Developing Teacher Leadership in an International School

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Abstract

International schools occupy a specific niche in the world of education simply because they have a population made up of several different cultures which, by default have an impact on the quality and emphasis of the education provided. Leading in this environment has its challenges and the object of this case study is to ascertain the extent to which teacher leaders are valued and utilized in order for a specific international, multi-cultural school to provide and ensure its desired student outcomes. The results of this study show that a school such as this endures complexities that can be successfully navigated with the help of engaged teacher leaders who have a shared moral purpose.

Developing Teacher Leadership in an International School

Introduction

I have always been fascinated by seeing the "whole-child" educational advantages enjoyed by students who attend the multi-cultural (with at least 27 or more different cultures and countries represented), internationally accredited residential school at which I work. Whether these advantages are some of the reams of stated aims and goals repeated ad nauseam by our development office and are evidenced at certain times (some more than others); or simply those that, without any overt commission, happen by virtue of being in this environment, it is clear that many of our graduates are quite extraordinary people, having benefited from their alma mater. I see evidence of their ability to cooperate in a global setting, having learnt values of cooperation, tolerance, awareness of their environment and their relevance in it, respect for others and their own culture, compassion, empathy and many other virtues. This, in addition to the academic curriculum is what I see as educating the "whole-child".

The more I marvel at these advantages, the more I see that they have their roots evidenced in the resources available and more specifically, the human resources. For this reason, I am particularly interested in seeing how our teacher leaders are understood, encouraged, developed and ultimately utilized in our school in order to bring about the educational advantages that are so tangible in a school such as ours.

This research project is also part of fulfilling the requirements for the EAD 801 Leadership and Organizational Development online course.

Background and Rationale

The school I live and work at is located in North India in the foothills of the Himalayas, with its challenges, rewards, transience and complexity. Having stepped out of my leadership role in our school, I am in the privileged position of being able to reflect on my five years as high school principal and how I attempted to use (sometimes not all that successfully) teacher leadership for better meta-cognition in our faculty and, ultimately, for improved student learning.

Being an internationally accredited, multi-cultural school that utilizes a few curricula (US, British and Indian) and dealing with a somewhat transient staff (some come for the broader experience, some for an international experience, some for the school, some to escape) who come and go, more than stay, it is difficult to establish a modicum of consistency. Every now and then, someone stays, and within that small group, some show great potential as teacher leaders. In my ideal world, the aim is to have the whole staff functioning as teacher leaders, so when a few stand out – either through their own excellence or those that rise to the occasion when it is facilitated by administration or other teacher leaders, it makes an interesting case study to explore how they cope and continue and develop in such a changing and transient staff.

From the outset, I must state that I am under no illusion that this is a perfect example of how a school develops teacher leaders. In fact, in some instances while working here, I have experienced the lack of and, unfortunately in some cases, the antithesis of good teacher leadership development. At the same time, however, I do see evidence of the advantages of what good teacher leadership can instil in our school and ultimately our students and an exploration of how teacher leadership is understood and developed in this context is the basis of this research project.

Research Questions

The aim of this research project is to explore the development and maintenance of teacher leadership, through, amongst other things, the use of parallel leadership in this specific school setting. In order to proceed, I have asked the following question which will form the basis of my investigation:

- To what extent do educators (both teachers and school leaders), who work in a specific multi-cultural, international residential school, view and understand the benefit of teacher leaders in education?

Leading from this question are several other questions that need to be explored. Some of these questions (Appendix) were posed in a series of interviews and others, that became more clear as a result of the interviews, I pose at the end of this paper. The responses to these questions from educational practitioners – both teacher leaders and school leaders – will form the basis of my findings and conclusions.

It is my further intention, as I develop my findings and conclusions, also to address a second, and perhaps more crucial, question:

- What suggestions can be offered for more successfully developing and sustaining teacher leadership at this school?

Hopefully the answer to this, and my initial research question, will lead to a greater understanding of the implications of good teacher leader development and practice in the school being studied and perhaps, in other similar schools worldwide.

Methodology

For the purposes of establishing a clear sense of what a select group of teacher leaders and school leaders believe regarding the importance and development of teacher leadership, I have, in all contexts, use my present school as a point of reference. I have also made sure

that all conclusions I came to are rooted in and informed by an, albeit limited, review of the literature.

As part of the process, I interviewed two teacher leaders and two school leaders/administrators. One of the teacher leaders (TL1) is relatively new to our school and has experience in successfully leading a Social Studies Department in the USA. Another (TL2), who has been at the school for nine years (which is the exception because of the length of time, rather than the rule), is an excellent early-years teacher with the potential and track record of initiating positive organizational change and development. Of the three academic School Leaders in this school, I chose the Head of Middle School (HMS) and the overall School Head/Principal (SH).

After I conducted the interviews, I attempted to articulate the common threads of their responses which hopefully informed my conclusion (perhaps a series of conclusions) regarding the perception and importance of teacher leaders in this school and how they are developed so that they are able to appreciate and enhance the advantages of having a school in a multi-cultural, international and residential setting.

Review of Related Literature

While reviewing related literature it became apparent that there were certain misconceptions in the teaching profession that need to be dispelled in order to allow for the development of teacher leading in any setting. Once these myths and taboos are overcome, a professional learning community can be established through, to use Michael Fullan's term, positive "reculturing". Clearly this can only be changed by committed professional teachers who are prepared to take up the challenge of leadership in whatever form it takes.

Having established this premise, I reviewed a list of the literature which starts to address the questions and issues posed regarding the development of teacher leaders.

Where Teacher Leaders "fit-in" in the School Organizational Structure and, at what Price

From the outset, and this was evident in my interviews, it is essential to dispel some of the myths regarding where it is believed necessary for teacher leaders to be on the organization chart of a school before they can influence, envision, effect change and "resonate", thereby "bring(ing) out everyone's best", as Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A., (2004) put it.

It appears, as Donaldson Jr., G. A., (2007, September) says, that "Most of us hold the deep-seated assumption that leaders must have appointments and titles that formalize their leadership and officially confirm their knowledge, traits, and competencies." (p26) Of course, as I hope will become evident in this research project, nothing should be further from the truth but, all to often, unless there is a hierarchical position assigned to a leader, there are many (documented) instances of how a person, who functions as an informal leader, is ostracized by his/her peers.

McGee (1999) in her article, Curse of the Trophy: Winners May Find Themselves Out in the Cold, speaks of the "Scarlet L" and how the perception of leadership in a colleague can often isolate instead of celebrate an individual's leadership abilities.

Barth (2001) is even blunter in his appraisal of what can happen when teacher leaders emerge. He says, "Few teachers who take the initiative to lead are welcomed by fellow teachers or by administrators. The teacher who steps in and assumes leadership, and distinguishes himself or herself from the others, violates a basic taboo of many schools and districts— and consequently pays a dear price." (p2)

Danielson, (2007) highlights another related concern which has to do with the fact that there are many teachers who wish to be of influence but who simply do not want to end up in administration because that professional route simply does not interest them at all.

When this urge to influence by having some sort of greater responsibility is, "left unfulfilled, (it) can lead to frustration and even cynicism." (p 14) Sometimes, as I discovered from my interviews, teachers in this position feel so frustrated at their inability to affect, what in their minds is positive change, they find themselves undermining school processes and initiatives rather than utilizing their gifts as leaders.

How then are these essential elements of leadership and, more specifically, teacher leadership identified, encouraged, maintained and sustained? The literature is clear that, as it were, the first step needs to be taken both by existing leadership and those with the potential to lead. One would never want a situation of "No one asked; no one told." to prevail which would thereby ensure that a, "school's instructional capacity remain(s) static, no more than the sum of individual teachers' strengths and deficits" (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007, p8). Again, the experience of some of those interviewed as part of my case-study, corroborated this problem. Further to this and as Johnson and Donaldson also comment, even when an attempt at the recognition of teacher leadership is made, veterans are often used to take away the time consuming, mundane tasks from administration, "rather than using their instructional expertise to improve teaching at the school." (p9)

How Teacher Leadership is (or should be) Utilized in my "Case Study" School

For the purposes of comparing the experiences and perspectives of those I interviewed, with the theory contained in the literature, I used Crowther, F.,Ferguson, M. & Hann, L's book, *Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success* (2009). Crowther et al., establish a "Teachers as Leaders Framework" which is essential for understanding what makes a teacher leader. In this framework they identify certain practical abilities inherent in teacher leaders such as "translating ideas into sustainable systems of action" (p3). In addition, what becomes clear through the entire framework is that

teacher leaders must possess an ability to engage on a relational level and exercise a competent level of emotional intelligence in order to succeed.

Hopefully, as schools work through the practice of developing teacher leaders, teachers will, according to Barth (as cited in Richardson, 2001), "become owners and investors in the school, rather than mere tenants" (p1). It is clear that the school being studied in this research project, although open to and somewhat engaged with the concept of teacher leaders, has to place more focus on organizing and formalizing their development of teacher leaders.

The Development of Teacher Leadership for Effective Practice

It becomes more and more clear then that at the core of successful school leadership, and consequently a successful school, is the quality of the relationships (both professional and personal) that are able to be enjoyed in a given setting. Positive relationships would hopefully obviate the suspicion, distrust and jealousy of colleagues "promoted" to a position of leadership. Donaldson (2007) goes on to summarize Darling-Hammond by saying:

> Although schools may be formally structured to support hierarchical
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> leadership, the culture within the education profession supports a rich
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> egalitarian ethic. Within this culture, relationships determine who
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> communicates with whom, who shares professional wisdom with whom, and
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> who ultimately influences the quality of teaching and learning. Darling-
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> Hammond (as cited in Donaldson, 2007, p 26).

It is the heart of this sentiment that I hope pervades all that is discussed below.

Sergiovanni, (2005), refers to the "heartbeat" of a school which, amongst other things, is contingent on this relational trust which is the "tie that binds roles together, allowing the creation of role sets that embody reciprocal obligations" (p69). These "reciprocal obligations" exemplify the "egalitarian ethic" mentioned by Donaldson but, he goes on to

emphasize the need for appropriate relational leadership in order for this to work. Donaldson comments that, "Relational leadership runs through the daily life of every school as educators attend to the quality of relationships, insist on commitment to the school's purposes and goals, and examine and improve instruction" (2007, p26)

This is where Goleman's understanding of Emotional Intelligence and consequently its utilization within schools, is very influential in affecting school culture and change. In order to establish strong relational leadership in a school a leader must exercise what Goleman (1998) terms the "Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work" which are "self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social-skills". These components, play essential roles in the "primordial emotional task" of a leader (Goleman ,et al., 2004). Goleman, et al., maintain that this task, "remains foremost among the many jobs of leadership: driving the collective emotions in a positive direction and clearing the smog created by toxic emotions." (p 5)

Parallel Leadership in the School and its Benefits.

Building on from this Crowther et al. maintain that without the support of established school leaders who allow for Parallel Leadership where there is "mutual trust, shared purpose and allowance for individual expression" (p53) a successful professional learning community cannot be achieved. "Rank in the hierarchy," says Barth (2001), "has little relevance when it comes to school-based reform." He goes further by saying that those leaders involved in the reform process, "are those who know something about the organization, have a vision leading to a better way, can enlist others in that vision, and can mine the gold of everyone's craft knowledge to discover ways to move towards that vision" (p2). There appears no better way to ensure school growth and effective culture.

Fullan's work in his book Leading in a Culture of Change (2001) became particularly relevant when looking at my case-study school, which seems motivated by an almost

pathological need for change. He has a particularly appropriate caveat regarding the change process which mentions that, "All this complexity keeps people on the edge of chaos." (p6). He continues that, "It is important to be on that edge (of chaos) because that is where creativity resides, but anarchy lurks there too." (ibid.). To help bring some order to this complexity, Fullan offers a "Framework for Leadership" (p.4) which he also refers to as a "mind-set" (p3) that is necessary for successfully leading in a culture of change. The five points that make up the framework, seem obvious but are often neglected and it is his "*energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness* constellation" (p7) that hopefully holds everything together. Energetic, enthusiastic and hopeful leaders, he maintains, " cause greater moral purpose to themselves, bury themselves in change, naturally build relationships and knowledge, and seek coherence to consolidate moral purpose" (p7) It is evident that when any of these three parts of the constellation are lost, the chaos of which he speaks starts to creep in.

For teacher leaders to be effective it is imperative for any leadership team to establish group norms, build team, and understand the need for a common purpose. These elements seem at the core of what Fullan describes as Moral purpose, which is about "both ends and means" (p13). It seems to be the core of all the other components in the framework for leadership and is essential if direction is to be sought and found. It has to be the component that ignites and prompts all purpose. Fullan goes on to comment that, "a sense of moral purpose on the part of employees is important and can make a huge difference in the performance of the organization." (p24).

To Sum up this Review of the Literature

My first research question asked to what extent the development of teacher leaders benefits the whole child, and of course, it is this, the student outcomes, that are at the essence of education. Any technique, approach or method employed by schools must have at its heart

the need to ensure student development and educational growth. This is why I have reviewed literature that emphasizes the ways of enhancing teacher leadership as a means to this end.

Danielson in her article The Many Faces of Leadership comments that, "The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilization" (p15). It was with this in mind that I approached the questions put forward in the interviews I conducted. It is my belief that the appropriate development of teacher leaders in any school will benefit student learning but, when this development is encouraged in a multi-cultural setting, the "whole-child" is benefited even further

Findings and Conclusions

What leads from my review of the literature and makes it all the more relevant to my case-study school, is the understanding that this school is trying to sustain and develop itself in what Fullan calls a "non-linear world" (p29). It is my understanding that this "non-linear world" is one in which there are no formulaic answers to the challenges faced by a multi-cultural international school and therefore, much of what helps this and other similar schools to function effectively (or not), is how and to what extent effective teacher leadership is developed.

Perceptions of the Role of Teacher Leaders in an International School

Clearly the importance of having identified teacher leaders (whether formally or informally) in an international school is a very important part of encouraging a professional learning community that can make the most of its unique multi-cultural attributes and thereby improve student learning. All of my interviewees articulated their hope for a better way to encourage teacher leader development in the school. At present, the only evidence of this hope is an all but defunct Master Teacher Program which was (and still is) an attempt to identify teachers willing to assume the role of mentor and guide to others. The intention was that master teachers would be selected amongst volunteers who qualified by having completed a certain number of years in the profession; were prepared to complete a certain amount of additional professional development every year and understood that they would spend a time each week working with other teachers. The incentive was a small stipend and a slightly reduced teaching load. When the program was introduced, volunteers were called for but, as was admitted by the SH, only one teacher enlisted. When pressed further he seemed at a loss for why this was the case.

Of the other interviewees, when asked why they believed that the program was so unsuccessful, some admitted that it could be the issue of it being taboo in the minds of teachers to assume a leadership role. Overwhelmingly, though, the response was that they believed that teachers felt that there was already too much to do and adding another task just "didn't seem worth it."

Another believed that, through the natural selection of teachers in an international school, there were, by default, already many teachers functioning as leaders informally and therefore they might not see the need for a formalized program. Consequently, the master teacher program at the school remains in theory but not in practice.

The teacher leaders articulated quite clearly that they believed the role of a teacher leader to be one that, as often as possible, creates opportunities to have discussions about best practice and what people believe to be essential to the "art of teaching". By doing this they believed that this would create a common ground within which the "best parts" of the diversity inherent in the teaching staff could function. TL1 mentioned that in order to start doing this, she has established a Short Story Appreciation group that convenes for an evening at her house every two weeks. (All staff houses are on the campus and no more than a forty-five minute walk away from each other.) This group is open to all staff and, sometimes upwards of twenty teachers from various academic disciplines attend. She continued that what she began to discover was that the conversation very soon turned from focusing on the short stories, to discussions about best practice and even better, trying to answer questions such as, "What is the point of being here at this school and how can we learn from such diversity?" TL1 went on to say that she counts it as a great success to notice that the people in this group never feel inclined to look at the negative aspects of living and working in this school community. This seems a very practical start to developing Fullan's concept of "moral purpose".

Leading on from this, TL1 continued that school culture can be the make or break of a successful school and, because staff come from so many different backgrounds, with so many different expectations of what it should be like to live in this international school community - expectations that are often unfulfilled - it is difficult to maintain a positive culture. She sees her role therefore as someone who has, in addition to creating opportunities for discussions about best practice, to make sure that discussions move away from negative culture builders.

This point came across strongly with the school leaders, who admitted that they often felt the effects of the negative aspects of the school culture. They therefore saw it as imperative for teacher leaders to play an active part in developing a positive school culture.

TL2 saw it as imperative for teacher leaders to be familiar with at least some of the various systems of education from which the teachers in the school come. With this knowledge they should then be able to facilitate identifying and integrating the different approaches to teaching, as well as identifying the most appropriate curricula for a specific section of the school. Such is the flexibility in an international school. This clearly requires an element of trust between the teacher leader and the school leader. A parallel leadership structure has to exist that allows for innovation, change and development to work in tandem with necessary restrictions such as budget control and conforming to established standards and norms.

Identifying and/or Selecting Teacher Leaders

It is clear that the formal program for developing teacher leaders at the school is not functioning as it should and therefore, I was interested to find out from my interviewees what they believed would be a more appropriate way of selecting teacher leaders. All believed that, having been part of the process of creating the school's formal Master Teacher Program and then seeing how ineffectual it has been, informal identifying of teacher leaders with intentional encouragement, might be a better route. They admitted to the risk of this and saw clearly that this approach could mean losing some effective teacher leaders to, at best, mediocrity of practice and at worst, to those undermining the established norms because they are not recognized or encouraged. They believed, though, that any significant undermining was at a minimum and this is again because of the quality of practitioners that an international school attracts. They were not as sure, though, about how many more of their teachers could stand out as teacher leaders but simply do not because they are not sufficiently

encouraged. TL2 did mention that she had sensed an element of "toxicity" that creeps into the school culture when effective teachers are not encouraged to lead.

All interviewees were able to provide a list of what they believed were essential attributes of a teacher leader. Amongst these were attributes such as: they are innovative; they show initiative; they are respected (by colleagues and students); they are positive culture builders; they care; they are clearly enthused by teaching and, are willing to "go the extra mile".

Developing Teacher Leaders

A significant comment by one of the teacher leaders was that an institution has to "want" teacher leaders. This is true both from the perspective of the teacher and from the perspective of the administration. The taboos of "going over to the other side", into administration, as well as the perceived "threats" by an emerging teacher leader to an administrative position, have to be non-existent. It takes a very strong and positive school culture to eradicate these perceptions.

All the interviewees believed that the school needs to create as many opportunities for potential teacher leaders to develop and exercise their skills. Being given release time for research was seen as very important. This time would have to be found in working hours where identified teacher leaders could become more familiar with the literature and also work in small collaborative groups where discussions about professional learning communities and best practice would be facilitated.

TL2 started her answer to this question (Appendix, Question 3) by saying that in order to develop teacher leaders in a school that has many cultures represented, school leaders need to step back and allow people to make mistakes and to enjoy successes. Sometimes, she said, there is a greater difficulty in accepting successes than tolerating mistakes, because it is probably easier to be gracious than dealing with being professionally jealous.

Obstacles Encountered by Teacher Leaders

A common malaise of international schools is that they can have an excessively high staff turnover. With this in mind, all of my interviewees started their answers with this issue as a caveat to their responses. Staff turnover is something that is expected and therefore, through which all initiatives and processes are filtered. High turnover, as one interviewee mentioned, makes it extremely difficult to identify, develop and maintain a teacher leader program in the short time available before people move on. The average contract is two years and this, on average is very seldom extended beyond a total of three years. The belief is that it takes a year to adjust to an international school in a different country because, not only are there differences in curriculum and methodology, but a person needs to adjust to different living conditions. If a person is at the school for the average of three years, the second is productive and during the third they are "leaning-out" and looking for their next posting. This effectively means that there is one constructive, efficient and productive year out of three.

In the midst of this then, is the perception of overwork. For some, the relatively autonomous nature of an international school is quite liberating. Engaging challenges such as the curriculum which, for better or worse, is under constant review; external accreditation boards requiring seemingly endless reams of documentation and students, many of whom are thousands of miles from home and now living in boarding, requiring additional personal attention, are all additional expectations. Some others, less inclined to believe these challenges as liberating, consider them sufficient, if not burdensome, and the thought of having to contend with the idea of being a teacher leader borders on anathema. In addition, there is sometimes the perception that when leadership is exercised, good teachers will be drawn out of the classroom and given administrative tasks which could negate or at least, reduce their ability to function as an effective teacher leader.

Further obstacles mentioned included: the lack of clarity about responsibilities, which is something that seems easily remedied but very seldom is; a lack of access to resources; a lack of clarity about and agreement on best practices, given the varied backgrounds of the teachers and, the lack of sustainability - again through high staff turnover. All of these obstacles were consistently blamed on the lack of time given or able to be given for teacher leader development.

Evidence of Effective Teacher Leadership in an Ideal International School

All interviewees agreed that their school was not functioning as they would hope an ideal international school would to ensure effective teacher leadership. Each though, had a different perspective as to the degree to which the school was not ideal.

The SH believed that teacher leaders in his ideal school would be considered his "ear on the ground", helping to diffuse any areas of conflict regarding differences in educational approaches. He went as far as to say that teacher leaders, through their ability to glean the best from all nationalities and cultures, could help to prevent a pedagogical and curricular dominance by a particular cultural group. This deliberately hybridized new culture, by collecting the best of all worlds, would then be able to make the most of what a multi – cultural school has to offer. To list one aspect of this and as TL2 put it, certain cultures have, for example, a less confrontational approach to issues than others and, depending on the circumstance, either could be the more appropriate approach. Being able to identify which is more appropriate should be a skill in the arsenal of any kind of leader in an international school. At the same time, and almost counter-intuitively, the SH believed that the school would then be able to deliberately celebrate the differences of the community, without having a slant towards a particular educational or cultural approach.

The MSH had perhaps a more practical approach to the same concern, saying that teacher leaders would be seen as effective when they are able to acculturate new teachers to

the established norms (a new culture) of the school. This would come through coaching and

mentoring new (and old) staff regarding the established norms.

TL2 took a step back from the practical application and "use" of teacher leaders by

commenting that in her ideal school, school leaders would feel so sufficiently at ease with

their own leadership that they would consistently facilitate the development of teacher

leaders. She commented that there would have to be a mutual respect and trust between the

school and teacher leaders which is, in essence, effective parallel leadership.

Support through Parallel leadership

The MSH and TL 1 said that they believe the school enjoys a mutual support between

the school administration and teacher leaders. TL1's experience is that she never feels

uncomfortable in approaching her school head and that she always feels heard. The MSH

mentioned that because this is a relatively small school (approx 460 students, KG-12) and

that the community constantly wrestles with cooperation in diversity, there is always a sense

of mutual respect and trust. She went on to say that this is probably another reason why the

Master Teacher Program never progressed. People never saw the need for it because the

"community functions well together".

This, however, was not the experience of the other two interviewees. The SH

reflected that he felt a lack of support for his leadership, saying that, "they are not all with

me." This moment of deep self-reflection and vulnerability was perhaps augmented by the

fact that he is relatively new to the school and has had to make some unpopular decisions.

When pressed as to how he believed this situation could be remedied, he first admitted a poor

management of the change process. He also understood that trust and personal contact

(relationship building) were things that needed to be worked on within the community.

TL2 commented that at that moment she felt quite unsupported. She did, however,

add that there were times in her tenure at the school that she had felt supported. This

however was when there was a greater sense of stability in the school and that there was not as much and as frequent change as there is now.

It appears that of all the questions posed to the interviewees, the one that related to the perception of support and parallel leadership was the most contentious. Clearly there was not agreement as to how well this connection between school and teacher leaders functioned and this might also be one of the reasons for why the school has been unable to formalize any teacher leadership program. It is also clear that within a school that espouses, practices and has as its selling point, multi –culturalism and its benefits to the student that attend the school, the complexities of all involved functioning with a clear moral purpose can, at times, be quite out of reach. This state will remain unless there is a concerted and constant effort by the school leadership to have clearly articulated goals and norms to which all can subscribe. Furthermore, in this process, I believe it is essential to ensure that the pivotal role of teacher leaders is never neglected.

Implications

I began this research project by asking a question which attempted to explore the extent to which educators in a multi-cultural international school view and understand the benefit of teacher leaders in education. My findings, I believe, simply highlight the complexities inherent in all schools but also those which are compounded by a school that by definition and purpose is multi-cultural. I believe that, in theory, those in leadership at this school are genuinely committed to developing teacher leaders. This commitment exists because they believe that the advantages inherent in the role of teacher leaders are essential for making the most of the international and multi-cultural attributes of the school. These attributes, then provide an added value to student learning outcomes. In practice, as my research has shown and if those interviewed can be considered a fair proportional

representation of the teachers in the school, only a limited number of teachers are ready or prepared to assume the challenge and to see this as a common goal and moral purpose.

I have been in the privileged position of taking a grandstand view of this school's management and practice and with a bit of hindsight, feel that I can reassess the practices I implemented and have highlighted the areas where leading in a school such as this can be adjusted.

To start with, I would make sure that, even if teacher leaders are identified informally, my encouragement and development of them would have to be intentional. In this context I believe that my findings could and should be shared with this school's leadership. So often, being deeply embroiled in the day to day activities of a school allows very little time for self –reflection which, I believe, is what the finding s in this research project will help them to do.

Therefore and, as an answer to my second initial question regarding what suggestions can be offered for more successfully developing and sustaining teacher leadership at this school, I believe that school leaders need to put processes in place that actively encourage themselves to be intentional in their support of teacher leaders. I felt it quite alarming that both of the school leaders interviewed, appeared to "rest on their laurels" regarding the existence of informal teacher leaders in the school, simply because of what was referred to as the natural selection process of teachers to an international school. Even if this were true, it is clear that unmotivated, underdeveloped or discouraged teacher leaders can start to work counter to the culture of the school.

Summary

Geographic location, transience and a multi-cultural setting has made my case study school's world full of non-linear consequences and it is therefore, essential for leaders to hold onto their moral purpose and cultivate their knowledge, understanding and skills in a world that doesn't offer step by step guidelines for working in a culture of change. In essence, a

leader needs to be able to adapt, when necessary, to different leadership styles - as many as four or more of the six that Fullan quotes Goleman as identifying. (p35) - in order to provide sustainability. Successfully engaging with this "complexity science" (p45) sees emotionally intelligent leaders grappling with the "mysteries of life and living" (ibid) and succeeding.

Having many of the complexities of leading in a culture of change - where you are often not clear out what surprise tomorrow will bring - articulated and then practically addressed, is what, for me, makes Fullan's thoughts indispensible. His framework for leadership (p4), if understood and practiced, can allow for a very constructive and dynamic process that will lead towards a shared goal. The shared goal, in this case, being the development of a non threatening, stable culture of teacher leader development which is committed to positive change processes.

New Questions

Although my research was limited in scope and informal in approach, reflection on this crucial and still emerging aspect of education in international, multi-cultural schools has given rise to new questions that might provide a look into future and more effective teacher leadership development. Those educators who are not part the international school circuit, may marvel at the apparent lack of governmental or state influence and interference, seeing the lack of external bureaucracy as a boon for this kind of development, but as is clear from my research, no school is devoid of self-created bureaucracy and the resultant complexities.

One of my interviewees, who has a track record at the school as an innovator and successful implementer of curricular and structural change, commented that there needs to be stability in schools before teacher leaders can be successfully developed. I would therefore find it very enlightening to receive answers to the following questions:

- How do school leaders believe they can practically create a sense of stability and calm where there is a culture of constant change in international schools.

  o How then, would this stability enhance teacher leader development?

Of teacher leaders I would then ask:

- How do you, as a teacher leader, believe you can help to establish a sense of stability in a culture of change with its complexities and resultant chaos and /or apathy.?

- Furthermore, what tools, facilities and help do you as a teacher leader believe that you need to help to create this stability?

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Appendix

Below is a list of the questions used in the interviews with the two teacher leaders, our Head of Middle School and our overall School Head (Principal).

Of the teachers, once establishing that we are on the same page about the concept of a teacher leader, I asked:

1. What would you see as the role of a teacher leader in an International school?

2. How do you believe teacher leaders should be identified/selected in your school?

3. How do you believe teacher leaders can be developed in order to encourage quantifiable "whole-child" student learning in a Multi-Cultural setting?

4. What obstacles do you see that teacher leaders do/will encounter at your school?

5. In your ideal International School, what would you like to see as evidence of effective teacher leadership? (Ideally, I wanted to get a sense of how much parallel leadership between teacher leaders and school leaders takes place.)

   a. Here, they were also asked to give examples of measurable performance outcomes?

6. Finally, do you feel supported in your role (whether formal or informal) as a teacher leader?

Of the school leaders, once establishing that we are on the same page about the concept of a teacher leader, I asked:

7. What do you see as the role of a teacher leader in an International school?

8. How are teacher leaders identified/selected in your school?

9. What processes do you have in place to develop teacher leaders in order to encourage quantifiable "whole-child" student learning in a Multi-Cultural setting?

     a. Failing any formal professional development in this realm, I asked what the school leader believed should be in place.

10. What obstacles do you see (or imagine) that teacher leaders encounter at your school?

11. In your ideal International School, what would you like to see as evidence of effective teacher leadership and how this compliments your role as a school leader? (Here I wanted to get a sense of the degree to which they believe parallel leadership with Teacher leaders is important.)

     a. Here, they were also asked to give examples of measurable performance outcomes?

12. Finally, do you feel that there is mutual support between you as a school leader and any identified teacher leaders (whether formal or informal) in your school? If YES, explain why, if NO, explain why not.