

# **Leadership Development: Evidence and beliefs**

**Summary Report**

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**A review of the literature carried out for**

**National College for School Leadership**

**by**

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## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

High-quality leadership is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important requirements for successful schools (Bush and Jackson 2002). However, much less is known about the forms of leadership development that are most likely to produce effective leadership.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) asked the University of Reading to review recent literature on leadership development, both within and beyond education, to establish what is known about different forms of leadership development. The review investigates the concepts, principles and the levels of leadership that underpin programmes for leaders in both educational and non-educational settings.

### **Key findings**

- The literature suggests that there is considerable similarity in the nature and content of leadership programmes around the world, leading to the view that an international curriculum for school leadership development is emerging.
- Work-based learning, action learning, mentoring, coaching, diagnostics and portfolios are strongly advocated.
- There is evidence that a number of learning opportunities are valuable:
  1. Mentoring and coaching
  2. Work-based and 'in house' experiential learning – such as 'stretch assignments', job rotation, shadowing and internship
  3. Peer support and networking
  4. Formal leadership learning programmes
- 'Needs analysis' is widely regarded as an important means of determining the leadership development needs of school leaders but there is only limited evidence of this being put into practice.
- Beyond education, leadership development is regarded as critically important in many countries due to its crucial influence on public governance, management capacity and organisational performance (OECD 2001).
- There is a significant distinction between taking on a new leadership role such as headteacher (professional socialisation) and focusing on the specific school where a leadership role is performed (organisational socialisation) (Crow 2001).
- Leadership development needs to encompass people in a wide range of roles, including middle level leaders and teacher leaders, as well as embracing the whole organisation.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Within education, there is an increasing emphasis on the learning organisation and on the importance of leadership distributed across the whole school staff. Leadership development is, therefore, concerned with enabling people to lead others. Development opportunities are also increasingly linked to instructional leadership, or leadership for learning, and philosophies that address organisational transformation.

There are many approaches and methods that promote leadership development but deciding how best to combine these approaches requires further consideration and may depend mainly on the specific needs of individual schools and leaders. This wide-ranging review of literature prompts several recommendations for leadership development provision:

1. Leadership development should be based firmly within participants' leadership contexts. Practising leaders should use their own schools as the starting point for leadership learning. Leadership development should also recognise the national and local contexts within which leaders operate.
2. Process-rich approaches are likely to be particularly effective in promoting leadership learning. Action learning, mentoring and coaching, for example, are strongly associated with successful leadership learning. These modes act to produce qualitative change in the leadership behaviour of participants.
3. Aspiring headteachers are generally unaware of the context in which they will operate when qualified. These leaders, therefore, need programmes rich in both leadership and management content and skills. The literature suggests that development should focus mainly on 'leadership for learning'.
4. Content-rich curricula should be augmented by school-based activity so that aspiring headteachers can practise the skills they will need to implement in their subsequent posts. This requirement can be fulfilled through internships or through specific assignments in their current schools.
5. Implicit in these points is the recognition that there is no real knowledge base about the appropriate blend of content and process for different needs and different stages of leadership.
6. Formal leadership learning should be augmented by informal development provision in each school so that leadership is widely distributed and all staff have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and behaviours.
7. Underpinning these precepts is the recognition that leaders are 'made not born'. Developing leadership potential is vital for the continuing success of schools and the educational system. This requires an active leadership development policy for each school and local education authority.

The review shows that much of the literature on leadership development is normative, that is, it relates to people's beliefs about what is most appropriate. The research literature offers little that explores the relationship between management and leadership, and its significance for leadership development provision. Further topics for investigation include:

- establishing both the specific and generic development needs of different categories of leader, including headteachers, middle level leaders and teacher leaders
- establishing the leadership development needs with respect to different stages of school development

- exploring the implications for leadership development of a 'middle tier' within the educational system. What can be learned from initiatives such as Excellence in Cities, Excellence in Clusters, the London Challenge and NCSL's Networked Learning Communities?
- comparative research into the different modes and approaches to leadership development
- comparative research into the relative impact of content-rich, process-rich and university leadership provision with its strong emphasis on theory, literature and research
- international work on the effectiveness of internship and apprenticeship models of development

### **About the study**

The review entailed a systematic review of databases of literature published in the United Kingdom and in other English speaking countries, with the aim of achieving an epistemology of leadership development. The review included books, edited volumes, journal articles, reports, conference papers and internet sources. All texts were subject to a preliminary review in order to establish their relevance to the aims of the study. Studies most directly relevant were subject to a full critical review. A total of 130 articles and 16 books in detail have been used in preparing for this work. The data from these sources were analysed and the findings synthesised to address the aims of the review.

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# 1 Introduction

High quality leadership is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important requirements for successful schools (Bush and Jackson 2002). However, much less is known about what forms of leadership development produce enhanced leadership that leads to school improvement.

## 1.1 The contemporary context

Crow (2001) states that the nature of work is changing significantly in post-industrial society and that this change affects the role of the headteacher:

Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century emphasises complexity rather than routinization... The dynamic nature of organizations, such as schools, where numerous individuals without close supervision make multiple decisions working directly with children, requires a different kind of leader. The acknowledgment of the changing demographics of schools, the explosion of technology, and the rapid growth and change in knowledge require individuals who can live with ambiguity, work flexibly, encourage creativity, and handle complexity. (p2)

Neill and Lewis (1997) contend that leadership in the post-modern or 'post-information' age is characterised by lifelong learning, learning to learn and just-in-time learning. Their report shows the impact of culture, philosophical approaches, hierarchical structures and, particularly, technology, on leadership development.

Taylor et al, (2002) argue that "the global changes now occurring demand approaches to leadership education that are profoundly different from those that have served well in the past" (p366). They contend (p353) that these changes require reversing the six traditional priorities:

- from theory to practice
- from parts to systems
- from states and roles to processes
- from knowledge to learning
- from individual action to partnerships
- from detached analysis to reflexive understanding

## 1.2 The content of school leadership development programmes

The content of school leadership development programmes has considerable similarities in different countries, "leading to a hypothesis that there is an international curriculum for school leadership preparation" (Bush and Jackson 2002, pp 420-421). They identify the following common elements:

- leadership; including vision, mission and transformational leadership
- learning and teaching, or 'instructional leadership'
- human resource management and professional development
- financial management
- management of external relations (Bush and Jackson, 2002, p421)

Murphy and Schwarz (2000) provide a wide-ranging review of the American principalship within a context of “a scarcity of capable educational leaders” and claim that school systems must “reinvent the principalship” (p1) to define the role in terms of leadership for student learning:

- instructional leadership: strengthening teaching and learning
- community leadership: big-picture awareness of the school’s role in society
- visionary leadership: energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that children will learn at high levels (p4)

Mestry and Grobler (2002, p34) say that there is an urgent need to train and develop principals in four main components:

- management of the curriculum
- management of organisational structures
- management of educators
- management of financial and physical resources

Based on their earlier review of the leadership literature, Bush and Glover (2003) argue that training should include elements of both management and leadership. The reviewed literature offers no consistency in the attention to these themes. Some references incorporate both management and leadership themes, whilst others focus on only one. The research literature offers little that explores the relationship between management and leadership and its significance for leadership development provision.

### **1.3 Lessons from beyond education**

There is a large body of material on leadership development in other sectors and those pieces selected for inclusion in this report are intended to be illustrative rather than definitive.

Day (2001, p582) defines leadership development as “expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes”. He adds that leadership development means capacity building:

Expanded capacity provides for better individual and collective adaptability across a wide range of situations. A leadership development approach is oriented toward building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges. (p582)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) produced a wide ranging review of leadership development in the public sector (2001), including chapters on the UK, the USA, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Mexico. It points to seven general trends across its member countries:

- developing systematic strategies for leadership development
- setting up new institutions for leadership development — this point is illustrated by reference to Sweden’s National Council for Quality and Development. England’s National College for School Leadership (NCSL) also fits this trend
- linking existing management training to leadership development
- defining a competence profile for future leaders — this is consistent with the approach taken by the English National Standards for school leadership and the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

- identifying and selecting potential leaders
- encouraging mentoring and training
- ensuring sustainable leadership development — this places emphasis on managers' time being utilised to develop other leaders, an approach consistent with NCSL's distributed leadership models

These seven trends resonate strongly with patterns of leadership development within education, notably in England.



## **2 Emerging concepts**

### **2.1 Personalised and contextualised learning**

Crow (2001) links leadership preparation to two forms of socialisation, or “learning a new role” (p2):

- professional; preparing to take on an occupational role, such as headteacher
- organisational; focusing on the specific context where the role is being performed

West-Burnham and O’Sullivan (1998, p5) distinguish between “fragmented” in-service training and professional development that is “a balanced and co-ordinated strategy”. They link leadership development to personal and professional learning:

The primary criterion for leadership is the ability to learn from experiences in order to enhance . . . capability . . . If leadership is to be developed in everyone then they have to be helped to process their personal and professional experiences through a value system and in response to others in order to evolve a growing understanding of what it means to be a leader. (p24)

Drawing on empirical research into middle leadership development in North Carolina, Pettitt (1999) argues that training and learning should be “situated in the context and experiences of...the midlevel manager...no one can simply train for the position of leadership...he or she must do the job to know the job’ (p.57). He adds that training should be situated in the context and experiences of the leader and be problem-solving in nature. He advocates mentoring, action-learning projects and reality-based case methods as appropriate training formats for middle level leaders.

### **2.2 Career-long learning**

From beyond education, Friedman and Phillips (2001) refer to lifelong learning and provide a powerful justification for ‘continuing professional development’:

Just as lifelong learning and the learning society represent a social imperative in a world of rapidly changing knowledge and technology, so CPD must be addressed if professionals are to keep up with these changes. (p273)

This argument appears to be particularly strong for school leaders and provides a justification for NCSL’s five stages of leadership.

Mole (2000) provides a useful distinction between training, education and development in his discussion of ‘management development’:

- the focus of training is the employee's present job
- the focus of education is the employee's future job
- the focus of development is the organisation. "Development programmes prepare individuals to move in the new directions that organisational change may require." (p22)

James and Whiting (1998) address the neglected subject of leadership development for deputy headteachers. Following a survey of all 366 deputy headteachers in two LEAs, one in England and one in Wales, they conclude that:

There [is] a need for all deputy headteachers to receive professional careers guidance, such as mentoring and involving where appropriate those with comparative experience and frameworks for networking. (p361)

Based on substantial empirical research, this paper provides powerful underpinning for NCSL's decision to develop the Established Leaders programme for deputy headteachers, as part of the leadership development opportunities provided across five stages of leadership from emergent to experienced consultant leaders.

### **2.3 Distributed leadership learning**

Much of the literature on leadership development examines the work and needs of headteachers and principals. This section focuses on development for those working as middle level, subject or teacher leaders. Lashway (2002) stresses the importance of distributed leadership and points to changes in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards in the United States. He advocates the following approaches to leadership development:

- cohort programmes where people work with peers
- case studies and problem-based learning
- extended internships (p4)

Lambert (1998) includes distributed leadership, or 'participation', as one of 'five critical features of a successful school':

- broad-based, skilful participation in the work of leadership
- inquiry-based use of information to inform shared decisions and practice
- roles and responsibilities that reflect broad involvement and collaboration
- reflective practice/innovation as the norm
- high student achievement (pp16-17)

The inclusion of inquiry and reflection are distinctive features of Lambert's approach. "Renewal processes include reflection, dialogue, question posing, inquiry (including use of data), construction of new meaning and knowledge, and action" (p18).

Rutherford (1999) outlines the development of a course arranged jointly with the Teacher Training Agency and Birmingham LEA to meet the defined needs of subject leaders. It is based on the English National Standards with an audit-plan-do-review approach that encourages the students to become aware of their personal development needs. The programme evolved in response to these articulated needs.

Leask and Terrell (1997) surveyed the development and work of middle managers, and argue that middle level leadership should be developed through staff coaching and mentoring, consultancy, observation and feedback.

Crowther and Olsen (1997), from an Australian perspective, broaden the notion of leadership beyond those with formal leadership positions. They use the concept of 'lead teachers' who constitute "a new cadre of professional educators" (p7). These teacher leaders operate in three ways:

- mentoring and coaching other teachers
- professional development and review of school practice
- school-level decision-making

Stoll (2001) sees teacher leadership as part of a wider process of enhancing capacity in schools. Frost and Durrant (2002) argue for a greater focus on teacher leadership for four reasons:

- school improvement
- school effectiveness
- improvement of teacher morale and retention.
- democratic values

They emphasise that the focus of teacher leadership is learning and that both external and internal support are required to aid their development. In particular, senior managers “have a crucial role to play as mentors of teachers who are prepared to exercise leadership” (p15).

Gronn (2000) links leadership to the flow of influence in schools and argues that distributed leadership is ‘an idea whose time has come’ (p333). He points to the need for a “revised set of role expectations among future cohorts of aspiring educational leaders” but is not specific about their development needs.

## **2.4 Leadership for learning**

A survey of the training needs of 436 middle leaders shows that eight of the top 10 items relate to teaching and learning:

- taking action to address problems in teaching quality and competence
- monitoring and evaluating the work of all staff teaching the subject
- monitoring and evaluating progress of all pupils
- taking action to address problems in pupil progress
- long-term planning for development of the subject
- promoting effective teaching of the subject
- developing assessment, recording and reporting policies and practice
- ongoing development of own teaching methodologies

Watkins et al (2002, p6) claim that leaders of learning are likely to:

- make learning a visible, central element
- talk publicly about learning
- promote inquiry into learning
- support learning exchanges and forums
- ensure fluid organisation
- reward and support staff learning
- ask of every action and every policy, “what do we learn from this?”
- encourage others to do the above

Stoll (2001) contends that leadership for learning requires four imperatives:

- a learning vision
- creating the right emotional learning climate
- building an inclusive learning community
- practising organizational learning (pp4-5)

## **2.5 The school as a learning organisation**

Within education there is an emerging emphasis on the learning organisation (Senge and McLagan, 1993). Leadership development is increasingly related to the promotion of collaborative approaches to organisations within which distributed leadership is the dominant mode of professional organisation (Hannay and Ross, 1999). The impact of this on individual, group and whole-school leaders is that their development opportunities are increasingly linked to leadership for learning, through transformational philosophies (Crowther and Olson, 1997).

Harris (1999) examines the problem of ineffective departments in schools and attributes them, in part, to weak leadership and lack of vision. She claims that “effective leadership essentially involves guiding and supporting staff, particularly those who are having difficulties” (p21).

Davies (1996) argues that school improvement depends on a different approach to leadership that involves coaching not control, and encouraging the dispersal of leadership and management widely within the organisation. Bierema (1997, p38) concludes that “learning organisations have the advantage of turning their learning upon themselves in an effort to improve their process and structure”.

Hopkins et al (2000, 1997) argue that school leadership and therefore leadership development needs to be differentiated to take account of the different stages of the school improvement journey.

### 3 Methods and approaches

This section examines a range of methods and approaches to leadership development and presents research evidence where it exists. However, much of the literature is normative, based on beliefs rather than research. In addition, Dimmock (1998) stresses the importance of culture and context in evaluating leadership development programmes. What works well in one context may not translate easily into another.

Sandler (2002, p14) shows how leadership was developed in 426 global organisations:

- external leadership programmes (57%)
- internal leadership programmes (51%)
- temporary 'stretch' assignments (48%)
- international assignments (47%)
- external consultants (45%)
- job rotation (41%)
- 'A demanding assignment to develop their management skills' (40%)
- Formal mentoring (22%)

Thomson et al (2001, p218) draw on large-scale empirical research with managers and companies beyond education to rank nine leadership development methods on the basis of their perceived effectiveness:

1. Time off for courses
2. External courses
3. On-the-job training
4. In-house training
5. Coaching managers
6. Use of consultants
7. Formal induction
8. Mentoring
9. Job rotation

Green (2001) stresses the importance of leadership rather than management and refers to Rajan's (1996) study of leadership in 500 organisations beyond education. This shows five development modes ranked according to how valuable they were perceived to be:

1. Coaching and mentoring
2. Sideways moves
3. Challenging assignments that stretched their capability
4. Networking with peers
5. Formal training

Green (2001, pp4-5) considers the implications of these findings for school leadership:

There are lessons from this study for those of us working in schools and with school leaders, not least the low ranking of formal training. We should be considering strategies to increase opportunities for the top four at all levels: within and between schools, regionally and nationally.

A number of key approaches emerged from the review.

### **3.1 Work-based learning**

Handy (1993) states the following on p219: "Learning by experience, left to itself, can be a painful and a tedious experience." However, it is clear that work-based learning is a significant element of school leaders' development.

Focusing on middle managers in English secondary schools, Adey (2000) shows that most had received no specific preparation for the position. They learned 'on the job', and by watching others perform the role.

Dareh and Male (2000) report on a small-scale comparative study of first-year principals in the UK and the USA. From p95: "Nothing could prepare the respondents, both American and British, . . . for the change of perceptions of others or for the intensity of the job." The preparation available to school leaders at the time of the research (1996-98) was of limited value:

British headteachers do not feel as if they were prepared totally for their posts simply because they had years of experience in roles similar to but not the same as headteachers. And American principals report that academic pre-service training does not prepare them completely for their jobs. The issue, therefore, is not one of suggesting that one is prepared either by previous practice or by courses. It is an issue of finding appropriate balance." (Dareh and Male 2002, p99)

The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) involves a collaboration between universities and partner-employing authorities in providing a programme that combines academic coursework with work-based learning demonstrated via a portfolio and supported by a colleague (usually the head) within the participant's school. Based on a survey of 32 local authorities and interviews with local co-ordinators, Murphy et al (2002) report that the SQH was deemed successful in terms of its impact on professional learning and on schools. More than 80% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that this work-based programme had moved management and leadership forward and that they could see an impact on schools.

Internships are often linked with mentoring programmes (Bush and Chew 1999) and involve the aspiring leaders spending time in the mentor's school. Crow (2001) provides a detailed review of the literature on internships and shows that they can differ across a range of dimensions, including duration, characteristics of the host school and balance of outside and inside influences. He stresses the importance of the socialisation process and states that the mentor generally has a strong influence. Other leaders and teachers may also help with this process. A major variable in the success of internships is the status accorded to the mentee. Empowerment increases both their learning and socialisation.

Lovely (1999) describes a 'grow your own', in-house leadership development model in Santa Cruz. This is an apprenticeship model with mentors and apprentices committing to shared outcomes. The programme operates using mentorship, outreach, coaching and peer support and the author concludes by claiming on p14 that "we are growing the kind of people who will successfully lead our team into the millennium and beyond".

### **3.2 Needs analysis and diagnostics**

West-Burnham (1998) stresses the importance of needs analysis in determining the nature of leadership development:

Needs analysis provides the crucial information to ensure that professional learning is appropriate, valid and relevant.” (p99)

The Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) run by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) includes both 360-degree feedback (see 6.6 below) and personal assessment to establish development needs for experienced headteachers.

Similarly, the English National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) adopts a curriculum based around national standards for headteachers (TTA 1998), which are used to identify the “professional development needs of headteachers” (Male 2001, p464). Male’s (2001) national survey of headteachers suggests that NPQH graduates consider themselves to be better prepared than other headteachers in the following nine skills:

- putting vision into words
- ensuring that all people with an interest in the school are involved in the school mission
- working with under-performing teachers
- using student performance data to plan the curriculum
- conducting a meeting
- forming and working with teams
- assuming responsibility for school management
- organising school administration
- using information technology and other tools in the management process

Gunraj and Rutherford (1999) report on small-scale research with those attending a Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP) run jointly by the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) and the University of Birmingham for new headteachers. Most participants took part in a ‘needs analysis’ but this aspect received a mixed response for two reasons:

- Headteachers' needs are constantly changing as they respond to new challenges within their schools (p149).
- There are problems in establishing whose needs (headteacher, chair of governors, LEA officer, etc) should be met.

This review suggests that there is only limited data on needs analysis informing professional development. The argument for basing leadership development on needs analysis seems powerful but leaves unresolved the issue of whose needs are to be met and at which point in the career trajectory. The literature does not explore the variable nature of the ‘needs analysis’ process itself, or its relative effectiveness in supporting the leadership development of school leaders.

360-degree feedback is a diagnostic process that has become popular in leadership development programmes, including those presented by NCSL. 360-degree feedback draws on the views of colleagues about the performance and development needs of

leaders. Tornone and London (1998) claim that “the complexity of jobs requires that employees have feedback from a variety of constituencies, not just their supervisor, who has traditionally been the source of feedback and performance review” (p2). They add that 360 degree feedback enables individuals to become connected.

Alimo-Metcalf (1998), drawing on extensive empirical research, says that 360 degree feedback promotes self-awareness through “a more accurate insight into one’s own leadership behaviour...related to one’s performance and potential” (p37).

### **3.3 Action learning**

McGill and Beaty (1995) provide an extended and detailed guide to action learning, based on practice beyond education. This provides for continuous learning and reflection by a 'set' of people using an 'experiential learning cycle'. These authors show how action learning can contribute to management development through the development of the individual manager and the organization as a whole (p.209).

Smith (2001) focuses on the use of action learning in leadership development. Writing from a Canadian perspective, he states that action learning “embodies an approach based on comrades in adversity learning from each other through discriminating questioning, fresh experience and reflective insight. It is a form of learning through experience . . . based on the premise that we can only learn about work at work” (p35).

Action learning sets are an important protocol within NCSL’s New Visions programme (Bush et al 2003). Most of the participant headteachers value this dimension as the following comments illustrate:

- “The most powerful process.”
- “The Action Learning sets are challenging: you have to explain your problems to others, they listen and discuss and finally feedback suggestions to alleviate your area of difficulty.”

### **3.4 Mentoring**

Mentoring has become increasingly important as a mode of leadership development in many countries, including Australia, England and Wales, Singapore and the USA. Hobson (2003), for NCSL, states that mentoring is “generally used to refer to a process whereby a more experienced individual seeks to assist someone less experienced” (p1) while Daresh (1995, p8), in reviewing the literature from an American perspective, points to “the experienced professional, as a mentor, serving as a wise guide to a younger protege”.

Mentoring is often highly successful in promoting the development of practising and aspiring leaders. Hobson (2003, p2) says that “all major studies of formal mentoring programmes for new headteachers have concluded that such mentoring work was effective”. Pocklington and Weindling (1996) argue (p189) that “mentoring offers a way of speeding up the process of transition” to headship.

Petzko et al (2002) surveyed 1,400 middle school principals in the USA. Most of them had no specific preparation to lead middle schools, being trained for either secondary or elementary schools. When asked to identify the person who influenced them most during their first year as principal, 44% indicated another principal while 22% said it was a central office administrator. These authors advocate the provision of trained mentors for new principals.



### **3.5 Coaching**

Davies (1996, p15) argues that “coaching and supporting can be seen as the most effective management approach”. He endorses the definition of Kinlaw (1989).

Coaching is:

”a mutual conversation between manager and employee that follows a predictable process and leads to superior performance, commitment to sustained improvement, and positive relationships”.

Bassett (2001) states that coaching differs from mentoring because it stresses the skills development dimension. West and Milan (2001), writing from a general leadership perspective, make a further distinction between coaching for skills development and performance coaching.

### **3.6 Portfolios**

Referring to teachers, Wolf et al (1997) define a portfolio as:

“the structured documentary history of a carefully selected set of coached or mentored accomplishments, substantiated by samples of student work, and fully realised only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation”.  
(p195)

Peterson et al (2001) identify seven serious problems with teacher portfolios, two of which may be pertinent for leadership development:

1. They are difficult to use for judgements because of a lack of uniformity.
2. Teachers may not be objective when portfolios are used for summative purposes, particularly those related to career development.

Despite these limitations, portfolios have a useful role to play in formative evaluation and leadership development.

### **3.7 Narrative methods**

Thody (1997) describes how the use of storytelling techniques are used as a basis for leadership development; by providing a stimulus to vision; gaining information in familiar formats; the acquisition of knowledge from stimuli; and using transferable learning growing from oral learning. She argues that the ability to listen contributes to consultative management and interpersonal relationships through management by sharing reflection, and the development of a climate for understanding (p336).

### **3.8 E-learning for leadership**

The review of research literature by McFarlane et al (2003) describes a range of indicators of effective practices in e-learning for leadership that include:

- providing pre-programme diagnoses to ascertain
  - personal goals and aspirations
  - learning style preferences
  - competences with information and communication technologies
  - time management capabilities
  - ease of access to computers

- providing opportunities for the professional learners to get to know one another prior to the commencement of programmes in order to optimise peer-to-peer and reciprocal learner-to-facilitator communications
- encouraging the professional learners to develop a group dynamic in order to promote collaborative working within the e-learning environment
- delivering leadership development by both online and offline offerings
- ensuring the availability of fast and reliable internet connections
- building in systems that guide/pressure learners to complete the programme
- assessing the e-learning activities so that their quality becomes an essential part of the successful completion of the programme
- ensuring that the programme has high status in the relevant community

## 4 Conclusion

This review draws on many important sources of knowledge about leadership development both within and beyond education. Several different concepts are used to describe the leadership development process: leadership development, leadership training, leadership experience, professional development, management development and management training.

### 4.1 Towards a fuller understanding of leadership development

The emerging theoretical background owes much to organisational development theory (Day, 2001). There is generally a range of approaches from Taylorist scientific management, with its emphasis on product-related job development (Thomson et al, 2001), to the humanist approaches which are more concerned with enabling and empowering people to undertake their role more effectively (Kluge, 1999). However, programmes within and outside education show elements of both dimensions when leaders are being prepared to deal with outcomes as well as with the people involved in the process (Southworth 2002).

Implicit in much of this report is the importance of facilitated learning approaches. Hall and Rowland (1999) recommend a greater emphasis on the facilitation of learning through approaches such as student-centred learning, action learning sets and open learning. The skills required of tutors are those of facilitation, coaching and mentoring (p4). This approach is similar to that adopted in NCSL's pilot New Visions: Induction to Headship programme (Bush and Glover 2002, Paterson and Coleman 2003) and in other NCSL programmes.

There is extensive material on the use of techniques in leadership development. What is required now is a sense of how best to combine these approaches to provide an holistic learning experience to meet the needs of leaders at different career stages.

Much of the research shows that leadership development is broader than programmes of activity or intervention. It is concerned with the way in which attitudes are fostered, action empowered, and the learning organisation stimulated (Frost and Durrant, 2000).

The emerging epistemology of leadership development is one that ranges from the specific, mechanistic, narrowly instructional and interventionist to the contextual, empowering, organisationally coherent and transformational. The literature suggests three models of leadership development:

- **The scientific (managerial/technicist):** results-focused with an emphasis on training to secure adherence to targets set within formal review frameworks and profession-wide standards.
- **The humanist (empowerment/persuasive):** people-focused with an emphasis on strategically planned transformational interaction, non-threatening development activity and continuing reflective (individual and group) review.
- **The pragmatic (rational/reactive):** project-focused with an emphasis on the immediate needs for individual or group activity and with a tendency to draw on both scientific and humanist techniques according to the contemporary needs of the organisation.

Further research and reflection is needed to ascertain the authenticity of these models and address how a coherent approach to leadership development might reflect these and other models.

#### **4.2 Implications for leadership development**

This wide-ranging review of the literature prompts several recommendations for leadership development provision:

- Leadership development should be based firmly on participants' leadership contexts. Practising leaders should use their own schools as the starting point for leadership learning.
- Leadership development should also recognise the local and national contexts within which leaders operate. However, learning about leadership practice in other countries provides a 'mirror' to help develop new insights into practitioners' own contexts.
- Process-rich approaches are likely to be particularly effective in promoting leadership learning. Action learning, mentoring and coaching, for example, are strongly associated with successful leadership learning. These modes act to produce qualitative change in the leadership behaviour of participants.
- Aspiring leaders are in a different position in that they are generally unaware of the context in which they will operate when qualified. Aspiring leaders need programmes rich in both leadership and management content and skills. The 'international curriculum' (Bush and Jackson, 2002), customised for each national context, should form a central part of leadership learning at this stage. The literature also suggests that development should focus mainly on 'leadership for learning' although this requirement should be interpreted broadly.
- The content-rich curriculum should be augmented by school-based activity so that aspiring leaders can practice the skills they will need to implement in their subsequent posts. This requirement can be fulfilled through internships or through specific assignments in their current schools.
- Formal leadership learning should be augmented by informal development provision in each school so that leadership is widely distributed and all staff have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and behaviours.
- Underpinning these precepts is the recognition that leaders are "made not born". Developing leadership potential is vital for the continuing success of schools and the educational system. This requires an active leadership development policy for each school and local education authority.

#### **4.3 Gaps in the evidence base: implications for research**

Given the widespread assumption that high-quality leadership is an essential dimension of successful schools, it seems to be imperative to have much more evidence about how leaders acquire the skills, attributes and confidence to become effective. Similarly, more needs to be known about how distributed leadership can be developed and harnessed for the benefit of the school community.

There is also a need for additional research to address gaps in the current knowledge base:

1. The relationship between management and leadership elements of leadership development requires further exploration.
2. The literature suggests that there is only limited differentiation in the leadership development provision for different categories of leader. There is a need to establish both the specific and generic development needs of different categories of leader, including headteachers, middle level leaders and teacher leaders. It would be valuable to research which approaches are effective with each group. The evaluation reports of NCSL's various programmes would provide a good starting point for this research.
3. There is also a need to establish the leadership development needs in relation to the different stages of school development.
4. There is a particularly strong case for research to establish the development needs of teacher leaders. This should be exploratory as teacher leaders are not easy to identify and their roles are both varied and context specific.
5. It is widely recognised that individual 'needs analysis' is an important dimension of leadership development. The nature and effectiveness of the needs analysis process requires further study.
6. There are now three main modes of leadership development in England — content-rich provision, process-rich provision and university leadership provision, which emphasise theory, literature and research. A comparative study of these three modes would provide the first empirical evidence of their relative effectiveness in promoting leadership development and school improvement.
7. A case can also be made for a comparative study of NCSL leadership programmes at each stage of leadership and the varying modes and approaches used. Similarly, a comparison between the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) and the English NPQH would be illuminating.
8. There is some support for apprenticeship models in the literature and this approach also accords with 'grow your own' modes of school-based leadership development. Exploratory research with schools committed to distributed leadership and explicit leadership development policies would be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of such approaches. International research to examine how apprenticeship models work in other countries, notably Singapore and the USA, would also be valuable.
9. There has been more research on mentoring, both in England and internationally, than on any other leadership development approaches. The findings are almost always positive, suggesting that this is a powerful means of developing school leaders. Given its proven benefits, how should it be incorporated within existing and future leadership development programmes? This is by no means straightforward as some of the literature suggests that mentoring is most effective

when it does *not* form part of formal programmes. An evaluation of the role and benefits of mentoring within existing programmes would be a valuable first step.

10. The literature shows the many and wide-ranging methods used to promote leadership development. There is only limited evidence of their relative effectiveness and of how they work in combination. Research on the effectiveness of the main methods is essential if informed decisions are to be made on which should be used in planning and delivering leadership development programmes.
11. The literature provides strong evidence from many different contexts of the positive relationship between effective leadership and school improvement (eg Bush and Jackson 2002). However, much less is known about which modes of leadership development are most likely to lead to school improvement. Exploratory research focusing on the leadership development experience of headteachers in successful schools would be a valuable starting point.
12. The evidence base regarding the nature and efficacy of collaborative leadership learning and networked learning needs considerable attention.

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