



CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Unlocking a world of potential

Leading the way



BRITISH
COUNCIL



دال الفخايقية
DAL FOOD
Good Food For Better Lives



CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Embedding core skills
in education.

[dan.britishcouncil.org/en/programmes/
online/connecting-classrooms](http://dan.britishcouncil.org/en/programmes/online/connecting-classrooms)

[schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/
online/connecting-classrooms](http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/online/connecting-classrooms)



Contents

Foreword	2
Instructional leadership: improving outcomes for all students	3
Instructional leadership in context	11
Twinkle, twinkle teaching star: what you <i>think</i> is how (effective) you are	19
Why is school-to-school collaboration important and how can we make it work?	25
Case study: Leading school-to-school collaboration to improve teaching and learning	33
Transforming education by supporting school leaders in Pakistan	37
School pedagogical leadership in Tunisia: challenges and solutions	41
Why school leadership is important: a South African perspective	45
Instructional leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa: evidence from six countries	49
Leadership matters	57
Case study: Kenya: using instructional leadership to improve literacy and academic outcomes	59
Case study: Sierra Leone: driving school improvement through instructional leadership	61
Case study: Nigeria: leading the move from a traditional curriculum	63
Case study: Lebanon: focusing on quality teaching to improve learning outcomes for all young people	65
Case study: Occupied Palestinian Territories: transforming teaching and learning through instructional leadership	68
Contributors	70

Foreword

Mark Herbert

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, countries around the world have reflected on their progress towards creating high-quality, inclusive and equitable school systems.¹

The intention is to support all young people to develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to live and work in a globalised economy and to contribute responsibly both locally and globally. Inevitably this has put a spotlight on those who play a part in influencing student outcomes: the education workforce.

Since John Hattie first published his synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to attainment in 2008,² it has widely been agreed that the quality of teaching within a setting is the most important influence on student learning. But who influences those teachers and the quality of what they deliver? Certainly initial teacher training along with the academic background, values and motivation of the teacher will play their part, but the role of the school leader is also critically important. As Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins observe in their paper *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership* (2010,³ revisited 2019⁴):

Successful school leaders improve teaching and learning and thus pupil outcomes [...] most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, teaching practices and through developing teachers' capacities for leadership.

As part of our Connecting Classrooms programme, the British Council, in partnership with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, has therefore chosen to focus some of our work on school leaders and the critical role they play in improving student outcomes. Specifically, we've highlighted instructional leadership and the types of activity a school leader might undertake to improve the quality of teaching.

In her chapter, Dr Jane Doughty examines the thinking behind instructional leadership, looking closely at what it involves at a practitioner level and the potential benefits this can have on pupil outcomes. She reflects on what this means for school leaders and policymakers in terms of its implementation at the system level. Connecting Classrooms has aligned its work with this approach, and the real-world impact of this is exemplified in case studies collected from around the world, demonstrating just how effective and sustainable instructional leadership can be.

This publication also showcases contributions from across the countries we work with. Policymakers and academics from a variety of diverse settings have been kind enough to accept invitations to share their knowledge, approaches and experiences in relation to the positive impact that effective school leadership can have on a system. We know there is not one answer – no single template for success – but through our work and collaboration with policymakers and school leaders, we aim to empower them to make informed decisions about how they can best provide for their pupils.

And so, with thanks to our partners and collaborators, I am pleased to present this, our fifth publication in the *Unlocking a world of potential* series, and I hope that these evidence-based narratives will provide you with stimulation for further debate and reflection.

1. UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4.
2. Hattie, J (2008) *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Routledge.
3. Leithwood, K, Day, C, Sammons, P, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2010) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*.
4. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Instructional leadership: improving outcomes for all students

Dr Jane Doughty CBE

In their drive to raise standards, policymakers, school leaders and other educational professionals all recognise that the core purpose of the school is to provide a learning environment that enables all learners to achieve their potential.

The quality of school leadership, at headship, deputy and middle⁵ leadership levels, is critical to achieving this enabling environment and to continuously improving student outcomes.

As Leithwood et al. state: 'School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.'^{6,7} The same authors also highlight the kind of leadership that impacts most significantly on student outcomes: 'Successful school leadership focuses on [...] developing teachers' skills, providing instructional support [and] monitoring student learning.' Therefore, the school's ability to improve and sustain student outcomes is dependent on its approach to instructional leadership.

This chapter will:

- explore instructional leadership – both its definitions and significance
- consider how instructional leadership can be promoted and developed in different school contexts.

WHAT IS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

Instructional leadership is not a new idea. The concept dates to the 1960s and over subsequent decades has become one of the most commonly researched models of educational leadership. As Hallinger⁸ and Gumus et al.⁹ argue, the increased interest in instructional leadership from 2005 onwards has been influenced by accountability demands and the global drive to improve outcomes for young people.

And it's clear that in many jurisdictions, policymakers and other educationists place importance on ensuring principals¹⁰ and other school leaders give sufficient priority to improving teaching and learning and can achieve an appropriate balance between leading teaching and learning and their administrative tasks.

The common theme to emerge from studies in the 1960s and 1970s was that an effective school leader was someone who focused on teaching and learning, providing direction and working hard to improve instructional practices. Individual researchers tended to report on specific strategies, e.g. assessing the quality of instruction, giving feedback to teachers, providing support to improve teaching or monitoring student progress and setting targets for improvement.

According to Gumus et al.,¹¹ it wasn't until the 1980s that more holistic models of instructional leadership started to emerge. They note that Hallinger and Murphy's 1985 model is the most frequently cited, which breaks instructional leadership down into three main components:

- 1. defining the school mission** – identifying and communicating the school's goals
- 2. managing the instructional programme** – co-ordinating the curriculum, supervising and assessing teaching and monitoring student progress
- 3. promoting a positive school learning climate** – protecting instructional time, providing incentives for teachers, promoting professional development, maintaining academic standards and maintaining high visibility.

5. Middle leadership refers to teachers who hold leadership responsibilities outside their own classroom relating to specific aspects of the school's work, e.g. head of department, subject leader, year group leader.
6. Leithwood, K et al. (2008) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.
7. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
8. Hallinger, P (2005) Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools* 4: pp. 221–240.
9. Gumus, S et al. (2018) A systematic review of studies on leadership models in educational research from 1980 to 2014. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 46/1: pp. 25–48.
10. The term 'principals' is used in this publication to refer to both head teachers and principals.
11. Gumus, S et al. (2018) A systematic review of studies on leadership models in educational research from 1980 to 2014. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 46/1: pp. 25–48.

While this earlier research into instructional leadership was mostly principal-centred, a more diverse understanding of instructional leadership, taking account of the contribution made by senior and middle leaders, has emerged in recent years. As has new terminology, including ‘leadership of teaching and learning’,¹² ‘learning-centred leadership’¹³ and ‘pedagogical leadership’.¹⁴

According to the OECD,¹⁵ instructional leadership generally refers to the efforts of the principal to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Expressions like ‘leadership for learning’, however, incorporate wider school leadership and draw heavily on aspects of instructional leadership.

The OECD¹⁶ also defines the leadership of teaching and learning through five domains of action:

1. a focus on learning
2. monitoring teaching and learning
3. building learning communities
4. acquiring and allocating resources
5. maintaining a safe and effective learning environment.

This definition is similar to Hallinger and Murphy’s model, with an additional emphasis on building learning communities.

Irrespective of the names given (which are frequently used interchangeably), this type of leadership refers to activities that support and develop high-quality instructional practices, develop and implement policies that support student achievement, develop learning communities, provide feedback on instruction, model effective instruction and support the use of assessment data. Such activities may primarily be the responsibility of the principal or delegated to other leaders at the school.

School principals should, of course, have a broad repertoire of leadership approaches at their disposal, adapting their behaviour to achieve the required outcomes. Hitt and Tucker¹⁷ maintain that a combination of instructional and transformational leadership brings out the best results. Transformational leadership emphasises how change and improvement can be achieved through a powerful vision that inspires and motivates others to create a better future. Leithwood et al.,¹⁸ however, highlight the importance of instructional leadership and distributed leadership.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address issues in relation to definition, but it is something school leaders and policymakers may wish to consider. Our focus here is on the instructional leadership of the principal, although consideration will be given to how principals can work with other school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

This chapter will use the following definition of instructional leadership:

- **defining the school vision and mission** – framing and communicating goals and desired outcomes (compatible with national ambitions and priorities)
- **managing the instructional (teaching) programme** – co-ordinating and developing the curriculum; overseeing, assessing, improving and developing teaching; and monitoring student learning and progress
- **promoting a positive learning climate and culture** – organising professional development focused on teaching and learning, maintaining high visibility around the school and in classrooms, establishing and maintaining standards, protecting teaching time and encouraging a collaborative culture.

WHY IS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

All jurisdictions clearly want their principals to be excellent leaders – but what difference does excellence actually make to pupils? Research methodologies like longitudinal studies, stronger quantitative methods, advanced statistical analysis and large-scale studies have, over the past decade, strengthened the quality of evidence generated from educational research. These advances allow for more robust links to be made between a principal’s leadership and student outcomes, as well as demonstrating the leadership aspects that are important to raising standards.

In a meta-analysis of 69 studies (involving 14,000 practitioners and 1.4 million pupils), Marzano, Waters and McNulty¹⁹ claim that replacing an average principal with an outstanding principal in an average school could increase student achievement by over 20 percentile points.

12. Hallinger, P & Heck, RH (2010) Leadership for Learning: does collaborative leadership make a difference to school improvement. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 38/6.
13. Southworth, G (2004) *Learning Centred Leadership*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.
14. Abel, MB (2016) *Why Pedagogical Leadership?* McCormick Centre, National Louis University, USA.
15. OECD (2016) *School Leadership for Learning: insights from TALIS 2013*. Paris.
16. OECD (2019) *Typology of leadership for learning (TALIS). Working paper no 219*. Paris.
17. Hitt, DH & Tucker, PD (2016) Systematic Review of key leader practices found to influence student achievement: a unified approach. *Review of Educational Research* 86/2: pp. 531–569.
18. Leithwood, K, Day, C, Sammons, P, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2010) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*.
19. Marzano, R, Waters, T & McNulty, B (2005) *School leadership that works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

For those who may be sceptical of these high-level, quantitative analytical research programmes, a McKinsey qualitative study²⁰ reviewed eight high-performing countries (identified using international test results and other data) and considered the leadership of the top 15 per cent. They concluded: ‘School principals in high-performing systems devote around 80 per cent of their time [to] improving instruction (teaching and learning).’ This finding is supported by the OECD,²¹ which claims: ‘Instructional leadership actions are amongst the strongest predictors of performance.’ So, clearly, excellent leadership enhances school outcomes, and instructional leadership is crucial to improving outcomes.

After an in-depth analysis of the activities of high-performing principals, McKinsey concluded that these activities can be placed in the realms of instructional leadership. These activities include:

- walking the school
- understanding what constitutes effective teaching and learning
- spending time improving teaching and learning
- coaching and developing teachers
- spending time with students.

Interestingly, these principals also demonstrate an enjoyment for teaching.

The principals in McKinsey’s sample clearly direct their thinking and leadership actions towards the goal of continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. These findings are supported by Viviane Robinson,²² who considered factors that affect student outcomes and concluded:

The more leaders focus on their relationships, their work and their own learning about the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes.

In another study, Robinson and her colleagues²³ identified five leadership behaviours that positively affect student outcomes, all of which link to instructional leadership due to their focus on enabling teachers to perform at their best. One of these behaviours – leading and participating in teacher learning and development – has significantly more impact than the rest. Robinson’s findings are explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

But how do leaders actually improve outcomes? We know from research that, in the main, a principal’s actions have an ‘indirect’ influence on student outcomes. As Day et al.²⁴ note, such activities include defining the vision and values, improving conditions for teaching and learning, and building relationships inside and outside of the school community.

There are, however, some actions principals can take to directly influence outcomes:

- focusing their strategic thinking, decision making and policy development on teaching and learning
- planning effectively, setting appropriate priorities for improvement and facilitating appropriate teacher professional development
- securing and allocating resources to achieve maximum outcomes
- organising the school so it runs safely, efficiently and effectively
- creating a collaborative, open culture with ‘can-do’ mindsets – delegating effectively and developing school leadership.

In the updated version of *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*, Leithwood et al.²⁵ added parents to the list of people principals should influence, by ‘encouraging parent/child interactions in the home that further enhance student success at school’.

This has proven particularly important during Covid-19 lockdowns, where, globally, millions of children have been educated at home, with or without virtual school support.

There are several indirect actions principals can take or delegate to other school leaders, including:

- **leading by example** – modelling behaviours that reinforce the value of teaching and learning
- **creating the culture** – using the language of success, praising staff and students, believing all students can succeed and reinforcing good habits like punctuality and routines for getting students to start working promptly at the beginning of lessons
- **developing monitoring and evaluation systems** – analysing data, observing teaching, monitoring student progress, holding focus groups with parents and students, providing feedback questionnaires and conducting learning walks

20. McKinsey (2010) *Capturing the leadership premium*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.

21. OECD (2016) *School Leadership for Learning: insights from TALIS 2013*. Paris.

22. Robinson, V (2011) *Student Centred Leadership*. Jossey, San Francisco.

23. Robinson, V, Lloyd, C & Rowe, K (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why; Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. University of Auckland for the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

24. Day, C et al. (2010) *Ten Strong Claims about Successful Leadership*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.

25. Leithwood, K, Day, C, Sammons, P, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2010) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*.

- **working with teachers** – providing professional development sessions, mentoring and coaching, and promoting collaboration, the sharing of practice and innovative approaches, and joint lesson planning
- **contact with students** – visiting and observing lessons, talking with students about their learning and using assessment data to track progress.

Today, it is understood that the effectiveness of a principal's instructional leadership can have a positive impact on student outcomes, and its significance cannot be overestimated.

Now we will consider how instructional leadership can be encouraged and developed in schools.

HOW CAN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BE PROMOTED, SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED IN DIFFERENT SCHOOL CONTEXTS?

Policymakers, principals and educational advisers all have a role to play in raising student outcomes through actions that promote, support and develop instructional leadership in schools. What actions can be taken will vary according to context, whether that's the national, regional or individual school context, and what works in one context may not be 'the answer' in another context. The strategies and suggestions presented here are, therefore, posed as questions for you to consider in your drive to improve educational outcomes for your own learners.

School leaders generally influence student outcomes through indirect means, so this section will explore instructional leadership in relation to four key behaviours:

1. authority, autonomy and accountability
2. understanding and practising instructional leadership
3. developing and distributing leadership
4. building an open and collaborative culture, in and outside of the school.

AUTHORITY, AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Effective instructional leadership depends on school leaders having sufficient autonomy to make decisions about certain aspects of school life. A useful example is the freedom and funding to organise professional development for staff. If principals are responsible for overseeing professional development programmes, it is more likely that the topics and activities will be relevant to their schools' improvement priorities.

Given the authority and the discretion to organise the school in a way that will support and promote student achievement, principals can take into account their local context, student intake and teaching staff. Some governments give principals significant autonomy and authority to lead and manage their schools, but this is not the case in many jurisdictions.

In 2020, the OECD²⁶ found that in over 40 per cent of publicly funded schools, leaders do not have significant authority over many tasks relating to staffing, budget, school policies and curriculum policies, concluding that this clearly hinders their ability to be effective instructional leaders. Policymakers wishing to strengthen leadership in general, and instructional leadership in particular, could identify the aspects of a principal's role that hinder their ability to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As circumstances can vary across regions, it is also useful to consider how local autonomy might provide more flexibility to adapt to a school's local needs and constraints.

While varying across jurisdictions, modern-day teaching can be a demanding and challenging role. Pressures can arise both from within the school and from the wider community. Increased public accountability, the impact of social media, a lack of resources and large class sizes are some areas that teachers cite as additional challenges.

In the 48 countries participating in the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), only 78 per cent of a typical lesson is dedicated to teaching, with the remainder of the time spent keeping order or dealing with administrative tasks. And in around half of these countries, this figure represents a decrease in teaching and learning time over the last five to ten years.²⁷ And, as Coe et al.²⁸ state: 'The core business of teaching matters more than anything else in a school.'

A principal's role is to create the working conditions that ensure the smooth running of the school, removing barriers and protecting teachers from distractions beyond the classroom to allow them to perform at their best and, thus, improve student outcomes. A principal's ability to achieve this depends on the opportunities they have for discretionary decision making and to share leadership with others, such as deputy principals and heads of department.

In cases where both the principal's and teachers' views on the importance of leading teaching and learning align, the principal has usually had training in school leadership, has high levels of autonomy in staffing, budgeting and instructional policies, and has a variety of beliefs about instruction and organisational innovativeness.²⁹

26. OECD (2020) *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS): 2018 Analysis plan; Working paper 220*. OECD, Paris.
27. OECD (2019) *Typology of leadership for learning (TALIS)*. Working paper no 219. Paris.
28. Coe, R et al. (2014) *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research*. Sutton Trust, London.
29. OECD (2019) *Typology of leadership for learning (TALIS)*. Working paper no 219. Paris.

Points to consider

- In what ways and to what extent does your system emphasise instructional leadership (through, for example, policies, infrastructure, job descriptions and leadership standards), and how does the accountability process endorse a principal's role in leading teaching and learning and their responsibility for student outcomes?
- What degree of authority and autonomy do principals have so they can make decisions regarding, for example, the organisation of their schools, employing teachers, and monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching?

UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTISING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Knowledge of instructional leadership among principals is high. The OECD³⁰ found that more than 80 per cent of principals who participated in TALIS had attended training focused on instructional leadership. This is welcome news, and may reflect the current prominence given to this form of leadership by researchers, ministers and other educationists globally. It may also reflect the priority identified in many national plans to improve student outcomes.

Knowledge is one thing; practice is another. Studies have consistently shown that principals spend a significant amount of time doing a range of tasks other than those related to instructional leadership. In 2007, a study from the National College for School Leadership³¹ found that principals in England spend 25 per cent of their time on administration and a similar percentage on managing external stakeholders. In a 2012 study, Earley³² reported that newly appointed principals in England spend 46 per cent of their time on management, 17 per cent on administration and 32 per cent on all leadership tasks, including instructional leadership.

More up-to-date analyses do not appear to indicate these figures have changed significantly. The OECD's TALIS³³ found that, on average, across the 48 participating countries, principals spend just 16 per cent of their working time on curriculum- and teaching-related tasks and meetings. This is the third most time-consuming task for principals, after administrative tasks and meetings (30 per cent) and leadership tasks and meetings (21 per cent). Principals maintain this is insufficient time for these crucial activities.

In the same study, 65 per cent of principals stated that they frequently reviewed school administrative procedures and reports, while 42 per cent said they often spent time having to fix issues with lesson timetables. So, it does appear that other urgent (and sometimes less important) activities can make disproportionate demands on principals' time.

Whatever the extent, a high proportion of principals do, however, engage in important instructional leadership tasks, for example, ensuring that:

- teachers feel responsible for their students' learning outcomes (68 per cent)
- teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills (63 per cent)
- teachers are encouraged to collaborate to develop new teaching practices (59 per cent).

Principals are keen to engage in more instructional leadership, so must find ways to change their working habits. School leadership structures can make a significant difference to how instructional leadership operates. Within senior leadership teams (deputy principals, senior teachers) administrative responsibilities can be delegated to team members to free up time for the principal to engage in other activities. Equally, team members can be asked to take on instructional leadership responsibilities, with the principal retaining overall accountability. In secondary schools, heads of subject can be the most appropriate individuals to take responsibility for the quality of teaching and student progress in their area. Their instructional leadership performance can be overseen by a deputy or the principal.

Time is frequently mentioned as a constraint. One option to free up time for school leaders could be for education systems and school management boards to create intermediate management roles, giving teachers and other staff responsibility for areas like school buildings, school transport and day-to-day budget management. If principals are to spend more time on instructional leadership activities, their curriculum, pedagogical and assessment expertise needs to be up to date.

30. OECD (2020) *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS): 2018 Analysis plan*. Working paper no 220. OECD, Paris.
 31. NCSL (2007) *A life in the day of a headteacher*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.
 32. Earley, P et al. (2012) *Experiences of new headteachers in cities*. National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.
 33. OECD (2018) *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)*; Working paper no 187. Paris.

Points to consider

- What kind of priority is given to instructional leadership in professional development programmes, at both national and local levels, for all school leaders, including aspiring/serving principals and aspiring leaders?
- How much working time do you, as a principal, devote to instructional leadership activities? What do you do, and what kind of value do your actions add to improving student outcomes?
- What evidence and information is used to judge whether a school and its school leadership are excellent, and how much of this evidence relates to instructional leadership?

DEVELOPING AND DISTRIBUTING LEADERSHIP

If principals wish to promote the practice of, and engage others in, instructional leadership, they must make 'leadership' a wider school activity, rather than something restricted to themselves or a small group of individuals. Being able to distribute leadership is essential for principals wanting to lead their schools effectively. School leadership can have an especially positive influence on school and student outcomes when it is distributed.³⁴ Distributed leadership can also have a positive impact on staff – Hulpia, Devos and Van Keer report that teachers are more committed to the school when informal leadership responsibilities are distributed or shared according to expertise.³⁵

An important aspect of instructional leadership is monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching. Provided they receive training and have the appropriate skills, heads of subject are in a good position to undertake this task – they know the curriculum, understand assessment requirements and can provide appropriate ongoing support to develop and improve teaching. They are also well-placed to promote other important behaviours, such as punctuality and providing stimulating starts and ends of lessons.

The best way to develop leadership capacity is to give teachers concrete opportunities to develop their leadership skills, such as analysing student data, observing teaching and reviewing students' work. Success depends on the time and effort principals give to supporting teachers and delegating appropriate instructional leadership-related activities. Aspiring instructional leaders will need support to develop skills to do important tasks like observing teaching, giving accurate and developmental feedback to teachers and monitoring student progress, over the short, medium and long term. Such delegation allows principals to engage in strategic matters, such as embedding the school's vision, curriculum design and teacher development, as well as building leadership capacity throughout the school and providing individual opportunities to further staff's professional expertise.

Principals can develop leadership through processes like mentoring and coaching, which help teachers to develop their skills and confidence to undertake new and sometimes challenging leadership tasks. While school principals generally consider mentoring and coaching to be important for teachers' work and students' performance, TALIS³⁶ found that only 22 per cent of new teachers have an assigned mentor. And considering mentoring is considered to be a crucial practice at this stage of a teacher's career, mentoring and coaching for experienced teachers may be even less common.

It is clear principals have insufficient time to be solely responsible for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning. And neither should they be – others have a great deal of expertise to offer and can make a significant contribution to school improvement.

Points to consider

- What enablers will allow principals to distribute leadership formally and informally so they can involve the wider staff in the processes of leading teaching and learning? Are there any barriers?
- How do you, as a principal, create leadership development opportunities for your staff, and which approaches have been the most successful? Have these included leading teaching and learning, and, if so, how has this affected student learning and outcomes?

34. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

35. Hulpia, H, Devos, G & Van Keer, H (2009) The influence of distributed leadership on teachers' organisational commitment. *Journal of Educational Research* 103/1: pp. 40–52.

36. OECD (2018) *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)*. Working paper no 187. Paris.

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE, BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL

A principal's values, attitudes and behaviours matter a great deal. These will establish a culture in the school that has the potential to motivate and influence teachers, thus raising their commitment to the job. Principals must be excellent communicators, with strong interpersonal skills, so they are able to communicate their beliefs and values to inspire trust, strengthen motivation and gain commitment from the wider school community. Of the teachers who participated in TALIS,³⁷ 90 per cent stated that an important reason they became a teacher was to have an opportunity to influence learners' development. Principals should capitalise on this by creating a culture that will sustain teachers' motivation, so they remain committed to this important aspiration.

How teachers (and learners) feel about their working environment is crucial to their performance. Effective leadership of teaching and learning that really does benefit students will only happen with strong collaboration between members of the school community. Collaboration develops in a culture of trust, transparency and openness – and when principals involve staff, students and parents in the life of the school in an authentic and purposeful way. As the most important role model, the principal should model values and behaviours that build trust and reflect best practice relating to leading teaching and learning. The principal's behaviour will have a significant impact on the whole school community, including parents. Our memory of what people do lasts much longer than our memory of what they say!

In their analysis of highly effective leadership, Leithwood et al.³⁸ report a number of leadership behaviours that help to build a collaborative culture across the school community:

- modelling the school's values and practices
- building trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents
- structuring the organisation to facilitate collaboration
- building productive relationships with families and communities
- connecting the school to its wider environment.

These behaviours also contribute to delivering equity across the school, so all students can make the most of educational opportunities.

Developing a collaborative culture is an ambition in many schools, and teachers say that professional development based on collaborative approaches to teaching has a positive impact on the quality of their own teaching. It encourages peer observations, joint lesson planning, the sharing of resources and professional discussions about pedagogy. Such training opportunities, however, are not widespread. With only 44 per cent of teachers, globally, reporting they have had opportunities to engage in training based on peer learning and networking, there remains a significant proportion of teachers who would benefit from such professional development.³⁹

School leadership also improves teaching and learning by encouraging parent–child interactions in the home that further enhance student success at school.⁴⁰ Such interactions can only be encouraged and developed if parents feel the school is open, transparent and inclusive. All staff have an important role to play, although the principal sets the tone by welcoming parents and other members of the community into the school, determining how they will be involved in relevant discussions and showing how their contributions are valued.

Points to consider

- How does your system support and promote collaboration between schools, and how does it identify and embed best practice in leading teaching and learning?
- As a principal, how would you describe your school culture? What would staff, students and parents say? What actions are needed to create a more collaborative and inclusive culture?
- How does policy at national, local and school levels promote parental and community engagement with schools, and in what ways could these policies be developed to improve student outcomes?

Education can transform lives. Countries across the globe are focused on improving outcomes for their children and young people, so the time they spend in school is beneficial and enjoyable. Effective instructional leadership in each school and across a system will help this ambition become a reality.

37. OECD (2019) *Teachers and School Leaders as Life Long Learners*, TALIS 2018.

38. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

39. OECD (2019) *Typology of leadership for learning (TALIS)*. Working paper no 219. Paris.

40. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.



Instructional leadership in context

Andy Buck

Where does instructional leadership fit within leadership thinking, and what are the implications for school leaders when applying the approach in practice?

There seems to be a fascination with creating false dichotomies in education. Whether it's the battle for supremacy between knowledge and skills, or the tussle between adopting a zero-tolerance strategy on behaviour versus taking a more child-centred approach, people can't seem to resist polarising issues in a way that isn't often helpful.

In this article, I will:

- argue that we are at risk of creating another false dichotomy when it comes to how we codify effective school leadership
- offer practical suggestions about what one element of this false dichotomy – instructional leadership – looks like in practice.

Broadly speaking, there are two main approaches to codifying school leadership. First, there is what is often referred to as 'transformational leadership', which focuses on a school leader's personal qualities and universal leadership skills, and their ability to create a powerful vision and inspire others to join them on a shared journey to create a better future for all students.

Then there are those who argue that what really matters is leadership knowledge and role-specific expertise, which ensure that school leaders can make good decisions and embark on effective courses of action and implement them successfully. With its strong focus on classroom practice, this approach is often referred to as 'instructional leadership'.

My view is that rather than see these two approaches as a choice or dichotomy, we should consider both perspectives as essential for effective school leadership, tailored to suit the context of the school or team.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

In their seminal work of 2008, *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*, Leithwood et al.⁴¹ made the assertion (in their second claim) that 'almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices'. In 2019, the same authors revisited this work, considering more recent research and evidence. While this second claim has remained unchanged, several additions have been made that describe these actions in more detail. These have been particularly influenced by the work of Robinson et al.,⁴² which stresses how important it is that school leaders 'participate with teachers in their professional learning activities'. See Table 1 for this revised list of leadership practices.

41. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077.
42. Robinson, V, Lloyd, C & Rowe, K (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why; Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. The University of Auckland for the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Table 1: Leadership practices

Domains of practice	Specific leadership practices
Set directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a shared vision • Identify specific, shared, short-term goals • Create high-performance expectations • Communicate the vision and goals
Build relationships and develop people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff • Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members • Model the school's values and practices • Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents • Establish productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives
Develop the organisation to support desired practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a collaborative culture and distribute leadership • Structure the organisation to facilitate collaboration • Build productive relationships with families and communities • Connect the school to its wider environment • Maintain a safe and healthy school environment • Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals
Improve the instructional programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff the instructional programme • Provide instructional support • Monitor student learning and school improvement progress • Buffer staff from distractions to their instructional work

Adapted from Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077.

What is striking about this list of leadership actions is how the four key domains fit with the well-respected organisational leadership model proposed by David Pendleton and Adrian Furnham in their brilliantly intuitive *Leadership: all you need to know*.⁴³ Based on a literature review of over 100 years of crucial research, they have synthesised leadership into three main domains, each of which overlap to give a total of six areas, as set out in Figure 1.

43. Pendleton, D & Furnham, A (2012) *Leadership: all you need to know*. Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan.

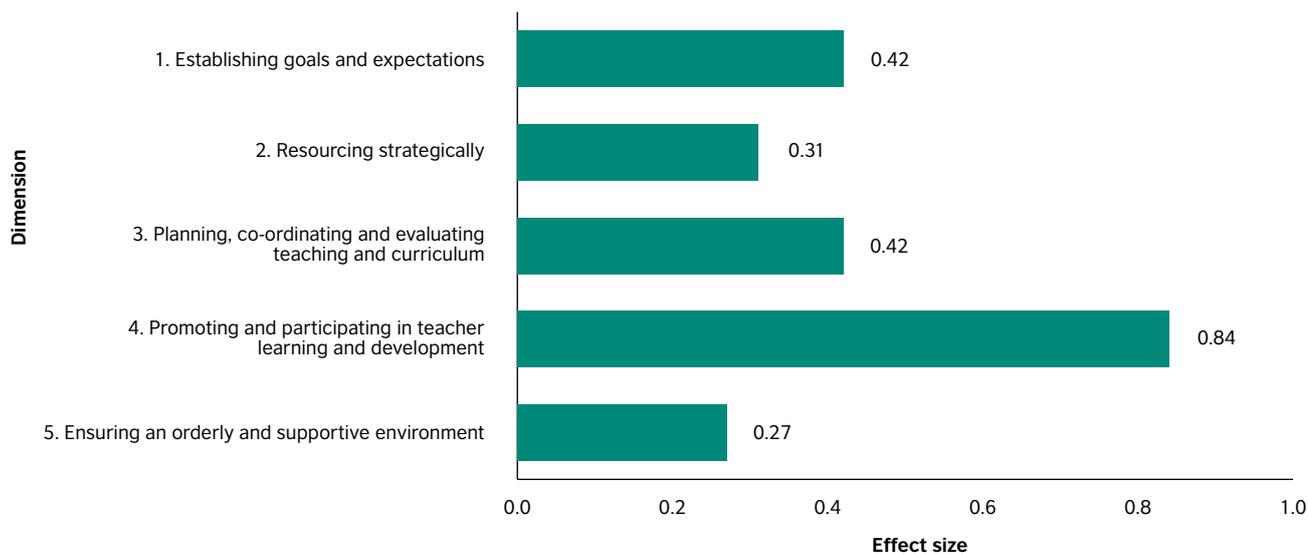
Figure 1: The three domains of leadership



Adapted from Pendleton, D & Furnham, A (2012) *Leadership: all you need to know*. Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan.

As well as noting how the domains relating to direction setting and relationship building are mirrored almost exactly in both models, it's interesting to note that vital elements of each also relate to *both* generic and role-specific knowledge and skills. For example, by examining three of the five most powerful dimensions identified by Robinson (see Figure 2), we see how important it is for leaders to know how to support teachers to improve their practice, to create a positive climate for learning, and to plan and evaluate teaching and curricular effectiveness. These areas all require in-depth knowledge and expertise in relation to teaching and learning, if leaders are to have an impact.

Figure 2: The five dimensions of leadership



Adapted from Robinson, V, Lloyd, C & Rowe, K (2009) *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why; Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. The University of Auckland for the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

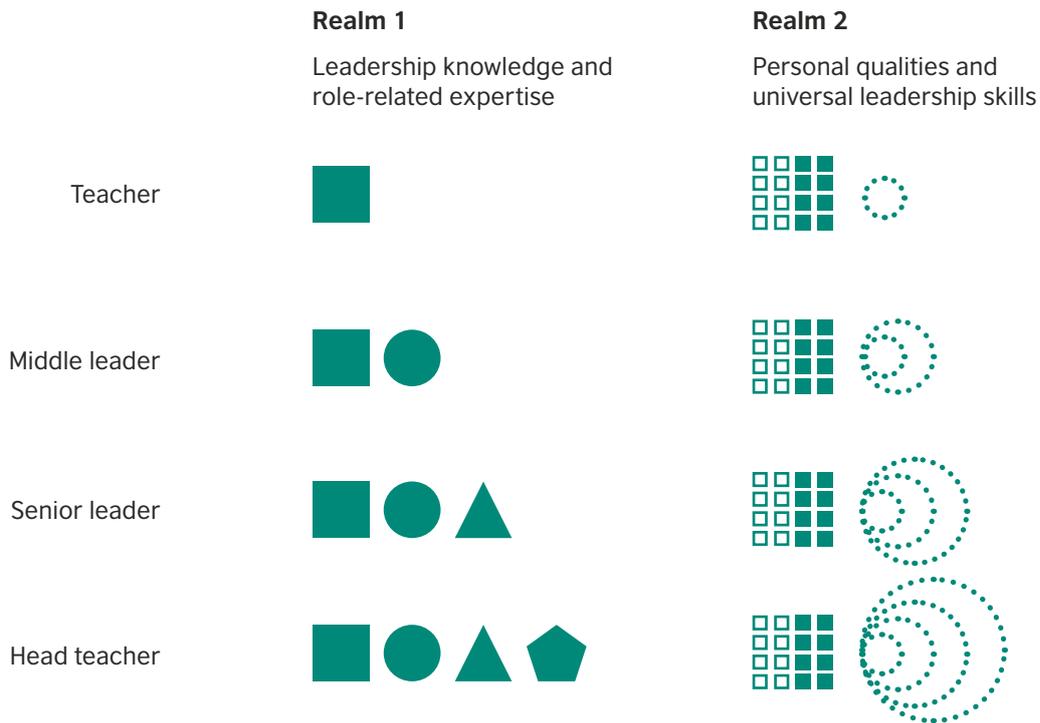
Table 2: Personal resources for effective leadership

Domains of practice	Specific leadership practices
Cognitive resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving expertise • Domain-specific knowledge • Systems thinking
Social resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceiving emotions • Managing emotions • Acting in emotionally appropriate ways
Psychological resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Self-efficacy • Resilience • Proactivity

Adapted from Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*. DOI:10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077.

Equally, there are important elements within both models that relate to more generic leadership actions, such as building relationships, planning or creating buy-in. Engaging colleagues is a fundamental part of a leader’s role. You could be pursuing a great strategy, but you won’t have the desired impact if your team doesn’t understand the approach or care about what you are trying to improve.

Figure 3: The two realms of leadership



PERSONAL QUALITIES

But when it comes to the potential false dichotomy, this is only half the story. In their seventh claim, Leithwood et al.⁴⁴ state that ‘a small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness’. In other words, there are some pivotal personal qualities, knowledge and skills that appear to underpin what effective leaders do. These are grouped into three domains: cognitive resources, social resources and psychological resources (see Table 2).

What is, once again, striking about this list of personal attributes is how it relates to both *expert knowledge*, such as the elements of domain-specific knowledge and problem-solving expertise, and more *generic personal qualities*, such as resilience, self-efficacy and proactivity. As with leadership actions, it is the powerful combination of both that, this evidence suggests, leads to the greatest impact of leadership on outcomes for pupils. Thinking of this as an either/or choice is unhelpful.

A SYNTHESISED MODEL

Drawing both perspectives together, I would like to suggest there are, therefore, two main realms for school leadership across all levels:

1. role-related leadership knowledge, skills and expertise
2. personal qualities and universal leadership skills.

As Figure 3 illustrates, there is specific leadership knowledge and role-related expertise that a teacher needs to be able to lead an effective lesson, such as effective curriculum and pedagogical expertise. This knowledge is represented by the box in Realm 1. As teachers take on more formal leadership responsibilities, there is a cumulative requirement for additional expert knowledge and skills to carry out each role effectively. These are shown by the additional shapes for increasingly senior roles. For example, head teachers will need specific knowledge in relation to budgetary and human resources issues, which a middle leader would not usually require.

But leaders at all levels also need to demonstrate a set of personal qualities, and should be able to use a range of generic leadership skills (see Realm 2). For teachers, this includes generic skills like building and sustaining relationships with students or planning and prioritising time effectively. As the scale and scope of a leadership role increases (represented by the spheres), unlike in Realm 1, there are no new personal qualities or skills. Rather, individual leaders need to apply the very same traits, but in an increasingly broader context, adapting their approach to suit their wider context or situation.

44. Leithwood, K, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2019) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077.

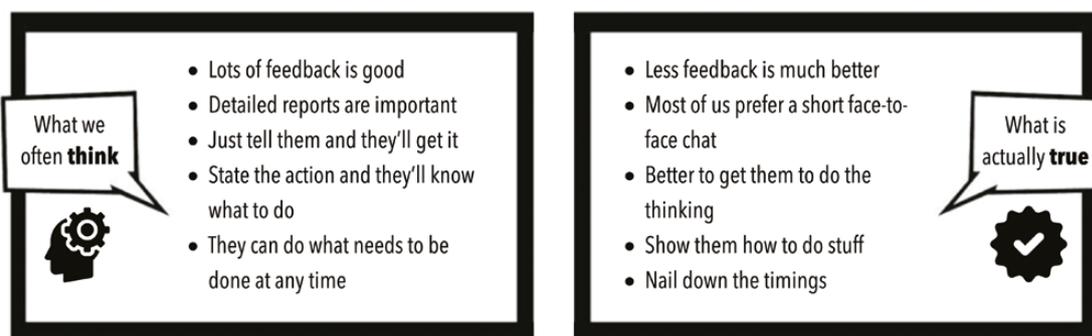
This is where David Pendleton’s model from earlier is so helpful, and why at Leadership Matters, we have placed his ‘Primary Colours’ model at the heart of our thinking about school leadership. Whether we are talking about teachers leading a lesson, or head teachers running a school (and everything in between), what matters is having the right balance between the six main elements of the model, which combine both expert role-specific knowledge and the personal qualities and generic leadership skills needed for success.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Returning to Robinson’s findings, and the huge importance of what essentially boils down to leaders focusing on helping teachers be better teachers, the question then is: how do school leaders actually support the quality of instruction in practice? At its simplest level, this is about prioritising time spent on observing teaching, having productive professional conversations and identifying priorities for practice and improvement. In other words, it is about offering feedback and agreeing next steps.

In his book *Leverage Leadership*, Paul Bambrick-Santoyo⁴⁵ identifies five main areas that challenge what we often think constitutes effective feedback (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Challenging beliefs about effective feedback



Adapted from Bambrick-Santoyo, P (2012) *Leverage Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Figure 5: The feedback sandwich



Adapted from Buck, A (2020) *The BASIC Coaching Method*. London: Cadogan Press.

So, how can this help teachers improve?

- Less feedback helps teachers prioritise what they need to focus on. Trying to improve in too many areas at once may lead to not improving in any of them.
- While there is a place for written feedback (which the receiver can revisit), when it comes to implementing change, many people find a positive and future-focused conversation to be more useful.
- When identifying potential areas for growth, try asking teachers to reflect for themselves first, and only offer suggestions if they cannot see what you have seen.
- When it comes to working out what to do differently, don't be afraid to give advice if they need you to.
- Agree some clear timeframes about what will be achieved, and by when.

THE FEEDBACK SANDWICH

Much has been written about how to give great feedback, and you have probably heard of the ‘feedback sandwich’ (see Figure 5). I am increasingly of the view that the traditional feedback sandwich may have had its day.

45. Bambrick-Santoyo, P (2012) *Leverage leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The idea behind the feedback sandwich is a good one – to make sure you include some positives in your feedback. In fact, make sure there is more positive than negative, and ensure there is something to improve or develop. All of which is great. The trouble with this approach is that individuals don't really own their area for growth, even though they may well have ideas about how they can improve, which might be quite similar. Or they may not agree with what the person offering the feedback thinks. In *Leadership Matters*,⁴⁶ I challenge this by proposing a new approach: 'feedback tennis' (see Figure 6).

FEEDBACK TENNIS

With feedback tennis, you still start off with positives, and these form your **first point**. Of course, these need to be authentic – areas you thought were genuinely good. You may also invite colleagues to come up with their own positive reflections. This approach can work for reflecting on a lesson, or on something a leader has just delivered. By focusing on the positives, you are building rapport, trust and positivity.

Your **second point** is to ask a neutral, or non-judgemental, question about an area where you think there may be potential for growth, and see what your colleague thinks. There may be a very good reason why they did what they

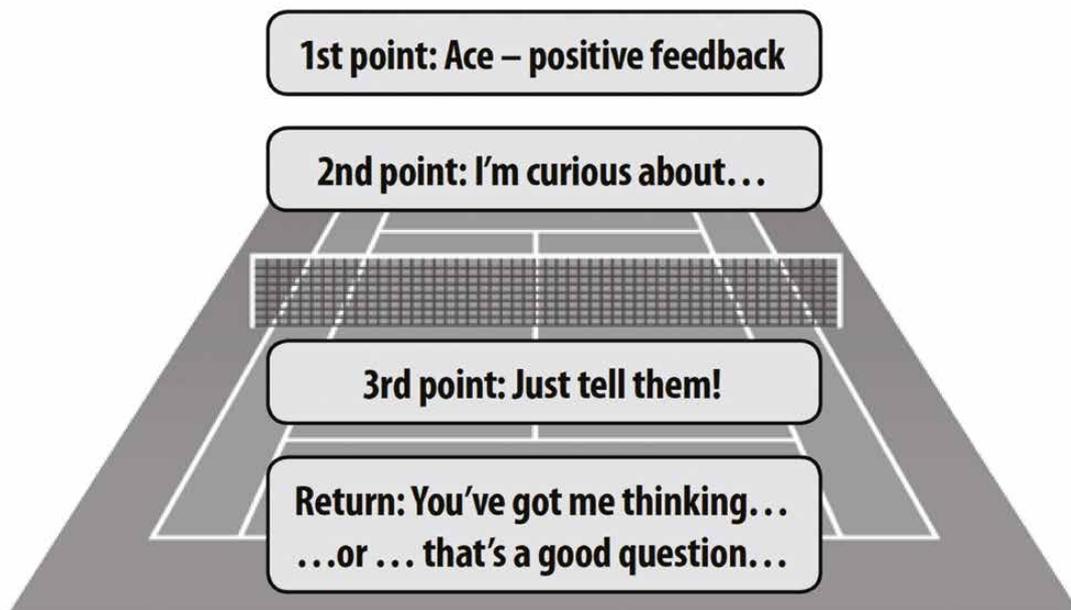
did, which you weren't aware of. Or the question may get them to start reflecting in a helpful way, and they become genuinely open to thinking about ways they might improve what they did.

Such a response or **return** is what you are looking for. You have prompted colleagues to think for themselves. And, of course, unlike the feedback sandwich, which is eaten in just three bites, feedback tennis can continue back and forth as a coaching conversation until the point is made – or won!

There will, of course, be occasions when, no matter how well you ask curious questions, a colleague just can't see something for themselves. In such situations, it is absolutely appropriate for your **third point** to be that you tell them what you are thinking. The key here is to avoid falling into the trap of you making all the suggestions on the assumption that this is what your colleague needs. The more they have done the thinking for themselves, the greater the chance their practice will change for the better, and in the long term.

Feedback tennis is still a fledgling concept (and my evidence for its efficacy is effectively zero), but informal feedback from colleagues who have focused on developing this as a leadership habit have said they are finding it very useful.

Figure 6: Feedback tennis



Adapted from Buck, A (2020) *The BASIC Coaching Method*. London: Cadogan Press.

46. Buck, A (2018) *Leadership Matters 3.0*. Woodbridge: John Catt Educational.

MOVE FROM OPEN TO CLOSED QUESTIONS

As with most coaching conversations, it is usually most useful to start with open questions that allow your coachee to explore possibilities for themselves. However, when you want them to focus on the specifics of what they want to do, or if they are having difficulty seeing what you think might be a good place to focus their attention, you may want to ask a more closed or leading question.

This is where your questions can really challenge your coachee to think hard about something, but with them being much less likely to feel threatened or defensive. For example, good open questions early on could be:

- What could you do differently next time?
- What didn't work out quite how you hoped?

Closed questions could be:

- Are you happy with what you have come up with?
- When are you going to do this?

IF ALL ELSE FAILS – JUST TELL THEM

No matter how skilled you are at asking great questions, there will be times when you've exhausted all possible lines of enquiry and still someone can't see what needs to change. In these situations, you have no choice but to tell them what your own views are (at least you've given them the chance to work things out for themselves first). This then provides leaders with the platform to coach or mentor a teacher on exactly what they then need to modify in relation to their practice. Once a goal has been agreed, the focus needs to be on the sustained and deliberate practising of that particular teaching element.

This process, often referred to as 'instructional' or 'incremental' coaching, is most powerful when it is embedded into the culture of a school for all staff. Peter Matthews believes the potential of this approach is significant:

In the research carried out into incremental coaching I found that where it has been adopted by a school, incremental coaching is the core process for developing the teaching workforce; it builds on other training and is central to continuing professional development (CPD), effectively transforming continuing to continuous professional development. One further

characteristic, essential to the successful establishment of incremental coaching, is that it is developmental and non-judgmental. It is best when detached from performance management; indeed, perceptions of such a link are detrimental to the process. For this reason, it is better if coaches are not the line managers of those they are coaching, and the outcomes of coaching are owned by the coachee rather than management.⁴⁷

Matthews also notes that the way in which incremental coaching is presented is crucial, and the climate within which it is implemented makes a real difference:

The schools presented incremental coaching as an entitlement for teachers: something that will support them in their work, enhance their skills and accelerate their progress towards professional mastery. Even when this stage is reached, it remains valuable, as demonstrated by leaders in education and other organisations and in a range of occupations. Coaching has the potential to make teaching more effective, more satisfying and more successful, through its agency for professional and personal growth. Undertaken systematically across a school, it can improve instructional quality and consistency.

FURTHER READING

Buck, A (2020) *The BASIC Coaching Method*. London: Cadogan Press.

Collins, J (2001) Level 5 Leadership – The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve. *Harvard Business Review*. January: pp. 67–76.

Covey, SMR & Merrill, RR (2006) *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Hattie, J (2008) *Visible Learning*. Abington: Oxon: Routledge.

Pink, DH (2009) *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates us*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Radcliffe, S (2012) (2nd ed). *Leadership: plain and simple*. Edinburgh: Pearson.

William, D (2015) The research delusion. *Times Educational Supplement*. 10 April 2015.

47. Buck, A (2018) *Leadership Matters 3.0*. Woodbridge: John Catt Educational.

Twinkle, twinkle teaching star: what you *think* is how (effective) you are

Dr Arran Hamilton

The global research suggests that educational leaders are more likely to unlock enhanced student learning gains when they adopt an *instructional* rather than a *transformational* leadership approach.⁴⁸

In other words, leaders who work collaboratively with educators to explore what is and isn't working, and who focus on continuous incremental improvement, are more likely to generate impact. However, implementing instructional leadership approaches effectively can be exceedingly difficult.

In this chapter, I suggest that one of the keystones of effective instructional leadership is in holding the mirror up to educators, so that teachers can systematically explore their individual and collective beliefs about teaching and learning. There is increasing evidence that how teachers *think* has a more profound impact on student achievement than the curriculum they teach, the technology they use or the per-pupil funding they receive.

A significant body of research is forming around two main constructs:

- **teacher efficacy** – ‘the extent to which teachers believe that they have the capacity to affect student performance’⁴⁹
- **collective teacher efficacy** – ‘the perceptions of teachers in a school that the faculty as a *whole* will have a positive effect on the students’.⁵⁰

The theory of change behind these two constructs is that when teachers *think* they can make a profound difference to student outcomes, they do. Although, this is not about the belief alone; it's about the way the belief drives educators to collaborate with the goal of improvement. And the fact that their positivity and optimism makes the outcome of that collaboration far more likely to be successful.

Rachel Eells's ground-breaking meta-analysis, which synthesised 26 major studies on the impact of collective teacher efficacy on student learning outcomes,

generated sizable evidence of impact.⁵¹ And John Hattie's most recent meta-meta-analysis identified collective teacher efficacy as the influence with the single highest effect size.⁵²

But it's not just educators' collective positivity that's important; it's also:

- what they *think* about their profession
- what they *think* about how teaching skills are acquired and enhanced
- what they *think* about how students learn
- what they *believe* to be the best ways to identify, implement and evaluate possible improvements to their practice.

And there's an important role that instructional leaders can play in facilitating this *thinking* process.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT TEACHING THINKING FROM OTHER PROFESSIONS?

Like most other professions, in most parts of the world, teachers require a licence to practice. But, unlike other professions, there is no globally dominant way of *thinking* about what teaching is. In some ways, perhaps, that's a good thing – it prevents a situation where everyone thinks the same way and no-one questions the status quo.

However, I want to argue that educators (with the support of their instructional leaders) might benefit from reflecting on the kind of profession teaching *should* be. This type of meta-thinking might also help educators harness their positive collective thinking towards the *right* kind of pursuits and reduce the number of blind alleys they find themselves in, which might potentially dissipate their collective efficacy.

This chapter will set out four potential modes of thinking that are drawn from four relatively different 'noble pursuits', each with different implications for how teachers could think about their role and how best to execute it.

48. See DeWitt, P (2020) *Instructional Leadership: Creating Practice Out of Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press. See also Hendriks, MA & Steen, R (2012) 'Results from school leadership effectiveness studies (2005–2010)', in J Scheerens & J Scheerens (eds) *School leadership effects revisited: review and meta-analysis of empirical studies* (pp. 65–129). (SpringerBriefs in education). Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2768-7_4
49. Ashton, PT, Webb, RB & Doda, N (1982) *A study of teachers' sense of efficacy. Final report* (Vol. 1). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 231 834).
50. Goddard, RD, Hoy, WK & Woolfolk Hoy, A (2000) Collective efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal* 37: pp. 479–507.
51. Eells, RJ (2011) Meta-Analysis of the Relationship Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement. *Dissertations* 133. Available online at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/133
52. Donohoo, J, Hattie, J & Eells, RJ (2018). The Power of Collective Efficacy. *Educational Leadership* 75/6.

Table 3: The noble pursuits and their implications for teachers

Noble pursuits	Implications for how teachers <i>think</i> about their role/what they <i>do</i>
Noble pursuit 1: parenting	<p>Like parenting, teaching would require no formal training or licence; instead, educators would learn on the job through trial and error by osmosis, and without much explicit thinking.</p> <p>It's worth noting that I do not endorse this way of thinking, but include it for pure provocation.⁵³</p>
Noble pursuit 2: acting	<p>Like actors, teachers would need to learn their lines and, over time, some would progress to becoming 'script writers'. They would think about how to best deliver the script and about whether their delivery was effective.</p> <p>The role of the leader is akin to a film director – getting their actors to deliver the lines in the most passionate and inspiring way.</p>
Noble pursuit 3: medicine	<p>Like surgeons, teachers would need to master a 'basket' of protocols/strategies and then draw on their experience to intuitively adjust and blend these to the specifics of their classroom context. But, once they have mastered these, they might not think very deeply about the various techniques; instead, they would enjoy the flow of automatic and effortless execution and switching.</p> <p>The role of the leader might involve supporting the establishment of professional learning communities, to encourage teachers to peer-support one another.</p>
Noble pursuit 4: science	<p>Like scientists, teachers would need to be trained systematically to evaluate their own impact – setting hypotheses and collecting verifiable empirical data.</p> <p>They would think about the quality of the evidence they have collected and about the different ways of interpreting and implementing their findings – to generate far greater impact in the classroom.</p> <p>The role of the leader would be akin to a lab director, helping their 'scientists' to systematically review the data and to decide where to go next.</p>

These noble pursuits have been deliberately selected to stoke controversy, as a way of encouraging instructional leaders and educators to explicitly unpack their understanding of what they currently do, and to *think* carefully about whether there are different and better mental frames for undertaking the role of a teacher that can lead to stronger and more consistent learner outcomes.

By reading on, it will become patently clear that each of these ways of thinking about teaching has different implications in terms of how educators:

- are trained
- collaborate with one another
- measure their impact.

And in terms of how leaders support educators to unleash greatness.

We start at the most controversial end of the spectrum: teaching as parenting.

53. Although Sir Anthony Seldon does endorse this position – see Seldon, A (2013) Teaching is like parenting: you don't need to have a qualification. The Guardian.

NOBLE PURSUIT 1: TEACHERS AS SURROGATE PARENTS

Parenting is extremely hard, but, despite being profoundly important, it requires no formal training or licence. Fortunately, humanity has survived and thrived for an estimated 150,000 years without the need for such training. You wouldn't be here today if any of your more than 7,500 ancestors catastrophically 'dropped the baby'.⁵⁴ So, there's an argument that parenting is something that virtually anyone can do to a reasonable standard, naturally.

This raises the question of whether anyone could be a teacher *naturally* and with limited or no training. Research studies that compare teachers who enter the profession with previous training to those who are simply thrust in the classroom and left to muddle through have consistently found very little difference in student achievement.⁵⁵ On the face of it, this suggests that education systems could operate without providing teachers with any vocational training or professional development. Assuming, of course, that these untrained recruits are, at least, literate and numerate.

If we follow the lessons from the *parenting* paradigm to their logical conclusion, we wouldn't bother investing in any sort of teacher training. Nor would we worry too much about what or how they think. Leaders would also not bother leaving their offices, entering classrooms or collaborating with teachers to improve their instructional effectiveness. Instead, like parenting, we would just leave teachers to figure it out for themselves and reinvest the US\$35 billion⁵⁶ a year normally spent on professional development in other worthy causes.

However, if we want to ensure that students get a uniformly good experience from every single teacher they meet, we need a more interventionist model and a more interventionist way of *thinking* about the profession. There are, after all, pedagogical approaches that are highly effective, including the use of:

- **blended phonics** – to teach children to read⁵⁷
- **formative assessment** – to provide feedback and feedforward⁵⁸

- **teacher clarity** – to set learning intentions and success criteria⁵⁹
- **cognitive task analysis** – understanding the parts of the lesson that will require a high cognitive load from students (such as problem solving, memory retrieval and judgement) and sprinkling these in a manner that does not result in cognitive overload.⁶⁰

These are just a few examples from a burgeoning literature on what works best. Given that we know there are *many* approaches for getting an above average return on investment, why would we want to leave it to chance that teachers will independently discover these gems through osmosis?

It clearly makes sense to train teachers and to equip them with the meta-cognitive skills to *think* deeply about the nature of their profession – if we can find the right modality. So, onto our next noble pursuit.

NOBLE PURSUIT 2: TEACHING AS ACTING

The acting profession has existed for at least 2,500 years. In ancient Greece and Rome, bands of actors made their living by portraying the exploits of great historical figures and fictional characters. However, while many modern actors complete formal qualifications in stagecraft, no one requires an acting licence.

The most common approach to the acting craft is to work with a script that has been developed by an expert writer. An actor's freedom to make the role their own comes in their tone of voice, their facial expression, the way they look at the audience and where they stand on the stage. The words on the page don't tend to change, although there can be tremendous differences in how individual actors execute or deliver their lines, and the amount of acclaim they receive.

If we thought of teaching as acting, teachers would follow scripted routines. Those routines will have been written by expert 'script writers' (educational action researchers), who will have tested the scripts in lots of education settings before agreeing and prescribing the best version for use in the classroom.

54. Harari, YN (2015) *Sapiens: a brief history of humankind*. New York: Harper.

55. See, for example, Hacke, W (2010) Meta-analysis comparing student outcomes for National Board certified teachers and non-National Board certified teachers. *Doctoral Dissertations* 384. Available online at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/diss/384> See also Sparks, K (2004) The effect of teacher certification on student achievement. *Doctoral Dissertations*.

56. Hattie, J & Hamilton, A (2020) *As Good as Gold? Why we focus on the wrong drivers for education*. Los Angeles: Corwin Press.

57. García, JR & Cain, K (2014) Decoding and reading comprehension: A meta-analysis to identify which reader and assessment characteristics influence the strength of the relationship in English. *Review of Educational Research* 84/1: pp. 74–111.

58. Black, P & Wiliam, D (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*. London, United Kingdom: School of Education, King's College.

59. Fendick, F (1990) *The correlation between teacher clarity of communication and student achievement gain: a meta-analysis*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Florida.

60. Tofel-Grehl, C & Feldon, DF (2013) Cognitive task analysis-based training: A meta-analysis of studies. *Journal of Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making* 7: pp. 293–304.

It's likely that many teachers would balk at the idea of being reduced to delivering a script, on the basis that it de-professionalises their role. There is growing evidence, however, that highly scripted approaches to teaching can be extremely effective. In the 1960s, Siegfried Engelman pioneered the Direct Instruction approach.⁶¹ Direct Instruction is centred around the development of a systematic curriculum delivered through a prescribed script. More recent approaches pioneered by Robert Slavin have also shown similar levels of effectiveness, although they are not without controversy.⁶²

The scripted Direct Instruction approach to teacher training and teacher *thinking* is, theoretically, quite straightforward. It involves familiarising teachers with the materials, getting them to rehearse using them and, optionally, some lesson study or independent coaching to help them understand why the materials have been written and sequenced in such a specific way. Like the actor, the pivotal role of the teacher is simply to *animate* the lesson by bringing their own style and personality to how they deliver the script. And the role of the instructional leader would be akin to that of a film director or acting coach, supporting teachers to deliver their lines with more passion and vigour.

But scripted Direct Instruction-style approaches seem to work best in contexts where there are no professionalised teachers, as trained teachers often fear the loss of their professional autonomy, and this can be a difficult barrier to traverse. Also, following a script does not encourage educators to *think* deeply about their role and the best ways to execute it. So, let's move onto the next noble pursuit.

NOBLE PURSUIT 3: TEACHERS AS SURGEONS

The training and licensing requirements for entry to the medical profession are considerably more standardised and arguably more gruelling than for acting. Pre-service training for medical practitioners lasts an average of five years, and surgeons usually don't reach the hallowed status of consultant until they are at least a decade into their career – after undertaking many electives and supervised work placements.

On the surface, surgeons seem to follow similarly rigid diagnosis and intervention protocols to the scripts delivered by actors, with limited room for improvising along the way. The truth, however, is slightly more nuanced. It would be more accurate to say that surgeons have 'baskets' of overlapping protocols and sub-protocols they can draw upon.⁶³ There are different incision types, wound-closing techniques, dissection protocols and even equipment, ranging from traditional scalpels to robotic arms. Often, surgeons choose the protocols from the basket they are most comfortable with. As a result, they have more leeway than scripted actors in deciding what to do and when.

If teachers are like surgeons, they should be trained in a whole basket of protocols, such as lesson warm-ups, co-operative learning strategies, project-based learning approaches and questioning techniques, and they would draw from what they think will be the most appropriate baskets of activities for that specific lesson. As with surgeons, that choice would often be an intuitive judgement call about which of the prescribed approaches has worked for them in the past and, therefore, what they feel comfortable with. It's about refinement through trial, error and experience.

If we see this as the accepted professional model of teaching, then the core purpose of professional development and instructional leadership is to provide teachers with an expanded collection of tricks, tips and activities that they can add to their existing toolbox or basket of experiences. It's then up to the discretion of autonomous teachers to intuitively decide which tools to pick out and use, and, also, to recalibrate, as they scan the classroom for feedback. An aligned purpose would be to support teachers to *think* meta-cognitively about why they pick some strategies over others, and whether the approaches they default to provide the best return for student learning.

61. See Stockard, J & Wood, TW (2018) The Effectiveness of Direct Instruction Curricula: A Meta-Analysis of a Half Century of Research. *Review of Educational Research* 88/4: pp. 479–507. DOI:10.3102/0034654317751919. See also Coughlin, C (2014) 'Outcomes of Engelmann's Direct Instruction: Research syntheses', in J Stockard (ed.) *The science and success of Engelmann's Direct Instruction* (pp. 25–54). Eugene, OR: NIFDI Press.
62. Slavin, RE, Madden, NA, Dolan, LJ, Wasik, BA, Ross, S, Smith, L & Dianda, M (1996) Success for All: A summary of research. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk* 1/1: pp. 41–76. DOI:10.1207/s15327671espr0101_6
63. See Burgers, JS, Grol, R, Klazinga, NS, Mäkelä, M & Zaat, J (2011) Towards evidence-based clinical practice: an international survey of 18 clinical guideline programs. *International Journal Quality Health Care* 15/1: pp. 31–45. DOI:10.1093/intqhc/15.1.31. See also Shekelle, PG, Ortiz, E, Rhodes, S et al. (2001) Validity of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality clinical practice guidelines: how quickly do guidelines become outdated? *JAMA* 286/12: pp. 1,461–1,467. DOI:10.1001/jama.286.12.1461.

NOBLE PURSUIT 4: TEACHERS AS SCIENTISTS

Scientists undertake research; they search and search again. Scientists use a standardised methodology to create hypotheses, design and conduct experiments, evaluate data and build theories. In science, to disprove something is considered evidence of progress. It means we can narrow down the search to a smaller number of potential scenarios. Scientists are also highly collaborative, working together in research groups and sharing ideas, equipment and eureka moments.

For teachers to be considered professionally equivalent to research scientists, we might expect to see them doing many of the following things during their working year.

1. **Searching:** like all good scientists, educators would devote time to reading the latest peer-reviewed research on educationally effective practice, to build on the shoulders of the giants that went before them and to attempt to put their insights into practice.
2. **Identifying challenging problems:** within their own institutional context, they would use a range of tools, like lesson observation, student voice recordings, psychometrics, surveys, student achievement data and student attendance data, to take the pulse of their school and identify major barriers to student learning. They would seek to further validate the reality and severity of these problems with different stakeholder groups.
3. **Building theories of change:** drawing on all the research they have previously imbibed, they would begin to build speculative causal models of why their specific problems exist and how to resolve them. This might involve working backwards through the causal chain to identify elements that could be varied and which, by varying, might spark improvement.
4. **Developing interventions:** these might be micro-variations on an existing approach (like, for example, introducing comments-only marking in their class), or they might be complex, whole-school or, even, system-wide reform initiatives. Sometimes these interventions might be developed from scratch, but more commonly, they might simply be borrowed from other contexts – to assess whether they are as effective in different kinds of settings.

5. **Testing:** this would involve the design of evaluation protocols to measure whether the proposed change is a step forward or three steps backwards, and then putting the intervention into practice, while systematically and dispassionately collecting data.
6. **Evaluating:** reviewing the data to see whether the intervention was successful and whether it could be improved yet further by iterating or ‘wiggling’ any of its sub-components through an evolutionary design process.
7. **Publishing:** making the findings available, so that other educators can review them and attempt to replicate the results in their specific contexts.

The role of the leader would be akin to that of a lab director – supporting the scientists in their group to continuously develop and rigorously test hypotheses about what works best for improving student learning.

Many education systems (and educators) shy away from encouraging their teachers to *think* like research scientists, because it can be a tall order to master both teaching and research-based approaches to improvement. However, in my recent work with Laureate Professor John Hattie, we developed a model, which we call G.O.L.D, and which is explicitly designed to support educators and instructional leaders through a cut-down or ‘lite’ version of the scientific thinking process. This involves:

- **Goal hunting** – to find education challenges worth solving and to then understand the causal mechanism, or moving parts, that generate the issue
- **Opportunity sifting** – to explore all the ways the education challenge can be resolved and to narrow in on the better bets
- **Lift-off** – to put those better bets into action
- **Double back** – to check the approach is actually working and to iterate to enhance the impact.⁶⁴

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this (deliberately controversial) chapter, I have outlined four different modes of thinking for educators and instructional leaders to explore together (see Table 4).

64. Hamilton, A & Hattie, J (2020) *Getting to G.O.L.D. The Visible Learning method for implementing effective education improvement*. Los Angeles: Corwin Press.

Table 4: Four modes of thinking for educators and leaders

Modality	Teachers as surrogate parents	Teachers as actors	Teachers as surgeons	Teachers as scientists
Way of acting	Unstructured learning on the job – by osmosis	Teachers follow a script developed by experts (or possibly themselves)	Teachers learn many classroom protocols and mix these intuitively – based on their reading of the classroom context	Teachers use the scientific method to develop hypotheses and conduct experiments to measure and enhance their impact
Way of training	No training provided, and limited personal reflection required	Training in how to effectively execute branching scripts ⁶⁵ and, eventually, to graduate to become a script writer	Training in new activities and routines that teachers can add to their mix – leaving the selection largely down to the teacher’s professional judgement	Training in scientific inquiry, to enable educators to conduct inquiry cycles to enhance their impact
Way of thinking	Narrow and implicit	Narrow and explicit for ‘actors’, but wide, deep and evidence-based for ‘script writers’	Wide, but often intuitive/gut-feeling-based; pattern recognition	Wide, deep and evidence-based
Type of leadership support	Leaders as administrators	Leaders as instructional acting coaches	Leaders as facilitators of professional peer support and improvement networks	Leaders as lab directors, supporting the design, implementation and evaluation of experiments
Also known as	Unstructured	Prescriptive	Professional expertise	Systematic inquiry

I’m not prescribing any of these as the silver bullet. The real magic comes from educators’ and leaders’ collective discussions and your interrogation of the benefits of these different ways of thinking and acting. So, what do you *think* teachers and leaders should be, and how will you bring this to life through your approaches to instructional leadership? Because, twinkle, twinkle teaching star: what you *think* is how (effective) you are!

65. Branching scripts provide multiple pathways for teachers to take the lesson, depending on how students react.

Why is school-to-school collaboration important and how can we make it work?

Toby Greany

Imagine a school leader who works in the education system you are most familiar with. Picture them in their office, at school.

Now imagine that they are facing an issue they've never encountered before, or a challenge they've been trying to address for some time, without success. Who do they turn to for ideas and support? The chair of the school's governing body or their supervisor at the district office may be ideal for supporting on some issues, but less so on others. For example, a head teacher might not want to reveal they are struggling to the person responsible for their performance management assessments. Or the challenge might just be something these people can't really help with, because they are not currently working in a school.

In many parts of the world, our imaginary school leader will turn to their networks for support on the tricky issues they face – their trusted colleagues in other schools who have faced similar issues, who can empathise and offer practical suggestions about what to do. These networks are often informal, based on professional friendships that develop almost naturally as we progress through our careers. In England, for example, it is common for head teachers to stay in touch with the other heads they met when studying for their National Professional Qualification for Headship.

Two points are important here. First, if your imaginary school leader does not have such informal networks to turn to, if their school operates in 'splendid isolation', then there will be limited opportunities for them and their staff to learn from practices in other schools, or to get emotional or practical support from their peers

when they face a tricky issue. Second, if the networks your imaginary leader engages with are all informal and self-generated, with no coherent ways of working or supporting infrastructure, then there is a risk they will be limited in their scope and impact, and that they don't align with wider system priorities and forms of communication.

Networks, collaborations and partnerships between schools can take multiple forms and achieve multiple objectives. This can make them hard to make sense of – and even harder to lead and manage. Nevertheless, the main message in this chapter is that policymakers should think carefully about where and how they want to encourage school-to-school networking as part of wider reform efforts, and what they need to put in place to make this happen successfully.

This is because school-to-school collaboration offers huge potential for sharing learning and expertise across systems, for providing support to schools that are struggling, for ensuring 'joined up' provision that meets the needs of all children, and/or for supporting innovation.^{66–70} That said, it is important to note that the evidence on how networks and collaboration lead to impact is not consistently strong – partly because it is challenging to assess impact from more diffuse partnerships, for example where schools are working with other services or universities to 'join up' provision. The strongest evidence comes from formally brokered school-to-school support and federations, for example where successful schools support lower-performing schools to improve.^{71, 72}

66. Armstrong, P (2015) *Effective school partnerships and collaboration for school improvement: a review of the evidence*. London: Department for Education.
67. Chapman, C (2015) From one school to many: Reflections on the impact and nature of school federations and chains in England. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 43/1: pp. 46–60.
68. OECD (2015) *Schooling Redesigned: Towards Innovative Learning Systems*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available online at: dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264245914-en
69. Muijs, D, West, M & Ainscow, M (2010) Why network? Theoretical perspectives on networking. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 21/1: pp. 5–26, DOI:10.1080/09243450903569692.
70. Suggett, D (2014) *Networking as System Policy: Balancing Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions*. OECD CERL. Available online at: www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/Suggett%20Networks%20paper%20formatted.pdf
71. Muijs, D (2015) Improving schools through collaboration: a mixed methods study of school-to-school partnerships in the primary sector. *Oxford Review of Education* 41/5: pp. 563–586. DOI:10.1080/03054985.2015.1047824
72. Chapman, C, Muijs, D & MacAllister, J (2011) *A Study of the Impact of School Federation on Student Outcomes*. Nottingham: NCSL.

It is also important to recognise that networks are not simple to manage and do not offer a panacea. For example, Greany and Higham⁷³ highlight that:

Networks can develop equitable partnerships, but can also support asymmetric power relations in which particular members gain authority and secure unequal gains and this can erode trust.⁷⁴ Networks can be open and inclusive, but can also be closed and exclusive where members develop a preference to interact with insiders or seek to manage and restrict flows of knowledge.⁷⁵ Networks can be flat and horizontal, but can also contain their own internal hierarchies.⁷⁶ Further, while networks can be co-ordinated on the basis of trust, external risk, suspicion and fear can also motivate people or organizations to collaborate without trust.⁷⁷

Despite these challenges, the majority of schools in England today engage in networks, and the development of school-to-school collaboration has been a significant feature of education policy since the early 2000s. This chapter outlines these developments and draws out some of the main learning from research and experience to identify implications for policy and practice.

HOW HAS POLICY IN ENGLAND WORKED TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS?

Most schools in England today are engaged in a range of partnerships, usually with other schools, but sometimes with other partners, such as universities. These partnerships range in their breadth and depth, but a combination of factors – mostly policy-driven – has served to increase the importance and strength of networks, starting around 2000, but particularly since 2010. Today, the partnership landscape in England is complex and disjointed, even within a single locality,

resulting from historic patterns of competition and collaboration, as well as more recent developments and forms of leadership agency.

England's school system is frequently described in terms of 'high-autonomy high-accountability.'⁷⁸ This reflects the fact that, since the late 1980s, school leaders in England have had relatively high levels of autonomy to make operational decisions, for example in relation to staffing and budgets, while being held tightly accountable for school performance, as measured via standardised tests for pupils and school Ofsted inspections. Schools also compete with each other, in particular to attract pupils, with funding following parental choice of school.

In this context, research in the 1990s identified sharp competition and significant status hierarchies between schools, particularly at the secondary level.^{79,80} Critically, although both Labour- and Conservative-led governments since that time have encouraged schools to collaborate, they have not dismantled the core 'high-autonomy high-accountability' framework, meaning that school leaders must maintain a focus on meeting their own institution's priorities, even as they also work in partnership. Thus, competitive pressures have not stopped, leading to arguments that schools are engaged in 'co-opetition'.⁸¹

Around 2000, the then New Labour government began to introduce various funding and policy incentives that encouraged schools to collaborate, both with other schools and, sometimes, with wider partners. Evaluations of these initiatives reveal a range of important opportunities and challenges for partnership working, many of which are outlined below.^{82–86} Perhaps the most successful New Labour initiative involving networks was the London Challenge, which had multiple strands but included a focus on brokering successful

73. Greany, T & Higham, R (2018) *Hierarchy, Markets and Networks: analysing the 'self-improving school-led system' agenda in England and the implications for schools*. UCL IOE Press: London.
74. Kamp, A (2013) *Rethinking Learning Networks: Collaborative Possibilities for a Deleuzian Century*, London: Peter Lang Publishers.
75. Hatcher, R (2008) System leadership, networks and the question of power. *Management in Education* 22/2: pp. 24–30.
76. Lieberman, A & McLaughlin, MW (1992) Networks for educational change: Powerful and problematic. *Phi Delta Kappan* 73/9: pp. 673–677.
77. Cook, K, Hardon, R & Levi, M (2007) *Cooperation Without Trust?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
78. Greany, T & Waterhouse, J (2016) Rebels against the system: leadership agency and curriculum innovation in the context of school autonomy and accountability in England. *School Autonomy and 21st Century Learning: Special issue – International Journal of Education Management* 30/7.
79. Gewirtz, S, Ball, S & Bowe, R (1995) *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*. Open University Press, Buckingham.
80. Glatter, R, Woods, P & Bagley, C (1997) *Choice and Diversity in Schooling: Perspectives and prospects*. London: Routledge.
81. Muijs, D & Romyantseva, N (2014) Coopetition in education: Collaborating in a competitive environment. *Journal of Educational Change* 15/1: pp. 1–18. DOI:10.1007/s10833-013-9223-8.
82. Ofsted (2003) *Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones: management and impact*. London: Ofsted.
83. Ofsted (2008) *Implementation of 14–19 reforms: an evaluation of progress*. London: Ofsted.
84. Rudd, P, Holland, M, Sanders, D, Massey, A & White, G (2004) *Evaluation of the Beacon Schools Initiative: Final Report 2004*. NfER.
85. Sharp, C, Pye, D, Blackmore, J, Brown, E, Eames, A, Easton, C, Filmer-Sankey, C, Tabary, A, Whitby, K, Wilson, R & Benton, T (2006) *National Evaluation of Creative Partnerships Final Report*. NfER.
86. Jackson, D & Temperley, J (2006) *From Professional Learning Community to Networked Learning Community*. Conference paper for International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) Fort Lauderdale, USA, 3–6 January 2006.

schools to support under-performing schools.^{87,88} In subsequent years, this approach developed into the National Leaders of Education programme and the wider use of school-to-school support as a means of securing improvement in under-performing schools.⁸⁹

Labour also established a legal framework for inter-school partnerships, as legislation passed in 2002 enabled maintained schools to federate together, with a single governing body (and, often, executive head teacher) overseeing two or more schools. This federation model provided the template for the later development of multi-academy trusts (MATs), initially under Labour and then, after 2010, as a system-wide approach.

Several important lessons can be drawn from New Labour's approach to fostering partnerships. First, it is clear that some partnerships formed as a response to the specific funding pots available, but then all but dissolved once the funding stopped. Indeed, a popular definition of partnership at the time was 'the suppression of mutual loathing in the pursuit of public funding'.⁹⁰ Second, the multiplicity of programmes and funding streams under New Labour led to accusations of 'initiavititis' and a 'congested state', with evidence that some schools felt overwhelmed by the sheer range of partnership opportunities on offer.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it could be argued that New Labour's investment in partnerships and networks served to shift the culture, making collaboration a core feature of the school system in England. For example, a survey conducted in early 2010 indicated that around three-quarters of head teachers were engaged in some form of school-to-school partnership at that time.⁹²

The Conservative-led governments in power since 2010 have built on this platform, seeking to develop what they call a 'self-improving, school-led' system,⁹³ and have argued that 'partnership and collaborative working

between schools is an essential requirement for realising this vision'.⁹⁴ Indeed, a series of influential think pieces written by David Hargreaves for the then National College for School Leadership argued that all schools must collaborate in 'deep' partnerships for a 'self-improving system' to succeed.⁹⁵⁻⁹⁸

Two initiatives have been central to the government's approach in this area. The first is 'system leadership' and school-to-school support, where high-performing schools and school leaders can volunteer to be designated by the government (as either a Teaching School or National Leader of Education), with a remit to develop networks (called 'alliances') and support improvement in other schools. The second, more significant initiative has been the development of MATs. A MAT is a charitable, non-profit company with a board and CEO that operates multiple academies via a funding agreement with the secretary of state for education.⁹⁹ The growth of MATs has been rapid, with around 1,200 MATs now operating 7,600 academies (accounting for more than a third of all schools and around half of all pupils in England), with each MAT responsible for between two and more than 40 academies, sometimes operating over a wide geographic area.

In addition to developing 'system leadership' and MATs, the government has been dismantling the educational oversight role of England's 152 local authorities since 2010. Local authorities had provided a crucial vehicle for reform implementation and school improvement support under previous administrations, but have now been largely replaced by MATs. In so doing, the government argues that it has reduced hierarchical oversight and freed up schools to individually and collectively 'self-improve'. In practice, however, as the following section sets out, the picture is considerably more complex.

87. Ainscow, M (2015) *Towards Self-Improving School Systems: Lessons from a City Challenge*, London: Routledge.
88. Baars, S, Bernardes, E, Elwick, A, Malortie, A, McAleavy, T, McInerney, L, Menzies, L & Riggall, A (2014) *Lessons from London Schools: Investigating the Success*. Reading, UK: CfBT.
89. Hill, R & Matthews, P (2010) *Schools Leading Schools II: The growing impact of National Leaders of Education*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
90. Glatter, R (2003) Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration: the origins and implications of a policy. *Management in Education* 17/5: pp. 16–20.
91. Skelcher, C (2000) Changing images of the state: Overloaded, hollowed-out, congested. *Public Policy and Administration* 15/3: pp. 3–19
92. Hill, R (2011) *The importance of teaching and the role of system leadership: a commentary on the Illuminas research*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
93. Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper*, London: DfE.
94. House of Commons Education Committee (2013) Written evidence submitted by the Department for Education, para 3. Available online at: publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmeduc/269/269we03.htm
95. Hargreaves, DH (2010) *Creating a self-improving school system*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
96. Hargreaves, DH (2011) *Leading a self-improving school system*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
97. Hargreaves, DH (2012a) *A self-improving school system in international context*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
98. Hargreaves, DH (2012b) *A self-improving school system: Towards maturity*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
99. West, A & Wolfe, D (2018) *Academies, the School System in England and a Vision for the Future: Executive Summary*. Clare Market Papers No. 23.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN ENGLAND

Greany and Higham analysed the various ways in which schools in England collaborate within the context of wider policy-driven reforms that have been under way since 2010.¹⁰⁰ Their study includes detailed case studies of local clusters (primary and secondary) of varying strength, depth and breadth.

They found that informal networks – most often centred on local clusters – remain important to schools, but that many of these informal networks have worked to become more formal and structured, usually by adopting one of the government’s preferred models (by becoming a Teaching School Alliance and/or MAT). The increased importance of networking for schools is driven by a view, reported by one primary head teacher in the study, that collaboration is ‘more and more something we need to do’. This perspective reflects a mix of factors, but particularly the loss of support from local authorities, coupled with the need to respond to significant national policy changes and new accountability requirements.

The research indicates that primary schools collaborate with an average of nine or ten other schools, while for secondary schools, the number is usually between ten and 13. Collaboration is most common with schools in the same phase and is often long-standing (five years or more). Most schools have a smaller number of long-term, more intensive ties and a larger number of newer, less intensive connections. In a national survey of head teachers, conducted as part of the same study, just two per cent of respondents stated that their school did not collaborate with any other school in a meaningful way.

In terms of the nature and focus of collaborative activity between schools, Greany and Higham show how this ranges from a local cluster that does little more than organise an annual inter-school sports day, to partnerships involving staff at multiple levels that impact on virtually every aspect of life and learning within member schools.

Primary school clusters had usually originated in previous local-authority-led initiatives, but those that had survived and developed had often been overlain with other initiatives and aims over time. Membership in these local clusters was usually voluntary and often fluid, but was generally drawn from a distinct local area with neighbouring or partly neighbouring schools. These clusters rarely had formal governance structures,

with shared decision making usually sited informally within a head teachers’ group. Common activities within stronger local primary clusters included head teacher meetings, curriculum or subject leader networks, assessment and moderation groups, peer reviews, research projects and joint practice development or shared professional development for staff, and providing joint extracurricular provision.

By contrast, secondary schools tended to collaborate in different ways, often over wider geographic areas, reflecting the fact that they are more likely than primaries to be in competition with neighbouring secondary schools.

Where local clusters and partnerships chose to formalise their partnership, for example by becoming a Teaching School Alliance or MAT, this was generally driven by a desire to access funding and increase sustainability. However, adopting these models inevitably meant that the partnership changed as a result. This is most evident in the case of MATs; once a school has joined a trust it ceases to exist as a separate legal entity, and the head teacher is line managed by the CEO of the MAT or by another member of the central team. While most MATs do seek to encourage some level of collaboration between schools in the group,¹⁰¹ a MAT is, thus, not a ‘partnership’ in the usual sense of a voluntary collaboration between ‘legally autonomous organizations that work together’.¹⁰²

Greany and Higham conclude that the ‘self-improving school-led system’ is a development of, rather than an alternative to, England’s pre-existing ‘high-autonomy high-accountability’ – or New Public Management¹⁰³ – policy framework. Thus, while it is true that school partnerships and networks have become more important since 2010, these collaborative arrangements do not represent a ‘self-governing’ alternative to hierarchy and markets. A consistent view is that the government’s agenda has created a more fragmented system in which there are ‘winners and losers’, with a sub-set of higher status schools, often ‘system leader’ schools, seen to be gaining new opportunities and resources, while lower-status schools face overlapping challenges, including higher levels of deprivation and pupil mobility. In this context, the extent to which a strong and inclusive partnership develops in any given locality depends on a complex array of factors, including the history of local relationships between schools, the context of individual schools, and the agency and values of local actors.¹⁰⁴

100. Greany, T & Higham, R (2018) *Hierarchy, Markets and Networks: analysing the ‘self-improving school-led system’ agenda in England and the implications for schools*. UCL IOE Press: London.

101. Greany, T (2018) *Sustainable Improvement in Multi-School Groups*. London: Department for Education.

102. Provan, K & Kenis, P (2008) ‘Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness.’ *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18/2: pp. 229–52.

103. Hood, C (1991) A public management for all seasons, *Public Administration* 69/1: pp. 3–19.

104. Greany, T (2020) Place-based governance and leadership in decentralised school systems: evidence from England. *Journal of Education Policy*. DOI:10.1080/02680939.2020.1792554

LESSONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

This final section draws out a set of overarching findings on the factors that support successful school-to-school partnerships, with a focus on governance and leadership. These findings come, in part, from the research and evaluations referenced above, while also drawing on wider research into partnerships, including those beyond the education sector.

First, we can say that strong networks and partnerships generally reflect a shared goal or interest. Provan and Kenis¹⁰⁵ note that organisations join or form networks for a variety of reasons, including to gain legitimacy, serve clients more effectively, attract more resources or address complex problems, but that all network organisations seek to achieve some end they could not achieve independently. In education, partnerships generally focus on improving the quality of education for children, although day-to-day partnership activity might be on ‘upstream’ issues, such as training new teachers. As we have seen, competitive pressures in a system can make working in partnership more challenging, while providing funding to incentivise partnerships may not lead to sustainable models in the absence of shared goals and values. So, there is a need to focus on how partnerships come together initially to identify a shared vision and set of priorities.

Second, successful networks generally share attributes, such as solidarity, altruism, loyalty, reciprocity and trust, and these take time to build. The circumstances around how a network is formed – for example, whether or not schools are mandated to join a particular group – will influence the development of these attributes. Hargreaves argues that ‘deep’ partnerships require strong ties between staff at multiple levels across schools,¹⁰⁶ with close and frequent interactions and high levels of relational trust and reciprocity.¹⁰⁷ However, Wellman argues that, in modern society, weaker ties of less intimate but more numerous interactions are more typical.¹⁰⁸ Subsequent research has shown how weak ties can allow information to flow and problems to be solved in distributed networks that do not rely on high levels of trust.¹⁰⁹ These findings are perhaps reflected in the

nature of school partnerships in England, as outlined above, where most schools have a smaller number of long-term and more intensive ties and a larger number of newer and less intensive ties. The – admittedly somewhat gnomic – implication for policy might be that the approach to fostering partnerships should be neither too tight nor too loose.

Third, many networks develop formalised governance and management structures as they grow over time, believing this will improve efficiency, but this can risk reducing levels of ownership for (some) members. Provan and Kenis¹¹⁰ identify three typical models of governance:

1. ‘shared governance networks’ are governed equally by all network members
2. ‘lead organisation networks’ are governed by one network member, acting as a centralised network broker
3. ‘network administrative organisations’ (NAOs) are networks governed externally by a separate administrative entity, often with a formal manager or CEO.

Provan and Kenis¹¹¹ also argue that, while many networks begin with informal ‘shared governance’, as they grow, they commonly evolve towards a ‘lead organisation’ or ‘NAO’ structure. This, they argue, is because finding consensus, sustaining trust and organising activities becomes more complex and burdensome in larger networks. However, Milward and Provan acknowledge that lead organisation networks can become dominated by the lead organisation, while NAOs can create a complex governing administration, with increased costs and decreased transparency.¹¹² In both cases, this can precipitate declining commitment by members.

Once again, the implications for policymakers are not straightforward. It is often necessary to stimulate the development of networks where they do not currently exist, for example by funding an external facilitator (or, in England’s case, by designating and funding Teaching Schools to lead the development of alliances). Developing formalised governance structures, in these ways, can support sustainability and avoid too much reliance on individual relationships. However, too much structure can stifle the ownership that can make partnerships powerful.

105. Provan, K & Kenis, P (2008) Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18/2: pp. 229–52.

106. Hargreaves, DH (2010) *Creating a self-improving school system*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.

107. Bryk, AS & Schneider, B (2002) *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

108. Wellman, B (1983) Network analysis: Some basic principles. *Sociological Theory* 1/1: pp. 155–200.

109. Little, JW (1990) The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers’ professional relations. *Teachers’ College Record* 91/4: pp. 509–536.

110. Provan, K & Kenis, P (2008) Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18/2: pp. 229–52.

111. *Ibid.*

112. Milward, H & Provan, K (2006) *A Manager’s Guide to Choosing and Using Collaborative Networks*. Washington, DC: IBM Center for the Business of Government.

Fourth, research highlights several design principles or features that are important for networks to be effective, including having shared goals, engagement at appropriate levels from within partner organisations, sufficient resources (including time) and shared protocols and routines that guide action, structure knowledge mobilisation and support impact. Hargreaves, Parsley and Cox¹¹³ provide a useful synthesis of these principles, arguing that it is important to establish clear expectations in terms of member participation and accountability and that, according to Evans and Stone-Johnson, ‘networking can be learned’.¹¹⁴ The implication for policy is that network leaders need to be helped to understand and develop these protocols and routines, through a continuing process of professional development and support, often provided by partner universities.

Fifth, education networks are invariably focused on ‘moving knowledge around’ between schools,¹¹⁵ but doing this successfully requires sophisticated skills, backed by supportive processes. The challenge is not only to share knowledge and expertise between teachers and classrooms, but to ensure that the resulting practices are actually more effective than what went before – that is, to avoid recycling low-level practices. Many networks identify ‘lead or expert practitioners’ who are charged with facilitating these processes, but an approach that is founded on a one-way transfer of knowledge (from the ‘expert’ practitioner to their, by implication, ‘less expert’ peers) is likely to excite resistance and risks trying to ‘drag and drop’ practices without consideration of how they might need to be adapted for different contexts.

Research on knowledge sharing¹¹⁶ suggests that knowledge is not simply ‘transferred’ from one context to another, but rather continuously reviewed and transformed as it is taken into different settings, although

there are differences between tacit and explicit/codified knowledge. Networks can benefit from fostering ‘joint practice development’¹¹⁷ routines and approaches that support the articulation and sharing of knowledge as teachers engage in addressing shared problems of practice.^{118,119} Policymakers should encourage network leaders to clarify their theory of action in relation to knowledge mobilisation, and should facilitate this through the provision of a robust knowledge and data architecture that supports evaluation, benchmarking and sharing between schools and networks.

Lastly, leading and managing networks requires sophisticated ‘network competencies’, but such skills and agency are not universally present. This can be particularly true in the context of schools, which tend to be relatively hierarchical and internally focused organisations, meaning that few senior leaders have significant experience of the kinds of lateral ‘systems leadership’ required.¹²⁰ Popp et al. argue that network leaders must nurture a network culture that:

*Addresses competing interests, politics and power differentials; and that promotes trusting relationships, curiosity, conscious interest in gaining different perspectives, and respect for diversity of views among organizations.*¹²¹

However, according to Vangen and Huxham, gaining and maintaining momentum in networks can require a degree of ‘collaborative thuggery’, where network leaders need to manipulate agendas or play the politics to move things forward.¹²² With this in mind, policymakers should be prepared to invest in developing and deepening these skills over an extended time period, potentially by linking networks to appropriately skilled universities.

113. Hargreaves, A, Parsley, D & Cox, EK (2015) Designing Rural School Improvement Networks: Aspirations and Actualities. *Peabody Journal of Education* 90/2: pp. 306-321. DOI: 10.1080/0161956X.2015.1022391
114. Evans, MP & Stone-Johnson, C (2010) Internal leadership challenges of network participation. *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 13/2: pp. 203–220.
115. Ainscow, M (2015) *Towards Self-Improving School Systems: Lessons from a City Challenge*, London: Routledge.
116. Hartley, J & Benington, J (2006) Copy and paste, or graft and transplant? Knowledge sharing through inter-organizational networks. *Public Money & Management* 26/2: p. 101.
117. Fielding, M, Bragg, S, Craig, J, Cunningham, I, Eraut, M, Gillinson, S, Horne, M, Robinson, C & Thorn, J (2004) *Factors influencing the transfer of good practice*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
118. Greany, T (2015) ‘How can evidence inform teaching and decision making across 21,000 autonomous schools? Learning from the journey in England’, in C Brown (ed.) (2015) *Leading the use of research and evidence in schools*. London: IOE Press.
119. Greany, T & Maxwell, B (2017) Evidence-informed innovation in schools: aligning collaborative Research and Development with high quality professional learning for teachers. *International Journal of Innovation in Education (IJIE)* 4(2/3): pp. 147–170.
120. Uhl-Bien, M & Arena, M (2018) Leadership for organizational adaptability: A theoretical synthesis and integrative framework. *The Leadership Quarterly* 29: pp. 89–104.
121. Popp, J, Milward, B, MacKean, G, Casebeer, A & Lindstrom, R (2014) *Inter-organizational Networks: A review of the literature to inform practice*. Washington, DC: IBM Center for the Business of Government.
122. Vangen, S & Huxham, C (2003) Enacting leadership for collaborative advantage: dilemmas of ideology and pragmatism in the activities of partnership managers. *British Journal of Management* 14: pp. 61–76.

CONCLUSION

Returning to our imaginary school leader at the start of this chapter, it is clear that if they are part of a mature, high-trust network, they and their teams will be able to turn to their partners for ideas and support, as they address their tricky or intractable challenge. Networks, partnerships and collaboration between schools, thus, offer the potential for significant benefits in terms of knowledge sharing, innovation and the achievement of shared educational goals. The big lesson is, perhaps, that networks cannot be seen in isolation from other aspects of system reform.

Furthermore, we've seen that policy can support the development of successful networks, although doing so requires a sophisticated, long-term approach that goes beyond simply providing funding or mandating participation by schools. England's 'self-improving,

school-led system' reforms provide many lessons here, both in terms of more and less successful approaches. Getting the balance right between individual school autonomy and accountability, together with network-level collaboration and equitable outcomes, may be key to inclusive improvement that meets the needs of all schools. Or, as Suggett concludes:

*Exposure to networks alone does not do the hard work of school improvement or transformation – even when they are well-resourced. Collaboration and relationship building open the door to an agenda for change and professional learning but it appears it is at the whole school organisational level where engagement and collaboration needs to gain traction to impact on school improvement.*¹²³



123. Suggett, D (2014) *Networking as System Policy: Balancing Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions*. OECD CERI. Available online at: www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/Suggett%20Networks%20paper%20formatted.pdf



Case study

Leading school-to-school collaboration to improve teaching and learning

Marie-Claire Bretherton

An executive head teacher in England introduces her successful approaches for harnessing the power of school-to-school collaboration to bring about sustainable improvements to teaching and learning across the group of schools under her responsibility.

I became head teacher of Benjamin Adlard Primary School in March 2015, just four months after the school had been rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted, our school quality regulator. The school serves a very challenging community, in a small town in rural Lincolnshire. Two-thirds of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, and a similarly high proportion have special educational needs, while the community itself experiences significant deprivation. The school had previously been deemed 'satisfactory' (although requiring improvement) by Ofsted, but it had never been graded 'good'.

When I agreed to take on the role, I was absolutely terrified, and needed to rapidly rethink my capacity and grow the team around me. I was to continue as the head teacher of two other schools at the same time, a role known in England as 'executive headship', and I knew I would need help. However, I was convinced that the key to sustainable improvement in teaching and learning at Benjamin Adlard was linked to helping teachers learn through powerful, hope-filled connections with other teachers and leaders in our partnership of schools.

I also wanted to believe that the partnership had the collective capacity and expertise to transform the school – not by replacing the teachers, but by restoring them, redeeming them and nourishing them back to life. So, we set to work, and 18 months later, in June 2016, the school was graded 'good' for the first time in its history – and we achieved it with the same teachers in post.

There were three main design principles that guided our work to improve teaching and learning.

CULTIVATING A FRONTLINE OBSESSION

What do I mean by a 'frontline obsession'? The most mission-critical interactions in our schools will be between the teachers and the students – that is the 'frontline'. Everything we do should be focused on how to make that interaction and relationship more effective. I believe, as leaders, we should be obsessed with what happens in our classrooms every day and, therefore, obsessed with teacher development. In the same way an entrepreneur is obsessed with the quality of their new, innovative product, we too should be obsessed with refining, improving and sharing the very best practice in our classrooms.

A frontline obsession is something that must be embedded in the school culture; the centrality of 'learners' and 'learning' must, therefore, be explicit in our everyday language. One measure, captured brilliantly by Tim Brighouse, could be the degree to which 'teachers TALK about teaching; teachers OBSERVE each other teach; teachers plan, organise and evaluate TOGETHER; teachers teach EACH OTHER'.¹²⁴

To develop a frontline obsession, and improve the quality of teaching and learning in a group of schools, there must be high social capital between colleagues. High social capital consists of two elements: trust and reciprocity. Trust is critical in building a sustainable relationship between teachers. It has many elements. At its basic level, the teachers show goodwill towards one another. Beyond this, teachers move to a stage of being more open and honest with one another and building the reliability (consistency, dependability) and the competence that commands respect. Trust is built slowly, especially for teachers who may have to share fears and anxieties, as well as hopes and aspirations about their practice.

124. Brighouse, T & Woods, D (2013) *The AZ of school improvement: Principles and practice*. Bloomsbury Education.

The idea of reciprocity is the sense of sharing and having an obligation for mutual exchange. For example, if I offer you a gift or help, you feel you want to give me something in return. Reciprocity arises when there is some level of trust, which is perhaps no more than just goodwill, but which, once it takes place, increases the level of trust. When there is a high level of social capital between colleagues in a group of schools, teachers begin to share their intellectual capital – that is, their knowledge, skills and experience. And that is where the magic happens!

At Benjamin Adlard, two approaches were crucial to developing this frontline obsession and building trust between colleagues. The first was a tool called teacher tracker, and the second was a strategy we called IMPact (Improving my practice through action) teams.

Teacher tracker

We developed the teacher tracker by working with teachers across our group of schools to draw together our collective view of effective teaching and learning, which we used to design a framework of teacher competencies.

From research, we knew the competencies that make the biggest difference and yield the greatest results are:

- a teacher's instructional delivery
- a teacher's classroom management
- the use of formative assessment
- personal competencies (softer skills).

The teacher tracker captures and describes these competencies in a teacher-friendly way, in their own words.

The tool is used first by teachers to review their own practice and assess how well they feel they are developing in their role, in relation to these competencies and across different subjects. The teacher then meets with a nominated middle or senior leader to share their tracker and discuss an area they believe they are doing well and making improvements in, and an area they have identified as something they need to focus on.

This one-hour coaching session culminates in the teacher making a commitment about how they are going to improve their practice. For example:

- Who could they observe?
- What should they read?
- What does the research say?
- Who should they talk to or visit?

If appropriate, the coach then works with them in class, perhaps through team teaching or observation, to support teacher learning.

From a leadership perspective, the teacher tracker has been incredibly useful, as it has enabled us to collate and analyse teacher development and professional learning needs – so, what are the common areas, subjects and skills that our teachers need to develop? Professional development can then be targeted to meet the needs.

When implementing this approach, we learned how important joint determination is, to create strong teacher buy-in. Defining what effective practice and teacher competency looks like in *our school* and in *our context*, and using research and evidence to develop collective understanding, was powerful. In addition, the strategy only worked because we had middle and senior leaders who are trained in coaching and mentoring, and who are competent practitioners themselves.

IMPact teams

IMPact teams are essentially triads of teachers who are selected to work together to improve their practice based on a 'joint practice development' approach. They are teachers from different schools who work in the same phase or year group, and work together over a minimum of 12 months.

To make this possible, we restructured the timetables across the schools so that teacher non-contact time happened at the same time for all teachers in a given year group, and so that professional learning time (staff meetings) was on the same day, after school. We made sure our curriculum model was aligned, so that teachers had meaningful content, ideas and resources to share. We made it non-negotiable that teachers share student work together when they met to discuss students' next steps in learning and any gaps. We also varied the days of the training so that teachers could visit other schools in the partnership to watch teaching and learning in action.

These triads have a clear focus for their work together and follow the cycle of design, teach, assess, share, reflect, evaluate, inquiry, with the focus being on the students and the progress they are making. The triads must have a basis for action, but can iterate and then iterate again, making adjustments and changes as needed. The purpose of the work is clear: it's about improving student outcomes through improved teacher instruction, classroom management and formative assessment.

It was critical for the work of the triad to include a commitment, something like:

I will focus on the following students who currently have the following need If I'm successful in meeting their needs, instead of seeing, I will see in my lesson and in their work.

IMPact teams have also had the added benefit of creating relationships between staff, which can be useful when it comes to redeploying staff to work in other schools in the partnership – the barriers have already come down through collaborative work. As Margaret Wheatley puts it: 'There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.'¹²⁵ As we grew our community of schools, the IMPact teams, by focusing on pupils in each other's classes, helped to build a shared sense of moral purpose and a deep commitment to seeing children and teachers flourish.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF NETWORKS

A robust, focused peer-review system between schools has been an excellent way of benchmarking our practice and learning from other schools. The key for us has been developing teacher-to-teacher, subject-to-subject and pupil-to-pupil peer reviews – always asking: what is the experience of learning for this child in this lesson?

Using student voice in the peer-review process has become a powerful lever for change. We set up the Kyra Kid's Council, a group of children from different schools in the partnership who regularly visit schools to support improvement through pupil-led peer reviews. They examine an area the school has been trying to improve and give feedback to the head teacher or senior leadership team.

This has been really powerful. Primary-aged children generally love their school; they usually don't have much to compare it to, but when you take them out of context and into other schools to look at learning, the classroom environment, behaviour in lessons, routines, presentation of work and resources, they often have very insightful and important things to say.

Of course, we've had to help this group of pupils understand how to give effective feedback, by providing them with sentences to frame their observations, e.g. 'I expected to see this ... but instead I saw that ...', 'I noticed A, B and C' or 'When the teacher did X I heard the children say Y.' This has helped to create a developmental, non-judgemental culture.

It's heartening to see that these pupils have a sense that children in other schools matter, that learning matters, that we are all trying to be the best that we can be, and that we are all part of the same wider community. Not only do the pupils share their views on the school they have visited, but they also go back to their own school with ideas and experiences that can help shape practice. This is the power of the network.

Teacher leadership matrix

Another example of how we tried to harness the power of the partnership to create opportunities for teacher development is the teacher leadership matrix. This time, the focus is on the development of teachers as leaders and learners beyond their own classroom, i.e. career development.

As a partnership of schools, we had tinkered with the odd secondment and organised a few *ad hoc* visits to each other's schools, and a few keen teachers got involved in coaching colleagues or observing leadership team meetings in another school. But we wanted to make these kinds of opportunities visible and accessible for every teacher within the group of schools. In response, we created the teacher leadership matrix, which is essentially a progressive list (from early career to established leader) of:

- in-school opportunities to learn, shadow a colleague, observe lessons, coach, lead staff training, give presentations or lead an aspect of school improvement – all with feedback and support from a mentor in the school
- cross-school learning opportunities, such as secondments to other schools, paired visits, shadowing other leaders, coaching someone in another school, leading school-to-school support and leading work on behalf of the group of schools
- formal continuing professional development opportunities available within the partnership.

This was our way of aligning professional development processes, content and activities, thereby creating opportunities for teacher learning that are consistent across the group of schools. Many schools have adopted this matrix as part of their professional development offer.

125. Wheatley, M (2002) Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future. *The Journal for Quality and Participation* 25/2.

When implementing this approach, we began by identifying and auditing strengths, expertise and opportunities in all our schools. We also needed to invest in colleagues by ensuring they were trained in effective school-to-school support, e.g. coaching and mentoring, joint practice development, building rapport and skilling-up others. There was also some work to do on building the culture and creating a belief that teacher and leadership development should be everyone's responsibility.

BUILDING CAPACITY BY EMPOWERING THE FRONTLINE

I've spoken about teacher development at the school and partnership levels – cultivating a frontline obsession – and the role of the wider network or partnership in driving and supporting improvements in teaching and learning. Now, I want to focus on the role of evidence-informed school improvement. How do you know what works, and how do you share knowledge and practice so that every teacher can learn and adapt their practice?

It's good to highlight one example of how we are seeing evidence-informed practice have an effect across our group of schools.

The Mobilise project

Our partnership of schools is just about to embark on our fourth year of leading a project in Lincolnshire called Mobilise. We chose this name because our aim was to mobilise the knowledge in the system and see it have an impact in classrooms right across the county. The work is led through a professional learning community model, and we are actively working in just over 300 schools and reaching around 2,875 teachers in such communities.

The ultimate aim of Mobilise is to build an effective cluster-based, school-to-school infrastructure, which will enable every teacher to be evidence-informed and evidence-ready in the future. This means they are able to rapidly understand, respond to and implement recommendations from research in their school. We aim to equip teachers and leaders to become champions of the evidence and to transform outcomes for pupils as a result.

The much-lamented gap between educational research and instructional practice results, in part, from the fact that the presentation of research findings is rarely calibrated to the problems encountered by teachers. Teachers often feel that research isn't relevant to their practice, or they don't know how to translate the evidence into changed ways of working.

The professional learning community model has created a way in which participants can actively seek out and carry out research that addresses group concerns; they can reflect deeply on existing research and, subsequently, on improving practice. This type of exploration and thinking deepens teachers' understanding of student learning and draws on the group's collective capacity to generate responses to instructional dilemmas.

Through this approach, teachers have studied cognitive theory and memory, feedback and marking, curriculum design, emotional health and well-being, the effective deployment of teaching assistants and the latest recommendations from the Education Endowment Foundation on English and maths. This is one of the ways we are trying to empower the frontline, equip them with the evidence and build teacher capacity and efficacy.

The central question for larger groups of schools working in collaboration is how to set up a learning infrastructure so that evidence can reach the classroom efficiently and with fidelity. This is what empowers the frontline and keeps the profession learning.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, these are just some of the ways we are seeking to improve teaching and learning in our group of schools. For us, the key has been to align the strategy and be clear on the purpose and impact of our work, as well as the time and commitment needed to make it worthwhile.

In essence, we've tried to:

1. cultivate a frontline obsession – build social capital, create active collaborators and build a culture of reciprocity
2. harness the power of the network – use the group to improve the group, build teacher efficacy and make learning opportunities systematic and accessible to all
3. build capacity by empowering the frontline – use evidence-informed practices to transform what happens in classrooms and amplify the voices of our teachers and our young people.

Transforming education by supporting school leaders in Pakistan

Murad Raas and Nishat Riaz

Governance of any nation is a challenge, and ‘catch-all’ solutions are few and far between. However, in the realm of education, one type of reform comes closer than any other to resembling the proverbial ‘silver bullet’ – what is known as the ‘development multiplier’.

This approach is when a pilot project is scaled up to increase the impact for larger sections of the population, and it plays a pivotal role in fast-tracking progress across all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (be it poverty eradication, good health or gender equality).

There is a strong consensus that education leadership has a key role in improving school effectiveness. Harris¹²⁶ argues:

While the education challenges are considerable and the route to reform is complex, the potential of leadership to influence pupil and school performance is unequivocal.

The role of the head teacher – as a school leader – is, therefore, crucial, as student learning and the success of a school can depend on how well an individual head teacher performs, and research shows that effective leadership has a positive impact on students’ learning outcomes.¹²⁷

With this in mind, one of our main goals at Pakistan’s Ministry for School Education is to identify and implement reforms that can encourage and promote the confidence, skills and motivation of school leaders, which can lead to exponential wins across both education and economic spaces.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION: PAKISTAN’S CHALLENGE

Access to education is one of Pakistan’s biggest challenges. The country has an estimated 22.8 million out-of-school children aged between five and 16 – the second-highest number globally, according to UNICEF – and this number accounts for 44 per cent of the total population in this age group.¹²⁸ Wealth inequality is also an important factor, with the enrolment gap between children of the richest and poorest fifth of households being greater in Pakistan than in all but two of the 96 developing countries recently analysed by the World Bank.¹²⁹

A province-wide comparison indicates that Pakistan’s largest province by area, Balochistan, has the highest proportion of out-of-school children, followed closely by the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Punjab, however, accounts for more than half of the total out-of-school children in terms of overall distribution.¹³⁰ It should be noted that inequalities vary significantly across different demographics, with regard to socio-economic status and gender, while intersecting across multiple dimensions.

Punjab is Pakistan’s most populous province, with around 56 per cent of the entire country’s population¹³¹ (making it as populous as the 12th largest country in the world¹³²). *The Annual Status of Education Report 2019* shows that around 52 per cent of children aged three to five and around 91 per cent of children aged six to 16 in Punjab are enrolled in school. According to the report, about 75 per cent of Grade 5 students can read text in Urdu, while 71 per cent can read English sentences meant for students in Grade 2. Likewise, 82 per cent of Grade 5 students can do two-digit division pegged at the Grade 2 curriculum. Overall, 85 per cent of children enrolled in Grade 5 in all urban districts surveyed in the province can read a story in their local language, 84 per cent can read sentences in English and 78 per cent can do division.¹³³

126. Harris, A (2011) ‘Distributed leadership: evidence and implications’, in T Bush, L Bell & D Middlewood (eds) *The Principles of Educational Leadership and management, second edition* (pp. 55–69). London, SAGE Publications.

127. Leithwood, K & Steinbach, R (2002) Successful leadership for especially challenging schools. *Journal of Leadership in Education* 79/2: pp. 757–789.

128. See www.unicef.org/pakistan/education

129. See www.economist.com/briefing/2018/01/04/pakistan-is-home-to-the-most-frenetic-education-reforms-in-the-world

130. Alif Ailaan (2014) *25 million broken promises: the crisis of Pakistan’s out-of-school children*. Islamabad: Alif Ailaan.

131. Abdul, R, Luan, J & Imran, H (2015) The province-wise literacy rate in Pakistan and its impact on the economy. *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences* 1/3: pp. 140–144.

132. The population of Punjab is 110,012,442 (Census, 2017). See www.pbs.gov.pk Ethiopia is 12th in terms of population, at 114,963,588 (2020). See www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/

133. ASER Centre (2019) *Annual Status of Education Report 2019* (Punjab, Rural).

The significantly high number of out-of-school children is worrying, and Punjab has suffered from years of misguided education reforms, which have been designed and measured against a numbers-based metric that alludes to an efficient and progressive school education landscape in the province.

The gravity of this education emergency cannot simply be measured in terms of the scale of provision or access to services, but by the very nature of those services and the way they have been conceptualised, resourced and delivered thus far. The task is greater than a mere revamping of the systems and structures. Seeing that head teachers, teachers and education managers are part of the education ecosystem, and have a crucial leadership role to play, helped us realise that reforms should consider supporting the role of school leaders across the province. This required a rudimentary shift in perspective, service delivery mechanisms and resource allocation to live up to the statutory commitment made under Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan.¹³⁴

After arriving at the Ministry for School Education, I came to realise that the public school education system in the Punjab province needed an urgent and complete overhaul, and that major remedial measures were required to transform and enhance access, equity, quality and transparency. Each of these steps were needed to improve the confidence of learners, their parents and, more importantly, school leaders, who champion the change on the ground. The province could not achieve its ambition of the implementation of a civil right to 12 years of free education due to systemic disadvantages. This, of course, was leading to exclusion from school, student dropouts, outdated teaching practices and, ultimately, poor levels of learning.

Building a system from scratch can often be easier than rebuilding one. But in this case, it posed an almost insurmountable challenge, especially at the scale required to make a real difference. The School Education Department (SED) is the nation's second-largest department, with around 52,000 public educational institutions, including primary, middle, high and higher secondary schools, and religious seminaries. There are some 12 million students enrolled in these institutions, who are taught by 400,000 teachers. They are overseen by 36 district educational authorities, including chief executive officers and 3,300 assistant education officers.

To evaluate the root causes of the problems facing such a large system, a preliminary assessment of the SED was initiated, which revealed severe imbalances in the provision, system-level controls, programme designs, administrative processes and service delivery apparatus.

Our findings were in stark contrast to the on-the-ground facts and realities. The baseline was lower than expected and, hence, required focused and urgent attention.

ACCEPTING THE REALITY AND MAKING TOUGH DECISIONS

Based on the review's findings, in 2018, a radical transition was made in the vision and direction of the SED, beginning with the launch of the Punjab government's five-year school education policy. Titled *The New Deal 2018–23*, the policy aims to tackle the problems facing school education by transforming the education system, with an emphasis on improving, learning, access, retention, equity and governance. These reforms have been ongoing since March 2019. The policy emphasises the need to reduce short-termism in the public education system, in favour of sustainable development and progress.

REVAMPING RECRUITMENT AND TRANSFER PROCESSES

The first step was eradicating redundant practices involved in the 'teachers transfer process', which was based on criteria other than business needs. The conventional and deeply rooted system of promotions and transfers created an environment that didn't recognise the knowledge, skills and merit of school leaders across the province. To solve this, a new mobile application named E-Transfer was launched, enabling teachers to apply for inter-district and intra-district transfers at the click of a button.

Initially, department officials and the ministry were overwhelmed with teacher transfer requests. Unfair and opaque reasoning was being used to cut through red tape and the merit-based evaluation process. In the first cycle of 2019, 36,000 teachers were transferred, while in 2020, 45,168 teachers secured their transfer via the online transfer system. Besides its ease-of-use and quicker facilitation, E-Transfer has served as an efficient tool to address the lack of effective teaching in public schools, by simply basing transfers on the student/teacher requirements of each school. Here, the power of technology has been harnessed to replace an inefficient, manipulative system with a simple online application, at a minimal cost to the government and taxpayer.

134. Article 25-A guarantees the right to free and compulsory education to children aged five to 16.

The success of the E-Transfer system encouraged us to look for similar solutions to eliminate inefficiencies. This resulted in the development of the Integrated Management Information System for public schools, which comprises modules such as the Student Information System, the Human Resource Management Information System and the Learning Management System. Alongside this, a Private Education Providers Registration and Information System was developed to facilitate and ensure hassle-free registration for private schools.

DEVELOPING STRONG ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

To strengthen system-level controls and accountability, we introduced amendments to existing legislation and to new laws that were fit for the current landscape. Some enactments predated the 1980s, and were unfit to govern and control the newly evolved education systems (both public and private). We started with the Punjab Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority Bill, incorporating clauses on student harassment, implementation of special directives issued under force majeure, registration and regulation of private school matters, including, but not limited to, fees. This was closely followed by two new pieces of legislation, the Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill and the Punjab Education Professionals Standards Council Bill to grant accreditation to institutions and award licences to teachers.

Alongside strengthening system-level checks, we kept our focus on initiatives that could improve service delivery within schools. Limited resources and budgetary constraints pushed us to think outside the box and look for context-specific, innovative, inexpensive solutions to the problem of access to education. We started by upgrading 1,227 schools from primary to middle, and from middle to secondary. By using the same school infrastructure and devising a system of evening shifts, this saved 16 billion rupees and successfully increased the capacity of the same institutions to cater for 100,000 more out-of-school children. To tackle the challenge of retention beyond the primary level and mitigate the shortage of schools, the Insaf Afternoon Schools Programme was launched in February 2019, introducing afternoon shifts in functional schools catering to middle, high and higher secondary levels.

INITIATING REAL-TIME MODEL PROJECTS

As part of the restructuring process, we launched the Punjab School Construction and Rehabilitation Programme, an initiative tasked with rebuilding 110 existing public schools in 11 districts into 'model schools'. This included constructing 2,000 more classrooms and revamping 1,000 science labs, 1,000 computer labs and 400 libraries in public schools by December 2020. It's clear that we need to renovate long-neglected public schools in Pakistan and bring out-of-school children back into the classroom.

DEALING WITH THE LEARNING CRISIS

After addressing the issue of access, we ventured inside classrooms to look at learning challenges. Giving children the opportunity to attend school would not guarantee high-quality learning by itself. This required the presence of well-trained teachers. The quality of pedagogy had deteriorated greatly over the years and we faced several challenges related to centralised training models with huge associated travel and meal costs, outdated training modules, a lack of needs assessments and a lack of interest from teachers in taking up professional development opportunities.

To tackle these, we are introducing a devolved teacher training programme that aims to maximise the full potential of district-level facilities in the first phase, leading to a school-based continuing professional development model, with the long-term goal of ensuring the continuation of the latest pedagogical practices across the board. And here, the British Council, as a strategic partner, has played a pivotal role in improving the professional development of teachers, leaders and education managers across the province.

The British Council's content, methodology and approach are widely used on various levels to address the challenges faced by school leaders and teachers in Punjab. In 2016 and 2018, the British Council carried out studies to analyse school leadership practices in government secondary schools in Pakistan, including the Punjab province, with the aim of highlighting good practices, lessons learned and challenges concerning school leadership to inform their own policies and programmes on school leadership and to add to the country's knowledge base on school leadership research. The learnings and recommendations in the research have greatly helped the government of Punjab to implement practical steps towards building the capacity of school leaders across the province.

These findings highlighted both positive and negative aspects of school leadership. While it showed leaders have a strong moral commitment to inculcate patriotism and good citizenship values among students, are effectively distributing day-to-day administrative tasks among teachers to encourage teamwork, are helping to improve the physical school environment, and have a clear focus on co-curricular activities to develop student leadership and citizenship skills, it also found that head teachers had a limited focus on the holistic development of students. The main reason for this was a lack of teacher training and skills development.

As a result, a needs-based capacity development plan was developed by the government to improve school leaders' skills around collaboration for professional learning, curriculum enrichment activities and promoting a conducive learning environment for students.

Around the same time, a province-wide survey showed that students, teachers and parents favour Urdu as a medium of instruction as it enables clarity of concept and reduces the need for rote learning. This, along with other factors, led to the monumental decision of shifting to Urdu as the medium of instruction in primary-level schools, alongside teaching English as a subject, from March 2020 onwards.

On the assessment front, the decade-old Grade 5 and Grade 8 exams were discontinued, as it was recognised that the system of measuring standards was neither well understood nor transparent. Indeed, the Punjab lacked an overarching assessment policy framework, which inevitably meant the system was weak. A new framework was clearly needed and was introduced. The newly implemented Assessment Policy Framework comprises school-based, formative and large-scale assessments. The framework not only gauges student development at the school level, both during and at the end of an academic year, but also offers a system-level diagnosis to support evidence-based decision making.

BRINGING BACK HEALTH AND SAFETY

During this tumultuous yet rewarding journey, a number of significant initiatives were undertaken to promote the health, safety and well-being of learners. These included the closure of schools due to toxic levels of smog, exploring collaborative initiatives with transit companies to reduce the 'one child, one car' phenomenon, conducting awareness sessions in education facilities, and formulating air-quality linked advisories for students, educators and parents. Anti-narcotics campaigns were also introduced, along with a tree planting initiative and Punjab's first ever sports policy.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 THROUGH A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

When Covid-19 struck, an instant tactical plan had to be drawn up to ensure the safety of children and the continuation of learning. Schools were closed and alternate means of learning were introduced. Given the inequities faced by students of low socio-economic backgrounds, an educational television channel, YouTube channel, website and android app, Taleem Ghar, were introduced to provide curated content in maths, science and general knowledge to support the continuation of learning during lockdown.

CONTINUING LEARNING AND LEADING

This is a critical time for our children. They are growing up in a world that offers so many possibilities, yet the system is failing them. Society's expectation of public schools is low, formed, no doubt, by years of neglect, resource mismanagement and unfulfilled promises. At the same time, this is a crucial period for our school leaders – the makers and change agents who have the enormous responsibility of transforming our young learners into happy, productive and fulfilled human beings. We, as leaders, owe them change for the better.

I am steadfast in my desire to secure far-reaching improvements across our school system and to impact on the lives of under-privileged children, by building up their skills and preparing them to face any future challenge that comes their way.

The government of Punjab, along with partners like the British Council, continues to enhance access to and the success of the education sector through collaborative programmes. After all, life is fraught with challenges. And a young person that can meet those challenges will be able to carry Pakistan into the future from a position of hard-won strength. We are off to a good start with 15 successful initiatives and are determined to introduce lots more as the changes we make today lay the groundwork for our future generations. Together we can turn their dream of a better life into a reality.

School pedagogical leadership in Tunisia: challenges and solutions

Dr Neji El Kouki

Quality education is the locomotive that drives societies towards peace and prosperity. In Tunisia, education has been a strategic priority since the country achieved independence in 1956, and it still occupies a prominent position in terms of planning, spending, review and evaluation. It has actively contributed to unifying Tunisia and to developing an identity of a peace-loving country that values co-operation.

However, when looking at indicators such as student performance in international assessments, Tunisia is among those countries lagging behind. This is particularly evident in results for international assessments like TIMSS and PISA, as highlighted by UNICEF in their 2014 country report: 'Poor student performance, these evaluations revealed the inadequacies of the efficiency of the education system.'¹³⁵ These results have shocked strategists, supervisors and educational actors in Tunisia, and have not improved for a decade. The issue can be linked to low skills from the fourth year of education onwards, with Tunisia seeing a three-year lag in studies compared to the OECD average.¹³⁶

This chapter sheds light on one of the main issues facing the Tunisian education system: school pedagogical leadership. In practice, the main pedagogical role in our educational system is entrusted to teaching staff, yet this role is also within the remit of the school principal. This chapter will, therefore, look at the principal's pedagogical role. We will focus on the difficulties facing educational leadership from different perspectives, before proposing a vision and methodology for addressing these difficulties, to be able to develop a philosophy of educational leadership.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TUNISIA

It's worth noting that, in education, as in all spheres of life, there are differences between the concepts of management and leadership. Definitions differ according to the intellectual or scientific perspective, as well as the context. However, there is consensus that leadership is more general and comprehensive; it precedes management.

The education literature shows that the field of leadership occupies an important place in the concerns of educational legislators in Tunisia. However, this is usually adjacent to the concept of management or support, as indicated in Tunisia's *National Education Report 2014*. Confusion between the two concepts is evident, particularly when considering administrative work as part of leadership. In Tunisian schools, the principal is entrusted with managerial tasks and, therefore, represents management, not leadership. Their mission is doing the tasks 'right', while leadership is 'doing the right things', as Peter Drucker puts it.¹³⁷

In terms of pedagogical leadership, the Directive Law on Education and School Education 2002 provides for the establishment of a pedagogical council to assist the school principal:

*Primary schools, preparatory schools, schools, magnet (pilotes) schools and virtual schools are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education and each of them is managed by a principal who is assisted by a council of the institution and a Pedagogical Council of Teachers.*¹³⁸

Chapters 32 and 33 of this law, which concern the roles of the school council and the pedagogical council, demonstrate an awareness of the importance of leadership in schools. The school council's role is to develop the school project, while the pedagogical council's role is to help address:

*Issues related to the organization of learning, continuous evaluation, school time, forms of support and accompaniment for students, according to national standards, taking into account the school's peculiarities.*¹³⁹

The pedagogical tasks assigned to the school principal are additional to their administrative tasks, and include the role of organising the work of pedagogical study groups in co-ordination with the educational inspection staff, as well as a contribution to the institution's project, in terms of preparation, implementation, and evaluation and participation in the pedagogical councils and school councils.

135. UNICEF (2014) *Tunisia national report on out-of-school children* (p. 51).

136. *Ibid.*

137. Drucker, PF (2017) *The Effective Executive*. Routledge.

138. Directive Law on Education and School Education 2002 (p. 32).

139. Directive Law on Education and School Education 2002 (p. 33).

THE PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The mechanism for appointing school principals is one of the many processes to undergo change since the Tunisian Revolution in 2011. The appointment of principals is subject to Decree No. 1257, dated 21 May 2007, which provides for the classification of preparatory and secondary schools, and the positions within these.

Recruitment is based on several criteria, most of which are administrative and related to managerial rank and seniority. We find only one criterion related to scientific competence, which is that candidates must hold a Bachelor of Arts degree. The principal's profile does not include any distinctive features that demonstrate leadership capabilities. If all criteria are met, the candidate goes through two recruitment phases. First, an interview is conducted by a joint committee representing the administration and trade unions, after which the candidate is assigned a grade. The second stage is a training session, which ends with the submission of a report that is evaluated and given a grade.

Some important observations can be made about this recruitment process, which affect the effectiveness of school leadership in practice in Tunisia.

First, the process does not set strict criteria for selecting the most capable or qualified candidates in relation to management and leadership. The prerequisite for the mandate is based on seniority, a fact confirmed by Pierre M Ranner,¹⁴⁰ who refers to:

The recurring weakness of heads of schools, also recruited from among practicing teachers on the basis of inappropriate seniority criteria. They thus play only an insufficient role in terms of management or pedagogical support.

Second, as candidates do not have specific qualifications related to management, they may lack the professional motivation to bring about real change in schools.

Ranner's report also notes the lack of motivation among administrative staff and other stakeholders:

*The lack of pedagogical support from inspectors and pedagogical advisers as well as a growing demotivation of teaching and administrative staff highlighted by multiple union movements and not always positively participatory.*¹⁴¹

Last, there is also a lack of pre- and post-training for principals, in the pedagogical field specifically and in leadership roles in general,¹⁴² which can affect their ability to fulfil their roles effectively.

LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

In recent years, the competency of those within leadership roles has been questioned. The *National Education Report 2014* states that 'primary school management has not kept pace with the development that is taking place, neither at the level of ideas and educational action, nor at the level of modern management technique'.¹⁴³ It also notes a gap in leadership and management as:

*Educational institutions complain of management difficulties due to the poor pre-training of recruited principals in the areas of administrative, financial, accounting and planning management ... [the principals are] educators of all kinds and specializations without any basic training in this field.*¹⁴⁴

The school principal recruitment mechanism can go some way to explaining this. In practice, their work remains limited to keeping pace with the daily, termly or annual administrative activities of the institution. It appears that the spirit of leadership – which requires the study, anticipation and mobilisation of resources and the development of plans to achieve educational goals according to the reality of each educational institution – is absent among school supervision staff in general, and principals in particular.

Therefore, there appears to be a gap between legislation and reality regarding the provision of pedagogical roles among school management staff, and there is confusion between the concept of administrative management, leadership in general and pedagogical leadership in particular.

During our Ministry of Education support visits to schools in different parts of the country, we've noticed poor performance among school principals and other school supervision staff, and have seen little interest in the pedagogical field. One of the crucial pieces of evidence for this is that the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance, especially in preparatory and secondary schools, is very weak.

140. Ranner, PM (2013) *Support For The Elaboration Of The Reform Of The Educational System*. Interim Report 1, First mission June 17 –22 2013 (p. 5).

141. *Ibid.*

142. *National Education Report 2014* (p. 117).

143. *National Education Report 2014* (p. 68).

144. *National Education Report 2014* (p. 111).

Table 5: Number of teachers who have not been inspected in Tunisian schools

Number of years since last inspection grade	Number of teachers
0–5 years	32,677
5–10 years	27,739
10–15 years	7,653
15–20 years	1,050
20–25 years	186
More than 26 years	76
No inspection grade received	917
Total	70,298

A study conducted by the Teaching Department at the preparatory and secondary levels found high numbers of teachers who had not been evaluated for many years. Each new appointed teacher is subject to either a two-year or one-year internship. After that, they are inspected and given an 'inspection grade', which they need to obtain an indefinite contract. But when we looked at the inspection visits carried out for teachers who had received their inspection grade, we saw that the inspection frequency was too low. Table 5 shows the number of teachers who have not benefited from a second inspection visit since they received their last inspection grade.

Although the evaluation process is one of the tasks of subject inspectors, it is important to note the failure of preparatory and secondary principals in not accessing teachers' files or reporting the issue to the supervisory authority, who could take the necessary measures.

The school and pedagogical councils provided for in the Directive Law of 2002 have never been established, and remain to be ink on paper. As a result, school management has been limited to handling daily business and coping with needs. We also see that the requirements of effective leadership are lacking among school supervisors. This situation is having a negative effect on student performance.

Indeed, this can be seen in students' poor results in national exams, backed up by the problems we see during our school visits. As noted in the *National Education Report 2014*:

*The students' achievements, especially in languages (including Arabic) and science have regressed, which was evident in the results of the national examinations and the international evaluations in which Tunisia has participated.*¹⁴⁵

Such realities contradict term and annual results, which are higher than national exam results. For fourth-year students, the final year of Tunisian secondary education, the annual averages are high, compared to results from baccalaureate exams. This contradiction indicates that evaluation during the school year lacks accuracy, objectivity and rigour, and gives a false impression to students, parents and the administration.

This shows that school principals and supervision staff are not currently measuring the reality of educational performance or addressing the defects in the evaluation process, educational performance and learning achievement.

Looking at leadership in practice, we can make a number of important observations.

At the legislative level, the concepts of leadership and management are confused, while at the institutional level, school principals lack leadership spirit and leadership competence. They are not assuming leadership roles, but strictly administrative roles. This is partly due to the recruitment process.

145. *National Report on Education 2014* (p. 118).

At the pedagogical level, most schools complain that this field is not given the necessary care in projection, planning, follow-up, evaluation and regulation, and this has resulted in a decline in students' educational achievements.

On the participatory level, the multiplicity of actors involved in the educational process (administrative and social actors, pedagogical inspectors) do not have a collective mechanism that brings them together, given the failure to establish the school council and pedagogical council projects.

CREATING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERS

Based on this, we believe that the educational system in Tunisia needs a strategy for the development of pedagogical leadership. This could be achieved by:

- reviewing and replacing the current appointment mechanism to prioritise recruitment via an exam that respects scientific rigour, enabling the selection of candidates who are motivated to take on both the leadership and management roles of an institution
- adopting a leadership work programme mechanism at the last stage of recruitment, by inviting candidates who have successfully completed the recruitment stages to submit a personal vision of the leadership programme
- putting the pedagogical dimension at the heart of administrative and training concerns to enable the real advancement of the educational and learning processes
- learning from the experiences of economic institutions to develop leadership within schools
- establishing a participatory pedagogical leadership mechanism between the school principals and the pedagogical inspectors, to add quality to educational and pedagogical studies and planning, and to ensure the complementarity of roles
- establishing a motivational mechanism for sharing successful leadership practice and experiences within educational institutions
- linking career advancement with leadership performance in general, and educational leadership performance in particular.

Alongside these actions, programmes such as Connecting Classrooms can play an important role in developing effective school leaders. Our experience with this programme has showed the benefits it can have in improving the performance of principals and head teachers through training in the field of instructional leadership. By being effectively adapted to the Tunisian context and mindset, the programme could play a

pivotal role in both the pre-training (before beginning their duties as the head of an education institution) and post-training (continuing professional development) of principals.

These recommendations for addressing the issues of school leadership in Tunisia remain aspirational, and can only be fulfilled with a set of objective requirements, including financial and human resources, infrastructure and structural reforms within the framework of a national project to reform the education system. Such a project should be based on scientific assessments, accurate criteria and indicators that consider the reality, capabilities and needs.

CONCLUSION

Establishing the concept of leadership in general and educational leadership in particular, especially within the management of schools, would be the best way to develop the performance of Tunisia's education system by improving students' achievements, knowledge and skills. Leadership is the art of guiding those involved in the educational process towards achieving lofty goals.

It is worth noting that leadership cannot be limited to the educational institution. Rather, it must include regional leadership at the level of the Regional Commission for Education and the Ministry of Education. These pathways require reflection and research.

Only effective pedagogical leadership can help to address the issues within the Tunisian education system, such as underachievement, school and community violence, delinquency, crime, extremism, unemployment and dropout rates. Pedagogical leadership ensures the delivery of education according to the principles of citizenship, success, positive competition, initiative, co-operation, motivation and innovation.

Living in the 21st century requires us to adopt a philosophy of life skills, the language of the age, methods of organisation, methods of work and openness to the experiences of others who are successful. This can only be achieved through will, honesty, trust, co-operation, humility and faith in the human participant, and by working to catch up with the train of progress. There is also the need to educate children and students to assume leadership roles at school, to prepare them to continue to take on leadership roles as adults. Leadership, in our perception, is a life force for bringing up generations. It is true that the task is not easy, but the need requires us to work to meet the challenges, especially as our country goes through a new construction phase. Just as we have gained freedom and joined global democracies, we can advance in education.

Why school leadership is important: a South African perspective

Haroon Mahomed

With the present impact of Covid-19, as well as the shifts brought about through 25 years of major political change, now is a good moment to look at the importance of school leadership in South Africa.

Research indicates that progress is being made in the country with regard to improving literacy and numeracy levels.¹⁴⁶ And while this progress may be slow, the same research indicates that South Africa is achieving the fastest rate of improvement among comparable countries, noting that it is starting from a base below the desired levels for reaching socio-economic targets.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Since the first fully representative elections in South Africa in 1994, the transition from a racially divided education system to unified, non-discriminatory provision has dramatically changed the policy context for school leaders and managers. However, progress is mixed. According to Ngcobo and Tikly:

*The government has instigated wide-ranging initiatives to transform education from its apartheid past [...] However, despite years of reform effort, South Africa continues to lag behind in international comparisons and has failed to significantly raise the performance of historically disadvantaged learners.*¹⁴⁷

According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), up to 74 per cent of ten-year-olds in South Africa cannot read with understanding.¹⁴⁸ According to Stats SA,¹⁴⁹ the school completion rate by Grade 12 is estimated at 51 per cent, while the Department of Basic Education reports that maths performance at Grade 9 is significantly low.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, adult unemployment is at around 30 per cent, and youth unemployment is at 58 per cent, while teenage pregnancy rates, substance and alcohol abuse, bullying and other forms of violence are high.

The arrival of Covid-19 has amplified these challenges, with inequalities in learning outcomes increasing through inconsistent delivery of different forms of curriculum provision; the majority of learners indicated struggles with accessing digital material (limited or no connectivity, devices and data costs), reduced face-to-face contact, the cost of paid television channels and a lack of space in homes in poor communities.

PROFESSIONALISING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

In this context, leadership at all levels, across both society and the economy, is being challenged to be responsive and to provide direction to enable the best possible outcomes. The role of school leaders, given that schools exercise such a large influence in shaping the lives of the majority of young people, is, therefore, crucial.

Leadership in South Africa has been characterised by authoritarianism and hierarchical styles. Such styles have also found expression in school leadership, and instructional leadership has been a weak feature of the system.¹⁵¹ From my experience, the following areas emerge as vital for school leadership improvement:

- the role of school leaders
- school culture
- leadership models
- teacher leadership
- school governance
- accountability
- school development
- facility management.

146. Department of Basic Education (2016) *Report on progress in the schooling sector against key learner performance and attainment indicators*.

147. Ngcobo, T & Tikly, LP (2008) *Think Globally, Act Locally: A Challenge to Education Leaders*. Paper presented to the CCEAM Conference, September, Durban

148. Howie, SJ, Combrinck, C, Roux, K, Tshela, M, Mokoena, GM & Macleod Palane, N (2016) *PIRLS Literacy 2016 South Africa highlights*. University of Pretoria.

149. Stats SA (2016) *School Completion rates*. Pretoria.

150. Department of Basic Education (2018) *Grade 9 Maths Diagnostic report*.

151. Bush, T & Glover, D (2013) *School management teams in South Africa: A survey of school leaders in the Mpumalanga province*. *International Studies in Educational Administration* 41/1: pp. 21–40.

School leaders in South Africa have to operate in diverse contexts. About 20 per cent of schools, mainly in the suburban areas of larger cities and towns, compare favourably with well-resourced schools in many Western countries. Their changing demographics, compared to the apartheid era, bring with them the challenges of managing sharp diversity issues based on race, wealth and gender, which school leaders have to manage. There have been recent outcries that these issues are not being sufficiently addressed, and that leaders in such schools are hard-pressed to find solutions.¹⁵²

In townships, rural areas and informal settlements, schools continue to experience a range of problems, including inadequate infrastructure, under-trained and demotivated educators, low expectations and poor post-school employment prospects.¹⁵³ School leaders in such settings must be extremely committed and skilled to be able to perform at a high level. While there are a few exceptional leaders, they are not the norm. To address this, emphasis has shifted to professionalising the role of the principal¹⁵⁴ and on developing a shared vision.

The role of the principal, and school leadership, is central to developing a culture of teaching and learning. Christie et al.¹⁵⁵ found that the dysfunctional nature of so many schools in South Africa requires:

A 'quest for learning': involving both learners and educators, and building upon their cultural heritage to establish a learning community within the classroom; schools that work well have organisational cultures or mindsets that support a work ethic, expected achievement, and acknowledged success, leading to a sense of purpose, commitment, achievement, acknowledged success, and an enabling work ethic.

There is increasing recognition that instructional leadership should be an appropriate approach to school improvement in South Africa. Bush and Glover¹⁵⁶ add that this must include the need for modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue through high-quality observation of classrooms, discussion of practice within subjects or phases, and the achievement of consistency in expectations of behaviour and practice for both learners and educators.

Ali and Botha¹⁵⁷ indicate that in most South African secondary schools, subject heads of department have the main responsibility for curriculum 'delivery'. They mention that there are two challenges with this. First, school leadership does not play a strong role and, second, many heads of department do not carry out their tasks sufficiently.

Ali and Botha also note that, if teaching and learning are to improve significantly, heads of department will have to spend more time supervising the teaching and learning activities that occur daily in their subject or learning area. They also suggest that top and middle managers should develop a routine of analysing results, planning for improvement, monitoring classroom practice, using observation and target setting.

Distributed leadership has been widely promoted in recent literature as an effective mode of school leadership. In the South African context, with its legacy of hierarchical styles, Hoadley et al.,¹⁵⁸ Singh and Lokotsch,¹⁵⁹ and Naicker and Mestry¹⁶⁰ all present reservations about the applicability of such an approach. It is likely that some leaders will promote distributed models, but these will require a good amount of sophisticated skill.

152. *Ibid.*

153. Rogan, M (2019) *Post-School education and the labour market in South Africa*. HSRC. Pretoria.

154. Van der Westhuizen, P & van Vuuren, H (2007) Professionalising principalship in South Africa, *South African Journal of Education* 27/3: pp. 431–445.

155. Christie, P, Butler, D & Potterton, M (2007) *Schools that Work: Report of Ministerial Committee*. Pretoria, Government Printer.

156. Bush, T & Glover, D (2014) School leadership models: What do we know, *School Leadership and Management* 34/5: pp. 553–571.

157. Ali, F & Botha, N (2006) *Evaluating the Role, Importance and Effectiveness of Heads of Department in Contributing to School Improvement in Public Secondary Schools in Gauteng*. Johannesburg, MGSLG.

158. Hoadley, U, Christie, P & Ward, CL (2009) Managing to learn: instructional leadership in South African secondary schools. *School Leadership & Management* 29/4: pp. 373–389.

159. Singh, P & Lokotsch, K (2005) Effects of transformational leadership on human resource management in primary schools, *South African Journal of Education* 25/2: pp. 279–286.

160. Naicker, SR & Mestry, R (2014) Teachers' reflections on distributive leadership in public primary schools in Soweto. *South African Journal of Education* 33/2: pp. 1–18.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

In 1997, a system of school governing bodies was introduced and widely regarded as an important aspect of grassroots democracy in the new South Africa. However, this has presented numerous challenges for school leaders, including role and mandate confusions, parent apathy, and lack of understanding and complexity of legal provisions. Xaba¹⁶¹ notes:

There are difficulties in understanding governance, mainly because governors perceive their roles differently, which detracts from their main responsibility – promoting the best interests of the school. This, combined with less than adequate capacity-building, as required by the Schools Act, adds to the ineffective execution of functions.

The role of learners in secondary school governance is guaranteed in the national Department of Education's guidelines for representative councils of learners. Mabovula¹⁶² found that the 'potential, limitations, constraints, consequences, and challenges facing learners in the school governance structure need to be revealed and debated' and Mathebula¹⁶³ found that 'the role of representative councils is hampered by the minimal and traditionally authoritarian views of democracy evident in many schools'.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Schools as learning organisations need to plan to be effective. In the South African context, strategic planning became fashionable in the private sector and government post-1994, and this filtered through to schools, bringing in fresh perspectives for school planning but also many implementation challenges. Xaba¹⁶⁴ concluded:

Schools find it difficult to engage in the process because they are 'merely' fulfilling an externally identified need. Consequently, schools struggle to find areas needing improvement. Development planning tends to yield superficial and unrealistic targets. This happens at the expense of the need for real innovation and change at schools.

He suggests that, for school development planning to be successful, the following points should be considered.

- The school principal and senior management team should be charged with the responsibility of ensuring the initiation of development planning, as well as its implementation.
- Instead of seeming to 'force' change and innovation, the school development planning process should have learning as its starting point to ensure that school development planning objectives and activities are focused on the achievement of learning.

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

To address these many and complex challenges, the national Department of Basic Education has moved to implement a new Advanced Diploma in Education (School Management) as a national qualification pitched at National Qualifications Framework Level 7 for current and aspiring school principals. The diploma offers specialised learning opportunities in school leadership and management, ICT for teachers, personnel management, organisational and community management, education system, law and policy, and portfolio submission. Six higher education institutions were ready to offer courses in 2020, although implementation was affected by Covid-19. With further institutions being ready to start in 2021, this carries the promise of increased professionalisation of school leadership and more effective running of schools.

South Africa still faces severe challenges in relation to inequality and optimal governance. However, its education system, and the school leaders within it, can play an important role in contributing to past and present challenges and building a brighter future. More effective school leadership can lead to improved literacy and numeracy levels, character building, citizenship and leadership for a more creative, environmentally caring, socially just, productive and socially cohesive nation.

161. Xaba, M (2011) The possible cause of school governance challenges in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education* 31/2: pp. 201–211.

162. Mabovula, N (2009) Giving voice to the voiceless through deliberative democratic school governance. *South African Journal of Education* 29/2: pp. 219–233.

163. Mathebula, T (2005) The role of Representative Councils for Learners in South African schools: Maximal or minimal participation? *Africa Education Review* 2/2: pp. 189–204.

164. Xaba, M (2006) An investigation into the basic safety and security status of schools' physical environments. *South African Journal of Education* 26/4: pp. 565–580.



Instructional leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa: evidence from six countries

Tony Bush

There is growing evidence that high-quality leadership is essential for student growth and school improvement, accounting for up to 27 per cent of variation in student outcomes.¹⁶⁵

Hallinger and Lee¹⁶⁶ note that ‘instructional leadership from the principal is essential for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools’. While Robinson et al.’s¹⁶⁷ meta-analysis of published research shows that the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students.

One of the core focus areas of the Connecting Classrooms programme is promoting and developing instructional leadership because, as the evidence shows, this can have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and lead to enhanced student outcomes. Currently implemented in 16 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa,¹⁶⁸ the programme aims to build the capacity of school leaders, with a specific focus on improving instructional leadership in schools. The research presented in this chapter provides baseline data on the current status of instructional leadership in six of these countries.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research, which covers Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, is based on the following research questions.

1. Who are regarded as school leaders and what do they do, linked to leadership structures and roles in schools, and who is responsible for instructional leadership?
2. How do school leaders spend their time, including the balance of administrative and instructional tasks?
3. What do policies say about instructional leadership, and who is responsible at the school level?
4. What other leadership roles exist in schools that could possibly take on some of the administrative responsibilities of school leaders?
5. What is the culture of delegation in schools?

Six in-country researchers first carried out desk research to identify and review literature related to instructional leadership. They then conducted interviews with various stakeholders, including ministry officials and school principals. Table 6 shows a summary of participants.

165. Leithwood, K, Day, C, Sammons, C, Harris, A & Hopkins, D (2006) *Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership*. London: DfES.

166. Hallinger, P & Lee, M (2014) Mapping instructional leadership in Thailand: Has education reform impacted principal practice, *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 42/1: pp. 6–29.

167. Robinson, V, Lloyd, C & Rowe, K (2008) The impact of leadership on student outcomes: The differential effects of leadership type. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 44/5: pp. 635–674.

168. British Council (2017) *Connecting Classrooms: Broadening horizons, enriching teaching and Learning*, British Council.

Table 6: Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholder	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	Sudan	Tanzania	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Total
Principals	4	1	10	10	1	1	27
Vice-principals	2	1			1	1	5
Ministry of Education staff	2	2	4	3	2	-	13
School board chairs	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Private bodies	2	-	-	-	1	-	3
Teacher union officials	-	1	-	-	-	2	3
Lecturers	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Non-governmental organisations	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Total	11	5	14	14	6	5	55

POLICIES ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Sudan, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe have no explicit policies on instructional leadership, so these have to be inferred from more general policy statements. Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia, meanwhile, do have policies on instructional leadership, but they are not widely understood or enacted. Zambia has a dated National Policy on Education,¹⁶⁹ which prioritises instructional leadership by head teachers when it comes to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, stating: 'The school's instructional tasks take precedence over all other activities.' However, Kabeta et al.¹⁷⁰ argue that there is a gap in the comprehension of instructional leadership in Zambia, and there are no clear guidelines on how to execute it.

The Tanzanian School Improvement Toolkit¹⁷¹ documents how instructional leaders should lead the improvement of instruction. Nyambo¹⁷² notes that the Tanzanian government authorises school leaders as internal supervisors, to ensure the implementation of educational policy, including monitoring instruction, to enhance learners' achievements. Nigeria's policy on education encourages instructional leadership to improve learning outcomes. Teacher evaluation, assessment and monitoring are conducted by the Federal Education Quality Assurance Service.¹⁷³

The collective evidence from the six countries indicates limited awareness of instructional leadership. Some have no explicit instructional leadership policies and, even where such policies exist, they are often not enacted, as school-level awareness is limited. None of the countries have a fully developed instructional leadership model encapsulating advice about monitoring, modelling and mentoring, as suggested by Bush.¹⁷⁴

169. Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating our Future; National Policy on Education*. ZEPH: Lusaka.

170. Kabeta, RM, Manchishi, PC & Akakandelwa, A (2013) Instructional leadership and its effect on the teaching and learning process: The case of head teachers in selected basic schools in the central province of Zambia, *International Journal of Science and Research* 6/14: pp. 876–1,883.

171. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2013) *Government Policy*. Dar Es Salaam.

172. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

173. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) *National Policy on Education (6th Ed.)*. Lagos: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council Press.

174. Bush, T (2013) Instructional leadership and leadership for learning: global and South African perspectives, *Education as Change* 17/1: pp. 5–20.

DEFINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Bush and Glover¹⁷⁵ state that ‘instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with students. Leaders’ influence is targeted at student learning via teachers.’

There are no definitions of instructional leadership in the literature reviewed from Sudan, Tanzania or Sierra Leone. The Sudanese literature indicates that principals lack an understanding of their instructional role and that they devote most of their time and attention to administration.^{176,177} In Tanzania, Manaseh¹⁷⁸ describes the school head as an instructional leader for playing roles such as instructional programming administrator.

In Zimbabwe, Sibanda et al.¹⁷⁹ identify five main components of instructional leadership:

1. defining and communicating a clear mission, goals and objectives
2. managing curriculum and instruction
3. supervising teaching
4. monitoring learner progress
5. promoting instructional climate.

Nigerian principals are expected to drive instructional goals in the school, organise the learning environment, manage resources, and recruit, dismiss and train staff. In Zambia, Kabeta et al.¹⁸⁰ argue:

The premise of instructional leadership is to lead teachers and students to reach their full potential by creating a conducive learning environment, defining and communicating shared goals, [and] monitoring the teaching and learning process.

Instructional leadership, as a concept and a practice, remains undeveloped in these six countries, and awareness of its significance for student learning is limited. Contextualised definitions are required that connect instructional leadership to wider policies and practice.

ROLES AND STRUCTURES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

There is a distinction between external and internal roles for instructional leadership. The hierarchical nature of the external structures for instructional leadership, sometimes framed as instructional supervision, may exert a significant influence on quality processes in schools in all six countries.

Sudan, Tanzania and Nigeria all have multilayered education systems, with responsibilities shared between and across these levels. In Zimbabwe, assessments by the district offices lead to the identification of the areas that need attention. These assessments are seen by teachers as ‘witch-hunting’ exercises.¹⁸¹ The Zambian Ministry of Education delegates authority for monitoring and evaluation to school inspectors, now known as standards officers. The policy directs them to observe lessons and examine teachers’ planning, strategies and use of teaching and learning materials.

Structurally, schools in all six countries have a senior leader with the title of principal or head teacher, usually supported by other leaders, such as deputy or vice-principal, heads of departments or subject leaders. In Sudan, the head teacher is responsible for all administrative and educational activities. The head is supported by one or two deputies, and each subject has a department head. Ayane and Chekol¹⁸² report that almost all instructional leaders are subject specialists who lack the skills, training, commitment and motivation to accomplish their leadership tasks.

The Zambian national policy¹⁸³ identifies the school head as an instructional leader, stating: ‘Before anything else, the school head should be an instructional leader who enthuses teachers and learners.’ There are also deputy head teachers, heads of departments for secondary schools and senior teachers for primary schools, but their instructional leadership roles are unclear.

175. Bush, T & Glover, D (2014) School leadership models: What do we know, *School Leadership and Management* 34/5: pp. 553–571.

176. Alkalifa, A & Adil, M (2015) *Challenges facing School Principals working in University of Khartoum Affiliated Schools*. Available online at: jilrc.com

177. Ahmed, R (2015) *The Applications of School Principals of Administrative Skills in West Darfur Basic Schools*. Available online at: search.shamaa.org/FullRecord?ID=111767

178. Manaseh, AM (2016) *Instructional leadership: The role of heads of schools in managing the instructional programme*, Mkwawawa University College of Education, United Republic of Tanzania.

179. Sibanda, J, Mutopa, S & Maphosa, C (2011) Teachers’ perceptions of lesson observations by school heads in Zimbabwean Primary Schools. *Journal of Social Sciences* 28/1: pp. 21–28.

180. Kabeta, RM, Manchishi, PC & Akakandelwa, A (2013) Instructional leadership and Its effect on the teaching and learning process: The case of head teachers in selected basic schools in the central province of Zambia, *International Journal of Science and Research* 6/14: pp. 876–1,883.

181. Sibanda, J, Mutopa, S & Maphosa, C (2011) Teachers’ perceptions of lesson observations by school heads in Zimbabwean Primary Schools. *Journal of Social Sciences* 28/1: pp. 21–28.

182. Ayane, KJ & Chekol, YG (2019) Assessing the teaching-learning roles of instructional leadership in some selected primary schools. *Journal of eSciences* 2: pp. 1–10.

183. Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating our Future; National Policy on Education*. ZEPH: Lusaka.

In Tanzania, head teachers are recognised as internal instructional supervisors, and their core function is to ensure that the curriculum is implemented according to the rules and regulations, notably through monitoring classroom instruction provided by teachers to pupils.¹⁸⁴ However, Nyambo¹⁸⁵ notes that Tanzanian head teachers are not engaged in classroom observation. A senior official of the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union states that principals, head teachers and senior teachers are all instructional leaders. The secondary principal concurs that the head teacher and principal provide the instructional leadership role, for example by checking lesson plans.

The internal leadership structure in Nigeria comprises principals, vice-principals and heads of department in secondary schools, and head teachers, assistant head teachers and heads of department in primary schools. According to a senior UNICEF official, the head teacher and head of department are responsible for instruction and guidance in the school. The head teacher provides classroom observation and looks at the schemes of work passed to them by the heads of department. In Zimbabwe, the idea of an instructional leader encompasses the school head, deputy head and heads of department. However, some teachers still hold the view that heads should focus more on administrative functions.¹⁸⁶

The evidence from these six countries is that the principal is usually regarded as the main instructional leader, although other professionals within the leadership structure may also contribute. The Zimbabwe data confirms international evidence that subject leaders are often preferred as instructional leaders by teachers.

BALANCING ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS

Even where instructional leadership is explicitly advocated, there are tensions between the administrative and professional aspects of principals' roles.¹⁸⁷ It is evident that priority is given to administrative tasks in all six countries. Sudan's regulations and policy documents mention three instructional leadership activities: lesson observation, checking teachers' lesson plans, and checking students' exercise books. However, research indicates that school principals could not function as school leaders due to administrative and financial pressures.^{188, 189}

Nyambo's¹⁹⁰ study of Tanzanian public school head teachers shows that their other work inhibits them from conducting instruction supervision, while Allieu¹⁹¹ reports that most head teachers in Sierra Leone are not aware of, and are not practising, instructional leadership. Principals and head teachers in Nigerian schools are expected to be leaders but, in practice, they spend more time on administrative duties. Bello¹⁹² identifies a lack of a clearly defined instructional vision in schools, ineffective instructional supervision by head teachers, and the absence of school-based professional development programmes for teachers.

Stakeholders in Zambia argue that heads are neglecting instructional leadership. For example, the principal education officer observes that 'head teachers have divorced themselves from classroom activities', while the head teacher claims that teaching and learning time is lost because of external meetings. Similar contradictions between administrative and instructional imperatives are evident in Zimbabwe, as reported by three researchers.^{193–195}

184. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2013) *Government Policy*. Dar Es Salaam.
185. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania
186. Musandu, C (2018) *Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State.
187. Bush, T & Ng, A (2019) Distributed leadership and the Malaysia Education Blueprint: From prescription to partial school-based enactment. *Journal of Educational Administration* 57/3: pp. 279–295.
188. Alkalifa, A and Adil, M (2015) *Challenges facing School Principals working in University of Khartoum Affiliated Schools*. Available online at: jilrc.com
189. Ahmed, R (2015) *The Applications of School Principals of Administrative Skills in West Darfur Basic Schools*. Available online at: search.shamaa.org/FullRecord?ID=111767
190. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.
191. Allieu, J (2019) Training of head teachers' workshop in supportive supervision and instructional leadership. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications* 1/10: pp. 1–12.
192. Bello, B (2015) Towards revitalization of instructional leadership for effective implementation of universal basic education in Nigeria. *Sokoto Educational Review* 16/1: p. 9.
193. Makamani, M (2015) *An evaluation of the influence of instructional leadership on the performance of government and council schools in Harare province*. MBA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe
194. Ncube, AC (2013) Managing and organising secondary schools for ineffectiveness? The views of principals in Zimbabwe, *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 4/4: pp. 637–643.
195. Manaseh, AM (2016) *Instructional leadership: The role of heads of schools in managing the instructional programme*, Mkwawawa University College of Education, United Republic of Tanzania.

The evidence from the six countries shows a fundamental dichotomy between the administrative and instructional roles of heads and principals. While instructional leadership is advocated in some contexts, for example Zambia and Zimbabwe, official expectations are not clearly articulated, and administrative demands are often more persuasive, especially when local officials call them to external meetings. In other countries, notably Sierra Leone and Sudan, there are few formal expectations for heads to be instructional leaders. What is required is to reiterate that principals are head teachers, who mostly have professional backgrounds, and that instructional leadership should be their core role, and not a marginal adjunct to administration.

DELEGATION AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The instructional leadership model has been criticised for 'focus[ing] too much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority',¹⁹⁶ ignoring or underplaying the role of other leaders such as deputy principals and middle leaders. Principals lack the time to be the only instructional leaders, particularly in larger schools, and may also lack the specific expertise to assess the quality of teaching and learning in terms of subject knowledge.¹⁹⁷

In Sudan, the Africa Development Bank reports that senior and middle leaders all have certain instructional roles. Heads of department follow the academic progress and performance of teachers, but their powers are limited to their departments. The Zambian Ministry of Education¹⁹⁸ advocates for collaborative approaches to be used for instructional leadership. Shipota¹⁹⁹ reports that the policy demands that school heads should lead instruction, but they often delegate this role to their deputies and middle leaders. Similarly, Nyambo²⁰⁰ notes that Tanzanian heads delegate their responsibilities to other leaders, especially deputy heads.

In Sierra Leone, Allieu recommends that head teachers should delegate instructional leadership to other teachers. The senior official from the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union also stressed that instructional leadership should be a distributed responsibility. Similarly, Chitamba²⁰¹ claims that Zimbabwean deputy heads and middle leaders are regarded as instructional leaders.

In Nigerian schools, there is only a limited culture of delegation. However, Yahya claims that principals practise several leadership styles, including democratic leadership.²⁰² In some schools, principals have the sole responsibility for developing curriculum and instruction for improving performance in the school, and prefer not to delegate these responsibilities (as noted by a vice-principal in Lagos).

Evidence from the six countries shows that the head or principal is regarded as the main instructional leader. However, heads have limited time to enact such responsibilities. In practice, therefore, other leaders, especially heads of department, may play a significant role, as in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In other contexts, notably Sierra Leone and Zambia, there is a normative orientation towards distributed instructional leadership, but with only limited evidence that this is being enacted.

RESOURCING AND THE ENVIRONMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The quality of school education is inevitably affected by the availability of an appropriate learning environment supported by adequate resources. This is a serious challenge in many Sub-Saharan contexts.²⁰³

Schools in all six countries experience challenges due to a lack of resources and wider concerns about the environment for school leadership. In Sudan, none of the interviewed principals have libraries or internet in their schools, and only two have computers. Other problems include a lack of textbooks, drinking water and teaching resources, as well as poorly maintained buildings and no provision to feed students.

196. Hallinger, P (2003) *Reshaping the Landscape of School Leadership: A Global Perspective*. Lisse: Swets and Zeitlinger.

197. Bush, T (2020) *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management: Fifth Edition*. London: Sage.

198. Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating our Future; National Policy on Education*. ZEPH: Lusaka

199. Shipota, M (2013) *The Role of Teachers' Unions in the Provision of Workers' Education in Kafue*. Master's dissertation, University of Zambia.

200. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

201. Chitamba, N (2019) *The role and experiences of deputy principals with instructional leadership in Zimbabwe*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State, South Africa.

202. Noor, Siti & Don, Yahya & Hussin, Fauzi & Khalid, Rozalina. (2018). Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Functional Competency across the 21st Century Learning. *International Journal of Instruction*. 11. 135-152. 10.12973/iji.2018.11310a.

203. Bush, T & Odoro, G (2006) New principals in Africa: Preparation, induction and practice. *Journal of Educational Administration* 44/4: pp. 359-375.

A Zambia National Union of Teachers' survey²⁰⁴ reveals several resource gaps, such as inadequate teaching and learning materials and equipment, including computers, to cater for all learners. In Tanzania, Kaai's study²⁰⁵ shows that most (75 per cent) teachers mention challenges such as a lack of teaching and learning materials and a lack of infrastructure (classrooms, teachers' houses, latrines). A shortage of materials is also highlighted by Nyambo.²⁰⁶

The Nigerian Policy on Education does not stipulate how resources, such as time, money, materials and expertise, should be distributed, although it encourages hiring qualified teachers. There is limited data about resourcing and the learning environment in Sierra Leone, but one secondary school leader stressed the importance of the school environment for instructional leadership. In Zimbabwe, one stakeholder commented that 'the focus is on libraries and labs, while issues of pedagogy are something else'.

The literature and data show significant challenges with respect to financial, human and material resources in all six countries. The comment from the Zimbabwe stakeholder, that material resources are more important than pedagogical change, is likely to be echoed in the other five countries.

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

The Connecting Classrooms programme has a central focus on school leadership and its impact on the quality of teaching, securing foundational skills and knowledge, leading curriculum implementation, integrating core skills into the curriculum and creating more inclusive classrooms. In particular, 'the programme builds the capacity of school leaders with a specific focus on improving instructional leadership in schools'.²⁰⁷

Two of the in-country research reports refer to Connecting Classrooms training workshops. In Sudan, several workshops on instructional leadership were delivered to school principals in two localities in Khartoum State, with the principals reporting that the training helped them feel empowered, increased their understanding of the value of mentoring teachers and monitoring learning, and helped them recognise that they are leaders of change with the potential to make a significant impact on student learning.

In Nigeria, similar training has led to cross-school learning, as noted by the vice-principal in Lagos, and there are examples of Connecting Classrooms affecting school leadership practice, and school and student outcomes. The principal of a mixed secondary school in northern Nigeria commented: 'Everything has changed in my leadership; I am now more of a school leader than the administrator I have always been.' Meanwhile, the principal of a mixed boarding school in southern Nigeria commented: 'Connecting Classrooms became a turning point for me, as my perspective on teaching and learning was broadened.'

At a secondary school in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the principal claimed: 'The training has enhanced my leadership capacity and helped me to work successfully with my team to implement what I have learned.' The programme introduced him to new approaches for leading teaching and learning. Teaching and learning were monitored through lesson observation, peer review and classroom visits.

ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature reviews and the stakeholder interviews have provided evidence that can be used to address the research questions.

Who are regarded as school leaders and what do they do?

There is a distinction between external and internal roles for instructional leadership. Because these countries have a centralised education system, the external hierarchy has a significant impact on the practice of instructional leadership in schools. The external leaders also have an important role in interpreting and translating national policy into meaningful school leadership practice. In all six countries, the head is responsible for both administrative and educational activities. In Tanzania, for example, head teachers are recognised as internal instructional supervisors, but Nyambo's study²⁰⁸ shows a lack of knowledge and skills about instructional leadership.

204. ZNUT (2017) *Breadth of Learning: Measuring the breadth of learning in Zambian schools*. Education International: Lusaka.

205. Kaai, P (2016) *Understanding and improving instructional leadership practices in primary schools in Karatu district*. Arusha, Tanzania.

206. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

207. British Council (2017) *Connecting Classrooms: Broadening horizons, enriching teaching and Learning*, British Council.

208. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

How do school leaders spend their time?

The data gathered by the researchers does not provide direct evidence about how school leaders spend their time. This would require an observational study. However, there are clear contradictions between formal expectations that principals should be instructional leaders and the practices reported in the literature and by stakeholders. Priority being given to administrative tasks is evident in all six countries.

In Sudan, the literature shows that school principals cannot function as school leaders due to administrative and financial problems. Similarly, in Tanzania, head teachers' other work inhibits them from conducting instruction supervision. In Zambia, the stakeholders argue that heads are neglecting instructional leadership and giving their attention to administrative issues. Similar challenges are evident in Zimbabwe, where heads spend much of their time attending workshops and seminars organised by their district offices.

As noted, there is a contradiction between the administrative and instructional roles of heads and principals. While instructional leadership is advocated in some contexts, such as Zambia and Zimbabwe, official expectations are not clearly articulated, and administrative demands are often more persuasive. In other countries, notably Sierra Leone and Sudan, there are few formal expectations on heads to be instructional leaders, so most focus on their administrative roles.

What does the policy say about instructional leadership and who is responsible at the school level?

Policy statements indicate an orientation or an expectation that school leaders behave in specific ways. In some countries, notably Sudan, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, there are no explicit policies related to instructional leadership, which could explain why there is little evidence of it being enacted. In Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria, expectations about principals as instructional leaders are included in policy statements, but there are problems with implementation. This may be due to a lack of understanding about the concept, as in Zambia, or because of competing administrative demands.

What other leadership roles exist in schools that could possibly take on some of the administrative roles of school leaders?

Leadership structures in the six countries include senior and middle leader roles, such as a deputy or vice-principal and heads of departments, to support the principal. However, it is not always clear how administrative and instructional responsibilities are divided between and among these leaders. This requires additional research.

In Sudan, the head teacher is supported by one or two deputies and department heads. The deputy is expected to handle the smooth running of daily activities within the school. Zambian school heads are profiled as instructional leaders, but little is known about whether other leaders, the deputy head teacher and heads of departments are expected to be instructional and/or administrative leaders. In Tanzania, Nyambo²⁰⁹ notes that some head teachers delegate their responsibilities to other leaders, especially deputy heads.

In Sierra Leone, two stakeholders argued that senior teachers are instructional leaders, but little is known about their role as administrative leaders. The Zimbabwe ministry view is that deputy heads and heads of department, as well as head teachers, are, or should be, instructional leaders. Leadership structures in Nigeria comprise principals, vice-principals, head teachers, assistant head teachers and heads of department. The principals oversee the day-to-day running of the school, but the administrative roles of the other leaders are not known.

Evidence from the six countries indicates that the principal is regarded as the main instructional and administrative leader, although other senior and middle leaders may also contribute. The data does not indicate the administrative roles undertaken by deputy principals and heads of department, as the focus of this review is on instructional leadership.

209. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

What is the culture of delegation in schools?

A distinction can be made between the management concept of delegation and the currently fashionable notion of distributed leadership. Delegation is linked to hierarchy, with instructional tasks passed to deputy principals and heads of departments. Distributed leadership is presented as emergent from anywhere in the organisation, independent of the formal leadership structure. However, in some centralised contexts, the language of distribution has been captured to describe practices that are often indistinguishable from delegation, and may be regarded as ‘allocative distribution’.²¹⁰

All six countries use both delegation and distribution. In Sudan, senior and middle leaders all have instructional roles, and the deputy is expected to handle the daily activities of the school. Shipota²¹¹ comments that the policy in Zambia demands that the school head must lead instruction, but they often delegate this important role to their deputies and middle leaders. Nyambo²¹² notes that some head teachers in Tanzania delegate their responsibilities to other leaders, especially deputy heads.

In Sierra Leone, Allieu²¹³ recommends that head teachers should delegate instructional responsibilities to other teachers. The Zimbabwean ministry expects the head, deputy head and heads of department to execute a combination of administrative and professional functions, including instructional leadership. In Nigerian schools, there is only limited evidence of delegation, and one vice-principal claims that some principals may not fully embrace it.

The evidence from all six countries shows that the head or principal is regarded as the main instructional leader. However, heads have limited time to enact such responsibilities, in which case senior and middle leaders may play a significant role, as in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In Sierra Leone and Zambia, there is a normative orientation towards distributed leadership, but with only limited evidence that this is being enacted.

CONCLUSION

The literature reviews and the stakeholder interviews indicate a developing awareness of the nature and significance of instructional leadership, but there is limited evidence that it is being enacted. Formal policy assumptions, where they exist, refer to the principal as the instructional leader, with only limited recognition that this responsibility needs to be distributed for it to be carried out at a sufficient scale to affect classroom practice.

There is a developing awareness of instructional leadership in all six countries, prompted in Nigeria and Sudan, for example, by initiatives such as Connecting Classrooms. Yet, there is a lack of a clear policy framework regarding instructional leadership in some settings, including Zimbabwe. Even where policies refer to instructional leadership, as in Zambia, they are not supported by clear guidelines.

Where there is a lack of awareness and understanding about instructional leadership, training is paramount. In Zambia, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe there is insufficient training or induction relating to instructional leadership. As noted in Sudan, principals could be more effective if they are well-trained, empowered and equipped, and Connecting Classrooms can play an important role in providing training to enhance the quality of education.

In several countries, including Tanzania, there is a perceived knowledge and capacity gap, and knowledge production remains modest. Further research is required to establish the extent and nature of instructional leadership, and to assess which approaches are most effective in enhancing student learning.

These concluding comments support the international evidence that effective instructional leadership has the potential to make a significant positive impact on classroom practice, leading to enhanced student outcomes²¹⁴. Despite this persuasive finding, evidence from the six countries shows that heads and principals devote most of their time to administration and neglect instructional leadership. It is important to reiterate that principals are head *teachers*, who mostly have professional backgrounds, and that instructional leadership should be their core role, not subordinate to administration.

210. Bush, T & Ng, A (2019) Distributed leadership and the Malaysia Education Blueprint: From prescription to partial school-based enactment. *Journal of Educational Administration* 57/3: pp. 279–295.

211. Shipota, M (2013) *The Role of Teachers' Unions in the Provision of Workers' Education in Kafue*. Master's dissertation, University of Zambia.

212. Nyambo, L (2017) *The role of head teachers as internal instruction supervisors of pupils' academic performance in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. The University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

213. Allieu, J (2019) Training of head teachers' workshop in supportive supervision and instructional leadership. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications* 1/10: pp. 1–12.

214. Robinson, V, Lloyd, C & Rowe, K (2008) The impact of leadership on student outcomes: The differential effects of leadership type. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 44/5: pp. 635–674.

Leadership matters

What is evident throughout this publication is the important role school leaders can play in improving the quality of teaching and learning across a school. The British Council aims to support school leaders through its leadership training programmes. These focus on the knowledge and skills that school leaders need to manage change effectively as well as the principles of instructional leadership.

Leaders are encouraged to work with staff to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching, including identifying and addressing any barriers that may exist. Leaders are encouraged to do this by building capacity, identifying great teaching in a team or across the school, and developing strategies to share this expertise to raise performance. Leaders also learn how to introduce and develop appropriate systems to support monitoring, evaluation and improvement of teacher practice and performance.

9,247

leaders have been trained across

26

countries since July 2018.

We aim to train

15,000

leaders by the end of 2021.

83%

of leaders say that their leadership practice has been enhanced and influenced by the professional development opportunities offered.

‘Collaboration with the staff and other stakeholders is very important. When a leader delegates, they should agree on a monitoring and evaluation approach with teachers for the purpose of reinforcing good practice, not fault finding.’

Kenya

‘As a head teacher, I have a role to nurture the skills of teachers. My advice for other leaders is to create opportunities for teachers to learn, so they can make the best contribution in the classroom.’

Bangladesh

‘As an instructional leader, I need to continually work at establishing an effective school through sharing best practices and crafting a functional school vision. By building collaboration and trust and a sense of teamwork, learning becomes more effective and the success of interventions can then be tracked by effective monitoring and evaluation.’

Zimbabwe



Case study

Kenya: using instructional leadership to improve literacy and academic outcomes

Attending Connecting Classrooms' Instructional Leadership course inspired one head teacher in Kenya to transform teacher performance, leading to whole-school improvements in literacy rates.

THE CHALLENGE

Located just outside of Nairobi, Kanjeru Primary School caters for 650 male and female students aged seven to 14, with classes ranging in size from 35 to 45 for the older students, to 65 to 70 for the younger ones. In its rural setting, the school draws most of its student body from communities with comparatively low levels of economic stability, with most families being engaged in some form of small-scale farming or agricultural work.

While the school employed a complementary range of teaching practices, including question and answer techniques, enquiry-based learning, group discussion, instructional teaching, role play, case studies and fieldwork, Head Teacher Agatah Karimi Njue knew there was room for improvement in terms of both the academic achievement of students and her own leadership capacities. In particular, the school faced a significant challenge around learners' lack of literacy, which affected all areas of the curriculum and the school's efforts to embed the core skills into lessons.

ISOLATING CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Agatah attended the Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms, which confirmed to her the role of effective leadership in improving teaching and learning. She left the training feeling empowered and able to transform the school.

Her first step was to form a committee, comprising members of the senior leadership team and teachers from both upper and lower grades, which was tasked with identifying problems at the school, as well as their causes and consequences. Looking deeper at the issue of literacy, the committee highlighted specific areas of teaching and learning that could be improved in this subject area, including inadequate planning by teachers, poor time management, a lack of resources, and poor teaching materials and content.

They made an action plan that would enable leaders and teachers across the school to work together to address any barriers and improve the school's capacity to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Taking their thinking one step further, Agatah and the committee decided to introduce and develop an appropriate system to support monitoring and evaluation and the improvement of teacher practice and performance.

PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

They communicated their plans and vision to all school stakeholders, including staff, students and parents, through teacher orientation and consultative meetings, to get them on board with the upcoming changes and gather any useful ideas and feedback.

The plan was to implement improvements across 11 action areas over the course of one academic year:

1. capacity building
2. adequate planning
3. discipline, guidance and counselling
4. time management
5. improvisation
6. strengthening and improving communication channels
7. improving study skills
8. creating a good classroom environment
9. practising professionalism
10. embracing new approaches to teaching and learning
11. motivating teachers and learners.

Agatah provided additional training for teachers and used assessment for learning methods to identify literacy gaps. Individual action plans were developed, lesson plans revised, and monitoring and evaluation structures put in place. The wider community was engaged and mobilised to provide resources such as reading and literacy materials, and stationery, with help coming from parents, alumni, friends and publishing bodies.

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

The improved communication and collaboration among staff, including training and guidance, coupled with monitoring and feedback, has had a real impact on the school community and students' academic performance. In terms of literacy, by the time the school was required to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Grade 5 literacy levels had reached 100 per cent, and Grades 1 to 4 were at 90 per cent (and are on an upward trajectory), based on teacher assessments.

This improvement in literacy has made learning in other academic areas more accessible and has encouraged greater engagement among the student body. Teachers have been able to renew their work to embed the core skills, and students have responded positively, with far higher levels of enthusiasm and understanding.

Agatah says:

I have realised that learners who are able to read tend to perform well academically, and I have realised that capacity building with all workers in an institution improves their performance. I have also realised that assessment for learning adjusts, bridges, reflects, supports and identifies learning gaps.

When schools can reopen, Agatah intends to work towards achieving 100 per cent literacy across all age groups and will continue to work with teachers to ensure they acquire and develop new skills.

The Instructional Leadership course has empowered and enabled her to gradually change her institution from a below average school to an outstanding one, equipping her with the knowledge and skills to lead effectively, manage change and integrate the core skills across the curriculum.

Her advice to other teachers is to:

Practise instructional leadership to make sure there is effective teaching and learning, there is embracing and practising of the school vision, and that the assessment of school projects and programmes is done in an effective way and everything is well-monitored and evaluated.

'Good classroom practices develop as a result of effective leadership. Leaders can transform average institutions into outstanding institutions.'

**Agatah Karimi Njue, Head Teacher,
Kanjeru Primary School, Kenya**



Case study

Sierra Leone: driving school improvement through instructional leadership

Attainment and attitudes to learning improved dramatically at a high school in Sierra Leone after its principal successfully put into practice knowledge and skills he gained on the Connecting Classrooms Instructional Leadership course.

THE CHALLENGE

Situated in a densely populated area of Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital, Evangelical Model Junior High School educates more than 800 mixed students aged 11 to 14. As the only government-assisted secondary school in the area, classrooms had become crowded – with an average size of more than 50 students per class – and the school population had outgrown the existing infrastructure, which was having a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Students' results in the Basic Education Certificate Examination were poor, and the school's reputation in the community was suffering.

Principal Santigie Desmond Conteh wanted to retain the school's commitment to child-centred teaching and learning, but felt that teachers needed training and support to improve their practice and raise standards. He also wanted to enhance the school's image and reputation by improving the physical facilities and providing additional classrooms to bring down class sizes and inspire teachers and students to strive for excellence.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Participating in the Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms introduced Santigie to a raft of new approaches he could use for leading improvements in teaching and learning. In particular, the training sharpened his focus on the effective use of resources, monitoring teaching and learning, improving communication and developing his own role as a force for change at school.

After the training, Santigie reflected on what he had learned about the importance of a school's vision, and how it could give a visible, clearly understood focus for the school and the community. Santigie's vision was to develop an environment where all children could fulfil their potential through quality education and lifelong learning, in this way building a future for themselves within the global community.

He knew that securing buy-in for his vision from all stakeholders would give him a solid foundation to build change. Using newly acquired communication skills, he held meetings with teachers, the school board, students and community members to discuss and share plans for improving the school and to agree a way forward.

Santigie also revisited the methods he had explored during the training to tackle the problem of poor-quality teaching and learning – in particular, the importance of lesson observation and giving teachers high-quality feedback. And this became a main priority for the school going forward.

With a strategy agreed, and everyone behind the proposed changes, he organised a series of regular meetings with teachers – an important feature of an instructional leadership approach to school improvement. Together they looked at ways of developing skills and practice through innovations such as learning circles and joint professional development.

FROM PILOT TO WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

The school began piloting lesson observation at JSS1 level, involving six staff members, including the school head and senior teachers. They saw that giving high-quality feedback to teachers improved their practice, and that the feedback was especially effective when it focused on a particular aspect of teaching, such as opportunities for students to give feedback. As mechanisms for student feedback improved, the school decided to expand the project across the school.

With support from Santigie, and in an environment of collegiate learning and support, teachers grew their confidence to use innovative techniques, such as effective questioning to scaffold students' learning.

Throughout the school, enhanced monitoring and evaluation procedures were put in place, with teachers soon becoming used to lesson observations, peer feedback and classroom visits. Emphasis was given to good classroom management, not only in terms of student behaviour but also at a more basic level, regarding the use and management of learning resources.

Teachers were encouraged to maximise the educational return of not only physical resources but also their time and effort, to make teaching and learning as efficient as possible. An offshoot of this was a commitment to enhance the classroom environment by displaying students' work, which improved the learning setting in a physical sense and encouraged students to produce better work, knowing it would be displayed to their peers.

Creating time for the project was challenging, with additional training and ongoing developmental meetings, but with the school's vision as a focus, teachers showed huge commitment to the school's goals and the role they had to play in achieving them. Santigie used what he had learned about communication and influence to engage the local community and secure funding and material assistance, which enabled the construction of the badly needed additional classrooms and teaching space.

MEASURABLE IMPACT

The Instructional Leadership course gave Santigie the confidence, knowledge and skills to drive forward improvement at Evangelical Model Junior High School, and the changes he instigated have led to clear improvements.

Trust has been built and strengthened across the school, as staff work in collaboration to develop teaching skills and achieve the school's vision. This collaborative approach has also led to team teaching and modelling of lessons, to support those teachers who were underperforming.

The trickle-down effect of Santigie's leadership has helped teachers improve their teaching, and they have become more consistent in managing behaviour, particularly in the transition between lessons, which has had a positive impact on the mood of the whole school.

Improved student feedback mechanisms have highlighted one particular aspect of school life that needs improvement – the need to assign responsibilities evenly between boys and girls. And after consultation and planning, measures have been put in place to ensure there is far greater equality in student leadership opportunities. This has extended to new extracurricular activities, including sports clubs, literary groups and a debating society.

Environmental improvements and the resultant smaller class sizes have contributed greatly to the improved motivation and performance of teachers and students alike. Lesson observations, reviews and classroom visits, since the start of the project, have shown that the new approaches – alongside improvements to the classroom environment – have had a major impact on students' motivation and concentration. At the same time, students' confidence has grown, partly thanks to increased opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.

These improved attitudes to learning are reflected in a measurable impact on attainment in the Basic Education Certificate Examination. In 2018, just 49 per cent of students passed five subjects or more. In 2019, this figure increased to 85 per cent. Thanks to these results and improvements in students' attitudes, the school's reputation locally has been restored and enrolment has increased by 60 per cent. The community's involvement in improving the school has strengthened these links even further.

Having successfully implemented what he learned through the Instructional Leadership course, Santigie and his school are looking forward to more staff getting involved in Connecting Classrooms in the future.

'I was motivated by the Connecting Classrooms training to initiate and propagate change for our school. It enhanced my leadership capacity and helped me to work successfully with my team to implement what I learned.'

**Santigie Desmond Conteh, Principal,
Evangelical Modern Junior School,
Sierra Leone**

Case study

Nigeria: leading the move from a traditional curriculum

Attending the Leading Core Skills course from Connecting Classrooms inspired a principal in Nigeria to completely redesign his school's traditional curriculum, with a remarkable impact on engagement, behaviour and achievement.

THE CHALLENGE

Rhemaville Christian Academy, a mixed boarding high school in Jos, Nigeria, has always enjoyed strong support from the local community – evident from the number of parents who have sought admission for their children based on the school's strong reputation.

However, Principal Emmanuel Yakusak was concerned that the school's conservative curriculum, which used traditional approaches to teaching and learning, was leading to students being disengaged in class and not taking ownership of their own learning. He also perceived students' behaviour to be deteriorating, with learners not respecting classroom routines or their teachers.

Concerned that standards would start to fall and that the school's reputation would suffer, Emmanuel sought support from Connecting Classrooms to change the school's curriculum, in order to re-engage students, improve their motivation to learn and increase their enjoyment in school.

A RADICAL CHANGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Emmanuel attended the Leading Core Skills course, where he gained practical tools and advice for integrating core skills into the curriculum, implementing new instructional leadership approaches, and using formative and summative assessment.

Back at school, he used what he had learned to bring about radical changes to teaching and learning. He started by organising core skills training for all teachers, focusing on new teaching approaches and how to embed the core skills into existing activities.

He then held workshops to ensure everyone was on board with the radical new culture for teaching and learning and felt actively involved in planning the new curriculum. From this, an initial eight-week programme was launched, which would use the core skills to improve lessons, attitudes to learning, digital literacy, collaboration and decision making, within the context of developing students' creativity and enhancing global learning.

Emmanuel branded the new core skills curriculum 'MTC' – 'Making choices, taking action, creating change'. MTC banners were placed around school to raise awareness of the initiative among teachers, students, parents and visitors, and a group of students gave a presentation to introduce MTC to the school.

Teachers started to embed the core skills into lesson plans, with a strong steer from Emmanuel, to develop students' critical thinking through group work, collaboration, interaction and problem solving. They introduced project work, alongside direct instruction, to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, and tracked their performance weekly.

Students got the opportunity to participate in new activities, including a weekly MTC club focusing on drama, music and presentations. They attended a students' conference, went on visits outside of the school and participated in competitions.

Teachers were encouraged to bring new teaching approaches into the classroom, and as the programme progressed, they grew into their role as facilitators and imparters of knowledge. They encouraged active engagement from learners by asking open-ended questions, encouraging them to think–pair–share ideas in groups and providing opportunities for collaborative work. These new approaches were monitored by the senior leadership team through formative assessments.

Teachers also continued their professional development by attending workshops on digital learning and skills, and started to introduce digital learning such as video and online assignments, which motivated and inspired students.

A major success factor was buy-in and support from parents, which reinforced the school's work at home. Emmanuel played an important role in establishing this partnership by providing information to parents about the new curriculum, inviting the parent-teacher association to get involved in projects around the school and holding a parent-teacher conference.

PREPARED FOR THE PANDEMIC

The school's new emphasis on digital literacy enabled it to become the first school in Plateau State to begin online lessons when Nigerian schools were closed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Students participated in online clubs and exchange programmes, including a comparative study on the use of the English language via Skype with a school in India.

EMPOWERING LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Attending the Leading Core Skills course gave Emmanuel the knowledge, tools and confidence to completely transform the curriculum at Rhemaville Christian Academy, and the success of the initial eight-week initiative encouraged him to turn it into a four-month project.

The project-based approach to teaching and learning has had a significant impact on students by encouraging them to take more responsibility for their learning and increasing their levels of engagement, with positive knock-on effects in terms of behaviour and attitudes.

Emmanuel explains:

They have developed global skills that will give them the opportunity to excel in life and achieve the best. They have learnt how to solve problems and use digital skills efficiently. They collaborate more with empathy and consideration. Their response and respect for other students outside the country has developed their global citizenship skills.

This has been reflected in academic achievement, as weekly assessments carried out during the extended four-month initiative show.

- Average maths marks have improved from 55 per cent to 68 per cent.
- Average English marks have improved from 64 per cent to 79 per cent.
- General averages in academic achievement are up from 70 per cent to 86.7 per cent.

- Grade 12 students have achieved highly in mock exams before their final West African Examination Council exams.
- The school has won an award for best academic achievement in Plateau State.

'The training was a turning point for me; it broadened my perspective on teaching and learning.'

**Emmanuel Yakusak, Principal,
Rhemaville Christian Academy, Nigeria**

Students have also excelled in a range of state and national competitions, which has further improved the school's reputation. Rhemaville is now over-subscribed, with parents keen to give their children the opportunity to benefit from the school's new curriculum and innovative approaches.

Including facilitation alongside direct instruction has energised and empowered teachers, and they take pride in knowing they are leading the way in curriculum innovation. An increased focus on collaboration has also improved relationships between teachers and school leadership, and there is a greater sense of unity in school.

Teacher Anthony Yashim explains:

Learning is now fun, and I am a better teacher with the core skills being at the centre of my instructional delivery.

Emmanuel believes that the Leading Core Skills training has had a significant impact on his whole leadership approach:

I now know how important it is for me to lead instruction and learning, rather than concentrating on administration. I am more focused on inspiring my teachers and school community to achieve success. I am a better and more confident teacher than before.

Moving forward, the school is keen to continue with its core skills work and build on the improvements that have already been made in teaching and learning, leadership and global links.

Case study

Lebanon: focusing on quality teaching to improve learning outcomes for all young people

The Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms has helped a chain of schools in Lebanon build the capacity of their leaders to improve the quality of teaching across all subject areas, significantly affecting learning outcomes for all students.

THE CHALLENGE

The Al-Mabarrat Association was founded during the Lebanese civil war, and set up a chain of 19 academic and vocational schools to shelter orphans and provide good-quality education for all children.

While conducting an impact study of a ten-year programme to improve educational leadership and management across its schools, the Al-Mabarrat Association found that although there had been considerable improvement in administration and management, there had been minimal impact on teaching and learning. This highlighted the need to strengthen the instructional leadership abilities of its educational leaders.

As a participant in Connecting Classrooms since 2011, the association had also identified significant barriers at the leadership level, as it looked to improve in areas such as global education, inclusion and the core skills. Again, this highlighted that a fundamental change in leadership was required to increase student engagement and create inclusive school environments.

The association needed a way to encourage school principals to understand and believe in the importance of policies and practices for ensuring engagement from all students, and to identify their role in creating an inclusive environment. This would require both strong instructional leadership and high-performing principals who could motivate students and teachers.

UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

To meet this challenge, the association took the opportunity to enrol 30 of its principals and educational division heads on the Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms.

During the course, participants gained an understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning, the importance of coaching and developing teachers' skills and knowledge, and how to create an open culture of high expectations and a 'can do' mindset. They learned how to consider students' opinions, as well as the importance of monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning process, and staying in touch with the day-to-day realities of teaching and learning in order to identify weaknesses and strengths in educational practices.

Participants were also assigned the task of planning and implementing a project to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. While the impact of these projects was to be assessed after six months of implementation, the outbreak of Covid-19 forced schools to close before many of those implementing projects could gather enough evaluation data.

One participant who did gather enough demonstrable data about his school-based project was Ali Shahade, Division Director at Issa Bin Mariam School, whose project shows clear evidence of the improvement in his students' learning.

'Participating in the training brought about a change in our mindset and perspectives, especially regarding the conceptual framework and practice of educational leadership.'

Ali Shahade, Division Director, Issa Bin Mariam School, Al-Mabarrat, Lebanon

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ISSA BIN MARIAM SCHOOL

Through his instructional leadership project, Ali set out to explain why students in Grade 7 were not achieving the required quality standards for student achievement, as set by the Al-Mabarrat Association's test and measurement office, even though they had achieved these standards in Grade 6.

To engage his team in the project, he delivered instructional leadership training to educational co-ordinators in each subject area, focusing on the indicators of effective teaching and learning, and on collecting evidence of student learning during lessons. He also ensured all co-ordinators were aware of their role as instructional leaders in their subject areas.

Ali says:

Every co-ordinator was asked to submit an instructional leadership project to implement with their team, and these projects were harmonious with my own project. Submitting projects was an indicator to me that what they acquired in the training was now being reflected in their practices and illustrated in their work plans.

Together, Ali and his team developed a new checklist of indicators to gather evidence on effective teaching and learning during classroom observations. These included looking at various aspects of a teacher's pedagogy, including:

- the effectiveness of feedback methods
- strategies for enhancing students' improvement
- how relevant the content was to students and their daily lives
- questioning techniques
- the number of students actively engaged in learning
- self-learning/self-assessment activities during the lesson.

The data collected from these observations, along with learning school walks, helped to clarify the interventions needed to change practices in each subject area.

The school's science co-ordinator reported that 60 per cent of each lesson was teacher-centred, leaving only 40 per cent for student participation, so he focused on increasing student engagement and learning inside the classroom to enable students to become self-learners.

The English co-ordinator noted that students were not being given the opportunity to use the language during class, leading to a gap between written and oral exam results, so she focused more on oral activities and student practice during lessons.

The French co-ordinator focused on ensuring that co-operative and group work in lessons engaged every student in the learning process, and that each student was given the chance to become a self-learner.

Meanwhile, the maths co-ordinator realised he needed to build students' confidence in their ability to achieve, so he focused on self-assessment strategies and peer feedback.

After collecting data on their faculty practices, each co-ordinator embarked on an improvement action plan with their team. They planned focused professional development programmes to carry out with teachers, individually and in groups, and conducted model lessons focusing on the practices that needed to be improved, incorporating samples from student notebooks.

Ali notes:

When I trained the teachers, I didn't face any problems in discussing the concepts and practices related to instructional leadership; I sensed that the co-ordinators have transferred this knowledge to them, so in my work with them, I was trying to understand the practice they were applying and the change in practice they have brought about.

MEASURABLE IMPACT

Comparing the mid-year exam results of current Grade 7 students to the previous year, there has been a remarkable improvement, with students now achieving an average of 77 per cent compared to 68 per cent the previous year.

There has been a clear shift in how learning is assessed, as Ali states:

The perspective behind school rounds has completely changed. I previously made the rounds to check classroom management; now on my learning walk, I want to observe learning. My attention used to be on teachers' behaviours, now it's on the students. I now prepare the points I want to observe ahead of time in my notebook and carry it with me, and I take the time to stop and look at samples of students' work.

As for the change in practices, Huda, the French co-ordinator, says:

We used to focus on the teachers' performance and classroom management; now we focus on student output, student engagement, questions asked by the students and the level of improvement post-teacher feedback.

As an example, during group work, some students would be working, while others wouldn't be. But now things have changed. During school rounds or classroom observations, we are thrilled to see all students busy and focused. Students finish their exams on time and no longer ask teachers to clarify questions. Teachers' practices are now more directed at follow-up and corrective feedback.

Abbas, the science co-ordinator, says:

The indicator checklist to differentiate between teaching and learning helped teachers to be active, so now, after observing the session focusing on teaching versus learning time, I come up with 70 per cent learning and 30 per cent teaching time pointers.

We can observe students working much more than the teacher. The teacher's role is more about orientating and giving feedback, and about making sure students are improving as a result. The effect of the feedback is my indicator to know the role of the teacher; it's an indicator of quality teaching, while students benefiting from feedback indicates the quality of learning, and here is the link between quality teaching and learning.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

As demonstrated by the successful project at Issa Bin Mariam School, the Instructional Leadership course has enabled participants to make the leap from theory to practical implementation, as they plan and deliver their school-based projects, with coaching and monitoring support from the training project co-ordinator and project manager.

Ali says:

The project helped me change my practices. It brought me closer to the students, and I detect the teachers' output from the students, not from the teachers themselves. It also led [me] to focus more on the assessment of learning, and the strategies that facilitate monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning in our school.

As for the challenges, Ali adds:

The first challenge we now have to tackle is how to continue the project through the flipped classroom strategy we are implementing during Covid-19, and the second is how to empower the team in a way that they can transfer this empowerment to other co-ordinators in other divisions and, eventually, to the teachers.



Case study

Occupied Palestinian Territories: transforming teaching and learning through instructional leadership

Taking the Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms inspired and enabled a head teacher in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to improve teacher performance and student outcomes by transforming classroom practices and developing links with the community.

THE CHALLENGE

As head teacher of Al-Khulafa' Al-Rashidin Basic Girls School, in Bethlehem, Palestine, Manal Mohammad Jomaa Salhab has always looked for opportunities to strengthen her leadership learning and develop her own practice. The school educates around 620 girls aged between six and 13, and Manal is passionate about ensuring they receive the best possible education.

A big challenge Manal faced was building internal relationships between herself and her teachers. She knew this was important, as building a collaborative culture built on trust would help her to improve teaching strategies and improve student outcomes.

To overcome this challenge, she attended the Instructional Leadership course from Connecting Classrooms, where she discovered new leadership methods and approaches.

PREPARING FOR CHANGE

Manal returned to school to put her new learning into practice. She consulted with her teaching staff to identify and agree areas for improving the learning environment and experience for all pupils.

The first aim was to build and strengthen internal relationships across the school by developing mutual trust and promoting a culture of evaluation and improvement. Second was to promote positive external relationships with the local community and to develop the school's role as an important community institution. The final aim was to develop the teaching and classroom practice of female teachers, and encourage the growth of peer-to-peer learning and professional development through experiential exchange and communication. These aims were brought together under the banner of 'making learning meaningful for every pupil'.

Next, Manal put an extensive, targeted training programme in place to enable teaching staff to learn about enhanced teaching strategies, such as the mantle of the expert and think-pair-share. They devoted time to progressing questioning techniques, with the aim of enhancing students' thinking and communication skills. Existing teaching practices were also revised to be more student-centred, to place the learner at the focal point of their own learning and to enable extended learning stemming from analysis, questioning and interpretation, rather than lecture-style lessons. Through this process, teachers understood how their role could evolve into providing guidance and facilitation, to help students navigate their own learning pathways.

Working collaboratively, the teachers and leaders developed a mutually agreed set of common practices that could set a clear standard of expectations across the school for both students and staff. As well as pedagogic practice and methodology, these included other details, such as guidelines on how information should be set out on chalkboards, so students would be able to find the same type of information in the same place in all classes, thus reducing cognitive load and making the learning process more streamlined and effective.

DELIVERING CHANGE

To deliver and embed this new learning culture, the school formed a core team of five teachers to specialise in and disseminate the new approaches, methods and practices to their peers. In this way, they would lead the change and provide continuing support to their colleagues.

They began to promote a culture of participatory leadership based on mutual trust and support, bolstered by fair, consistent and constructive observation and feedback. This triangulation of regular classroom observation, direct feedback and honest, forward-looking assessment started to build confidence among the staff, directly improving classroom practice.

Communication also began to improve between teachers and senior leadership, as staff members started to share their feelings and ideas in a collegiate environment and actively participated in the development of the school's vision and mission.

Manal says:

I wanted to create a family atmosphere, characterised by freedom of expression and co-operation, so that everyone could express an opinion while breaking down the barrier of fear of evaluation for the sake of improvement and development.

Throughout the transformation, Manal and her staff had to overcome several challenges, including finding the time to train the core group of teachers, which was solved by restructuring the teaching roster so that the selected teachers had no contact time at the same time, on the same day, each week, and could, therefore, be trained together. The outbreak of Covid-19 also caused serious challenges, with training, professional development, feedback and, of course, teaching all needing to be adapted to be delivered remotely.

MEASURABLE IMPACT

Despite these challenges, Manal and her teaching staff have achieved significant progress together. In academically quantifiable terms, there has been an uplift of 65 per cent in the test and exam results of students taught using the new approaches and methodologies. These students seem to be leading their own learning, using more enquiry and deeper questioning during lessons.

While the desire to improve academic outcomes was an important driver of the changes, the holistic growth that has occurred in the culture and climate of the school has also been noticeable. One teacher says:

The first director, I feel she loves us. I feel comfortable while working here this year, unlike previous years.

Other noticeable improvements include increased confidence among team members, improved classroom practices, a higher rate of student interaction in class and participation in school projects, improved student achievement, increased participation from parents in school activities and improved internal relations. Everyone has also embraced the idea of evaluation for improvement and development.

Manal plans to further develop the skills and remit of the initial core group of teachers, to enable them to roll out pedagogical changes across the school, with the aim of enriching the teaching and learning process for the whole school community.

She is grateful for the inspiration she gained from the Instructional Leadership course, which continues to drive her to make changes:

It has strengthened my interest in the work culture and is creating a supportive atmosphere for staff to develop their educational skills and practices.

‘The training had a clear impact on modifying my practices as an educational leader in various areas, leading to a change in the learning process, student results and teacher practices.’

**Manal Mohammad Jomaa Salhab,
Head Teacher, Al-Khulafa’ Al-Rashidin
Basic Girls School, Occupied
Palestinian Territories**



Contributors

Mark Herbert

Mark is Director Schools and Technical and Vocational Education at the British Council, and has worked for the organisation since 2006. Before this role, he worked in communications, marketing and strategy, and has been Director of Communications for the British Council, Head of Communications for part of the NHS and Head of Communications for the Royal Mail's international division.

He has a particular interest in how school systems can be improved through international collaboration to increase access and quality. He holds a Bachelor of Economics in Management Studies from Cardiff University. In addition to British Council visits and work with education systems in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and Europe, he has worked as a volunteer in Uganda, Chile and Peru.

Dr Jane Doughty CBE

Jane is an independent consultant who has worked with a range of clients both in the UK and internationally. She is currently working with school leaders and other educationists in Algeria and Lithuania on national government school reform projects.

Jane's background is secondary education – in schools for 20 years, including ten in headship. Between 2001 and 2013 she was a Director at the National College for School Leadership in England. Her responsibilities focused on developing and building school leadership capacity to address school improvement priorities and improve pupil outcomes. Jane led the design and delivery of a number of national leadership development programmes and, on behalf of the Department for Education, was responsible for leading a review of head teacher standards and training/accrediting school improvement partners.

She was awarded a CBE in the 2014 New Year's Honours list for services to education.

Andy Buck

Andy is the Founder of Leadership Matters (www.leadershipmatters.org.uk), a worldwide virtual network of over 10,000 school leaders, and the creator of The BASIC Coaching Method (www.basic-coaching.com).

Dr Arran Hamilton

Arran is Group Director of Education at Cognition Education. His early career included teaching and research at Warwick University and a period in adult and community education.

Arran transitioned into educational consultancy more than 15 years ago, and has held senior positions at Cambridge Assessment, Nord Anglia Education, Education Development Trust (formerly CfBT) and the British Council. Much of this work has been international, and has focused on supporting ministries of education and corporate funders to improve learner outcomes.

Arran currently oversees the design and delivery of Cognition Education's portfolio of education improvement programmes, with live projects in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Professor Toby Greany

Toby is Professor of Education and Convener of the Centre for Research in Education Leadership and Management at the University of Nottingham, UK. He was previously Professor of Leadership and Innovation and Vice-Dean: Enterprise at the UCL Institute of Education. His former roles include Executive Director – Leadership Development at the National College for School Leadership and Special Adviser to the Education and Skills Select Committee.

Toby's research is focused on understanding the ways in which system governance mechanisms, leadership agency and evidence interact to shape current and potential educational opportunities, processes and outcomes, in particular for disadvantaged groups. His most recent book, *School Leadership and Education System Reform*, was co-edited with Professor Peter Earley. He has extensive international experience and has advised the OECD, EU and ministries in several countries on issues relating to school leadership and educational system reform.

Marie-Claire Bretherton

Marie-Claire is Education Director at Anthem Schools Trust, a multi-academy trust of 16 schools in England. She is also the Founder of the Kyra Teaching School Alliance and Research School – a thriving collaborative partnership of over 60 schools focused on collective improvement and success for all children.

Marie-Claire was previously the Executive Head Teacher of Mount Street Academy, a school that has been judged 'outstanding' twice by Ofsted, recognised as a national support school and is the lead school in the Kyra Teaching School Alliance and Research School. In 2013, Marie-Claire and her team successfully built and opened a new primary academy in Lincoln City, which was judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted in 2015. Most recently, Marie-Claire led the rapid turnaround of one of the poorest performing schools in England, which moved from 'special measures' to 'good' in less than 18 months and subsequently won a Pearson Award for Primary School of the Year.

Dr Murad Raas

Murad completed his secondary education at Aitchison College, Lahore, and later graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Eastern Kentucky University, US. In 2010, he was awarded an Honorary PhD in Business Administration by the American Heritage University of Southern California.

With a passion to serve his country, he returned to Pakistan to join the political party Pakistan Tehreek-I-Insaf, and was first elected to the Provincial Assembly of Punjab in 2013. In August 2018, he was inducted into the Provincial Punjab Cabinet of Chief Minister, Punjab, and was appointed as Provincial Minister of Punjab for School Education. Since then, he has taken dynamic steps to set new standards and change departmental affairs with some crucial initiatives in the education space.

Dr Nishat Riaz MBE

Nishat has more than two decades of sector expertise. Currently Director Education at the British Council in Pakistan, Nishat is a social development adviser, governing board member at reputable development agencies, author of several think pieces and academic papers, and a speaker on education and development issues. Nishat is on Twitter at @nishatriaz

Dr Neji Kouki

Neji is currently the Director of Preparatory and Secondary Schools at the Ministry of Education in Tunisia. He has a Doctorate in Language Sciences from Sorbonne Cité Université (Paris 13). He is a member of different committees with the Ministry of Higher Education, the National Security Council and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.

As a researcher, Neji has published several articles on topics related to education, citizenship, linguistics and sociology, as well as a book, *The expression of the cause and the purpose*, in 2020.

Haroon Mahomed

Haroon is Chief Director for Curriculum Management and Teacher Development at Western Cape Education Department, South Africa. His previous leadership roles include National Director for Continuing Teacher Professional Development at the Department of Basic Education, and Executive Director at the Gauteng Curriculum Development Institute. He also served on the Ministerial Review Team for Curriculum 2005, and headed its Teacher Development working group.

Haroon has taught English at primary and secondary schools since 1979. He has also been a humanities lecturer and has worked on a range of community-based and non-formal programmes. He has published articles on curriculum and teacher development, and sports and development. His qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts, a Higher Diploma in Education, a Bachelor of Education, a Master of Education and a Diploma in Strategic Planning and Leadership.

Tony Bush

Tony is a Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Nottingham and President of the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society.

Agatah Karimi Njue

Agatah is the Head Teacher at Kanjeru Primary School, a public school in Kiambu County, Kenya. She is a highly effective educationist, with over 15 years of teaching experience, and has a passion for changing the lives of her learners. She also has a passion for childcare and protection – evident from the certificate she received from the Juvenile Justice Agencies, a Kenyan organisation committed to the training of teachers and advocating for child protection practices in schools.

Agatah is an efficient team builder and curriculum developer, having attained a Master's in Curriculum Studies from the University of Nairobi. Her educational philosophy is that effective learning is a product of effective teaching. She also believes that every child's behaviour has underlying reasons behind it, and, therefore, any leader must understand the psychology of learners; an institution is only as good as its leader.

Santigie Desmond Conteh

Santigie began his educational career at the Baptist Secondary School, East of Freetown in 1999 as a Head of Department for Language Arts. He taught second and third grade junior secondary school students for two years before joining the Evangelical Model High School in 2003, becoming a senior teacher there in 2011. He took over as Acting Principal in June 2018, and in September 2020 he was appointed Principal.

Santigie holds a first-class Bachelor of Science degree from the Institute of Public Administration and Management (2011) and is currently pursuing a master's at the Njala University College in Sierra Leone.

Santigie believes that student success is created through meaningful relationships. He has served as a professional development mentor, presented workshops for new teachers and taken an active role in the community. He has also served on various school improvement committees and as a team leader, a coach and a co-operating teacher for future educators.

Emmanuel Yakusak

Emmanuel Yakusak is Principal at Rhemaville Christian Academy, a private, faith-based school in Jos, Nigeria. In 2020, he led the school to being awarded the best school in academic achievement in Plateau State. He is an educationist and teacher, with more than 20 years of teaching experience, and has a passion for bringing real change to the lives of young people.

Emmanuel is also the Team Leader of Education for Change Africa, an organisation committed to teacher training and advocating for best practices in schools. He has trained more than 1,000 teachers and has deployed innovative learning tools to foster the growth of education in Nigeria and beyond. He has also written and published many educational articles. His educational philosophy is that every child can learn.

Rana Ismail

Rana has been a professional educator for the past 28 years and is currently the Principal of Al-Kawthar Secondary School. She has played a leading role in innovative projects and programmes for Al-Mabarrat schools across the whole country. She established and integrated a special education programme in Al-Kawthar Secondary School, making it the first inclusive school in Lebanon, and later led the implementation of the educational inclusion programme in all 19 schools in Al-Mabarrat.

Recently, Rana has been assigned a member of the curriculum mapping and development committee at the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in Lebanon. The committee is currently conducting a study that aims to improve and develop the Lebanese curriculum in both private and public schools.

Rana is also a member of the experts committee of teacher continuous training curriculum model at CERD.

Ali Shahade

Ali is a Division Director at Issa Bin Mariam Secondary School Al-Khiam, a branch of the Al-Mabarrat Association. He has eight years of experience in cycle management and 15 years of experience as a science teacher.

After majoring in biology, Ali began his teaching career at the Faculty of Science at Lebanese University in 2005. In 2007, he co-ordinated the Science Department, successfully running the school Science Fair and paving the way for the school's team to compete at the National Science Fair.

Ali has taken part in many Connecting Classrooms workshops, including the Instructional Leadership course, which has had a significant impact on his career. Ali believes that today's students are tomorrow's leaders, and that teaching is not a job but a passion.

Manal Salhab

Manal has been Principal at Al-khulafa Al-Rashidin Girls School, in Bethlehem, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, for two years. Before that, she was Principal at Al khadir Basic School and Al- Naserah Basic School. She also worked as a teacher for seven years. Manal has a Master's in Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education, and is currently a board member of the Committee for New Teachers' Selection at Bethlehem Governorate.

Manal has participated in many training sessions during her career, and she is always keen to develop her skills as a school leader to help her school become more well-known in the community. Her happiest moments are when she sees her students developing their skills during school study. Manal's aim is to create a generation who can solve problems, apply their learning, knowledge and skills in their future, and live and work in the global economy.

Images:

Inside front cover © Bebo – Dark Room Productions; Page 10 © Mat Wright; Page 31 © Ahed Izhiman; Page 32 © Mat Wright; Page 48 © Bebo – Dark Room Productions; Page 58 © Mat Wright; Page 67 © Roudy Lattouf

© **British Council 2021 / L062**

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.