

STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP 7

Alma Harris
Editor

Distributed Leadership

Different Perspectives

 Springer

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

VOLUME 7

Series Editor

Kenneth Leithwood, OISE, University of Toronto, Canada

Editorial Board

Christopher Day, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
Stephen Jacobson, Graduate School of Education, Buffalo, U.S.A.
Bill Mulford, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia
Peter Sleegers, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

SCOPE OF THE SERIES

Leadership we know makes all the difference in success or failures of organizations. This series will bring together in a highly readable way the most recent insights in successful leadership. Emphasis will be placed on research focused on pre-collegiate educational organizations. Volumes should address issues related to leadership at all levels of the educational system and be written in a style accessible to scholars, educational practitioners and policy makers throughout the world.

The volumes – monographs and edited volumes – should represent work from different parts in the world.

For further volumes:

<http://www.springer.com/series/6543>

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Different Perspectives

Edited by

ALMA HARRIS

*Institute of Education,
London*



Springer

Editor

Prof. Alma Harris
Institute of Education
University of London
Bedford Way
London
WCIH OAL
a.harris@ioe.ac.uk

ISBN 978-1-4020-9736-2

e-ISBN 978-1-4020-9737-9

DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9737-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008942715

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2009

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Printed on acid-free paper

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

springer.com

Acknowledgements

Books such as this are rarely possible without the intellectual endeavor and goodwill of colleagues in the field. Fortunately, I work in an international research community that is challenging but also supportive. I am particularly grateful to all of the contributors in this book for providing chapters of such quality and depth. I am also grateful to the series editor for encouraging me to publish this book and to the publishers for their professionalism and support.

Special thanks go to Jim Spillane for his friendship and intellectual generosity. I have learned a great deal from him and continue to do so.

In any career there are people who influence us and who provide opportunities that take us further than we could ever have anticipated. My own intellectual journey benefited from the early influence of two leading academics, David Hopkins and Christopher Day. I would like to thank them both.

Alma Harris

Contents

Part I Setting the Scene

Introduction	3
Alma Harris	
1 Distributed Leadership: What We Know	11
Alma Harris	

Part II Empirical Perspectives

2 Investigating Connections Between Distributed Leadership and Instructional Change	25
Eric M. Camburn and S.W. Han	
3 Taking a Distributed Perspective in Studying School Leadership and Management: The Challenge of Study Operations	47
James P. Spillane, Eric M. Camburn, James Pustejovsky, Amber Stitzel Pareja and Geoff Lewis	
4 The Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Teachers' Academic Optimism	81
Blair Mascal, Kenneth Leithwood, Tiiu Strauss and Robin Sacks	
5 Distributed Leadership in Schools: Does System Policy Make a Difference?	101
Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck	

Part III Practical Perspective

6 Capacity Building Through Layered Leadership: Sustaining the Turnaround	121
Christopher Day	

7 The Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Action Learning in Schools: A Case Study 139
Stephen Dinham

Part IV Conceptual Theoretical

8 The Role of Sensemaking and Trust in Developing Distributed Leadership 157
Karen Seashore Louis, David Mayrowetz, Mark Smiley and Joseph Murphy

9 Distributed Leadership: Democracy or Delivery? 181
Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink

Part V Future Perspectives

10 From Distributed to Hybrid Leadership Practice 197
Peter Gronn

11 Fit for Purpose: An Educationally Relevant Account of Distributed Leadership 219
V.M.J. Robinson

12 Coda 241
Alma Harris

Author Index 245

Subject Index 249

Contributors

Eric M. Camburn is an Assistant Professor in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Camburn's current research centers around understanding efforts to improve instruction, including programmatic improvement efforts, the organizational factors that support such efforts, and the impact change efforts have on leadership practice and instruction. Recent publications include "Assessing the Validity of A Language Arts Instruction Log through Triangulation" coauthored with Carol Barnes and published in the *Elementary School Journal*, and "Distributed Leadership in Schools: The Case of Elementary Schools Adopting Comprehensive School Reform Models", coauthored with Brian Rowan and James Taylor and published in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

Christopher Day is Professor of Education and Director of the Teacher and Leadership Research Centre (TLRC). Prior to this he worked as a teacher, lecturer and local education authority adviser. He is editor of "Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice" and co-editor of the *Educational Action Research Journal*. He has recently completed directing a four year national Government funded research project on Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness. He is currently directing a 12 country project on successful school principalship; a nine country European project on successful principalship in schools in challenging urban contexts; and national projects on school leadership and pupil outcomes; and effective classroom teaching. He is a founder member of the Primary Schools Learning Network.

Steven Dinham is Research Director of the Teaching, Learning and Leadership program at the Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, Australia. He is also Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne and Visiting Professorial Fellow at the University of Wollongong. He was formerly Professor of Education at both the University of New England and the University of Wollongong and Associate Professor at the University of Western Sydney. He has conducted a wide range of research projects in the areas of educational leadership and change, effective pedagogy/quality teaching, student achievement, postgraduate supervision,

professional teaching standards, teachers' professional development, middle-level leaders in schools, and teacher satisfaction, motivation and health.

Peter Gronn is Professor of Education, University of Cambridge. Previously, he was Professor in Public Service, Educational Leadership and Management at the University of Glasgow, prior to which he was Professor of Education (personal chair), Monash University. His research interests cover all aspects of leadership, including educational policy, distributed leadership, leadership formation and the development of leaders, leadership models and types, school improvement, and links between organisational culture, leadership and organisational learning. The major focus of his most recent research has been leadership coaching, and head teacher recruitment and retention, for which projects he has been principal investigator and has received funding from the Scottish government.

Philip Hallinger holds a Chair in Leadership and Change at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. His research focuses on school leadership effects, leadership development and problem-based learning. He can be reached at philip@ied.edu.hk. His research publications can be accessed at philiphallinger.com

Seong Won Han is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research interests include social stratification, sociology of education, and quantitative methodology. Her areas of specialization are inequality in education, transitions from high school to postsecondary education, educational policy, school reform, and comparative and international education.

Alma Harris is Pro-Director (Leadership) at the Institute of Education, London and Professor of Educational Leadership at the London Centre for Leadership in Learning. She has previously held academic posts at the University of Warwick, University of Nottingham and University of Bath. She is currently an Associate Director of the "Specialist Schools and Academies Trust" and she is the editor of "School Leadership and Management". Her research work has focused upon organizational change and development. She is internationally known for her work on school improvement, focusing particularly on ways in which leadership can contribute to school development and change. Her writing has explored middle level leadership, teacher leadership and leadership in challenging circumstances. Her most recent work has focused on distributed leadership in schools.

Ronald Heck holds the Dai Ho Chun Endowed Chair in Education at the U. of Hawaii-Manoa. His research focuses on the relationship between school leadership and school improvement. He has also written on research methodology. He can be reached at rheck@hawaii

Kenneth Leithwood is Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at OISE/University of Toronto. His research and writing concerns school leadership, educational policy and organizational change. He has published more than 80 referred

journal articles, and authored or edited more than three dozen books. For example, he is the senior editor of both the first and second *International Handbooks on Educational Leadership and Administration* (Kluwer Publishers, 1996, 2003). His most recent books include *Distributed leadership: The state-of-the-science* (2008) *Leadership With Teachers' Emotions In Mind* (2008), *Making Schools Smarter* (3rd edition, 2006) and *Teaching for Deep Understanding* (2006). Professor Leithwood is the recent recipient of the University of Toronto's *Impact on Public Policy* award and is a *Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada*.

Blair Mascall is Associate Professor in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada. His current research is divided between an empirical study to establish the outcomes of distributed leadership in schools and school districts in Canada, and a large-scale project to define the impact of leadership on student achievement in the United States.

David Mayrowetz is an associate professor of educational policy studies at the University of Illinois, Chicago. His research agenda centres on how organizational and institutional forces shape the formation and implementation of educational policy. He is particularly interested in distributed leadership as a condition that could facilitate school reform and improvement. Articles authored and co-authored by Mayrowetz have appeared recently in *Educational Policy*, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Journal of School Leadership*, and *Leadership, Policy in Schools*.

Viviane Robinson is a Professor of Education at The University of Auckland and Academic Director of the First-time Principals Programme – New Zealand's national induction programme for school principals. Her research focuses on leadership and organisational learning. She has recently published in *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *Journal of Educational Administration* and *Educational Management and Leadership*.

Karen Seashore Louis is Rodney S. Wallace Professor in Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on school organization, leadership, and policy. She has served as a vice-president for the American Educational Research Association, and on the executive committee of the University Council for Educational Administration. Her most recent book is co-authored with Sharon Kruse (2009) *Strong Cultures: A Principal's Guide to Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Mark A. Smylie is Professor of Education in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research focuses on education organizational change, teacher and administrative leadership, and urban school improvement.

James P. Spillane is the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Chair in Learning and Organizational Change at Northwestern University where he is a Professor of Human Development and Social Policy, Learning Sciences, and Management and Organizations. Spillane is a Faculty Fellow at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research and is a senior research fellow with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE). With funding from the National Science Foundation, Spencer Foundation, and Institute for Education Sciences, Spillane's work explores the policy implementation process at the state, school district, school, and classroom levels, and school leadership and management.

Tiiu Strauss is currently a project director working with Kenneth Leithwood in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. She has published in the areas of leader problem solving and distributed leadership, and is involved in research projects related to leadership in turnaround schools.

Part I
Setting the Scene

Introduction

Alma Harris

The field of school leadership is currently preoccupied with the idea of distributed leadership. Few ideas, it seems, have provoked as much attention, debate and controversy. Whatever your position on distributed leadership, and you cannot fail to have one, it is irrefutable that distributed leadership has become the leadership idea of the moment. Yet, it is an idea that can be traced back as far as the mid 20s and possibly earlier. So why the interest?

Part of the answer can be found in a move away from theorizing and empirical enquiry focused on the single leader. This shift has undoubtedly been fuelled by structural changes, within schools and across school systems that have resulted in alternative models or forms of leadership practice. Evidence highlights how those occupying formal leadership positions are increasingly recognizing the limitations of existing structural arrangements to secure organizational growth and transformation (Fullan et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2008; Chapman et al., 2008). As a consequence, many heads and principals are actively restructuring, realigning and redesigning leadership practice in their school (Harris, 2008). While the terminology to describe such changes varies, the core principle is one of extending or sharing leadership practice.

While scholars have long argued for the need to move beyond those at the top of organizations in order to examine leadership (Barnard, 1968; Katz and Kahn, 1966) until relatively recently, much of the school leadership literature has tended to focus upon the head or the principal. The growth of what Gronn (2003) has termed “greedy work” in schools has undoubtedly contributed to a renewed and pragmatic interest in sharing leadership responsibility. Teacher leadership, student leadership and community leadership, previously overshadowed because of the dominance of more traditional forms of leadership, are now receiving much greater attention (Wilmore, 2007).

While many organizational theorists spent most of the twentieth century exploring the variations and consequences of hierarchies, interest has now moved to a

A. Harris (✉)
Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way
London, WCIH OAL

consideration of peer based relations, interactions and co-leadership (Heckscher, 2007). Interest in collaborative systems, reflected in both the management literature and the academic social sciences literature, is best exemplified by the explosion of interest in complexity science and network theory. From a complexity perspective those in formal leadership positions “emphasize the management of independencies” and are primarily concerned with rich networks of relationships rather than “controls over process or outcomes” (Leithwood et al., 2009a: 7).

Network theory is similarly concerned with interdependencies and the distribution of power across complex systems. As Wheatley notes (1998: 164) *nothing exists independent of its relationships, whether looking at subatomic particles or human affairs*. This position implies that maximizing interconnections and interactions among organizational members is more likely to result in positive growth and development. Organisational learning theory and theories of distributed cognition assume that existing capacities of individual members can be enhanced through social interaction and connecting sources.

Distributed cognition views a system as a set of representations, and models the interchange of information between these representations. Hutchins (1995) emphasizes the interdependence of the individual and highlights how human activity is widely distributed across a complex system. His work also emphasizes the power of *lateral agency*, understood as the potential for change and learning to emerge in a horizontal as well as a vertical direction.

It is possible for a team to organize its behavior in an appropriate sequence without there being a global script or plan anywhere in the system. Each member only needs to know what to do when certain conditions are produced in the environment. (Hutchings, 1963: 24)

Distributed cognition suggests that capacities are distributed throughout the social and material conditions of the organization and that they are fluid rather than fixed. The implication here is that making better use of existing capacities, including leadership, within in the organization is likely to result in some advantage. From this perspective, distributing leadership is more likely to have a positive impact on the organization if it is aligned to the contours of expertise and the provision of conditions that support social learning.

Jim Spillane’s highly influential and groundbreaking work on distributed leadership theory draws heavily upon distributed cognition and social learning theory (Spillane et al., 2001). Distributed cognition is largely concerned with sources and patterns of influence that occur within organizations. Using this theoretical position, Spillane et al., (2004) suggests that a distributed perspective on leadership has two aspects: the *leader plus aspect* and the *practice aspect*. Drawing on distributed cognition theory, Spillane (2006: 19) argues that a distributed perspective necessitates understanding how aspects of the situation enable and constrain leadership practice and thereby contribute to defining it. Distributed leadership is a lens to understand leadership practice; it is a conceptual and analytical framework for studying leadership interaction.

Others in the field take a different perspective on distributed leadership ranging across the normative, descriptive, predictive and discursive. Indeed, the popularity