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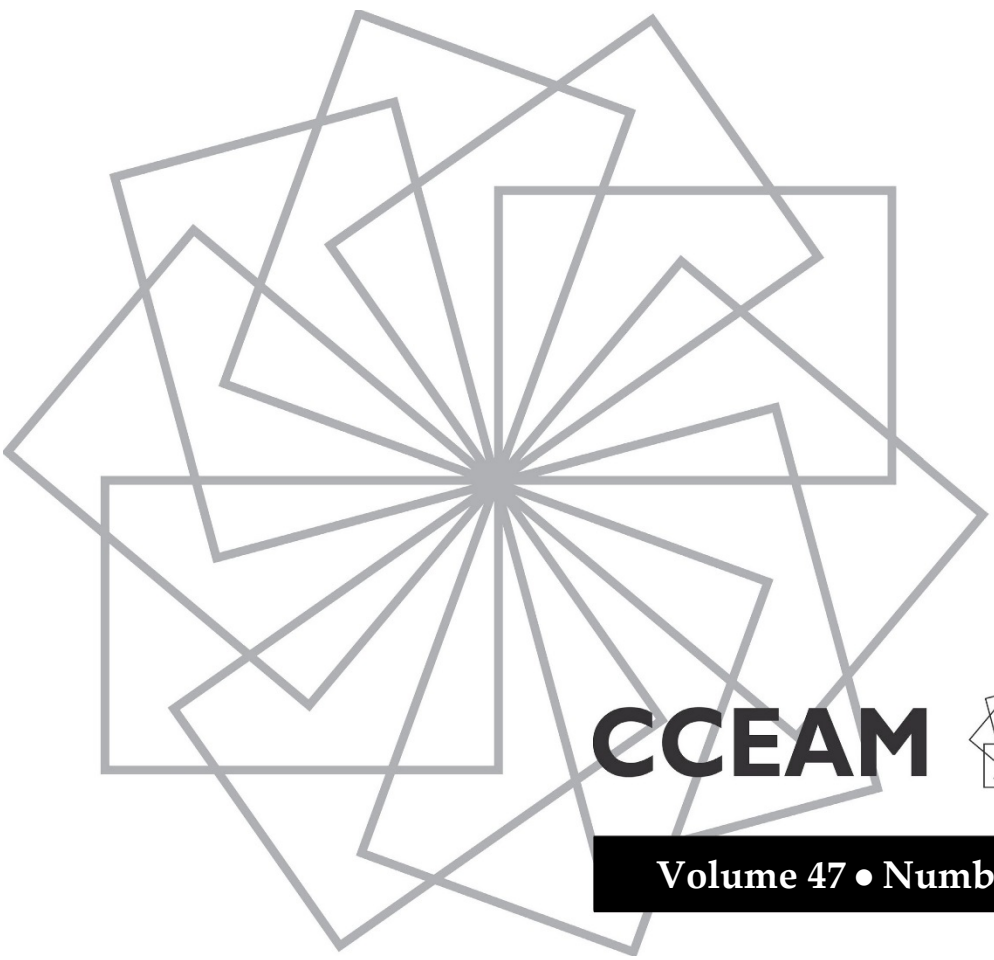

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Editorial Note

Developing Educational Leaders for the Future: New Ways to Consider Leadership Preparation

A rapidly changing world is requiring new ways of conceptualising and delivering education. Educational settings are in the spotlight more than ever before. In an era of high-stakes testing, increasing marketisation and the rise of a digital society, the role that teachers and leaders play has shifted considerably (Schleicher 2012). Where teaching once was a life-long profession and the principalship a role that the finest educators aspired to, this is no longer the norm internationally (Auguste, Kihn & Miller 2010; Goss, Sonnemann & Nolan 2019). For many nations, increasing attrition within the teaching profession resulting in a smaller pool of aspiring leaders, is creating the need to review how to best prepare teachers for the future and in what way to attract the most effective educators to consider a pathway in leadership (Chapman 2005).

Of in-school factors impacting on student outcomes, it is now commonly understood that teachers followed by school leaders have the greatest influence (Chapman, Muijs, Reynolds, Sammons & Teddlie 2016; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom 2004); and investing in teacher quality and professionalism is seen to have a direct correlation to improved student outcomes (Ingvarson & Rowe 2008). So, it has been no surprise to see significant policy reform in initial teacher education with the creation of national teaching standards in various countries regulating the education of future teachers and the profession more broadly (OECD 2013). Albeit a decade on, the McKinsey Report rings true in suggesting that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' (Barber & Mourshed 2007: 19).

In an effort to attract and retain the best teachers in the profession, provide quality education, care and improve student outcomes, major shifts in policies have been introduced which have reconceptualised how educators are prepared and, furthermore, how careers are regulated. For example, Australia, England, Germany, USA and New Zealand have all established national standards for teachers which have impacted on the preparation of their educators (OECD 2013), and the recent endorsement of the Education International – UNESCO Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards (Education International 2019) is set to drive further adoption of national teaching standards globally to support teachers in their work and practice. The introduction of national teaching standards, greater regulation in initial teacher education university entry requirements, literacy and numeracy benchmarks and national accreditation, are all part of a reform agenda regarded as positive steps towards better preparing teachers for the 21st century classroom (Ingersoll 2007; OECD 2011; Roberts-Hull, Jensen & Cooper 2015; Schleicher 2012; TEMAG 2014). What we are yet to see is the same level of attention paid to the development of future educational leaders (Schleicher 2012). Leadership preparation lacks the same broad scale reform, with efforts to standardise training in some nations, ad hoc (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen 2007; Pont, Nusche & Moorman 2008). The work of educational leaders is instrumental in shaping the lives of students and teachers alike however the expectations of the role are complex. For many teacher graduates, the opportunity to lead is upon them very early in their careers, however their initial teacher education fails to recognise and prepare them for this.

Within this context, this special issue draws together papers written by researchers across five countries whose work addresses the importance of initiating a leadership discourse in pre-service teacher education. Their collective work analyses shifts in policy imperatives, existing research into leadership development at pre-service level, the rise of teacher leadership and considerations for instructional design of pre-service education in developing understandings, skills and capabilities required of the next generation of educational leaders. The intent of this special issue is to stimulate discussion and initiate thinking about the changing global educational landscape and the affordances of considering an additional approach to leadership preparation through initial teacher education.

In the first paper of the issue, Fiona King, Margery McMahon, Dong Nguyen and Stephen Roulston present findings from the first phase of a large-scale study exploring leadership learning in pre-service teacher education in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. Leadership learning refers to developing professional knowledge and skills to understand the leadership that early career teachers will experience and see enacted when they enter the profession. They explore the need for leadership learning in pre-service education as a means to support teachers with leadership knowledge and skills to practice leadership within and beyond their own classroom. The paper highlights the value of leadership learning amongst

pre-service and early career teachers in developing their knowledge, skills and aspirations for leadership.

Jane Page and Manjula Waniganayake examine the importance of building leadership capacity within early childhood education in order to develop quality education and care. They provide an overview of the Australian policy context outlining the shift in standards and regulations in the early childhood education and care sector. They note that the introduction of national standards and regulations in early childhood has created a new set of accountabilities and expectations of leadership practices in the early childhood education and care sector including the mandatory appointments of educational leaders within each setting. Whilst recognising the importance of early childhood education, this policy shift has created tensions in defining the role of the educational leader within the early childhood sector. They draw on Australian research evidence to highlight the employment experiences of educational leaders and to identify how university courses can best prepare early childhood educators for the reality of leadership.

The importance of teacher collaboration skills and working in groups is analysed in the next paper. Christy Thomas and Barbara Brown explore how theory-informed instructional designs can develop pre-service teachers' leadership capacity in group activities. They note that dimensions of teacher leadership are premised on relationship building, collaborating and mediating and that pre-service teachers are able to develop these leadership competencies through collaborative inquiry in group activities which include formative assessment approaches and technology mediated strategies. In their paper, they present findings from a two-year design-based research study which explored how instructional designs support collaborative inquiry through group activities amongst pre-service teachers. Their findings suggest that when pre-service teachers engage in these group activities, they can develop teacher leadership competencies.

Amy Burns illustrates the power of experiential learning in developing leadership capabilities amongst pre-service teachers. Through unanticipated findings resulting from a larger study, she outlines how pre-service teachers progressed their understandings of leadership during three non-traditional student teaching placements in a school located on a housing construction site. A non-traditional placement opportunity necessitated the development of collaboration, creativity and an inquiry mindset and in doing so advanced a sustainable leadership perspective evidenced through ways that the pre-service teachers viewed school and system improvement. She found that the pre-service teachers exercised flexibility in their approaches and developed a desire to effect change in order to make education more accessible for all.

In the next paper, Melody Anderson and Natasha Ziebell explore the impact of a changing policy context on the accreditation and delivery of initial teacher education programmes at the primary level in Australia. They discuss the mandate to include specialised pathways in all primary initial teacher education programmes and note this policy reform as emergent of the imperative to improve teacher quality and student learning outcomes. They outline the need to incorporate

leadership studies within primary programmes. They add that the introduction of the specialised pathways acknowledges the critical leadership role that teachers play and the significance of preparing primary graduates for teacher leadership as they enter the profession.

Amidst broad reforms in both school leadership and initial teacher education in the Republic of Ireland, Gavin Murphy explores four principals' understandings and cultivation of leadership during initial teacher preparation school placements. He notes that principals expected pre-service teachers to be leaders of learning within and beyond the classroom. Owed to recently reformed leadership structures and the cultural legacies of more hierarchical, scripted leadership, some principals also believed that these circumstances necessitated formal leadership learning at the earliest stage of initial teacher preparation. Furthermore, principals believed in the developmental potential for all teachers by affording more careful consideration to pre-service teachers' leadership development during school placement. Gavin notes that the principals' insights point to the necessity to conceive of the benefits brought about by the sharing of pre-service teacher formal and informal learning with other school leaders through mentoring and leadership roles, but also through teaming and co-inquiry.

In the final paper, Daniela Acquaro explores the need to initiate a leadership discourse in initial teacher education amidst increasing teacher and principal attrition rates, a rise in distributed leadership practice and teacher leadership research. She considers the potential of introducing leadership studies to pre-service teachers in their formative education as a means of establishing the significance of leadership and leading for school and system improvement. Following a review of existing research exploring the inclusion of leadership studies within initial teacher education programmes over the last decade and an analysis of leading international initial teacher education programmes, this paper reveals a trend amongst top ranking universities to promote the development of leadership skills within pre-service programmes. This paper expands educational leadership research by exploring the role of initial teacher education in preparing the next generation of educational leaders.

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Editor of the Special Issue, *Developing Educational Leaders for the Future: New Ways to Consider Leadership Preparation*
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Leadership Learning for Pre-Service and Early Career Teachers: Insights From Ireland and Scotland

Fiona King, Margery McMahon, Dong Nguyen and Stephen Roulston

Abstract: *Teachers' leadership learning should arguably commence in the initial stages of their pre-service education. However, the scope for leadership learning in pre-service teacher preparation is questionably less prominent. This paper presents findings from the first phase of an ongoing qualitative research study that is exploring the extent of leadership learning in pre-service teacher education in three education systems (i.e. Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland). It discusses participants' receptivity and challenges of leadership learning at the pre-service and early career stages. The paper highlights the need for strengthening leadership elements in pre-service teacher education programmes and for developing supportive structures and cultures within and beyond schools, to promote leadership learning for teachers.*

Keywords: Leadership, leadership development, leadership learning, teacher education, teacher leadership

Introduction

In recent years the body of literature relating to leadership preparation has grown considerably, with a focus on principal leadership (Hallinger & Walker 2015; Walker, Bryant & Lee 2013), development of middle-level leadership (Harris, Jones, Ismail & Nguyen 2019) and teacher leadership (Nguyen, Harris & Ng 2019). Leadership, within the current paper, is defined as 'the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives' (Yukl 2013: 23). Yukl's definition highlights three hallmarks of leadership: firstly, leadership is influence-based, rather than authority-based; secondly, leadership is a social process in which individuals have reciprocal influences on one another to accomplish a goal; and thirdly, leadership is a directional or purposeful process in which individuals work towards a shared goal, reflecting the notion of leadership as an interactional

activity and practice which encourages teachers to use their individual and collective agency (MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson & Swaffield 2018).

The research shows that teachers, at any career stage, play multiple leadership roles, formally and informally. These roles range from leadership of school curriculum (Firestone & Martinez 2007) to professional learning and development of colleagues (Allen 2016). There is a range of evidence concerning the positive impact and influence of effective teacher leadership on teacher leaders themselves (Avidov-Ungar & Shamir-Inbal 2017; White 2014), on the other teachers (Supovitz, Sirinides & May 2010; Yost, Vogel & Liang 2009), on school culture (Beachum & Dentith 2004) and school reforms (Lai & Cheung 2015), and indirect influence on student learning (Sebastian, Allensworth & Huang 2016; Supovitz et al. 2010).

To support teachers' enactment of leadership, leadership learning should be promoted as an essential element of curricula for pre-service teacher education (Mowat & McMahon 2019; Pucella 2014). In the current paper, leadership learning refers to developing professional knowledge and skills to understand the leadership that early career teachers will experience and see enacted. Leadership learning also involves supporting these teachers with leadership knowledge and skills to practise leadership within and beyond their own classroom as part of collaborative professional practices (Hargreaves & O'Connor 2017; King & Stevenson 2017). Leadership learning is arguably the remit of all teachers as professionals (Department for Education Northern Ireland 2015; General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) 2012; Teaching Council of Ireland (TCI) 2016). However, the scope for leadership learning in pre-service teacher education and in the early career stage is deemed to be less evident (Forde, Dickson & McMahon 2018; King 2017).

The current, ongoing study aims to investigate the scope of leadership learning of teachers across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. The study provides insights into leadership learning, which would give important implications for developing teachers' leadership knowledge and skills in pre-service teacher education programmes, in schools and the wider system. The study is also a welcome response to the calls (see Nguyen et al. 2019) for more cross-national studies to enrich the empirical knowledge base on teacher leadership across various contexts.

The first phase of this ongoing study that entailed participation of pre-service and early career teachers and other stakeholders elicited the perspectives and experiences of these participants concerning leadership learning in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. This current paper presents key findings of the first phase of the study. More specifically, the paper focuses on discussing the broad question: *What are participants' views on and concerns around leadership learning in pre-service teacher education across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland?* The next section presents the literature that informs the current paper.

Literature Review

Preparing and developing teacher leaders is an ongoing process that starts from early stages of pre-service teacher education (Forde et al. 2018; King 2017). To conceptualise this process, Quinn, Haggard and Ford (2006) propose a model of preparing and developing teachers for leadership activities and roles. This conceptual model comprises four phases, namely (1) cooperative, (2) extended, (3) mentoring, and (4) global. The first and second phases concern leadership learning and development of pre-service and early career teachers, respectively. The first phase – 'cooperative' involves developing skills of classroom management and instruction, for example, justifiable selection of pedagogical methods and materials, for teacher candidates in pre-service teacher education programmes. Skills of communication with colleagues, school leaders and parents should also be attended to in the curricula in this phase (Quinn et al. 2006). The second phase – 'extended' in this conceptual model suggests that early career teachers solidify classroom and instructional skills they learn in the pre-service stage. These teachers participate in professional activities beyond their classroom, for example, attending conferences and participating in professional groups within the school and beyond. This section presents literature around leadership learning in the first two phrases in the conceptual model of Quinn et al. (2006).

Leadership Learning for Pre-Service Teachers

The literature has argued for the introduction of leadership elements in the curricula of pre-service teacher education programmes (e.g. Neumann, Jones & Webb 2007; Pucella 2014; Quinn et al. 2006). Bond (2011) emphatically states that pre-service experience is important in forming and developing future educators' worldviews and perspectives. Appropriate incorporation of leadership elements in teacher education programmes would better prepare teachers for knowledge (e.g. basic theories) and skills (e.g. communication, teamwork) to enter their profession and to grow as leaders (Bond 2011; Neumann et al. 2007; Pucella 2014; Turnbull 2005).

The literature has suggested three approaches to promote leadership literacy and competences (e.g. skills, qualities and dispositions) in pre-service teacher education. A typical way is to include a course on leadership and management and action research/professional enquiry in a teacher education programme. Some universities have delivered a single elective course in Leadership for Learning (e.g. University of Glasgow) or a minor programme in Teacher Leadership (e.g. The Education University of Hong Kong). In Dublin City University, all pre-service teachers undertake a major specialism as part of their degree and the final module within this specialism in 4th year is on leadership (e.g. Leadership for Special and Inclusive Education, Literacy Leadership) (King 2017). Turnbull (2005) suggests requiring teacher candidates to conduct empirical enquiry on school-based management as part of their teacher education programme. Undertaking action research on school leadership and management would give pre-service teachers functional knowledge and experience of school leadership prior to entering their profession (Turnbull 2005).

Alternatively, or inclusively, leadership learning and teaching can be integrated and embedded across courses in teacher preparation programmes (Bond 2011). The argument for this approach is that leadership development involves a shift in teachers' vision and perspectives on the nature of ethical leadership (Xu & Patmor 2012) and requires teachers to articulate their values and beliefs related to their vision as these influence practices (Brown 2006; King 2017). This approach would arguably require the involvement of all teacher educators, rather than only those delivering leadership courses.

The third approach is to develop pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills through service-learning (Ado 2016; Bond & Sterrett 2014; Lundeberg, Tikoo, Willers & Donley 2004; Salam, Iskandar, Ibrahim & Farooq 2019; Stewart 2012). Service learning is an experiential education approach that aims to promote pre-service teachers' understanding of concepts and theories and to develop skills through community service and reflection (Jacoby 1996). Stewart (2012), in an empirical study in the United States, claimed that participation in service-learning activities would increase pre-service teachers' sense of servant leadership (e.g. emotional healing, persuasion) and sense of self-efficacy in pre-service teacher engagement, instruction, and classroom management. In another study, Lundeberg et al. (2004) revealed that pre-service teachers developed their leadership in technology and the classroom through supporting and teaching in-service teachers with technology skills in workshops.

Leadership Learning for Early Career Teachers

The empirical literature has shown two ways by which early career teachers learn and develop their leadership knowledge and skills.

Early career teachers continue learning and developing leadership knowledge and skills through formal leadership programmes (Harris & Townsend 2007; Ross et al. 2011; Snoek & Volman 2014). Many of these are postgraduate degree programmes with a focus on leadership learning. However, the evidence regarding the impact of these programmes on leadership remains modest or varies. A few empirical studies suggest positive impact of graduate programmes on preparation and development of leadership competences (e.g. Adams et al. 2013; Mongillo, Lawrence & Hong 2012; Snoek & Volman 2014). However, Leonard, Petta and Porter (2012) looked at 21 graduate programmes focusing on teacher leadership and questioned whether 'graduate education is the best route to teacher leadership' (pp. 200-201). Snoek, Enthoven, Kessels and Volman (2017: 26) maintain that 'strategic alignment and shared ownership between university and school' is important in developing teacher leadership through graduate education.

Another important form of leadership learning is through 'leading by learning' and 'learning by leading' (Collinson 2012). More specifically, early career teachers can develop their leadership knowledge and skills through in-school professional learning activities where they are mentored by senior colleagues (Gul, Demir & Criswell 2019) and lead their peers with expertise (Gao, Wong, Choy & Wu 2010).

In a growing field of literature on educational leadership, leadership learning in the pre-service stage is still limited. This paper contributes to this body of literature in reporting on an ongoing study of pre-service leadership learning across three contexts. The next section outlines the process of data collection and analysis.

Methodology

The current paper draws on a complete analysis of six focus group interviews as part of an ongoing study that explores leadership learning in pre-service teacher education in three jurisdictions: Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. This research was funded by SCoTENS (The Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South) which is 'a network of 24 colleges of education, university education departments, teaching councils, curriculum councils, education trade unions and education centres on the island of Ireland with a responsibility for and interest in teacher education' aiming to support collaborative research projects and practices in teacher education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (SCoTENS 2019: para 1).

In Northern Ireland, Qualified Teacher Status can be achieved through a four-year undergraduate degree. Alternatively, a one-year postgraduate qualification can be undertaken, which is the course completed by the Northern Ireland participants in this study. In Scotland, pre-service teacher education comprises either a one-year postgraduate programme qualification or a four-year undergraduate programme. There is an option in both instances to complete a further year of study to receive a Master's Qualification. A four-year undergraduate degree in teacher education was undertaken by the pre-service teachers and early career teachers who attended the focus groups in the Republic of Ireland. Teachers may choose to undertake a two-year post-graduate Master's qualification.

A qualitative case study approach was adopted to explore each jurisdiction (Stake 1995), namely Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. A qualitative case study approach allowed for in-depth exploration from a variety of sources and perspectives (Yin 2014). Ethical approval was granted prior to data collection and plain language statements and informed consent forms were obtained from each participant prior to data collection. In each of these three jurisdictions, an invitation to participate was extended to teaching staff and academics within the participating universities[1], pre-service teachers and early career teachers along with various stakeholders in education at national level.

A two-day meeting was held in each jurisdiction for gathering and sharing of information in terms of the policy context at national level and policy and practice at university level in relation to leadership at the pre-service stage. The team reviewed pre-service teacher education curricula, policy guidance, teacher professional standards and codes, where

[1] Dublin City University, University of Glasgow and Ulster University

applicable, in each of the three participating systems, which informed the design of interview protocols. Data collection took place during these two-day meetings and involved focus group interviews. Overall, six focus group interviews were held with 31 participants across the three jurisdictions: five pre-service teachers, three early career teachers and 23 various stakeholders, which included representatives from Teaching Councils, Teacher Unions, Teacher Educators, Government Departments of Education, Leadership bodies and various Teacher Support Services.

The process of collecting and analysing this set of data involved four iterative stages. In the first stage, the research team conducted two focus group interviews in the meeting in Scotland in November 2018. These focus group interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. A thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke 2006) was used to analyse these two focus group interviews. Initial themes and patterns were identified, which informed subsequent data collection in the Republic of Ireland context in the second stage in March 2019. Another two focus group interviews were conducted in this jurisdiction, followed by transcription and thematic analysis of these data. The findings from this second stage similarly informed preparation for data collection in the third stage. A similar procedure of data collection and analysis was carried out in Northern Ireland in June 2019.

Upon data collection and analysis in Northern Ireland, another round of thematic data analysis across six interviews was undertaken in the fourth stage. This iterative process allowed for moving back and forth through the data, questioning and challenging previous emerging codes and themes.

Findings

The current paper presents the participants' views on and concerns around leadership learning in pre-service education across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. This section outlines three key themes emerging from the data, namely (i) implicit and explicit elements of leadership in pre-service teacher education, (ii) evolving professional identity and self-efficacy; and (iii) concerns about system readiness**.** Selected responses from participants are included, for the purpose of exemplification, in the following section with participants indicated by their position (PT pre-service teacher, T teacher and ST stakeholder – as outlined in the methodology section) and their jurisdiction by NI (Northern Ireland); RoI (Republic of Ireland); and SC (Scotland).

Implicit and Explicit Elements of Leadership Learning

Pre-service teachers in the study believed that 'the seeds [of leadership] need to be planted in pre-service education' (PT, NI) reflecting findings in the literature (Neumann et al. 2007; Pucella 2014; Quinn et al. 2006). Many felt that leadership learning was implicit in the pre-service phase, especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, they felt it needs to be explicit and focus not only on the school but the wider education system (Bond 2011). Some

confusion was evident, related to the definition of leadership, with one participant asking, 'Are we using leadership as a proxy for professionalism?' (ST, SC). Many participants agreed that leadership and professionalism are very similar but suggested the focus in pre-service seemed to be on preparing teachers as professionals but not as leaders.

Within each jurisdiction there was agreement on the need for explicit and implicit leadership learning in pre-service education to create an expectation of leadership as reflected by one stakeholder in the Republic of Ireland, '... to incorporate leadership learning' from the outset. Another stakeholder in the Republic of Ireland felt pre-service teachers need 'opportunities for stepping up within pre-service education in tutorial groups ... responsibilities … experiencing leadership'. One stakeholder in Scotland recognised leadership as 'taking responsibility and stepping up'. This concept of stepping up (Buchanan 2015) was mentioned by several participants with a stakeholder in the Republic of Ireland stating that teacher educators of pre-service teachers need to be explicit in developing 'an attitude of stepping [up] to leadership … which is not entirely about their own classroom'. Overall participants' perceptions show that teachers may evidence leadership of student learning, their own learning (Allen 2016), leadership with parents (Quinn et al. 2006) and teaching assistants within their classrooms and that this is largely done collaboratively as they interact with others to enhance professional practice (MacBeath et al. 2018). Perhaps leadership is about the collaborative interactions taking place as distinct from where they are taking place.

Several examples of lived experiences of and an explicit focus on leadership within pre-service education were cited by pre-service and early career teachers and those working in HE in each of the three contexts. One newly qualified teacher who had undertaken the module on Leadership for Inclusion as part of a specialism argued that 'content knowledge can only get you so far ... [need] competencies of a leader as well … [to] try and overhaul the system … I think I would feel confident enough to try and change things' (PT, RoI). This endorses the point made by a stakeholder in the Republic of Ireland who stated that recent research (Hick et al. 2018) showed that those who undertook the specialist pathway in Special and Inclusive Education as part of their pre-service education felt better prepared and more confident to narrow the knowledge practice gap between pre-service education and what is happening in schools.

This expectation to practise leadership is set from the beginning, to support teachers in enhancing their professionalism by focusing on their individual and collective agency and advocacy (King & Stevenson 2017) to support their students' learning. This sense of agency helped the pre-service teachers in their evolving professional identities and self-efficacy – our second key theme – to which we now turn.

Evolving Professional Identity and Self-Efficacy

Within each of the jurisdictions, participants believed that encouraging pre-service teachers to articulate their values and beliefs could help them to develop their professional identity

and prepare them for leadership (ST, SC), supporting previous research on leadership learning (Bond 2011; Brown 2006). Indeed, a number of respondents suggested that 'values' were one of the differentiators between professionalism and leadership: 'we don't necessarily say "you are being prepared for leadership"… it is the dispositions and values … [we] don't explicitly use [the term] leadership' (ST, SC). Similarly, 'what differentiates ideas of leadership from professionalism [is] around duties, values, beliefs … for everyone in the profession' (ST, SC) and there is an emphasis on 'actually understanding that ... you're always … leading by ... your values, your practice' (ST, NI).

Developing a sense of self-efficacy as a practitioner equipped with leadership learning is considered an important feature of pre-service teacher education. This can be a challenge and some pre-service teachers felt that it is best achieved during school-based placements as it is '… hard to prepare until you get out there' (T, RoI). An approach adopted by some institutions focused initially on developing individual leadership skills to promote self-efficacy. There was an attempt to build from 'leadership of self … in terms of your own professional learning, your own professional development in your own pathway through the programme' to '… leadership of others in the context of what the student [pre-service teacher(s)] would do in school, with their own class, the children that they're working with [and then] in the community, in terms of volunteering activities' (ST, NI). A growing self-awareness of their identity as well as their self-efficacy is similarly argued to be important. They need to know '… who they are as people, where their strengths are, [and] where the areas are that they need to work on' (ST, NI).

The key role of teacher educators in developing self-efficacy was widely articulated. Teacher educators have to demonstrate their own '… confidence … to use skills [the tutor has] to bring that confidence out in other people so that they can use the skills that they have' (PT, RoI). The tension between over-direction and independence was deftly captured by one respondent: 'If too much structure then that is not the conception of leadership. If too much agency aren't you entitled to some direction in where you take your project?' (ST, RoI). It was commonly agreed that there was a need to model leadership with pre-service teachers: 'What are our expectations for students, [pre-service teacher(s)] how do they see leadership enacted in their lives? [We] should model it' (ST, RoI) and 'it is about getting that message across to them as best as we can … modelling in our classes subliminally each day and just show them what we perceive a leader to be' (ST, NI). Also, 'it's great to tell them how to be a leader, but if they're not seeing that practice in the lecture theatre … "go do this, go off and do that" but if they're seeing somebody who's quite didactic at the front, who isn't actually doing … leadership … the implicit is what they pick up from your behaviour' (ST, NI).

In all jurisdictions, relationships with schools and mentors were considered particularly important. A feeling expressed by a number of the pre-service or early career teachers was that, as a pre-service teacher on placement, they were 'low on the food chain' (T, RoI). Additionally, 'because you're a learning teacher, the other teachers obviously are going to have more experience than you. And it depends on how much they let you do or their control

of you over the class' (T, NI). Even after formal qualification as a teacher, mentoring can be challenging: 'How can you ensure that the people who are mentoring them when they get out of their teaching practice and then into their first jobs, are capable?' (ST, NI).

When mentors and schools were encouraging to pre-service teachers in their placements, this helped promote self-efficacy. Both pre-service and early career teachers reflected on disparities in placements: 'When I was on [one] … I remember the teacher was quite controlling and didn't give me much room … [which was] undermining … after that I had a teacher who was so confident in her own teaching, she gave me more room … she allowed me to grow as a teacher' (T, RoI). Another commented: 'My teacher let me make mistakes. She would sit down and say, "this didn't go well, what could we try, what will work?" [While she] did not give me total rein … she gave me confidence to try things out' (PT, RoI). Another pre-service teacher, reflecting on one of her placements, noted: 'If the Head of Department had more of a hierarchical view … then [I] wouldn't have felt as comfortable. Whereas there was no kind of feeling of hierarchy and it was all very open. We share if you have an idea' (PT, NI). Pre-service teachers can develop self-efficacy prior to their placements. One considered that:

> The thing that helped me a lot this year … especially at the start, was just instilling you with confidence that you can actually be a teacher … I didn't know if I could actually be a teacher … whereas if … you're instilled with confidence through peer teaching and things like that … and you're like, 'oh, I actually can do this', then you go in and can provide ideas that they didn't already have. (PT, NI)

There is a need for a pre-service teacher to have a level of leadership readiness and confidence, and teacher educators have an important role in helping to develop that. The need for leadership learning to equip pre-service teachers for occasions when they might encounter resistance or opposition was also highlighted as was the need to 'prepare' actors within the system for pre-service and early career teachers who are more 'leadership aware'. There is also a need therefore for the wider systems and schools into which these early career teachers move to be ready to adopt and support them to exercise leadership. A need for system readiness emerged as an important third theme in our study which is explored below.

Concerns About System Readiness

A particular issue to emerge from the data was a concern that the 'system' was not yet ready to embrace these early career teachers who had experienced leadership learning. Arguably these teachers are more articulate and knowledgeable about leadership practice and potentially can be more assertive in the exercise of their own leadership and in their critique of others' leadership. 'System' in this context refers to 'micro system' (i.e. classroom and school) and 'macro system' (i.e. local/regional and national level) (see O'Brien, Murphy, Draper, Forde & McMahon 2016).

System readiness depends on the nature of the partnership that underpins the relationship with pre-service educators, placement schools and local authorities; a shared understanding of the conceptual model of the teacher; and the extent to which placement schools and partners are co-designers and co-constructors of pre-service programmes (Snoek et al. 2017). For one participant the '3Ps' are at the core: 'placement, partnerships and pedagogy' (ST, RoI). Teacher educators have an important part in this relationship, together with school-based mentors and placement tutors (Ying & Ho 2015). However, enduring cultures and perceptions of the role and place of pre-service and early career teachers may act as inhibitors to the enactment and exercise of leadership (Nguyen et al. 2019). This requires a shift in how leadership is understood and shared across the school so that leadership learning is about 'leadership for a wider role in the life and work in a school, which may prepare them for more formal leadership at a later stage' (ST, RoI). The responsibility for this shift is seen to extend beyond teacher education with 'responsibility on the other side too' (ST, RoI). 'Young teachers with wonderful initiatives/electives [need] to be embraced and accepted and showcased and the expertise accepted' (ST, RoI) with a need to 'educate current school leaders about young teachers' (ST, RoI). While principals have a critical role in setting the culture and climate in their school, a concern was expressed that delegation of day-to-day responsibilities for pre-service and early career teachers to a senior teacher 'who is already overwhelmed with duties' may impact negatively (ST, NI). Nonetheless, the role of senior leaders in the school was seen to be important as 'Senior leadership [make] the link between what they [pre-service teachers] are doing in the classroom and collaborative leadership' (ST, RoI). Indeed, the role of others in the exercise of teacher agency was seen to be critical as 'agency has to be mediated by others in school' (ST, SC), (Priestly, Biesta & Robinson 2015).

It is important therefore to be 'careful in managing the expectations of student [pre-service] teachers, to prevent them from being deflated and to recognise that they can make changes within their career, but they won't change things in their first year' (ST, RoI) (Turnbull 2015). The need for early career teachers to have a critical awareness of the systems that they were entering was underlined by a number of participants (for example, ST, RoI) but there was also recognition that those systems could be dysfunctional. A trade union-led 'work to rule' policy in Northern Ireland during the course of the study impacted on the potential and scope for new teachers to engage in collaborative leadership (PT, NI), raising concerns from some participants that new teachers were experiencing negative contexts and role models for leadership in schools (ST, NI). There was a concern that the wider political system did not currently offer good examples of leadership: globally and locally, especially in the Northern Ireland context where the jurisdiction was without a locally devolved administration for over two years (ST, NI).

Findings from the analysis of six focus groups underline the complexity of the education sector that pre-service teachers and new teachers are part of. It is a multi-level system with a range of actors and stakeholders. For early career teachers this is complex terrain – they encounter not one but many systems, cultures and subcultures and leadership learning can

help them develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to navigate and make sense of this. While this may help new teachers to become more 'system ready' the extent to which the system is ready for them remains a concern.

Discussion

The findings on participants' perspectives and experiences of leadership learning in pre-service teacher education suggest teachers' receptivity of leadership learning and enactment and highlight their challenges in learning and exercising leadership.

Pre-service and early career teachers articulated their receptivity of leadership learning opportunities and willingness to get involved in leadership activities. These teachers felt that sharing expertise with colleagues is a form of leadership, which is instrumental in developing their own leadership skills. They were particularly interested in sharing their expertise on curricular and instructional areas. This perception of peer sharing as a form of peer leading and learning reflects the method of 'leading by learning' and 'learning by leading' (Collinson 2012). In particular, this form of leadership is perceived to occur from the early stage of pre-service teacher education. The aspirations and willingness to practise leadership of pre-service and early career teachers have also been evidenced across contexts, for example, in England (Muijs, Chapman & Armstrong 2013), in Hong Kong (Ying & Ho 2015), in the Republic of Ireland (King 2017) and in the United States (Reeves & Lowenhaupt 2016).

Although the receptivity, aspirations and willingness are necessary, pre-service and early career teachers would benefit from greater support from teacher education programmes and systems. The findings evidence some confusion and dissonance related to the definition and the presence of leadership learning in the curricula for pre-service teachers. Participants came to a shared understanding of leadership as influence, with a focus on collaborative practices (Hargreaves & O'Connor 2017; King & Stevenson 2017; Yukl 2013) regardless of where they are taking place. There was a perception that leadership is not only part of teaching professionalism but also an additional 'stepping up' (Buchanan 2015) beyond that zone. It is argued that a teacher could be professional and be missing leadership competences (Harris & Townsend 2007). An approach adopted by some institutions focused initially on developing individual leadership skills to promote self-efficacy. A growing self-awareness of their identity as well as their self-efficacy is similarly argued to be important. They need to know '… who they are as people, where their strengths are, [and] where the areas are that they need to work on' (ST, NI).

Many participants in this study (Scotland and Northern Ireland) felt that leadership learning was implicitly incorporated in the curricula of the pre-service teacher education programmes that they had experienced or were experiencing. Some argued that they had been prepared to be a teacher but under-prepared to be a leader. These teachers called for a more explicit focus on leadership learning alongside an inclusion of the language of leadership in the curricula for pre-service teachers. However, some concerns were raised regarding an already

overloaded curriculum for pre-service teachers and teacher educators alike. Nevertheless, experiences of leadership while on school placement as a pre-service teacher or mentoring as an early career teacher (Gul et al. 2019) were cited as important for promoting self-efficacy and confidence to practise leadership.

Strong and explicit embeddedness of leadership learning into pre-service teacher education programmes would be helpful in developing teachers' leadership knowledge and skills (Bond 2011; King 2017; Xu & Patmor 2012) and in promoting their identities and efficacy of leadership that is a critical aspect of leadership development (Poekert, Alexandrou & Shannon 2016). In addition, this study reinforces the need for teacher educators to model leadership in their practice with pre-service teachers, and to be explicit about identifying it and naming it (Bond 2011; King 2017; Ying & Ho 2015). This stronger embeddedness would arguably reduce early career teachers' tensions and issues in leading colleagues as a result of uncertainty and unpreparedness (Nguyen et al. 2019) and reflects Bond's (2011) call for leadership learning to be integrated and embedded across courses within programmes.

Alongside a more explicit focus of leadership learning in pre-service teacher education programmes, a more supportive system is critical in nurturing teachers' leadership aspirations and motivations and promoting their leadership development. At the micro level of system, supportive and positive school structures and cultures are seen as a crucial condition for genuine teacher leadership (Cooper et al. 2016; Ghamrawi 2010; Woodhouse & Pedder 2017). Early career teachers in this study emphasised the need for a structure and culture that is ready to embrace their initiatives and their engagement in leadership activities and roles. At the regional and national levels, there is an expectation that all teachers are leaders within the Scottish *Professional Standards for Teaching* (GTCS 2012) and the Irish Teaching Council's *Framework for Teachers' Learning* (TCI 2016) where teachers are expected to be leaders of their own classrooms, their own learning and that of their colleagues through mentoring and induction. However, the findings suggest that teachers have experienced major challenges in meeting this expectation of acting as both teacher and leader. Early career teachers' leadership roles are generally less visible and explicit in policy documents. This variation in the emphasis on leadership roles for early career (and pre-service) teachers across the jurisdictions may well have an impact on its practice. These challenges suggest the need for stronger support from pre-service teacher education programmes in getting their pre-service teachers better prepared to enact leadership in a multi-level system.

Conclusions

The current paper evidences the views and concerns of educators and other stakeholders around teachers' leadership learning in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. The findings were drawn from an analysis of six focus groups with pre-service teachers, early career teachers and other stakeholders in the three jurisdictions. It should be acknowledged that this sample may not be representative of larger numbers of educators in

these systems. However, the detailed analysis of these focus group interviews enables us to raise implications for teacher education and future research.

While pre-service and early career teachers are receptive of leadership learning and willing to assume leadership, they face challenges and tensions. Leading the learning of others is arguably challenging in a culture 'where isolated practice still predominates' (O'Sullivan 2011: 112) and little leadership learning happens at pre-service education (Forde et al. 2018). Pre-service teacher education programmes are critical in promoting leadership learning for future educators. They should play an active role in developing teachers' leadership knowledge and skills and nurturing their aspirations and motivations for leadership. The findings suggest a need for a more explicit focus on leadership learning in pre-service teacher education programmes. From study of the three systems reported in this paper, an explicit focus was evident in only one – the Republic of Ireland. Arguably the focus on leadership learning needs to be both explicit and implicit for it to be effective and result in self-efficacy and identity as a leader. Therefore, appropriate incorporation of leadership learning into the curricula is of great importance. A systematic review of current pre-service teacher education programmes, with consideration of contexts and cultures, would inform the extent and methods of such incorporation.

Future empirical research on leadership learning in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland, using a greater sample and alternative methodologies for verification purposes, would be helpful in informing teacher education programmes in these systems. Looking forward, research on this significant topic across more systems and societies would provide a more holistic picture of leadership learning at the international level.

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Early Childhood Educational Leaders in Australia: Tensions and Possibilities in Leadership Preparation and Capacity Building

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Abstract: *Contemporary research underscores the importance of educational leadership in building quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) environments and in supporting educators to advance children's learning. The suite of Australian early childhood policy documents that comprise the National Quality Framework (NQF) reflects the value of effective leadership in promoting learning and development within ECEC settings. Under the NQF, the educational leader role was, for the first time, positioned as a key driver of the continuous professional development of early childhood educators. Despite these policy directives there is inconsistency in the role and job description, clarity of authority in the position and time allocated to the educational leader to enact policy expectations. This paper considers tensions and possibilities in early childhood leadership preparation afforded through both initial teacher education programmes, as well as postgraduate studies and professional development courses. It examines the place of university studies in the preparation of educational leaders by drawing on research based on their employment experiences.*

Keywords: Early childhood education and care, educational leadership, leadership preparation

Introduction

Contemporary research attests that educational leadership is key to building quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programmes and supporting Early Childhood (EC) educators to advance young children's learning (Ebbeck & Waniganayake 2003; Page & Tayler 2016; Rodd 2006; Sims, Forrest, Semann & Slattery 2014; Siraj & Hallet 2014; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni 2007). Educational leadership evidenced through research has, in turn, influenced Australian national policy on ECEC. Consequently, a focus on educational leadership is now clearly evident in the regulatory and policy documents comprising the

National Quality Framework (NQF) covering ECEC settings in Australia (ACECQA 2011a, 2018; COAG 2009; DEEWR 2009). This paper draws on research that examined the employment experiences of EC educational leaders and the place of university studies in the preparation of these leaders in Australia. We argue the importance of addressing the complexities reported by educational leaders and other educators working in ECEC services in generating new theories and robust models for leadership preparation and capacity building in the EC sector in this country.

The Australian Policy Context

EC educators in Australia work within a policy context that outlines a clear set of expectations regarding educational leadership and its role in advancing teacher effectiveness and child learning outcomes (Page & Tayler 2016). The key national policy documents influencing ECEC settings in Australia today comprise the approved learning frameworks, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (DEEWR 2009) and *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Aged Care in Australia* (DEEWR 2011), the *Education and Care Services National Law* (Parliament of Victoria 2010), *Regulations* (MCEECDYA 2011) and the *National Quality Standard* (ACECQA 2011b and updated in 2017). Collectively, these documents make up the *National Quality Framework* (NQF). Under the NQF, the educational leader role was, for the first time, mandated and positioned as a key driver of quality assessment and accreditation of ECEC services, and this role included a key emphasis on supporting the continuous professional development of other educators who are co-workers.

Since 2012 the owner or the 'approved provider' of an ECEC service in Australia has been required to appoint an educational leader to '… lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service' (MCEECDYA 2011: Part 4.4 Division 1.5.118) and 'to mentor colleagues in their implementation practices' (ACECQA 2019b: 143). This also meant that centre owners must '… designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual as educational leader at the service' (Regulation 118, MCEECDYA 2011: 133) to fulfil these expectations. In addition, under Quality Area Seven of the *National Quality Standard* revised as *Governance and Leadership* (ACECQA 2017), the educational leader is expected to establish a positive organisational culture and a productive professional learning community guided by shared values and a shared vision for young children's learning and development. This involves mentoring and supporting co-workers through processes of self-reflection, ongoing learning and continuous improvement of their educational programmes and practices. From 2009, for the first time, these standards have been applicable across the full range of ECEC services in Australia comprising long day care, kindergarten/preschool, family day care and outside school hours care.

Conceptualisation of the Educational Leader in Australian Policy

The role of the educational leader outlined in the NQF was informed by contemporary research that provided compelling evidence of the importance of early childhood education and more specifically the role of the EC educator in advancing children's outcomes in prior to school settings (Ackerman & Barnett 2006; Burchinal, Kainz & Cai 2011; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Cryer & Howes 1997; Shonkoff & Phillips 2000). International research further underscored the importance of educational leadership in building quality ECEC environments and supporting educators to effectively advance young children's learning and development (Sammons et al. 2002; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni 2007; Sylva et al. 2003). This evidence highlighted the positive impact that quality educational leadership had on young children's learning and development (Siraj & Hallet 2014). It also identified key practices of effective leadership (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni 2007). Key practices included building a collective vision with colleagues, developing shared understandings, meanings and goals regarding teaching and learning, effectively communicating, encouraging reflection, monitoring and assessing of teaching practices, building a team commitment to ongoing professional development, enacting distributed leadership, building a professional learning community and team culture, strengthening parent and community collaborations and partnerships, and striking the balance between leading and managing.

Recent research has further highlighted the range of skills and knowledge(s) required by educational leaders to support colleagues to improve their educational programmes and practices to advance child learning. These findings also include sharing specialised knowledge of theory and research on how children learn, evidence-based practices that advance child, programme planning, coaching and mentoring to deepen colleagues' pedagogical knowledge and fostering colleagues' commitment to improve their daily practices with children as well as tracking and monitoring the effectiveness of leadership and teaching on child learning (Colmer, Waniganayake & Field 2015; Couglin & Baird 2013; Fonsén 2013; Page & Tayler 2016; Stamopoulos & Barblett 2018; Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd 2012, 2017). The role of an effective educational leader is thus complex and multi-faceted and requires expert knowledge on teaching and learning processes, adult learning, and leading learning.

Challenges and Tensions in Establishing and Enacting the Role of Educational Leader in Australian ECEC Settings

While the introduction of the role of the educational leader can be viewed as a necessary and important change, not surprisingly, transitioning into this new role has proved a complex undertaking for educators in the ECEC sector. Collectively, the NQF policy initiatives presented a new set of accountabilities and expectations of leadership practices in ECEC services throughout Australia (Nuttall, Thomas & Wood 2014). Challenges noted in the Australian EC research literature indicate that the educational leader role presented a

departure from well-established models and practices that were in place in ECEC services prior to the NQF. Nuttall et al. (2014), for example, note that the new emphasis on educational leadership created a shift in how leadership was understood and enacted in ECEC services. Prior to the reforms, leadership had been enacted from administrative and managerial perspectives with no clear focus on children's pedagogy and adult learning. Shifting the leadership lens to leading for learning was a new and complex emphasis. A further complexity was that the role of educational leader was mandated for a range of services – long day care, kindergarten/preschool, family day care and outside school hours care – that prior to the reform had varying degrees of experience with quality assurance processes and increased expectations as outlined in the NQF. In some of these services the role of educational leader was one of several roles that an EC educator and/or Director was required to enact. (Note, for the ease of reading this paper, we are using the words 'EC educator' to embrace all categories of EC staff, including teachers and assistants.) This meant that educational leaders had to build new understandings of the difference between being an effective centre manager and educational leader (Nuttall et al. 2014) at a time in Australia when there was an absence of proven models and understandings of educational leadership developed in conjunction with and for the ECEC sector (Grarock & Morrissey 2013; Nuttall et al. 2014).

An additional challenge was that professional learning and development of educators had previously been outsourced and offered externally (Nuttall et al. 2014), with individual educators participating with EC colleagues from diverse ECEC settings (Hadley, Waniganayake & Shepherd 2015; Waniganayake et al. 2017). Until recently, there were limited options for workshops or any type of specialist EC training focusing on educational leaders. This is symptomatic of the lack of preparedness of the ECEC sector, as a whole, in responding to major policy reforms as noted by the Productivity Commission (2011). The NQF, however, required educational leaders to offer ongoing professional learning within their service at a time when they, alongside their colleagues, were contending with new expectations and accountabilities outlined in the NQS, the EYLF and the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *Regulations* (Nuttall et al. 2014; Waniganayake et al. 2017). This was particularly challenging given that educational leaders were not experienced in or prepared for adult learning and were not usually offered professional learning to support this role (Fleet, Soper, Semann & Madden 2015; Nuttall et al. 2014). In addition, diversity of staff qualifications and high rates of turnover in the ECEC sector created further challenges for educational leaders seeking to develop a collective vision and support their colleagues to improve their educational programmes and practices (Nuttall, Thomas & Henderson 2018).

A further complexity facing educational leaders was that service providers were not mandated to provide job descriptions or to allocate time to this role. As a result, the EC sector witnessed inconsistencies as ECEC service management struggled to identify a suitably qualified educator and define the roles and responsibilities of their educational leaders (Fleet et al. 2015; Grarock & Morrissey 2013; Nuttall et al. 2014; Sims, Waniganayake & Hadley

2018). Discussion of adequate pay to reflect the increased responsibilities of the role has not been addressed since the implementation of the reform began (Fleet et al. 2015; Sims & Waniganayake 2015) and continues to be challenging for educators and centre management.

The aforementioned gaps and inconsistencies in the supports offered to educational leaders to assist them to enact change were recognised in a review of the NQS by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and resulted in a greater emphasis on employers and management being expected to support educational leaders. That is, the NQS now requires that educational leaders are 'supported' (ACECQA 2017: Element 7.2.2) and that their 'roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service' (ACECQA 2017: Element 7.1.3). These changes reflect a growing recognition of the need for improved support mechanisms required to enable educational leaders to implement their role. Researchers also affirm the importance of service owners and managers understanding the empirical basis and motivation behind policy reform in providing adequate, ongoing support to educational leaders to be effective in their role (Fleet et al. 2015; Grarock & Morrissey 2013; Loo & Agbenyega 2015).

Experiences of Educational Leaders in Australian ECEC Settings

In the years following the NQF reforms in Australia, the experiences of EC educational leaders and their colleagues in the field have shed further light on the range of challenges that are experienced in enacting this new role. Research studies undertaken in long day care and kindergarten services in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), New South Wales (NSW), and Victoria (Fleet et al. 2015; Grarock & Morrissey 2013; Nuttall et al. 2014) highlight the personal, relational, and structural barriers that have existed in ECEC services, their impact on the effectiveness of the educational leader's role and what support structures are required to assist them to perform this role. Grarock and Morrissey (2013), for example, reported the low sense of self-efficacy of kindergarten teachers acting as educational leaders in long day care services in Victoria. While these teachers noted that the formal title of educational leader had built their confidence in enacting change, they also expressed a reluctance to see themselves as leaders (Grarock & Morrissey 2013). This reluctance could perhaps be explained by the fact that they had both experienced success in leading changes in their rooms that aligned with the NQF but at the same time found it difficult to create change with colleagues in other rooms in their centres. This may, in turn, have been connected to the fact that the educational leaders in this study were degree qualified kindergarten teachers funded to provide a preschool programme in long day care services. Kindergarten teachers are under different industrial awards and receive higher salaries and more holidays than their child-care colleagues. The different work conditions for educators employed within the one service can create tension and may also be part of the difficulties experienced by educational leaders in this study.

Nuttall et al. (2014) similarly reported that educational leaders in Victoria felt ambivalent about their role in advancing quality through a process of continuous improvement. They argue that the absence of clear models of what educational leadership looked like in practice at this time resulted in educational leaders defaulting back to more familiar models of managerial leadership. Nuttall et al. (2018) further noted the tendency of educational leaders to initially focus on individual educators rather than on the more difficult task of building the collective capacity of their teams. Fleet et al. (2015), on the other hand, noted that educational leaders in NSW and ACT reported success in their support of colleagues' implementation of the EYLF and in building a repertoire of teaching skills, practices and approaches to teaching children (Fleet et al. 2015). However, this research was based on methods of self-assessment and educational leaders' perceptions of their roles as change agents may have been a 'hopeful' rather than realistic assessment of practice (Fleet et al.: 34). Researchers also highlighted that success is contingent on the culture of the services including the openness of staff to welcome and work alongside educational leaders.

These studies, nonetheless, highlight the varying degrees of success and resistance Australian educational leaders have experienced in leading change in their services. They, in turn, speak to the importance of providing clear support structures within ECEC services so that educational leaders have sufficient time, space, resources, and expert support to enact their roles and responsibilities with all educators in their services (Fleet et al. 2015; Grarock & Morrissey 2013; Nuttall et al. 2014). These studies also draw attention to the need for tailored, in-depth professional learning that builds educational leaders' knowledge, skills, and understanding of educational leadership in both a theoretical and practice-based sense (Nuttall et al. 2014; Sims, Waniganayake & Hadley 2018, 2019).

It is imperative that attention is paid to the lived experiences of educational leaders employed in the field and addressing these tensions and complexities in leadership preparation. This involves the examination of both early childhood initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, as well as in postgraduate studies and professional development courses on leadership completed while being employed in the sector and performing these roles. These pathways offer important mechanisms through which EC educators can be supported to navigate the complexities and tensions in the field, build deeper understandings of educational leadership and achieve the high aspirations for quality provisioning to ensure children's development and learning. These issues are complex and will be explored more fully in the following section.

Research on Leadership Preparation

There is some early research undertaken by Australian researchers on EC leadership preparation of pre-service EC student teachers (Diamond 2014) and EC educators and educational leaders seeking professional development and learning to enhance their leadership capabilities (Nuttall et al. 2018; Pilsworth et al. 2017; Stamopoulos 2015;

Waniganayake 2016). These studies represent diverse participants working in ECEC settings in a range of contexts but collectively underline the importance and value of expert mentoring of students in leadership preparation development initiatives at university and when they have transitioned into the ECEC workforce. Diamond (2014), for example, investigated the impact of a 12-week (semester long) leadership and advocacy unit on final year EC student teachers' perceptions of themselves as leaders at one Australian university. Her study demonstrated that student teachers' misconceptions about leadership were dispelled and that their self-perceptions of leadership capabilities improved as a result of participating in the unit of study. Targeted and relevant readings on leadership and 'discussions with peers, site personnel and others' (p. 19) were noted as contributing to these outcomes. She also attributed these outcomes to the scaffolded expert mentoring of the students' project work by university academics and EC service staff.

Various studies conducted within Australia have further underscored the positive impact of expert mentoring on EC educators engaged in leadership training and capacity building courses available in the sector. These are typically small-scale studies conducted in different parts of the country that often included a professional partnership between a university and a non-government agency. Research by Stamopoulos (2015) in Western Australia, with 17 educators participating in an action research training programme on leadership, for example, found that their confidence increased as a result of mentoring from the researchers throughout the study. Analysing the personal accounts of educators working in the State of New South Wales, Waniganayake (2016) also reflected on the value of 'creating a safe space' enabled by expert mentors where 'like-minded peers could share ideas, learning, fears and possibilities' (p. 75). This report documents the leadership journeys of EC educators from six successive cohorts who completed a professional development programme for aspiring leaders based on an inquiry-based practitioner research model sustained over 10-12 months. Research by Nuttall et al. (2018) within a municipality in the State of Victoria also noted the positive impact of researchers using double stimulation techniques in fostering sustainable leadership practices. This study examined the formative interventions in leadership development with newly appointed educational leaders. Their research enabled educational leaders to build new understandings of educational leadership that involved a departure from focusing on individual mentoring and problem solving to building a sense of collective leadership and cohesive capacity within an ECEC service. Likewise, another university-based research partnership with government and ECEC services in Victoria noted the benefits of a one-year professional learning intervention. It consisted of specialised pedagogical training with university staff and external expert coaching support over a sustained period of time for educational leaders to enact their roles more effectively. This research reported that training and external coaching supported educational leaders to confidently and effectively build a process of continuous pedagogical improvement with colleagues, to improve the quality of educator–child interactions and to collectively research their impact on young children's learning and development (Page & Eadie 2019; Pilsworth et al. 2017).

Possibilities for Growing EC Leadership

The Australian studies above highlight the promise of leadership preparation in counteracting the ambivalence, lack of confidence and influence in the role of the educational leader reported by those employed in this role as outlined above. These studies also highlight the gaps in university based ITE courses targeting EC educators. For example, it is difficult to know if any leadership preparation is built into practicum placements in ITE courses offered by Australian universities as this is not a mandated EC course accreditation requirement. To this end, we turn to Norwegian researchers Hognestad and Bøe (2019), who originally used shadowing methodology in the study of pedagogical leadership in Norwegian ECEC settings. They have recently investigated the impact of shadowing as a teaching and learning method in professional practicums for EC leadership preparation at one Norwegian university.

The conceptualisation of leadership preparation by Hognesad and Bøe (2019) views the ECEC setting as a learning arena where both cognitive and social processes are deployed by the teacher leader, who acts as a role model and mentor preparing student teachers for leadership. Collaborating with teacher leaders in real time and observing their work in everyday situations, they argue, provides student teachers with authentic experiences that capture the scope and scale of regular EC leadership practice and is 'characterised by a high tempo, complexity and lots of movement' (p. 22). By enabling student teachers to reflect and question the teacher leaders while shadowing, in turn, allows for the theoretical and practical elements of leadership to be discussed in the moment, including the rationale underpinning observed actions in powerfully relatable ways. Hognestad and Bøe (2019) emphasise the value of this method in dealing with ethical challenges of leadership as 'privacy and data protection' issues (p. 26) as they are encountered during the shadowing. They also assert that leadership preparation based on shadowing is not about copying or simply emulating a teacher leader. Instead, they declare:

> … if independence and autonomy of thought and action is to be nourished in the student, shadowing must allow for conversations where the practice teacher is not concerned just with her own interpretations of practice, but also with acknowledging the thoughts and interpretations of her shadow, the student. (p. 28)

Hognestad & Bøe's (2019) model as well as those described earlier are worthy of further consideration as models of leadership preparation to be explored in and for the Australian ECEC sector.

Discussion

Research evidence has effectively drawn attention to the ways in which leadership preparation has been researched and practiced in Australian university settings and the EC sector in this country. There remains, however, a dearth of information on leadership preparation despite the evidence for its need (Rodd 2015; Waniganayake 2015) and gaps in our knowledge of how leadership preparation is enacted in universities and training

institutions across Australia. There has, for example, been no comprehensive appraisal of the models and methods deployed in EC leadership preparation by Australian universities and vocational education agencies. The analysis of leadership course content in postgraduate courses at Australian universities by Waniganayake and Stipanovic (2016) involved an investigation of ACECQA approved ITE courses and represents the only study of this kind. Before being implemented, Australian ITE courses covering children from birth to five years are assessed by ACECQA against six curriculum areas. Of these, the area of 'EC professional practice' comprises the sub-themes of 'educational leadership, management and administration, professional identity and development, advocacy and research' (ACECQA 2019a: 5). ACECQA's website indicates that over 100 ITE courses at the Bachelor and Master degree levels have been approved. However, there is no publicly available data to assess the extent to which educational leadership preparation has been embedded in these ITE courses and how student teachers are supported to translate leadership theory into practice during their university studies. Moreover, ACECQA (2019a: 4) guidelines on ITE course approval currently stipulate the number of days of 'supervised professional experience during qualification' as being '80 days' for a Bachelor degree and '60 days' for a postgraduate qualification (e.g. typically a two-year Master degree in EC teaching). Although ACECQA also specifies the distribution of these days according to the children's ages inclusive of birth to 12 years, the actual course content to be covered during professional placements is determined by individual universities. This leads to variation in the ways universities translate research evidence on leadership preparation initiatives into practice and results in an inconsistent approach to EC leader preparation within ITE courses across Australia.

Researchers have also noted the barriers and tensions in building and sustaining leadership preparation in the EC sector. Nuttall et al. (2018), for example, have expressed concern that resources available for the effective mentoring are 'extremely limited' in the EC sector (p. 83). Moreover, they note that the level of deep engagement made available through research studies and facilitated by highly skilled researchers experienced in adult education is not realistic in being scaled up in ITE in the EC sector. A national audit of ITE courses available in Australia is however a necessary first step in appraising how universities are preparing EC student teachers for leadership roles.

Additionally, the experiences of educational leaders in Australian ECEC settings raise important questions for early childhood students poised to transition into the workforce who are likely to be appointed as educational leaders (Waniganayake 2014) as well as educators employed in the sector navigating workplace complexities. They are expected to adopt a policy of continuous learning to upgrade and keep abreast of new developments in policy and practice aligned with research-based evidence for children and adult learning. It is thus imperative that EC student teachers are supported and prepared to guide the learning of both young children and adult co-workers before they graduate and as they transition into the sector. Research methodologies employed in leadership preparation studies such as those

outlined in this paper should be explored and adapted to assist EC educators to effectively enact leadership in their services.

Improving the preparation and support available to educational leaders in EC services also relies on creating diverse pathways and innovative models on leadership preparation and continuing development. System enablers such as course accreditation, course evaluations and quality assurance measures can assist in driving leadership improvements across the country. Employer investment is also essential in embedding institutional arrangements that support practitioners to achieve their leadership potential, and thereby impact quality provisioning of EC programmes for children before starting school. Research further highlights the potential of cross sectoral engagement between training institutions and ECEC services especially by offering opportunities for shadowing and mentoring of educational leaders by pre-service teachers when undertaking professional practice placements during their university studies and when transitioning into the EC sector. Developing professional learning communities and networks of practice where educational leaders and professional colleagues in ECEC services can discuss, interrogate and explore leadership tensions, challenges, and possibilities as they emerge is important. These strategies have the potential to generate new knowledge, and theories of educational leadership for the EC sector. This is particularly important as educational leadership is contextual and will be shaped by the vision, core tasks and culture of the local communities in which centres are located (Hujala 2013).

In addition, leadership preparation can be demonstrated through government commitment to working with universities and funding a national longitudinal study to assist in appraising the effectiveness of ITE courses and professional development programmes in EC leadership preparation and capacity building. Models of educational leadership (Page & Tayler 2016; Siraj & Hallet 2014; Stamopoulos & Barblett 2018; Waniganayake et al. 2017) outlining the active ingredients for effective leadership in ECEC settings from research in the sector can be re-tested alongside the experiences and journeys of student teachers as they enter the workforce and teach and lead in diverse early childhood contexts and communities. Study design can also incorporate measures to track the impact of leadership on children's learning and development in prior to school settings. It is through joint research collaborations of this nature that we can build more nuanced and multifaceted understandings of effective educational leadership for a diverse range of Australian ECEC services.

Conclusion

The research evidence on educational leaders' experiences of educational leadership highlights both the tensions and possibilities for effectively building quality ECEC services and systems in Australia. Research based publications on leadership enactment in this country highlight the value of expert mentoring and the experiences of leadership in practice during the teaching and learning period. They additionally raise important considerations

regarding the length and sustainability of leadership preparation courses (over 10 or more months). While this research refers to theories of leadership, it remains a challenge to glean information about content covered in leadership preparation courses from the published papers.

Universities are important vehicles through which ongoing leadership preparation and capacity building occurs. Focused and careful preparation in pre-service and postgraduate studies is essential in building a confident and effective EC workforce who can deliver high quality ECEC for young children and their families. In order to achieve this goal, government, researchers, training institutions, educational leaders and other educators working in ECEC services should work together to generate new theories and robust models for developing educational leadership applicable in and for the EC sector. This work will support us as a collective to navigate the complexities and tensions in the field, build deeper understandings of educational leadership and effective leadership practices and achieve high aspirations for quality provisioning to advance young children's development and learning as outlined in the national reform Agenda for the Australian ECEC sector.

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Developing Pre-Service Teachers' Leadership Capacity Through Group Work

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Abstract: *Teacher preparation programs and coursework call on pre-service teachers to work independently and collaboratively. In this study, researchers re-designed a group activity for pre-service teachers by applying elements of Social Interdependence Theory in an effort to improve teacher-collaboration skills when working in groups. Repeated surveys were used to examine pre-service teachers' leadership functions while working on a collaborative inquiry. Findings suggest pre-service teachers who worked with a group of peers used a range of teacher-leadership functions to accomplish the group task. Leadership was distributed among group members and functions of leadership frequently involved taking lead on a specific task, brainstorming ideas, communicating between learners and engaging in group discussions. Findings from this study serve to inform the design of teacher education programs and coursework, and how theory-informed instructional design with attention to group processing and leadership functions can support the development of teacher-leadership skills.*

Keywords: Teacher-leadership, collaborative inquiry, pre-service teacher programs

Background

The quality of teacher collaboration matters (Hargreaves 2019; Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom 2015). This is one of many defining characteristics of successful learning organizations and should also be one of many foundational experiences early in a teacher's career during their pre-service teacher preparation program (Brown, Hartwell & Thomas 2018). There is no lack of research demonstrating that teachers who work in a collaborative culture are satisfied in their jobs and positively impact student achievement (Goddard, Goddard & Tschannen-Moran 2007; Hargreaves 2019; OECD 2018). Despite the evidence pointing to the value of teacher collaboration, there is less evidence of what that looks like in pre-service teacher preparation programs and the benefits of learning through intentionally designed and scaffolded collaborative experiences.

The intent of our research was to re-design a group work learning activity from a contrived learning experience to a collaborative inquiry experience with an emphasis on developing pre-service teacher-collaboration skills. Our findings revealed that pre-service teachers engaging in collaboration were also developing essential teacher-leadership skills. Empowering teacher leadership early in the career can support the growth of informal and formal leaders in schools (Pineda-Baez, Bauman & Andrews 2019). Leadership is also well-known as a key influence, second only to the quality of teaching, in making a difference towards improved student learning. We argue pre-service education courses should include group work activities designed as a collaborative inquiry experience as a means for developing teacher-leadership skills. Developing collaboration and leadership skills could help retain new teachers in the profession, improve teaching quality, and in turn positively impact student learning.

Literature Review

Pre-service teacher preparation programs are positioned to support new teachers in developing necessary skills to become quality teachers. Group work is an educational mode widely used in teacher education to promote interdependence and collaborative inquiry. Instructional design of group work activities can promote collaborative inquiry. A gap in the literature demonstrates a lack of attention on developing teacher-leadership skills in pre-service teacher preparation programs suggesting research is needed in this area.

Group work. Working effectively in groups has been identified as a critical skill in workplaces including schools (Dumont, Istance & Benavides 2012). *Learning Together* models of cooperative learning involving groups of students working together and handing in one single product as a group has been a method studied by researchers and findings show positive effects for learners (Johnson & Johnson 2002, 2018). Group work is described as a proven educational mode that promotes learning together (Frykedal & Chiriac 2018). This has translated into extensive use of this educational mode in classrooms for students of all ages; however, researchers also note that success is largely dependent on the quality of the teacher (OECD 2018). Likewise, teacher collaboration is recognized to be positively associated with improved student performance and school effectiveness (Goddard et al. 2007; Hargreaves 2019; OECD 2018). Ronfeldt et al. (2015) found 'student achievement gains are greater in schools with stronger collaborative environments and in classrooms of teachers who are stronger collaborators' (p. 512). In other words, students and their teachers can benefit from learning how to work in groups effectively.

Positive interdependence. Researchers assert engagement in active learning benefits overall student learning (Barkley, Major & Cross 2014; Dumont et al. 2012; Johnson & Johnson 2018). Achieving shared goals when working with others actively requires positive interdependence. 'When people clearly perceive positive interdependence, individuals realize their efforts are required for the group to succeed' (Johnson & Johnson 2005: 314). In

education, when students are actively engaged in groups, there are various terms used to describe activities requiring positive interdependence (i.e. problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, team-based learning, collaborative learning, etc.). For example, David Johnson and Roger Johnson (2018), known for their research in cooperative learning, assert that cooperative learning provides the foundation for active learning and student engagement. They defined cooperative learning as 'instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning' (p. 1). It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an extensive review of the literature related to the different terms associated with active learning for group work. In this paper, we will use group work based on the foundation of cooperative learning as an educational mode of active learning and engagement through positive interdependence.

Collaborative inquiry. In the teaching profession, it is common for teachers to work with colleagues to plan a unit together. Interdependent relationships fostered during group work can support a culture of collaborative inquiry (Friesen 2009; Johnson, Johnson & Smith 2014). Post-secondary instructors working with pre-service teachers recognize students need to experience collaborative inquiry before entering the field as novice teachers. Instructors are interested in developing effective strategies that promote active learning and student-to-student interdependence (Clark & Blissenden 2013; Johnson et al. 2014). Although some attention has been given to improving collaborative learning techniques in post-secondary classrooms on-campus (Barkley et al. 2014), we argue that designing opportunities for collaborative inquiry in a post-secondary classroom can prepare beginning teachers to engage in active learning and to work interdependently with colleagues in their schools in future.

Instructional design for collaborative inquiry. Instructional designs can promote collaborative inquiry (Clark & Blissenden 2013; Laurillard 2012) and relationships can be strengthened through collaborative inquiry (Darling-Hammond et al. 2008). Given the complexities of collaborative inquiry and the common use of group work as an educational mode in undergraduate programs, instructors are seeking better strategies to support this type of active learning (Barkley et al. 2014). Instructors can support students in collaborative inquiry by scaffolding (Van de Pol, Volman & Beishuizen 2010). Scaffolding is important for designing collaborative learning experiences because it can be difficult to assess (Hmelo, Chinn, Chan & O'Donnell 2013). Instructors can use formative assessment strategies to move the learning forward (Wiliam 2011) and to help monitor student progress (Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2000). Technology can also support collaborative inquiry (Hmelo et al. 2013) and be used to identify individual contributions (Clarke & Blissenden 2013). As such, instructional design cultivates collaborative inquiry, active learning, and positive interdependence when students are working in groups.

Instructional designs in teacher education programs do not explicitly focus on developing teacher-leadership competencies. Teacher leadership roles (Harris & Muijs 2004) require teachers to work interdependently and build relationships (Nappi 2014). School

Improvement literature points to the importance of capacity building along with conceptualizations of distributive leadership that promote teacher leadership (Harris & Muijs 2004). Activating this leadership potential at all levels and career stages is essential for building leadership capacity (Breakspear 2017). 'Teacher leadership is premised upon the belief that leadership potential is widely spread amongst organizational members' (Harris 2002: 78). Such preparations should teach them leadership skills (Xu & Patmor 2012). An important aspect of teacher leadership is interdependence where teachers have opportunities to work together with a shared purpose of improving student learning (Harris & Muijs 2004; Ronfeldt et al. 2015). Harris (2002) outlines four dimensions of teacher leadership: (1) brokering, (2) participative leadership, (3) mediating, and (4) forging close relationships. According to Harris (2002), brokering explains how teachers take up the recommended changes for school improvement that translate to the classroom. Participative leadership describes teachers working together towards a common goal that encourages collaboration. Mediating occurs when teachers act as sources of expertise for one another. The fourth dimension is forging close relationships which takes place when teachers collaborate. These dimensions outlined by Harris (2002) serve as a framework that is helpful in understanding teacher leadership development.

Pre-service teachers may enter the profession with an expectation to move into early or mid-career leadership roles (Reeves & Lownhaupt 2016). Leadership skills can be learned (Kouzes & Posner 2010) even at the beginning stages in one's teaching career (Xu & Patmor 2012). The potential for leadership is within everyone and is not based on title or position of authority (Kouzes & Posner 2017). However, developing leadership competencies is generally reserved for experienced teachers in graduate programs in education, continuing education courses and other professional learning programs or workshops, and not an expectation for pre-service teacher preparation programs. It is important to note that statistics continue to indicate a high percentage of new teachers leave within their first five years of employment (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey 2018). Researchers also identified workplace conditions associated with attrition, including collegial relationships and time for working with colleagues interdependently (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas 2016).

There is also limited study documenting the development of teacher-leadership skills in undergraduate coursework for pre-service teachers (Ado 2016). In their seminal literature review on teacher leadership, York-Barr and Duke (2004) noted limited pre-service programs emphasized teacher leadership and found that formal training to support teacher leadership development was necessary and recommended pre-service programs foster shared leadership. Given the importance of developing quality teachers with teacher-leadership skills, the purpose of this study is to describe the teacher-leadership skills pre-service teachers developed when engaging in a group work activity designed for collaborative inquiry. This paper centers on the research question: How are pre-service

teachers developing teacher-leadership skills when engaged in collaborative learning designs?

Theoretical Framework

Social Interdependence Theory has been applied to educational studies related to active learning for over 60 years (Johnson & Johnson 2005, 2018). The theory was introduced by Morton Deutsch (1949) and has considerable research demonstrating connections to greater achievement, positive relationships, and interactions. Hence, drawing on elements of a sound theory, such as Social Interdependence Theory, can support instructional design. We applied the five basic elements of the theory (interdependence, individual accountability, interaction patterns, social skills and group processing) to our redesign of a group work activity for pre-service teachers.

First, *interdependence*, may be divided into three categories: goals/outcome, means and boundary. The group work activity was designed with specific goals and learning outcomes, the means were articulated by each group as part of a project plan (roles, responsibilities, accountability, interdisciplinary overlapping roles, resources, timelines) and boundaries were also established among group members (interdependence between individuals within and across groups in the class/other classes, learning spaces). Second, *individual accountability* was considered as part of the instructional design. Positive interdependence requires individuals to be accountable individually and take responsibility for completing their work as well as facilitating the work of their group (Johnson & Johnson 2005). Our design required group members to identify the individual accountabilities as part of their project plans. Third, *interaction patterns* were considered in the instructional design.

> *Promotive interaction* is defined as individuals engaging in actions that increase the likelihood of each other's success in achieving the joint goal. It consists of a number of variables, including mutual help and assistance, exchange of needed resources, effective communication, mutual influence, trust, and constructive management of conflict. (Johnson & Johnson 2005: 292)

Examples of promotive interactions included providing assistance, resources, feedback, challenges, effort, influence, trust and exploring different points of view. Fourth, *social skills* are known to promote higher achievement and were considered as part of the instructional design. We used introductory activities and group contracts to '(a) get to know and trust each other, (b) communicate accurately and unambiguously, (c) accept and support each other, and (d) resolve conflicts constructively' (Johnson & Johnson 2005: 320). Fifth, *group processing* was considered as part of the instructional design. Group processing requires group members to reflect on which actions were helpful and supported their group as well as reflection to make decisions about next steps. We surveyed students at three different points during the eight-week period to allow for reflection and we also incorporated a

group assessment activity to provide groups with an opportunity for a structured group processing activity to reflect on their work as a group together and adjust for improvement. We specifically asked pre-service teachers to identify group members that supported group work through leadership functions.

Context

The researchers teach a required course in a Teacher Education program where pre-service teachers (PSTs) design interdisciplinary concept-based units (Erikson, Lanning & French 2017). The students were enrolled in a required undergraduate education course (Fall 2017 & Fall 2018) and worked together in groups (~4-5 members) for an eight-week period to jointly prepare a unit plan with accompanying assessments.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the teacher-leadership skills PSTs developed when engaging in a group work activity designed for collaborative inquiry in an undergraduate education course. We acknowledge teacher-leadership may lack clarity and may not be an agreed upon construct in the literature. In our study, we draw on Wenner and Campbell's (2017) stance that teachers, including pre-service teachers, can be positioned as collaborators and can be empowered to lead and have capacity to influence others. In this paper, we report on the data collected during the two-year study to examine the following question: How are pre-service teachers developing teacher-leadership skills when engaged in collaborative learning designs? We used the Social Interdependence Theory to guide our analysis and discussion of the findings related to the development of teacher-leadership skills for pre-service teachers.

Research Methodology

In this paper, we describe a two-year, design-based research study (Amiel & Reeves 2008; Dai 2012; McKenney & Reeves 2012) that explored student learning in group assignments in an undergraduate course for PSTs. We drew upon McKenney and Reeves' (2012) description of design research. During the study, three iterative phases were used to re-design the group work activity: (1) investigation/analysis, (2) design/prototyping, and (3) evaluation/retrospection.

The research began by conducting a literature review that provided theoretical foundation for understanding some of the challenges related to collaborative learning designs. The second phase involved designing and developing prototype strategies for collaborative learning and assessment and including these in the course outline. The third phase took place when the course was being taught during an eight-week term and this involved testing and evaluation. These three phases occurred during both years of the study. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected using a repeated online survey completed by instructors and students three times during the course. Each year, after completion of

the course, participants (post-secondary course instructors and PSTs) were invited to provide further insights through semi-structured interviews.

In this course, PSTs worked in small groups to design interdisciplinary learning units and instructors in the program used a variety of strategies to foster collaborative inquiry. During the eight-week course, we surveyed the PSTs three times to learn about their group work experiences and how leadership was provided by group members. This study informed instructor strategies for developing teacher-leadership skills.

Data Sources and Evidence

Data were collected from undergraduate students and instructors teaching different sections (Year 1 – 6 sections; Year 2 – 9 sections) of the eight-week Interdisciplinary Learning course. There were approximately 35 students in each section of the course. Some of the courses were delivered as fully online courses and some were delivered in blended formats with scheduled on-campus classes. A repeated survey was administered online to gather data from students (Year 1 – 210; Year 2 – 151) and instructors (Year 1 – 6; Year 2 – 9) at three points during the term (three different weeks). In each survey, instructors and students provided feedback on collaborative learning. The survey also contained open-ended questions where participants were asked to give examples and explain how classmates provided leadership functions and supported collaborative learning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the term with students (Year 1 – 9; Year 2 – 4), and instructors (Year 1 – 6; Year 2 – 5) to discuss findings and gain further insights.

In both years, the researchers engaged in thematic analysis of the data and engaged in two cycles of coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña 2014). In the first cycle, the research team individually coded qualitative survey data. Responses were reviewed and then a label was assigned to each descriptive code. When participants' words were used to create the code, In Vivo coding was used. The research team reviewed the codes, refined descriptions and settled any differences. If there were lengthier responses, then multiple descriptive codes were utilized.

For the second cycle of coding, the researchers individually reviewed their first cycle of codes and frequencies and collapsed these codes into smaller categories. A summary of emerging themes resulted from these categories and included a detailed explanation. This process represented the second cycle of coding allowing the researchers to use smaller categories with definitions. We argue the findings prove credible and trustworthy due to the process of using two-cycle coding and team coding.

Findings

Our findings are based on survey data gathered during the course and interviews conducted with students and instructors after the course was completed. Table 1 provides

the number of responses we received from the three surveys administered to students and instructors in the first year and second year of the study. In each year, the surveys were repeated weekly for a three-week period when students were working on their group projects. Data from the surveys and interview responses converged to inform the findings from this study.

Table 1: Number of Survey Respondents for Repeated Survey in Year 1 and 2

		Student Responses	Instructor Responses
Year 1			
	Survey 1	81	6
	Survey 2	52	5
	Survey 3	39	5
Year 2			
	Survey 1	121	9
	Survey 2	100	6
	Survey 3	60	7
	TOTAL	453	38

Findings related to the theoretical framing of distributed leadership emerged from our year two data, so we use this frame to describe leadership practices of informal leaders, such as pre-service teachers when engaging in group work during their teacher preparation program. Distributed leadership is defined as a practice and 'implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals, and the task is accomplished through interaction and collective action' (Harris 2011: 629). It is important to note that it does not imply everyone leads or leadership is divided by everyone equally (Harris 2011). Findings indicate that working in a small group to co-design a unit plan shows PSTs developing skills related to four dimensions of teacher leadership (Harris 2002): brokering, participative leadership, mediating, and forging close relationships. Additionally, instructional designs for group work were informed by Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson 2005, 2018) – individual accountability, interdependence, interaction patterns, social skills and group processing. The findings from this study will be discussed using elements of Harris' (2002) four dimensions of teacher leadership and Social Interdependence Theory.

First, PSTs engaged in *brokering* to negotiate the fit for their understanding of interdisciplinary learning as a pedagogical approach. Instructional strategies to support this included providing feedback to move learning forward, engineering class activities, and using technology. Taking lead on specific parts of the task and completing specific tasks helped group members with brokering. Second, PSTs engaged in *participative* leadership as

they worked in small groups but encountered challenges when collaborating. Instructors noted similar challenges and instructional designs and course redesign following year one of the study were aimed at addressing these. Brainstorming ideas, offering feedback, managing the project, and sharing responsibilities helped group members with participative leadership. Third, in regard to *mediating*, PSTs served as sources of expertise in their groups. PSTs reported how their learning was supported by other individuals in their group and shared challenges around making shared decisions and reaching consensus. Instructors used formative strategies to mitigate this challenge. Communicating between learners, improving upon or challenging ideas, and sharing pedagogical, disciplinary and technical expertise helped group members with mediating. Finally, *forging close relationships* was another dimension developed. Student-student relationships were noted as positive and negative and instructors helped PSTs resolve conflicts and establish trust with each other. Engaging in group discussions and providing support and encouragement to each other helped group members with forging close relationships.

Brokering

In the undergraduate course, the PSTs engaged in brokering as a leadership dimension while negotiating the fit between their understanding of interdisciplinary learning as a pedagogical approach and the value for student learning. Our findings show PSTs struggled to manage designing an interdisciplinary unit in collaboration with peers. Table 2 shows the frequency for the top challenges encountered by students when engaging in collaborative learning, such as balancing the workload in the project in conjunction with other classes; missing group members; balancing workload in the project; and making shared decisions and reaching consensus. These challenges link to the notion of brokering. For example, what was noted in the data sets was that students who found it difficult to make decisions and agree on a direction for their interdisciplinary project (brokering) at the beginning of the project continued to find the whole group work experience challenging.

Table 2: Frequency of Student Responses per Survey for Top Challenges Encountered When Working in the Group

	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total Responses
Balancing the workload in the project in conjunction with other classes	38	43	37	118
Missing group members	47	28	6	81
Balancing workload in the project	16	30	26	72
Making shared decisions and reaching consensus	32	27	10	69

Instructional designs were aimed at mitigating these challenges and developed *individual accountability*. In particular, formative assessment strategies were reported by both PSTs and instructors as an important aspect of instructional design and were based on Wiliam's (2011) work on formative assessment. The top two ranked strategies based on frequency of responses by students across three surveys were: (1) instructor feedback provided to move learning forward, and (2) classroom activities to help clarify and improve understanding (Table 3).

Table 3: Frequency of Student Responses per Survey for Formative Strategies Used

	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total Responses
Instructor feedback provided to move learning forward	82	81	54	217
Classroom activities to help student clarify, share and understand learning intentions and criteria for success	90	68	34	152

During the interviews, students provided examples of formative assessment strategies. In one interview, a student shared how an instructor designed peer feedback loops to help develop unit plans. Instructors also selected the same top two strategies as students (Table 4).

Table 4: Frequency of Instructor Responses per Survey for Formative Strategies Used During the Week

	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total Responses
Instructor feedback provided to move learning forward	5	5	6	16
Classroom activities to help student clarify, share and understand learning intentions and criteria for success	8	6	5	19

In the interview, one of the instructors provided a specific example of questioning as a formative assessment strategy used to provide instructor feedback and move learning forward in the groups:

> I mean in terms of strategies a lot of it is just sitting down and listening, responding, questioning, you know it's those pertinent questions. A lot of the time it's reframing

> some of the things that they are thinking about as they go through what I think is very much a design process. (Instructor 4)

PSTs also reported that technology supported their group assignments (Table 5) and links to brokering. Table 6 provides the frequency of responses showing how technology supported group work.

Table 5: Frequency of Student Responses per Survey for Technology that Supported Group Assignments. The responses over all three surveys totalled 2,072.

	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total (n=2072)
To support communication	151	136	73	360
To support designing unit plan	121	142	70	333

Note: This table shows the number of student responses per survey for the top two ranked: (1) to support communication, and (2) to support unit plan design.

In one of the interviews, a student elaborated on how technology supported communication within the group:

> For communicative purposes, we used google documents, google docs to document our entire process – in the end it was like some terrible number of pages, but we used that, quite respectively, because I feel like it was one of the few ways that we could communicate on it was something that everybody in the group could use. We also communicated with each other using Facebook messenger, to make sure to see where everybody's at, or to just send a quick message. (Student #4)

Instructors also noted how technology was used to support communication and to support designing unit plans (Table 6). Technology was used to support communication and as a tool for holding students accountable to their work.

Table 6: Frequency of Instructor Responses per Survey for Technology that Supported Group Assignments. There was a total of 102 responses over all three surveys.

	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total (n=102)
To support communication	9	5	6	20
To support designing unit plan	7	5	5	17

Note: This table shows the number of instructor responses per survey for the top two ranked: (1) to support communication, and (2) to support unit plan design.

One of the instructors interviewed shared:

> I used D2L Discussion Board, and what I liked about that was there was an immediate accountability piece to making learning visible, which I think is really important…. The other thing, Google Docs, was used a lot. (Instructor #2)

PSTs were actively brokering in their groups to make sense of the group task and instructors and students used technology-mediated strategies to support their group work. Instructional designs also supported brokering and included formative assessment strategies and technology-mediated strategies which fostered individual accountability because it encouraged students to take ownership for their learning and informed their next steps.

Participative Leadership

PSTs engaged in participative leadership as they worked in small groups but encountered challenges when collaborating as noted earlier. During student interviews, issues around managing the project and balancing the workload were mentioned. For example, a student shared:

> I would say the biggest challenge was just that, with the stress of the whole project…. Learning different people's emotional capacity was interesting. But in terms of people following through, doing what they said they would do, all of that, there weren't any issues…. everybody had something that they were bringing. And then also just in terms of that emotional support, different people were able to inject something that would diffuse the tension in a given situation if you haven't really quite agreed on what we were doing for one part of our project. (Student #2)

Instructors also discussed challenges in their interviews. For example, instructors mentioned attendance which was noted by students in the survey (e.g. missing group members). One instructor said: 'I found this year attendance was quite challenging … I'm pretty sure that I maybe had one or two classes where I had 100% attendance. So, there was always somebody missing from the groups' and pointed out how these group members missed 'critical conversations' and the groups who had more absences seemed to be 'the only two groups that had breakdowns' (Instructor #1).

Another instructor noted the same issue of attendance and stated:

> I think attendance was a problem. And some of the groups had some people who were very flexible in their own life and whether they needed to attend or not. (Instructor #2)

Instructional designs to support participative leadership that encouraged PSTs to develop interdependence included the formative assessment strategies as outlined earlier, such as using activities to bring clarity to the group work. One instructor shared how they used rubrics to facilitate dialogue around criteria to ensure individuals are contributing based on their assigned roles and stated:

> What I often do as I'm talking with groups is I will ask those questions so who's doing this piece, how's this going, is this, let me see, let's see where you're at this stage. Then back to the group work I mentioned earlier so that will be a common question to what extent do you think you're hitting that outcome or meeting these descriptors in the rubric, what do you think you need to. It's a lot of open-ended question rather than me saying okay this is short on this, it's weak on this, it's thin there, you need to go fix that. (Instructor #4)

As mentioned previously, instructional designs also included the use of technology-mediated strategies to support group work. Both instructors and students noted how technology-mediated strategies were used during collaborative learning to support communication and designing the unit plan which helped develop participative leadership and promote interdependence. The top two ranked ways technology supported group work according to students and instructors were: (1) to support communication, and (2) to support unit plan design. Likewise, during the interviews, both instructors and students talked about how technology-mediated strategies were used during group assignments to support communication and to accomplish their group task of designing an interdisciplinary unit plan.

Technology-Mediated Strategies Supported Communication

One instructor referred to using email and Desire2Learn, along with Google Docs as a means to communicate feedback:

> The purpose for D2L and email was more around formative, clarifying instructions for sure, and then providing feedback to students ... we certainly used Google docs a lot, and once the students set those up, once they start working on their unit plans, they all included me in their Google docs, and so I was providing feedback through that as well. (Instructor #1)

Another student talked about using similar technologies to communicate and said:

> For communicative purposes, we used google documents, google docs to document our entire process … I feel like it was one of the few ways that we could communicate on it was something that everybody in the group could use. We also communicated with each other using Facebook messenger, to make sure to see where everybody's at, or to just send a quick message … and then of course we used email and outlook to email each other and send documents. (Student #4)

Technology-Mediated Strategies Supported Unit Design

Technology was identified by both instructors and students for designing unit plans. Discussing how technology was used by PSTs to synthesize their designs, an instructor noted:

> ... they would chop up some certain pieces of their designs, so yeah the math person would go I'll write up my math piece and then I will put it up for you guys to have a look at … and they would comment on that and post on that. So actually, they used Google Docs ... It seems to be a very common tool. (Instructor #4)

A student also shared how technology was used and stated:

> ... we use Google Docs all the time, and we were constantly just plunking in information. I think our document, by the end of the course, was like 72 pages or something crazy. So, mostly we used that to facilitate our group work and assignments. (Student #3)

Formative assessment and technology-mediated strategies supported PSTs with participative leadership and developing their ability to work together towards the common goal of unit design thereby building interdependence.

Mediating

Mediating was a teacher leadership dimension developed while PSTs were working on their group task. PSTs served as sources of expertise and information when co-designing their unit plans and this created an interactive pattern that promoted group productivity. PSTs reported that their learning was supported by other individuals in their group in the following ways: (1) offering feedback and suggestions, (2) engaging in group discussions, and (3) providing support and encouragement. The main ways PSTs shared leadership in their groups was by taking lead on a specific task, engaging in group discussions, and brainstorming ideas. An excerpt from a student interview illustrated how feedback encouraged their group to support each other in their learning:

> I think the key one that sticks out to me was the reflection pieces and how we were constantly able to, even after submitting, we are constantly able to like reflect, and rework, and improve our work based on the formative feedback that we received … I think too, [instructor] was constantly circulating the room, observing us in conversation, starting conversations with us, having speak to peers and get peer feedback on what we were working on throughout the whole process, throughout the whole unit development. (Student #3)

Instructors used formative strategies, such as peer feedback loops, and technology-mediated strategies to support shared leadership and to mitigate challenges around making shared decisions and reaching consensus. An instructor shared how a project management tool (e.g. spreadsheet) was used as an accountability tool to help PSTs manage their project:

> I've used the project management tool again this year, which was effective in terms of outlining specific roles and then particular students would choose roles in their group and then have an accountability piece. (Instructor #2)

Co-designing the unit plan allowed PSTs to serve as resources for one another and instructional designs such as formative assessment strategies and technology-mediated

strategies were used. Group members supported each other in their learning through mediating and promoting each other's productivity.

Forging Close Relationships

Forging close relationships was another teacher leadership dimension developed (Harris 2002) while students were engaged in collaborative learning to co-design a unit. While doing group work, PSTs *forged close relationships* with their group members and utilized their *social skills.* Student-student relationships were noted as both positive and negative and instructors helped PSTs resolve conflicts and establish trust with each other. As mentioned previously, PSTs were challenged in balancing the workload, missing group members, and making shared decisions and reaching consensus. Instructors noted similar issues around missing group members and the strain on their relationships as group members. These group members missed 'critical conversations' and the groups who had more absences seemed to be 'the only two groups that had breakdowns' (Instructor #1). Student #4 shared their struggles with working in a group and pointed out how groups often have a student who is referred to as a 'free-rider' and does not contribute to the group task.

Instructional designs to support students in forging relationships with their group members and building social skills included both formative assessment and technology-mediated strategies for communication and unit design. Instructors met with groups to provide feedback to move their learning forward and this appeared to support relationships that required use of social skills. Technology-mediated strategies were also used to support students in their communications as a group, an important aspect of developing effective relationships and utilizing social skills. These examples show how co-designing a unit plan provided an opportunity for PSTs to forge close relationships with their instructors and their peers, an important dimension of teacher leadership.

Group Processing

Instructors designed opportunities for PSTs to engage in formative assessment throughout the course, encouraged them to reflect on their group work, and used technology-mediated strategies to facilitate group processing. One instructor explained how a shared document for a group contract was used during a class activity to support PSTs in articulating their expectations for working together as a group, indicators for their success and strategies for challenging situations at the beginning of the project:

> Well I think the question is always in assessing the group are you also assessing the individual? And so I think the way that the course was structured, that if they had a problem they needed ... it was pretty clear they needed to bring it forward. They had the group contracts. They had processes for talking to one another, but that doesn't

mean in the end it was all equal. You don't have insight into that unless they choose to share. (Instructor #3)

Discussion

The following section includes a discussion of the findings and insights gained from this study. The initial inquiry was to explore how theory-informed instructional designs can develop pre-service teachers' leadership capacity in group assignments: How are pre-service teachers developing teacher-leadership skills when engaged in collaborative learning designs?

Working in a small group to co-design a unit plan showed PSTs developing skills related to the four dimensions of teacher leadership roles (Harris 2002) and this was supported by instructional designs informed by Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson 2005, 2018). Table 7 illustrates how instructional designs from this study aligned with the four dimensions of teacher leadership and Social Interdependence Theory.

Table 7: Connections Between Teacher Leadership Dimensions, Social Interdependence Theory, and Instructional Designs

Teacher Leadership Dimensions (*Social Interdependence Theory*)	**Instructional Design:** Formative Assessment (e.g. instructor feedback and classroom activities)	**Instructional Design:** Technology used to support group work
Brokering *(individual accountability)*	X	X
Participative Leadership *(interdependence)*	X	X
Mediating *(interaction patterns)*	X	X
Forging Close Relationships *(social skills)*	X	X
(group processing)	X	X

PSTs engaged in *brokering* to negotiate the fit for interdisciplinary learning as a pedagogical approach where instructional designs fostered *individual accountability* as group members identified roles and responsibilities in managing their group assignment. Leadership functions related to brokering and individual accountability were connected to taking lead on a specific task and completing specific tasks as part of the group work. Clarke and Blissenden (2013) discuss the challenges of assessing group work and suggest using strategies that identify the individual contribution. Instructional strategies to support this

included providing formative feedback to move learning forward and engineering class activities. Additional formative strategies that can support instructional designs are outlined by Wiliam (2011). Technology-mediated strategies were also effective in supporting brokering and this is recognized in the literature to aid in collaborative learning (Hmelo et al. 2013). Additional research is needed to further explore other instructional strategies that promote brokering and fostering individual accountability.

PSTs engaged in *participative* leadership which encouraged *interdependence* as they engaged in group work to develop a project plan with instructional/course boundaries (interdependence between individuals within and across groups in the class/other classes, learning spaces for this assignment). Group work is recognized as supportive for collaborative inquiry (Friesen 2009; Johnson et al. 2014). Leadership functions that were considered participative and interdependent included brainstorming ideas, offering feedback and suggestions, project management tasks, sharing responsibility and co-creating deliverables. PSTs encountered challenges when collaborating and instructors noted similar challenges. Formative assessment and technology use were instructional designs that support *participative leadership* and *interdependence* as PSTs worked together towards the common goal of unit design. Literature points to the importance of finding instructional strategies to support group work to address the complexities of group work (Clarke & Blissenden 2013; Johnson et al. 2014).

PSTs engaged in *mediating* and served as sources of expertise in their groups which fostered *interaction patterns* and encouraged them to promote the productivity of their group. PSTs' learning was supported by other individuals in their group and experienced challenges around making shared decisions and reaching consensus. Leadership functions for mediating interaction in the groups included communication between learners; improving upon or challenging ideas; and sharing pedagogical, disciplinary and technical expertise. There is a recognized need for improving collaborative inquiry (Barkley et al. 2014) and instructional designs that attend to formative strategies (Wiliam 2011) and use technology-mediated strategies (Hmelo et al. 2013) can be a way to meet this need. Further research that examines instructional designs for collaborative inquiry is valid and can expand on what has been noted in this study.

While doing group work, PSTs also *forged close relationships* with their group members which required utilizing *social skills.* Student-student relationships were noted as both positive and negative and instructors helped PSTs resolve conflicts and establish trust with each other. Positive interdependence resulted when groups worked together towards a common goal (Johnson et al. 2014). Leadership functions, such as engaging in group discussions and providing group members with support and encouragement, were identified as ways to forge close relationships. Technology provided a platform for communication that supported PSTs in forging close relationships with their group members and managing their group work. According to Hmelo et al. (2013), technology supports working together in this type of collaborative inquiry. For future research, it

would be interesting to examine the other ways technology impacts collaborative inquiry and how instructors can more effectively integrate technology into the group work experience.

Finally, instructional designs attended to *group processing* by providing opportunities for peer/instructor feedback throughout the course which allowed for the PSTs to reflect on the nature of their work as a group in class and with technology. PSTs indicated they were supported by other group members who provided leadership functions ranging from brokering specific tasks, participative responsibilities, mediating, and forging close relationships among the group members.

Significance

This research has influenced how we are preparing pre-service teachers for teaching and leading in schools and how theory-informed instructional design with attention to collaborative inquiry in group work can support the development of teacher-leadership skills. The findings serve to inform redesign of the course syllabus for the undergraduate interdisciplinary course, professional learning with the instructor team, and the next iteration of the study. These findings also serve to inform teacher education programs and faculty who are interested in preparing pre-service teachers not just to teach but also to become teacher-leaders in the profession. This work has potential to inform frameworks for pre-service teacher leadership development. Furthermore, this study holds value as it contributes to the body of research around pre-service programs aimed at teacher leadership development and instructional designs for group work.

Conclusion

In this study, researchers applied elements of Social Interdependence Theory to re-design a group activity for pre-service teachers. Interviews with students and instructors as well as repeated surveys were used to examine pre-service teachers' learning experiences while working in small groups with their peers to develop an interdisciplinary unit plan. Instructional designs supporting this collaborative inquiry included formative assessment and technology-mediated strategies. Findings suggest pre-service teachers engaging in a collaborative inquiry experience can develop teacher leadership competencies while engaging in group work in their teacher preparation programs. These findings serve to inform the design of teacher education programs and coursework, and how theory-informed instructional design with attention to collaborative inquiry in group work can support the development of teacher-leadership skills.

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Non-Traditional Student Teaching: Creating Future Leaders Through Disruption

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Abstract: *This paper describes an unanticipated finding within a larger study designed to examine the pre-professional development of nine student teachers during three non-traditional student teaching placements in a school located on a housing construction site. Specifically, it was found that the non-traditional placement opportunity enhanced those teaching competencies one might expect, such as collaboration, creativity and the development of an inquiry mindset. However, it also encouraged the development of the criticality necessary for questioning schooling generally. Findings emerged pointing to the development of a leadership perspective among pre-service teachers aimed at ways schools and school systems could be / ought to be improved. Within the finding of pre-service teacher leadership development as a part of the larger study, three themes were noted. First, the unique environment of the student teaching placement allowed pre-service teachers to see, understand and begin to critique the structure of schooling with an aim to ways in which they could lead change in that area in the future. Second, pre-service teachers recognized the potential impact of their leadership in making less traditional learning opportunities for students the norm, and finally, pre-service teachers were able to connect leadership and teaching as acts sharing a similar foundation and purpose.*

Keywords: Pre-service teacher, leadership, practicum, non-traditional

Introduction

The role of the principal in education continues to be one of incredible importance but one that is not necessarily attractive to new generations of teachers. Current news outlets (Alphonso & Bradshaw 2018; Outhit 2018) report on the desperate shortage of principals facing Canadian school systems today, citing the complexity of the position and how it has changed in recent years. Alphonso and Bradshaw (2018) note that the position in Ontario is such that 'the number of educators receiving their principal qualifications dropped from 1,056 in 2003 to 590 last year' (para. 5). With declining interest from in-service teachers in school-based educational leadership opportunities owed to a number of factors including the

diversity of demands as well as workload conditions and complexity (Pollock, Wang & Hauseman 2015; Wang, Pollock & Hauseman 2018), the question becomes how one might engage both beginning and pre-service teachers in the kinds of experiences that may encourage them to take up formal leadership one day. The findings presented here provide one example of how pre-service teachers might be encouraged to engage in the kind of systems thinking necessary for the development of an interest in and focus on educational leadership. Through undertaking a non-traditional practicum experience on a building construction site, the pre-service teachers in this study were able to articulate their experiences through a more broadly conceived view of what education and schooling are and what that might mean systemically in the future.

Context of the Larger Study

The findings presented here were unanticipated outcomes of a larger study aimed at examining the effects of a non-traditional practicum placement on pre-service teacher emergent professionalism. This larger study saw nine pre-service teachers over three years (2014-2017) placed into two schools that existed on housing construction sites. The schools were part of a unique program in which grade 10 students were able to complete both required and elective curriculum while building two houses alongside industry professionals and under the guidance of two certificated teachers. The classroom in each school was housed in the heated garage on-site and students moved fluidly between classroom instruction and duties associated with home building, enjoying an interdisciplinary and integrated educational experience. The grade 10 students who attended this program were required to apply for the experience and ranged from those who simply desired a more hands-on experience to those who were considering a career in the trades. In all cases, however, the experience provided an opportunity for both students and teachers to blur the lines of what it means to learn in a classroom through individualized, experiential learning.

Each of the pre-service teachers involved in the larger study was placed in this unique environment for a total of 14 weeks and each had been involved in more formal classroom settings previously. Not only did this allow them the opportunity for comparison but it also provided a frame of reference for the act of pre-service teaching more generally. For example, by knowing what was expected of them in the more traditional setting, the pre-service teachers were able to ensure they were fulfilling the basic elements of the practicum and therefore they felt more comfortable embracing the more innovative aspects of this experience. The purpose of this larger study was to examine the emergent professionalism of these pre-service teachers, that is, the 'ability of a pre-service teacher to move beyond concerns for their own success during practicum to concerns for student learning' (Burns & Danyluk 2017: 250). In this regard it was found that the pre-service teachers were able to experience and develop community partnerships, employ interdisciplinary teaching methods, position themselves as co-learners alongside their students in the building of the houses, and engage in communities of practice that developed within the setting (Danyluk &

Burns 2016). Surprisingly, however, was the emergence of a more systemic view of education and schooling, reminiscent of sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink 2006) that developed among two of the nine participants. It is those views that are discussed within this paper.

Relevant Literature

The importance of the practicum experience as a part of education is key to understanding how it may impact students, be they pre-service teachers or those enrolled in principal preparation programs. Therefore, a brief examination of the bodies of literature that exist on the practicum is necessary to understand the impact of these important experiences on those who undertake them. Secondly, and more specific to the two pre-service teachers described in this work, an examination of sustainable leadership, the leadership theory most closely aligned with the findings in this work, is provided (Hargreaves & Fink 2006). Taken together, these bodies of work provide insight into the connection between pre-service teacher education and leadership development and begin to lay the foundation for understanding how one might come to conceptualize leadership development in pre-service teachers through the implementation of unique, non-traditional practicums designed to disrupt the more traditional experiences often had in formal school settings.

Importance of Practicum

The practicum is a critical aspect of pre-service teacher education and has been discussed by many as being central to the development of competent in-service teachers (Ambrosetti 2014; Burns & Danyluk 2017; Burns, Hill, Danyluk & Crawford 2018; Butler & Cuenca 2012; Danyluk & Burns 2016; Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley & Smith 2012). The criticality of the practicum experience is noted by Franklin Torrez and Krebs (2012) when they state that 'the student teaching experience is a pivotal component of most teacher education programs and a focus within teacher education literature' (p. 485). As such, numerous themes emerge as to the importance of this experience in the development of pre-service teachers. For example, it is clear from research that pre-service teachers enter into their educational experiences with clearly defined ideas around what constitutes teaching and learning grounded in their own educational experiences (Franklin Torrez & Krebs 2012; Kuechle, Holzhauer, Ruey, Brulle & Morrison 2010). What is also clear, however, is the need to challenge these beliefs in order to cause a disruption to the status quo. Kolb and Kolb (2005) advocate for such a disruption through experiential learning such as the practicum when they note that 'conflict, differences and disagreements are what drive the learning process' (p. 194). In requiring pre-service teachers to grapple with ideas that challenge their taken-for-granted notions of schooling and education, they are able to see and subsequently engage with the complex issues that they encounter.

While the work presented in this paper acknowledges the expansive body of literature that exists on the role of the practicum in teacher education, it is clearly and logically focused on the development of the pre-service teacher into a capable and independent in-service teacher. The examination of leadership development, particularly with a focus on formal leadership within educational settings, is understandably meagre given the importance placed upon teaching and leadership experience, as well as advanced study, as necessary conditions for successful attainment of educational leadership positions. Perhaps most closely related to the concept of leadership development among pre-service teachers through practicum was the pervasiveness of principal preparation programs that included an element of observation or mentorship (Dodson 2014; Taylor Campbell & Parker 2016). Dodson (2014), in his description of field experiences as a key component of university-based principal preparation programs, noted the importance of such experiences for practicing principals in Kentucky, USA who undertook such a program. Much like pre-service teacher practicums, the principals in this study found that, through participation, they were able to challenge their own ideas and test new concepts in the relative safety of the program.

Sustainable Leadership

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) caution that if 'the first challenge of change is to ensure that it's desirable and the second challenge is to make it doable, then the biggest challenge of all is to make it durable and sustainable' (p. 2). Interestingly, in their description of research undertaken in high schools in Canada and the United States, the authors continue to describe a pace of change that has resulted in a standards-driven, unsustainable brand of reform that has led to a narrowing of curriculum, a loss of creativity and innovation and an erosion of teacher confidence and professional community; all issues that are confronted within the non-traditional practicum placement, thereby setting the stage for the development of a sustainable leadership ethic. This is of critical importance as Hargreaves (2009) also notes that there is a crisis of leadership and that leaders 'are leaving not just for demographic reasons, or even because of the stresses of change, but because leadership itself is also changing' (p. 185). Leadership, in this context, is seen as highly changeable and inauthentic, where leaders implement strategies for improvement that are then lost when leadership changes. It is marked by unsustainability.

Sustainable leadership, however, is hallmarked by a different ethos and differentiated from other forms of leadership primarily by its ethical nature. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) describe sustainable leadership as 'a moral concept and a moral practice' (p. 18) and describe it as a leadership ethic that 'addresses the value and interdependence of all like as both a means and an end' (p. 18). In this way, sustainable leadership becomes the antidote for a changeable educational reality and a calling for all concerned with the future of education as opposed to a destination or position to be held on the basis of charisma or ambition. Cook (2014) supports this notion when he states that 'sustainable leadership has an activist engagement with the forces that affect it, and builds an educational environment of organizational diversity that

promotes cross-fertilization of good ideas and successful practices in communities of shared learning and development' (p. 3). This then becomes the foundation upon which educational leadership is built and shared.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) outline sustainable leadership as being built upon seven principles including 1) the creation and preservation of sustained learning; 2) the advancement and preservation of success from one leader to another; 3) the sharing of leadership; 4) the active improvement of society; 5) the development of diversity; 6) the development and protection of human and material resources; and 7) a determination to learn from the past to improve the future. These principles upon which sustainable leadership is built are echoed by Cherkowski (2012) who describes the importance of building sustainable leadership into the fabric of a school so as to ensure a shared purpose and vision. Similar findings were put forth by Cook (2014) who noted that his participants who were teachers and recent graduates of Governors State University Educational Administration Program saw sustainable leadership as the path to a well-developed, shared learning community.

> The participants also indicated that sustainable leadership is necessary for maintaining a positive school culture and high morale among faculty and staff. Sustainable leadership, according to the participants, involves everyone in the school community having a voice and a role which contributes to the culture and learning community. (p. 13)

What is clear within the various descriptions of sustainable leadership is the principled nature of the work and the commitment to a shared responsibility for learning.

Theoretical Framework

The theory upon which the larger study was conducted, and out of which these findings were extracted, was Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb & Kolb 2005) and was chosen to underpin the larger study due to its fit with the scaffolded approach experienced by students in the various practicum components. This theory was developed originally by Kolb (1984) as a four-step process through which participants progressed in the undertaking of experiential learning. The first step, the concrete experience, describes the situation in which the participant finds themselves. In the case of this study, the concrete experience was the practicum on the housing construction site and served as the foundation for the transformative learning that took place. The second step of the process involves observation and reflection on the concrete experience allowing participants in the experience to refine their previously held beliefs based on a comparison on what they have experienced in the past and the new concrete experience. Third, participants may form abstract concepts based upon those reflections and observation which they may then test in the fourth and final step. Described as the grasping and transforming of experience, Kolb and Kolb (2005) elucidate on experiential learning model as portraying 'two dialectically related modes of grasping experience – Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC) – and two

dialectically related modes of transforming experience – Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE)' (p. 194). While portrayed as a series of steps through which one moves, Kolb and Kolb (2005) also make clear that each step is not discrete nor is the model unidirectional. Instead, the process of experiential learning should be seen as a 'learning cycle or spiral where the learner "touches all the bases" – experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting – in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned' (p. 194). Within the scope of this study the movement of two participants in particular within the model of experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation acted as a catalyst for learning to such an extent as to allow them to broaden their thinking beyond the concrete experience and imagine a system that existed outside of their purview.

Methodology

A single-site case study (Stake 2006) was employed in the larger study with each of the two construction sites serving as a single experience due to the inherent similarities that existed as a result of the same program being run in two locations. Semi-structured interviews, document analysis of reflective portfolios for each participant and promotional materials created by the program itself were all analyzed to ensure data saturation and triangulation were successfully accomplished (Burns & Danyluk 2017). Participants were selected from the final year of a large, urban teacher education program and had already completed two practicum placements in more traditional locales. In all cases, pre-service teachers sent to this practicum opportunity were interviewed ahead of time to ensure they were ready for the challenges this practicum would offer and the flexibility that would be required of the concrete experience.

The Participants

While there were nine participants overall, the two described here are those who displayed the leadership sensibilities and systemic thinking inherent in sustainable leadership. Interestingly, both were male and both participated in the practicum experience in the same year (2016-2017) but each was in a different location. The practicum experience was 14 weeks in length and each was responsible for both curricular teaching, one in math/science and the other in the humanities, and working alongside students in the building of two houses on each site. Each student was provided a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

Alex was entering the teaching profession with a specialization in the STEM disciplines after a short career in Engineering. In his mid-thirties, he had both work experience and life experience to draw upon and this allowed him to enter the non-traditional practicum placement with an already broadened idea of the role of education and schooling. He was initially particularly interested in the role of relationship as a basis for exemplary teaching and learning opportunities. As a graduate of relatively traditional educational experiences,

both in the K-12 system and in his previous Engineering degree, he was curious as to why a student would choose to undertake their grade 10 program in this way. He was also eager to implement some of his expertise as an engineer in the development of projects related to math, science and the building of the houses.

Stephen was younger and had recently completed a degree in English literature. His life experience was primarily rooted in the postsecondary educational context with little work experience outside of summer camps for children and his involvement in community theatre. His interest in the practicum opportunity offered on the construction site was rooted in his desire to implement what he had been learning in his education courses around interdisciplinarity, alternative forms of assessment and project-based learning. In particular, he was most taken with questions of how one might blend the learning and teaching of Humanities with the building of the homes and what alternative forms of experiences this might present for high school students.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection within the larger study, and as a result for these two participants, consisted of three semi-structured interviews conducted by me which were then transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. The interviews took place before the start of the practicum experience, half way through the experience and then again at the end of the 14 weeks. Additionally, all practicum students in the program from which these two participants hailed were required to complete a reflective portfolio. Both the portfolios of these two participants and their interviews were analyzed thematically using Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model as a framework. Each interview transcript and reflective portfolio was coded for instances describing the concrete experience, observation and reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the case of the two participants noted here, however, additional themes emerged related to systemic thinking and the development of a sustainable leadership ethic.

Findings

Within the larger study, many of the findings for the two participants under discussion here were similar to their peers. Employing Kolb's (1984) model as a guide to analysis, it was found that both participants were somewhat apprehensive originally by the unique nature of the concrete experience, however, through increased contact with the community, they were able to observe and reflect on the experience in concert with others. This then led to a willingness and desire to both design and test unique ways to engage with students through interdisciplinary experiences (Burns & Danyluk 2017). Also, the participants here did not move through the four stages associated with Kolb (1984) in a unidirectional manner but noted often how they would test and reconsider and re-test their ideas, moving between the

stages in an attempt to better understand their teaching experiences and the impact on student learning.

Findings Consistent with Sustainable Leadership

Within the larger study, two participants stood out as demonstrating an already developing awareness of the systemic thinking required of school-based leaders. In particular, their discussions of teaching, learning and what they viewed as both supports and challenges afforded by the educational system shared a common foundation with sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink 2006).

The importance of interdisciplinary teams. For both Alex and Stephen the concept of interdisciplinary teams as a powerful educational tool was evident and both had specific ways in which they would implement this in a systemic way. Specifically, the participants saw the need for increased flexibility for students and teachers in schools, highlighting the impact that their unique placement had on their previously held belief of the high school structure and timetable as a necessary construct. The program offered to the grade 10 students on the housing construction sites did not make use of a traditional high school timetable but instead offered teachers the flexibility to design large blocks of teaching and learning time that could be easily changed and moved depending on student responsibilities to the housing project. Instead of seeing this as possible only in this particular context, Alex noted that this could be implemented in any high school and, he felt, at any grade level.

> Why couldn't high schools have teams of teachers who specialize, not in one specific subject, but in a disciplinary area and, more importantly, a grade level. Let's say you had a grade 10 team made up of a humanities person and a STEM person and a Comprehensive School Health/PE person and others depending on the priorities of the school. And this team could spend the days as necessary. No bells. Just projects and learning driven by students. And I know that money is an issue but this team could handle its fair share of students by working in an interdisciplinary way. (Alex)

As can be seen in this quote, Alex was able to envision a new format outside of the experience in which he was at the time and, additionally, was able to understand the fiscal implications of such a move.

A similar idea was shared by Stephen but his perspective tended more toward students and finding ways in which interdisciplinary teams could serve as support mechanisms for groups of high school students. Additionally, he was more pointed regarding how our current reliance on the high school structure propped up antiquated visions of education, noting:

> One of the many things I've learned here … maybe the most important thing … is that this whole thing isn't about me. They [the students] help each other with homework at times that make sense to them and are relevant to what they are doing and some of them have become real leaders in the construction side of things. In fact, I had a lesson the other day from one of my students on how to drywall. The students here aren't

> boxed into little packages of time that don't respect their passions or, quite frankly, their expertise. If I had my way, schools would be designed as learning pods where groups were formed over the long term, where students could meet when it made sense and could become the experts through leading in the area they excelled in while also learning from their peers when they struggled. Then teachers could really become the support system they should be. (Stephen)

This quote was followed up with a question that asked Stephen if students would solely teach one another and what this would mean for the role of the teacher. The participant replied with the notion that a question such as this held up an antiquated notion of teaching as lecturing and he wondered 'why can't teachers and students learn together?' (Stephen).

In their descriptions of the need for interdisciplinary teams that worked in a more fluid high school design, each participant spoke the language of sustainable leadership in their own way. First, they were not focused on ideas only for their own classrooms, as were many of our participants from the larger study, but could envision how they would make change in the larger system through a disruption of fundamental constraining elements associated with high school education. In doing so, elements of justice, diversity and resourcefulness (Hargreaves & Fink 2006) were brought to the fore. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) describe justice as leadership that 'does no harm to and actively improves the surrounding environment' (p. 19). Both participants described a desire to bring the unique and powerful experience they had encountered on the housing construction site to students who were unable to attend this program, thereby actively improving the more traditional high school environment. This was particularly noteworthy for Stephen who also saw this as allowing teachers to fulfill their true purpose, one of support, improving the educational experience for them also.

In addition to justice, both participants also spoke of diversity, described by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) as leadership that 'fosters and learns from diversity in teaching and learning and moves things forward by creating cohesion and networking among its richly varied components' (p. 19). In the case of both participants the power and possibility of a highly networked, diverse team coming together in the interests of improved educational experiences was very clear. While Alex saw this team as primarily comprised of a diverse group of teachers working together to meet the needs of a more cohesive group of students, Stephen saw a diverse group of students coming together with the support of a flexible teacher. In both cases, the idea of a team that actively rejected standardization and embraced the varying strengths of those involved was seen as critical to improving education writ large.

Finally, each participant, in their way, mentioned resourcefulness as an important part of making their bold visions a reality. Resourcefulness, as described by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) is created when leadership 'develops and does not deplete material and human resources' (p. 20). Alex, in his description of the importance of interdisciplinary teams, stated explicitly that he recognized that money would always be an issue but he also recognized that

such a diverse team would be likely to be able to 'handle its fair share of students'. This awareness of the financial realities coupled with his description of a team that worked together for the betterment of students showed his awareness of the importance of both material and human resources in education. Although material resources were not mentioned, Stephen also noted that working in teams would allow students to 'become experts through leading' while also enjoying the support of their peers. This conception of interdisciplinary groups then provided a real picture of how students might be elevated and developed as people.

Making the non-traditional the norm. Both Alex and Stephen were clearly committed to the unique environment their practicum placement had afforded them. Their experiences in a fluid environment were instrumental in developing their ideas around the ways in which education, particularly at the high school level, could be conceptualized. In this, they both described a desire to make the non-traditional high school experience the norm for all students. In particular, both participants saw a need to ensure that a more non-traditional experience be available to all students who desired it for an extended period of time, if not the entire duration of the high school experience. To this end, Alex described the implementation of unique, experiential opportunities as a way to structure schooling generally.

> Imagine if students could take a year in [name of program on construction site] and then a year in nature school or learning to start a business and everything is built around that. No more learning out of context. And I know people will say, what context does Calculus get used in? How would this work for Grade 12? Well maybe it's up to us to find ways to make Calculus applicable. Someone must be using it! We could base whole years off of one major question and bring in experts and community people and make the learning part of life. (Alex)

This quote demonstrates Alex's commitment to ensuring that students could enjoy a unique environment over the long term and that it be available throughout the grades, making it the norm. Also, of note was Alex's desire to ensure that key concepts were not lost. In his description of the importance of making Calculus relevant to everyday life, he was clear that Calculus was not to be discarded but to be made applicable to the real world. This was further echoed when he stated that 'schools aren't bad places. We need schools and we need to learn Math and Science and History and all of it. We just don't need to do it the way we always have' (Alex).

Stephen shared a similar idea around making the non-traditional the norm in schooling but felt strongly that this would require large-scale reform and a real commitment to reconceptualizing the experience of schooling. Unlike Alex, he was more sceptical that schooling in its current form could be transformed in place to be unique and non-traditional. Instead Stephen advocated for the reconceptualization of entire school divisions to ensure all students in that division would have access to a program that would meet their needs.

> I would love to see a school division where schools are collapsed into communities and there are different opportunities depending on what you want. For example, instead of going to one high school to take everything, maybe you attend the STEM community for a semester and then you take what you learned and you spend a semester or year or multiple years in an adventure high school where students design their own program using the outcomes from the curriculum. And if they find they need more of one thing or another to achieve their goals, they join a different community and go there for as long as it suits them or as long as they need. (Stephen)

In this description it is clear that Stephen saw the need for a complete redefinition of the structure of schooling but that this redefinition would certainly make the non-traditional the norm. What was also of note, however, was his willingness to admit that 'we shouldn't get rid of schools altogether, it's just that we need to see them differently' (Stephen). In this statement, although his commitment to whole-scale reform was clear, he was also aware of the importance of the system as it currently exists.

In both of the descriptions put forward by the participants, the principles of length and conservation (Hargreaves & Fink 2006) were evident. Length, according to Hargreaves and Fink (2006), 'preserves and advances the most valuable aspects of life over time, year upon year' (p. 18). It is in their commitment to a multi-year approach that the participants most closely aligned with this leadership value. Both participants spoke of the need for the non-traditional to become the norm so that it could then be experienced by students and teachers over multiple years. In this way the innovation experienced by students would be somewhat immune to changes in leadership or teacher staffing but would continue on as the way in which schooling is enacted. However, this new way of enacting schooling would look very different to the model we currently have and would place incredible choice and flexibility in the hands of both students and teachers.

Additionally, both participants, but particularly Alex, conveyed ideas connected to the sustainable leadership principle of conservation, described by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) as leadership that 'honors and learns from the best of the past to create an even better future' (p. 20). In their descriptions of making the non-traditional the norm, both participants were able to acknowledge to varying degrees the important foundations that have been laid by more historical views of education. Alex referred to the importance of some of the more theoretical concepts taught in schools such as Calculus, highlighting the importance of this important topic but also acknowledging a desire to make it more relevant in the lives of students. Additionally, he described that schools were not 'bad places' but that this did not abdicate our responsibility to try and make the experience a better and more connected one. Stephen, who admittedly saw less value in the traditional notions of schooling, did concede that school as a social institution was still necessary but had much more aggressive plans for its redesign.

Views of leadership. The final theme drawn from the unique perspectives of these two participants was explicitly about leadership and about how they viewed that term. For both

Alex and Stephen, leadership formed a large part of the way they visualized their roles as teachers. This was a marked difference from the interviews conducted with the other pre-service teachers in the larger study who saw leadership as residing with a formal role such as the principal. Alex and Stephen, on the other hand, saw themselves as leaders within a classroom and within a system with a distinct responsibility to actively try to enact change. Alex, however, was admittedly more aware of leadership as formalized and positional in nature and described himself as a teacher with different ideas.

> When I become a teacher I see my role in a couple of ways. First, I have a responsibility to bring what I have learned and who I am into the classroom. So even if I don't end up in a particularly nontraditional environment, I can make sure my classroom is as open and flexible as possible. But second, I think I have a responsibility to put these ideas out there before I get tired and give up. I can lead change in my classroom, yes, but that isn't enough. Teaching is leading but leading is also teaching so I just have to tell people my ideas and see if anyone will listen. (Alex)

Within this description of himself as a leader, Alex acknowledged his role in the change process and admitted that simply accepting the status quo was unacceptable, however he also described his desire to tell his ideas to others with the hope that those in a position to make change would act upon them. Therefore, in the view of Alex, his act of leadership was to continue to advocate for change by those in formal leadership positions. Additionally, he noted the need to do this 'before I get tired and give up' which clearly showed his belief that, with enough resistance, it would become difficult to maintain the passion for change he currently held.

Stephen also mentioned leadership explicitly and did so in a manner more connected to teaching and leading as both intricately connected and as a commitment to activism. In describing himself in the future, Stephen noted that he saw himself as 'an advocate or a champion for all kids. Sometimes we think that if a kid is getting good grades it's fine but that doesn't mean they love what they are doing. It means they get "school".' In this quote Stephen shows himself to be committed to change for all students and characterizes his position in that as a champion.

> A champion to me is someone who just keeps working for someone or something that makes life better. And sometimes that means you have to take a risk and put yourself out there and say what you believe and do what needs to be done to change something and sometimes you have to support other people to do that for themselves. I can do that as a teacher or I can choose not to do that but I certainly can't un-experience what I've experienced in this placement and the fact is, I know now it can be different so I have to try. (Stephen)

Although he didn't explicitly use the word leadership, Stephen's ideas of serving a greater cause, or supporting others as they do so, in the name of change is a trait of leadership that is well documented in leadership literature (Kouzes & Posner 2017; Lambert 2009; Spaulding

2015; Starratt 2009). And in contrast to Alex, Stephen does not see that this might, at some point, come to an end. Instead he states explicitly that he has had an experience now that has changed his views on what education can be.

In their depictions of themselves as teachers who see the need to now lead a change in ideas around schooling, both participants spoke in terms reminiscent of the sustainable leadership principle of depth. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) describe depth as a moral purpose that drives leadership for learning.

> We must preserve, protect, and promote in education what is itself sustaining as an enrichment of life: the fundamental moral purpose of deep and broad learning (rather than superficially tested and narrowly defined achievement) for all in commitments to and relationships of abiding care for others. The first principle of sustainable leadership is leadership for learning and leadership for caring for and among others. (p. 18)

In the words of both Alex and Stephen, their calling as leaders to enact change is seen as a moral imperative, as something that must be done until it can no longer be done. This is clearest in the words of Alex when he says he has to tell people his ideas and in the words of Stephen when he notes that he can't 'un-experience' what he has experienced, making this an act of leadership he simply cannot deny. Most notable, however, is the manner in which both Alex and Stephen view their responsibilities to others as a fundamental part of what will become their teaching/leadership career. While Alex speaks of his responsibility to the students he will inevitably teach, Stephen speaks in more activist terms, using words such as champion and risk.

Implications and Conclusion

The findings presented here were initially gathered from two participants as part of a larger study but stood out as distinct from other participants in the ways in which leadership at the systemic level was envisioned. That pre-service teachers, through participation in a non-traditional practicum placement that allowed them to see high school conceptualized differently, could come to develop views so consistent with leadership and change behooves teacher educators and school divisions to view pre-service teachers in a new light. As teacher education programs consider the courses and practicum experiences they are designing for their students, providing opportunities to see schooling done differently could be a path to developing the leadership skills that may lead to future interest in formal leadership. At the very least, it may allow pre-service teachers to begin to consider in a more concrete way their views on educational change, allowing them to examine the beliefs rooted in their own educational pasts.

Secondly, teacher education programs should consider the inclusion of leadership education, both formal and informal, at the undergraduate level. Although this was a small sample, only two participants out of nine, it did show that this kind of thinking can be developed and can

be nurtured with the right kinds of conversations and experiences. By including leadership education into undergraduate teaching programs, perhaps others involved in the practicum experience on the housing construction sites would have started to use this language to describe the impact on their own experiences. Given the discourse that exists around shortages of those interested in formal leadership, undergraduate programs could begin to plant the seeds earlier in the life-cycle of the teacher.

Additionally, the results of this study implicate school divisions in the kinds of experiences they provide the pre-service teachers who come to them for practicum placements. Historically one pre-service teacher has been matched with one or more in-service teachers and has worked to become competent and proficient in that formal school setting. Given the importance placed on the unique and diverse experience described here, perhaps more can be done to ensure that pre-service teachers are exposed to as many learning environments as possible throughout their education, ensuring that they too have the opportunity to experience an educational environment that will challenge their historical notions of schooling and help them to see themselves as a leader of change. This may call for a re-evaluation of the ways in which the practicum is envisioned in teacher education and may require a commitment to alternative forms of practicum sites as powerful and engaging places for pre-service teachers to learn and develop.

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Preparing Teachers to Lead in an Evolving Policy Context: Innovations in Initial Teacher Education

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Abstract: *Preparing pre-service teachers to lead is the collective and ongoing responsibility of initial teacher education providers, departments of education and school systems. Conceptualisations of leadership are extended beyond senior positions in schools to include expertise in functional roles, teaching teams and collective capacity for driving change and improvement at the school level. This paper explores teacher quality as a driver of world-class education systems and a critical influence upon future economic prosperity in an increasingly globalised world. Outlining the background to recent reviews into initial teacher education, agendas for reform and policy mandates from Australian national and state governments, there is a specific focus on preparing teachers to lead through the introduction of specialised pathways in key learning areas for pre-service primary teachers. This is exemplified through discussion of two case studies detailing primary specialisations embedded into the Master of Teaching (Primary) programme at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne.*

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, initial teacher education, primary specialisations, teacher leadership

Introduction

Teacher quality is acknowledged as the single most critical factor in improving student achievement and promoting a nation's economic competitiveness (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Carnegie Corporation 2001; Department of Education and Training (DET) 2015; Hattie 2003; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2018; Whelan 2009) and the driver of world-class education systems (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Darling-Hammond 2006). High quality schooling leads to the development of creative, informed and resilient citizens and active participation in our increasingly globalised world (Gonski 2011; MYCEETA 2009; OECD 2018). The knowledge and skills needed for students to be successful in an increasingly globalised world that is undergoing rapid technological change are being

reconceptualised by school systems. Governments across the globe are reviewing ambitious reforms to improve the quality of teaching and in-school leadership undertaken by education systems in the top tier of school performance and contextually replicating these in order to emulate this success.

In Australia, school leadership is understood as central to these reforms (Council of Australian Governments 2008). Federal and state governments are developing and implementing new systemic approaches that proactively target and guide leadership development, identifying and supporting high-potential teachers (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2012; Department of Education and Training (Queensland) 2016; NSW Department of Education & Communities 2012). Incentive packages that recognise high performing teachers, leadership education and special leadership roles are offered. In acknowledgement that the preparation and retention of high quality teachers and leaders is dependent on robust policies and strategies that guide selection, recruitment, development and the work environment (Barber & Mourshed 2007), improving teacher quality and school leadership is a central focus of recent educational policy and reform.

The Policy Landscape in Australia

In the last 10 years there has been a steady and continuing decline in the performance of Australian students in international tests of student achievement across all achievement levels, particularly the top and specifically in the areas of mathematics, science and reading (Gonski 2011; OECD 2018). This has been the catalyst for a corresponding increase in government and public concern about the quality of teachers and teacher education, and the subsequent impact on the social and economic development of Australia (Louden 2008). The past 40 years have seen a series of over 100 national and state government inquiries into the state of teacher education resulting in much criticism, scant evidence and insignificant impact (Louden 2008). Responding to some of the more recent government inquiries: *Inquiry into the Promotion of Mathematics and Science Education* (Education & Training Committee 2006); the *Top of the Class* report (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training 2007); and the *Step Up, Step In, Step Out* report (Parliament of Victoria, Education and Training Committee 2005), in 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) introduced the *Smarter Schools – Quality Teaching National Partnership* (TQNP) with a reform agenda to drive quality and continuous improvement in teaching, improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and strengthen the capacity and resilience of disadvantaged schools. National reform agreements with all states and territories were entered into and significant funding allocations made to achieve national goals for school education in Australia. Resultant changes in education policy and jurisdictional reforms have been aimed at raising the quality and status of teachers and school leaders, promoting school autonomy, improving initial teacher preparation, delivering sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students and providing equity for all students in access to high quality learning experiences irrespective of geographic location or socio-economic background. Under the

TQNP, Australian governments have introduced a range of nationally significant and sustainable systemic reforms aiming to create a world-class education system for all Australian students. These are articulated under eight key reforms, targeting the critical areas of teacher recruitment, training, employment, development and retention, some of which inform the following discussion.

Responses From the States as Partners for National Reform

In New South Wales, the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: Blueprint for action* (NSW Department of Education and Communities 2013) provides a series of 16 reforms focused on selection of high quality academic performers with strong literacy and numeracy skills; attracting bright, motivated school leavers and career changers; initial teacher education (ITE) programmes that produce high quality graduates; high quality placement experiences for pre-service teachers and induction for beginning teachers, supporting entry to the profession. The Victorian strategy, *From New Directions to Action: World class teaching and school leadership* (State of Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2013), aims to recruit suitable and talented candidates; simplify course entry for strong candidates from diverse backgrounds; support new entrants with career planning frameworks; review Victorian ITE programmes and establish stronger school–university partnerships. Similarly, in Queensland, *A Fresh Start: Improving the preparation and quality of teachers for Queensland* (Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and Employment 2013) aims to improve the preparation and quality of teachers by instituting stronger governance and regular reviews of ITE programmes, school–university partnership agreements, and frameworks for assessing pre-service teacher performance during professional experience placements. As noted in recent strategic documents for the South Australia Department of Education, there is an emphasis on building a stronger South Australia through high quality education (www.education.sa.gov.au) which echoes the goals of other states, seeking improvements in the quality of teaching, school leadership and community engagement, also planning a mandate for all new teachers to hold a masters level qualification from 2020.

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) was established early in 2014 to provide advice for the Australian Government on how ITE could be improved to better prepare graduate teachers. TEMAG was charged to undertake an international review of ITE programmes and identify principles of best practice that would translate into the Australian context and transform the teaching workforce. The TEMAG report, *Action Now: Classroom ready teachers* released in December 2014, concedes that there is great variability in quality across ITE programmes and proposes a broad range of (38) comprehensive recommendations for significant improvement in the accreditation, content and delivery of ITE programmes under the umbrella of five key proposals for:

1. a strengthened national quality assurance process;

2. sophisticated and transparent selection for entry to teaching;
3. integration of theory and practice;
4. robust assurance of classroom readiness; and
5. national research and capability.

The findings of the TEMAG, articulated at Key Proposal 3, are particularly pertinent to this paper. Specifically: 3. Preparing effective teachers – integration of theory and practice (p. 15), 3.1 What providers teach – areas of concern (p. 15), 3.1.5 Teaching in specific areas, Preparation for teaching literacy; Preparation for teaching numeracy; and Primary specialisation, particularly in science, mathematics and languages' (pp. 18-20).

TEMAG Key Proposal 3: Preparing Effective Teachers – Primary Specialisation, Particularly in Science, Mathematics and Languages

Traditionally, primary teachers are considered as generalist classroom teachers and required to hold broad pedagogical content knowledge across the range of curricular disciplines. Students taught by teachers with subject specific certifications, that is, specialised subject qualifications, achieve higher results than those taught by generalists or outside of their disciplinary expertise (Akiba, LeTendre & Scribner 2007; OECD 2018).

In a report investigating the state of Australian primary schooling (*In the Balance: The future of Australia's primary schools*) Angus, Olney and Ainley (2007) indicate the most common specialist positions in primary schools as teacher librarian, LOTE teacher, literacy specialist and physical education specialist. Numeracy and science specialist positions were significantly less frequent and many of the specialist positions were undertaken on a part-time basis. Parallels were drawn against the frequency of specialist positions and teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy to teach the key learning areas. Almost half of the principals in participating schools indicated a lack of funding to employ additional staff for specialist learning areas or experienced difficulty in recruiting suitable specialist teachers, therefore rendering the capacity to respond to curriculum priorities as variable within and across schools. The distribution of quality teachers across schools can influence equitable opportunity and access to high quality teaching. A direct correlation between the availability of instructional specialists and variations in student achievement is noted in international reports (Darling-Hammond 2012). In the recent report, *Not So Elementary: Primary school teacher quality in top-performing systems* (Jensen, Roberts-Hull, Magee & Ginnivan 2016), the benefits of ITE programmes producing generalist teachers with specialised knowledge are discussed with a focus on disciplinary leadership and the increased ability of schools to selectively hire specialists to ensure curriculum expertise. Conversely, teachers with advanced qualifications, greater experience and specialised knowledge are more highly sought after and can therefore exercise greater choice in the school of employment.

The TEMAG found that as generalists, primary teachers are under increasing demand to develop strong content knowledge across all disciplines. Specifically the TEMAG reported

that generally, primary teachers did not feel confident to teach reading, that those who lack mathematics knowledge in a particular topic tend to avoid teaching it, and that science content knowledge is typically underdeveloped due to the crowded nature of the curriculum (TEMAG 2014). These factors contribute to a lack of capacity and confidence in teaching one or more of the disciplines which, in turn, adversely impacts student access, engagement and achievement during the early years of schooling. There is a consequent reduction in students studying advanced levels of science and maths or qualifying to teach in these disciplines, thus perpetuating the cycle. The TEMAG acknowledges these challenges and notes strong stakeholder support for primary teachers to have a specialisation, prioritising science, mathematics or languages. The TEMAG further notes the added potential of primary specialists, as leaders in their discipline area, to increase teacher capital by sharing specialised curriculum and pedagogical knowledge across the school community and recommends that higher education providers (HEP) include primary specialisations in all ITE programmes.

AITSL Mandates Inclusion of Primary Specialisations

In 2015, Australia's jurisdictional teacher regulation authority, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was charged with the responsibility for implementing the majority of the TEMAG recommendations. The Australian Government supported the call by TEMAG to reconstitute AITSL as the national regulator with rigorous oversight of the accreditation of ITE programmes. Amongst a suite of TEMAG reforms, AITSL mandated ITE providers to incorporate primary specialisations by 2019 as a condition of accreditation of all primary programmes – to document specialisations, and provide related graduate workforce data and mechanisms for researching subsequent impact (AITSL 2016). These conditions directly respond to TEMAG (2014) Recommendation 18: *Higher education providers equip all primary pre-service teachers with at least one subject specialisation, prioritising science, mathematics or a language. Providers publish specialisations available and numbers of graduates from these programs* (p. xv).

Teacher Leadership: What Does the Literature Tell Us?

The role of 'leader' is often synonymous with senior positions in schools, such as principals and curriculum leaders. However, the conceptualisation of leadership roles has expanded significantly in recognition of the expertise of teaching teams and in building collective capacity for driving change and improvement at the school level. York-Barr and Duke (2004) conceptualise 'teacher leadership' as, 'the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement' (pp. 287-288). The impact that teaching has on the quality of student learning is a primary concern of teacher leadership, although this is not a linear process as the role of the teacher leader is complex (Szeto & Chen 2017; Yavuz & Gulmez 2018). In determining what

constitutes the role of a leader, literature focusing on categorisation schemes that label teachers as particular types of leaders is unhelpful and detracts from the important work that teachers do within the scope of their daily practice (Lovett 2017; Reeves & Lowenhaupt 2016). Balancing the roles of teacher and leader in order to have an impact on student learning can incorporate various forms of formal and informal leadership tasks, including the development and alignment of the intended, enacted and assessed curriculum, working in professional teams, sharing innovations, leadership of learning areas, communicating with parents, mentoring other teachers, and being involved in decision-making and action-taking processes that involve continuous improvement cycles at the whole school, year and classroom level (Reeves & Lowenhaupt 2016). Szeto and Chen (2017) define teacher leadership as being bounded within four contexts:

> (1) the classroom, where teachers lead other teachers outside their own classroom; (2) the subject, in which teachers lead work with their colleagues on curricular and instructional issues; (3) the team, in which teachers lead issue management across year or curricular groups; and (4) the organisation, in which teachers operate beyond the school by leading cross-school initiatives for improvement. (p. 47)

Teacher leadership endeavours are rarely independent, and effective leaders need to develop the skills to navigate and maximise the complex collaborative and interdependent relationships that exist within and beyond the classroom and school ecologies.

Wenner and Campbell (2017) state that there are two key forms of preparing teacher leaders for their roles: Professional Development programmes, and through university courses. In a comprehensive review of literature focusing on leadership, York-Barr and Duke (2004) assert that formal training should commence at university and be continued throughout a teacher's career. More specifically, targeted professional learning could provide opportunities for developing teachers' capacity to:

- continue to learn about and demonstrate advanced curricular, instructional, and assessment practices;
- understand the school culture and how to initiate and support change in schools;
- develop the knowledge and skills necessary to support the development of colleagues in individual, small group, and large group interactions. (p. 282)

In a large scale, longitudinal study of Australian graduate teachers, *Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education,* it was reported that up to 34 percent of the participant graduate teachers held a leadership position, with many taking on formal leadership positions in either their third or fourth year of teaching (Mayer et al. 2013). In-school leadership teams utilise systemically developed performance development frameworks to provide career pathways for teachers and identify potential leaders (Clinton, Anderson, Dawson, Dawson & Bolton 2017). The assumption that graduate teachers intuitively have leadership skills when they enter the profession does not adequately acknowledge their career stage or any further support and mentoring that is required. Rogers and Scales (2013) note that the capacity of

pre-service teachers to undertake leadership training must be considered in relation to their development as a professional. In fact, there is an expectation that graduate teachers will assume leadership of their class from the very first day. The 'education profession needs all teachers, even beginners, to be active participants in school improvement. Leadership is an integral part of the profession, and moral reasons compel all teachers to serve as leaders in some capacity' (Bond 2011: 282). Beyond this, teacher leadership is an essential part of a teacher's career development. Incorporating a leadership focus in current pre-service teacher courses can provide a strong foundation for ongoing, career-long professional learning. Reeves and Lowenhaupt (2016) found that some pre-service teachers expected to be in leadership roles within five years of commencing their professional teaching career. It is evident that pre-service teachers aspire to take on leadership responsibilities as part of a clearly defined career path upon entry to the profession (Reeves & Lowenhaupt 2016). The expanding conceptualisation of leadership at different levels of the teaching profession provides a new entry point for considering the knowledge, skills and dispositions that can be addressed in initial teacher education programmes in preparation for proactive leadership.

Leadership in Initial Teacher Education Courses

The development of specialised pathways in initial teacher education courses acknowledges the critical leadership role that teachers have upon entering the profession. The addition of leadership curriculum in pre-service courses can support leadership *responsibility* in graduate teachers by building *response-ability* for leadership. That is, developing the capacity of pre-service teachers to recognise leadership roles and tasks, to develop leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions, and in turn, know when to use initiative and action as leaders in their teaching role. If leadership is an expected professional responsibility, building the leadership capacity of pre-service teachers needs to be introduced in initial teacher education programmes (Bond 2011). Such programmes can enable novice teachers to be response-*able* with respect to teacher leadership. There are obvious constraints when attempting to incorporate leadership opportunities in initial teacher education courses (Rogers & Scales 2013). Initiatives to incorporate leadership instruction in pre-service teaching courses have included community service projects or undertaking leadership workshops and working with current teacher leaders. Furthermore, current research is limited in the area of leadership in initial teacher education programmes, so there is a need for evaluation of current initiatives being trialled in terms of what skills, knowledge and dispositions are relevant and appropriate for pre-service teachers and the extent to which these are transferable into the workplace.

Leadership Through Primary Specialisations at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education

The approach taken at the University of Melbourne involves a more direct method for preparing pre-service teachers for leadership within a particular learning area, with a strong

focus on intentional content and pedagogical leadership as part of the initial teacher education course. The purpose of specialised pathways is to develop a deep understanding of the knowledge and skills required to meet the demands of the curriculum in a select learning area in order to support student learning. Specialised pathways recently introduced in the primary programme (both as part of a major research project and later, in response to mandated policy) require sustained engagement with content and pedagogies relevant to one learning area and engaging with research that strengthens classroom practice. The specialised pathways, detailed in later sections, allow pre-service teachers to begin developing leadership skills and knowledge that can be applied in practice with a view to improving the quality of teaching and student learning. This is in acknowledgement that teacher leadership resides in every teacher, whether or not they have more formal educational leadership aspirations for the future.

Mathematics and Science Teachers as Leaders in Schools

In 2012, Australia's Chief Scientist released *Mathematics, Engineering and Science: In the national interest*, a report to the Australian Government (Chubb & Chubb 2012). Echoing global recognition that future economic prosperity is directly linked to increasing proportions of the workforce being educated in Mathematics, Engineering and Science (MES), the report offers a series of prioritised recommendations focused on five key areas: 1) inspirational teaching; 2) inspired school leadership; 3) teaching techniques; 4) gender issues; and 5) scientific literacy.

In 2014, the Australian Government addressed this call for action, launching the *Enhancing the Training of Mathematics and Science Teachers (ETMST)* programme to drive major improvements in the quality and preparation of maths and science teachers in order to reinvigorate teaching of these disciplines in schools. The programme supported collaboration between school and university faculty on innovative course design, content, pedagogy and delivery of ITE programmes on a national basis. The ETMST Programme comprised five major projects across Australia. The Victorian project, *Reconceptualising Maths and Science Teacher Education Programs* (ReMSTEP), was a cross-institutional partnership of four leading Victorian universities traversing 11 faculties, further including 10 external science (and mathematics) partners and 24 primary and secondary schools. The Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE), University of Melbourne led the ReMSTEP project to develop a series of seven key innovations for making maths and science curricula more engaging and relevant and, acknowledging graduate teachers as powerful agents of change.

Case Study 1: ReMSTEP – Introducing Maths & Science Specialisations

The case for study focuses specifically on ReMSTEP Innovation 3: *Science specialisations within primary pre-service programs* which concentrated on the development and implementation of

mathematics and science specialisations into primary ITE programmes. This was a cross institutional, cross faculty endeavour involving collaboration between maths and science academics, teacher educators, industry professionals and specialist researchers. This expertise was a critical factor in the development of new content knowledge and pedagogies that had strong connection to contemporary practice while articulating with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL 2011).

The Master of Teaching (Primary) at the MGSE is a two-year postgraduate programme, for generalist primary classroom teachers. In 2014, the course architecture was redesigned to include 50 points of study dedicated to specialised study in either mathematics or science. This was achieved without increasing credit points or extending the duration of the course. Existing disciplinary subjects were reviewed and parallel subjects created for those who entered the two specialised pathways with more specialised content and pedagogy and a stronger focus on disciplinary leadership in schools. In addition to this, capstone research subjects and projects required pre-service teachers to undertake literature reviews and design proposals for research projects that focused on the designated discipline. Practicum tasks and assessments were also tagged to the specialised areas, requiring pre-service teachers to demonstrate targeted performance and leadership in the discipline. Specific assessments, planned lessons and tasks that were previously free choice or generic were linked to the pre-service teachers' specialisations, requiring them to demonstrate deep pedagogical content knowledge and leadership in the field and to substantiate this by drawing upon relevant research and literature. An expression of interest was sought from pre-service teachers hoping to take a specialised pathway, with entry dependent upon their previous relevant study, background, prior semester results and employment history or other experience in the field. Successful applicants participated in the new offerings along with other affordances of the ReMSTEP innovations, such as: access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) practitioners and cutting edge research, experiences linked to contemporary STEM practices, collaborative development of units of study at science and technology centres with maths and science educators, teacher educators and STEM practitioners. These affordances further supported PSTs to extend their capacity to integrate contemporary science and mathematics into their curriculum and practice and to increase their confidence in teaching difficult concepts.

In 2016, one third of MTeach (Primary) graduates were certified as mathematics or science specialists. Based on a standardised online survey exploring PSTs overall experience, there is early evidence that these graduates of the programme have increased capabilities and are having a positive effect on student engagement and learning outcomes in the classroom. With overwhelming agreement that the experience was a valuable part of their teacher education, the findings included strong evidence of change in terms of knowledge and attitude towards the discipline(s). PSTs also acknowledged changes in perception of their own efficacy and highlighted benefits that will influence their future teaching and communication of mathematics and science concepts to students (Hoxley & Anderson 2018). Now early career

teachers, the former participants are prepared and positioned as catalysts for transformative change in their school contexts both within their own generalist primary classroom, as mentors – modelling contemporary science and maths knowledge and practice, as a science or maths specialist/coordinator, and as leaders of science and maths professional learning in their schools.

Case Study 2: Embedding Leadership Within a Course Structure – The Master of Teaching (Primary) – MGSE

As part of the ITE accreditation cycle of the Master of Teaching programmes at the MGSE, a major reconceptualisation of the early childhood, primary and secondary programmes occurred during 2015-2016. Mindful of the new national programme standards for accreditation (AITSL 2016), the primary programme needed to include provision for all PSTs to undertake at least one specialisation, observing priority areas. Capitalising on the experience of embedding the existing science and maths specialisations and learnings of the ReMSTEP project, the same principles were applied to create a suite of eight specialised offerings in the 2017 accredited version of the programme. Building upon the groundwork laid by the ReMSTEP programme, the suite includes the prioritised areas of: Science, Mathematics and Literacy – and also, Languages, STEM, Humanities, The Arts and Health & Physical Education. All PSTs undertake at least one specialised pathway with entry determined by relevant employment or experience, prerequisite knowledge, subjects or credentials and prior results. These factors, in combination, guide enrolment for the best and brightest for priority entry into their preferred specialised pathway.

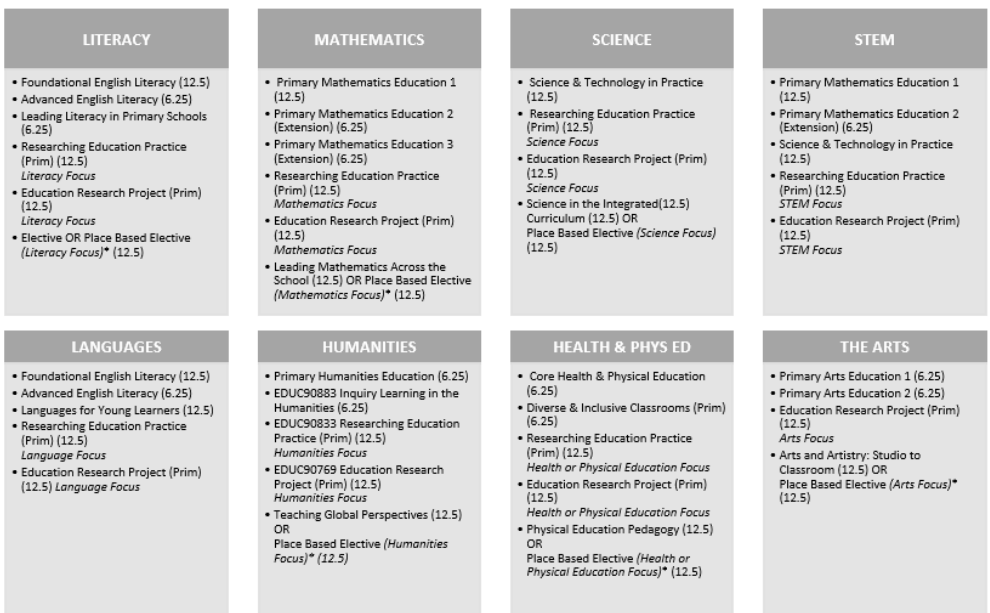
The Suite of Eight Specialised Pathways

Each specialised pathway has at least 25 percent of the total programme points dedicated to the discipline area in a combination of core education subjects, research methodologies/ capstone research projects, and related professional experience as indicated in Figure 1.

The MGSE was an early responder to the call by AITSL to embed primary specialisations in all primary ITE programmes by 2019. Going beyond the mandate which prioritised for specialisations in mathematics/numeracy, science and English/literacy by 2019, the MGSE designed a unique architectural feature that incorporated specialisations in eight key learning areas into their two-year Master of Teaching (Primary) programme in 2017. With the accreditation cycle of ITE programmes progressively approving new four-year bachelor degrees and two-year masters degrees that meet the policy mandate from 2017, the trickle of first cohort graduates will be soon followed by a veritable flooding of the workforce with primary specialists by 2022, particularly in the priority areas outlined. As MGSE graduates are amongst the *first wave* of primary specialists entering the workforce in 2019, principals have little awareness or experience of employing or best utilising teachers possessing these new specialised credentials. Principals may need to reconceptualise school structures and

strategically allocate systemic funding in order to capitalise on the disciplinary expertise and leadership potential of these new graduates. The established AITSL career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers [HALT] and networks require nuanced revision to reflect the needs and status of new primary specialists as future leaders. The extent to which and range of ways that primary specialists are able to lead in their designated specialist learning areas in their schools of employment is yet to be determined.

Figure 1: Master of Teaching (Primary) Specialised Pathways



Conclusion

Declining results in international tests of student achievement have been the catalyst for unprecedented reforms to pre-service and in-service teacher education. Major initiatives have been implemented across the globe as countries strive to emulate the features of top-tier education systems. Governments continue to review these ambitious reforms through a lens of 21st century skills, student achievement and international benchmarks.

Proposals for change recommended by the TEMAG included a call for all initial teacher education programmes for primary teachers to include a specialised pathway, prioritising science, mathematics or languages. The success of this policy driven initiative will be largely dependent upon how schools employ, recognise, utilise and support new teachers to work in their specialised fields. New conceptualisations of leadership roles continue to be redefined, acknowledging increased teacher capacity, and driving organisational and structural changes at the school level. What remains to be seen is how the introduction of specialised pathways

translates into impact on student learning outcomes, mentoring or professional learning of peers, leadership in the specialised discipline across the schools and future specialised leadership roles

A key focus of TEMAG was evidence of impact of teacher quality in order to promote community confidence, consistent preparation of pre-service teachers for positive impact on student learning, provision of sufficient numbers of classroom-ready teachers to meet future workforce demands and, of continuous evaluation of cyclic improvement to ITE programmes (AITSL 2017). The initiatives implemented in the Master of Teaching (Primary) courses at MGSE have demonstrated that leadership focused through deep content and pedagogical knowledge can be developed and rigorously implemented in initial teacher education programmes in a sustained way.

Further large-scale longitudinal research is recommended to determine the impact of these nationally mandated and statutory regulated reforms to initial teacher education across contexts, programmes and school systems. Areas associated with graduate teachers' leadership capabilities, aspirations, ongoing professional learning needs and employment/ promotion opportunities should be examined along with subsequent impact on student achievement across key learning areas. Extensive reporting of the multiple perspectives and experiences of graduate teachers, initial teacher education providers, schools and policy makers are critical for consolidating this ambitious agenda that informs leadership and curriculum design, and creates programmes and ongoing support to optimise the knowledge and skills of quality teachers.

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Exploring Principals' Understandings and Cultivation of Leadership at All Levels During Initial Teacher Preparation School Placement

Gavin Murphy

Abstract: *In this small-scale study, four principals' understandings and cultivation of leadership at all levels are explored, set against recent national policy reforms in the Republic of Ireland in (i) school leadership, specifically leadership preparation and development, and (ii) initial teacher preparation, specifically school placement. In-depth semi-structured interviews with principals provide narrative accounts of policy enactment in the Republic of Ireland. Findings illustrate the nuances in principals' understanding and cultivation of leadership at all levels. Findings also indicate the challenges, opportunities and possibilities presented to principals. Importantly, findings demonstrate principals' belief of the developmental potential for all teachers' leadership development by affording more careful consideration to pre-service teachers' leadership development during school placement. Their stories of enactment highlight implications for conceiving of and practising leadership preparation and development individually and collectively, as well as at all school and system levels.*

Keywords: School leadership, principals, school placement, initial teacher education, leadership preparation

Introduction

In many international contexts, there have been parallel reforms of school leadership, leadership preparation and development (LPD) (Bush 2012) and initial teacher preparation (ITP) (Cochran-Smith & Villegas 2015). They have been aligned to other education reform initiatives and are related to new evidence about and, by consequence, shifting conceptions of quality school leadership and teaching. Although LPD and ITP are distinct, arguably they are not entirely separate given that they are both concerned with questions about educators' professional learning for quality educational provision at system, organisational and individual levels. However, for the most part, they remain separate in both academic and policy literatures despite evidence of school leadership's influence on quality teaching (Day

2017) and thus the interrelationship between school leadership, teaching and learner outcomes (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2019).

Leithwood et al. (2019: 3) propose that 'the function of leadership at all levels, or distributed leadership, is to build the organisational conditions that foster high-quality teaching and generate improvements in learner outcomes'. Therefore, the necessity for 'leadership at all levels' (Mowat & McMahon 2019) (LAAL) or distributed leadership as indicated by Leithwood et al. (2019), is evident, both for school improvement as well as to create opportunities for school leadership development (Harris 2008; Robinson 2008). Consequently, in view of this body of research suggesting the importance of LAAL and the leadership development potential offered by distributed leadership, national policy contexts have responded. The Republic of Ireland is one such policy context, with significant reform in LPD (Murphy 2019) influenced by distributed leadership. There are, however, challenges in adopting and implementing a distributed leadership perspective at the school level.

As Leithwood et al. (2019) indicate, positional hierarchy in many organisational cultures constrains opportunities to learn about leadership experientially or opportunities to lead based on expertise. In their examination of the Scottish context that urges reconciliation of both the system's and individual professionals' needs, Mowat and McMahon (2019: 185) echo that 'deeply entrenched' positional hierarchies compartmentalise, and thus constrain, leadership education. They add the need for LAAL to include: ITP, system and collaborative leadership; a consideration of contextual forces on policy enactment; and urge for a focus on the 'why' of LAAL in addition to the 'how' of LAAL. In the Republic of Ireland, alongside recent reform in LPD, other reforms have underscored the importance of school placement in ITP. This situation makes the Republic of Ireland an interesting context in which to consider principals' understandings and cultivation of LAAL during school placement. Therefore, this study begins to address the calls for further research raised by Mowat and McMahon (2019). The recent parallel reforms in school leadership and ITP are now overviewed.

Connecting Parallel Policy Context Reforms in School Leadership and ITP

Overviewing Reforms in the School Leadership Policy Context

Given the evidence base demonstrating the impact school leadership has on students' educational achievement (Day, Gu & Sammons 2016; Leithwood et al. 2019), there has been significant recent national interest in school leadership policy in the Republic of Ireland. This recent interest in school leadership has not only been limited to policy reform, but has also been reflected in changes to the organisation of school leadership structures and the provision of professional education for school leaders (Coolahan, Drudy, Hogan, Hyland & McGuinness 2017). Furthermore, a national Centre for School Leadership (CSL) was established in 2016. Subsequently, a Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership that is partly

funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) commenced in 2017. Policymakers have invested in the idea that professional education in leadership matters, an investment which reflects international best evidence (Orphanos & Orr 2014) and ambitiously attempts to foster large-scale leadership development (Leithwood 2019), which is not without challenges.

In the Irish policy context, this study is also timely given the DES (2019) Action Plan for Education, which as part of its continuing reform of ITP aims to 'build strong leadership practice in schools and promote innovation and excellence in leadership' (p. 28) and to equip teachers with 'the right skills for 21st-century teaching, learning and assessment' (p. 31). A sub-action of this is the 'review of student teacher school placements in ITE, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships and capacity of schools to support placements' (p. 32).

A continuum of school leadership, with particular focus on reformed middle leadership structures, has also been established (Forde, Hamilton, Ní Bhróithe, Nihill & Rooney 2018). Nonetheless, in almost all policy documents, an understanding of teacher leadership reflects the research literature (Nguyen, Harris & Ng 2019). Teacher leadership is posited as a quality of a teacher's pedagogical excellence within their classroom as well as a capacity beyond their classroom to influence other teachers' practice through trusting and collaborative relationships, irrespective of their level in the school. In their publication *A Professional Learning Continuum for School Leadership in the Irish Context*, for example, CSL (2017: 1) state:

> Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners increasingly recognise the role of leadership at all levels in developing high-performing schools. There is growing recognition also that sustained improvement in the educational outcomes for students will depend on the quality of leadership at several levels in schools.

Notwithstanding this, it is necessary to engage critically with the notion of the continuum of school leadership, given that oftentimes the tendency is to conceive of elements of the continua of both LPD (Mowat & McMahon 2019) – such as those described by Bush (2018) – and ITP (Feiman-Nemser 2001; Ó Gallchóir, O'Flaherty & Hinchion 2019) as a disconnected, hierarchised series of linear leadership and teacher career stages. When considered simultaneously, arguably conceptions may become increasingly hierarchal rather than result in an integrated conception of leadership and teaching. Therefore, scholars have argued for the necessity of adopting a more fluid perspective regarding continua. They argue in favour of interconnecting leadership and professional education at all levels, instead of conflating formal, typically hierarchised, leadership *status* with demonstrable, either formal or informal, leadership *actions*.

A fundamental tenet of school leadership reform is the convergence of school leadership with school self-evaluation (SSE) (Murphy 2019) based on a distributed leadership model (DES 2017, 2018). In the absence of national professional standards for leadership (Sugrue 2015), the current school leadership policy text (Ball, Maguire, Braun & Hoskins 2012) primarily informing contemporary discourse and interpretations can be considered to be 'Looking at

Our School 2016', where primary and post-primary school iterations exist (DES 2016a, 2016b). 'Looking at Our School 2016' is conceptualised by the DES as the *framework* against which the SSE *process* for school improvement is implemented through the distributed leadership *model*. Two *dimensions* frame 'Looking at Our School 2016': 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Leadership and Management'. Despite much attention having been afforded in national discourse to 'Teaching and Learning' to date, the focus in this paper is 'Leadership and Management', particularly the *domain* 'Developing Leadership Capacity'.

Here, the importance of empowering teachers to take on and carry out leadership roles is underscored. For effective and highly effective practice, reference is made to: the notion of the school as a learning organisation (Stoll & Kools 2016); empowerment to take on and carry out leadership roles is linked to the effective use of distributed leadership models (Harris & DeFlaminis 2016) and teamwork; and principals' provision of mentoring to support teachers in new roles, including developing the capacities of mentors (Ulvik & Sunde 2013). Therefore, in terms of how school leadership is conceived, the Irish policy context reflects a global paradigm shift where leadership is seen as residing in the collective rather than in the individual, and by extension, the existence of a collective responsibility for school improvement (Mowat & McMahon 2019) which is particularly significant in the Irish context given the connections between leadership and SSE. Therefore, as CSL (2017: 1) assert, 'an ever-increasing breadth and depth of leadership talent within the school community' is required.

Leadership Challenges in Schools

Despite policy rhetoric, research on teacher and middle leadership has demonstrated the challenges experienced by senior school leaders in the Republic of Ireland in enacting reform concerning the distribution of leadership. Senior school leaders cite the distribution of leadership as an urgent requirement for their professional development (Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants 2018). O'Donovan (2015) refers to the challenge of lingering professional cultures at the school-level, whereby only formal, positional leadership prevails. Lárusdóttir and O'Connor (2017) report similar challenges, as well as how bureaucratic work intensification constrains the distribution of leadership, concluding with a call for leadership skills development to be part of ITP. They believe that formally including LPD in ITP would promote teachers' perceptions of themselves as leaders at all levels. They believe that this would challenge the view that leadership is solely limited to those in formal positions, which would ultimately lead to professional reculturing. Other research has focused less on middle leadership and more on teacher leadership. King (2017) has explored pre-service teacher leadership, although the focus was limited to a leadership module relating to inclusion at the university. Elsewhere, King and Stevenson (2017) have considered how school principals can create conditions for informal teacher leadership to flourish, although the focus was not on ITP and was centred on a collaborative professional development initiative in partnership with the university concerning literacy. They conclude that for teacher leadership to flourish,

principals' actions, and indeed, inactions – or letting go – are crucial in an accountability-driven policy environment. Therefore, set against the opportunities and constraints of the national policy context, this study explores principals' understandings and cultivation of LAAL related to their schools' involvement in a critical aspect of a reformed ITP policy context: school placement. The ITP policy context is now reviewed.

Overviewing Reforms in the ITP Policy Context

Paralleling reform of school leadership policy context is substantial reform of initial teacher preparation (ITP) policy in the Republic of Ireland since 2012 (Hyland 2018; O'Donoghue, O'Doherty & Harford 2017). Post-reform, ITP in the Republic of Ireland is at Master's degree level and remains university-led, and the concepts of both school-university partnership (SUP) and school placement prominently feature in reform (Hall, Murphy, Rutherford & Ní Aingléis 2018). While this reflects international best practice (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman 2011), SUP has traditionally been informal in the Republic of Ireland. Placement was founded on a spirit of 'goodwill and volunteerism' (Ní Áingléis & Looney 2018: 279). Often, PSTs were not perceived as learners (Ó Gallchóir et al. 2019) and engaged in placements in a workplace/host model (Conway, Murphy, Rath & Hall 2009). Since reform, 25 percent of ITP programmes ought to be allocated to school placement experiences, mandated by the Teaching Council (Ó Gallchóir et al. 2019), Ireland's professional standards body for teachers.

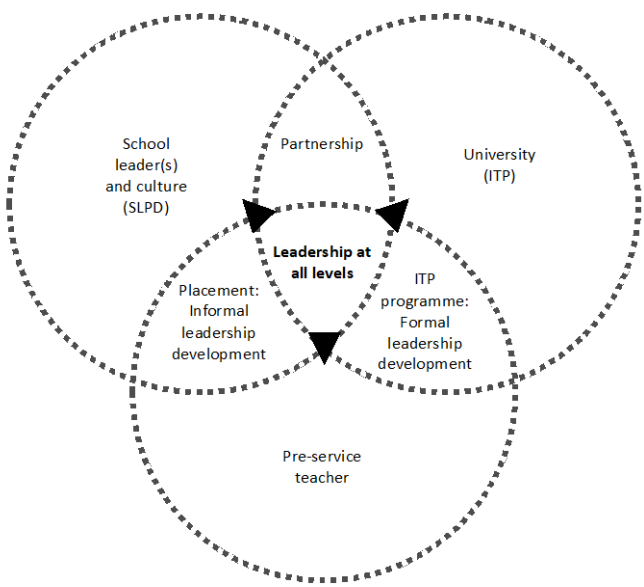
Discussing leadership and ITP, Conway, Murphy, Hall and Rath (2011) address models of partnership and the professional education cultures in schools during placement. Noting that the model of partnership is essential, they view that the professional cultures in which pre-service teachers are placed are possibly more influential, particularly the structure and substance of professional collaboration. Conway et al. (2011: 103) conceive of learning to teach as 'preparation for not only life in the classroom but also active engagement in teaching as a professional learning community', reflecting the contemporary school leadership policy context. They conclude that school leaders have a responsibility to relay their expertise in sophisticated pedagogical knowledge during school placement through 'modelling, sharing and discussion' (p. 106), echoing Day (2017) who emphasises the role school leadership plays in quality ITP. Given reform of the configuration of ITP, Conway et al. (2011: 105) observe 'implications for leaders at all levels of the education system'.

However, other recent research has expressed concern between the discourse of partnership – specifically school placement – and the reality of the reform's enactment. In their policy analysis, Harford and O'Doherty (2016) conclude that a power disequilibrium in SUP leads to the vision for schools as sites of clinical placement and recognised partners in the teacher education process to be undermined. They also attribute the lack of resourcing as a threat to this vision. As outlined by Holland (2018), associated industrial action issues initially precluded teachers' engagement with ITP mentoring, also negatively impacting the reform agenda.

Day (2017) contends that any discussion of ITP is incomplete without discussing school leadership. For him, how school leaders sustain cultures of high expectation conducive to student and teacher learning transcends policy and social issues. Echoing Conway et al. (2011), in their mapping of SUP in ITP Lillejord and Børte (2016) stress the role of both university and school leadership to ensure its success. Focusing on placement as a critical dimension of SUP situated within the school's professional learning community, Heggen, Raaen and Thorsen (2018) note the necessity of principal leadership, pointing out the necessity for school principals to be actively involved with both mentors and PSTs.

Based on the literature review, as well as the structures resulting from the conjointly reformed policy contexts, the conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the individuals from whom and contexts in which leadership is possible and desirable during ITP school placement. Underpinned by LAAL, the framework links partners in ITP; formal and informal leadership development; and the PST themselves. The dotted circles of the framework indicate the fluidity required in conceiving of LAAL, the shifting permutations of who may lead and follow in a given task or situation, as well as what is theorised as the collective responsibility required in cultivating LAAL.

Figure 1: Leadership at All Levels During ITP School Placement



However, empirical research exploring the Irish policy context's reforms and their leadership implications for principals and leadership preparation more generally is lacking (Murphy

2019) as is empirical research focused on the enactment of LAAL (Mowat & McMahon 2019). Therefore, given that the Irish policy context has (i) linked LPD and distributed leadership and (ii) reformed its ITP to underscore the importance of partnership and school placement, this study sets out to explore principals' perspectives. In so doing, school contexts are viewed as collective learning organisations in which 'leadership develops, grows and is sustained through collaboration, teamwork, and participation' (Stoll & Kools 2016: 12) documented in the policy context, with its specific reference to the development of leadership capacity.

Methodology

Given that the purpose of this study was to explore principals' understandings and cultivation of LAAL during ITP school placement, I adopted a qualitative approach whereby each participant was interviewed (Seidman 2006). In-depth, semi-structured interviews (Coleman 2012) were conducted with four purposively sampled principals. Prior to constructing the interview questions, I reviewed the research literature and policy contexts concerned with LPD and ITP as presented above, given that I also sought to understand more deeply how school principals perceived and provided accounts of successful enactments of these specific educational policies (Gu, Sammons & Chen 2018) in their school contexts. The research questions framing this small-scale study were:

(i) What are school principals' understandings of leadership at all levels, especially concerning ITP school placement?
(ii) How do they cultivate such leadership? Which challenges, opportunities and possibilities did they encounter in their school contexts?
(iii) Consequently, which implications emerge for how leadership preparation is conceived?

Three secondary school principals and one primary school principal participated in the study. The principals' school contexts represent a range of situated, professional, material and external contexts (Braun, Ball, Maguire & Hoskins 2011), whose complexities are important for all school leaders to consider (Clarke & O'Donoghue 2017). Given their locations, they also represent partnerships with at least eight different institutions providing ITP. The principals' school contexts are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: School Principals' Contexts

Name	Location	School type	School size
Andrew	Urban, single sex	Primary	~100 students
Ava	Suburban, single sex	Post-primary	~1000 students
Peter	Urban, single sex	Post-primary	~600 students
Zoe	Rural, co-educational	Post-primary	~800 students

The interviews began by asking principals about how they understood good teaching and leadership before going on to ask them about the structures in place in their schools for the leadership of ITP school placement. Principals were subsequently asked about their principal leadership in this process, and how they cultivated teacher, middle and PST leadership during placement. Additionally, principals were asked to share the challenges, opportunities and possibilities they encountered in this process, and what these mean for how leadership preparation might be conceived and practised more broadly.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis involved processes of inductive thematic analysis given my analytic interest (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules 2017) in LAAL and its relationship to ITP school placement in both the policy and research literatures, as well as principals' stories of enactment in their individual contexts as indicated (Braun et al. 2011; Gu et al. 2018). As outlined by Floyd (2012: 228), while approaches to data analysis involving 'coding and thematic analysis' allow for data to be reduced, another approach is 'to analyse the data as a whole, in narrative form'. For Pepper and Wildy (2009), narrative accounts generate insights into qualitative research in educational leadership, particularly semi-structured interviews. Following Seidman (2006), Floyd (2012) indicates that both approaches might be used to make sense of data in studies on educational leadership. Therefore, under each theme below in findings, sub-themes are presented as well as drawing on the first-person voice of principals to illustrate how principals experience these sub-themes in their respective contexts which are governed by a common macro-policy context.

Findings

Understanding of Leadership at All Levels During School Placement

Principals' understandings of leadership were not limited to formal, positional leadership, reflecting the shift in the national policy context. Ava pointed out that 'at different times in your career path you take on leadership at different levels'. During placement, principals were explicit that PSTs were expected to be leaders in the classroom first and foremost. As Peter states, a challenge for some PSTs is 'to assume confidence and accept that when they are in the classroom, they automatically assume leadership as the leader of learning in that classroom'. Concerning PSTs, Andrew pointed out that 'leadership happens across the board. But we forget that.' However, Peter also cautioned that the term leadership 'has become far more prevalent' and that 'we need to look at what exactly that involves for different people at different stages in their careers'. He remarks that the primary task of PSTs is to become 'really good, really effective teachers. There is a leadership component within that. But whether or not that term is used or necessarily needs to be used, I'm not sure.' Therefore, although principals generally supported the idea of LAAL, they simultaneously adopted a somewhat critical perspective, primarily owed to the constraints and complexities of enacting

national policy, as well as school culture. Zoe reflected on the contrast between her own school placement experience with PSTs today in thinking about leadership. Although each PST is unique, Zoe said that in general, they are aware of what they have to give as well as what they have to learn. 'In my day, I thought I had everything to learn and very little to give.' For her, this awareness was a useful starting point from which to understand and cultivate LALL.

Principals pointed out the challenge in cultivating LAAL because of the legacies of old system structures whereby many teacher and middle leaders in schools still understood the idea of leadership as solely associated with individuals occupying formally designated management positions. Ava pointed out the tendency of some mid-career teachers, including those in middle leadership positions, to assume that exercising leadership was confined to deputy principalship. She was hopeful that policy reform would continue to challenge this view, and that over time, it would result in continued cumulative championing of distributed leadership, extending into ITP. Andrew identified teacher and middle leaders' lack of recognition of their exercising of leadership capacity as a barrier to cultivating PST leadership. Peter echoes this concern stating that 'there is a conceptual shift that is required at middle management level'. Despite reform, Peter stated that there remains a view amongst some that leadership is 'task-specific'. Andrew also pointed out that while PSTs might be given full responsibility in their classrooms, other times they are 'not given much autonomy', depending on with whom they collaborate as co-operating teacher or the school culture. He was concerned that the focus was often on controlling what material PSTs were covering rather than on the collective responsibility of developing PSTs more broadly for contemporary professional life and the responsibilities ahead upon qualification and through their careers. To overcome this tension between co-operating teacher control and PST autonomy, as well as to instil collaboration within and outside the classroom, Zoe established an initial period of team-teaching underpinning her school's approach to PST placement that extended to planning. This approach was one her school had collectively designed and adopted, which appeared to be a feature of its success.

Each principal cited the benefits that those school leaders who were vested in their responsibility of developing PSTs got from the experience of collaborating with and mentoring PSTs. Zoe shared that 'many of the teachers would say that they have learnt so much from the PST'. Andrew noted that PSTs might also model leadership in collaboration with teachers who may not typically lead themselves. Andrew believed this might 'entice them to do it [lead] more'. Ava was less convinced by PSTs' capacities to model leadership to the reluctant and thought while this might be possible that it would need a lot of principal support and direct influence. Beyond that cohort of vested teacher and middle leaders in schools, Andrew highlighted how, in his experience, PSTs often tend to be constrained and dismissed as 'not real teachers yet' beyond the classroom at the school level, which conflicted with his view of teacher leadership as a principal and his engagement in reading about the concept. Andrew also remarked that he found it curious how some schools, while focusing

on student leadership, never discussed PST leadership. Nodding to the fluidity of the continuum of LPD and ITP and onwards, he indicated that much more professional education in the area of school leadership needed to be provided across the continuum for PST leadership to be cultivated during placement. This necessity signals the potential naïveté of policies or practices targeting PSTs singularly with formal leadership development when it is likely necessary to target leaders at all levels. Ava and Peter agreed with this sentiment, as well as the necessity for further professional education on school leadership policy more generally at PST, teacher and middle leader levels to promote a language of leadership. Temporal and situational dimensions shaped Zoe's understanding of LAAL. She stated that at different times and in different places PSTs and mentors might support one another, sharing her context's example where PSTs had supported mentors with technology, while mentors had supported PSTs with classroom management concerns and aspects of pedagogical content knowledge.

Cultivation of Leadership at All Levels During School Placement

Participants were asked to elaborate on the placement arrangements in their schools, including the structures and values underpinning their approach, such as co-operating teacher arrangements, teaming, mentoring or coaching. Zoe indicated that she led changes in structures for PSTs' placement as a middle leader in her school before becoming principal, drawing inspiration from the national teacher induction framework and involving teachers in the process. Both Ava and Peter stated that they had also recently changed the structures through which they and their school leaders engaged with PSTs. They both remarked that principals needed to reflect on how many PSTs would be taken on placement so that PSTs had a quality placement experience. Peter was also concerned that it was 'too overwhelming in the staffroom having too many student teachers' that may contribute to a perception of PSTs as a 'burden', which he wished to avert. Rather than perceiving PSTs as taxing, Ava stated the necessity to highlight the value they bring to members of the school community: 'there are loads of opportunities to be exploited at different times of the year where your student teachers can play huge roles within schools and have the resources to do it'. By interviewing PSTs before placement, principals – along with middle leaders responsible for coordinating school placement – wanted to ensure PSTs' quality and 'fit' for the school context. Their rationale was that interviewing was necessary to ensure the likelihood of the PSTs' development throughout placement, acknowledging the relationship between context and leadership. In the three post-primary schools, a middle leadership position responsible for mentoring, induction and co-ordination of both newly qualified and PSTs had been recently created. Zoe also pointed out that PSTs who came to her school context had to agree to an initial period of team-teaching with co-operating teachers, which she believed had mutual benefit for both PSTs and co-operating teachers.

Principals' interactions with PSTs involved initial induction and sharing of expectations that had a leadership coaching dimension to the interaction. All principals stated that they

articulated their expectation of PSTs to become involved in school life beyond the classroom at the school-level in individual meetings before commencing teaching. Peter and Ava also referred to discussing PSTs' career aspirations. However, subsequent interactions with the principal were likely limited to more managerial concerns, for example, if something went wrong or PSTs were struggling or deemed to be underperforming. It was less likely in participants' accounts for PSTs to have sustained developmental interactions with the principals, other than indirectly through principals' engagement with other leaders situated in either the school or the university. The extent of principals' indirect influence on those leaders responsible for PST learning and development during placement varied significantly. While some had termly 'check-in' meetings and sought to influence leadership with particular strategies or priorities, others were more satisfied to wait until there was an issue.

Ava described how she and her leadership team observe whether PSTs become involved 'in projects with us' and, if they become involved, they may have better chances of becoming employed in the school, or indeed elsewhere, upon graduation. This points to the value and developmental potential principals attributed to PST leadership. Andrew echoed the importance of PSTs becoming involved and the positive influence this has on their employment prospects, as well as citing the importance of being 'confident, not cocky'. Peter shared these views: 'we want them really to get involved in the life of the school for their benefit'. Peter was concerned about the legacy in his school where PSTs isolated themselves, demonstrating poor interaction with other teacher and middle leaders and a lack of collaboration. Here, he raises notions of ostracisation and belonging. Peter, along with the other principals, also pointed out the necessity for PSTs to move into less comfortable interactions and, rather than to shirk away from these beyond the classroom responsibilities, to perceive these as developmental opportunities. Zoe echoed the importance of PSTs becoming involved in school life and departmental initiatives, stating that she would also like to see PSTs 'spearhead something new'. However, less was shared about how principals set about cultivating this involvement and how PSTs would be supported to deal with beyond the classroom responsibilities, such as whether these would be introduced in planned, staged, supported or individualised ways. Peter and Andrew both added that being open to feedback and constructive criticism to develop PST capacities for leadership was crucial. Peter's view was that PSTs themselves should also be responsible for their assimilation into any of the pre-existing leadership activities in the school. Despite all he can do to situate leadership opportunities for PSTs, teacher and middle leaders during placement, Peter stated that ultimately 'there is a high degree of personal responsibility in relation to leadership and taking on leadership roles'. This raises an important reflection point for communication for principals and their leadership teams: to ensure to explicitly dialogue with PSTs about expectations and responsibilities surrounding leadership, whether in or beyond the classroom.

All principals mentioned the importance of the school's professional culture to promote LAAL. Zoe deliberately worked to ensure that staff were 'very open to what the PST has to

offer', which was now a highly valued the norm in her school. She perceived this openness as a necessary precursor to genuine inquiry, developing PSTs as well as teachers and leaders in the school alike. Peter stated how he viewed PSTs' exposure to school and staffroom culture as highly formative of their overall development and capacities for leadership, signalling an interrelationship between the two. Both he and Andrew indicated that students on their second or subsequent placements are highly sensitised to these cultures, and that evidence of PST leadership potential is to work within the opportunities and constraints afforded by these contextual realities. As principal, Andrew maintained that it was necessary to cultivate rapport and trust in order to foster LAAL, as well as paying attention to team composition and dynamics. He saw it as crucial for principals to ensure that teams are 'willing to take on new members and see that every teacher can engage in leadership'. Signalling variance in whether and, indeed, how LAAL is achieved, for Ava it remains the case that 'some principals are more in tune with knowing about a continuum of leadership'. She therefore draws attention again to the need for professional development in distributing leadership cited by leaders.

By and large, therefore, the strategies principals adopt to cultivate leadership are indirect and implicit, rather than more direct and explicit alternatives. This may be owed to their belief that culture is crucial to the cultivation of leadership, and consequently the necessity to work more indirectly and implicitly to foster and sustain such cultures. Another possible explanation, however, might connect to their professional development needs in distributing leadership whereby direct, explicit strategies to cultivate leadership may be useful to include as a priority to strive for greater strategic balance in cultivating LAAL during ITP school placement.

Challenges, Opportunities and Possibilities

The principals certainly viewed the school as a site of informal leadership development through ITP school placement not only for PSTs but also for their teacher and middle leaders. Zoe underscored this, as well as signalling what she perceived were the benefits for students from an inclusive education perspective when teacher and middle leaders collaborate with PSTs: 'students [in classrooms] that need extra support … there are endless possibilities with it'. Nonetheless, principals cited the need for more support to overcome challenges and to fully realise the latent potential in situating leadership between LPD and ITP school placement. For Ava, cultivating PSTs' leadership 'takes a village' and will necessitate more collaboration between schools and universities providing ITP through partnership, demonstrating that leadership development requires support within and beyond the school. She stated that instilling 'a broad definition of leadership' in PSTs' minds would require them not only to reflect on their personal leadership to date but also some formal, educational leadership development at the university. She believed some degree of formal leadership development would be a prerequisite to leverage any informal leadership development activities such as shadowing of teacher and middle leaders. She also pointed to the need to

embed broad definitions of leadership in formal middle and principal leadership programmes.

Additionally, Ava thought there was a need for professional education in cultivating leadership during ITP placement as a distinct manifestation of distributed leadership, particularly for principals. Similarly, Andrew stated that given the current policy context where leadership is emphasised, both PSTs, as well as teacher and middle leaders, would benefit from some formal leadership development. He believed this would promote a shared understanding and language of leadership. Andrew stated that 'it would be great if co-operating teachers could have more time and more training to actually focus on their role and maybe address leadership as part of that'. Importantly, Andrew believed that this knowledge could challenge what he perceived as sometimes both a reluctance to change and inequitable power relations between PSTs and their school-based colleagues. Taken together, this demonstrates the principals' view of a need for professional education for all individuals involved in ITP school placement. However, Peter cautioned against any interventions that could be perceived as over-burdening already busy co-operating teachers who 'might see it as being more work on their part, that more is required of them' when they are already engaging in multiple other policy reforms, including SSE. While he viewed this as a threat to enhancing professional cultures, Zoe reflected on her leadership of the initiation, embedding and sustenance of mentoring and team-teaching as unconsciously trying to mitigate against such cultures by promoting collaboration, sharing of expertise as well as experience, resources and 'new ways of doing things'.

Regarding the opportunities currently being seized by principals, Ava proudly listed the leadership activities in which PSTs at her school had been engaged. They had taken on a project as a group and created a new module for her students and, once it was completed, evaluated its success in a report as part of SSE. PSTs had also become involved in school-wide activities relating to sustainability. As an in-school celebration, Ava also organised that PSTs in her school showcased their research-based projects as part of their ITP, viewing these as PST leadership given that her school's context inspired their projects. For Peter, he wanted his PSTs to lead in extra-curricular areas, such as sport and music. Andrew, however, shared his view that in the absence of some formal leadership development during ITP, PST leadership might risk being an act of faith, an argument well versed in broader leadership preparation literature pertaining to principals (Cowie & Crawford 2007). Reflecting on his own experience, he states: 'We had lectures on the history of education, but nothing on leadership. Absolutely nothing.' He believes that embedding a 'practical leadership element' into ITP is necessary to reflect the current policy context and to prepare future teacher, middle and school leaders to understand distributed leadership, as well as research and policy literacies. Andrew also indicated that in his experience, many PSTs are willing to become more involved, particularly as they move closer to the completion of their ITP. He also perceives that this exposure would more realistically reflect the professionalism expected of PSTs upon qualification, such as their readiness to partake in collaborative school

improvement efforts. More practically, Andrew believes in the potential of a formal leadership-focused ITP assessment to create opportunities for PSTs to lead where otherwise, a school culture may constrain leadership through hierarchy or other, sometimes unintended and unquestioned, organisational routines.

Discussion and Implications

LAAL has emerged as a concept in the contemporary international policy context (Mowat & McMahon 2019). Despite the evidence of the importance of leadership during ITP school placement (Day 2017; Heggen et al. 2018; Lillejord & Børte 2016), how LAAL is understood and cultivated in schools and education systems, particularly systems of LPD and ITP, remains in flux. While the recently reformed policy context in the Republic of Ireland reflects a commitment to LAAL through connecting LPD and distributed leadership (Murphy 2019), as well as SSE's focus on 'Developing Leadership Capacity', significant emphasis has been placed on formal LPD and the construction and promotion of teacher (Ó Gallchóir et al. 2019) and leader (Forde et al. 2018) continua. Given the scholarly observations arguing that these approaches risk partially constraining the conceptual fluidity required to deeply understand and actively cultivate LAAL in schools, it is not entirely surprising that principals' understanding of LAAL – although broad and inclusive of PSTs – can also be in tension with how LAAL is cultivated organisationally.

A potential key gap in principal understanding and cultivation of LAAL inclusive of PSTs manifests in terms of communication. Principals' explicit communication encourages PSTs to lead in the classroom. However, principals' equally important and deeply held expectations of PSTs to lead beyond the classroom at school level are often more implicitly communicated. Furthermore, these expectations may exist without the potentially necessary modelling and growth of leadership from a learning organisation perspective (Stoll & Kools 2016). Furthermore, owed to the fluidity of LAAL articulated by principals in their understandings whereby PST and teacher and middle leadership development were seen as interconnected, and anchored on a bedrock of rapport and trust, perhaps more deliberate noticing of the 'shifting combinations' (Robinson 2008: 243) of leader, follower and situation during placement would lead to richer LPD for all.

Principals' accounts evidence that they view infinite permutations whereby this combination can shift during school placement, including PSTs leading in collaboration with qualified teachers as followers. Reflecting on and mapping where and when these situations exist both formally and informally, and which leadership capacities can be developed and for whom, may be useful for principals to reflect on while pursuing cultivation of LALL. Keeping a dual perspective in mind, assuming both PSTs and qualified teachers as potential beneficiaries, might further enrich reflection for action. In this small-scale study, principals especially cited PSTs' capacities to lead using technology and sharing of research. Therefore, extending practices of learning-orientated leadership (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano 2013) beyond

mentoring and leadership roles to further focus on teaming and collegial enquiry involving both PSTs and qualified teachers could also assist principals in the cultivation of LAAL. Principals' accounts also demonstrated that ITP providers would need to self-assess their curriculum and explore the benefits of including leadership more formally on their curricula to PSTs and partner schools. Providers' responses as system leaders ought to also consider not only the policy imperative for LAAL but also the principals' view that more formal provision of leadership curriculum during ITP would need to be matched with provision for teacher, middle and senior school leaders to best support its enactment in schools.

Simultaneously, there are many different, yet interconnected challenges for principals in cultivating recognition of LALL. Spanning organisational culture, recent reform intensity, and professional education priorities, principals' accounts also allude to the idea that formal approaches to LPD have been successful in developing teacher and middle leaders' *own* formal understanding of and capacities for leadership, but have perhaps been less attentive to date to developing teachers' capacities to recognise and foster leadership *in others* in both formal and informal ways. More attentively building these capacities might include cultivating PST leadership in ways such as engaging in collaborative co-enquiry (Willegems, Consuegra, Struyven & Engels 2017) during school placement. This may occur in a team, focused on a dimension of school improvement for SSE, for example. By fostering PSTs' agency which is inherent in defining teacher leadership, principals might also more fully achieve development of LAAL through further focusing on strategies like teaming and collegial enquiry. In so doing, principals might further avert the risk of conflating PST leadership with actions reflective of predetermined, delegated tasks.

While PST engagement in common extra-curricular provision (such as sport, music, drama or debating) is important, it is necessary to ensure that this is not conceived as merely a 'rite of passage' to determine one's worthiness to the organisation by taking ownership of tasks or situations deemed undesirable or having already been served by others. Service as a teacher leader might be better conceived as being transformational within and beyond the engagements listed, as well as being involved in processes of purposeful and collective educational change in schools both in and beyond the classroom (Nguyen et al. 2019). Of course, elements of PST LPD will involve engagement with pre-existing structures given that school communities are anchored, to a degree, in tradition and continuity. However, this notion of PST LPD is not entirely synonymous with identifying and seizing opportunities where PSTs can learn to collaboratively instigate and navigate change for improvement within and outside of the classroom, which may additionally offer developmental potential from a leadership perspective beyond PSTs alone.

Approaches such as those mentioned above may be promising given that principals in other international contexts have used national policy reform, including teacher induction and school evaluation, as an impetus for collaborative change and growth, intertwined with school improvement (Gu et al. 2018). However, how accountability-driven policy reform and system demands are balanced with individuals' professional needs (Mowat & McMahon

2019) remains challenging for principals. Therefore, addressing balance in these demands and needs should be a system-level consideration and included in professional education for distributing leadership, particularly given the convergence of distributed leadership and LPD in the Irish context (Murphy 2019).

Conclusion

According to principals, rendering teachers' leadership learning entirely separate by career stage is challenging. They suggest that this is primarily because LPD opportunities emerge during ITP school placement not only for PSTs but for other teachers with whom PSTs collaboratively work both at the classroom and school levels. Principals also point out the importance of LPD being founded informally in a school community's context and values, as well as more formally in higher education institutions. As senior leaders in placement schools, principals not only have the potential to influence the quality of PSTs' development as classroom teachers, but they can also directly and indirectly influence opportunities whereby the leadership capacities of *all* teacher and middle leaders can be collaboratively developed within and beyond the classroom, inclusive of PSTs. Principals also indicate the potential of partnership during ITP to provide formal LPD which is less hierarchical or bound by the traditional continuum of LPD, reflective of the expectations PSTs will face in collaboratively leading school improvement upon qualification at classroom, school and system levels. They also view that over time this will benefit them to distribute leadership more widely in their schools. Therefore, how the partners and processes of ITP can continue to contribute to understandings and cultivation of LAAL, and in so doing, aim to foster LPD, will demand sustained research attention.

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Preparing the Next Generation of Educational Leaders: Initiating a Leadership Discourse in Initial Teacher Education

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Abstract: *Within the context of major international policy reforms impacting on the structure and delivery of initial teacher education, increasing principal attrition, a rise in distributed leadership practice and teacher leadership research, this paper considers the potential of introducing leadership studies to pre-service teachers in their formative education. Utilising a qualitative research design, existing literature is explored which considers the introduction of leadership studies within initial teacher preparation programmes, the prevalence of this practice, and the structure and focus of leadership studies offered. The paper reviews initial teacher education courses offered by top ranking international education universities, revealing a trend in the promotion and attainment of leadership skills and capabilities. The paper also draws upon research within engineering and medicine which have explored the affordances of introducing students to leadership studies prior to entering the profession. It is hoped that this paper will advance educational leadership research by exploring the role of initial teacher education providers in preparing the next generation of school leaders.*

Keywords: Educational leadership, leadership preparation, teacher leadership, initial teacher education, pre-service teacher education

Introduction

Attracting and retaining effective school leaders continues to be a priority across schools internationally (Chapman 2005; OECD 2005, 2012), however, increasing government regulation, accountability, social reform and the marketisation of schools has made this task more difficult (Walker & Qian 2006). As the responsibilities of school leaders are compounded, so are the challenges associated with developing programmes to best prepare them for 21st century schools. Leadership preparation is necessary in some form to ensure individuals have the breadth of understanding to successfully lead schools. Whilst there is

disagreement about what type of preparation is most effective, the fact remains that school leaders are typically appointed following demonstrated leadership capacity often coupled with some type of formal leadership study.

Leadership preparation has traditionally been intended for in-service teachers however it has been argued that certain aspects of leadership training ought to commence from the very beginning of teacher preparation (Campbell-Evans, Stamopoulos & Maloney 2014; Xu & Patmor 2012). Given the changing landscape in schools where organisational and social structures enable greater access to leadership earlier in one's career, there is an opportunity to develop understandings of school leadership during the formative years of teacher training. Initial teacher education programmes should not only focus on certifying graduate teachers as ready to teach, but also provide opportunities to develop some familiarisation of leadership in schools with a view to building greater understanding of the scope of school leadership in order to create a greater pool of aspirant leaders. If our future school leaders are born from the teachers entering the profession, perhaps some thought ought to be given to initiating a leadership discourse prior to entering the academy. Whilst pre-service leadership studies cannot be seen to be all-encompassing leadership preparation, its purpose is to introduce pre-service teachers to leadership early whilst their understanding of the profession is in formation. Exposure to leadership studies can create an awareness of the complexity of contemporary schooling, an appreciation of what it means to be part of an organisation and an introduction to the prospect of leadership in schools and educational settings. Conceptualisations of leadership at the pre-career stage ought to be vastly different to traditional models of leadership development for practicing teachers aspiring to leadership. It is unclear, however, which leadership skills and qualities are required, how they should be best fostered and how widespread this practice of incorporating leadership studies within teacher training programmes actually is.

Attracting and Retaining School Leaders

The importance of the principal's role in schools is undisputed. Of in-school factors, the principal's impact on student learning is second only to classroom instruction (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson 2010). The leadership demonstrated by school principals drives a school, identifying priority areas, establishing goals, initiating improvement programmes, and creating a positive and supportive school environment where students and staff can prosper. With ultimate responsibility for the teaching, learning and wellbeing of students, school principals have been subjected to significant scrutiny which up until recent times has focused exclusively on the role of the teacher.

With increasing pressure to succeed, the desire to lead has decreased across the teaching profession with attrition rates rising (Battle 2010). Although published data revealing the extent of leadership attrition are limited (Buchanan et al. 2013), research has shown that in the US, principals are unlikely to remain in their role for more than four years (Béteille,

Kalogrides & Loeb 2012). Difficulties in attracting and retaining school leaders is particularly evident in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas where resourcing is low and student underachievement is high (Béteille et al. 2012; Louis et al. 2010). The turnover rate for principals in underachieving schools can be as high as 30 percent annually (Béteille et al. 2012) 'with 35 percent of principals being at their school for less than two years, and only 11 percent of principals being at their school for 10 years or more' (Levin & Bradley 2019: 3). Underperforming schools not only experience greater principal turnover, but they also struggle to attract experienced new principals when positions arise (Béteille et al. 2012).

Various measures to incentivise aspirant leaders have been offered by governments in the hope of luring them to needy communities. In 2019, an expert advisory panel for rural and regional students in Victoria, Australia conducted a review into how best to improve educational outcomes for rural and regional students. The attraction and retention of principals, teachers, and support staff has been identified as an essential area with $7 million allocated to fund the employment of executive class principals to take on the most challenging, complex and specialised school leadership roles (Department of Education and Training 2019).

It is important to note that widespread teacher attrition also impacts on the pool of aspirant leaders and creates instability in schools through high teacher turnover. Consistent data have revealed that the teaching profession experiences high levels of attrition in the first five years of teaching, with approximately one-third of new teachers leaving the profession within their first five years in the job (Ingersoll 2001). Heightened pressure attributed to standardised testing and increasing workloads (Mason & Poyatos Matas 2015) have been identified as major contributors to the declining teaching pool. Research suggests that high levels of attrition are in fact impacting on the supply of the next generation of leaders (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff 2005; Bullough & Baughman 1997; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers 2004). Ameliorating this is multi-faceted, however, in part it lies in better preparing graduates for the challenges faced in the profession and the leadership pathways available.

The Rise of Distributed Practice

The practice of distributing leadership is commonplace in schools in many countries and has been evident for some time. As a concept, it is certainly not new. Discourse of its merits gained traction in the early 2000s (Gronn 2000, 2002; Spillane 2006; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond 2001, 2004) and has continued to provide a theoretical exploration of the practice of leading and managing teaching and learning in schools and school systems (Diamond & Spillane 2016). Supovitz et al. (2019: 15) define distributed leadership as 'a lens to understand a range of activities which contribute to the fulfilling of the organisations mission'. Distributed leadership provides insight into how leadership practice occurs in schools (Gronn 2002; Spillane 2005; Spillane et al. 2001, 2004). Furthermore:

> … it provides an organizing principle for selectively involving more members of the school community in the improvement process and, in doing so, gaining both more diverse perspectives into the underlying causes of challenging problems and a shared commitment to the solutions that emerge. (Supovitz et al. 2019: 8)

More often than not, a distributed approach presents a logical solution to the leadership challenges of 21st century schools in which schools, regardless of size, have a complexity that benefits from leadership by many.

The scope of 21st century schools has made the practice of leadership far reaching and complex, so much so that it has become untenable for the principal to singlehandedly lead and manage (Angelle 2010). In addition to responding to the day-to-day needs and demands of staff, students and parents, principals must understand the needs of their school and ensure they are committed to a continuous cycle of improvement. Furthermore, increased accountability coupled with the push and pull of marketisation has set competitive agendas to offer more to prospective students and their families. In an effort to improve the quality of education offered, schools require a leadership framework which ensures multiple agendas can be carried forward. Expecting a school principal to envision, create, carry forward and review all the necessary areas that make a school function is impossible if not detrimental to the school. The complexity of contemporary schools in many countries calls for a shift away from the one leader model to a structure where leadership is both formally and informally shared, enabling focused effort and attention across various facets of the school's operation. The breadth of school leadership demands requires great agility and an openness to a distributed model of operationalising a multi-faceted organisation. Be it through actions or interactions of teachers, distributed leadership practice offers opportunities for teachers to contribute to school improvement. 'A distributed leadership approach fundamentally enhances the improvement process by drawing attention to the participants in the problem identification process, the ways in which solutions are designed, engagement in the ensuing action, and involvement in the after-action review' (Supovitz et al. 2019: 30). Distributed leadership facilitates organisational efficiency and effectiveness with 'empirical evidence to support a strong relationship between distributed patterns of leadership and organisational performance' (Day & Sammons 2013: 35) and a positive influence on teacher effectiveness and student engagement (Leithwood & Jantzi 2000).

The rise of distributed practice in schools is also an opportunity to recognise the expertise and contribution of its teachers. A distributed approach generates opportunities to value teacher voice, skills and capabilities by extending the boundaries of leadership through high levels of 'teacher involvement' (Harris & Lambert 2003: 16). Moreover, a distributed framework creates opportunities for teachers to develop and exercise 'expertise, skill and input' (Harris & Lambert 2003: 16) by building capacity. Harris (2014) presents the case for a distributed model of leadership as a means of capacity building. She draws together research to argue that school improvement research has focused on the impact of formal leadership such as the principal, and not acknowledged the opportunities that lie in formal and informal leadership

at other levels present within a school. Creating opportunities for teachers to contribute to wide-ranging school imperatives facilitates efficiency and effectiveness and develops individual and collective skills and capabilities where this would not otherwise have been possible outside of a formal leadership role. Facilitating opportunities for both formal and informal leadership also fosters a collective approach towards school improvement (Leithwood & Riehl 2003). The efficacy of a distributed framework of leadership is evident in leadership research (Harris 2013; Leithwood, Mascall & Strauss 2009) along with the importance of a distributed perspective of leadership practice in working towards school improvement (Hallinger & Heck 2010; Harris 2003, 2014; Leithwood & Mascall 2008; Supovitz et al. 2019). In their study into successful school improvement efforts, Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2001) ranked leadership including distributed leadership as having the greatest impact. Harris (2004: 21) also identified that successful leaders who distribute leadership practice, are more orientated towards relationship building, reciprocal learning and working together to 'generate organizational development and change'.

Teacher Leadership

Alongside a rise in distributed leadership practice is growing interest into the affordances of teacher leadership. Identified as important key players in school and system improvement (Bierly, Doyle & Smith 2016; Campbell, Lieberman, Yashkina, Alexander & Rodway 2018; Harris et al. 2017; Harris & Mujis 2004), teacher leaders are being recognised for the significant role that they play in instigating, creating and implementing educational change (Harris & Jones 2019). A *teacher leader* is:

> … increasingly, serving as a cornerstone of a well-functioning school system, especially given the ever-evolving demands of the education profession, such as more rigorous standards, high-stakes federal and state achievement mandates, increasingly diverse student populations, greater numbers of school-aged children living in poverty, and the hyper pace of technological change. (ASCD 2015: 7)

The central tenet of teacher leadership is that teachers become 'co-constructors of educational change and key contributors to policy making' (Harris & Jones 2019: 123). Where traditional conceptions of leadership and leadership practice rely on formal roles in vertical hierarchical structures, teacher leadership foregrounds disciplinary and instructional expertise and a deep desire to work collectively to improve student learning. Teacher leadership 'is a strategy that can be used to address key teaching and learning challenges; promote sustainable, long-term school improvement; and strengthen the teaching profession overall' (Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0 2019: 4). Teacher leadership utilises the unique skills and capabilities of teachers across educational settings to influence school transformation and broader educational change (Harris et al. 2017; Lieberman et al. 2017; York-Barr & Duke 2004). Unlike administrators and school leaders who can be removed from the realities of the classroom and the pressure placed upon teachers and students alike through shifting policy imperatives, teachers offer a valuable perspective when they take on the role of teacher leader. Criticism

levelled against the notion of teacher leader conflates the term with effective teaching. By virtue of their work, teachers plan, prepare and *lead* students in learning. More often than not, their focus is on *their* students and *their* own practice. This is vastly different to the *leadership* practice exhibited by teacher leaders who leverage their expertise to lead initiatives, model exemplary practice and support colleagues towards broader scale improvements. 'Teacher leadership can leverage the knowledge, skills, and abilities of exemplary teachers to promote meaningful and sustainable change' (Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0 2019: 4). Teacher leaders are ready to influence others and seek opportunities to enhance professional practice and student learning outside of their own classroom.

In an attempt to capture the benefits of teacher leadership, the United States has allocated funding for school districts to create teacher leadership programmes that allow classroom teachers to take leadership roles as instructional coaches, model teachers, and curriculum and professional development leaders, with many still teaching in the classroom (Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0 2019). The impetus for the creation of a teacher leadership system is to strengthen instruction and improve student outcomes as well as attract and retain teachers by providing opportunities for collaboration, professional growth and leadership. The promotion of teacher leadership is being recognised for its potential in developing, recruiting and retaining a larger, more effective education workforce (Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0 2019).

Research Focus

Using a qualitative method of inquiry, this study sought to explore the incidence and prevalence of leadership studies across initial teacher education programmes internationally. The research was framed by two broad questions:

1) Do initial teacher education courses introduce pre-service teachers to concepts of *leadership*?
2) If so, how prevalent is this across the world's top-ranking Education Universities?

In order to explore this, it was necessary to review existing research into the notion of leadership studies within pre-service teacher education as well as an in-depth look at individual pre-service teacher education programmes. Hence, the data collection was conducted in two stages. Firstly, in order to better understand existing literature in this area, a review of research exploring the inclusion of leadership studies within initial teacher education was conducted. The review was limited to research spanning over the last decade. The search centred on research focused on building leadership capacity amongst pre-service teachers in early childhood centres, and primary and secondary school settings. The second stage of the data collection consisted of an audit of initial teacher education programmes. The sample consisted of initial teacher education programmes offered by the top 20 Universities in Education as per the 2019 QS World Rankings (https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2019/education-training). Using the QS world rankings

provided a means of classifying the sample and a selection of 20 universities was within the scope of the project. Each of the 20 university entries provided links to their homepage which were accessed for the search. The web-based review consisted of an exhaustive search through each university website and various initial teacher training programmes to identify the following:

1) Is *leadership* a skill or capability developed in the pre-service teacher training which is promoted in the marketing information of the university?
2) Are *leadership studies* evident in the initial teacher education programme/s offered by the university?

A review of each university website included a search through early childhood, primary and secondary initial teacher education programmes. All publicly available programme and course subject documentation was accessed. Programme marketing material, programme descriptions, curriculum offerings and subject lists were searched within each course. The subject search included the terms: *leadership*, *leading*, *leader*, and *lead,* followed by a deeper review of the subject content where available. The search sought to identify if specific leadership subjects were offered rather than subjects focused on building skills or capabilities which are often associated with leaders and leadership such as group work, collaboration, critical thinking, etc.

The data gathered from the web-based research of programmes have been collated into a table and are presented in Table 1.

It is important to note that the investigation was limited to publicly available material for the top 20 ranked international Universities in Education. Despite a search across university websites, not all universities provided subject specific information for each course and this is noted in the table of findings. Information across websites may have changed since the audit which was conducted in June 2019.

The terms pre-service teacher education and initial teacher education are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Reviewing the Research

An investigation of existing literature exploring leadership studies within pre-service teacher preparation programmes suggests this area of research is still in its infancy. Nonetheless, the body of work emerging offers important insights in considering the early introduction of leadership studies to pre-service teachers. The following section presents a sample of small-scale empirical research and conceptual works that advocate for early introduction of leadership studies in initial teacher education. Following this, some parallels are then drawn to similar research in engineering and medicine.

Advocating Leadership Studies Within Initial Teacher Education

Leadership preparation in initial teacher education is viewed as a strategy to better prepare graduate teachers for teacher leadership. Exposure to leadership studies also develops leadership capacity by encouraging teachers to *step into leadership* earlier when they may not have considered it as well as developing or extending their expertise. An introduction to leadership studies enables teacher graduates to enter the profession understanding the important role of leadership in creating a collaborative approach towards school improvement (Harris et al. 2017; Lieberman et al. 2017; York-Barr & Duke 2004). Lovett (2017) calls for closer attention to be paid to the potential of introducing teachers to conceptions of leaders and leadership earlier. In her research, she advocates for recognition of the importance of teacher leadership and a need to better prepare teachers for this work in educational settings (Lovett 2018). She suggests that although leadership preparation programmes are now being targeted towards middle leaders or aspiring senior leaders, high attrition rates within the teaching profession and a shortfall of leaders warrants a multi-pronged approach. Lovett (2017) found that early career teachers were attracted to notions of leadership which involved collective work utilising expertise to further student learning as opposed to notions of leadership aligned with status and position. Xu and Patmor (2012) also advocate the need to better prepare teachers for teacher leadership in schools. They outline that in addition to leadership focused professional learning for in-service teachers, there is a need to generate insights into teacher leadership within teacher preparation programmes. They suggest that offering a teacher leadership course within initial teacher education programmes will enable graduates to have a better understanding of teacher leadership.

> For pre-service teachers to gain leadership skills, there needs to be a shift in their vision and perspectives. The sooner they can move beyond their vision and perspectives, the sooner they can move beyond their student perspective to the teacher perspective or the administrator perspective, the better they can prepare for the teacher leadership responsibility. (Xu & Patmor 2012: 253)

They go on to propose that introducing pre-service teachers to leadership will not only assist them in better understanding the structure in schools but 'also the importance of building trust among school stakeholders' (p. 254). Abidin, Norwani and Musa (2016) outline a quasi-experimentational study completed in Malaysia amidst large-scale educational reforms to initial teacher education within the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. They argue that in order to improve the profession, teachers need to be introduced to leadership studies within their initial teacher education. They note that introducing pre-service teachers to leadership studies early on will assist them in the profession and better prepare them for leadership when the opportunity arises. In their study, they developed a leadership module which was taken by a small group of pre-service teachers. The module included elements such as: leadership attributes and skills, organisational development, fostering collaborative culture, and influencing for change. Albeit a very small sample, their preliminary findings show that the pre-service teachers' understandings of leadership were impacted positively

with increased motivation to become role models in leading and influencing others (Abidin et al. 2016).

The largest body of work to emerge is research advocating leadership studies within early childhood education. The importance of effective leadership in delivering quality education and care programmes in early childhood and care settings has been a driver for change in initial teacher education (ACECQA 2017). Developing the next generation of early childhood leaders is seen to be the key to transforming early childhood education. Australia's National Authority for children's education and care state that:

> Effective leaders set strategic directions and foster professional values which inform how services operate. They promote a positive workplace culture which allows educators, coordinators and staff members to create and participate in collaborative and reflective learning communities. Positive workplace cultures support educators to learn from each other and develop professionally. Such workplaces welcome new ideas encourage reflection and self-review and motivate educators to pursue continuous improvement. (ACECQA 2017: 5)

Changes to the structure and provision of early childhood education within the Australian context have resulted in the need to build leadership capacity amongst early childhood educators (Campbell-Evans et al. 2014). Research shows that early childhood educators often find themselves in leadership roles within early childhood settings shortly after entering the profession (Hayden 1997; Rodd 1998; Waniganayake, Morda & Kapsalakis 2000) and as a result, leadership education is seen to be an integral part of early childhood initial teacher education programmes (Campbell-Evans et al. 2014). Despite this, there still remains great inconsistency between how leadership is understood and enacted (Nuttall, Thomas & Wood 2014), and how future leaders ought to be best prepared to take on the oversight of early childhood settings. Campbell-Evans et al. (2014: 46) suggest that 'university teacher education courses have a key role to play in clearly articulating and describing roles and responsibilities in relation to both administration and leadership'. Whilst there is great discussion around how best to prepare future leaders, there is recognition of the value of leadership development within early childhood initial teacher education.

The Leadership Gap in Engineering and Medicine

Research shows that it is not just the teaching profession which is exploring the value of introducing leadership to students prior to entering their profession. There is extensive research advocating for this within the medical and engineering professions. The last decade has seen a steady rise in research into the importance of developing leadership skills in undergraduate engineering students (Cox, Cekic & Adams 2010; Yousefdehi, Alves, Caron & Gopakumar 2017). The call for reforms in engineering education has been made to meet the changing demands of the profession for the 21st century (Galloway 2007). 'We are seeing a transition in engineering education from understanding engineers as merely the providers of

technical solutions to engineers as leaders' (Yousefdehi et al. 2017: 1). Incorporating leadership studies in formative engineering programmes is considered to be critical in enabling engineers to function at a professional level (Khattak, Ku & Go 2012). Introducing leadership studies within undergraduate engineering degrees teaches future engineers to identify and assess situations, take initiative, make decisions, be resourceful, flexible and work collegially with others (Khattak et al. 2012). Successful implementation of leadership programmes has been traced across several prestigious US engineering schools with little traction across Europe and Australia (Khattak et al. 2012). In a review of engineering leadership research from 2006-2016, Yousefdehi et al. (2017) identified that whilst there is little agreement on how best to define the concept of engineering leadership and develop leadership skills and capabilities amongst engineering students, there is a growing body of empirical research advocating the importance and relevance of leadership studies in engineering education.

Similarly, medical leadership is recognised as essential for high-quality healthcare (Chen 2018; Rotenstein, Sadun & Jena 2018) however, the development of leadership skills and competencies has not been able to match the technical and academic competencies of doctors. Chen (2018: 66) notes:

> Leaders in the medical profession have called for reform in healthcare in response to challenges in the system and improvements in public health. Furthermore, there has been an increased drive to see leadership education for doctors starting earlier and continuing throughout their careers so that they can take on more important leadership roles throughout the healthcare system.

Blumenthal, Bernard, Bohnen and Bohmer (2012: 515) describe the *leadership gap* that exists amongst physicians with deficiencies in 'communication, team building, planning and priority setting, assessing performance, problem solving, and leading'. Their research outlines the need to incorporate systematic leadership studies for doctors during their medical training to better prepare them for clinical leadership responsibilities in the course of their day-to-day clinical practice. Furthermore, they identified that there is a significant decline in institutional physician-leaders and point to leadership training to ensure sufficient numbers of future healthcare leaders. Their research identifies that:

> In 1935, 35% of U.S. hospital CEOs were doctors; as of 2008, only 4% of America's roughly 6,500 hospitals were run by physicians—a decline of 90% since 1935. A more systematic approach to leadership development for young trainees would prepare physicians for, and hopefully foster their interest in, mid-level and senior-level hospital management. (p. 515)

Like education, both engineering and medicine are facing changes across their profession and are calling for the inclusion of leadership studies within their pre-service training. Whilst further empirical work is required to identify if exposure to leadership studies in fact builds skills and competencies and better prepares professionals for leadership, there is ample

evidence pointing to the need to consider alternative methods in developing the next generation of leaders through the introduction of leadership studies within pre-service education.

Leadership in Initial Teacher Education Programmes

The following section presents the findings of an audit of the initial teacher education programmes offered by the top 20 Universities in Education as per the 2019 QS World Rankings. A desktop search was conducted in June 2019 to identify if leadership is a skill or capability developed in the pre-service teacher training which is promoted in the marketing information visible on the university website; and if *leadership studies* are offered in the initial teacher education programme/s offered by the university.

At the time of the search, across the 20 universities, 117 initial teacher education programmes were offered. These typically include the Bachelor of Education, Post Graduate Diploma or Certificate in Education and Master of Teaching programmes. Various Bachelor and Master degrees are also offered including the Bachelor of Arts/Mathematics/Music/Science and the Master of Arts/Early Childhood/Elementary and Secondary Education. There are various subject specialisations which are not counted in the 117 total within the programmes offered. What is common amongst all is that they are all initial teacher education programmes required for teacher certification. It is also interesting to note that the 20 leading Education Universities are spread across six countries: United Kingdom (3), United States (8), Hong Kong (2), Canada (2), Australia (4) and Singapore (1).

Table 1: Initial Teacher Education Programme Audit

2019 QS Rank	University	Country	Initial Teacher Education Programme			Leadership promoted in marketing material	Subject handbook available online	Evidence of Leadership Studies offered in ITE programmes
			Undergraduate programme	Postgraduate programme	Internship			
1.	University College London	United Kingdom		X	X	X		
2.	Harvard University	United States		X		X	X	X
3.	Stanford University	United States		X		X	X	X
4.	University of Oxford	United Kingdom		X				
5.	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom		X		X		

6.	The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong		X		X		
7.	University of Toronto, OISI	Canada		X		X	X	
8.	University of California, Berkeley	United States		X			X	X
9.	Columbia University	United States		X		X	X	
10.	University of California, Los Angeles	United States		X		X	X	
11.	University of Michigan	United States	X	X		X	X	X
12.	The University of Sydney	Australia	X	X		X	X	X
13.	University of British Columbia	Canada	X					
14.	=14. Nanyang Technical University	Singapore	X	X		X	X	X
15.	=14. The University of Melbourne	Australia		X	X		X	X
16.	Monash University	Australia	X	X		X	X	
17.	University of Wisconsin-Madison	United States	X	X		X	X	X
18.	Michigan State University	United States	X			X	X	
19.	The University of Queensland	Australia	X	X		X	X	
20.	The Education University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	X	X		X	X	X

Table 1 outlines the results of an audit of initial teacher education programmes offered by the top 20 Universities in Education as per the 2019 QS World Rankings. The results show that of the 20 universities, 18 offer post graduate teacher preparation programmes with the top 10 universities only offering post graduate teacher preparation programmes. Subject handbooks and course outlines were not visible for five universities which precluded a search for leadership subjects within their programmes.

A review of website marketing material indicates that 16 of the 20 universities promote leadership as a skill or capability attained through completion of the programme. One can assume that the promotion of leadership development within their initial teacher education programmes is considered to be important in attracting prospective students. The promotion material indicates that graduates will develop leadership skills, equipping them to lead future generations. A sample of statements found across websites includes:

> The critical thinking skills we teach you from day one of your PGCE will equip you to lead education for future generations throughout your whole career. (University College London)

> The Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP) is a nationally renowned 12-month full time program preparing future teacher leaders at the elementary and secondary levels. (Stanford University)
>
> The BEd Early Childhood Education and Special Education Programme will enable graduates to meet the academic qualifications required as kindergarten principals. (The University of Hong Kong)
>
> The program prepares candidates to become outstanding teachers and leaders who consult, critique, create and mobilize educational research. (University of Toronto, OISI)
>
> Training the Next Generation of Leaders in Education. (University of California, Los Angeles)
>
> We develop academic skills alongside character building and leadership skills, with a strong emphasis on values. (Nanyang Technical University)
>
> You will acquire the foundation to move into leadership roles as your career progresses. (Monash University)

The promise of leadership development is visible and very clear in marketing the initial teacher education programmes across 16 of the 20 university websites. This finding contrasts with leadership studies only evident within the programmes of nine universities. A review of the subject offerings identifies very little in terms of core leadership focused material. Early Childhood programmes were more likely to offer leadership focused content. The Education University of Hong Kong and Harvard University had the greatest number of leadership subjects. The Education University of Hong Kong in their Bachelor of Education Early Childhood offer: Leadership, Policy and Innovation; Effective Leadership for Early Childhood Education; Resources Management in Early Childhood Sector and Leadership for Engaging Diversity in Early Years. They also offer a subject in their Master of Teaching called: Teacher Leadership and School Improvement. Similarly, Harvard University subjects include: Leadership in Social-Change Organizations; Managing Financial Resources in Non-profit Organizations; Education Entrepreneurship; Independent Schools: Leadership, Opportunities, Challenges, Equity and Inclusion; Leadership Practicum; Organizing: People, Power, Change; Leading the Profession; and Teacher Empowerment and Activism. The terms *leading*, and *leadership* were commonly used in subject titles such as Leading Literacy, Leading Mathematics, Leadership in Educational Settings and the content of subjects related to leadership within specific content areas or in some cases explicitly to leadership development. Along with the prevalence of the term teacher leadership, the use of instructional leadership was also found across several pre-service programmes.

Leadership subjects offered within the initial teacher education programmes are not evident across all universities within the sample. It is not clear what has motivated some universities to offer leadership focused subjects, but one can only assume that some value has been placed on leadership preparation for the graduate teachers about to embark on a professional career.

Conclusion

The importance of school leadership is widely recognised and is a priority in educational policy globally (OECD 2012). Leadership 'plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling' (Pont, Nusche & Moorman 2008: 9). Leadership has a significant impact on student outcomes and in order for schools to be successful, effective leadership is necessary. Leadership preparation is vital in developing the skills and capabilities required to successfully lead, however leadership preparation has traditionally been targeted at in-service teachers who typically show an interest in formal school leadership roles. Increased responsibilities and accountability in schools have created the need to distribute leadership practice in order to address the needs of complex 21st century schools. This shift to distributed practice has created opportunities for teacher leaders at all levels, be it in formal or informal roles. However, teacher preparation programmes have not yet recognised the need to prepare pre-service teachers for leadership opportunities which are now being provided earlier in careers than has been the case previously.

The focus of this study has been to stimulate a leadership discourse in initial teacher education. In considering the changing educational landscape where distributed leadership practice has increased opportunities for teacher leadership, this paper has described how introducing pre-service teachers to leadership during their formative education can have various benefits. The significance of introducing leadership studies in initial teacher education is in developing a profession that enters the workforce with a clear understanding of the value of utilising teacher expertise, developing leadership capacity and working collaboratively for school improvement. Exposure to leadership studies can improve initial teacher perspectives and is important in the creation of a supportive school structure. Teacher graduates entering the profession are not only ready to teach, but equipped with the understanding of how leadership and leading can improve student outcomes.

Research into the world's leading education universities indicates that the power of leadership is important and clearly this is something that is being explored when marketing initial teacher education programmes to prospective students. This practice is not widespread and further research is required to explore what impact exposure to leadership studies has had on graduates entering the profession.

If we are to positively impact on education, our responsibility lies in ensuring that graduates are not only ready to teach but they are ready for all that the profession offers. Preparing teacher graduates with a positive attitude towards the impact of leading will undoubtedly create a profession that works collaboratively, striving to be better educators, with a broad understanding of schools and the power of leading for improvement. It is hoped that this research expands educational leadership research by exploring the role of initial teacher education providers in preparing the next generation of school leaders.

If we are calling for the professionalisation of teachers, initiating a leadership discourse will develop a stronger profession, open to teacher leadership, supportive of distributed practice and working together towards school and system improvement.

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