

Leadership for Quality Education

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About LQE

In response to the passage of bold, decentralizing school reform legislation, Chicago's senior business community started LQE in 1989 to serve as its voice on school reform. It is an advocacy organization that focuses its energies on helping to resolve specific issues that are impediments to improving the quality of education at the local school level. It also works to identify financial and in-kind resources from a variety of national, state, and local sources to put to work on behalf of Chicago's public schools.

LQE has sponsored numerous programs and citywide efforts to rethink, restructure, and energize this city's schools. In 1995 a second major reform law put the Mayor directly in charge of the upper level of the schools bureaucracy. This has led to fast-moving action to improve finances, operations, and school accountability. LQE's staff focuses on several programs that provide lasting improvement to education:

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[A message from John Ayers, Executive Director](#)

Accountability

Created by the same 1995 reform law that put the Mayor's team in charge of the city's schools, the Academic Accountability Council had been quiet for most of the first two years of the new CPS management's tenure. The group of nine business, university and civic leaders acted boldly. After a careful data analysis of school performance over seven years conducted by LQE, the Council empowered the school district to reconstitute up to nine extremely low performing schools. This part of the 1995 law allows the system's CEO to completely redesign a failing school and replace any and all personnel, without regard to standard procedures or contracts.

Paul Vallas, the CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, chose to tackle the seven tough high schools on the Council's list but at the same time indicated he will not provoke the system's teachers union by the outright

firing of large numbers of teachers. Vallas gave five of the schools new principals, and all teachers are being asked to reapply for their jobs over the summer. The Council was devised by the Civic Committee, and LQE has played the support role in getting this important activity underway.

Charter Schools

When Illinois' charter law passed in April 1996, the Chicago Civic Committee affiliates, LQE and the Financial Research and Advisory Committee (FRAC), jointly formed the Charter Schools Support Project. The Project has been serving as a resource and advocacy center to support the development of charter schools in Illinois. While the Project's work has focused on Chicago, we also provide assistance to charter efforts in the suburbs and Downstate. We are currently advocating at the State level for improvements in our charter law and its implementation.

The Project initially focused on four areas:

- Raising public awareness about charter schools and opportunities for success in Chicago
- Developing a suggested application format and review process for the Chicago Public Schools
- Conducting outreach to organizations and individuals potentially interested in creating charter schools
- Providing advice and technical assistance to those developing charter proposals

In January 1997, the Board granted preliminary approval to ten charter schools in Chicago. The Project then shifted its focus to start up issues. The Project helped to design a revolving loan program for capital improvements to charter school sites. This loan fund, which is capitalized by \$2 million in CPS funds and managed by the Illinois Facility Fund (IFF), provides an affordable, continuously replenishing source of capital for new-start charters for the next several years. (The IFF is a nonprofit community development loan institution that grew out of the Chicago Community Trust and is now under contract with the Board of Education to provide financial and facilities planning assistance to each of the charter schools during the start up phase.)

LQE has been instrumental in the success of the city's effort to seed these innovative new schools, which are free of standard Board rules and union contracts. CPS' provision of the \$2 million grant to an externally administered revolving loan fund allows groups to purchase and make capital improvements to charter facilities. With LQE's technical assistance, Chicago charters claimed most of the federal start-up dollars available to the state. LQE also loaned its lead consultant on charter schools to the CEO's office for four months to help oversee start-up arrangements, which have been a major challenge. Illinois is suffering under a "weak" charter statute in that only local districts can approve charters. (More aggressive charter states like Michigan have "strong" laws with two or three authorizers, often including state universities and/or state agencies that can grant charters. This of course leads to the creation of more charters as local districts cannot "stonewall" competition as easily.) The Civic Committee advocated in Springfield for a second authorizer, but the needed reform was defeated with the school finance package. Currently, two charter schools are planned in the suburbs, and there are three charters authorized in Downstate Illinois.

Small Schools

www.smallschools.org

The 24 small schools we started through the system's Small Schools Request for Proposal in Fall 1995 had solid results. They are both improving student performance at their own sites and stimulating change throughout the system. Best Practices High School, for example, in its first year at the West Side's

Cregier Multiplex (home to three independent small schools) reversed educational trends to rank 7th in the city in test scores among non-magnet secondary schools. In the small elementary schools, superior performance in small schools compared to the host school serving the same population has led a number of principals to convert the entire school to autonomous small schools, as is the case at the enormous Brian Piccolo school.

On the policy side, the influence of small schools thinking is evident in innovative efforts to raise standards in the system: the new transition centers, intended to prepare low-performing students for high school, incorporate elements such as a more personalized setting, team teaching, cohesive curriculum and flexible scheduling which are known to work best with at-risk students. And most of the charter and expanded alternative schools follow the same model. In addition, small schools with school-to-work programs and business partnerships served as the pilot for the system's new thrust towards career academies.

The Small Schools Coalition has published two compelling studies: a review of national literature and findings on this approach to restructuring urban schools and profiles of three outstanding small schools initiated in recent years in Chicago. Like team strategies in the workplace, small schools increase teacher productivity, reduce alienation, and provide a focus on quality through integration of effort and creation of a human scale setting. In addition, the Coalition is preparing a proposal that will allow well-working small schools to gain much more autonomy, along the lines of charter schools, in exchange for tougher accountability agreements with the system.

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National Staff Development Council

SCHOOL TEAM INNOVATOR - March 1997

Teachers Can Be Leaders of Change

By Joan Richardson

By all standards, Melisa Hancock is a teacher leader.

Whenever she attends a workshop, she shares what she's learned with her colleagues at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Manhattan, Kansas. She presents at state and national conferences. She started after-school science clubs as a way to get kids excited by science and to provide a non-threatening place for teachers to learn new ideas. She became a clinical instructor at nearby Kansas State University and played a key role in engineering a partnership with the university that led to her school becoming a professional development school.

Why does she do all of this?

"If I really want to impact a greater number of students, I can do it best by impacting other teachers," said Hancock, an 11-year veteran of the classroom.

Teachers like Melisa Hancock are at once proliferating and in short supply. More and more teachers are reaching out beyond the four walls of their classrooms, and yet too many teachers are still cloistered inside those walls, isolated and unwilling to do more than "just teach."

And yet few doubt the importance of creating cadres of teacher leaders who can lead their peers through school reform.

"This will be the key to changing our schools in the future," said Gayle Moller, who is executive director of the South Florida Center for Educational Leadership, which runs a teacher leadership program. Moller also has written extensively on the subject.

Growing more teacher leaders will be essential to meet the enhanced expectations for students and teachers, she said.

"Think about the complex skills that teachers are going to have to have to help their students learn. Think about how many teachers experience those skills themselves. Think about having to learn the strategies to teach those students," Moller said.

"There aren't going to be enough trainers and experts and consultants in this world to teach them. Teachers are going to have to help each other. They're all going to have to become staff developers," Moller said.

What is a teacher leader?

Moller says a teacher leader must, first of all, be competent in the classroom. "If teacher leaders lack competency, they'll never have credibility with their peers," she said.

Teacher leaders reach beyond their classrooms. That might begin with hallway talk. "But eventually, it moves up to 'come on down to my classroom to see what I'm doing,' " she said.

Beyond merely demonstrating their excellence at teaching, Moller said teacher leaders are individuals who "use their skills to influence other teachers toward better practice."

Finally, she said, teacher leaders want to be part of a larger community of leaders. "They don't want to do this by themselves. They don't want to be a star in their own classrooms. There is a real need to share what they know," she said.

In their book, *What's Worth Fighting For?: Working Together for Your School*, Canadian researchers Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves describe five principles for redefining the teachers' role to include responsibilities outside the classroom.

1) Each teacher has an obligation to help increase the degree and quality of day-to-day interaction with other teachers. "Even if done on a small scale regularly, this can make a very significant difference for other individual teachers and for oneself," they say.

2) Each teacher has a responsibility to try to understand and to attempt to improve the culture of the school. "Every teacher must be concerned about the health of the school as an organization. This does not mean getting obsessively involved in every aspect of school life, but it does mean taking some responsibility for the welfare of one's colleagues and the wider life of the school," they write.

3) Every teacher is a leader. The leadership role will vary according to the stage of the teacher's life and career. But Fullan and Hargreaves agree that "all teachers have a leadership contribution to make beyond their own classrooms and should take action accordingly."

4) Redefining the teacher's role includes a responsibility to become knowledgeable about policy and professional and research issues. "This does not mean having a second career as an academic. But it does mean connecting with the knowledge base for improving teaching and schools. The more knowledgeable a teacher is about global educational and professional issues, the more resourceful he or she will be for students as well as for other teachers," they write.

5) Each and every teacher has a direct responsibility for helping to shape the quality of the next generation of teachers. "All teachers can make a contribution," they say, listing options that include working with student teachers, mentoring new teachers, and even supporting and praising other teachers who take on those roles.

In South Florida, Moller said her office's interest in teacher leadership grew out of a realization that change could not be institutionalized in a school if it was the sole province of the principal. "It became real evident that, when innovation happened in a school, when a principal left, that was the end of the innovation," she said.

So, the South Florida Center for Educational Leaders began searching for ways to move teachers into leadership roles. Moller said she learned that teacher leaders are people who don't necessarily want to move into administration. "They want to stay and learn and grow in their own profession. They want to stay close to students," Moller said.

Often, she believes they resist leadership roles because they lack confidence and because they fear rejection by their peers.

Even Hancock who now welcomes visitors to her classroom and enjoys presenting to groups large or small, acknowledges that lack of confidence slowed her down in the beginning.

"The first year I taught in Manhattan, I was very nervous. I didn't want anyone else to see my teach.

Ironically, her path to becoming a lead teacher at her school began when she admitted her weakness in

teaching math and science. "My principal started working on me to get me out to conferences and to workshops. She kind of forced me to get involved in some things," Hancock said.

As she learned, she became more confident and wanted to share what she was learning and how she was putting these new ideas into practice.

Now, Hancock tries to play the same role with other teachers that her principal played with her.

But, ever conscious about the cultural restraints, Hancock said she moves slowly with other teachers.

"I don't want to force anything on them. I know if my principal had tried to force me, I probably would have resisted. It has to come from them. I just try to expose them to what I'm learning. I share little things with them. I don't push. I don't threaten.

"But I always say, 'if you want to know more about that, then come and see me,' " Hancock said.

Hancock believes that significant changes can begin by having as few as three teachers in a building who are willing to experiment with new ideas

"It takes just three or four teachers in a building who feel like they can change their role. If they can see that they're no longer just teachers in a classroom, if they understand that they're also here to help other teachers, things can change," she said.

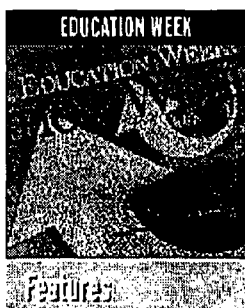
"That's very empowering."

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Principal Matters

By Bess Keller

A joke that's been making the rounds lately among Texas teachers begins: "What does it take to be a high school principal?" The answer? "A graduate degree and a winning football team."

A new generation of research focuses on the importance of principals, and what makes a good one.

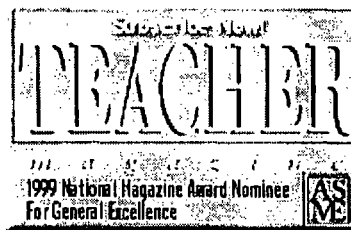
Read a bibliography on the role of principals, "Shaping School Leadership," in This Week's News.

It may be funny, but it's no longer true. The days of principals resting on gridiron victories are gone--especially in Texas, where districts and schools are being held accountable as never before for academic results. Across the country, there's not a hotter seat in all of education than the one in the principal's office.

Nor a more studied one. One reason principals can't get by on the old profile is that some 20 years of research strongly suggest that they make a big difference in shaping the education that goes on in a school. If a school is going to succeed academically, it needs someone whose potential can't be summed up on a scoreboard.

That view has emerged largely from studies of school success. As scholars' thinking about school effectiveness evolved, so did their understanding of the principal's role.

Public interest in principals grew as concern spread over the state of the nation's schools. Popularly, there were heroes--a Joe Clark or a Marva Collins battling lax standards and an unbending bureaucracy to turn around a failing school.



Building a Better Principal

Current thinking on principals has identified several characteristics that are important in providing sound leadership. A good principal:

- Recognizes teaching and learning as the main business of a school.
- Communicates the school's mission clearly and consistently to staff members, parents, and students.
- Fosters standards for teaching and learning that are high and attainable.
- Provides clear goals and monitors the progress of students toward meeting them.
- Spends time in classrooms and listening to teachers.
- Promotes an atmosphere of trust and sharing.
- Builds a good staff and makes professional development a top concern.
- Does not tolerate bad teachers.

Researchers didn't look for heroes, but they did observe that good schools usually have good principals. Policymakers touted "the strong leader"--a term that quickly gave way among educators to "instructional leader" and, more recently, "facilitator."

Through all of this, the tough question remained: How do effective principals do it? If principals play an important part in school improvement and student achievement, what are their secrets and what are the limits to their powers?

Complex Answers

Researchers have been piling up more complex answers to those questions. And bolstered by the experiences of reformers, the ideas have trickled out.

But the research hasn't always brought about changes in the way principals do their jobs. Many principals know what to say about leading a school--though they may not know how to actually do it. In fact, researchers have repeatedly noted a mismatch between what principals profess and what they practice.

Since the 1970s, scholars have largely focused on the principal's role in shaping teaching and learning. Findings from a number of lines of research, particularly the investigations of effective schools and successful school change, highlighted the importance of the principal's leadership.

The late Ronald Edmonds, whose work on effective schools influenced a generation of educators, argued that strong leadership from the principal is the single most important factor in schools that work.

Others built on that premise, defining the needed leadership as "instructional." Good principals pay attention to curriculum and teaching.

By 1996, more than 40 statistical studies in the United States and elsewhere had looked for the effects of the principal's behavior on various aspects of schooling. About half the studies found that the principal made a significant difference, often indirectly.

That work was not lost on policymakers, who were happy to single out the principal as the key to a good school. More than a dozen states now test aspiring principals before licensing them, and at least 40 states require working principals to undergo formal evaluations. In the last 20 years, spending on professional development for principals has soared.

Researchers, though, sound a note of caution. Kenneth Leithwood, a

professor at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, explains that the influence of students' background is so strong it accounts for most of the variability of student achievement across schools.

Mr. Leithwood, who has conducted some of the largest studies of school change, estimates that as little as 10 percent or 20 percent of the variation is due to school effects, including the quality of the principal.

Leadership accounts for only about 3 percent of the variability, he estimates. A 1985 study put the figure at 2 to 8 percent. "But," Mr. Leithwood adds pointedly, "there are very few elements that get more than that."

Supporting Teachers

Karen J. Dudley shows no hesitation when asked her top priority. "Student achievement," responds the principal of Gabriel Richard Elementary School in Detroit, a showcase school for the district.

The veteran administrator says she spends a lot of time studying test scores, finding the gaps in students' learning, "making sure there's alignment between the district's core curriculum and ours, and seeing what teachers are actually teaching."

During school hours, she adds, she spends a lot of her time in the halls and classrooms, talking with teachers, students, and parents--but especially with teachers.

More and more research suggests that such an aggressive, achievement-centered approach pays off.

A recent study of student performance among Maryland districts on that state's assessment, for example, found that standout schools in every category--urban, suburban, and rural; high income, moderate income, and low income--had principals who are instructional leaders.

The research was led by Willis D. Hawley, the dean of the school of education at the University of Maryland. He and his colleagues found that principals of the better schools demanded high-quality teaching, they tracked student achievement, and they recruited good teachers. They also rounded up extra resources to meet their goals. Principals of the less successful schools functioned more as managers, and had low instructional expectations for teachers.

In two recent reports to the New Jersey legislature on the effectiveness of the state takeovers of two districts--Jersey City in 1989 and Paterson in 1991--the consulting firm Arthur Andersen highlighted the principal's role, especially in relation to teaching and learning.

The studies found that the schools that meet state minimums on various tests are not necessarily the ones with the fewest poor children or the least student mobility. "We believe, based on our site-based observations," the researchers concluded, "that this is attributable to the actions of the building principal."

In a list of best practices at the higher achieving schools, the consultants

found, the principal plays a key role--setting realistic student achievement goals and planning ways to meet them, evaluating and offering support to teachers, reaching out to parents, displaying a positive attitude, and leaving no child outside the school's circle of concern.

"The greatest part of my day is spent supporting teachers--getting them what they need, responding quickly, being visible."

Ann B. Clark,
Principal,
Vance High School,
Charlotte, N.C.

As these studies show, investigators in recent years have come closer to pinpointing the ways in which principals make a difference.

Most earlier studies looked for a direct effect on desired school outcomes, and often failed to find a strong one. But as researchers viewed the principal's role in more complex ways, the link between leadership and achievement became clearer. Investigators looked for ways in which principals affected achievement indirectly, through their efforts to influence teachers or others. Those efforts might involve personal actions, such as being visible in the school, or actions that shape school goals, policies, or

organization.

In a 1996 paper reviewing the research on principals and school effectiveness, Philip Hallinger, a professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and Ronald H. Heck, a professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, viewed the inclusion of mediating factors as a distinct advance.

Some of the studies they analyzed also took into account that some features of the school--the socioeconomic makeup of the student body, for instance--can affect the way the principal exercises leadership.

The same goes for personal characteristics of the principal, such as gender. Some of the differences in some settings appear to have an impact on achievement.

Sharing Power

Principals are important, but Ann B. Clark knows that the job of boosting student achievement is primarily in the hands of teachers.

"The greatest part of my day is spent supporting teachers--getting them what they need, responding quickly, being visible," says the principal of Vance High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., district.

"I use every available opportunity to be a support for teachers," adds the 40-year-old administrator and former National Principal of the Year. "I'm modeling for teachers what I expect them to do with students."

At the Westminster Community School in Buffalo, N.Y., Yvonne Minor-Ragan takes much the same view.

"I spend the bulk of my time being an instructional leader," she says. That means being "in the classrooms, listening to concerns from teachers, giving them tips, providing support." Support, she adds, not just from the principal's office, but from the instructional specialists on the staff.

Like Ms. Clark in North Carolina, Ms. Ragan promotes cooperation among teachers at her 580-student, K-8 school. And for a while now, she says, her own approach has been collaborative.

That was less so in 1994 when she arrived at Westminster, picked after a nationwide search for a principal who could turn around the lowest-performing school in the 47,500-student district.

"Because it was so bad in the beginning, I didn't have time to collaborate," the 52-year-old principal recalls. "The staff was so down and discouraged, nothing really mattered and it was important at that point for me to venture ideas, take risks, and troubleshoot."

She required every staff member to join an improvement committee, and only after those were running well did she step back. "I can remember many times when it was hard for me not to make decisions," she says. "But I sat on my hands because ... they had to begin to believe this was their school and what they said and did mattered."

Role of Facilitator

In this, Ms. Ragan fulfills the role that has interested scholars for more than the last decade: the principal as facilitator, presiding over a school that is being weaned from the central office and is groping its way toward autonomy.

Such schools call for a new kind of leadership, one that puts a premium on both teaching expertise and on a collegial approach to solving problems.

"Principals are learning to lead not from the apex [of a hierarchy] but from the center of a network of deep relationships with teachers," said Joseph Murphy, a professor at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College and a widely cited expert on school leadership.

Some research suggests that power-sharing is an important ingredient in a principal's effectiveness.

A study last year of Chicago elementary schools, for example, compared schools that were low-achieving in 1990 but had made impressive reading gains since then with schools that remained on the bottom during that same period. After controlling for students' backgrounds, researchers found significant differences between the groups of schools.

The schools that showed improvement had more effective Local School Councils, the 11-member governing groups for each school that include the principal, six parents, two community members, and two teachers. Those schools also had teachers who were more involved in school decisions and principals who stressed teaching and learning and who made sure improvement plans were followed through.

"The study suggests that an instructional leader having a clear vision for the school and high expectations but open to the views of others ... is good for a school," says Donald R. Moore, the study's author and the executive director of Designs for Change. The local research and advocacy group helped write the 1988 reform law that created the local school councils.

Leadership's Many Faces

Other experts, however, do not see a shifting of power relations to be a fulcrum for critical change. These scholars are less likely to value a principal's ability to share power or work collaboratively.

"This restructuring escapade!" exclaims Richard F. Elmore, a professor at Harvard University's graduate school of education. The role of a principal, according to Mr. Elmore, is mainly "to improve instruction by managing a flow of professional development to specific teachers in specific classrooms around specific goals."

Mr. Elmore has spent five years studying a nationally acclaimed staff development program in District 2, one of 32 community districts in the New York City school system. A principal's approach or style, he argues, matters far less than the central project of helping teachers do their jobs better.

Still other researchers emphasize the many different ways in which principals can lead effectively.

"There's a different set of skills for turning a school around than for keeping a school high performing," notes Daniel L. Duke, a professor at the University of Virginia who has helped start four programs for training principals.

Mr. Duke also argues for recognition of exceptions. "There are principals who defy all norms or expectations, and they run a good school," he says, recalling one school leader in Oregon. A general in the Army Reserve, the man "was autocratic and dictatorial in an era when leaders are urged to be facilitators and share decisionmaking," Mr. Duke said. "But the teachers felt he could make all the tough decisions and they were free to teach, and they trusted him." That was apparently enough.

The training principals receive often does not prepare them to be the type of leader that the research says is needed, says Mr. Sergiovanni.

Thomas J. Sergiovanni, a professor of education and administration at Trinity University in San Antonio, points to the importance of context: "What makes a good principal in one setting doesn't in another."

The Vision Thing

If there is one broad area of agreement among researchers, consultants, those who teach prospective principals, and the principals themselves, it is that schools must have a clear idea of what they are about.

Leaders "must understand the mission of the school, promote it, use an educational agenda, and keep it in front of people," Mr. Murphy said. And that has to be built on a foundation of knowing about teaching and learning.

Good principals, says Karen Seashore Louis, spend a lot of time on what she calls "structuring the story of the school." In the late 1980s, Ms. Louis, a professor at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and the

late Matthew Miles, studied why some urban high schools were better than others.

"Teachers work very much in isolation," she explains. "It's hard for them to make sense of the changing nature of the environment." So the principal provides a common definition of what the teachers are doing, one that both unites and moves them forward.

This is what other researchers have called having a vision for the school, but Ms. Louis dislikes the word with its implication that a principal is somehow "a visionary."

Besides, she warns, whether or not a principal can rally a school, "we found most principals know enough about appropriate behaviors for leaders, they will talk [about] vision. That doesn't mean it's shared with or well communicated with the faculty."

A related idea put forward by the University of Virginia's Mr. Duke is that principals succeed when they know what *not* to do.

The job of the principal, particularly a high school principal, is "undoable" in the sense that all the work never gets done. So, Mr. Duke says, the principal who thrives must have "a clear sense of which activities produce the most student gain."

In her initial study of high schools and in subsequent research, Ms. Louis also found that good principals spent time not so much on the formal decisionmaking apparatus of a reform agenda, but simply listening to teachers.

One thing teachers care a lot about, her surveys and interviews with educators revealed, is a principal's willingness to confront bad teachers. Making that effort and risking that unpleasantness pay off not only with students but also with teachers.

Monitoring teachers' behavior is not enough, Ms. Louis concludes. The principal must make significant changes in the expectations people have of each other--and ushering ineffective teachers out the door sends a strong message.

Reality Falls Short

As a clearer and more detailed picture of an effective principal emerges, why is it that study after study shows that many principals fall so short of the ideal?

The National Association of Elementary School Principals surveyed K-8 principals this year and found, for example, that they gave low priority to staff development. On the other hand, they called staff supervision and contact their highest priority.

California principals surveyed this year by EdSource, a nonprofit California research organization, reported that they wish they could spend almost twice as much time as they currently do on instruction and curriculum. Only about a quarter of their time goes to teaching and school improvement, they said.

Simply put, much of what the leadership research shows makes for an effective principal is not what principals are trained or rewarded for, says Vanderbilt's Joseph Murphy, who chairs the university department that prepares school administrators.

Running a school smoothly often wins approval from the central office and is certainly easier than overhauling teaching and learning, experts say.

And the training principals receive often does not prepare them to be the type of leader that the research says is needed, says Mr. Sergiovanni.

New Schools, New Leaders

He questions the sharp dividing line between administrators and teachers, arguing that the principals "with walkie-talkies surrounded by cadres of assistants" are obsolete. The whole notion of leadership should be reshaped at schools that don't look much like most of those that exist now, he contends.

Such a school would be small, with faculty members who have jointly made a commitment to certain standards of learning and behavior and "who accept responsibility for embodying those ideas in their practice."

In Mr. Sergiovanni's vision, spelled out in a series of books over the last 12 years, the preparation of principals would not differ significantly from that of teachers. Furthermore, leadership becomes available to everybody in the school. Indeed, everybody in the school has an obligation to exercise it.

PHOTO: Ann B. Clark, right, the principal of Vance High School in Charlotte, N.C., says a big part of her job is helping and supporting teachers. "I'm modeling for teachers," she says, "what I expect them to do with students."

Yvonne Minor-Ragan, the veteran principal of Westminster Community School in Buffalo, N.Y., had to let teachers make some of the decisions: "They had to believe this was their school."

Kenneth Leithwood of the University of Toronto has conducted some of the largest studies of school change and the various factors that contribute to it.

--Mark Mulville

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Teachers Leading the Way: Voices from the National Teacher Forum - April 1998

New Roles for Teachers

"I'm most comfortable in my classroom, teaching with my children," says teacher Julie Ferriss of Mississippi, who echoes the sentiments of many colleagues. "If I could choose to be anywhere, that's where I would be. And 20 years ago, I could do that. I could leave the policy making to the policy makers and the administrating to the administrators, and parenting to the parents, and teaching to me. But it's just not like that anymore."

Traditionally, the work of American teachers has been centered solely in the classroom, helping children learn. Most of teachers' energy is still focused in the classroom. But, in recent years, the need to improve schools has called a growing number of teachers outside their traditional roles to help.

Today teachers are leading efforts to improve the curriculum and promote partnerships with other school districts and universities as well as with parents. They are serving on policymaking boards and testifying on school issues before state legislatures. They are leaders in setting high academic standards for students and in deciding how to help their students reach the standards. The list of leadership positions continues to grow as teachers begin to feel comfortable as education leaders outside of their classrooms.

Ferriss' words reflect the growing awareness of teachers who are learning the importance of teacher leadership.

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[Letter from the Secretary of Education]



[Teacher Forum on Leadership]

ED330691 Apr 91 Developing Teachers' Leadership Skills. ERIC Digest.
Author: Gehrke, Nathalie

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There have long been teacher leaders in schools. They have traditionally accepted positions as department chairs, team and grade leaders, curriculum committee chairs, and more. With the advent of school and teacher education restructuring efforts, new leadership roles are emerging (Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Whether taking on traditional or emerging roles, a major characteristic of teacher leaders is that they often teach full- or part-time and then assume other responsibilities (Howey, 1988). An additional characteristic is that they have generally learned the new role just by doing it.

A more systematic approach to developing the requisite skills for assuming leadership roles may be helpful. Whether or not a teacher takes on a formal leadership position, the acquisition of these skills may serve to enhance performance in the classroom.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs

Programs such as those developed in Ohio (Zimpher, 1988) and in California require the identification of experienced master teachers to work with beginners. These "mentors" must be able to provide not only good role modeling, but also offer the kinds of help necessary to establish the beginners as competent professionals. They must know about teaching children AND about teaching adults; they must have a level of expertise that goes beyond being a comforter and a source of practical information.

School-Centered Decision Making

School-centered decision making, also known as site-based management, has been variously interpreted (Sirotnik & Clark, 1988), but in its most authentic form it requires strong teacher involvement in decisions about structures and programs in their schools. School districts that have moved to decentralize decision making have discovered that teachers with conflict resolution and communications skills are more effective. Also helpful is an understanding of the school district's organization and knowledge of the state and federal education scene.

Professional Development Schools (PDS)

Professional development schools call for an array of new teacher leader roles. These PDSs, jointly created by schools and universities (Holmes, 1990), propose to serve as the locus for teacher preparation, career-long professional development, and school innovation and inquiry. Teacher leaders will be called on to demonstrate skills required in mentoring programs and school-based management, as well as skills related to a wide array of peer helping approaches, inquiry methods, innovation leadership, and school-university collaboration.

LEARNING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In the past, teacher leaders' successes or failures were due more to context, previous experience, and personal characteristics than to any formal effort to provide them with appropriate leadership skills. Teachers have been expected to have the necessary skills on entry into leadership positions, or to develop them on the job.

Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles (1988), in hopes of offering guidance for formal program development for teacher leaders, described in detail the kinds of on-the-job learning of teacher leaders they studied. The

teacher leaders reported that they had had to develop competence in several areas including: rapport building, organizational diagnosis, dealing with the change process, finding and using resources, managing the leadership work, and building skills and confidence in others.

Devaney (1987) offered an inclusive list of leadership areas that teachers might be called on to exercise in emerging school organizations. The six roles she identified can provide an organizer for the descriptive reports on the formal programs to develop leadership skills:

Continuing To Teach and Improve One's Own Teaching

This is the largest category of staff development programs for teacher leadership. Teaching expertise, including subject matter knowledge, seems critical because it is basic to other leadership roles, including in-service education, advising and assisting individual teachers, and peer support. Maeroff (1988) described several programs for enhancing teachers' power by increasing their knowledge of their subject matter. He claimed that the sessions were designed to get teachers accustomed to acting and being perceived as professionals and required them to set the agenda for their own learning.

Organizing and Leading Peer Reviews of School Practice

Programs for the development of teachers' ability to examine school practices must include preparation in doing a form of practical research. Pine (1986) suggested that action research be seen as an ongoing aspect of staff development and that teachers be prepared accordingly. Action research methods have proven useful to teachers in the Puget Sound Educational Consortium who are seeking to enhance their leadership capacities within their individual schools, their districts, and the consortium.

Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge

Curriculum development knowledge may also be seen as requisite to leading peer review of school practice. Klein (1985), for example, discussed the master teacher as a curriculum leader. Perhaps because curriculum development knowledge is seen as a prerequisite to teacher leadership, there are no readily apparent descriptions of programs to develop this knowledge among teacher leaders. Perhaps, too, this is an area where undergraduate and graduate courses are assumed to provide sufficient preparation; such an assumption may be unwarranted.

Participating in School-Level Decision Making

Many articles may be found espousing the importance of teachers' involvement in decision making in their school, but the impression is given that one learns decision making primarily by doing it. The Pittsburgh Public School District is one exception (Johnston, Bickel, & Wallace, 1990). In-house facilitators of organization development are trained to lead problem solving and to conduct process observations in each participating school.

Leading In-Service Education and Assisting Other Teachers

As early as 1982, Joyce and Showers offered guidance to program creation for teachers in peer coaching. Little, Galagaran, and O'Neal (1984) later offered directions for training of teachers for teacher assistance responsibilities, based on the California experiences in mentor teacher programs and teacher advisor projects. Raney and Robbins (1989) have given a good overview of the cognitive coaching program offered in Sonoma County, California. Hilton, Kuehnle, School, and Zimpher (1988) described an induction program for "invigorating the new and experienced" teachers in Ohio, while Anderson, Asbury, Grossman, Howey, Rentel, and Zimpher (1988) described a peer assistance program, also in Ohio. These latter two efforts have led to the creation of a graduate program in professional development through the Ohio State University.

Participating in the Performance Evaluation of Teachers

The Ohio teacher leader program described by Anderson et al. (1988) prepared teachers not only for

assistance roles, but also for performance review of peers. Descriptions have also been given of the Schenley High School Teacher Center and the preparation for teacher assistance and performance review of the Pittsburgh teachers who participate in it (Johnston et al., 1990).

CONCLUSION

As in the larger field of teacher education, there is little evidence of research on the actual effectiveness of the programs offered to develop leadership skills. There are, at best, developers' comments on perceived effectiveness. Perhaps the next five years will see a more concerted effort, not just to develop programs to replace learning on the job, but also to evaluate teacher leader programs and thus enhance not only the programs offered, but the leaders who emerge.

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*What
Matters
Most*

*What do
YOU think?*

Types of parent involvement schools can foster

Type 1: Parenting

Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Sample Practices

Suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.

Workshops, video-tapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade level.

Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).

Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition and other services.

Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle and high school. Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

Type 2: Communicating

Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

Sample Practices

Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.

Language translators to assist families as needed.

Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments.

Parent/student pickup of report card, with conferences on improving grades.

Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters and other communications.

Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs and activities within schools.

Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms and transitions.

Type 3: Volunteering

Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Sample Practices

School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents.

Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.

Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times and locations of volunteers.

Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information.

Parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs.

Type 4: Learning at Home

Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

Sample Practices

Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.

Information on home-work policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.

Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments.

Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.

Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.

Family math, science and reading activities at school.

Summer learning packets or activities.

Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Type 5: Decision Making

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Sample Practices

Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation.

Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.

District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.

Information on school or local elections for school representatives.

Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Type 6: Collaborating with Community

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development.

Sample Practices

Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support and other programs or services.

Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

Service integration through partnerships involving school, civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation and other agencies and organizations and businesses.

Service to the community by students, families and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama and other activities for seniors or others).

Participation of alumni in school programs for students.

Developed by Joyce Epstein, director of the Center of School, Family and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University. Reprinted with permission. Additional information on these activities and how to become part of the National Network of Partnership-2000 Schools can be obtaining by:

◆ Calling Karen Salinas at (410) 516-8818.

◆ Sending email through the network's web site, www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000.

◆ Writing the network at Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships/CRESPAR, 3003 N. Charles St., Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21218.

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Strengthening the Teaching Profession

Linda Darling-Hammond

Teacher Learning That Supports Student Learning

Yearlong, supervised internships. Intensive mentoring. Graduate-level, school-based courses. Planned collegiality and inquiry. Are we providing these avenues for teacher learning?

Today's schools face enormous challenges. In response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing, technology-based economy, schools are being asked to educate the most diverse student body in our history to higher academic standards than ever before. This task is one that cannot be "teacher-proofed" through management systems, testing mandates, or curriculum packages. At its root, achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching--and schools that are organized to support teachers' continuous learning.

What do teachers need to know to teach all students according to today's standards? What kinds of preservice training and ongoing professional development will make teacher success more likely?

What Teachers Need to Know

First, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly, so that they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate ideas to one another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 1987), which enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others. The audience is also key: A skillful teacher figures out what students know and believe about a topic and how learners are likely to "hook into" new ideas.

Interpreting learners' statements and actions and shaping productive experiences for them require knowledge of child and adolescent development and an understanding of how to support growth in various domains--cognitive, social, physical, and emotional. Teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning. Teachers need to be able to inquire sensitively, listen carefully, and look thoughtfully at student work, as well as to structure situations in which students write and talk about their experiences. This builds a foundation of pedagogical learner knowledge (Grimmett and MacKinnon 1992). Motivating students requires an understanding of what individual students believe about themselves, what they care about, and what tasks are likely to give them enough success to encourage them to work hard to learn.

Teachers need several kinds of knowledge about learning. Teachers need to think about what it means to learn different kinds of material for different purposes and how to decide which kinds of learning are most necessary in different contexts. Teachers must be able to

use different teaching strategies to accomplish various goals and many means for evaluating students' knowledge and assessing students' approaches to learning. Teachers must be able to identify the strengths of different learners while addressing their weaknesses. In addition, all teachers need tools to work with students who have specific learning disabilities or needs. And because language is the gateway to learning, teachers must understand how students acquire language, so that they can build language skills and create accessible learning experiences.

Teachers need to know about curriculum resources and technologies to connect their students with sources of information and knowledge that allow them to explore ideas, acquire and synthesize information, and frame and solve problems. And teachers need to know about collaboration--how to structure interactions among students so that more powerful shared learning can occur; how to collaborate with other teachers; and how to work with parents to learn more about their children and to shape supportive experiences at school and home.

Finally, teachers need to be able to analyze and reflect on their practice, to assess the effects of their teaching, and to refine and improve their instruction. They must continuously evaluate what students are thinking and understanding and reshape their plans to take account of what they've discovered.

New Strategies for Teacher Learning

Acquiring this sophisticated knowledge and developing a practice that is different from what teachers themselves experienced as students requires learning opportunities for teachers that are more powerful than simply reading and talking about new pedagogical ideas (Ball and Cohen, in press). Teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see.

This kind of learning cannot occur in college classrooms divorced from practice or in school classrooms divorced from knowledge about how to interpret practice. Good settings for teacher learning--in both colleges of education and schools--provide lots of opportunities for research and inquiry, for trying and testing, for talking about and evaluating the results of learning and teaching. The "rub between theory and practice" (Miller and Silvernail 1994) occurs most productively when questions arise in the context of real students and work in progress, and where research and disciplined inquiry are also at hand.

Better settings for such learning are appearing. More than 300 schools of education in the United States have created programs that extend beyond the traditional four-year bachelor's degree program, providing both education and subject-matter coursework that is integrated with clinical training in schools. Some are one- or two-year graduate programs for recent graduates or midcareer recruits. Others are five-year models for prospective teachers who enter teacher education as undergraduates. In either case, the fifth year allows students to focus exclusively on the task of preparing to teach, with yearlong, school-based internships linked to coursework on learning and teaching. Studies have found that graduates of these extended programs are more satisfied with their preparation, and their colleagues, principals, and cooperating teachers view them as better prepared. Extended program graduates are as effective with students as are much more experienced teachers and are much more likely to enter and stay in teaching than their peers prepared in traditional four-year programs (Andrew and Schwab 1995, Denton and Peters 1988, Shin 1994).

Many of these programs have joined with local school districts to create Professional Development Schools. Like teaching hospitals, these schools aim to provide sites for state-of-the-art practice that are organized to support the training of new professionals, extend the professional development of veteran teachers, and sponsor collaborative research and inquiry. Both university and school faculty plan and teach in these programs. Beginning

teachers get a more coherent learning experience when they are organized in teams with these faculty and with one another. Senior teachers deepen their knowledge by serving as mentors, adjunct faculty, co-researchers, and teacher leaders. Thus, these schools can help create the rub between theory and practice, while creating more professional roles for teachers and constructing knowledge that is more useful for both practice and ongoing theory building (Darling-Hammond 1994).

These new programs typically engage prospective teachers in studying research and conducting their own inquiries through cases, action research, and structured reflections about practice. They envision the professional teacher as one who learns from teaching rather than as one who has finished learning how to teach, and the job of teacher education as developing the capacity to inquire systematically and sensitively into the nature of learning and the effects of teaching. This is like the approach to knowledge production John Dewey (1929) sought--one that empowers teachers with greater understanding of complex situations rather than seeking to control them with simplistic formulas or cookie-cutter routines.

If teachers investigate the effects of their teaching on students' learning, and if they read about what others have learned, they become sensitive to variation and more aware of what works for what purposes in what situations. Training in inquiry also helps teachers learn how to look at the world from multiple perspectives and to use this knowledge to reach diverse learners. As Lisa Delpit (1995) notes,

We all interpret behaviors, information, and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the level of conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is simply "the way it is" (p. 151).

Teachers concerned with democratic education must develop an awareness of their perspectives and how these can be enlarged to avoid a "communicentric bias" (Gordon et al. 1990) that limits understanding of students as well as of different areas of study.

These goals suggest a new relationship between research and practice. For most of this century, policymakers sought knowledge to aid in the remote control of teaching--generalizable dictums that could shape teaching via texts, curriculum packages, and teacher manuals. When these proved inadequate, teachers were left with the knowledge they'd managed to accumulate on their own. By contrast, the kind of learning found in rich professional development settings has several key features (Ball and Cohen, in press):

- It is centered around the critical activities of teaching and learning--planning lessons, evaluating student work, developing curriculum--rather than in abstractions and generalities;
- It grows from investigations of practice through cases, questions, analysis, and criticism; and
- It is built on substantial professional discourse that fosters analysis and communication about practices and values in ways that build collegiality and standards of practice.

These elements need to be part of a seamless process of professional learning that begins in preservice education, continues through the early years of induction, and extends through years of developing accomplished practice. This approach is common elsewhere around the world and in a growing number of schools in the United States.

Professional Learning in Practice

Countries like Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg have long required two to three years

of graduate-level study for prospective teachers on top of an undergraduate degree in the subject(s) to be taught. Education courses include the study of child development and learning, pedagogy, and teaching methods, plus an intensively supervised internship in a school affiliated with the university. In 1989 both France and Japan undertook major teacher education reforms to extend both university- and school-based training. In France, all candidates now complete a graduate program in newly created University Institutes for the Preparation of Teachers that are connected to nearby schools. In Japan and Chinese Taipei, new teachers complete a year-long supervised internship with a reduced teaching load that allows for mentoring and additional study. By Japanese law, first-year teachers receive at least 20 days of inservice training and 60 days of professional development. Master teachers are released from their classrooms to advise and counsel them. In both Japan and China, new teachers watch other teachers at length, discuss problems of practice, present and critique demonstration lessons, and, with groups of colleagues, imagine and act out how students might respond to certain presentations of material. In their study of mathematics teaching in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States, Stigler and Stevenson (1991) note:

[One of the] reasons Asian class lessons are so well crafted is that there is a very systematic effort to pass on the accumulated wisdom of teaching practice to each new generation of teachers and to keep perfecting that practice by providing teachers the opportunities to continually learn from each other (p. 46).

Because schools in other countries provide for this kind of regular collegial exchange, teachers share knowledge and refine their practice throughout their careers.

Without these supports, learning to teach well is extremely difficult. Most U.S. teachers start their careers in disadvantaged schools where turnover is highest, are assigned the most educationally needy students whom no one else wants to teach, are given the most demanding teaching loads with the greatest number of extra duties, and receive few curriculum materials and no mentoring. After this hazing, many leave. Others learn merely to cope rather than to teach well. After entry, teachers are expected to know everything they will need for a career, or to learn through workshops mostly on their own, with few structured opportunities to observe and analyze teaching with others. As one high school teacher who had spent 25 years in the classroom once told me: "I have taught 20,000 classes; I have been 'evaluated' 30 times; but I have never seen another teacher teach." With this degree of isolation common, is it any wonder that shared knowledge and standards of practice are so difficult to forge?

Some school districts have begun to create new models of induction and ongoing professional development for teachers and principals. These feature mentoring for beginners and veterans; peer observation and coaching; local study groups and networks for specific subject matter areas; teacher academies that provide ongoing seminars and courses of study tied to practice; and school-university partnerships that sponsor collaborative research, interschool visitations, and learning opportunities developed in response to teachers' and principals' felt needs.

For example, at Wells Junior High, a Professional Development School working with the University of Southern Maine,

The whole notion of staff development was turned on its head. The emphasis shifted from outside consultants to in-house experts. Collaborative learning groups replaced the traditional lecture/demonstration format. Problem posing and problem solving supplanted the recipes and prescriptions for effective schools that teachers had heard for years and never managed to implement.

"Using the knowledge" became the starting point for developing a new view of staff development. . . . [Allocated workshop days] were used for teachers' review of research and for critical discussion and reflection. On one such day teachers spent two hours

individually reading research about grouping. During another day, they worked in cooperative groups to share their perceptions on the research they had read. On yet another day, the staff met to engage in the process of consensus building with the goal of reaching a decision about grouping practices in the school (Miller and Silvernail 1994, pp. 30, 31).

Similarly, at Fairdale High School in Louisville, Kentucky, teachers' research coupled with shared decision making produced major changes:

As part of a self-study, 10 teachers followed 10 children through a school day. When it was over, teachers said things like, "It was boring," or, "You know, this isn't a very humane place to be." Teachers read and began to trade articles from the *Kappan*, *Educational Leadership*, and *Education Week*. . . . Even before participative management was initiated at Fairdale, the teachers started changing things. . . . "Make no mistake about it," [the principal] said, "We are building a professional culture." (Kerchner 1993, p. 9).

In other schools, teachers have organized their learning around the development of standards and assessments of student work, evaluating both student learning and the effectiveness of their own teaching in the process. The result is a greater appreciation for what matters and what works, as well as what needs to change to promote student success.

Professional development strategies that succeed in improving teaching share several features (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995). They tend to be:

- * experiential, engaging teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, and observation that illuminate the processes of learning and development;
- * grounded in participants' questions, inquiry, and experimentation as well as professionwide research;
- * collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators;
- * connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students as well as to examinations of subject matter and teaching methods;
- * sustained and intensive, supported by modeling, coaching, and problem solving around specific problems of practice; and
- * connected to other aspects of school change.

These approaches shift from old models of "teacher training" or "inservicing" to a model in which teachers confront research and theory directly, are regularly engaged in evaluating their practice, and use their colleagues for mutual assistance.

The Benefit for Students

Growing evidence suggests that this kind of professional development not only makes teachers feel better about their practice, but it also reaps learning gains for students, especially in the kinds of more challenging learning that new standards demand (Darling-Hammond 1997, NFIE 1996). Creating a profession of teaching in which teachers have the opportunity for continual learning is the likeliest way to inspire greater achievement for children, especially those for whom education is the only pathway to survival and success. *

*Author's note: This article draws in substantial part on the author's recently published book, *The Right to Learn* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).*

*Editor's note: See p. 90 for a review of *The Right to Learn*.*

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