

‘Together we Stand’ Distributed community leadership

Maggie Farrar

Distributed leadership in schools

The belief in **leadership teams**: belief in the power of one is giving way to a belief in the power of everyone.

As schools become more complex places to manage and lead, we need many **more leaders** than ever before.

Ensuring that there are many leaders enables us to create pools of talent, from which we can **grow tomorrow's leaders.**

And so

‘When leadership practice is viewed from a distributed perspective, then you allow for and take into account the work of **all** individuals, regardless whether they are formally designated as leaders’

Exploring new forms of leadership practice

NCSL 2007

But not quite enough

Distributed community leadership

Why bother

Standards plateau – standards **and** progress **and** wellbeing

Social context – social mobility

Learning context - personalisation

Equity – achievement - happiness

Schools – federated / extended / core social centres / learning hubs ; community cohesion

Interdependence – standards / well being / social justice

‘ You can mandate to get the system from awful to adequate but not from adequate to great. To do that you have to unleash potential and creativity. This cannot be centrally mandated but has to be **locally enabled.**’

Sir Michael Barber

McKinsey International

London Challenge Think Tank

From **distributed** leadership
To
Mutual, reciprocal, democratic leadership

Reciprocity and mutual assistance

Rekindled hope – we can do anything together

Leadership development – local talent

Wisdom banks – know who, know what, know
how, know why

Long term relationships – trust

Maximise resource, time and effort

Community data – confront the facts / build data
on what works

Mutualism – giving and receiving

The writing on the wall....

Emphasis varied on what was important;

Homework – emphasised by parents and students

Progress – emphasised by teachers

Holiday activities emphasised by parents

Space and environment emphasised by students

Parents and students limited their experience of what was possible by what was currently on offer;

The awareness of the benefits of growing

Community resources to meet needs;

The vastness of the resource available in a 'giving and receiving' gift culture

‘The one sided nature of current service delivery strips people of their dignity and deprives them of the fundamental and empowering act of returning value’

Trevino and Trevino 2004

Empowering act of returning value

Learning from early years practice

- Authentic and active family and parent engagement
- Diverse workforce – skills development
- Professional learning communities – enquiry led
- Research focused

Distributed community leadership

- Know your context – link needs ; create multiplier effects
- Self determination – what matters most
- Leadership development – talent spotting
- Localisation of reform – the 5 outcomes , locally scripted
- Stories and narrative - Appreciative enquiry , experience stories

Any educational reform strategy that improves relationships has a chance of succeeding – any that does not is doomed to failure. On the community building side, success is only possible if organisational members and community members develop trust and compassion for each other ie for others different than themselves. For this agenda, we need to understand the deep meaning of working in and achieving diversity and community building. If we do this we will enable real change and avoid fatal mistakes

Michael Fullan

Building relationships

- Participation and ownership – who and how
- Social; eating / arts / sports / celebrations
- Giving and receiving of feedback – constantly
- Mutual respect, honesty and humility –we are assets, not problems
- Genuine interest, questioning and dialogue – curiosity

The direction of travel ?

- Instruction – better learning and teaching / booster classes / revision classes
- In partnership – connexions / youth service
- In service – working collaboratively, over time to build an aspirational, enriched locality

From find and fix to predict and prevent
From a deficit to an asset based approach
From distributed to co - leadership

What makes the difference

Involve the community right from the beginning – use open spaces, stories and open agendas to build ‘the agenda’

Initiate action based on real need rather than perceived need

Use word of mouth as communication – *‘the stories others tell about you’*

Start small, and reflect ; what did we do, how well did we do it, who has benefited ?

Use local people to resource the work – local caterers, transport, printers etc

Develop the leadership of local community champions

Take time to build ownership and relationships

NCSL Community Leadership Network

Distributed community leadership

Not planned – but lived

Not talked about – but enacted

Not written – but seen and felt

Not theorised – but real

‘Be the change you want to see in the world’