ISMT, and then involving the whole staff provided "*broad-based* leadership" (Harris, 2008, p. 71). The way whole-staff discussion had led to the distillation of shared understandings in smaller groups, smaller groups led to syntheses by the ISMT, and the ISMT collaborated with the school's parent council provided "multiple levels of *involvement* in decision-making" (p. 72), Harris' second principle. Principle three focusing "primarily on improving classroom *practice* or instruction … [and principle four] … encompassing both formal and *informal* leaders" (p. 72) were both addressed through the formation of curriculum and assessment documentation. And finally, linking principal five, "vertical and lateral leadership structures" (p. 72) was crucial as vertical leadership groups such as promoted leaders and the ISMT worked hand-in-glove with lateral structures such as consultative groupings focusing on industrial issues and workplace relations.

Whilst these happenings were completed during multiple lockdowns, there emerged a dual purpose in creating a teaching and learning plan and opportunities for staff, out of necessity of geographic isolation for collaboration and enhanced communication during an exceedingly challenging time. This duality of purpose had "knowledge workers working in teams" (Drucker, 1994, p. 68) completing meaningful work whilst the world around them was in chaos. Most importantly during this time, the principal and the teacher leaders of the ISMT had facilitated and enhanced the notion of professional learning communities. Targeted, research-based professional development reflected Harris (2008) notion of "improved leadership practice in order to influence teaching and learning" (p. 72). It was this realisation amongst staff that struck a chord as they were hearing their voices reflected in curriculum formation. They were seeing their expertise used to link curriculum areas, and they were acknowledged for their teaching and leadership skills.

As 2021 ended, the staff had launched the new school vision, the curriculum was mapped and linked to an agreed assessment schedule, and teacher capacity for pedagogical action was increasing. The staff however had yet to discover "how" they believed students learned best at Mackellar Primary School and how this married with personal and authoritative pedagogies (Andrews & Conway, 2009). The development of a schoolwide pedagogy and pedagogical principles was one of the final components of the actioning phase. Crowther et al. (2013) defined a schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) as:

> … a school's expression of its priority teaching, learning and assessment principles. A SWP […] represents teachers' agreement regarding pre-eminent teaching, learning and assessment processes for their school; reflects the school vision and extends into the life

of the classrooms; and provides a vehicle to enable teachers to develop heightened connectivity in the learning experiences of students across year levels and subjects. (p. 4)

Put simply, the SWP framework inclusive of clearly rationalised and defined pedagogical principles provided a common language that allowed for example, a grade six teacher to converse with a grade one teacher about teaching and learning using the same contextual and research-based language.

Using a suite of staff forums, distillation of shared understandings, and facilitation of workshops, the staff of Mackellar Primary School had created their own pedagogical principles reflective of the school's mascot, a bee. These pedagogical principles emerged as: *Bee* Connected, *Bee* Curious, *Bee* Challenged, and *Bee* Creative. These principles developed from sound pedagogical practice and theory, and relevant community language in situ, aligned with the newly formed Teaching and Learning Plan. Together they provided a big picture for the destination of the school's community, the smaller parts of the picture providing the detail of how to implement the plan, perhaps similar to the words of Mintzberg (1994) when stating, "the big picture is painted with little strokes" (p. 111).

With the new school vision launched and enthusiasm at a high, the start of 2022 saw staff revitalised, students vibrant and engaged, and parents reengaging with the school. But the question remained: were we having an impact? The 2020 data from the Department of Education's Staff Opinion Survey, Attitude to School Survey, and the Parent Opinion Survey all showed Mackellar Primary School did not meet similar school, network, or state results in any measure. By the end of 2022, state and national data across a range of measures all demonstrated Mackellar Primary School had dramatically improved results and surpassed most similar school, network, state, and national benchmarks.

Conclusion

With the uncertainty and disruption previously discussed, it became evident that the school had lost its way. How far was unknown, but thanks to the relationships built, or reformed, the revitalisation process instigated by the adoption of the IDEAS project at Mackellar was the catalyst for improved teacher leader capacity built through a model of parallel leadership. The data for the report card came from the community, yet it was the ISMT who in many ways determined the future pathway. These teacher leaders led a process that involved and engaged all staff collectively and acted deliberately and with purpose to achieve outcomes. They engaged with stakeholders across the community and forged meaningful and trusted relationships from which challenging questions could be asked and answers discovered. The relationships formed amongst the ISMT led to staff buy-in, improvement, and connection. Once formed, the energy was self-perpetuating. As stated by Stoll (2009), "while school improvement is outcomes-oriented, it is a process: a journey with many subtleties that even the richest of case studies can't capture" (p. 116). Lastly, the connection with world leading consultants led to relationships with other schools and of course, the connection with the personnel of the Leadership Research International (LRI) team at the University of Southern Queensland has provided an authoritative lens through which to work, a critical friend, and robust challenge partner.

The principal, regardless of their leadership position in the school, could not have made or sustained this level of improvement alone. It is only through the leadership of the principal coupled with the teacher leaders that a critical mass of support could form, and from which improvement could result. In doing so, they were supported meta-strategically by a principal who was confident in their own ability to build the teaching and leadership capacity of the staff through careful, considered, and deliberate actions. The symbiotic relationship between these two powerful forces, each occupying a space quite distinct, yet equally important, led to what can only be described as a successful, albeit continuing, school revitalisation.

Acknowledgements

References

Andrews, D., & Conway, J. M. (2019). *IDEAS: THE way to sustainable school improvement.* Leadership Research International, University of Southern Queensland.

Andrews, D., & the USQ-LRI Research Team (2009). *A research report on the implementation of the IDEAS project in Victoria, 2004-8*. Leadership Research International, University of Southern Queensland.

Bennis, W., & Nanus B. V. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge.* Harper & Row.

Conway, J., & Andrews, D. (2021) *Time to talk – The LRI handbook for facilitating professional conversation* (2nd ed.). Leadership Research International, University of Southern Queensland.

Conway, J. M., & Andrews, D. (2022). Parallel leadership: A leadership approach for organizational alignment. In F. W. English (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of educational leadership and management discourse* (pp. 387-406). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99097-8_21

Crowther, F., Andrews, D., & Conway, J. M. (2013). *Schoolwide pedagogy: Vibrant new meaning for teachers and principals*. Hawker Brownlow.

Crowther, F., & Boyne, K. (2016). *Energising teaching: The power of your unique pedagogical gift*. ACER Press.

Drucker, P. (1994). The age of social transformation. *Atlantic Monthly, 274*(5), 53-80. https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95dec/chilearn/drucker.htm

Fielder, F. (1983). The contingency model – New directions for leadership utilization. In W. Lassey & M. Sashkin (Eds.), *Leadership and social change* (pp. 124-134). University Associates Inc.

Fullan, M., (2008). *The six secrets of change*. Jossey-Bass.

Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D., (2006). *Sustainable leadership.* John Wiley & Sons.

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. (1993). An introduction to situation leadership. In W. Lassey & M. Sashkin (Eds.), *Leadership and social change* (pp. 142-159). University Associates Inc.

Harris, A. (2008). *Distributed school leadership: Developing tomorrow's leaders*. Routledge.

Heifetz, R. A., & Laurie, D. L. (1997). The work of leadership. *Harvard Business Review, 75*(1). 124-134. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10174450/

Isaacs, W., (1993). Taking flight: Dialogue, collective thinking, and organizational learning. *Organizational Dynamics, 22*(2), 24-39. https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(93)90051-2

Minzberg, H. (1994). The fall and rise of strategic planning. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 107-114. https://hbr.org/1994/01/the-fall-and-rise-of-strategic-planning

Owens, R. G. (2001). *Organizational behaviour in education* (7th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Reese, J. (2003). Building trust. *Executive Excellence*, 20(11), 19. https://www.proquest.com/docview/204604522/fulltext/6166264369294BB8PQ/17?accountid=14647

Sinek, S. (2011). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. Portfolio.

Stoll, L. (2009). Capacity building for school improvement or creating capacity for learning? A changing landscape. *Journal of Educational Change,* 10, 115-127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-009-9104-3'

Stogdill, R. M. (1983). The study of educational leadership. In W. Lassey & M. Sashkin (Eds.), *Leadership and social change* (pp. 217-223). University Associates Inc.

Becoming a Middle Leader: Accidental, Aspirational, or Anointed

PETER GROOTENBOER

Griffith University

Email: p.grootenboer@griffith.edu.au

CATHERINE ATTARD

Western Sydney University

Email: C.Attard@westernsydney.edu.au

CHRISTINE JOY EDWARDS-GROVES

Griffith University

Email: c.edwards-groves@griffith.edu.au

SHARON TINDALL-FORD

Wollongong University

Email: sharontf@uow.edu.au

SHARON AHERN

Griffith University

Email: sharon.ahern@griffithuni.edu.au

ABSTRACT: Middle leadership is a critical feature of school-based development, but the pathways of middle leaders into their roles are varied and diverse. This article presents findings from a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with 28 middle leaders (who teach) from primary and secondary schools across Australia as part of a large school research project examining middle leaders' practices. Thematic analysis revealed that teachers' journeys to become middle leaders formed part of their ongoing professional trajectory; but, more distinctively, the raison d'être to lead learning among colleagues was associated with three distinguishing pathways: (1) accidental or happenstance, where at a particular place and

opportune time there was a need, and the teacher happened to be there, available, and "qualified" to a greater or lesser degree; (2) aspirational or those teachers with an ambition to lead and who were deliberatively and strategically working towards a formal leadership position; and (3) anointed or those teachers who were identified, nominated, selected, and then appointed by a senior leader without a formal application process. Once appointed, regardless of the pathway, it was evident middle leaders engaged in a range of similarly experienced orientation and development practices that enabled their ongoing becoming as a middle leader; these were often self-initiated and involved critically reflective professional practices. The findings have implications for the development of educational middle leaders, and how they can be supported in their becoming a pedagogical and curriculum leader in their school.

Introduction

It is commonly understood and accepted that good leadership is essential for good quality education in schools (Anderson, 2017), and increasingly, this has been acknowledged as being more than just the principal or senior leadership team. Of course, in Australia, and beyond, a range of school leaders other than principals and other senior leaders are recognised as an important part of the machinery of school activity and development, including those referred to as "middle leaders". By middle leaders, we mean "teachers who have a leadership role but are still active in classroom practice"[1] (Grootenboer, 2018, p. 2). While it is generally understood that middle leaders have always been present in schools and school systems, until recently little empirical evidence about their particular roles and enacted practices existed. The recent reports include Grootenboer et al. (2020), the government report of Lipscombe et al. (2020), and the doctoral study of Wattam (2017), but apart from these there is very little research-based information available, and this has implications for leadership pathways, how teachers move into middle leadership roles, and what customised support is needed to respond to the varied pathways.

The diversity of middle leaders in Australian schools is evidenced by the Australian Teacher Workforce Data ([ATWD], AITSL, 2020). In 2020, the ATWD reported characteristics of middle leaders in schools regardless of jurisdiction. These included age bracket data, where almost half middle leaders in the study reported to be over 50 years of age (48%), with 16% aged 60–68 years, and 2% over retirement age. Data showed that middle leaders were typically employed under ongoing/permanent arrangements (91%), with 73% contracted to work full-time. Aligning with our definition of middle leaders, the majority (87%) were engaged in teaching, with most teaching students either at the secondary level (66%), or primary level (19%); while 9% of middle leaders taught early childhood learners. In this article, we explore different pathways to middle leading, associated practices and professional learning, and we consider the implications for supporting middle leader development.

---

[1] We have deliberately not defined it by specific roles because in a large school there may be a number of leaders who do not have a regular classroom commitment, but in a smaller school almost everyone might have scheduled classroom responsibilities.

The reported findings here come from a large-scale four-year study designed to investigate the practices of school middle leaders. The aim of this study is to discern theoretically driven and empirically robust insights into middle leading practices and the particular conditions and site-based arrangements that enable and constrain them, to ultimately inform policy related to the practice development of school middle leaders. Whilst there is increasing attention currently being paid to the provision of tailored support and development of educational middle leaders, we assert that such programs of development must be informed by rigorous empirical research.

The Study

The findings reported in this article are drawn from data gathered in the second phase (of four) of the four-year project. These data are constituted by 28 online interviews conducted with school middle leaders from most Australian states and territories. Participants were from urban, regional, and remote regions from primary and secondary schools in government, Catholic, and independent sectors. Participants included 18 identifying as female and 10 as male, with teaching experience ranging from 10 to more than 20 years. The recorded interviews, which lasted between 40 and 70 minutes, were conducted online (by Zoom or Teams), and the transcripts of these interviews formed the data set.

The interviews were semi-structured, and the questions and prompts were focused on their journey to middle leadership, and the practices they engaged in as they lead within their school sites. Data were interrogated individually and collectively by the research team using a mainly deductive approach that sought to establish particular pre-determined themes and concepts guided by the interview questions; but also noting any distinctive themes that emerged inductively from analysis. The data reported here focuses on participant teachers' reported pathways to middle leadership which emerged as a theme derived from analysis of accounts of experiences.

Pathways to Middle Leadership

While it is important to acknowledge that all the participating middle leaders had their own unique pathway into their middle leading role – shaped and prefigured by their practice sites, there were some commonalities that emerged from their accounts. We have identified these themes as:

1. Accidental
2. Aspirational
3. Anointed

These are briefly discussed in turn, before turning our attention to some implications for schools and educational systems.

Accidental

Of the middle leaders interviewed, we identified five (three secondary and two primary) arriving to their role "accidentally". For these middle leaders, it was evident that their leading emerged as a matter of happenstance; that is, they did not set out or necessarily aspire to having a leadership position, rather they were given the "job" by a senior leader (e.g., often the principal) because they were in the right place at the right time, or were the only teacher available to fill the leadership gap, for some it was an ad hoc opportunity to "lead a system initiative". This path meant they typically entered a temporary "acting" middle leadership position which eventually led to a more ongoing or permanent role. To illustrate, one leader said: "I feel a little bit like I was the only sort of person available at the time". While the majority of accidental leaders appeared to be pleased to step into their roles and comfortable continuing their leadership development, one leader described their reluctance to further their leadership career, saying: "I never set out to do it so I'm not one of those leaders who wants to sort of climb the ladder and has career goals".

Invariably, this group of middle leaders considered themselves fundamentally as a teacher who had some leadership tasks added alongside their main teaching responsibilities, and expressed in this next sentiment: "As a leader, you still do need to put your main job of teaching first ... But then there are tasks and jobs, to do with the leadership that have to be done ... immediately". Generally, accidental leaders characterised their role as providing additional administrative or professional support for the teachers in their department or team, and when required, provide "back-up" in terms of behaviour management or pedagogical guidance to others.

> I suppose I am the old school head teacher who would have been you know, the one that dealt with any discipline problems – I suppose, these days, middle leadership it's still a bit about that. But also, it's about sort of growing the capacity of the teachers to deal with it themselves.

When asked about ways they managed staff meetings and other associated professional interactions, most explained that they understood that the main purpose was primarily to disseminate information, and the responsibility for more refined pedagogical development rested with the individual teacher, as evidenced by this quote:

> I talk with the teacher, you know it might only take a few minutes and say you know look, here is what we've got – here's an example of something of how you could have done it just that little bit better I guess to do it themselves.

Finally, each of these middle leaders, to a greater or lesser degree, considered their middle leading practice as focused on informing and monitoring curriculum content and the associated assessment and data requirements. By their accounts, it seemed that the nature of many of their interpersonal interactions with their teaching team members centred on procedures and systems, and involved disseminating information and supporting individual teachers "around" pedagogy, as summarised in the following quote:

> ... most of that sort of stuff comes in as emails, so I quickly shoot out the information – the other parts of it is sort of helping the teachers deal with particular issues that arise, I

> suppose a big one of them is the behaviour and the management of that within different classes with different teachers which all have different skills in that area, I suppose, some need some sort of support to discipline the students, especially when we have second year in the job who needs specific support.

Although this was not the case for all. For example, for this middle leader, it was taking up a system opportunity that "accidentally" opened the path to leading. They explained this pathway in this way, after they had come across the notice in a system newsletter:

> I guess I threw my hat in the ring, didn't expect to get it, but it just happened … but that led me into it, I liked sharing what I knew about the pedagogy of the teaching and learning and being able to instruct, so in that way I instruct teachers, I now develop professional learning for teachers in order to build their capacity.

Aspirational

The most common pathway to middle leadership emerged to be aspirational, with 16 participants (11 secondary and 5 primary) assigned to this category. This group of aspirant middle leaders was confident in their ability to lead, and they often mentioned personal leadership qualities or traits that were an inherent part of their personality, as demonstrated in the following quote:

> I've probably always had leadership roles all through my life. Even from back to primary school, I was the sports captain in high school, I was the sports captain and then I've always been the captain of the team.

For others in this group, middle leadership was viewed as a "next step" and an expected and natural career progression.

A shared trait evident in this group of aspirational leaders was the desire for change to personal and/or professional circumstances, to improve teaching and learning, and, as explained by one leader, a "moral imperative to do better". Some, like in the quote below, were seeking a challenge, while others were at a point where they wanted to move away from a full-time classroom teaching load:

> I became a middle leader because I suppose it got to a point in my career where I thought that I could do more ... I'm always trying to challenge my thinking, and challenge the way that I do things. Can I improve, what can I do next? What can I do to make things better? It got to a point where I thought, you know what? I want to be able to do something more and share what I've thought with other people. I was provided an opportunity to relieve and really loved it. Then an opportunity arose to apply for a permanent position, and then I was successful in gaining that position.

A defining feature of the middle leaders on this pathway was their commitment to personal professional development both within their school communities, and through networks outside of their particular site: "One of the biggest supports I think naturally for me is my immediate middle leadership team around me as well". This learning included informal and formal research, post-graduate study, and seeking out mentors and professional coaches.

However, some expressed some frustration about the lack of opportunities and resources for their leadership development. The following quote synthesised the sentiments of this group of leaders:

> If I heard about something that I wanted to go to, I feel like that would definitely be supported, but nothing's been organised kind of for us, where's our PL? One of us will be running PL all the time, and our professional learning is in our own time.

Aligned with this desire for personal professional growth, they also saw their middle leading as providing and supporting professional learning for the teachers in their team in formal and informal circumstances, and this included assisting in accreditation, helping individual teachers to reflect on their practice, and engaging in whole school initiatives in order to translate learning to their particular context. This leader describes the formal and informal support of teachers:

> You find yourself in a coaching situation where you're having conversations about the program, or about the students, or about the data, and looking where we're going and things, and you just catch yourself doing it naturally.

Finally, the aspirational middle leaders expressed beliefs about leading pedagogical change through focused conversations, and they emphasised the importance of relationships as a foundation for their practices.

> Sometimes as a middle leader, I find it easier for it to be an informal encounter sometimes, especially if there's a difficult conversation that has to happen. If it can be brought around and about in a way that still makes the person feel supported, as opposed to, "we need to meet, do this. ..." it's tapping into the emotional intelligence of the person, but also of the situation as well, whether it does mean that at all.

Thus, for many, while there was a single-minded focus on their work and career as a leader, there was also a sense of collegiality that was seen as vital to effective educational development in their school sites. These leaders work "shoulder to shoulder" with their colleagues, a characteristic shared by the final group, the "anointed" middle leaders.

Anointed

Finally, five (2 secondary, 3 primary) of the middle leaders interviewed were identified as being "anointed". Invariably these middle leaders had their leadership qualities and skills recognised by others (predominantly, a principal) and they were asked (or occasionally told) to apply for a particular position in their school. In this way it seemed that they were in some manner "anointed" by senior leaders.

> I applied for a teaching position. And I think that my, the boss there, felt that I had – was overqualified for that. And so she hired somebody else to the teacher position and then said, "I actually want you to be the stage three assistant principal".

Interestingly, one experienced middle leader said she had actively avoided taking on middle leading positions because she has seen others in these roles "drown in administration".

This group of middle leaders clearly considered themselves as teachers first and foremost, and perceived their leading work as something that had been added to their teacher work. For example:

> I would say that my teaching comes first. And that is how I view myself, and I think that is why I've had, I believe I've had success because I'm a teacher first and my colleagues see me as a teacher, and that has allowed me to lead because I'm one of them.

Consistent with this perspective, their leading practice could be viewed primarily as "leading by example", and their practices were highly collegial and collaborative. Furthermore, in this grouping of middle leaders, it was evidenced that they did not consider themselves as "above" their teaching colleagues, but rather, a co-teacher who worked alongside. This point is explained in this next account.

> ... shoulder-to-shoulder teaching is how I've done that professional learning piece and it's I think being much more successful because of that I think is so overwhelmed and overloaded that another session of PL they have to attend after hours is not going to be as effective as working with them in the classroom.

This was phrased by another "anointed" middle leader in this way:

> I work with teachers to develop a particular goal for their teaching, and we do it together. Then we reflect together and that's been how we've done things so I think what I do is collaborate pretty much all the time. So that's been good, but I had to have a good relationship with my people, before I could do that.

When it came to their own professional development as a middle leader, participants indicated that they had not participated in anything formal or informal, but consistent with their relational approach to their practices, each expressed a desire for some form of leadership mentoring.

Implications

The findings from this research indicated three clear pathways to middle leading. The aspirational and anointed leaders revealed similar characteristics that were evidenced in their practices of working alongside teachers to improve pedagogy. However, those who were accidental leaders tended to view their roles from a managerial/organisational perspective and appeared to see themselves as separate to the teachers they were leading. The common element amongst each of the groups was the desire for improved professional learning opportunities that include opportunities for networking and collaboration beyond their school sites. This analysis confirms the uniqueness of each middle leader's circumstances and experiences and the need to attend to the professional developmental needs in ways that support individual middle leaders.

As noted at the outset, after many years of neglect, middle leading has now become something that educational systems are actively working on, and in particular providing support and professional development. This is welcome and overdue, but it is important that this new wave of professional support for middle leaders is based on sound understandings of their roles and practices, and the nuances of those involved and their school sites – there is no single best practice that will be appropriate universally. Part of that required understanding is what middle leaders bring to their roles, and here we have brought empirical evidence to provide insights about their pathways into middle leadership.

Acknowledgment

References

AITSL. (2020). *National initial teacher education pipeline: Australian teacher workforce data report 1.* AITSL.

Anderson, M. (2017). Transformational leadership in education. *International Social Science Review, 93*(1), 1-13. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90012919

Grootenboer, P. (2018). *The practices of school middle leadership: Leading professional learning*. Springer.

Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Rönnerman, K. (2020) *Middle leadership in schools: A practical guide for leading learning*. Routledge.

Lipscombe, K., De Nobile, J., Tindall-Ford, S., & Grice, C. (2020). *Formal middle leadership in NSW public schools*. NSW Government. https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-andlearning/school-leadership-institute/research/research-report--formal-middle-leadership-in-nsw-public-schools

Wattam, P. C. (2017) *Understanding the role of the middle level leader in New South Wales Catholic secondary schools* [Doctor of Education thesis, University of Tasmania]. https://eprints.utas.edu.au/23804/1/Wattam_whole_thesis.pdf

The Implementation of Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors to Build Capacity in Australian Secondary Schools

JANELLE O'NEILL
Mt St Michael's College, Brisbane

Email: joneill@msm.qld.edu.au

ABSTRACT: *The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) current policy documents for teaching and leadership include the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profile. Whilst these documents provide clarity and expectations for the work of teachers and principals, it is argued that neither policy document services the professional learning needs of those educators with Middle Leadership roles. This study introduces and examines the use of Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors that were purposefully designed by the author to be positioned between the AITSL Teacher and Principal Standards and to be used within the local implementation of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2012b). After the first year's implementation of these Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors in two Catholic Girls' schools, qualitative and quantitative data revealed Middle Leaders' use of these Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors to develop their leadership capacity. This article contributes key findings from implementing Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors in Secondary Schools, illuminates current expertise, and informs future research in school improvement policy and practice.*

Introduction

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) current policy documents for teaching and leadership include the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2014) and *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* (AITSL, 2011). These documents provide guidance for teachers, teachers who are aspiring to apply for Highly Accomplished Teacher or Lead Teacher certification, those aspiring towards a principalship, and current principals. Whilst these documents provide clarity and expectations for the work of teachers and principals, it is argued that neither policy

document services the professional learning needs of those educators with Middle Leadership roles.

Middle Leadership is positioned between the principal and the teacher and includes formal roles in Pedagogical leadership, Student-based leadership, and Program leadership (AITSL, 2022). This Middle Leadership is viewed as instrumental in enacting school improvement as educators are required to work between school leaders and teachers (Grootenboer et al., 2019, 2020; Lipscombe et al., 2020a; Wattam, 2021) whilst providing challenge and support for the adult and adolescent population. Extensive study of Middle Leadership in Australian schools has not only revealed the significance of these formal roles but also the challenges and professional learning needs of these educators (Day & Grice, 2019; De Nobile, 2018, 2021; Flückiger et al., 2015; Grootenboer, 2018; Grootenboer et al., 2020; Lipscombe et al., 2020b). In late 2022, the significant publication, *Spotlight Middle Leadership in Australian Schools,* identified the need for "middle leadership standards that reflect the adaptive, relational, and contextually informed nature of middle leaders' work" (AITSL, 2022, Conclusion, para. 2). The challenge lies in formulating policy that includes the development of current middle leadership practice, aligns with the characteristics of professional learning as described by *The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012a), and can be incorporated in the local implementation of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (AITSL, 2012b).

The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL, 2012a) describes the importance and characteristics of professional learning in improving teacher and school leader practice. The *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (AITSL, 2012b) outlines the critical factors for creating a performance and development culture in schools. Both documents are engineered to promote professional growth through the deliberate use of the Framework's performance and development cycle. This performance and development cycle includes Reflection and goal setting, Professional practice and learning, and Feedback and review, with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2014) being used to guide goal setting. In contrast, there is no guidance for Middle Leaders to document and regularly review goals related to their leadership practice and development. It is proposed that Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors can be used in the goal setting phase of the Framework's performance and development cycle to promote the professional growth of Middle Leaders.

The *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (AITSL, 2012b) refers to the policy, processes, and strategies that support educators to improve their professional work and ultimately student outcomes. An integral part of the Framework requires educators to establish professional goals within a professional learning plan. Professional goals are often linked to standards that identify with the expected professional knowledge, practice, and engagement. The standards are separated into descriptors at different professional career stages (AITSL, 2011; Wratten, 2018). The Standards provide "the basis and a common language for coming to a shared understanding of what effective teaching looks like in a particular school at a particular time" (AITSL, 2012b, p. 5) and this article introduces novel leadership practice descriptors which reflect what effective Middle Leadership in Secondary Schools looks like.

This article introduces the author's Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors, how they are designed to be positioned between the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011) and *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* (AITSL, 2014), and their foreseeable inclusion within the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* to build the capacity of Middle Leaders. It then examines the initial implementation of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors within Teacher Development and Performance processes in two Australian Secondary Schools illuminating current expertise, and potentially informing future research in the development of middle leadership practice.

Devising the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors

The measured approach to devising the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors included examining policy documents, research, and expertise in the field. The definitions of Middle Leadership positions were defined using the Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreement (Queensland Catholic Education, 2020) as shown in Table 1. The definition of "Leadership", also shown in Table 1, then guided the audit of Middle Leaders' role descriptions from a variety of Religious Institute Schools in Queensland. Common expectations for Curriculum Leaders, Pastoral Leaders, and Program Leaders were identified alongside nuances and distinct differences in how each role contributes to the educational leadership of the institution. Overarching categories of "Spiritual Leadership", "Educational Leadership", "Administration and Management", and "Reflective Leadership" were either explicitly written or implicitly captured within these documents. These identified categories formed the four focus areas for the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors. The development of the descriptors was influenced by the employment policy and local leadership roles, research, and the author's expertise as a Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Assessor (AITSL, 2017a, 2017b) for Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) and role as Director of Professional Learning.

Table 1

Middle Leadership Definitions and Responsibilities, Attributes, and Duties

Definitions
S2.4.1 Senior Leadership Positions
Senior Leadership Positions howsoever designated include all appointments of teachers within the school who provide support to the principal in the senior leadership and management of the school.
S2.4.2 Middle Leadership Positions
Middle Leadership Positions include all appointments of teachers within the school designated to provide support to the principal in the overall leadership and management of the school specifically in the areas of curriculum, pastoral care and other program or coordination responsibilities.

S2.4.3 The difference between leadership and co-ordination is intrinsic to the accurate classification of Middle Leadership positions.

(a) 'Coordination' describes the administrative tasks of organising people and/or things in order to make them work together effectively.

(b) 'Leadership' describes a wide range of responsibilities and skills, particularly the ability to guide, direct or influence people in achieving collective objectives. Leadership includes self-development; developing, engaging, and inspiring others; thinking clearly; and delivering outcomes (p. 131).

Curriculum Leaders in Secondary Schools- Responsibilities, attributes, and duties

The role of the Curriculum Leader is to support the mission of the school through leadership of the learning and teaching program. This involves developing appropriate curriculum in line with national, state, and local requirements; ensuring that appropriate pedagogies are developed and implemented at all levels; ensuring the quality of student learning and the effectiveness of teacher practice through appropriate supervision; utilising thorough analysis of current data to inform decisions; developing appropriate partnerships within and outside of the school; and prudently administering available resources (Table 5, p. 153).

Pastoral Leaders in Secondary Schools- Responsibilities, attributes, and duties

The role of the Pastoral Leader is to support the mission of the school through leadership in the support of students as school and family community members. This involves developing and implementing effective pastoral practices which provide for students' welfare and coordinating the efforts of staff in students' holistic growth through ensuring that appropriate programs and processes are developed and followed at all levels to encourage students to embrace a way of living based on the values of the Gospel and to manage student behaviours which are contrary to this; ensuring the quality and effectiveness of teacher practice through appropriate supervision; developing partnerships with parents and carers and other appropriate partnerships within and outside of the school; and prudently administering available resources (Table 6, p. 159).

Program Leaders in Secondary Schools- Responsibilities, attributes, and duties

The role of the Program Leader is to support the mission of the school through leadership of specific academic, cultural, outreach, sporting or other defined programs offered to students and/or the school community. This involves interacting with students, staff and parents in an appropriate manner as well as developing and implementing effective processes and practices in keeping with the values and ethos of the school and designed to accomplish the desired outcomes of the specific program. Depending on the nature of the program, the role may also involve interacting with personnel and organisations outside the school community and developing partnerships that enhance results for students (Table 7, p. 167).

Note. Source: "Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreement", by Queensland Catholic Education, 2020. Religious Institute Schools Queensland 2019-2023. https://eb.qcec.catholic.edu.au/

The ultimate positioning of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors between the AITSL Teacher and Principal standard policy documents required forward and backward mapping of these documents. The 37 descriptors for each career stage in the Teacher standards are carefully crafted with lexical patterns (AITSL, 2017a, 2017b) and "define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high quality, effective teaching" (Queensland College of Teachers, 2022, p. 3). These Teacher standards clearly align with the teaching load component of a Middle Leader's role but do not define the work between administration and pedagogy nor the work between school leaders and teachers. The audit of role descriptions and the brief overview of Middle Leaders' responsibilities, attributes, and duties in Table 1 suggests Middle Leaders' work, or leadership practice, requires creating the conditions, structure, and levels of support to maximise students' educational outcomes. These positions of responsibility are clearly derived from the distribution of leadership heralded as the effective management of schools (Leithwood et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2007; Masters, 2018). Hence, the Principal standard "Professional Practice lens" (AITSL, 2014) was sought for enabling leadership practices within "Leading teaching and learning", "Developing self and others", "Leading improvement, innovation and change", "Leading the management of the school", and "Engaging and working with the community". This resulted in the use of "engage", "diagnose", "in ways that inspire", "evaluate", "create", "champion", "construct and negotiate", "create", "support", "promote", "align and review", "reflect", "critique", as shown in Table 2, as demonstrative of the specialised work of Middle Leaders in navigating continuous improvement in leadership practice and adolescent learning. This language signposts the cognitive actions of Middle Leaders' work and frames the Middle Leadership Descriptors for their use in the reflection and goal-setting phase of the Performance and Development cycle.

Motivating adult and adolescent learning includes the development of self and others along with the other components of the Leadership Profiles - Professional Practice lens identified earlier. Building capacity using the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors includes developing and sharing knowledge and practices, and establishing, cultivating, and valuing opportunities for informed professional judgement, decisions, and actions. This continuous development of educators to improve student learning has been conceptualised by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) as "Professional Capital" comprising three constructs: human capital, social capital, and decisional capital. Human capital relates to the individual's efficacy; how effective teachers are in uniting their subject knowledge with their understanding of pedagogy. Social capital relates to the collective's efficacy; how the group interacts and contributes to a collegiate, capable, and supportive culture. Decisional capital is a process that involves making judgements based on accumulated experience and expertise (Fullan et al., 2015). Each construct is dynamically interrelated with social capital adding direct value to human capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In Canada (Campbell et al., 2016; Osmond-Johnson, 2017) and England (Brown et al., 2020), Professional Capital has been utilised within professional learning communities to build the capacity of teachers and teacher leaders with benefits for teachers and for students. Hargreaves and Fullan's Professional Capital has served as a useful conceptual framework for developing teacher and principal capacity (Brown et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2016; Fullan et al., 2015; Osmond-Johnson, 2017; Spillane et al., 2003) with the assumption that Middle Leaders'

professional learning hovers in between. Therefore, as the range of role descriptions requires this human capital, social capital, and decisional capital, these constructs provided a theoretical lens to inform the intentional use of language that illuminates the leadership practice of Middle Leaders.

Table 2

The Author's Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors

Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors
Spiritual Leadership
1. **Demonstrate** a personal commitment to the [College's core values] to **engage** an effective working community.
Educational Leadership
2. **Diagnose** the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning **in ways that inspire** colleagues to improve their own professional practice.
3. **Evaluate** the use of consultative and collaborative strategies to **create** a culture of challenge and support.
4. **Champion** reciprocal learning processes that enable fellow leaders and/or teachers to **construct and negotiate** meanings leading to a shared sense of purpose.
5. **Create** programs and **support** to assist colleagues in developing age-appropriate social emotional competencies in students as they progress academically. (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills)
6. **Promote** collaborative problem-solving approaches and model timely and effective responses to families when either academic or non-academic concerns arise.
Administration and Management
7. **Align** and **review** processes, structures and resources that service optimal student learning, and **support** the implementation of College policies.
Reflective Leadership
8. **Reflect** on personal actions considering the College Mission, Vision and Values and **critique** professional leadership practices to seek continuous improvement.

Ingvarson (2009) describes well-written standards as those grounded in clear guiding conceptions of leadership, valid in promoting quality learning opportunities, and which identify the unique features of what leaders know and do. This focus on Middle Leaders' practice to develop their capacity is supported by lead researchers in educational leadership practice (Grootenboer, 2018; Lipscombe et al., 2020a; Wilkinson, 2021). The author's Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors, as shown in Table 2, are intentional statements that reflect the role description of these varied leadership positions, are anchored and informed by the constructs of Professional Capital and reflect the autonomy that is conducive to adult learning. They are inspired by an extensive audit of Middle Leadership role descriptions in Religious Institute

Schools, Queensland, the author's expertise, and research, to align with the characteristics of professional learning-relevant, collaborative, and future-focused, as described by *The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012a). Rather than standards of prescription and performance assessment, these intentional statements reflect and guide leadership practice to enable professional growth. Crucially, these descriptors acknowledge the educators in these leadership positions as agents for school improvement and support their continuing professional learning (AITSL, 2012a; Macklin & Zbar, 2020).

Implementing the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors

The Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors were designed to be used in conjunction and aligned with the current overarching policy documents *The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012a), *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (AITSL, 2012b) and within the local implementation of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. Two schools were approached based on: their well-developed implementation of a local tool – such as an Annual Professional Plan – where the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) descriptors were selected as annual goals; independent Catholic secondary schools for girls with enrolments of 900 students; similar number of teaching staff currently employed in middle leadership positions (approximately 30%) as defined in Table 1.

The author constructed a pre-recorded video to consistently introduce and navigate the use of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors for the two local contexts. Each Middle Leader was encouraged to select one or two of these Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors for inclusion in their local Teacher Performance and Development Processes, and then discuss the implementation with their line manager and colleagues. As the author's school was one of the sites for this multi-site case study, there was the potential for bias. To minimise this bias, there was no interpretation of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors and no pre-determined approach for their use. This aligns and continues the autonomy and professional judgement that has been instilled over the years in the use of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers descriptors as annual goals. The Middle Leaders were also informed of an online survey that would be distributed at the end of the year and may be completed in a voluntary and anonymous capacity. Each Secondary School agreed on a two-year implementation period and gave permission to distribute an online survey at the end of each year.

Initial Findings After One Year of Implementation

All Middle Leaders from both sites (n=40) selected and engaged with the Middle Leadership Descriptors as goal(s) within their local Teacher Performance and Development process from January to November 2022. At the end of 2022, 20% of these Middle Leaders either retired or moved to a new role within or beyond their respective College. An online survey was administered to the remaining Middle Leaders who were continuing in 2023. Fifty-six percent of these Middle Leaders volunteered to complete the survey anonymously with an average response rate of 20 minutes and both sites were evenly represented. The online survey

comprised multiple choice, Likert 10-point sliding scale and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative perceptions of Middle Leaders (Cohen et al., 2018; Merriam, 1998). The survey's 14 questions and a summary of the resulting descriptive statistics and vignettes are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Middle Leaders' Perception of the Use of Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors in the First Year of Implementation

Q1. The Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors are listed below. Please select the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors that align with **your current role and responsibilities**. (multiple answers are allowed)
All eight Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors were identified with the 67%-100% range shown below.
100% identifying 8. **Reflect** on personal actions considering the College Mission, Vision and Values and **critique** professional leadership practices to seek continuous improvement.
94% identifying 1. **Demonstrate** a personal commitment to the [College's core values] to **engage** an effective working community.
7. **Align** and **review** processes, structures and resources that service optimal student learning, and **support** the implementation of College policies.
67% identifying 5. **Create** programs and **support** to assist colleagues in developing age-appropriate social emotional competencies in students as they progress academically.
(self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills)
Q2. Please refer to your leadership role and responsibilities and the **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**. In the context of annual professional goal setting, to what extent do the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers resonate with your leadership role and responsibilities beyond your classroom practice? Note: The scale of 1-10 is used with 10 indicating the greatest alignment.
Range of response ratings 3 – 9   Average rating 6.5
Q3. Please refer to your leadership role and responsibilities and the **Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors**. In the context of annual professional goal setting, to what extent do your chosen Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor(s) resonate with your leadership role and responsibilities beyond your classroom practice? Note: The scale of 1-10 is used with 10 indicating the greatest alignment.
Range of response ratings 6 – 10   Average rating 8.67
Q4. Identify which of the following Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors you included in your 2022 Annual Professional Plan. This question will be repeated for those who used two Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors.
Q5. What **evidence of achieving this** Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor did you include in your Annual Professional Plan? Please include this evidence here.
Q6. How has this Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor **challenged** your professional practice?
Q7. How has your contextualised interpretation of this Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor **changed** your leadership practice?
"I don't think it changed my practice but made me more conscious of my goals and intentions in this area." *"The reflective and reflexive process ensures I gather data whether formally or anecdotally in daily and/or 'core' activities."*
Q4-7 repeated as Q8-11 with a branched pathway to enable the second Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor to be included.
Q12. What have you **learned about your leadership practice** through using the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors?

"The descriptors emphasise and clarify the actions involved in the leadership"

"I like the way the descriptors give legitimacy to taking the time and energy to focus on these middle leadership practices."

"That I am fairly flexible and open to change"

"That I am committed to self-reflection"

"Overall these descriptors were encouraging of the work that I do. I have struggled to find descriptors in the teaching professional standards that line up with the core business of a Curriculum Leader."

Q13. Describe your **perceived influence on colleagues and/ or student outcomes** since using these Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors.

"Expressing a level of vulnerability and clear intent of my goal development has allowed me to also witness the reciprocal nature of that sharing. I use it explicitly to support and develop staff members in a more conscious and considered way. In addition, when my goals were shared with other colleagues, there was interest in understanding the goal and the process of the development of the goal, gathering of evidence and reflection. Peer-to-peer influence in leadership can be rare in the 'busyness' of the term. This shows the potential of the descriptor to have much wider influence on others beyond the immediate audience. Overall, I believe by way of influencing my practice, the descriptor has allowed an open space, a clear conversation and a considered collaborative effort that has impacted those involved in the process."

"I will continue to seek the advice and guidance of colleagues as well as pursue my own PD learning to drive change in my department."

"It is my observation that my colleagues have noticed the actions I have taken in leading the department."

"The use of the Leadership Practice Descriptors has for me resulted in more reflection of my own practice and approaches, rather than impact on others. This is due in part to not really being able to see or measure an impact on others - or more to the point, I don't know how to."

"I liked the fact that this provided a space for discussion and connection with peer middle leader colleagues and would welcome even more opportunity for this in 2023 - in this area I feel like I have had some good influence."

"I feel that the descriptors have given me a heightened awareness of my leadership role. I think they have been an important touchstone."

"I think that, despite the challenges of 2022, staff in my department appreciated a visible commitment to College values and shared purpose in my leadership."

Q14. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers define the work of teachers, and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals defines the role of a Principal.
To what extent would positioning Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors between the Australian Teacher
Standards and Principal Standard build the leadership capacity of other Secondary School educators with the role and responsibilities such as yours?
Note: The scale of 1-10 is used with 10 indicating the greatest extent

Range of response ratings 5-10	Average rating 8.39

Table 3 illuminates current Middle Leaders' voice when reflecting on using their selected Middle Leadership Practice Descriptor(s) as a reflection and goal-setting guide within their local Teacher Performance and Development process. Question 2 acknowledges the use of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers aligning with their middle leadership role and responsibilities to some extent (average 6.5/10) compared to the Middle Leadership Practice

Descriptors alignment in Question 3 (average 8.67/10). The reflective consideration of the final question in terms of the positioning of Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors between the Teacher and Principal Standards to build leadership capacity for their like-role colleagues was most interesting (average 8.39/10). At this early stage of implementation and the relatively small sample of Middle Leaders this perhaps reiterates AITSL's (2022) need for such professional learning guidance for Middle Leaders.

The eight Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors were selected as goals within each College's Teacher Performance and Development process in the first year of implementation. However, as each Middle Leader selected either one or two of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors, the sample size is reduced when analysing the data for themes in the evidence of how the goal was achieved. Therefore, a sample of the data provided in response to Questions 4-11 has not been included for the purposes of this article. Instead, preliminary findings revealed clear interrogation of the descriptor, interpretation for a Curriculum Leader, Pastoral Leader or Program Leader's role and context, and varied degrees of developing intentional leadership practice. At this early stage of implementation, there were identified threads of developing self, developing others, and shared experience in decision making. There was a deep sense of inquiry and reflection coupled with engaging teachers in collaborative practice and focused dialogue about ways to improve (Flückiger et al., 2015; Netolicky, 2020), and wondering how to be supported in developing leadership practice. A snapshot of the raw qualitative data captured in Questions 7, 12, and 13 is evidenced in Table 3 to hear the individual voices of this professional collective. This is not paraphrased to ensure these voices are contributors to the ongoing conversation regarding building the capacity of Middle Leaders. In view of all qualitative and quantitative data, there was an effort by all survey contributors to identify how they had engaged with the leadership practice descriptor(s) as a mechanism to improve their ability or skill beyond the classroom setting. At this point in time, there is evidence of professional learning by Saito's (2022) definition where the educator "feels fundamentally challenged and questioned about their practices, beliefs, or identities" (Abstract).

This study delves into the unchartered territory of devising new descriptors to build the leadership capacity of Middle Leaders in Australian Secondary Schools. The empirical evidence generated from two schools creates an initial picture of how Middle Leaders use these new Leadership Practice Descriptors to build leadership capacity. This multi-site approach provides a composite insight however, the preliminary implementation of the Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors and the accompanying original online survey require replication on a larger scale, or over time, before generalisability of findings can be made (Cohen et al., 2018; Wellington, 2000; Yin, 2011). Transferability of these descriptors from the Catholic sector to government and independent sectors is possible by reconsidering the naming of the overarching category "Spiritual Leadership". The Middle Leadership Descriptor 1 in this "Spiritual Leadership" category aligns with research in moral leadership where values and beliefs gives schools a sense of purpose (Greenfield, 2004) and engage an effective working community (AITSL, 2021). Therefore, all eight Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors are potentially relevant to Middle Leaders in all sectors of Australian Secondary Education (AITSL, 2022).

Conclusion

The author's Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors provide a compass that guides the building of leadership capacity in Australian Secondary Schools. Their use within the local implementation of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2012b) allows Middle Leaders to continually develop and refine their abilities to excel at their work. By design, they illuminate the leadership practice of current Secondary School Middle Leaders without prescribing the specifications of the varied roles encompassed by this professional collective. This ensures the guidance of middle leadership practice can potentially be applied to nuanced contexts in Australian Secondary Schools and across sectors, states, and territories. The scope and need for purposeful professional learning in Middle Leadership to develop educational leadership within school improvement frameworks is clear (De Nobile, 2018; Department of Education, 2021; Lipscombe et al., 2020a; Macklin & Zbar, 2020; Masters, 2018; NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute, 2021; Zbar, 2017). This article has introduced new Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors which develop middle leadership practice, align with the characteristics of professional learning-relevant, collaborative, and future-focused as described by *The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012a), and were incorporated in the local implementation of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (AITSL, 2012b). There is potential for such Middle Leadership Practice Descriptors to inform the development of "middle leadership standards" (AITSL, 2022) in Australia.

Acknowledgement

References

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2011). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.* AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2012a). *The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders*. AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2012b). *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework*. AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2014). *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles*. AITSL.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2017a). *Guide to the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Australia*. Education Services Australia.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2017b). *Review of the Assessor Training Program*. Education Services Australia.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2021). *Australian Teacher Workforce Data: National Teacher Workforce Characteristics Report*. Education Services Australia. https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/atwd/national-teacher-workforce-char-report.pdf?sfvrsn=9b7fa03c_4

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2022). *Spotlight: Middle leadership in Australian schools.* AITSL. https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlights/middle-leadership-in-australian-schools

Brown, C., Flood, J., Armstrong, P., MacGregor, S., & Chinas, C. (2020). Is distributed leadership an effective approach for mobilising professional capital across professional learning networks? Exploring a case from England. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 6*(1), 64-78.

Campbell, C., Lieberman, A., & Yashkina, A. (2016). Developing professional capital in policy and practice: Ontario's Teacher Learning and Leadership Program. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 1*(3), 219-236.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539

Day, C., & Grice, C. (2019). *Investigating the influence and impact of leading from the middle: A school-based strategy for middle leaders in schools*. University of Sydney.

De Nobile, J. (2018). Towards a theoretical model of middle leadership in schools. *School Leadership & Management, 38*(4), 395-416. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1411902

De Nobile, J. (2021). Researching middle leadership in schools: The state of the art. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 49*(2), 3-27.

Department of Education. (2021). *Middle Leadership Development Program.* © New South Wales (Department of Education). https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-leadership-institute/leadership-development-programs/middle-leadership-development-program/mldp-program-content-and-outcomes

Flückiger, B., Lovett, S., Dempster, N., & Brown, S. (2015). Middle leaders: Career pathways and professional learning needs. *Leading & Managing, 21*(2), 60-74.

Fullan, M., Rincon-Gallardo, S., & Hargreaves, A. (2015). Professional capital as accountability. *Education Policy Analysis Archive, 23*(15). https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.1998

Greenfield, W. D. (2004). Moral leadership in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 42*(2), 174-196. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230410525595

Grootenboer, P. (2018). *The practices of school middle leadership: Leading professional learning*. Springer.

Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Rönnerman, K. (2019). Understanding middle leadership: Practices and policies. *School Leadership and Management, 39*(3–4), 251-254. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.161171

Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Rönnerman, K. (2020). *Middle leadership in schools: A practical guide for leading learning*. Routledge.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school.* Teachers College Press.

Ingvarson, L. C. (2009). School leadership standards. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 768-776). Elsevier Press.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management, 40*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077

Leithwood, K., Mascall, B., Strauss, T., Sacks, R., Memon, N., & Yashkina, A. (2007). Distributing leadership to make schools smarter: Taking the ego out of the system. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 6*(1), 37-67.

Lipscombe, K., De Nobile, J., Tindall-Ford, S., & Grice, C. (2020b). *Formal middle leadership in NSW public schools.* The University of Wollongong; Macquarie University; University of Sydney. https://hdl.handle.net/2123/28882

Lipscombe, K., Grice, C., Tindall-Ford, S., & De Nobile, J. (2020a). Middle leading in Australian schools: Professional standards, positions, and professional development. S*chool Leadership and Management, 40*(5), 406-424. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1731685

Macklin, P., & Zbar, V. (2020). *Driving school improvement: Practical strategies for schools* (2nd ed.). ACER Press.

Masters, G. N., AO. (2018). *Principal Performance Improvement Tool.* Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). https://research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/30/

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* Jossey-Bass.

Netolicky, D. M. (2020). *Transformational professional learning: Making a difference in schools*. Routledge.

NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute. (2021). *Middle Leadership Development course.* NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute.

Osmond-Johnson, P. (2017). Leading professional learning to develop professional capital: The Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit's Facilitator Community. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 8*(1), 26-41.

Queensland Catholic Education. (2020). *Catholic Employing Authorities Single Enterprise Collective Agreement*. Religious Institute Schools Queensland 2019-2023. https://eb.qcec.catholic.edu.au/

Queensland College of Teachers. (2022). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Education Services Australia.

Saito, E. (2022). Disruptive hooks, professional learning, and knowledge artefacts: A conceptual discussion. *Professional Development in Education,* (ahead-of-print), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/19 415257.2022.2111322

Spillane, J. P., Hallett, T., & Diamond, J. B. (2003). Forms of capital and the construction of leadership: Instructional leadership in urban elementary schools. *Sociology of Education, 76*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.2307/3090258

Wattam, C. (2021). Understanding the role of the middle level leader in New South Wakes (NSW) Catholic secondary schools. *Leading & Managing, 27*(2), 39-49.

Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. Continuum.

Wilkinson, J. (2021). *Educational leadership through a practice lens: Practice matters*. Springer Singapore Pte. Limited.

Wratten, K. A. (2018). *Implementing teacher performance and development frameworks - some enabling factors: A review of the international evidence-based literature 2008-18*. Parliamentary Library, Australia.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. The Guilford Press.

Zbar, V. (2017). *Effective leaders of school improvement: Development of the QELi framework*. Zbar Consultancy.

Leading for Success in Flexi Schools

ADAM J. TAYLOR
University of Melbourne

Email: adam.taylor@unimelb.edu.au

PAULINE THOMPSON
University of Melbourne

Email: pauline.thompson@unimelb.edu.au

ABSTRACT: This study investigates the work of leaders in non-mainstream school settings. These non-mainstream schools, sometimes called flexible learning options (FLOs) or "flexis" are educational settings which offer alternative courses and curricula developed to meet the specific needs of their students such as responding to the impact of trauma in their lives (Stokes & Turnbull, 2017). Flexi schools present challenging environments in which to teach and lead and have difficulty in attracting and retaining quality staff (te Riele, 2014). Using a collaborative yarning methodology (Shay, 2021) and semi structured interviews with leaders, we researched the views of teachers and leaders from across Australia regarding the challenges and opportunities of leading in flexi schools. We found that whilst the wellbeing of young people was front and centre for teachers and leaders, this often meant that teaching and learning was a secondary consideration. Our findings also support the view that, given the diverse range of learners in these schools, retaining the staff who can provide high level literacy and numeracy support is highly challenging, especially in rural and remote settings. We conclude by recommending action that could be taken at a school and system level to support leaders in flexi schools to enhance the teaching and learning environment for young people and their teachers.

Introduction

This study investigates the work of principals, heads of campus and network leaders in flexi schools and the specific actions undertaken by these leaders to promote success for young people. "Flexis" is a term increasingly encountered in the research literature exploring alternative schools in Australia (Baroutsis et al., 2022; Shay, Sarra, & Lampert, 2022; Shergold et al., 2020; te Riele et al., 2017). Flexi schools, catering for educationally disenfranchised young people, are generally small in scale with a distinctive pedagogy based on trauma-informed and relational practice (Morgan, 2017; Morgan et al. 2015) with high ratios of teachers and youth workers working with young people in a positive environment of unconditional positive regard (Stokes & Brunzell, 2020). Flexis provide a genuine alternative to mainstream schooling for young people

who have not been served well by the dominant paradigm of mainstream schooling in Australia (Murray, 2018). These schools are considered a different sector under the Australian Education Act (2013) which defines them as "primarily cater[ing] for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties" (Australian Government, 2013, Div 2.6). This definition is not the whole of the lived experience of flexis which cater for young people, the source of whose educational disenfranchisement is broader and more nuanced than the government's narrow definition. Suffice to say, the distinctiveness of flexis compared to mainstream schools in Australia, and their significant growth in recent years, has led to them being considered a separate education sector (see te Riele, 2014). As a distinctive sector within Australia's education system, the issues, foci, and strategies of leadership in flexis is deserving of specific attention, considering the influence of school leadership on the learning of young people (Leithwood et al., 2019). The research reported here is derived from data collected from leaders in flexi schools about measures of success, wellbeing and learning of young people, and the recruitment and retention of staff.

Methodology

Data Collection and Participants

The methods in this study were designed to develop an understanding of the concept of success for young people in flexi schools from the perspective of flexi practitioners and leaders. Following ethics approval from the University of Melbourne Human Ethics Advisory Committee, participants were recruited via an email to the leaders inviting the schools to participate. Thirteen of the 25 schools invited chose to participate in the study. The participating schools ranged in size from approximately 60 to 250 young people across all Australian states. The data were collected from two groups in the schools, the teachers and social workers (referred to as the flexi practitioners) and senior leaders (referred to as the flexi leaders).

To collect data from flexi practitioners, the flexi leaders were asked to invite teachers and social workers working in the schools to offer their perspective of the daily life of each school. In order for this to occur, the participants were trained by the researchers as Embedded Reflective Practitioners (ERPs) in order to gain an authentic view of what is happening in the day-to-day life of a flexi school. This training involved two three-hour workshops to support the participants to "notice", "reflect", and "record" what was happening in their schools over a designated two-week period.

The ERPs from each of the participating schools then came together and joined one of four collaborative yarning sessions (Shay, 2021) occurring at different locations across Australia. In these three-hour sessions, the participants utilised their own personal data gathered during the observation period and yarned together, responding to prompts designed to elicit response to the overarching question, "what does success look like for young people in flexi schools?" ERPs were free to share the artifacts (written word, photos, diary entries, mobile phone voice and text notes, pictures, etc.) that they had gathered in the observation period, and some indeed did so. Storyboards were compiled to reflect the yarning, with participants invited to write directly onto

the storyboards. The data from the storyboards were compiled and transcribed. This methodology produced data that are respectful of the sensibilities of the high number of Indigenous Australians associated with flexi schools (both adults and young people). The methodology provided the safe space for sharing of views and member checking of the data to happen in real time, resulting in rich and authentic data that synthesised the views of multiple participants.

In the second aspect of the study, flexi leaders from across the schools were invited to take part in a 30–60 minute online, semi structured interview. Seven leaders from the schools agreed to participate. These interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The Miles et al. (1994) framework was used to analyse the storyboard and interview data. This framework follows a four-step approach of data reduction, data display, identification of themes, and verification of conclusions. The data were coded from each group of participants (teachers/social workers and leaders) using the research questions and yarning prompts as an initial guide. In the data display stage, the themes across the groups were displayed to glean any patterns or relationships. This enabled the overarching themes identifying the concept of success for young people from the perspective of flexi practitioners and leaders to emerge. These themes are identified and discussed in the following sections.

Literature Review

Disengagement

Flexis have an important role to provide an educational pathway for those students whose needs are not met through mainstream schooling. Watterston and O'Connell (2019) report that in 2017 over 39,000 Australian young people of school age were disengaged with schooling. Long-term disengagement with school can lead to long-term disadvantage for both individuals and society.

Recruitment and Retention

In Australia at present there is a reported wide-spread teacher shortage. This is exacerbated in flexis. The situation appears to be worse elsewhere in the world. According to the TALIS 2018 international survey (Schleicher, 2020), teacher realities in Australia are relatively good in comparison to other OECD countries. Australian teachers are relatively well paid, they self-perceive their status as higher than most other OECD countries, they are slightly younger than the OECD average, and are positive on most indicators of teacher job satisfaction. Australia experiences ongoing teacher shortages in specific disciplines (Forrester & Alonso, 2021) and geographical areas, but these ebb and flow according to demand, supply, and incentivisation (Fahey, 2022). All of that notwithstanding, school principals have widely reported current and looming systemic teacher shortages.

Flexi schools can be challenging environments in which to teach and lead. Yet to be published work by Baroutsis et al. presented at the recent AAFIE Conference (2022) has established preliminary findings about the relative state of the flexi workforce within the larger context of the Australian teacher workforce. In short, the flexi workforce is less experienced, more itinerant, 20% casualised, yet highly satisfied with their schools' cultures and support structures, albeit in relatively inferior physical school settings.

Measures of Success

Discussion about measures of success features prominently in flexi education precisely because of the keen awareness of all stakeholders that flexi school success looks so different from student success as it typically manifests itself in traditional secondary schooling settings. In opening this section on findings from the research, it is important to first critique traditional measures of school success. Are they serving young people generally? This brief discussion helps one to understand why flexi practitioners and leaders so roundly reject traditional measures of school success for the young people in their care. From a flexi perspective, the question needs to be put back on mainstream schooling. As one leader in our study expressed it: "what could the mainstream learn from the flexi schools, and what do the mainstreams need to do differently so that flexis don't need to exist anyway?"

Questioning of the equity of current approaches to schooling, with a focus on high stakes exit credentialing as the measure of students' worth and success, is now happening on a global scale. A case is being put that learning to live together in diverse communities in a diverse world is as important as learning from the canon of traditional school subjects (ICFE, 2021). In Australia in particular, the current focus on high stakes testing at the end-of-schooling does not serve young people in flexi schools, whose needs are to develop the skills, confidence, and agency to be successful participants in their families, future workplaces, and communities. Focus on the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) as the key metric for the measurement of school success ignores the fact that less than a third of all school leavers achieve university qualifications. While more than 60% of Australians have post-school qualifications, only 31% hold a university Bachelor degree or above (ABS, 2021). Even for those bound for university post-school, the ATAR is increasingly irrelevant with the significant extension of early admission systems being undertaken by Australian universities (Pilcher & Torii, 2018), unleashed by the "major policy experiment" of uncapping university places following the 2008 Bradley Review (King & James, 2014, p. 147). A further reason to question the legitimacy of high stakes testing as the primary means of measuring success at school is young people's incrementally rising and unacceptably high levels of post-school stress and anxiety (FYA, 2018).

Findings and Discussion

Reframing School Success As Agency and Confidence

Flexis do not produce strong exit credentials when compared to mainstream. Yet their value in re-engaging young people into the community has been estimated—in economic

terms—at between $6 and $17 for every dollar of public money spent in the sector (Thomas & Nicholas, 2018). Thus, it is the daily acts of re-engagement of young people which are quoted by flexi practitioners as the markers of success. Walking through the gate—daily attendance—was frequently quoted to us by flexi practitioners as a marker of re-engagement and thus of success. Concomitant to attendance as a success measure was the return to school of a young person after a conflict which had led to their absence for a time. A "different measuring stick" for each individual was also quoted by flexi practitioners as an important facet of flexi practice that leads to success for young people.

Because flexi practitioners deal with young people who are so markedly disenfranchised from learning, "finding the small wins" is an important part of their practice in building confidence and agency in young people. Several practitioner groups told us about the importance of "shout outs"—acknowledgements of positive actions, behaviours or achievements of young people—at morning circle, the gathering of all young people and all staff at the start of each school day. Practitioners also noted the evolving agency of those young people who had learned to "call out" other young people who breached the shared school understandings of expectations of everyone at the school to be honest, participatory, and respectful. Flexi leaders spoke of the purpose of flexis as environments where young people could "find their voice" and be self-reflective of their own growth, noting that "the measuring stick looks different for each young person".

Flexi practitioners' emphasis on "finding the small wins" is consistent with flexi leaders. Both groups look to closely track not just behaviours but also small learning gains. One leader noted: "We're really attached to being able to track those micro progressions. It's really important to our young people to receive that feedback."

Wellbeing of Young People

Mental health is second only to academic ability as a key barrier to achievement of work and study goals for young people (Carlisle et al., 2019). Mental health issues are quite prominent in the flexis with which we engaged, as is a range of other situations and conditions that impact on young peoples' capacity to learn at their best. The experience of flexis that have had success in supporting young people with a particular kind of learning challenge is that it brings even more complexity to the learning space. A leader we spoke with expressed it this way:

> About six-seven years ago we started getting lots and lots of mental health young people … because once you do some good work [with] a young person within a population you tend to get referrals for other young people who have similar scenarios.

Relationships and Belonging

Both flexi practitioners and leaders note the importance of relationality which underpins belonging as a measure of success, contributing to the confidence and agency of young people. Thomas and Welters (2018) make a strong case for the causal link between belonging and the long-term quality of life of young people in flexi schools and thus the benefits of belonging at school not just for young people at flexis but for the whole of the society of which they are a part.

Thomas and Welters (2018) pose the question as to whether one of the purposes of education is "to include health and happiness as worthwhile ends in and of themselves" (p. 126), experienced in the here and now of school life rather than an aspiration for a future life. As much as the future, quality schooling "is about the now" (Hattie & Larsen, 2020, p. 219). It is worth noting that belonging is an under-considered metric for success not just in flexi schools, but in all schools in Australia which, across the country and its various school states and systems, "reported a significantly lower level on the sense of belonging index than students on average across OECD countries" (ACER, 2018).

The importance of belonging in school highlights the importance of relational pedagogy as quintessential to good flexi practice, and leaders' responsibility to foster it. It also draws focus on the key tension in contemporary flexi practice and leadership in Australia, a tension already noted in the emerging literature on flexi schooling (Mills & McGregor, 2018); that is, the tension between attending to the social-emotional needs of young people to such a degree that focus on learning is given insufficient attention. Flexi leaders expressed a deepening awareness of their responsibility to balance relational practice that focused on the wellbeing of young people with the need to provide a quality educational experience for young people commensurate with the "quality" of the educational experience of young people in mainstream schools. One flexi leader put it bluntly this way:

> I'm not rescuer, but I think some of our staff are... they think "these poor young people; they've got a really bad life and let's just bring them in and have a happy day". And I don't think that's what we should be about.

Drive for a Learning Focus

While the wellbeing of young people is foregrounded in flexi practice, staff in the sector increasingly understand the need to develop the quality of learning experiences. It is something that young people demand too. In the largest youth survey of flexi young people yet to be undertaken in Australia, Shay, Miller et al. (2022) found that young people are demanding that learning needs to be challenging and engaging.

Achieving high quality learning is not straightforward. Flexi practitioners noted that there are few reading resources available that are age and culturally appropriate for the learning stage of flexi young people (for example, who may need resources that are appropriate for a "typical" Year 5 (or younger) reader, but considered inappropriate to be placing before a 16-year-old).

There was a sense of urgency from the flexi leaders about the need to drive the learning agenda forward. The need for development is most acute in rural and remote settings. In the words of one flexi leader:

> And so what we're doing is we're really focusing on every site, every term, upskilling [staff] in curriculum. So right now, we've been doing a lot of work with staff around writing unit plans, because there's a real gap in flexis.

Another significant need is the ongoing development of a learning ecosystem which is culturally safe for the disproportionately high number of Indigenous young people in flexi school communities (Shay, Miller et al., 2022). Indigenous adult workers *have* chosen to work in the

flexi school sector in proportionately larger numbers than in mainstream school settings (Shay, Sarra, & Lampert, 2022), and there is a relatively high level of awareness of all adult workers in flexis of the need to provide culturally appropriate learning spaces for First Nations people.

Nonetheless, flexis remain places where whiteness persists as the dominant cultural norm, bringing with it issues of ongoing educational marginalisation (Morgan et al., 2017; Phillips, 2021). As one of our research participants put it: "We just need to get on the game for a co-design outcome for our First Nations communities". And another: "Cultural competency of our leaders is really critical and for our staff in general; I think is a huge area of growth".

The leadership demand in balancing wellbeing and learning was well expressed by one leader in these terms:

> I think setting the culture; we talk about this, and we reflect, and we prioritise it, and we have high expectations around our practice so it's just knowing where—when I move across spaces and have those conversations—are we paying enough attention to the work of teaching and learning, and are we having those conversations with staff? Are we balancing, trying to be innovative and looking to what young people need but also sticking with what's working and what is good practice and kind of balancing that need to evolve and change with also being grounded in good practice as well?

The focus on the development of a learning culture referred to by this leader is consistent with Leithwood et al.'s (2019) strong claim that leaders influence improvements to teaching and learning, but that they do so indirectly "and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, ability and working conditions" (p. 10). This reference to working conditions segues to a brief discussion of a final theme of the research data, that is, leadership for recruitment and retention of flexi practitioners.

On the Recruitment and Retention of Staff

As reported by Baroutsis et al. (2022), flexi workers are ambivalent about their level of professional learning and level of collaboration, although somewhat more satisfied with the level of collaboration of the school with external social service partners. The higher satisfaction with support structures would appear to be associated with flexi leaders' recognition that their schools, in the words of one of our leader-respondents, "need to be grounded in the other networks that are around us ... that are providing services to youth".

The flexi leaders we interviewed also pointed out the very flexi-specific workforce issues that they faced, particularly high rates of "churn" or staff turnover:

> The churn.... I think it comes out if people think "I can do this work with really disenfranchised young people" and sometimes they choose that work for the wrong reason—to heal themselves ... you know, they've got to be good—you know, fully healed themselves before working in that space.

Even with good staff retention, flexi leaders need to devote considerable leadership effort to stemming "practice drift" as they frequently referred to it—that is, a slow return by teachers to the teaching approaches of mainstream schooling. Practice drift is exacerbated in situations of high staff turnover, where the ability to provide formation for new workers in situated flexi

practice is outstripped by the rate of accumulation of new workers who are not familiar with flexi relational practice of common ground *with* and unconditional positive regard *for* young people.

Our research data highlighted some innovative and even novel approaches that flexi leaders are taking to both recruit and retain practitioners. For example, some schools regularly empanel young people to assist at recruitment interviews, helping to ensure good fit between prospective employees and the young people they serve.

On the matter of recruiting, retaining, and developing the professional skills of Indigenous workers, the most successful flexis in this space have utilised a "grow your own" strategy. They have used their community connections to draw well-respected Indigenous workers to their centres, focusing on the development of Indigenous workers' professional skills "post-recruitment" and as a part of a long-term plan, not as a barrier to recruitment in the first instance.

One university initial teacher education (ITE) training provider, the University of Tasmania, has trialled the exposure of ITE students to Professional Experience placements in flexi schools. While reported as a successful trial (Thomas et al., 2022), it was very small in scale and has, to the best of our knowledge, not been scaled up. Our research participants were ambivalent about preparing ITE candidates for moving directly into employment in flexi school settings, believing that early career teachers need the structures and disciplines of curriculum design and delivery in mainstream settings before moving into a flexi school.

Professional Learning to Support Participation and Flexi Practice

Flexi leaders noted that avoiding practice drift was a key aspect of their leadership responsibility. One flexi leader described mainstream approaches to pedagogy as "command and control". What is beyond doubt is that flexi young people are not motivated or encouraged by mainstream approaches to pedagogy which are, in many cases, among the factors which led to their estrangement from mainstream schooling in the first place. Technology of Participation (ToP) developed by the Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs (Stanfield, 2000) is widely used in flexis as a means of developing feedback loops and informing staff in the nuances of flexi practices that serve the diverse needs of young people. There is a multitude of ways in which ToP is applied, from short, focused conversations with small groups of staff through to multi-day, multi-campus formation days. All ToP processes share the common threads of structures aimed at ensuring all voices are heard, noted, and responded to.

Middle Leader Development

The development of middle leadership was identified as an important consideration for the future of flexi schools. Typically, flexis have flat leadership structures. As one flexi leader told us:

> We've done as much as we can to keep that in place but also have the ability to develop staff to move into leadership positions, so it's not just a staff member and then a leader and then a huge gap in between, because it's really difficult to make that gap.

Like the tension between the demands of wellbeing support and development of learning, there is a tension between "doing school differently" and the need for some hierarchy, that is,

leaders "in the middle". Effective middle leaders can—responsively and with agility—provide the feedback loops to staff to deal with the complex, difficult, and sometimes traumatic realities of working in a flexi setting. Without feedback loops and support of staff, practice drift results. Our research participants shared with us a belief that they were witnessing a growth of middle leadership in (1) flexi practice and (2) staff/student support. This is different from the kind of administrative coordination that so commonly burdens mainstream middle leaders. Flexi middle leadership growth in a particular style of non-administratively-focused middle leadership is consistent with the growing body of literature indicating that this direction for middle leadership is where its potential to contribute to positive school outcomes is strongest (Gurr, 2022).

Conclusion

Whilst we acknowledge that each flexi school is unique, what is evident from this study is that there are certain actions that leaders of flexis can take which promote the concept of success for the young people in their care. This research indicates that a strategic and relentless focus on recruiting, developing, and retaining quality staff is fundamental to the success of young people who undertake their learning in flexi schools. It was evident from the data that many of the teaching staff do not have the resources, skills, and confidence to adequately support the range of learning needs of the young people they serve. Given we know that teachers are the biggest in school influence on student achievement (Hattie, 2012), recruiting and developing the staff to do this essential work lays the foundation for success. A second important focus for leaders is to build the capacity of middle leaders. Most flexi leaders describe their flexis as flat and collaborative structures, commensurate with the flexi principle of common ground and a certain impatience for the effectiveness of traditional hierarchy. Yet as one leader we spoke to recounted, "if you go back probably less than 10 years, people did not use the word leadership in flexi because everyone was about collaborative, flat structures and leadership was almost like a dirty word. It's totally shifted now". Consequently, flexis are typically very flat structures. When one adds to this the fact that flexi schools are typically very small, there are not well-developed structures of middle leadership.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of middle leaders in all schools (including flexis). Middle leaders are important conduits for the implementation of key policies and priorities of the school and provide essential support and guidance for their colleagues. At this particular juncture in the life of flexis, an important reflection may well be the increasing recognition by flexi leaders of the importance of middle leaders. The fostering of the growth and development of middle leaders towards leadership for student wellbeing, learning, and "flexi practice" (rather than paralysis from administrative burden) is, it is suggested here, a purposeful direction for the future of leadership in flexi schools. Practice matters, as one flexi leader expressed it, because it "is not *just* about practice, but practice is at the *core* of all of our work". A focus of middle leaders on student wellbeing, learning, and flexi practice has great potential to support flexi principals in the enhancement of learning outcomes for young people; in the words of one flexi leader, it would help in the flexi leadership task of "wrap[ping] the school in

community" in all its life-giving forms, making them good places in which to work, live, and learn, despite their manifold complexities.

References

ABS. (2021). *Education and work.* Australian Bureau of Statistics. https://bit.ly/3pZknQG

ACER. (2018). *Sense of belonging at school. PISA Australia in focus: Number 1.* Australian Council for Educational Research.

Australian Government. (2013). *Australian Education Act.* Commonwealth of Australia. https://bit.ly/3EDwM4a

Baroutsis, A., Mills, M., & McGregor, G. (2022, June 30). *Teachers and teaching workforce in flexible and non-traditional schools.* [Conference presentation]. Doing Schools Differently Conference. Adelaide.

Carlisle, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Perrens, B., Perdriau, A., & Plummer, J. (2019). *Youth survey report 2019.* Mission Australia.

Fahey, G. (2022). *Teacher workforce: Fiction vs fact.* The Centre for Independent Studies. https://bit.ly/3Ik5gco

Forrester, K. (Endorser), & Alonso, L. (Approver). (2021, 8 July). *Briefing for the Secretary: MT21/1362* [Briefing paper for the Secretary, NSW Department of Education, on the Quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Review Panel]. https://bit.ly/3v6eW5h

FYA. (2018). *The new work reality.* The Foundation for Young Australians. https://www.fya.org.au/app/uploads/2021/09/TheNewWorkReality_2018.pdf

Gurr, D. (2022). A review of research on middle leaders. In R. Tierney, F. Rizvi, K. Ercikan, & G. Smith (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education.* Ahead-of-print: Elsevier.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning.* Routledge.

Hattie, J., & Larsen, S. N. (2020). *The purposes of education: A conversation between John Hattie and Steen Nepper Larsen.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367815561

ICFE (International Commission on the Futures of Education). (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education.* UNESCO.

King, C., & James, R. (2014). Increasing participation and attainment in higher education in Australia: The early effects of a "demand-driven" system. *Higher Education Management & Policy, 24*(3), 145-160. https://doi.org/10.1787/hemp-24-5jz8tqsd095g

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2019). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management, 40*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Sage.

Mills, M., & McGregor, G. (2018). Alternative schooling in Australia: Policy and practice. In M. Mills & G. McCluskey (Eds.), *International perspectives on alternative education: Policy and practice* (pp. 66-85). UCL-IOE Press.

Morgan, A. (2017). Cultivating critical reflection: Educators making sense and meaning of professional identity and relational dynamics in complex practice. *Teaching Education, 28*(1), 41-55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2016.1219335

Morgan, A., Pendergast, D., Brown, R., & Heck, D. (2015). Relational ways of being an educator: Trauma-informed practice supporting disenfranchised young people. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 19*(10), 1037-1051. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1035344

Morgan, A., Shay, M., & Proud, D. (2017). Inclusion in the middle years: Supporting ethnic and cultural diversity. In B. Saggers (Ed.), *Developing positive classroom environments: Strategies for nurturing adolescent learning* (pp. 278-294). Allen & Unwin.

Murray, D. (2018). Flexi-learning in Australia: The Youth+ approach. In M. Mills & G. McCluskey (Eds.), *International perspectives on alternative education: Policy and practice* (pp. 114-130). UCL-IOE Press.

Phillips, J. (2021). Foundations of teacher knowledge in Indigenous education. In M. Shay & R. Oliver (Eds.), *Indigenous education in Australia: Learning and teaching for deadly futures* (pp. 7-20). Routledge.

Pilcher, S., & Torii, K. (2018). *Crunching the number: Exploring the use and usefulness of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).* Mitchell Institute. https://bit.ly/34oDrhw

Schleicher, A. (2020). *Teaching and learning international survey: TALIS 2018: Insights and interpretations.* OECD. https://bit.ly/3uoAKIY

Shay, M. (2021). Extending the yarning yarn: Collaborative yarning methodology for ethical Indigenist education research. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 50*, 62-70. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2018.25

Shay, M., Miller, J., Mills, M., & Ockerby, Z. (2022). *Flexi youth voices report 2022*. University of Queensland. bit.ly/3wZtRyr

Shay, M., Sarra, G., & Lampert, J. (2022). Counter stories: The voices of Indigenous peoples undertaking educative roles in flexi schools. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 51*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.55146/ajie.2022.20

Shergold, P., Calma, T., Russo, S., Walton, P., Westacott, J., Zoellner, D., & O'Reilly, P. (2020). *Looking to the future: Report of the review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training.* Education Council. https://bit.ly/2DB9CP2

Stanfield, R. B. (Ed.). (2000). *The art of focused conversation: 100 ways to access group wisdom in the workplace.* New Society Publishers; The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

Stokes, H., & Brunzell, T. (2020). Leading trauma-informed practice in schools. *Leading & Managing, 26*(1), 70-77.

Stokes, H., & Turnbull, M. (2017). *Evaluation of the Berry Street Education Model: Trauma informed positive education enacted in mainstream schools*. Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne. https://bit.ly/3Y0KV2h

te Riele, K. (2014). *Putting the jigsaw together: Flexible learning programs in Australia: Final report*. The Victoria Institute. https://bit.ly/3nKLGL6

te Riele, K., Mills, M., McGregor, G., & Baroutsis, A. (2017). Exploring the affective dimension of teachers' work in alternative school settings. *Teaching Education, 28*(1), 56-71. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2016.1238064

Thomas, J., Coleman, B., & Herrlander Birgerson, E. (2022). Preparing initial teacher education students for flexible learning programs. *Australian Journal of Initial Teacher Education, 47*(1), 66-79. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2022v47n1.5

Thomas, J., & Nicholas, C. (2018). *Estimating the economic returns to flexible learning options in Australia: A social return on investment analysis*. James Cook University. https://bit.ly/3cj9ZMU

Thomas, J., & Welters, R. (2018). The importance of belonging: The impact of young people's sense of belonging at school on their quality of life as young adults. In S. McGinty, K. Wilson, J. Thomas, & B. Lewthwaite (Eds.), *Gauging the value of education for disenfranchised youth: Flexible learning options* (pp. 105-129). Brill Sense.

Watterson, J., & O'Connell, M. (2019). *Those who disappear: The Australian education problem that nobody wants to talk about* (MGSE Industry Report No.1). Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. https://bit.ly/37N9KWM

Teacher Leader Development During a Master's in Educational Leadership Program

MAUREEN UNGAREAN
Florida Gulf Coast University

KRISTA BIXLER
Florida Gulf Coast University

KEIANA DESMORE
Florida Gulf Coast University

TABITHA DAWES
Florida Gulf Coast University

ABSTRACT: This article examines teacher leaders' development as they prepare to become P-12 school leaders. The Master's in Educational Leadership program at a Florida university provides teacher leaders with realistic practice in each of the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) in a P-12 school setting supported by a school-based mentor and university professor throughout the program. Teacher leaders train to become future school leaders by completing a targeted internship task focused on a FPLS during each course in the Master's program. The research presented in this article analysed data on teacher leader performance using results from the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE), which is based on knowledge of FPLS and FELE competencies. In addition to FELE scores, the authors examined district mentor surveys from one course which focuses on communication and organisational structures. The district mentor survey was analysed to determine how teacher leaders grew in their knowledge and implementation of the competencies and state standards on communication and organisational structures from the perspective of their mentors during the program.

Introduction

Florida Principal Leadership Standards focus on student learning results, student learning as a priority, instructional plan implementation, faculty development, learning environment, decision making, leadership development, school management, communication, and professional and ethical behaviour (fldoe.org). Teacher leaders in this Master's program write about their standards-based internship experiences in critical task essays (CTE) that connect internship activities to a specific FPLS, coursework, and scholarly research. Throughout their program,

teacher leaders analyse data, make instructional program goals, and lead implementation and monitoring of instructional programs and professional development initiatives. They also support safety and diversity initiatives, practice communicating appropriately, and complete other tasks that support student achievement.

The research presented in this article analysed data on teacher leader performance using results from the FELE subtest-2. For the purpose of this article, graduate student growth in the competencies and standards related to communication and organisational structures were studied. In addition to FELE scores, the authors examined district mentor surveys from the Organisational Development course which focuses on FPLS standards for communication and organisational structures. The district mentor survey was analysed to determine how teacher leaders grew in their knowledge and implementation of the competencies and state standards on communication and organisational structures from the perspective of their mentors during internship activities.

Literature Review

As the practice of developing teacher leaders grows, so must our understanding of the practices that best aid in the transformation of teachers to teacher leaders. According to Bellibas et al. (2020), research confirmed that principals' learning-centred leadership had a direct effect on teacher leadership and was important for enhancing a school culture in which teachers' participation in decisions and their enthusiasm for undertaking leadership practices are supported. This is especially critical as teacher leadership is increasingly emphasised as a means of improving student learning and advancing and strengthening the teaching profession (Barth, 2001; Lieberman & Mace, 2009; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). In the most thorough systematic review of literature regarding teacher leadership to date, York-Barr and Duke (2004) note a call coalesced in the relevant research for more formal preparation of teacher leaders. As an example of such formal preparation, many in-service teachers now seek out and enrol in university graduate programs to develop their leadership capacity and skills to transform into the role of teacher leader with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. The results of a meta-analysis completed in 2020 revealed that teacher leadership was positively related to student achievement (Jianping et al., (2020).

With the development of graduate programs in higher education to prepare teacher leaders, there exists great variance in program purposes, principals, organisation, and standards (Leonard et al., 2012). There is a gap in the current body of literature pertaining to the intentional practices in teacher leader preparation programs intended to prepare teachers for future leadership roles and responsibilities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Greater understanding of the role graduate education plays in the preparation and transformation of teacher leaders is warranted, especially as teacher leadership is increasingly used in the context of school improvement. The arrival of the era of accountability in the early 2000s markedly promoted teacher leadership as a lever for improving student outcomes (Lovett, 2018; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Professional development by way of a teaching leadership graduate degree program is an emerging phenomenon in education (Leonard et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2011). Literature reveals that in-service teachers seek out graduate programs to increase pedagogical knowledge,

understanding of leadership, and to hone their skills as teacher leaders (Ross et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2011). However, graduate programs have faced criticism of poor preparation for the realities of teacher leadership (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005). Further, a review of graduate teacher leadership programs was conducted by Leonard et al. (2012), and the variety among programs was described as "eye-opening".

Despite program criticism, a review of literature reveals a set of positive outcomes for teachers who pursue graduate teacher leadership education. Ovington et al. (2002) reported outcomes of increased confidence in teaching and leadership, better understanding of school leadership, and increased assertion in taking on leadership roles. Taylor et al. (2011) noted findings of graduate programs' impact on teachers' identification and use of their professional voice and increased engagement in leadership roles and responsibilities in their schools. Similarly, Carver and Meier (2013) highlight findings of teachers' reports that their graduate programs aided their preparation to become teacher leaders and resulted in increased confidence in their leadership actions due to the gained understanding of research and education literature.

Given the potential benefits of teacher leadership graduate programs, it is important to note findings in the literature regarding the particular qualities and components of graduate programs. First, researchers articulated positive findings regarding "job embedded" coursework that helped close the gap between theory and practice (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Ross et al., 2011). Through participation in both coursework and professional positions at their schools, teachers were able to engage in transformative practice through coursework, implementation of learning in their schools, reflection, and refinement (Ross et al., 2011). Similarly, Ni et al. (2019) highlighted the positive impact of internships and in-depth field experiences on the development of teacher leaders. In addition to experiential elements of graduate programs, curricular elements such as exposure to current research and literature, engaging in research activity, and a coherent, relevant curriculum were reported by teachers enrolled in graduate programs as impactful (Carver & Meier, 2013; Ni et al., 2019).

As teacher leadership is increasingly examined in the context of school improvement and strengthening the teaching profession, it is critical to consider the preparation and development of teacher leaders (Barth, 2001; Lieberman & Mace, 2009; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). Though still emerging as formal preparation, teachers are seeking graduate degree programs at universities to build skill and knowledge of both teaching and leadership practice (Ross et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Despite criticism of graduate programs' ability to adequately prepare teacher leaders (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005), a review of the literature provides ample evidence of positive outcomes for those who participate in teacher leader graduate programs (Carvery & Meier, 2013; Ovington et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2011). Furthermore, emerging research highlights specific program elements that lead to reports of positive outcomes for student participants (Carvery & Meier, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Ni et al., 2019; Ross et al., 2011). As an emerging area of research, it is important to extend the current body of literature pertaining to the intentional practices in and key elements of teacher leader preparation programs intended to prepare teachers for future leadership roles and responsibilities.

Context for Program Development

In 2019, university program leaders and professors in a master's in educational leadership program at a Florida university analysed past program candidate performance and created program improvement goals. Program leaders and professors met with stakeholders which included leaders from each of the university's regional school districts to modify the program based on data from the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE) and the needs of the regional school districts (Ungarean et al., 2023, forthcoming). In 2019, data indicated performance on the FELE was below the state average in several areas and district leaders explained their need for embedded clinical experiences throughout the program so teacher leaders (graduate candidates) could support P-12 student achievement as they pursued their educational leadership degree.

Based on regional school district leader feedback, each academic course in the program was modified to require candidates to complete specific, targeted clinical experiences related to an identified Florida Principal Leadership Standard (FPLS) and FELE competencies. This gives teacher leaders real-world, real-time leadership experience under the direction of their district mentor (school principal) in the P-12 buildings in which they serve. Previously, clinical experiences only occurred in the final two internship courses in the program. The new clinical experience requirements for graduate students were co-developed by university program leaders and district leaders to ensure district needs were met for the professional development of teacher leaders.

Next, program and district leaders had to determine how graduate student success on clinical experiences would be monitored and measured. Teacher leaders now must secure a district mentor (usually their principal) who will support them throughout their time in the Master's in Educational Leadership program. Principals with learning-centred leadership styles directly affect teacher leadership (Bellibas et al., 2020) and provide support for teacher leaders during this program. District mentors work with educational leadership graduate candidates to identify how teacher leaders will accomplish the required course tasks while supporting P-12 student achievement in their schools. Teacher leaders are required to write a critical task essay (CTE) at the end of each course to connect their practical experience to scholarly research, coursework, and the focus FPLS. CTEs are read by district mentors and graded by university professors according to a valid and reliable rubric. Additionally, at the end of each course, district mentors complete a survey describing how their mentee improved related to the focus FPLS and how they supported P-12 student achievement as a teacher leader in their building. Graduate students must also take the FELE to demonstrate their knowledge of FPLS and FELE competencies. This revised master's program allows teacher leaders to grow in focused areas while being supported by district leaders and university professors to complete focused tasks that support student achievement in their schools.

Specifically, for this article, authors examined district mentor survey data for mentee growth in the Organisational Development course that focuses on FPLS 9, Communication, and FELE scores related to organisational structures and development. FPLS 9, Communication states: "effective school leaders practice two-way communications and use appropriate oral, written, and electronic communication and collaboration skills to accomplish school and system

goals by building and maintaining relationships with students, faculty, parents, and community" (Florida Gulf Coast University, n.d., p. 11).

For the clinical activity assignment in this course, teacher leaders work with their mentor to answer the following questions and complete tasks to support their knowledge of organisational structures and effective communication.

1. Determine an initiative your organisation has just started to implement or will be implementing. What organisation goal will this new initiative address?

2. Which stakeholders do you need input from before planning a course of action?

3. Identify which task must be done to successfully implement the initiative. Who is responsible for each task? How and how often will task completion be monitored?

4. How will job responsibilities be communicated to those who have a role in the initiative? (Remember to over communicate using various formats).

5. What information do faculty and staff, parents, and stakeholders need to know and when/how will this be communicated?

6. How will feedback from various stakeholders be received and responded to?

7. Review the plan with your mentor. Was anything overlooked? Are new job responsibilities appropriate for the individuals identified or are there too many responsibilities to be successful in their work? Are all stakeholders identified who need to be communicated with? Is the information to be communicated to the various stakeholders appropriate for that audience?

8. Implement the plan to the extent possible. (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2022)

Teacher leaders write about these activities in their CTE and connect their experiences to the focus FPLS and FELE competencies in writing. This work helps teacher leaders develop and hone their leadership skills while supporting P-12 student achievement in their school building under the direction of their district mentor. Activities like this occur in each course throughout the Master's in Educational Leadership program, thus, providing real-world, real-time clinical experiences for teacher leaders who will become school leaders.

Methods

To monitor and determine efficacy of teacher leader performance on clinical experiences, the authors analysed district mentor surveys for the Organisational Development course and related FELE data to determine whether or not graduate students improved their understanding of FPLS 9, Communication. According to Standard 9, "effective school leaders practice two-way communications and use appropriate oral, written, and electronic communication and collaboration skills to accomplish school and system goals by building and maintaining relationships with students, faculty, parents, and community" (fldoe.org). In addition to the FPLS standard for communication, FELE competencies were considered for this course. Subtest two (2) for "Organizational Development" including faculty development, leadership development, and professional and ethical behaviour are also discussed at length in the course and throughout the

program to best support teacher leaders as they prepare to become future school leaders. The authors evaluated performance on the FELE Subtest 2 and district mentor surveys for the Organisational Development course from 2019 to present. This was done to determine if embedding practical experiences throughout the program helped support teacher leader graduate candidates in their knowledge of FPLS and FELE competencies as they support P-12 student achievement.

Findings

According to district mentor surveys for Organisational Development, teacher leader candidates showed improvement from "not observed/no experience" at the start of their internships to "satisfactory level or advanced level" competence and performance at the end of their internships, within the following competencies:

- Two-way Communication,
- Communication of Expectations,
- Using Technology for Communication, and
- Communications of State Requirements and Changes to Faculty,

In Figure 1, there was a significant change in the "two-way communication", which showed an average of 62% at the beginning of the internship, and increased to 100% at the end of the internship for all 39 candidates evaluated. Both the use of technology to communicate and the competence to communicate expectations changed from 74% at the start of the internship, to 97% at the end of the internship. Finally, there was a 28% increase in a candidate's competence with communicating state requirements and changes to faculty, in which the average changed from 72% to 100%.

Figure 1

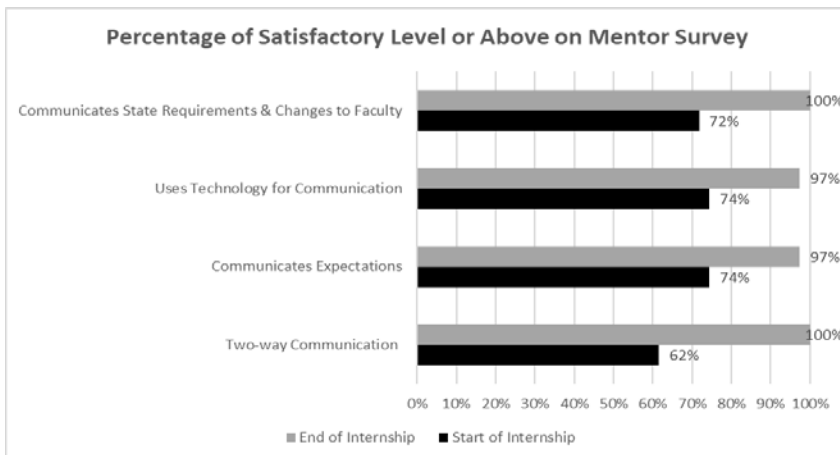*Percentage of Satisfactory Level or Above on Mentor Survey*

Figure 2 shows an overall increase in the percentage correct of FELE Subtest-2 competency scores from 2019 to 2022. First-time pass rates are typically utilised to demonstrate program growth as 100% of students must pass all sections of the FELE and may utilise multiple attempts to gain school leader certification. There is some variability between competencies and changes in first-time pass rates during this time period. Although the knowledge of "recruitment and induction practices" showed an increase of 9 percentage points between 2019 to 2022, the other competencies did not show a continual increase. Both of the competencies "faculty/staff development & retention" and "develop leadership within the organization" showed a continual increase from 2019 to 2021, but decreased by two percentage points from 2021 to 2022. The percentage scores for "personal/professional behavior practices" also showed significant variability between the years of 2019 to 2022 (20 points increase, 11 points decrease, to 3 points decrease). Although variability is noted, all areas in this subtest have shown an overall increase since program modifications were implemented beginning in 2019. Variations in scores could be attributed to continuous course modifications to ensure topics were covered or individual student understanding of topics.

Requiring teacher leader graduate candidates to work with a district mentor and embedding targeted practical standards-based experiences throughout the program led to improved FELE first-time pass rates and district mentor survey results.

Figure 2

Percent Correct of FELE Subtest 2: First Time Pass Rates
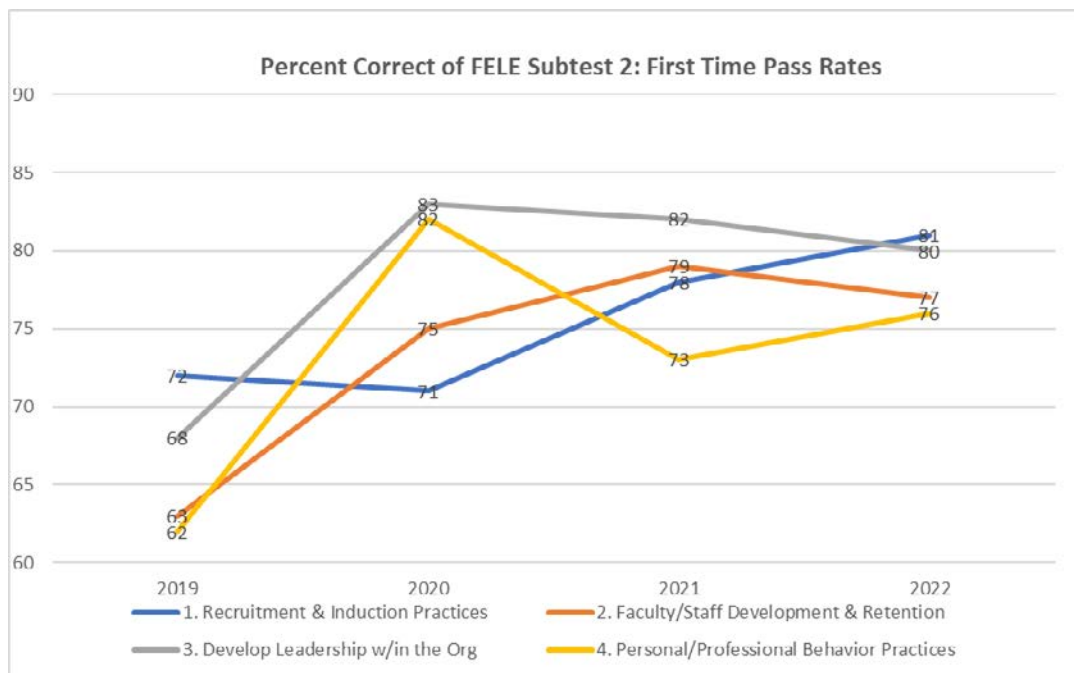
Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the small sample size utilised. In future studies, it is recommended to have a larger sample size.

There were limitations in communicating with mentors to ensure they understood each of the required tasks for teacher leaders who are graduate students. Additionally, when the survey was first disseminated, not all district mentors completed the mentor surveys for each course.

Conclusion

Graduate student teacher leaders enter this master's program with varying abilities related to supporting P-12 student achievement. This program offers real-world, real-time experiences for teacher leaders to hone their leadership skills while being supported by district leaders and university professors. District mentor survey data and FELE data indicate candidates were able to grow in their knowledge of FPLS 9, Communication, and FELE Subtest 2 - Organizational Development content from 2019 to present because of the programmatic changes that were made to support teacher leaders as they train to become school leaders. Similar data are available for each course and FPLS standard in this master's program.

According to the data presented, serving as a teacher leader and completing practical, standards-based experiences under the direction of a district mentor helps both the graduate candidate and the P-12 school in which they serve. Teacher leaders who are graduate students in this program are able to lead activities that support P-12 student achievement in their schools. These teacher leaders benefit from working with their principal and university professors to analyse student data then create instructional programs intended to improve P-12 student achievement. In addition, they lead implementation and monitoring of instructional programs and professional development initiatives to support their colleagues while serving in their teacher leader role. Teacher leaders also gain experience in supporting safety and diversity initiatives and communicating effectively, among other tasks that support P-12 student achievement in their schools.

Disclosure Statement: The authors state there are no competing interests to declare.

Data Statement: Supporting data are available upon request.

References

Barth, R. S. (2001). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 443-449. https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217010 8200607

Bellibas, M. Ş., Gumus, S., & Kılınç, A. Ç. (2020). Principals supporting teacher leadership: The effects of learning-centred leadership on teacher leadership practices with the mediating role of teacher agency. *European Journal of Education, 55*(2), 200-216.

Carver, C. L., & Meier, J. M. (2013). Gaining confidence, managing conflict: Early career conceptions of teacher leadership during graduate coursework. *The New Education, 9*(3), 173-191. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 1547688X.2013.806723

Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(8), 597-604.

Florida Department of Education. (n.d.). *Principal leadership standards*. https://www.fldoe.org/core/file parse.php/7566/urlt/0075276-principalleadershipstandards.pdf

Florida Department of Education. (n.d.). *Subtest #2: Organizational development.* https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/3/urlt/cs_subtest2.pdf

Florida Gulf Coast University. (n.d.). *College of Education – General course information.* https://fgcu-web04.fgcu.edu/syllabi/202201/14438/14438_202201.pdf,

Florida Gulf Coast University. (2022). *EDA 6192 Organizational development course syllabus.* https://www.coursicle.com/fgcu/courses/EDA/6192/

Hess, F. M., & Kelly, A. P. (2007). Learning to lead: What gets taught in principal preparation programs. *Teachers College Record, 109*(1), 244-274.

Jianping, S., Huang, W., Reeves, P., Yunzheng, Z., Ryan, L., & Anderson, D. (2020). The association between teacher leadership and student achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review, 31.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100357

Leonard, J., Petta, K., & Porter, C. (2012). A fresh look at graduate programs in teacher leadership in the United States. *Professional Development in Education, 38*(2), 189-204. https://doi.org/10.1080/194152 57.2012.657826

Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders. Education Schools Project.* http://edschools.org/pdf/Final313.pdf

Lieberman, A., & Mace, D. (2009). The role of "accomplished teachers" in professional learning communities: Uncovering practice and enabling leadership. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 15*(4), 459-470. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600903057237

Lovett, S. (2018). *Advocacy for teacher leadership: Opportunity, preparation, support, and pathways*. Springer.

Mangin, M. M., & Stoelinga, S. R. (2008). *Effective teacher leadership: Using research to inform and reform.* Teachers College Press.

Ni, Y., Rorrer, A. K., Pounder, D., Young, M., & Korach, S. (2019). Leadership matters: Preparation program quality and learning outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 57*(2), 185-206.

Ovington, J. A., Diamantes, T., & Roby, D. A. (2002). An early distance learning success story: The teacher leader program. *College Student Journal, 36*(3). https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=google scholar&id=GALE|A95356590&v=2.1&it=r&sid=AONE&asid=53313022

Ross, D., Adams, A., Bondy, E., Dana, N., Dodman, S., & Swain, C. (2011). Preparing teacher leaders: Perceptions of the impact of a cohort-based, job embedded, blended teacher leadership program. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(8), 1213-1222. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.06.005

Taylor, M. Goeke, J., Klein, E., Onore, C., & Geist, K. (2011). Changing leadership: Teachers lead the way for schools that learn. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(5), 920-929. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.03.003

Ungarean, M., Bixler, K., & Desmore, K. (2023, forthcoming). Forming a unique partnership between a university's Educational Leadership Masters' Degree program and its surrounding school districts using the Five Whys protocol. *Journal of Formative Design.*

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316.

Teacher Leaders: Profiles of Difference and Conviction

CHARLES F. WEBBER
Mount Royal University

Email: cfwebber@mtroyal.ca

ABSTRACT: This report summarises the findings from the oral history component of the International Study of Teacher Leadership. *Four secondary school teachers were identified as teacher leaders by their peers, school and district administrators, and former students. They agreed to participate in online interviews in which they told their stories of teacher leadership. They were unique individuals who represented unusually high levels of academic and coaching success. They were diverse in terms of race, linguistic background, academic profiles, and pedagogical orientations. They shared an extraordinary capacity to demonstrate social and political acumen in their facilitation of improved teaching and learning in secondary school settings, even in schools with entrenched practices and in departments populated almost entirely with senior teachers who were near retirement ages. A collective profile of teacher leadership emerged from the coding of interview data. Attributes included a high value placed on formal and informal professional learning, reluctance to describe themselves as leaders, altruistic motivations, resistance to appointment as formal school leaders, an inclination toward "edginess" in their approaches to teaching, extraordinary influence throughout school and provincial educational communities, and a reliance on supportive school principals.*

Introduction

Teacher leadership is an area of increasing interest in the field of school leadership and administration. Pan et al. (2023) identified a series of influential reports that suggested that shared leadership between teachers and formal school leaders may lead to improved instruction and increased student achievement. They noted York-Barr and Duke's (2004) frequently cited summary of the teacher leadership literature, Wenner and Campbell's (2017) subsequent literature review, and the more recent systematic review provided by Schott et al. (2020). The work of Harris and associates (Harris, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2020) also was included as significant. Andrews and Crowther's (2002) presentation of the concept of parallel leadership in relation to school reform was highlighted as noteworthy.

This report describes four teacher leaders who exercised unusual influence throughout their school communities. The teacher leaders held strong opinions that garnered peer support and recognition but also generated tensions and conflict.

Study Framework

The study of four influential teacher leaders is part of the oral history component of a multi-stage study called the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* (ISTL)[1] conducted in 12 countries. The primary research question is: *How is teacher leadership conceptualised and enacted and what are the implications for educational stakeholders?* As shown in Figure 1, the ISTL research design consists of six components.

Figure 1

International Study of Teacher Leadership Research Design
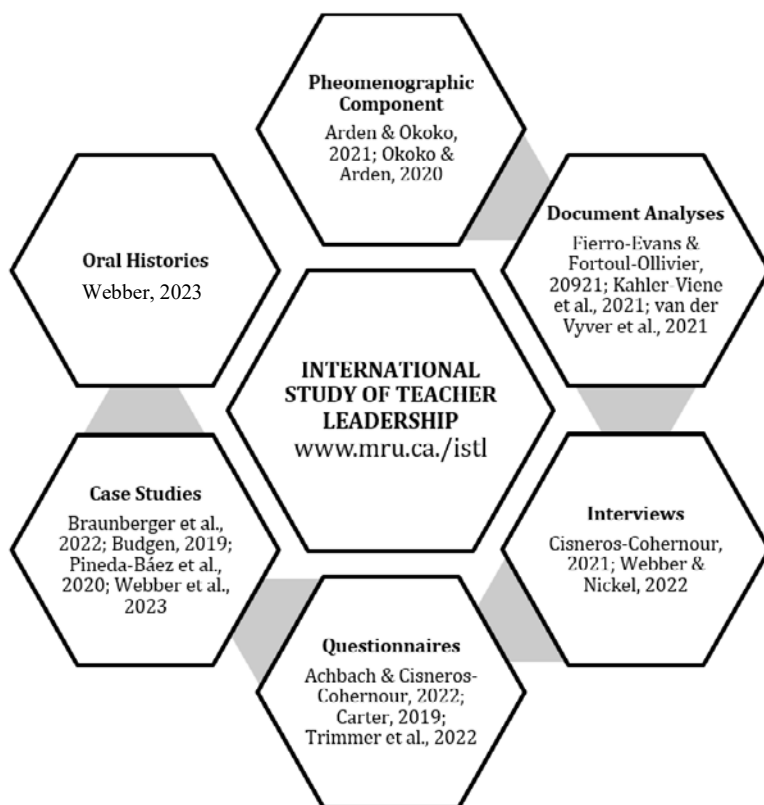
The findings of ISTL components conducted prior to the oral history stage are identified in Figure 1 and in an edited book *Teacher leadership in international contexts* (Webber, 2023).

---

[1] This report is based on research done as part of the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* conducted in Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Mexico, Morocco, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey. For more information, see the study website: www.mru.ca/istl

The term oral history was used to guide the interviews. Ritchie (2014) described oral history as the collection of memories and personal commentaries "from which meaning can be extracted and preserved" (p. 1).

Four classroom teachers working in a large urban Canadian Catholic school district were nominated by their peers, school and district leaders, and former students as teacher leaders who exercised unusual influence within their school communities. The four teachers participated in online semi-structured interviews. Interview data were analysed to create a composite profile of teacher leaders rather than to present discrete descriptions of each study participant.

Oral History Participants

The four teacher leaders (see Table 1) were particularly unique individuals, even in the context of a large urban district with highly diverse students and community members.

Table 1

Study Participants

Participant	Professional and Personal Interests
Mid-career senior high school female teacher Canadian of Asian heritage Undergraduate degree plus two master's degrees 18 years of teaching experience	Social studies curriculum Alternative student assessment strategies Provincial curriculum advisory role Student social justice club Civil rights movement LGBTQ issues Self-perception as a leader has changed since having her own children
Mid-career senior high school teacher Canadian multi-racial male International private school teaching experience Double degrees in English and religious studies, plus a Master of Education 12 years of teaching experience	Provincial level English curriculum leader Buddhism Department head for several years District anti-racism initiative founder LGBTQ student club facilitator Alternative assessment initiatives White fragility
Mid-career male teacher in K-9 school Refugee from southeast Asia Non-English speaker as a child 16 years of teaching in two major Canadian cities	Coach of 14 city championship school teams District racial justice committee Teacher advocacy Parents were professionals in Asia but served as cleaners and drivers in Canada
Mid-career female high school teacher Immigrant from eastern Europe PhD in engineering Bachelor of Education 15 years of teaching	Math and physics curriculum Curriculum leader in a high school Learners who are new Canadians Teacher leader – principal relations Education in a civil society

Collective Attributes

Six themes were discerned within the oral histories.

Professional Learning

Professional learning was a strong presence in the lives of three of the four study participants. One teacher leader had completed an undergraduate degree plus two master's degrees. A second participant had been awarded two undergraduate degrees and a master's degree. A third participant had completed a series of undergraduate and graduate degrees in eastern Europe that culminated in a Doctor of Philosophy degree, followed by another undergraduate degree from a Canadian research-intensive university.

The impetus for pursuing graduate studies varied. One noted that the initial purpose was to increase her salary: "So in all honesty, I did my first one [graduate degree] to get paid more, but I didn't realize the benefits until I was in the midst of it, and I was learning so much."

Another teacher leader seemed to be motivated more by intrinsic motivations that led to three university degrees. He also participated in an ongoing series of informal professional development experiences.

The teacher leader with multiple degrees from eastern Europe completed a Bachelor of Education in Canada to gain teacher certification. Her participation in her studies in Canada was marked by some frustration and evidence of high levels of personal professional autonomy:

> … so the professor that we had was telling us about the curriculum in I believe it was Nevada … and I actually remember asking her like shouldn't you talk about the curriculum in [this province] so that we are aware of what we are teaching our kids when we go to teach them. And I remember that I got an answer from her that was not satisfying my logic and I was like "Okay, whatever. I have to do this work by myself." And I remember coming home and printing the curriculum for math from Grade 1 to Grade 12 so that I could see where the students are coming from and what steps they have to go through in order to reach the outcomes in grade 12 .

One exception to the pattern of valuing formal education was the study participant who completed his initial teacher education degree and chose not to continue with additional university studies. Highly regarded by his peers, this teacher's professional learning experiences may be missed opportunities for him to shift from an intuitive approach that positively influences students and peers to one that is better informed and more intentional (Webber, 1994). For instance, he observed that his lesson preparation is minimal, "Yeah, no, with math, there's not too much planning. It's just following the textbook".

Motivations and Principles

All four study participants were leery of the term "leader". They understood that others might perceive them as leading in some ways but, as one reflected, "I never would have called myself a teacher leader".

Another disclosed that, "At first, when I saw the words teacher leader, I wasn't sure what it was". He agreed that perhaps he does lead, "You know, I'm not one to ask other people. I just step up and just do it". He stressed the importance of being someone who really cares, "not only about their students, but also about the school environment". He said that "the best way to lead is to lead by example". Another participant declared:

> So, every teacher should see themselves as a leader but not a leader as "my students are my soldiers" but leader as "my students now are independent thinkers, and they can think on their own". It's more the principles that stand behind those things. Like why do we have to be better human beings and why do we have to be responsible for our actions? Why is it important for us to respect others? And to respect others' opinions?

The same teacher stated that being a leader "is not to do all the work, but to have a vision and leave them [students and colleagues] enough space to create a good environment so they are fully applying themselves". Her goal is that "At the end of the day, I want to have good human beings that are able … Good citizens that are able to do, in my case, Science". She uses questions to facilitate her students' progress toward her vision of being a good person. "I always ask questions to make them think [about why they are] doing this? … Why don't you check it with the principles that you have in life?"

Formal Leadership Aspirations

All study participants expressed reluctance to leave their classroom teaching appointments. One teacher leader had served as a department head in a large high school but left that role, despite having an earlier intention of working toward a principalship. One reason was his responsibility as a parent of a young daughter. Another was his perception that he was having a positive impact by leading curricular initiatives, serving as staff liaison with a student social justice club, and founding a district-wide anti-racism committee.

A similar view was offered by a teacher leader who simply did not want to leave classroom teaching and, in fact, had twice refused invitations from formal school leaders to apply for assistant principal positions. She emphasised, "I love teaching, and to go into administration would take me away from what I love and the curriculum". She stated, "I hate to say it. There is a lot of politics in everything". She thought this even though, "I think if you have a title, it is easier to get your voice heard [but] I have no desire!" Another teacher leader offered a parallel view: "You don't need a title to be a leader".

Finally, one of the teacher leaders succinctly summarised study participants' shared view that they valued informal leadership more than formal leadership: "There's a huge difference between a leader and a boss".

"Edginess"

Study participants were cautious about describing themselves as teacher activists. Given their reluctance to be labelled activists, the colloquial descriptor of "edginess" was chosen to describe this dimension of their collective attributes, as in daring or provocative (Walker, 2005).

One teacher leader noted that, although she saw herself as non-confrontational, "When I do speak up or I stand my ground I think that people realize, okay, she feels strongly about this, and maybe we should listen to her". She described how she and several colleagues worked to have a former political figure speak to students in her school district. She and her team worked around the school district's resistance to the speaker's well known advocacy for birth control, which goes against Catholic teachings: "Anyway, we worked around it and we had to really be [strategic] in how we approached things".

A study participant told how he engaged with a professor in his graduate program who described the teacher leader's neighbourhood in an unflattering manner. The teacher leader stated:

 I don't know, [I had] a bit of a chip on my shoulder with it too, right? We had a discussion, but she took it [and] I did everything in that class to be a strong voice for my community.

The same teacher shared how he uses Tupac Shakur's poem *The Rose that Grew from Concrete* to provoke consideration of diversity, racism, and anti-racism. He described how one of his students declared, "If I want to learn from a white male, I will just ask my dad. I want other perspectives too. ... Very profound comment from a seventeen-year-old, right?" The teacher noted that, "I refuse to teach any authors that are dead white males in my classroom" and that he visits high school classrooms to "guest lecture on some race issues, be it the history of literature or the use of the N word, or politics in sports as they deal with race".

Although the teacher leaders did not describe themselves as activists per se, one observed, "I think if you are a leader and you are not willing to [engage with the school community], then it is just going to be stale, and you are not going to grow".

Influence

Two of them reported extensive involvement in building relationships through coaching a range of sports teams, with one stating, "I've coached everything from cross country, wrestling, basketball, badminton, track and field, [and] volleyball". The other noted his role as a football coach, a sport at his school with an intense level of intergenerational support that included some fathers and grandfathers, who had been players when they were students at the high school, attending practices and game, sometimes wearing their old team jackets.

Significantly, both teachers who served as coaches also offered ongoing support to LGBTQ students and to educating students about racial justice. The football coach, a former player himself, observed the irony associated with his role as a founder of the LGBTQ club at his school while coaching a sport often viewed as promoting homophobic stereotypes.

Two of the teacher leaders described how they worked with colleagues on department-wide curricular initiatives. In one school the teacher leader led his colleagues in combining three or four classes in his subject area and developing weeklong inquiry projects: "I will take three or four classes of our English classes, and we have a team teaching theater, so those other teachers and I will do lessons and discussions for a week". The same teacher described how his grade eleven students "do a massive podcast project … and three quarters of them get them put out as Apple podcasts or a Spotify podcast".

In another school, the study participant led her departmental colleagues in altering how they taught their subject:

> So all grade tens in [the subject] didn't have to do a final exam and instead they had to do this final project. It really changed the way our department approached how to teach and how to give kids more power over their learning and how to teach them that [the subject] was more than just multiple-choice exams and writing essays; it is about being active, being in the community, and they learned skills on how to present.

Two teacher leaders reported that they facilitated curricular change in unlikely contexts. One described his school as:

> … a school with huge tradition…. they say that over fifty percent of the staff went there, including our principal and two of our VPs this past year, and our caretaker. … It is a very grounded community, and … I teach some very off the beaten path texts, very non-traditional.

The other curricular leader observed that in her department:

> They are all male. They are all a lot older. They are nearing retirement age, so I feel I bring a different perspective when it comes to teaching because I don't emphasize the traditional stuff, and I feel like that is being welcomed.

A third teacher leader shared how she was intrigued by moving to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued in that teaching mode even after most of the district returned to in-school teaching. "I liked the online experience, and I considered that every day was PD. Every day I was doing something new, looking for a way to improve or make or create something". She influenced her colleagues by addressing a series of questions focused on instructional improvement: "What was the best practice that you had this week? How can we improve them? What were the students' reactions to this or that? What were the results? And how can we make them better?"

It is noteworthy that two of the study participants volunteered to mark the provincial Diploma Examinations that all grade twelve students must take. The first teacher leader explained that he marked provincial exams "because we have an incredible curriculum". A second teacher leader shared how some of her colleagues said, "'You don't make sense! You mark Diplomas and you are against Diplomas!' [But] our students have to do Diplomas and I feel that if I have to get my students ready [so] I might as well know the process". This teacher leader also demonstrated province-wide influence: "I actually work as well with the Alberta Teachers' Association, giving PD to other teachers around the province".

Study participants noted increasing levels of parent involvement in school and district decision making. A teacher leader cautioned:

> I find parents have a lot more say at the school I am at now, and it almost hinders what I [can] do as well … A lot of these parents, they are successful, right? They are successful business owners, they work oil and gas, they are lawyers, they are doctors, and I don't think they have a good perception of teachers.

She continued, "I just find that I have to be more careful with how I teach things and what I teach".

Principal Support

One teacher suggested his early experiences in his current school included writing "the N word across the board in big letters, like in my second week of teaching and we [he and his students] had some really raw conversations about that". However, "I remember my principal walked into the room and saw that on the board and her eyes were opened, and … she called me to the office later that day … and I explained to her, and she was incredibly supportive".

Another teacher leader appreciated how her principal's responses to "parents who said how I approach the curriculum is too political or I have a political agenda". She contrasted the support of her current principal with how a change in principals at her previous high school led to her stating, "Oh my gosh! Like I can't even tell you how much I fought with admin … Yeah, lots of tears were shed that year!"

A less turbulent and more supportive teacher-principal relationship emerged for one teacher leader:

> So, I was doing a fundraising on this, and the vice principal was kind of giving me a hard time … But at the end she came into the agreement because the principal approved so she had no power I guess, no say in this.

Takeaways

First, the teacher leaders demonstrated an unusually strong commitment to formal university education in a broad range of academic disciplines, while also challenging and interrogating what they were taught. Most of them also valued informal professional learning in the form of seminars and workshops, plus service on district and provincial committees.

Second, the teacher leaders appeared to be intrinsically motivated to improve learning and social conditions for their students and colleagues. The motivations they expressed were altruistic in nature. They took obvious pride in their work and there was evidence of a strong sense of purpose, a vision for their students' learning.

Third, the teacher leaders were not drawn to formal leadership positions. Rather, they were motivated by the opportunities that classroom teaching appointments provided them to engage in instructional improvement and collaborative initiatives. Indeed, they observed that formal leadership appointments might limit their intellectual freedom and compel them to accommodate the political dimensions of leadership.

Next, the teacher leaders demonstrated their potential to challenge and even irk colleagues, students, parents, and formal leaders. The oral histories included examples of behaviours in and out of their classrooms that could have led to conflict and tension among the members of their school communities and, in some instances, did.

Fifth, the teacher leaders successfully facilitated school improvement initiatives that challenged long standing values and practices. Their influence was evident in their schools and throughout the contexts of school community, church, ministry of education, and the teachers' union. They led in the dimensions of curriculum, pedagogy, community values, athletics, student assessment, and professional accountability.

Another significant takeaway is that the same teacher leaders could be perceived positively by some formal leaders and negatively by others. Evidently the relationship between teacher leaders and their principals can make or break the effectiveness of teacher leaders.

Conclusion

The participants in the oral history component of the ISTL saw themselves as different from most of their colleagues. Their origins were not mainstream and that may have fostered their interest in supporting learners who also were different because of their race, sexual orientation, linguistic backgrounds, and cultures.

The teacher leaders grew their knowledge and self-understanding by attaining high levels of academic and athletic success. They clearly were not satisfied with being good enough. In fact, their reflective comments suggested that they wanted to continue to grow and learn.

A prescriptive description or definition of teacher leadership continues to be elusive, and the observations gleaned from this oral history report do not provide either. It may be enough to describe teacher leadership as the influence of classroom teachers in the interest of improving teaching and learning. Further, perhaps Leithwood's (2007) questioning if teacher leadership is "what most professions would agree are the normal responsibilities expected of a collection of professionals" (p. 43) remains valid. Nonetheless, the ongoing intent of the ISTL is to explore how teacher leadership is understood and enacted. It is an effort to continue opening what Andrews and Crowther (2002) called the "black box" of teacher leadership and school improvement.

References

Achach, L. G., & Cisneros-Cohernour, E. J. (2022, Noviembre). Liderazgo Docente: factores que inhiben o facilitan su desarrollo. Ponencia presentada en el IV Congreso de Investigadoras en Iberoamérica. Puebla: México.

Andrews, D., & Crowther, F. (2002). Parallel leadership: A clue to the contents of the black box of school reform. *International Journal of Educational Management, 16*(4), 152-159.

Arden, C., & Okoko, J. (2021). Exploring cross-cultural perspectives of teacher leadership among the members of an international research team: A phenomenographic study. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 6*(1), 51-90. https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.3

Braunberger, D., Webber, C. F., Nickel, J., & Hamilton, S. (2022, April 9-12). *Teacher leadership in Alberta* [Conference presentation].CAP - ULead – The Summit of Educational Leadership, Banff, Canada.

Budgen, Z. (2019). *Exploring teacher leadership in action: A rural Australian school perspective* [Unpublished research report]. University of Southern Queensland.

Carter, D. (2019). *Exploring a survey component of teacher leadership: A thematic analysis within one Australian school system* [Unpublished research report]. University of Southern Queensland.

Cisneros-Cohernour, E. J. (2021). The key role of administrators in supporting teacher leadership and professionalism in southern Mexico. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 6*(1), 313-340. https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.10

Fierro-Evans, C., & Fortoul-Ollivier, B. (2021). Reflexivity: An essential feature of teacher leadership in Mexico, Colombia and Spain. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 6*(1), 164-197. https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.6

Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: Heresy, fantasy or possibility. *School Leadership and Management, 23*(3), 313-324.

Kahler-Viene, N., Conway, J. M., & Andrews, D. (2021). Exploring the concept of teacher leadership through a document analysis in the Australian context. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 6*(1), 200-239. https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.7

Leithwood, K. (2007). What we know about educational leadership. In J. M. Burger, C. Webber, & P. Klinck (Eds.), *Intelligent leadership* (pp. 41-66). Springer.

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2006). Teacher led school improvement: Teacher leadership in the UK. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(8), 961-972. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.010

Nguyen, D., Harris, A., & Ng, D. (2020). A review of the empirical research on teacher leadership (2003–2017). Evidence, patterns and implications. *Journal of Educational Administration, 58*(1), 60-80. http://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2018-0023

Okoko, J., & Arden, C. (2020, January 6-10). Exploring cross-cultural perspectives of teacher leadership among researchers: A phenomenographic study [Conference presentation]. Learning Walkthrough – Educational Leadership Network, International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), Marrakech, Morocco.

Pan, H. W., Wiens, P. D., & Moyal, A. (2023). A bibliometric analysis of the teacher leadership scholarship. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 121*, 2-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103936

Pineda- Báez, C., Bauman, C., & Andrews, D. (2020). Empowering teacher leadership: A cross-country study. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 23*(4), 388-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1543804

Ritchie, D. A. (2014). *Doing oral history*. Oxford University Press.

Schott, C., van Roekel, H., & Tummers, L. G. (2020). Teacher leadership: A systematic review methodological quality assessment and conceptual framework. *Educational Research Review, 31*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100352

Trimmer, K., Andrews, D., & Conway, J. (2022). *System-school interpretations of teacher leadership in the Toowoomba Catholic Schools System*. A report to the Toowoomba Catholic Schools. Leadership Research International, University of Southern Queensland.

van der Vyver, C. P., Fuller, M. P., & Khumalo, J. B. (2021). Teacher leadership in the South African context: Areas, attributes and cultural responsiveness. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 6*(1), 127-162. https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.5

Walker, R. (2005, April 29). *On the edge - or even over the line*. Christian Science Monitor.

Webber, C. F. (1994). School culture. In R. R. O'Reilly & S. Sikora (Eds.), *Becoming a Canadian teacher* (pp. 152-167). University of Calgary.

Webber, C. F. (Ed.). (2023). *Teacher leadership in international contexts.* Springer. ISBN: 978-3-031-25763-6

Webber, C. F., Braunberger, D., Nickel, J., & Hamilton S. (2023, April 13-16). Successful teacher leadership: A case study [Conference presentation]. The annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Webber, C. F., & Nickel, J. (2022). A vibrant and empowering context for teacher leaders. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning, 22*(1), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll2

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316.

Comprehensive History of ACEL

Written by Dr Marie Jansen (FACEL)

https://www.acel.org.au/ACELWEB/About/Comprehensive_History_of_ACEL.aspx

How It All Started: The History of ACEL

In the literature of professionalism, there is general agreement that the establishment of a professional association represents an important early step in the evolution of an occupation into a full profession. The founding of the Australian Council for Educational Administration in 1973 is linked to this concept of an 'emerging' profession. By the 1950's the study of educational administration as a discipline, still in its infancy in Australia, was already well established in the USA. Goldhammer recalled the excitement of those early years: "It was great to be an administrator and scholar of educational administration in the decade of the 1950's, but to be young and have a part in the rebuilding of a professional orientation was heaven".

The field was permeated with a new enthusiasm and hope that out of the new research and analysis would come the true foundation for a sound professional approach to educational administration. The efforts of these 'administrators and scholars' had led to the formation of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), an organisation representing major universities in the United States and Canada, established with the aim of advancing research and development in educational administration.

In the mid 1960's, an enthusiastic Australian, William Walker, was a Visiting Professor at the University of California at Berkley. He was asked to organise a conference for educational administrators 'in his spare time', with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. This 1966 conference became known as the First International Intervisitation Program – participants held a residential seminar in Michigan during week 1, visited US universities in weeks 2 and 3, before assembling in Alberta to report their findings. Enthusiasm ran high. A Second International Intervisitation Program was held in Australia in 1970, at the University of New England in Armidale. Already Walker had observed:

> Educational administrators had virtually no tradition of working together or of a professional association; unlike doctors and psychiatrists, they had not formed any such significant professional group.

Walker's vision for a Commonwealth-wide association for educational administrators had begun to set root. By the time the IIP delegates had completed their orientation session in Sydney, dispersed throughout Australian universities for 2 weeks, and reassembled at the University of New England, Walker was ready to propose the establishment of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration.

One observer noted:

> In the initial discussions it was evident that there were misgivings as to the viability of such an organisation. The clouds of doubt were dispelled by a masterly exposition from

Bill Walker. I can recall most vividly the feeling of excitement, exhilaration and exuberance when the roll was called of representatives of 14 Commonwealth countries and it was resolved that a (British) Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration should be established.

An offer to house the CCEA Secretariat at the University of Calgary in Canada was rejected when the University of New England, offered its support. Bill Walker became the first President, and Ross Thomas was elected Secretary. In June 1971, the Commonwealth Foundation in the United Kingdom agreed to support the establishment of CCEA financially. Walker commented: "Thus was the infant equipped for the first time with real teeth!"

The CCEA Executive in Armidale then commenced one of its primary tasks – encouraging the establishment of national, regional and local professional bodies in educational administration.

Walker recalled:

The first thing we did was to use the Old Girls and Old Boys network. The people who had done the Ed. Admin course, or people we knew from other contacts – quite often a Director or a Director-General – we wrote to them and said: "Look we'd like to have a meeting in Melbourne or Sydney or Brisbane or wherever. I'll come along with Ross Thomas. Can we get together and look at the desirability of establishing an institute?"

From 1972, groups began to form in capital cities and provincial centres around Australia.

1973: ACEA is founded

In 1973, ACEA become only the second national body to be established under the auspices of the then (British) Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration (the first being the British Educational Administration Society.) Walker observed:

This provides an interesting contrast with other professional groups, whose national bodies are usually in existence before any international organisation is set up.

Representatives from each state or regional association in Australia, already members of CCEA, were invited by the CCEA Executive to attend a meeting in Canberra in November 1972, where general support for the formation of a national council was expressed. These representatives assembled again in Sydney for 2 days in May 1973 to found the Australian Council for Educational Administration.

The question of how ACEA would differ from the Australian College of Education became a major point of discussion among participants on Day 1. The majority were of the opinion that the proposed new body would allow for a broader membership than the College and would also provide a concentration on educational administration which was not evident in the ACE.

On Day 2, 18 May 1973, delegates resolved unanimously that a national body of educational administrators be established. Constituent groups were Queensland, Sydney, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, the ACT, Riverina and Darling Downs. Harry Harris (Sydney) was elected Foundation President and Bob Pearson (Queensland) Vice-

President. Among those who attended the inaugural meeting of the new ACEA Board, which met in Canberra on 19 November 1973, was the driving force behind ACEA'S establishment, Bill Walker. He later recalled that he came away from that meeting, humming to himself... "The country's in the best hands".

2002 A New Chapter Begins: The Name Change to ACEL

For several years, the Board of Directors discussed the possibility of a change of name for the Council to better reflect modern conceptions of the nature of educational administration. As scholarly thinking of the nature and distribution of leadership in organisations developed, it was felt that the inclusion of the term leaders in the name of the Council more accurately reflected the current and future aims of the organisation.

In 2002, the Board of Directors recommended that the name of the organisation be changed to Australian Council for Educational Leaders. This was passed at the 2002 Annual General Meeting of the Council.

2008: ACEL Begins a New Chapter

In 2008 the members of ACEL approved the transition from an incorporated association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Australian Council for Educational Leaders Ltd came into being on the 11th August, 2008. This governance change has enabled ACEL to take its place both nationally and globally in offering strategic direction and professional learning programs for those committed to improving outcomes for schools and their students.

ACEL Advisory Group – Academics & Researchers

The ACEL Research Advisory Group provides strategic advice and leadership to support ACEL to serve its members and customers and to achieve its stated purpose to shape the practice and contribute to the growth of educational leadership, particularly with regard to the use of research in education policy and practice. The Group will help enable the organisation in its member-centric and customer focused approach to providing leaders in our network opportunities to connect with relevant research and researchers from Australia and around the world. The relevant research may be in educational leadership, other areas of education, and where relevant from other disciplines and systems.

Group Membership

Chair: Martin Westwell – South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)

John Halsey – Flinders University

Tania Aspland – Australian Catholic University

Michele Simons – Western Sydney University

Mark Rickinson – Monash University

Dorothy Andrews – University of Southern Queensland

Scott Eacott – University of New South Wales

Jeffrey Brooks – RMIT University

Simon Clarke – University of Western Australia

Michael Anderson – Sydney University

Kirk Zwangobani – Dickson College, ACT

Annemaree Carroll – University of Queensland

Greg Prior – NSW Education

A Statement of Commitment to the Profession of Teaching was developed by the Queensland Executive of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL).

https://media.acel.org.au/Branch/QLD/Statement%20of%20Commitment%20[v.3].pdf

A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
TO THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING

I acknowledge that I am a member of a profession that extends to me the opportunity and the privilege to make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

I bring to the profession my unique talents to teach and to lead, which I commit to nurturing and developing throughout my career.

I understand that teaching is a deeply human endeavour. While I teach subjects, ideas and skills, above all I teach young people, who are our future.

I recognise and respect the body of distinct theory and knowledge which is gifted to me by those who have come before. I draw from it and strive to contribute further to it.

I recognise that young people learn in different ways and at different rates. I believe that given appropriate support and resourcing, all young people can learn, and I strive to nurture a love of learning that will help every young person to succeed.

I make judgements to evaluate student achievement through assessment that is valid, reliable and fair, and I give value to those learnings that cannot be measured.

I recognise that teaching is a collaborative profession and I am not the only teacher in a young person's life. My work is enriched through working with my colleagues, learning from them and contributing to their practice.

I acknowledge the contribution of the many parents, caregivers, and teachers past, present and future who contribute to a young person's education. I work with them wherever possible to enrich the learning of young people.

I offer a spirit of optimism, resilience and hope as I support young people to develop and act on the values, beliefs and capabilities that guide them throughout their lives.

I recognise the changing nature of knowledge, and I commit to continuous learning throughout my professional career.

In committing to this statement I accept the responsibilities of being a teacher, and acknowledge the deep trust placed in me by young people, parents, caregivers and society.

7 April 2017

The consultation, development and production of the statement were facilitated by the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (Queensland)

Context of the Statement

What is the Statement of Commitment?

The statement is a voluntary declaration of commitment to a set of values and beliefs for the teaching profession in Australia.

Why was the Statement of Commitment developed?

In 2015 the Queensland Executive of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) researched the criteria of established professions, with a view to ascertaining whether there exists a common set of criteria that comprise a profession. It was agreed that teaching clearly meets all but one of the criteria evident in the research. What is missing is a deep statement of ethically based values and beliefs that complements existing legislative and regulatory instruments.

The Executive resolved to lead the development of a professional statement that captures the spirit of the former Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession (Teaching Australia) and that of similar documents from other professions, and which speaks to all teachers.

Who has contributed to the development of the Statement?

The development of the statement was made possible through consultation with, and invaluable contributions from the following professional groups and their representatives:

Association of Special Education Administrators Queensland, Australian College of Educators, Early Childhood Teachers' Association, Independent Schools Parents' Network, Independent Schools Queensland, Isolated Children's Parents' Association, Joint Council of Queensland Teachers' Associations, Parents and Citizens Queensland, Queensland Association of State School Principals, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Queensland College of Teachers, Queensland Department of Education and Training, Queensland Independent Education Union, Queensland Secondary Principals' Association, Queensland Teachers' Union, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, and University of the Sunshine Coast.

How might the Statement of Commitment be used?

It is hoped that the statement will inspire and engage teachers to take pride in being members of the teaching profession. The statement can be used formally or informally, at graduation ceremonies, induction ceremonies, celebrations of transitional moments in the careers of early childhood, primary and secondary teachers, or for recommitment to the profession for long-serving teachers. It can be used by teacher educators in their work with pre-service students, at the beginning and end of their courses. When using the statement, systems, schools, universities and professional associations may wish to brand the statement with their own identification.

Leading *&* Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Notice for Contributors

The use of two active, present participles in the journal title appears, perhaps, slightly unorthodox, but the choice is deliberate. **Leading *&* Managing *(L&M)***, for us, assumes that while leading and managing are qualitatively different activities, in reality they complement one another, and are vital to the effective performance of complex organisations and groups. We think managing is best thought of as tied to the performance of specific roles and organisational responsibilities. While this may also be true of leading, it is invariably not the case.

Instead of providing just one more scholarly vehicle for concentrating on leadership and management as conventionally understood and statically defined functions we believe *L&M* highlights two key organisational processes: the acts of leading and managing.

Specifically, we have aimed *L&M* at personnel working at all organisational levels and in all sectors and systems, principally, but not exclusively, in the sphere of education, with that word understood in its widest sense. We have set two goals for *L&M*: (1) to advance understanding of what it means to lead and to manage, the experiences of organisational personnel while engaged in leading and managing and the experiences and reflections of those who find themselves being led and managed; and (2) to improve the practice of leading and managing through empirical research and theoretical analysis.

In the belief that no one particular school of thought ever has a monopoly on wisdom or truth, we want *L&M* to be eclectic in its scope and tolerant of diverse standpoints. Accordingly, we welcome manuscript contributions from a plurality of perspectives. These may report empirical research, best practice and pedagogy, propose intervention and consultancy strategies, or comprise discussions of theory and methodology.

We ask contributors to bear in mind the following broad indicators of quality writing when preparing manuscripts for submission. Above all, we seek significant contributions to *L&M* which advance understanding of leading and managing. We ask that authors should demonstrate their familiarity with current developments in the field and strive to bring to bear distinctive and new perspectives on their chosen topics. We expect arguments to be tightly structured, clearly presented and written in prose that is accessible to a diverse readership.

Leading & Managing Subscription Form
For Non-ACEL Members

TO: **ACEL National Office**
P.O. Box 876
Strawberry Hills, N.S.W. 2012 Australia
FAX: 1800 680 561 **EMAIL**: publications@acel.org.au

Please begin my subscription to *Leading & Managing*, in one of the following categories commencing with the next issue:-

WITHIN AUSTRALIA
Cost includes GST.

Online/Electronic: ❏ $78.00: two issues.

Print Copies (AUSTRALIA) ❏ $85.00, includes postage: two issues.

Print Copies (OVERSEAS) ❏ $98.00, includes postage: two issues.

To be pre-paid in Australian dollars; cheques must be drawn on an Australian bank.

PAYMENT

Payment detail ❏ Master Card   ❏ VISA   ❏ Cheque (made payable to ACEL)

Card Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date (MM/YY) ☐☐ / ☐☐   CCV ☐☐☐

Name on Card   Signature:

Name:

Address:

City: State: Postcode:

Phone: Email:

(Photocopy of Subscription Form accepted)
ABN *75 132 672 416*

Leading *&* Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Preparation of Manuscripts

Leading *&* Managing is a scholarly, refereed journal and observes the normal processes of blind review. All manuscripts should be sent to the editor, Professor Dorothy Andrews, Leadership Research International, School of Education, The University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350, Australia. To facilitate the review process an electronic version is to be sent as an email attachment to dorothy.andrews@usq.edu.au in a Word.doc format. Contributors should note that articles accepted for publication in *L&M* become the copyright of the Journal.

Manuscripts should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words in length. They must be typed, double-spaced and with ample margins, on A4 paper, on one side only and with all pages numbered. The front page should bear the manuscript title, the author's name and institutional affiliation. The second page should carry the title and an abstract of 100–150 words. Avoid the excessive use of dot points.

Spelling will be checked to conform to the most common usage found in *The Macquarie Dictionary* (4th Edition, 2005). For **style**, the *APA 7 Style Manual* will be used as the reference document.

Level 1 Headings should appear in title case and bold type and should be centred. Level 2 sub-headings should be in title case and bold type and be left justified. Level 3 sub-headings should be in title case, italics, bold type and left justified. The first sentence of all paragraphs should be indented (as per APA 7 guidelines).

Notes to appear as footnotes, but authors are urged to avoid excessive footnoting.

Illustrations, tables and figures should be numbered and included in their preferred position included within the text (formatting as per APA 7 guidelines).

References should be indicated in the typescript by giving the author's surname, year of publication and page numbers, e.g., (Smith, 1995, pp. 1-2). Several articles by the same author and published in the same year should appear as Smith 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, etc. All references cited should be listed in alphabetical order, by year and with page numbers, on a separate page headed **References** at the end of the article, using APA 7, in the following form:

Referencing your own work – to ensure that anonymity is preserved, the author should replace in both the text and reference their name and replace it with 'author' or 'author(s)'.

For articles:	Yammarino, F. J., Spangler, W. D., & Bass, B. M. (1993). Transformational leadership and performance: A longitudinal investigation. *Leadership Quarterly*, *4*(1), 81-102. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(93)90005-E
For books:	Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations.* Free Press.
For chapters:	Trice, H. M., & Beyer, J. M. (1986). Charisma and its routinisation in two social movement groups. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Volume 8, pp. 113-164). JAI Press.

Leading *&* Managing

Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders

Copyright* Criteria, Warranties and Publishing Terms, and Conditions

You warrant that you are the owner of all copyright and related rights in the article/manuscript you have provided to ACEL for publication.

Warranties

You warrant that:
(a)   You are the sole legal and beneficial owner of the copyright in the article assigned to ACEL;
(b)   You have the legal authority to submit the manuscript and information on behalf of all legal and beneficial owner/s of the manuscript;
(c)   You have not licensed, charged, encumbered or assigned to any other person, in whole or in part, any rights in the manuscript;
(d)   there are no existing or threatened claims or litigation which would impair, limit, inhibit or diminish the rights in the manuscript assigned to ACEL (including the exploitation of those rights);
(e)   the manuscript does not, and will not, infringe the copyright of any person;
(f)   all material referenced in the manuscript which you have not created is attributed to appropriate authors;
(g)   You have obtained and will provide to ACEL all necessary permissions for the reproduction, as part of the manuscript, of any artistic works or data, e.g., illustrations, maps, photographs, charts, graphs, tables and any other visual or data material, not owned by you;
(h)   the manuscript has not been previously published or submitted for consideration for publication to any other party;
(i)   the manuscript contains no unlawful statements or content, is in no way defamatory and does not infringe the rights of any third party.

Indemnity

You agree to defend, indemnify and hold ACEL and any related body corporate and personnel harmless from and against any and all claims, liabilities, judgements, penalties, and taxes, civil and criminal, and all costs and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable legal fees) arising out of or relating to any breach or alleged breach of this agreement including any warranty by you.

Assignment of Copyright

By submitting this manuscript, you have assigned to ACEL: the entire copyright throughout the universe and all other rights of a like nature, whether vested, contingent or future, in the manuscript including all renewals and extensions of copyright; and any and all rights in relation to the manuscript available to you at the time of your manuscript submission and acceptance of these terms and conditions. You warrant, acknowledge and agree that the rights that accrue to you pursuant to these terms and conditions are sufficient consideration in exchange for your assignment of the copyright.

Moral Rights** and Licence

None of the above is to be taken as a waiver of Your moral rights. ACEL hereby grants you a limited licence to use the manuscript for non-commercial purposes including research, presentations at conferences and meetings, and within private research groups. If You publish the manuscript, you must include a full citation of the ACEL publication the manuscript appears in and, if the manuscript is published online pursuant to this licence, provide a link to ACEL's website.

Reprints and Permissions

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Requests should be addressed by email to: ACEL CEO, Dr Barbara Watterston: barbara.watterston@acel.org.au

* **Copyright** means: any copyright under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth); any copyright under the law of a country other than Australia; and rights in the nature of or analogous to the rights in the above definitions under the law of Australia or any other country (including future copyright and rights in the nature of or analogous to copyright).

****Moral rights** means rights of integrity, rights of attribution and other rights of an analogous nature which may now exist or which may exist in the future in respect of the Works under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) or under the law of a country other than Australia.

Editorial

Special Edition: Teacher Leadership: An Exploration of Teachers Leading
in Many Ways Across Varying School Contexts
Special Edition Editor: Associate Professor Joan M. Conway
University of Southern Queensland

Editor:
DOROTHY ANDREWS

Articles

ACEL
Inspiring Educational Leaders