



Extending the leadership continuum:
an exploration into teacher leadership

Dr Liz White and Dr Coleen Jackson

University of Glasgow

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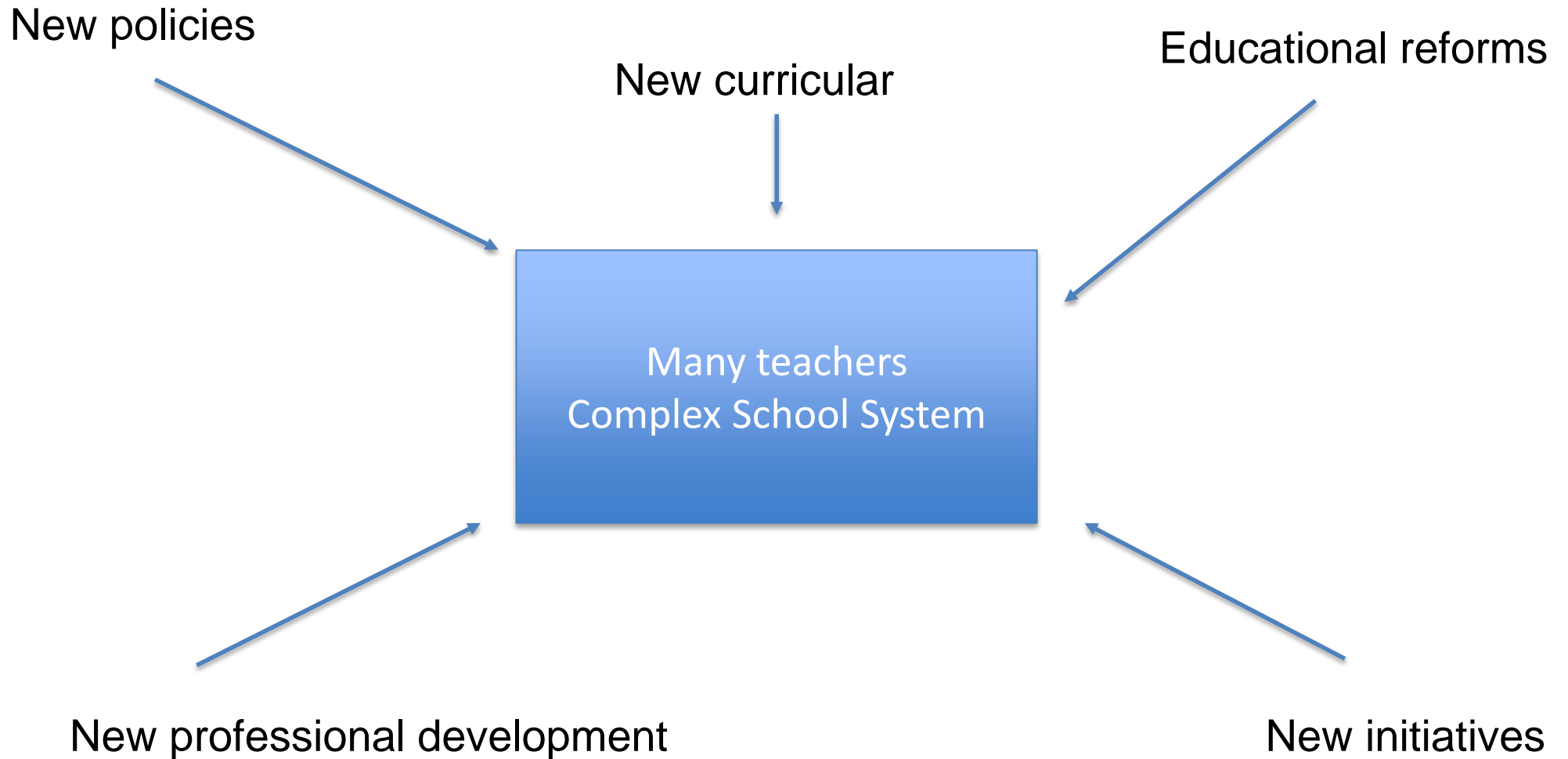


International Professional
Development Association

Overview

- To explore what we mean by teacher leadership
- To identify the next steps for developing our teacher leadership

Who is the leader?



What is teacher leadership?

- What do you mean by teacher leadership?
- Do you have a shared viewpoint of teacher leadership in your school?
 - Position and responsibility
 - Headship?
 - Senior Leadership team?
 - Middle Leadership?
 - Attitude and influence
 - Within the classroom?
 - Beyond the classroom?



Expanding teacher leadership

‘Advocacy for teacher professionalism and expanded leadership roles is based on the understanding that teachers, because they have daily contacts with learners, are in the best position to make critical decisions about curriculum and instruction.’

Boyd-Dimock & McGree 1995

Who are teacher leaders?

- Experienced teacher mentors?
- Teachers serving as research colleagues?
- Teachers facilitating professional development of colleagues?
- Teachers initiating programs of change
- Newly qualified teachers?
- Student teachers?

Who are teacher leaders?

“All teachers must be educational leaders in order to optimize the teaching and learning experience for themselves and their students; and, as professionals, they are expected to do whatever it takes to make that happen”

FORSTER, E. M. 1997. Teacher Leadership: Professional Right and Responsibility.
Action in Teacher Education, 19 p. 83

Who are teacher leaders?

‘...those teachers who lead within and beyond the classroom . . . identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders . . . and influence others towards improved educational practice’

Katzenmeyer, M., and Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: helping teachers develop as leaders*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press. pp. 5–8.

Extended professionals

‘Commitment to systematic questioning of one’s own teaching as a basis for development.

Commitment and skills to study one’s own teaching.

Concern to question and to test theory in practice’

Stenhouse 1975, 144

What is our role as teacher leaders?

- improving student achievement
- extending your own learning
- collaborating for school improvement
- supporting shared vision and values

What skills do teacher leaders employ?

- Shaping and sharing a vision
- Taking initiative
- Building trust and developing rapport
- Modelling collegiality
- Diagnosing organisational conditions
- Persevering in the face of obstacles
- Building skills and confidence in others

How does teacher leadership impact on teachers?

- What are the benefits?
- What are some of the challenges that we face in seeking to develop our teacher leadership?



What are the benefits to teacher leaders?

- Deep pupil learning
- Decreased teacher isolation
- Professional growth of teacher
- Intellectual growth of teacher and pupil
- Motivational for teacher and pupil
- Career opportunities enhanced for teacher

What are the challenges to teacher leadership?

- Identity - Role definition?
- Time?
- School culture – expansive or restrictive?

Characteristics of Teacher leaders

- **Risk-Taking**—Teachers who seek challenges and create new processes
- **Effectiveness**—Teachers who model best practice, professional growth, and heart
- **Autonomy**—Teachers who display initiative, independent thought, and responsibility
- **Collegiality**—Teachers who promote community and interactive communication skills
- **Honour**—Teachers who demonstrate integrity, honesty, and professional ethics

MERIDITH, E. M. 2007. Teachers as leaders. *Leadership Strategies for teachers*. 2nd ed. California: Corwin. Available at

http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/11324_Merideth_Chapter_1.pdf

Envisioning goals for teacher leadership

- Achievable – do you have the skills and resources?
- Believable – have you allowed reasonable time? Does it fit within the schools ethos?
- Credible – will it enhance your teaching and the learning of your students? Will the goal contribute to the school improvement plan? If it is an educational goal, is it grounded in research and educationally sound? How generalizable are the research results to your classroom?

What is next?

Developing these characteristics in all teachers, wherever they are on the continuum. What does this mean to you

- **as a teacher?**
- **as someone involved in teacher learning and development?**
- Share with someone on your table one thing that you are going to take away from this session – a different attitude or approach or an activity.
- **Let me know how you get on - e.j.white@Herts.ac.uk**
- How is this different from your approaches and experience in Scotland?

References

- BOYD-DIMOCK, V. & MCGREE, K. M. 1995. Leading Change from the Classroom: Teachers as Leaders *Issues ...about Change*, 4.(4). <http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues44.html>
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References

- SERGIOVANNI, T. J. 1992. Why we should seek substitutes for leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 5, 41-45.

Of further interest:

DAVIS, S. L. 2012. Are you a teacher-leader?

<http://gettingsmart.com/2012/05/are-you-a-teacher-leader/>.

SCEL *Leading Change from the Classroom: Teachers as Leaders*

<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues44.html>.