Education International

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Teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership: towards a policy framework for Education International

John Bangs and David Frost
University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

A report on an international survey of the views of teachers and teacher union officials

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FOREWORD

The study Teacher Self-efficacy, Voice and Leadership, commissioned by Education International Research Institute, comes at the time when teaching profession is increasingly facing pressures from society and policy makers and we need to reaffirm the role and potential of teachers in leading educational change. This study in particular draws on a range of recent research on teachers' self-efficacy and confidence as well as the conceptual work already undertaken within the International Teacher Leadership project.

Collaborative professional cultures within schools, within which teachers are confident in their own knowledge and capacity has, the Education International believes, a number of important and positive impacts.

The essence of distributed leadership is that it gives teachers the responsibility for leading in particular areas of pedagogy, development of the curriculum and in responding to the social, emotional and wellbeing needs of pupils, unlocks innovative and untapped potential in teachers. In doing so it increases the capacity of schools to meet the needs of pupils and to enhance educational achievement.

Such distributed leadership also enhances the collective capacity of schools and provides time and capacity for the principal and his or her senior management team who can work with and take an overview of the successes and developmental needs of schools.

Fred van Leeuwen

General Secretary
Education International

INTRODUCTION

Educational policy making is increasingly centralised and globalised. Governments are advised by organisations such as the EU, the World Bank and UNESCO to focus on their competitiveness in a global arena. Studies such as OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provide the means for international comparison which has led some governments to look to adopting some or all of the policies of countries which occupy the top quartile in PISA rankings. For the last decade the Finns, for example, have played host to a succession of international visitors seeking to emulate Finland's success. Policy frameworks are forged by organisations such as the OECD and the European Union's Commission. It is no coincidence that the scale of the World Congress of Comparative Educations Societies (WCCES) continues to grow. International comparison is big business.

Some of the policy development discourses are informed by research, although detailed accounts of policy making suggest that research, in fact, plays a marginal role (Bangs, MacBeath and Galton, 2011). Teachers' voice is mediated through their organisations, most of which are affiliated to Education International – 'The voice of educational workers worldwide' (www.ei-ie.org), which has made, as its top educational priority, the involvement of teachers in educational policy-making. However, when it comes to policy making at both national and international levels, teachers themselves remain the ghost at the feast.

Teachers, their wellbeing, their professionalism and their professional development are critical in any discussion as to how to improve educational performance. The quality of teachers and what they do that makes all the difference (OECD, 2011), was central to the core agenda at an international summit hosted by US Education Secretary in March 2011 at which EI representatives put the case for enhancing the teaching profession. This comment was posted in advance of the meeting.

> *The summit will be used to identify best practices worldwide that effectively promote, elevate and enhance the teaching profession. EI and its affiliates will use the opportunity to make the case for fully funded public education for all and ensure that teachers are recognised as integral to any development of education policies.*
>
> (EI web site: www.ei-ie.org)

It was encouraging to hear that a powerful force such as the US government was taking steps to explore the future of the teaching profession. Their position was illustrated in this comment from the US Education Secretary was posted on the same website.

> *When it comes to teaching, talent matters tremendously, but great teachers are not just born that way. It takes a high-quality system for recruiting, training, retaining and supporting teachers over the course of their careers to develop an effective teaching force. This summit is a tremendous opportunity to learn from one another the best methods worldwide to address our common challenges: supporting and strengthening teachers and boosting the student skills necessary for success in today's knowledge economy.*
>
> (US Education Secretary, Arne Duncan quoted on the EI website)

The Summit was the product of three organisations, the US Education Department, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development and Education International. It was the first time that the global federation of teacher unions had linked up with governments to jointly organise a conference on the future of the teaching profession. One account of the first Summit, (a second Summit organised on the same basis took place in 2012), highlighted its focus and drew the conclusion that a consensus is developing between teacher unions and governments about the importance of teacher policies involving the teaching profession in systemic improvement (Bangs, 2011). The OECD's background paper, 'Building a High Quality Teaching Profession' advocated teacher policies based on the assumption that reform can only be effective when it is supported from the bottom up. The Summit saw a remarkable degree of consensus on the importance of teacher policy but, in the main, it remains the case in many countries that the optimism surrounding the Summit has yet to translate into teachers becoming central players in establishing educational policy, nor are they necessarily able to shape professional practice in their own schools.

It is for this reason that the Education International Research Institute commissioned research on teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership. The research was undertaken by the Leadership for Learning group at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education in collaboration with the International Teacher Leadership project directed by David Frost (leadershipforlearning.org.uk). The purpose of the research was to produce data about the current environment and existing opportunities for teachers to:

- exercise leadership,
- influence policy,
- shape professional practice, and
- build professional knowledge.

The research also sought to identify the nature and potential links with teachers in other schools and with the wider community.

We hope that the outcomes of this project is a significant contribution to the debate about the future development of the teaching profession.

SECTION 1

SELF-EFFICACY, WELLBEING AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The question of how teachers can make their voices heard on matters of policy and practice is inextricably bound up with the way we conceptualise professional development. We have an abundance of statements such as Arne Duncan's above highlighting the need for improved recruitment and professional development of teachers, but it is commonly assumed that the quality of what teachers do can be improved by people other than teachers themselves. Many organisations representing teachers have outlined policy proposals aimed at enhancing teacher creativity, responsibility and status within schools, but so far there is little evidence of the take-up or impact of such proposals. We argue here that it is time to consider approaches to teacher and school development that puts the teacher at the centre of the process. If this were to be achieved, teachers would have enhanced opportunities to influence both policy and practice.

The first part of this discussion is concerned with the importance of teacher self-efficacy and the second with the centrality of leadership.

The importance of self-efficacy

The term 'self-efficacy' is a common subject of psychological studies and tends to be used as a short hand for the beliefs that human beings have in their own ability and capacity to take action and succeed. The concept of self-efficacy is not a straightforward one (Tschannen-Moran, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). It is however an essential part of a theory of human development, the most prominent exponent of which is Albert Bandura.

> *Human attainments and positive well-being require an optimistic sense of personal efficacy. … Self-doubts can set in quickly after some failures or reverses. The important matter is not that difficulties arouse self-doubt, which is a natural immediate reaction, but the speed of recovery of perceived self-efficacy from difficulties.*
>
> (Bandura, 1989: 1176)

What is crucial here is the idea of belief in one's own efficacy. A teacher with strong beliefs in his or her own efficacy will be resilient, able to solve problems and, most importantly, learn from their experience.

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International survey (TALIS) explored teachers' reported self-efficacy and its connection to factors such as 'disciplinary climate' (OECD, 2009). However, the secondary analysis that followed said more about the potential that a focus on self-efficacy might generate.

> *When teachers have a high sense of self-efficacy they are more creative in their work, intensify their efforts when their performances fall short of their goals and persist longer. Teachers' sense of self-efficacy can thus influence the learning and motivation of students, even if students are unmotivated or considered difficult (Guskey and Passaro, 1994). ….. most studies have found a positive relation between teachers' efficacy beliefs and several student cognitive outcomes, such as achievement in core academic subjects (e.g. Anderson, Greene and Loewen, 1988; Ashton and Webb, 1986; Moore and Esselman, 1994) and performance and skills (Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles, 1989; Ross, Hogaboam-Gray and Hannay, 2001).*
>
> (Scheerens, 2010: 28)

The concept of self-efficacy is linked to the concept of agency which is a fundamental human capacity to make a difference not only to our own lives but also to the world around us. Agency is a distinctively human characteristic which refers to our capacity to 'pursue self-determined purposes and goals through self-conscious strategic action' (Frost, 2006: 20). It is a capacity that can either be enhanced or diminished by experience.

It is clearly important for the well-being of all human beings that they experience an enhancement of their agency, but particularly crucial when we consider what society needs from professionals such as teachers. The ability to make judgments, work to a set of principles, take the initiative, self-evaluate and be accountable to peers and stakeholders are all dependent on being effective as human agents.

> *the exercise of personal agency is achieved through reflective and regulative thought, the skills at one's command, and other tools of self-influence that affect choice and support selected courses of action. Self-generated influences operate deterministically on behavior (in) the same way as external sources of influence do….. It is because self-influence operates deterministically on action that some measure of self-directedness and freedom is possible.*
>
> (Bandura, 1989: 1182)

At first glance, this may look as if it is concerned merely with teachers' well-being which, it might be assumed, is at odds with the goal of improving teaching and learning. However, while agency and self-efficacy are key dimensions of well-being, the argument is essentially about enabling teachers to develop themselves and their practice rather than be defeated by the challenges of their working lives.

In the UK, the concept of 'well-being' is the subject of investigation and development by some practitioner researchers, interested in strategies to improve teaching and learning. Here a primary school headteacher explores the connection between teachers' well-being and student learning.

> *By 'wellbeing' I do not mean some nebulous and well-meaning new age world where staff are always happy. I do not intend to be "romantic or sentimental about teachers" (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 3). I do not marginalise the matter of the pupils' learning; quite the opposite. Staff wellbeing is a moral and legal imperative and has a practical and pragmatic impact upon absenteeism, recruitment and retention (Angle, Fearn, Elston, Basset & McGinigal, 2008). Moreover, there is a correlation between teacher wellbeing and the social, emotional and academic development of pupils (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Dewberry & Briner, 2007; OECD, 2009). I found this correlation lasts well into pupils' adulthood (Pederson, Fatcher & Eaton, 1978).*
>
> (Hannibal, 2011: 5)

There is a disagreement about the nature of teacher wellbeing among researchers. Leithwood's study for the Ontario Federation of Elementary teachers (2006) argues that the way teachers feel affects their motivation to do a good job. The study identified the importance of 'internal states' that may shape the extent to which teachers are committed, enthusiastic and willing to perform. Bascia takes issue with the implication of this; she argues that the link between teacher satisfaction and their effectiveness is more interesting than feelings and motivation; she argues that it is about ways in which the nature of teachers' working conditions shape conditions for student learning. Perhaps the most significant way in which this link is manifest is in the extent to which the teachers' working environment, in terms of the organisational context and the nature of the professional culture, enable teachers to develop positive belief in their own efficacy.

It is noteworthy that Leithwood cites a study which identifies the kinds of working environments associated with teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004). These include 'participation by teachers in decisions affecting their work' and 'collaboration among teachers'. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the report recommends that teachers should build their own professional networks and be proactive in relation to their own professional development. The recommendation that teachers should 'expect effective leadership from your administrators' (p. 76) is not accompanied by any proposal that teachers should themselves exercise leadership. What this neglects is the possibility that how we conceptualise school leadership is a crucial determinant of the way we conceptualise how teachers develop professionally.

Distributed leadership and teacher leadership

A distributed leadership perspective recognises that leadership involves collaborative and interactive behaviour through which organisations are maintained, problems are solved and practice is developed (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004; MacBeath, Waterhouse and Oduro, 2004, Spillane, 2006). A salient message of the OECD's 'Improving School Leadership' report (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008) was that schools 'need' distributed leadership. However, the implied approach was less helpful as this extract from the Executive Summary illustrates.

> *The increased responsibilities and accountability of school leadership are creating the need for distribution of leadership, both within schools and across schools. School boards also face many new tasks. While practitioners consider middle-management responsibilities vital for school leadership, these practices remain rare and often unclear; and those involved are not always recognized for their tasks.*
>
> (OECD, 2008)

The report goes on to discuss 'organisational structures', 'incentive mechanisms', middle-level management' and 'modifying accountability mechanisms'. The view of distributed leadership implied here is a restricted one, reflecting the situation in the UK where the concept of leadership has been tangled up with the development of schools' organisational structures. Roles such as 'Heads of Departments' and 'Heads of Year' were common in secondary schools in the 1980s and this pattern of organisational structures/roles has since been overlaid with roles such as 'Special Educational Needs Coordinator' (SENCO), 'Key Stage 3 Coordinator', 'Learning Leader' and the like. The National College for School Leadership has sponsored useful work on distributed leadership (Bennett *et al.*, 2003; MacBeath *et al.,* 2004), but its provision of training courses focussing on 'middle leadership' and 'emergent leaders' has tended to focus on building the capacity of middle leadership post-holders to manage their teams more productively (Naylor, Gkolia & Brundrett, 2006). Not only does this not guarantee the development of leadership of those middle managers, it also denies the entitlement *of all* teachers to exercise leadership and to develop leadership capacity.

Education International has responded positively to the idea of distributed leadership because of its potential to foster collaborative professional cultures within schools which can unlock untapped potential in teachers and in doing so, increases the capacity of schools to meet the needs of pupils and to enhance educational achievement. This is a contentious claim of course since hard evidence of a link between distributed leadership and measurable effects is lacking (Hartley, 2007), but recent studies are beginning to find positive links between collaborative forms of leadership and improved student outcomes (eg Hallinger and Heck, 2010).

Distributed leadership also has the potential to shift principals and their senior teams away from micromanagement of staff and towards providing developmental support for teachers. In this environment, a climate of trust between the formal school leadership and classroom teachers can flourish. So the idea of distributed leadership is appealing, but it carries with it the hazard of being interpreted as a strategy whereby principals simply distribute management responsibilities within their schools. A more helpful interpretation of distributed leadership is one where the school principal engineers the professional culture so that the capacity of teachers to lead is enhanced.

In contrast, a key characteristic of the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) project's view of distributed leadership is that all teachers are entitled, as professionals, to initiate and lead change, contribute to knowledge building and to have influence, both locally within their own schools, and more widely through collective action (Frost, 2011). It is essentially about voice, but not merely with teachers as the subject of consultation from above, rather it implies the right to set the agenda and to both create and validate solutions to educational problems. The ITL project's approach to teacher leadership invites teachers, regardless of rank, position or delegated responsibility, to join a programme which provides support in the form of tools for reflection and planning together with a forum where teachers can discuss and share their experience of leading innovation.

The secondary analysis of the TALIS data talks of professional development that is integrated in everyday school practice and encompasses teachers' roles in 'secondary processes' through which they make their contributions as members of 'modern professional organisations'.

> *This additional emphasis on secondary roles is also promoted as part of the modernisation of the teaching profession. They include teachers as researchers, as receivers of feedback from colleagues, as innovators, as active colleagues, as collaborators of principals, and as manifesting what is sometimes called 'teacher leadership'.*
>
> (Scheerens, 2010: 191)

This is where we see the joining up of an agential approach to teacher and school development with a view of distributed leadership that is not only more democratic in nature but also carries with it the potential to build teachers' self-efficacy and agency which enables them to enhance their effectiveness.

The role of teacher unions

It was intended that the research outlined above would enable teacher organisations to speak for teachers in terms that some commentators may be surprised by. Teacher

unions have always existed to represent and defend the interests of their members and it may be assumed that is about matters of salary, workload, performance management and the like. Bascia has observed that the negotiations between policy makers and unions have traditionally been locked into an industrial model where a concern for teacher's working conditions is seen to be at odds with a concern for teaching and learning (Bascia and Rottman, 2010). This negative view of the role of teacher unions is widespread. For example, one of President Obama's educational advisers, Geoffrey Canada, has warned the British Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, that unions can inhibit innovation (Vasagar and Stratton, 2010). In the USA the view that unions will always oppose improvement was fuelled by Myron Lieberman's book, 'The Teacher Unions: How They Sabotaged Reform and Why' which held that: 'Collective bargaining is inconsistent with democratic, representative government' (Leiberman, 2000: xi). There is no doubt that this negative view holds sway in many parts of the world, but it is open to question as Ben Levin pointed out in a recent blog.

> *A lot of education rhetoric these days includes mention of the supposedly negative impact of teacher unions on reforms. For a few commentators, eliminating union opposition is one of the most essential, or even the most single, most important component in creating improvement, while for many others it is part of the package. But here is an interesting observation. Virtually all the top-performing countries on international education measures have strong teacher unions, including Finland, Korea, Japan, Canada, Australia and others. Of course, such a relationship does not imply causation but it does suggest that there is no necessary conflict between strong teacher unions and good outcomes. More over, some countries or sub-national units that took steps to weaken the influence of their unions did not demonstrate any subsequent improvements and, in some cases, such as England, later had to take many measures to improve the situation of teachers to get an adequate supply and, thus, improve student results.*
>
> (Levin, 2010)

This is an interesting observation. It suggests the possibility that the concern for improving teaching and learning, and the concern to enhance the environment in which teachers operate, do not have to be in opposition.

We hope that the project reported here will make an important contribution to Education International's efforts to shape the debate about the future development of the teaching profession. As Ben Levin has argued, teacher organisations have an important part to play in enhancing the professional role of teachers. Despite the growing number of studies on teacher leadership and teacher self-efficacy, a policy framework for their promotion, which teacher organisations can draw on in discussion and negotiation, has yet to written. This research provides an opportunity for just such a policy framework to be drafted. It is hoped that the proposals within the completed study will trigger debate internationally.

SECTION 2
CONVERSATIONS WITH TEACHERS AND TEACHER UNIONS: THE METHOD

The overall purpose of this project was to collect data, the analysis of which would enable Education International to develop and put forward policy recommendations aimed at the enhancement of the teaching profession. The data was to be essentially qualitative, collected through a survey of and the views of two groups of people: a) teachers invited to participate in 'survey workshops' in a range of countries, and b) officials in a sample of teacher organisations.

The sample of teacher organisations was drawn from those Education International affiliates involved in its Research Network. The intention of the survey workshops was to achieve a reasonable spread of countries both developed and developing. The identification of the teacher unions was for a different purpose. The volunteers from EI's Research Network were those Unions which believed they had, or were working towards having, activities and organisational arrangements which enhanced their members' capacity to exercise leadership. Complementing this were semi-structured interviews with a small number of teachers from two quite distinctive groups in England; recipients of 'Steve Sinnott Fellowships' and alumni of the 'Teach First' programme. The Steve Sinnott Fellowships was a Government funded project which aimed to 'fund the work of outstanding practitioners who play the increasingly important role in schools of creating innovative external links and relationships to improve pupil aspiration and attainment' (www.outwardfacingschools.org.uk). The Teach First programme aims to put outstanding graduates into challenging inner-city schools and provides a Leadership Development Programme to support them.

The interviews with teacher union officials enabled comparisons to be made between their Unions' aspirations and the views and attitudes of teachers.

Semi-structured interviews with officials from the teacher organisations were conducted by telephone. All data collection activities were guided by a common set of themes.

- Teachers' leadership of innovation and development
- Teachers' influence in policy and practice
- Choice and judgement in matters of pedagogy
- Leadership of continuing professional development
- Teachers' roles in curriculum development
- Responsibility for relationships and communication with parents
- School evaluation / inspection
- Teachers' roles in assessment of pupils' learning

- Teacher performance assessment / appraisal
- The creation of professional knowledge
- Teachers' voice and influence
- Strategies and policies that would enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy

The questioning and discussion around these themes explored both the current environment as well as teachers' aspirations and expectations as to the scope of their professional roles. Focus group facilitators were provided with detailed guidance and the tools to support activities that would enable the participating teachers to reflect on their experience and articulate their views regarding their present circumstances and their hopes for the future.

The overall purpose of this survey was to enable groups of teachers to express their views about the extent to which teachers currently able to take responsibility, have influence and contribute to the leadership of the development of practice in their schools. The activity enabled teachers to express their views about the conditions that nurture teacher voice and influence, the extent to which teachers are consulted, and the strategies and policies that would enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy.

In addition to indicating the extent to which they currently have influence, exercise judgement and take responsibility in relation to the above, the workshop enabled teachers to indicate the extent to which they believe that they *should* do so. That is to say respondents were asked to indicate both actual practice and the importance to them of these practices.

Through the Leadership for Learning network the research team contacted collaborators who were asked to arrange meetings with groups of teachers (around 10) who would be willing to discuss and express their views about their professional roles and their aspirations in relation to their own professionality. Collaborators were asked to facilitate 'survey workshops' in which they would use a questionnaire (Appendix 1) as a tool to stimulate reflection and discussion as well as a data collection instrument. The main points of the discussion within the workshop would be recorded by the facilitators.

The questionnaire was based on the two-sided approach which explores both perceptions of actual practices and opinions about the relative importance of such practices. It consists of a series of statements against which individuals are asked in one column to respond to the question:

To what extent do you agree with these statements about your school ?

And, in the opposite column, the question:

How important are these things for you ?

Respondents were asked to indicate, with a number between 1 and 4, the extent to which they agree with the statement in the centre column. At the end of the questionnaire participants were invited to engage in discussion before responding to 2 open ended questions:

What do you think would enhance your self-confidence and belief so that you can make a positive difference to children's learning and wellbeing ?

What could policy-makers, managers and administrators do to enhance your professional self-confidence as a teacher ?

It might be said therefore that the written responses to these open ended questions are shaped by the collective view.

Workshop facilitators were also asked to make notes of the general discussion following the completion of the questionnaire. Where these discussions were held in a language other than English, facilitators supplied translations.

The invitation to participate was distributed to contacts across the world, including Canada and the USA, Australia, Hong Kong, a number of European and Scandinavian countries and the UK. After a period of 6 months we have been able to draw on data from the countries listed below in the table below:

Source of data	N° in group	Characteristics of the group
United Kingdom (Colchester)	12	Teachers in a secondary selective school in the state sector.
Greece	10	Secondary school teachers from a popular state school with a high level of student achievement.
USA (Los Angeles)	12	High school teachers who are enrolled in post-graduate degree programmes.
Macedonia	15	Teachers in state primary schools
Hong Kong	6	Teachers in state primary schools
United Kingdom (HertsCam)	32	Teachers in both secondary and primary schools including 3 headteachers
Denmark (FS/AS)	18	Teachers in state community schools with students aged 6-17
The Netherlands	12	Secondary school teachers
Denmark	11	Teachers in both primary and secondary schools
Bulgaria (Sofia)	12	Teachers in elementary, primary and high schools
Bulgaria (Veliko Tarnovo)	12	Mainly primary with some secondary teachers all participating in a teacher leadership programme
Turkey	15	Teachers in primary school teachers and subject teachers in elementary schools
Egypt	8	Both secondary and primary teachers from a variety of schools
TOTAL	**175**	

The groups of teachers who took part in this exercise are not representative samples of course. They are for the most part teachers who have connections with universities and other organisations which provide support for teachers. In addition, the fact that they were willing and able to participate suggests that they correspond to what Judith Sachs called 'activists' (Sachs, 2003).

The survey does not claim to be able to tell us what all teachers think, but the views of these teachers are helpful in that they illustrate the issues and challenges facing the teaching profession. Given the markedly different cultural contexts, it is noteworthy that there is a high level of consistency of response. For example when we look at the responses to the statement: 'Teachers influence educational practice and policies in their own districts/regions and nationally' we find that only 23% of teachers agree that this is the case, but the majority of teachers say that having such influence is either 'very important' or 'crucial'.

The views expressed by the teachers who participated in the survey workshops are reported here under the thematic headings. These headings were derived from a consideration of a range of domains within which teachers may take responsibility or be influential. These themes provide the structure for the account of the outcomes of the survey presented in the next section.

SECTION 3
TEACHER'S VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES

This section consists of an analysis of what teachers said in the survey workshops. It is organised under headings that correspond to the themes explored in the survey tool and the workshop discussions.

Teachers' leadership of innovation and development

The survey asked teachers to indicate what they see as normal practice in relation to the initiation and leadership of development both within and beyond their designated areas of responsibility. One of the difficulties here is that there may be many interpretations of the idea of 'development'. For some this may be the ad hoc trying out of a different teaching technique whereas others may interpret it as a planned and collaborative programme of innovation carried out over time. Nevertheless responses to the questionnaire and the discussions that followed indicate some broad trends.

Large scale or systemic innovation is generally seen to be something that is led from the centre and fuelled by expert advice and sometimes, research. However, the vast majority of teachers consulted think that it is normal for teachers to initiate and lead development in relation to their prescribed role. Levels of agreement with this point varied between 70 and 100%. This can be interpreted as indicating that it is acceptable for teachers to take steps to improve their own practice and, that it is acceptable that those with specific responsibility such as heads / chairs of subject departments, should exercise such leadership within their designated sphere of influence. However, when we asked the teachers about the idea of initiating and leading development work beyond their designated area, we see a quite different picture. Far fewer regard it as normal for teachers to lead change beyond their designated areas of responsibility. Levels of perceived actuality ranged quite widely. In the case of Greece only 20% reported that it was the case with a similar figure for the Turkish group. This is particularly significant because the Turkish teachers questioned were participating in a programme designed to encourage them to exercise leadership more widely. Higher figures in Bulgaria (79%) and Macedonia (80%) can be explained perhaps by the fact that the teachers in these groups teach in the primary or elementary sectors.

Is leading development work important to teachers? In several groups there was no equivocation at all about the importance of developing your own practice, but it is striking that, in some groups, very low value was placed on the idea of initiating and leading change beyond your own designated area. Both Danish groups for example indicated 80-90% agreement with the idea of developing your own practice but less than 20% support for the idea of leading change beyond your designated area. This

was in sharp contrast to the response from Macedonia where the figure was more like 93% agreement. This may suggest that the professional culture in Denmark emphasises teacher autonomy with the consequence that it might be considered impertinent to try to influence what goes on beyond your own classroom.

Teachers' influence in policy and practice

The survey questioned teachers about the extent to which they perceive themselves and their colleagues to have influence over policy and practice both in their schools and beyond in their districts and even nationally.

Again there seems to be a consistent pattern across the participating groups, albeit with some notable variations. About three quarters of the teachers indicated that they are able to exert some influence over policy and practice in their schools. This tells us nothing about the extent of this influence of course. An agreement with the statement may indicate merely that teachers are sometimes consulted by their school principal; on the other hand it might reflect a school environment where teachers are encouraged and supported in framing proposals and leading deliberative processes. One teacher from Colchester, UK answered the open ended question about what would support the sense of self-efficacy with the following comment.

> *Knowing that I can influence what happens in the school as a whole; knowing that I can collaborate with others, seek guidance and offer suggestions which will be valued.*
>
> (Teacher in Colchester, UK group)

What is abundantly clear is that, if the responses to the question about actuality indicates doubt about the extent of influence, the responses to the question about the importance of having such influence is unambiguous. For example, in the group from Hong Kong all teachers agreed with almost all from the HertsCam (UK), Macedonia, and Denmark groups agreeing. In the cases of UK and Hong Kong, the gap between their perceptions of the extent of their influence in school (67% in each case) and their aspirations (UK HertsCam 97% and 100% for Hong Kong) is particularly significant. This is an important gap because it supports the claim that teachers have an appetite for leadership. The discussion in these 'survey workshops' reinforced this, but the statements did not, as some policy makers might suppose, indicate that teachers simply look to improving their own material working conditions or reducing the intensity of their work, considerable as this may be; rather they seek to be more effective teachers as illustrated by the following comments.

> *More influence on curriculum and other aspects of the lives of children eg their social status, how to help them out when they have problems at home.*
>
> (Danish teacher)

> *The headteacher needs to provide the right conditions and opportunities for all staff to have an influence and to lead positive change in the school.*
> (Teacher in HertsCam Network, UK)

The linked question (Qu 4) which asked teachers about their current influence beyond their own schools got a mixed response. In the HertsCam (UK) group a third of teachers do not see teachers having influence in their region or nationally. In the accompanying discussion the following comment was recorded.

> *There is a sense of despair about the gap between policy and what we know and experience as practitioners.*
> (Comment recorded in discussion with HertsCam, UK group)

This picture is echoed in the responses from the teachers in Hong Kong, Denmark, Greece and the USA where there was similar levels of negative response.

Again the question of how important this is to teachers is crucial. The questionnaire responses indicate overwhelmingly that to have influence on the direction of policy at the level of the system is of the utmost importance to teachers. The percentages of those who answered 'very important' or 'crucial' are high, with 87.5% in the HertsCam UK group; 100% in the Hong Kong group; 93% in the Macedonia group; 83% in the USA group, and 80% in the Turkey group. Oddly there was a relatively low response from one of the two Danish groups and from the Netherlands group.

Choice and judgement in matters of pedagogy

In spite of a tendency in recent years for governments to try to influence pedagogy as well as curriculum, the survey indicates that the belief in teacher autonomy, at least as far as pedagogy is concerned, is alive and well. In most of the survey workshops the majority of teachers reported that they choose their own methods of teaching and learning. There was a different response from two of the groups (Colchester, UK and Greece), but these might be explained by the wording of the question which included the phrase 'in collaboration with their colleagues'. It may be that disagreement with the statement reflects the view that in some schools the classroom door remains closed and so the approach to teaching is considered to be a private matter.

As would be expected, the responses indicate that teachers feel very strongly that pedagogy is their preserve with not a single teacher disagreeing that having the freedom to exercise professional judgement about approaches to teaching and learning is important. Considerably more than half of the teachers who took part in the survey workshops rated the importance question as 'crucial'. In the light of these unequivocal responses it is unsurprising that it did not feature as a major talking point in all the workshop discussions or in the responses to the open ended questions. For most of the teachers

participating in these workshops, it is largely a taken for granted right to determine how you should teach, albeit within the context of being part of a professional team. What was clear however, is that teachers are keen to learn from each other as is discussed in more detail below.

The situation in Egypt is not clear cut. The responses to the survey tool indicate a reasonable level of agreement that teachers have choice about their pedagogy, but at least one person said otherwise. The facilitator's notes on the discussion included this.

> *Autonomy and freedom of the teacher inside the classroom was debated. One teacher mentioned that he tried to teach maths through games, as it was very applicable for the young age he was teaching, however, he was called to account and penalised because students must sit on chairs. From then on he stopped any innovative procedures.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Egypt)

This was a small group and it cannot be claimed that these views reflect the national picture. It was clear however that the Egyptian teachers questioned think that the freedom to choose your own teaching strategies is important.

Leadership of continuing professional development

In the survey workshops there was a surprisingly high level of positive response to the statement that teachers are responsible for determining the nature of their own professional development. This is open to interpretation of course, and for some, it could mean merely that they can choose which inservice courses to attend; for others, it could mean that teachers are able to have their own sense of direction without it being dictated by senior leaders in the school; for others it may simply mean that there is scant provision and so they have to muddle along without any expert support. In a few countries (Greece, Turkey, Macedonia), around half of the teachers disagreed with the statement perhaps because there is perceived to be insufficient support provided. In the open discussions Greek teachers said that provision for continuing professional development is restricted to 'seminars' which are provided centrally, outside the school, and which are mostly based on presentation rather than discussion, reflection and enquiry. They also said that there is flexibility as illustrated by the following comments.

> *The lack of certain structures gives to the teachers the flexibility to act alone and be inventive in order to cope with problems and to try new things.*

So, it may be the case that it is the lack of something which gives rise to independence rather than a provision which facilitates and enables teachers to set the direction of their own professional learning.

In the Netherlands, and in one of the Danish groups, it seems that responsibility for determining the nature of their own professional development is entirely the teachers',

but this is not necessarily a positive response. When we compare the response on the question of the importance of having such responsibility, the score is actually much lower.

A strong thread running through the discussions in these survey workshops is that, in the main, governments are not yet providing the kind of support that would enable teachers to steer their own professional development. This is illustrated by the following extract from the facilitator's notes in Bulgaria.

> *The general opinion is that teachers are more passive compared to other colleagues; there are no mechanisms for self-assessment and feedback. The assessment on their work and professional development is externally provided, and it has been through this current approach that they perceived the power and meaning of professional communication between themselves. The so-far existent practice for choice of professional development had not been based on specific personal needs and quests, but rather had been imposed on them by the Regional Inspectorate on Education and the Ministry of Education in the form of check lists of subjects, which had not necessarily been in accord with teachers' daily challenges.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Bulgaria)

Is it important to teachers to be in control of their own professional development? Most of the teachers we asked were in full agreement, with only one group, The Netherlands, being relatively lukewarm in their response. What is important to note here is that there is a substantial gap between the current extent of teachers' responsibility for their own professional development (76%) and their aspiration or desire to take such responsibility (94%). It has to be taken into account of course that teachers will find it difficult to put a value on such responsibility unless they have experienced a situation where they have been provided with support in setting the direction of their own professional learning and in pursuing their goals.

While there may be a high level of agreement that teachers are responsible for their own professional learning, and even more agreement that such responsibility is important, views about the extent to which teachers should play a leading role in their colleagues' professional learning is sharply contested. In the Hong Kong group for example, there was complete agreement with the importance of teachers leading each other's professional learning, but in Greece, no-one was in full agreement and half the group were in absolute disagreement. In the Bulgarian group, there was sharp division, with half the group rejecting the idea of teachers having a role in their colleagues' learning. This is particularly notable in that the Bulgarian teachers all belonged to one of the 'Active Teachers' clubs affiliated to the International Teacher Leadership project. This may reflect fundamental cultural differences of course, where collaboration is more highly valued in some contexts, but equally it might reflect the idea that to lead the learning of colleagues is to claim status or position which is illegitimate.

Setting aside this obvious lack of consensus on this issue, there is nevertheless a clear signal that teachers have a role to play in leading the professional development of their

colleagues. The teachers in the HertsCam Network group are enrolled on a masters degree course in 'Leading Teaching and Learning' so it is perhaps unsurprising that almost two thirds of them say that teachers do lead their colleagues' professional learning. However, when asked how important this is, a much larger number, 27 out of 32, say that it is either very important or crucial.

In the survey tool, there is a low level of reliability when it comes to interpretation of the questions, particularly when we take account of translation and the different cultural contexts involved. It is interesting for example to see how the discussion in the Colchester, UK group focused on one-to-one professional learning.

> *Discussion centred on the value of one-to-one mentoring in school-based professional development: the example of a 'remote mentoring' project run by a Head of Department (which videos teachers in the classroom and offers feedback on practice) was mentioned with strong approval. The fact that such provision is personal, practical, interactive and in short bursts makes it more valuable than any other type of CPD.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Colchester, UK)

Here they talk about 'mentoring' in which colleagues support each other's professional learning through a one-to-one relationship. In the case referred to here, the model is not as 'flat' as might be the case in the other UK context where a 'coaching' model is developing in which colleagues of equal status can pose questions for each other in a structured, facilitative process.

> *Peer support and collaboration helps us to develop our professional roles and self-confidence.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, HertsCam, UK)

Increasingly, it is recognised that some form of one-to-one approach to professional development is helpful whether that be peer-mentoring, coaching or simply reciprocal classroom observation.

Teachers' roles in curriculum development

Increasingly the aims and content of the school curriculum is dictated nationally, but there is still room for curriculum planning at the school level and, in some cases there is scope for local determination of curriculum content. There is also a difference between primary and secondary schools in that, in some countries, primary teachers retain control of curriculum content.

In the cases of Greece, Turkey and Egypt, teachers said that they had almost no part in curriculum development. This contrasts sharply with the response from the primary school teachers in Hong Kong and one of the Danish groups who agreed wholeheartedly that teachers do have a voice in curriculum development. It is evident that in some

cases, especially in the secondary school system, teachers have very little influence over what is taught, but they are in complete agreement that it is very important or crucial to do so. The gap between actuality and aspiration is keenly felt. This comment from the Greek group was echoed in other cases.

> *Teachers that have a long experience in classrooms do not have a role in developing curriculum. Teachers should participate or at least give feedback on the curriculum.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Greece)

Responsibility for relationships and communication with parents

Responsibility for relationships with parents is clearly an issue for many teachers and the question of whether teachers are responsible for maintaining relationships with parents seems to be linked to an issue about the extent to which parents and the wider community respect teachers as professionals. Responses to the question about whether teachers 'take the lead in establishing relationships with parents' are quite straightforward. Apparently, many of them (81%) do take this responsibility and even more of them (84%) think that it is important to do this. In Macedonia, Denmark and Bulgaria, the responses are very positive with considerable enthusiasm for this responsibility in Egypt and Turkey. This is an example of the comments noted.

> *Relationships with parents are cultivated by all the teachers….they try to be supportive and cooperate with the parents. If for example a teacher thinks that a pupil has emotional instability or learning difficulties, they usually talk about it with other teachers of the pupil, call the parents to share concerns with them and, if they are cooperative, they together try to find ways to help the student. The school tries to find the proper assistance and has taken many initiatives toward that direction. Sometimes parents trust more the judgement of their children and not the judgement of the teachers and take a defensive stance. The cultivation of good relationships and the cooperation with parents is crucial for the progress of students.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Greece)

The extent to which parents respect teachers and put their trust in them is illustrated by the above extract.

In spite of this generally positive picture, there are some interesting gaps between perceptions of actual practice and the importance of this practice. In Hong Kong for example the teachers say that it is normal for teachers to liaise with parents, but only half of the group members think it is important to do so. Similarly, in the Netherlands, teachers carry the responsibility, but without much enthusiasm. In contrast only half the teachers in Colchester, UK, observe that liaising with parents is part of the role but almost all believe that it is an important part of the job.

Teachers were also asked about their views about responsibility for relationships with parents being reserved for those with a designated role. In the majority of the survey workshops teachers reported that this is not how it is done with the notable exception of Hong Kong and Egypt. Some teachers expressed the view that parental liaison should be dealt with by those with special responsibility – in the UK, for example, this has traditionally been the preserve of the Year Head. This was the case in Egypt, Turkey and to some extent in Macedonia. However, most teachers were not in favour of this division of labour.

> *it is crucial that all teachers communicate directly with the parents – it would be much against Danish school tradition if only few teachers had a special responsibility towards parents.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Denmark)

There are bound to be some teachers who want to limit their professional activity to teaching their subject in the classroom, but the survey workshops clearly show that there is strong support for the idea that building a partnership with parents is a key dimension of the teacher's role and should not be the responsibility of a small group of experts. Limiting communication between teachers and parents is seen by many as part of a general lack of respect for teachers.

School evaluation / inspection

School inspection, along with the publication of 'league tables', have often been cited as the cause of unhappiness for teachers. In the UK there has been strong commitment on the part of policy makers to the role of Ofsted inspections although schools have also been encouraged to conduct their own 'self-evaluation' which is then moderated or validated by the inspection. Comments in the survey workshops in the UK talked of inspections as being destructive. The fact that school self-evaluation is linked to inspections in the UK is reflected in the high level of response to the survey statement 'Teachers play a key role in contributing to the external evaluation/inspection of schools'. There were a few detractors however which might suggest that not all teachers feel involved or consulted in the process of school self-evaluation. In some countries (Denmark, Turkey, Greece) there is a very low level of agreement which reflects either that teachers do not feel involved in the inspection system or that there is simply no system to be involved in.

Predominantly teachers want to be involved in the process of school evaluation. This is strongly felt in the UK, the USA, Macedonia, Hong Kong, Bulgaria, Turkey and Egypt. However, in the Netherlands and Denmark the picture seems to be quite different with relatively low levels of response to both the 'actual' and 'importance' scales. Here, apparently, teachers are not involved and do not feel the desire to be. In some cases the gap between the extent of teachers' involvement and their aspiration to be involved is stark. In Turkey for example, there is little teacher involvement but massive support for the idea that they should be involved. This is also the case in Greece.

> *The teachers would like to play – if not a key role – then at least a bigger role in contributing to the external evaluation of the school e.g. in deciding which topics should be evaluated.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Denmark)

Most of the teachers questioned reported that inspection is controlled by agencies external to the school with the exception of Greece but, as might be expected, in most cases teachers do not see the value of this. One notable exception to this is Macedonia where there seems to be complete agreement that inspections should be external but with a high level of teacher involvement. The key issue is one of respect as illustrated by this American teacher's comment.

> *I taught in Japan for a few months and was very humbled by teaching there – I was respected anywhere I went. I came back and cried at the airport because of the lack of respect that teachers receive here. I didn't see the difference until I removed myself from here.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator's notes, USA)

The teachers are not rejecting the idea of accountability or claiming the right to be entirely autonomous, but they are expressing a desire to be involved as professionals in the process of judging schools.

Teachers' roles in assessment of pupils' learning

There is no doubt from the teachers' responses to questions in the survey workshops that teachers regard it as their job to assess their students' learning. What is not so clear from the data we have is the kind of conception teachers have about assessment practice. For some, this will be a wide ranging set of activities which resonate with the literature of 'assessment for learning' while for some it may simply mean 'testing'.

Teachers seem divided however on the importance of assessment being their responsibility. In the UK it is said to be really important. The same is true in the US and in Macedonia. There is less enthusiasm for assessment in Greece, Hong Kong, Denmark, The Netherlands, Bulgaria and Turkey. This may reflect the view that teachers are required to assess students' learning but do not regard it as having educational value.

The question of the extent to which teachers collaborate to moderate and standardise their assessments of students' learning gets a very mixed response. In general teachers seem to be saying that it doesn't happen. The Bulgarian teachers and the Macedonians were the only groups to say that this happens to any great extent. However, it is clear that more teachers think that this should be the case and some of the responses show this quite starkly: in the Turkish group for example, only a third of the teachers reported that this happens but almost all of them thought that it should.

Teacher performance assessment / appraisal

Is this seen as 'performance management', as something done to teachers rather than a reflection of shared accountability where teachers' professional learning is nurtured?

Evaluating each other's performance is a strong feature of professional practice in the UK, Macedonia and Hong Kong. It is also evident to some extent in Bulgaria and the USA. In Egypt there is very strong support for the idea as illustrated by this comment from the survey workshop where the teachers were expressing what they wanted to see in the new Egypt.

> *Assessing teachers based on their performance and competence rather than years of experience, and penalising those who do not do the job well.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Egypt)

It is noteworthy that, where the teacher groups had been part of a teacher leadership programme - in HertsCam, UK, Bulgaria and Macedonia - there was strong support for the idea of teachers being involved in evaluating each other's performance. This can be contrasted with the case of Hong Kong where the teachers report that it happens a lot, but there is relatively little support for the idea. A similar contrast is evident in Colchester, UK, which sits oddly with the positive response to the question about teacher evaluation as a key dimension of supporting professional development. Here the teachers report that this is the case and that they are very keen that it should continue to be so.

The most striking pattern of response comes from Greece and Turkey. Here they say that methods of performance evaluation currently employed do not support professional development, but there is strong support for the proposal that it should do so. It is puzzling that the Dutch teachers did not seem to place a great deal of value on the idea that performance evaluation methods should support professional development.

The creation of professional knowledge

It has been said that 'knowledge creation and transfer' or 'knowledge management' are not well developed in the education sphere (Hargreaves, 2001; OCED, 2009) and many of the teachers questioned through our survey workshops were not at ease with this discussion.

There seems to be marginally more support for the proposal that teachers should build professional knowledge than for the proposal that it should be created through university-based research and authorities external to the school. In the HertsCam Network there has been an explicit discourse focusing on teachers as knowledge builders, so it is not at all surprising that the response in their workshop was that it is crucial that teachers build professional knowledge through networking and continuing professional

development. They were twice as enthusiastic as they were for the idea of externally driven knowledge creation. Similar aspirations were expressed within the Greek group which contrasts sharply with their observations that teachers currently play almost no part in knowledge creation.

One of the difficulties about engaging teachers in discussion about knowledge creation may be that so much is taken for granted about the nature of professional knowledge, how it is created and disseminated. If it is the case, as suggested above, that knowledge management is not a strength in the field of education, this could be said to be reflected in a low level of consciousness about the issue.

Teachers' voice and influence

Here the questions aimed to stimulate discussion about teachers' opportunities to have influence and the conditions which enable this. The responses to the survey tool were not very enlightening by themselves.

Taking the most familiar group as a starting point, we find that there was about a 60% level of agreement with the proposal that headteachers create an environment that enables teachers to have influence and that teachers are consulted on a wide range of issues. There is a much higher level of agreement (100%) as to the level of importance of these conditions. The same gap is evident with the Greek and Egyptian groups. However, this pattern does not repeat itself in all cases. In fact, some groups of teachers appear to be saying that being consulted is marginally less important than is reflected by current practice in their schools. This lack of clarity in the picture may well be because the idea of 'consultation' is in tension with the possibility that teachers might work in a school where the principal ensures that they are influential in a more direct way. To some, consultation may imply that all decisions are taken by the school principal with teachers' views merely taken into account as this comment from the Turkish group suggests.

> *They (teachers) are consulted, but teachers believe that it is for the sake of formality and they are not sure if their opinions are really taken into account. Thus they think it is not important to ask them since their ideas do not count. They even see this as a burden since they feel that they cannot influence the policy.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Turkey)

The question of how influential teachers are within their schools is important but what we also see coming through these discussions is the idea that teachers and school principals together, as professionals have limited influence within the educational system. These comments recorded on the flip chart in the HertsCam, UK group workshop expressed this succinctly.

> *We experience 'voicelessness' as a profession. There is a sense of despair about the gap between policy and what we know and experience as practitioners.*
> (Workshop Facilitator, HertsCam UK)

Strategies and policies that would enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy

The survey tool asked teachers to make written responses to two open-ended questions as follows.

> *What do you think would enhance your self-confidence and belief so that you can make a positive difference to children's learning and well being ?*
>
> *What could policy-makers, managers and administrators do to enhance your professional self-confidence as a teacher ?*

It may seem obvious that, given the opportunity to express a view, teachers are bound to mention a few basic factors that they believe impinge on their ability to do their job. Remuneration or levels of salary is mentioned frequently. This is highly significant for some because it reflects the relative standing of teachers in society. A low salary is seen by many as indicating a lack of respect and tangible sign of the low value placed on the teaching profession.

> *To ensure decent wages for decent work, at least in the national media to speak with respect for the teaching profession.*
> (Bulgarian teacher)

In some countries it is more practical than that; salaries are so low that teachers are struggling to manage their lives and avoid being distracted by the challenge of feeding their families. Many of our respondents linked the question of salary to funding for education more broadly, including the lack of resources for schools. This is an important consideration in any discussion about effectiveness but the focus of this enquiry was self-efficacy and self-belief.

A key issue for many teachers is the behaviour of pupils and the level of discipline maintained within the school and at home. Some feel that their sense of self-efficacy is undermined by difficulties of this sort, but the number of teachers in our survey workshops who chose to focus on this were few in number. What is perhaps more interesting is that many teachers talked about the importance of establishing collaborative relationships with parents.

> *Involvement of parents as partners and helpers in the work of the teacher, thus the children feel important and this affects their welfare.*
> (Bulgarian teacher)

For the teacher quoted above, it is a matter of collaborating for the sake of the childrens' education, but one of his colleagues made the link to the standing of the teaching profession in society.

> *Parents interested in pupils' discipline and readiness to learn; rising up the public prestige of the teachers.*
>
> (Bulgarian teacher)

The image of teachers reflected in the media was of concern to many teachers who feel that their self-belief is constantly undermined by negative portrayals which in turn affects the trust and respect accorded to them by government and parents. The following extract from the Egyptian workshop facilitator's notes shows the sharp end of this problem.

> *The lack of respect is also from the ministers of education, one of them said, "if I receive a complaint from a parent, I will put the teacher in jail". This statement alone shows how teachers are not respected within the ministry of education.*
>
> (Workshop Facilitator, Egypt)

Many of the responses to these open-ended questions focused on teachers' feelings about what they perceive to be a lack of respect on the part of society in general and government agencies in particular. Some clearly think that the policy makers are able to influence the way teachers are portrayed in the media.

> *(Policy makers) could create a positive and supportive picture of public schools in the press.*
>
> (Danish teacher)

Perceptions of the extent to which government listens to teachers or consults them are closely linked to teachers' feelings of well-being, as is illustrated by this somewhat exasperated comment from a teacher in Hertfordshire.

> *The school already does a huge amount but I would like policy-makers at government level to ask my opinions. I have never knowingly been asked for my ideas/ feedback/ consultation by any government! Do my ideas not matter to those at 'the top'?*
>
> (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)

The comment below builds on the one above and draws specific attention to the teacher's professional knowledge on which her judgement should be based.

> *My self-confidence and belief in making a positive difference will be enhanced by feeling that my opinion is a valued. Teachers are in close contact with pupils in everyday practice and thus have an immediate understanding of issues affecting the learning and well-being of pupils. Acknowledgement of this and consultation with teaching staff will empower a workforce with the confidence needed to drive development.*
>
> (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)

This lack of faith in the ability of teachers to make professional judgements is echoed by teachers' mistrust of the policy makers' agendas, driven as they are by political considerations. It is not just a matter of respect and teachers' well-being; it is claimed that, without the continuous interference of government, teachers would be able to improve the educational system. This Danish teacher shows a keen awareness of this.

> *Politicians should leave professional decisions to professionals. The school system shouldn't end up as part of an election campaign. If society, including teachers, could agree to paint a positive picture of the school system where we trusted in the things we do without the need to make changes all the time, it would give the teachers room to develop the whole system instead of having to put out the small fires that politicians set all the time.*
>
> (Danish teacher)

The theme is taken up by another Dane.

> *They could give school policy a rest and not change of rules and regulations every year, but give us time to try new things out for a couple of years. Changing too often leads us in limbo where we never really get to finish anything.*
>
> (Danish teacher)

This is expressed differently by this Bulgarian teacher who clearly wants to be consulted and to be able to contribute her ideas.

> *Inclusion of us, the 'ordinary teachers', in the development of documentation, criteria, state educational standards, curricula and textbooks; actually listening to teachers' opinion.*
>
> (Bulgarian teacher)

The pressure from the centre is perhaps felt more keenly by those teachers who inhabit a policy environment in which high-stakes testing has become firmly entrenched. In the USA, the discussion tended to focus on the more negative aspects of the No Child Left Behind policy which is experienced by some as pointless interference and bureaucracy, illustrated by this teachers' rather direct comment.

> *Leave me alone! Ninety-nine of my interactions with administrators deals with the paperwork they need to justify or defend their actions. This slows me down and isn't constructive.*
>
> (Teacher in the USA)

In the USA the term 'administrator' is perhaps a little ambiguous in that it might be referring to district officials or school principals. Elsewhere it is clear that teachers' central concerns are with the way their schools are run and, on the whole, comments are more positive and where critical, at least constructive.

> *I feel my school gives me opportunities to make a positive difference and supports me thoroughly with all development work. Collaboration and distributive leadership are high priorities in my school.*
>
> (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)

From the same network another teacher presents a useful account of what is required while implying that these ideal conditions are not yet in place.

> *I would like to feel part of a learning community where staff and students feel like they have a voice; where their opinion is valued and where there is a culture of shared dialogue. In such a community, there could be a shared vision, reached through dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and best practice. Staff and students could buy into it because they understand the point of the vision and feel that they have a role to play in achieving it. Being part of a staff body which values innovation in teaching and learning would free teachers to enhance teaching and learning in new and different ways.*
>
> (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)

In their responses to the open ended questions, teachers make very direct pleas to school principals to provide support and encouragement. Quite a number specifically urge principals to engage in professional development themselves and sometimes this carries with it the implication that school principals are not always in that position because they have the skills to lead a school. The comment from Turkey below indicates that, in some parts of the world, politics can be a factor in the appointment of school principals and this can have a knock-on effect in the way staff are encouraged and supported.

> *Teachers must be supported and appreciated without concerning their political ideas.*
>
> (Turkish teacher)

Of course teachers want to be free of political favouritism and to be consulted on matters of policy and practice, but in our survey workshops they have expressed a clear vision of the kind of enabling environment that leads to innovative practice and the improvement of outcomes for students. This teachers' call for enabling conditions is echoed by many of our respondents.

> *Conditions for sharing of good / working practices when working with students, parents and colleagues - informal meetings, forums, development of procedures for problem solving, introduction to various forms and means of teaching and communication. More incentives for teachers to be active in this process.*
>
> (Bulgarian teacher)

For some of the teachers questioned, a key task for senior leadership is to provide feedback. This is cogently expressed by this teacher who is not simply asking for the 'feel-good' of positive feedback.

> *I would be grateful to receive positive feedback about my work but it would make me even happier if I can get some criticism and instructions about how to improve weaknesses adding that it would be important that teachers' confidence to point out teachers' positive results and achievements.*
>
> (Macedonian teacher)

The traditional assumption here is that feedback comes from above but for many of the teachers who participated in our survey workshops, the key ingredient was the conditions that enable teachers to learn from each other. While many teachers called for better provision of what they are already familiar with - continuing professional development from 'the ministry' – those who had experienced school-focussed programmes of support for teacher leadership were insightful about the value of professional learning that arises from the sharing of practice. It was also clear that, in order for the sharing of practice to be at all helpful, it needs to be linked to a climate of innovation.

> *Within school, allow teachers the freedom to develop their teaching as individuals who have principles and values with the children's learning at the core, rather than focus on tests.*
>
> (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)

Here the key word is 'develop'. This is not a plea for freedom to carry on teaching in a traditional way or in the way that is most comfortable for a particular teacher, but a call to allow teachers to innovate, to develop practice. Through their responses in the discussions and in their written answers teachers have expressed the hope that policy makers will focus on enabling strategies. This simple comment from a Bulgarian teacher speaks volumes.

> *Encourage us through resource allocation and example to take charge of our professional lives.*
>
> (Bulgarian teacher)

The views expressed in the survey workshops were reinforced by those expressed in the interviews with Sinnott Fellows and Teach First alumni. An evaluation study of the Fellowships discussed a key requirement, that Fellows should undertake outward-facing activities. Fellows emphasised that such activities enhance students' engagement and attainment, but they can only be successful if teachers' autonomy and leadership is enhanced by the culture of the school (Bubb, 2010). In fact a precondition of successful outward-facing activity is partnership of members of the school community who have the confidence to lead.

> *the whole outcomes for everybody (are) going to be better if we work together in partnership…it's part of what I do - co-operation… it's also about motivating people to lead and each one of us…(is)…different…(in)… what motivates every person and every individual in school to be a leader…I am a passionate believer that every single professional in the school should want to lead, whether it's in the classroom, whether it's in the department, whether it's across the school, whether it's in the playground.*
>
> (Steve Sinnott Fellow 1, 2011)

This comment highlights the value of collaboration and the shared responsibility for leadership. Another Fellow talks about the relationship between creativity and

collaboration: creativity is in essence, leadership (Steve Sinnott Fellow 2, 2011). Also essential to creativity and creative leadership, according to the interviewees was student voice.

> *Once you give them…(a voice)…they start to feel like they are members of the institution and engaged and valued by the institution; you actually find you can get them involved and they are very very keen to be involved in the school…*
> (Steve Sinnott Fellow 1, 2011)

Interestingly, the Fellows tended to blame difficulties which school leadership teams experience on individual leaders 'living in caves'.

> *One of the most interesting aspects for me having worked in senior leadership teams is that in each of those teams that have had difficulties is that at some moment there's been an epiphany where people realise they need to look outwards to improve dramatically, i.e. get out of the cave that they've been living in, whether it's the history teacher in the history cave or the English teacher in the English Department cave, and it's at this moment where those schools have started to take off…where pupils' outcomes have started to improve where they suddenly realise they're not going to be able to solve all the problems themselves inside those four walls.*
> (Steve Sinnott Fellow 3, 2011)

The insights in this comment are multi-layered. A school's leadership team which does not look outwards but focuses entirely on internal school issues is in danger of not only cutting itself off from the richness an outward-facing approach can bring to the school's life and learning but such an approach isolates senior leaders from each other and by implication, teachers from one another as well. The effects on creative leadership at every level in the school of such introversion are self-evident.

The Sinnott Fellows' insights are complemented, perhaps unexpectedly given the continuing debate among some in the teaching profession, by those arising from the interviews with Teach First alumni and by the concepts behind the Teach America/Teach First initiatives. Describing the enabling ethos of her school a Teach First alumni interviewee expressed her expectations in the following way.

> *If you have a project you want to do they will listen to that and support you and help you see it through… our senior leadership will get us to write a pitch and to come along to their SMT meeting and (you) actually do it quite formally, so keep(ing) it extremely professional so that you feel that there is accountability there as well and actually they will trust you…and hand over responsibility to you …but then you knowyou will be expected to report back to the same meeting and debrief after the event…I think that's really important because it sets really high expectations of you whilst also giving you the freedom, giving you the responsibility… Our school is actively looking for ways to move forward*

> *and therefore any ideas are welcomed and put through a rigorous review process- it makes my working life enjoyable to do that.*
>
> (Teach First interviewee 1, 2011)

A second interviewee describes the excitement of creating a 'critical mass' of teachers who are able regularly to move away from the confines of their own schools to investigate what might collectively inspire them in other schools.

> *(As alumni)..fifteen…(of us)…from different schools will meet up and go to a school and spend the day and have a tour and sit down with the head and sit down with the leadership team and you might go back…(to that school). It's really important to see what other people are doing…you know that you've got a critical mass of teachers that want to do great things.*
>
> (Teach First Interviewee 2, 2011)

Both the Sinnott Fellows and the Teach First alumni are teachers who have been, in a sense, been publically validated as teacher leaders. Many are engaged in innovative activities, in schools which actively encourage new ideas, which they embrace as affirmations of their ability to show leadership. Are they typical of classroom teachers as a whole? The evidence from the survey workshops is that there are very many teachers who wish to engage with the question of how to develop their capacity to exercise leadership in their schools in exactly the same way as those who have been identified by schemes such as Teach First and the Sinnott Fellowships. The issue is one of opportunity and a provision of the right conditions, something which small scale schemes can point to but which cannot substitute for the necessary overall shift in climate.

SECTION 4
TIME FOR A COLLECTIVE VOICE FROM TEACHERS ?

What of the teacher organisations who have the option of encouraging and enabling teacher leadership? Bascia notes that teacher unions face a choice; either they inadvertently reinforce the status quo in which teachers are excluded from the decision-making that affects their working lives or

> *make a point of providing a range of different ways that teachers can participate in their organisations…rather than emphasising an orthodoxy in terms of the kinds of activities they sponsor, they make member interest and access a priority-for example providing a wide assortment of different professional development formats and topics…(and providing)…a range of leadership opportunities so that many different teachers can develop organisational skills and become involved and known to others.*
>
> (Bascia, 2008)

In the context of this study, Bascia's description of Unions as sites for teachers developing their learning and confidence to lead, marries with the concept of unions providing collective teacher leadership. It is these unions that provide the focus of this study. Leading officials or senior lay members of four teacher unions/federations in the United States, Canada, Norway and Australia were interviewed for this study. All four participate in Education International's research network. Questions focused on the same themes explored in the teachers' survey workshops.

'Teacher Leadership is a concept whose time has come'

All four respondents were unequivocal about the role they believed unions should adopt and had clear ideas about the nature of empowering leadership in schools. This comment highlights collegiality and distributed leadership as being good for schools.

> *The AEU strongly supports the concept of teacher leadership…the union's view is that schools work best when the principal acts, not in an individualistic way, but in collegial, supportive and co-operative manner, building relationships with staff and working alongside them as fellow educator(s)…it believes that a culture of distributed leadership contributes to principals' successful leadership….*
>
> (Executive member, Australian Education Union)

Here the representative of the National Education Association makes a useful distinction between teachers having formal teacher leader roles and the more general practice of teachers exercising leadership.

> *Teacher leadership is a concept whose time has come…for the NEA teacher leadership is not a new concept…in fact, before formal teacher leadership roles existed in schools, it was the teachers' unions/ associations that provided opportunities for teachers to lead and influence policy and practice outside of their classrooms… teacher leadership occurs when teachers, formally or informally take on roles that allow them to influence teaching and learning beyond their own classrooms…*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst National Education Association)

The Director of the Canadian Teachers Federation offers evidence from their own survey which supports the findings of this study.

> *The CTF believes that teachers should have a critical role in decision making within schools….the majority of teachers want to be involved in influencing external education policy-making…the National Survey of Teachers conducted by the CT confirmed this, (CTF 2010)…member organisations within the provinces seek to provide sites and opportunities for their members to discuss policies with a view to influencing education policy…*
>
> (Director, Canadian Teachers Federation)

The questions of consultation and teacher influence and the mediation that unions can effect were discussed by the representative of the Norwegian organisation.

> *Teachers' influence on national policies is mediated almost exclusively through the Union…sometimes teachers are organised in groups by employers to comment on proposed national policies but, almost always, the union is involved…(we believe that)…school principals should create the conditions that allow teachers to have influence…(in their professional work)… and that teachers should be consulted about a wide range of issues.*
>
> (Senior Consultant, Union of Education Norway)

All four unions are committed to encouraging and providing sites for their members within which they are able to become involved in influencing education policies which is the core business of the vast majority of teacher unions. Common to these unions is the belief that, as well acting corporately, they are in the business of enabling their members to influence educational and professional policies. Interestingly the CTF identifies the issues of greatest current interest to their members which include *social advocacy, child poverty, implications of immigration, and direction of public education policy.* However, another common theme that runs through these interviews is that teacher leadership and distributed leadership are interdependent concepts which provide the enabling conditions for their members to be influential in their schools. For these unions, distributed leadership is the preferred model which, according to one interviewee, has created conflict with a number of principals.

> *In recent years, a new principals' only 'union' has been set up with the tacit support of some conservative state governments including, for example, Victoria and W Australia…its focus is on increasing power to the principal and on reinforcing managerialism in all forms…this is coupled with a massive federal devolution agenda which has its model of the principal as a business manager where market forces dominate school-based decision making.*
>
> (Executive Member, Australian Education Union)

> *Indeed this account bears strong similarity with the direction of policy in England. Devolution of state education powers to schools is seen as synonymous with enhancing the powers of head teachers; 'at the heart of this government's vision for education is a determination to give school leaders more power and control…'*
>
> (Department for Education, 2010).

It is a policy which has found an echo with a leading headteacher and advisor to the Government in England. Sir Michael Wilshaw, who is now Chief Inspector for Schools in England, is reported in the Times Education Supplement, as making the following comment.

> *Take that scene in Pale Rider when the baddies are shooting up the town, the mists dissipate and Clint is there…being a headteacher is all about being the lone warrior fighting for righteousness, fighting the good fight, as powerful any chief executive…I'm not bothered about distributed leadership; I never use it; I don't think Clint would either…we need head teachers with ego…you see heads who don't use 'I' and use 'we ' instead, but they should…we need heads who enjoy power and enjoy exercising that power.*
>
> (Barker, 2011)

Wilshaw's comments about the need for headteachers to embrace ego and exert power are not unique, but come very much out of the Geoffrey Canada stable (Vasagar and Stratton, 2010). They contradict not only emerging evidence about the nature of the most effective forms of school leadership in enhancing the quality of education, but also emerging evidence about the importance of self-sustained teacher collaboration (OECD, 2011). The sense that teacher collaboration empowers and enhances teachers' capacity to lead, which was evident in the MetLife Survey and in the Sinnott Fellows/ Teach First alumni interviews, is recognised by teacher unions if not by Wilshaw and his colleagues.

The CTF encourages its members to collaborate professionally, for example. The NEA representative elaborated on the reasons for collaboration.

> *Teacher collaboration cannot be a matter of chance…collaboration is most effective when it is part of a school's daily routine…in addition it is not simply about teachers meeting in teams…the focus must be the improvement of student learning…collaborative teams provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in on-going enquiry…what do teachers know?... how do we measure that knowledge?... how do we help learners?... collaboration fosters an increased sense of professionalism for educators.*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

The respondent was optimistic, that in the USA, schools are increasingly creating collaborative cultures in which teams meet daily to share practice and discuss pedagogy and student progress. Barriers to collaboration were identified however, as illustrated by the following comment.

> *Many school administrators need to be creative, and many cannot overcome barriers to innovative timetable scheduling which would accommodate in-school and cr school collaboration…principals and other school leaders, who are committed to creating a culture of collaboration and continuous school improvement must also be committed to finding and scheduling time in the school day for teachers to meet…*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

According to the Union of Education in Norway, the gap between its aspiration for creating collaborative cultures in schools and the reality is marked. The sentiments below illustrate how a teacher union can play a part in the leadership of reforms in teaching and learning.

> *When teachers meet and collaborate professionally, it is usually to share information and administrative details and to make logistical decisions…the practice is not generally to share pedagogy…the Union believes that there should be greater collaboration in pedagogical developments...there is a real need to observe teaching…peer observation is not a feature in schools and is not very common…indeed most Norwegian school buildings are not built for that purpose…the Union believes that it is very important for teachers to become more collaborative in their teaching methods and to base debates on professional conduct in the classroom on peer observations.*
>
> (Senior Consultant, Union of Education Norway)

The UEN's promotion of collaboration highlights the importance of collaboration in teachers' own learning and its relationship to teacher self-efficacy. The OECD, in its Teaching and Learning International Study (OECD 2009), highlights teachers' beliefs that much of the professional development which has the greatest impact is collaborative. Teacher research was said to have the highest impact and informal dialogue to improve teaching, the third highest impact. It was noted however, that collaborative forms of professional development are not evident in all countries.

Developing teachers and developing learning

All the teacher unions in this study consider the provision of high quality professional development to their members as their core business; not simply as an essential service which is a key membership entitlement but as one which defines the ethos of their organisation. As the AEU puts it;

> *there is… little system wide approach to teacher development and learning as more and more responsibilities are devolved to the school level…the union's avowed aim is to restore a system wide professional learning community…*
>
> (Executive Member, Australian Education Union)

Along with the other unions in the study which directly provide professional development, the New South Wales Union registers many of its courses with the teacher registration authority, the NSW Institute of Teachers.

This vision of professional development is seen to be particularly practical in remote communities. Without provision by Australian Education Union, teachers in the remote outback would be left totally isolated from their profession.

> *The union's professional learning provision is particularly important for teachers in remote communities, particularly for newly appointed teachers…in these courses the union provides the sites for teachers to meet and learn from each other and indeed, professional development in their learning encourages teachers to become active more widely in their union …this is seen as vital for very remote communities which have enormous difficulties recruiting and retaining young teachers…as part of encouraging professional renewal in these communities the union is …(also)…trying to keep alive the teacher transfer system.*
>
> (Executive Member, Australian Education Union)

The AEU representative conjures up a tempting analogy in his description of the professional isolation of teachers, resulting from a combination of geographical remoteness and system neglect. The profession's isolation need not be triggered by geography but by conscious political agency in which hierarchical leadership leads to the balkanisation of the teaching profession (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992).

Nevertheless, as the AEU's approach shows, the void created by professional isolation can be filled by teachers' own organisations, their unions. In Canada, the CTF's own surveys have shown that their provincial affiliates currently offer more professional development for their members during the summer, where there is a higher take-up, than school boards, higher education faculties or provincial ministries. The popularity of this professional development is perhaps explained by the comment below.

> *Professional learning communities are encouraged...there is a strong use of teacher leaders who are experts in the curriculum field…(and because)… most professional development on offer to teachers is relevant to pedagogy or the issues and concerns that teachers are facing in school.*
>
> (Director, Canadian Teachers Federation)

The relationship of national systems and unions to professional development provision, even amongst the unions interviewed for this study is uneven. The position in Norway was outlined as follows.

> *Teachers have few, if any, rights to determine their own professional development…they have to seek agreement from their principals and the municipalities…there is a national plan for further education for teachers…funding is offered nationally and given to municipalities to distribute…there is no requirement on municipalities to spend the delegated money on professional development itself…last year, 4000 teachers applied for 2500 places for further education…but only 1500 were chosen…*
>
> (Senior Consultant, Union of Education Norway)

It is one of the main professional policy objectives of the UEN that there should be a more coherent national system for professional development involving teachers having the right to a given number of hours and days for professional development as well as an obligation to take part. In spite of this, there is no guarantee that teachers have equality of access to learning or that they are empowered to make choices.

Evaluation and testing

Amongst the four unions the experience of institutional evaluation is not as severe as that in place in England, where according to Gillian Shephard, a previous Secretary of State for Education in England, there is a unique hard-edged model. That does not mean to say that the testing systems, designed for use both at the pupil level and for comparative use at school level, have not been fiercely opposed. Indeed the Australian Education Union found that its threats to boycott Federal Government proposals drew strong support from principals who saw their roles being undermined because the principal was being cast as:

> *a business manager where market forces dominate school based decision-making…one example of the AEU's principals finding common cause with AEU classroom teacher members was…(by)…boycotting national…tests in opposition to league tables…the principals showed strong support for the union despite threats of dismissal and other disciplinary action.*
>
> (Executive Member, Australian Education Union)

For the other unions the existence of such a testing system to evaluate schools has been a cause of irritation as have other forms of school evaluation.

> *Municipalities usually just want test result numbers…they do not want a whole picture of schools…the evaluation of the school is conducted through principals who provide information on forms, both to municipalities and government…the use of visits by school inspectors to schools is not common…school self-evaluation is set out in regulations but is ignored, both by principals and municipalities…*
>
> (Senior Consultant, Union of Education Norway)

Forms of self-evaluation characterise institutional evaluation in Canada but they involve similar forms of external information gathering as those in Norway.

> *In Canada, within the provincial jurisdictions, there are few external inspectors…the school boards have the responsibility for accountability and solicit the views of stakeholders…this often involves separate questionnaires…the boards plan a regular schedule of evaluations and the results are kept internal to the Board where personnel issues are discussed.*
>
> (Director, Canadian Teachers Federation)

Again, concern at the disempowering nature of externally required tests causes more concern than other forms of school evaluation.

> *Teachers generally take responsibility for assessment, however, external standardised testing regimes are now playing a larger role, impacting on the autonomy of teachers…*
>
> (Director, Canadian Teachers Federation)

> *For the NEA the use of external tests (is) an, albeit, irritating fact of life and a consistent nation-wide approach to accountability was non-existent …it is worth remembering that, within the US, there are 15000 school districts… all those districts have different forms of accountability…the only true accountability mechanisms at the Federal level is the 'No Child Left Behind' Act… (which offers federal education funding to States in exchange for states showing that they have accountability mechanisms for student achievement).*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

The curriculum - an engagement not joined

All four unions have policies which foster the active engagement of their members in curriculum reform and engagement with parents. In relation to the curriculum, respondents were downbeat in their attitude towards whether their members could be at the leading edge of shaping curriculum reform. The UEN representative, for example, while believing that it is; *very important for teachers to contribute to curriculum development in their schools and in collaboration with their colleagues,* nevertheless questions *whether teachers have the confidence, competence and time to develop the curriculum*. The CTF Director acknowledged that teachers are heavily engaged with provincial governments in writing curricula albeit within frameworks determined by the ministry, admits that unions can *slow the pace of curriculum reform…but not always…alter curriculum reforms fundamentally.*

In a country where the curriculum debate rarely raises its head except in the religious and moral spheres, it hardly surprising that the NEA appears not to see curriculum reform as providing a site for teacher leadership. The AEU sees longstanding teacher involvement in shaping the curriculum at state level threatened by Federal attempts to impose a minimalist centralised curriculum which will involve *very little tangible involvement of classroom teachers*. Indeed the AEU representative sees the move towards a federal curriculum as symbolic of a wider trend towards removing the agency and power of teachers to influence their lives professionally.

> *The move towards a federal curriculum signifies a growing centralising trend on the curriculum…(and on)… evaluation, narrow testing and assessment combined with a reciprocal devolution of power to principals.*

Parents - a new contract ?

All unions saw the initiation of productive relationships with parents as being primarily the responsibility of teachers.

> *Both teachers and principals make initial contacts with parents…teachers take the lead in relation to school counselling, and can take the initiative if a child is struggling…the CTF would expect this level of professional responsibility.*
>
> (Director, Canadian Teachers Federation)

The AEU has elevated the expectation of professional responsibility to an overarching, policy position which envisages parents as a powerful political ally in promoting and protecting education and teachers' professionalism.

> *There is a strong tradition of establishing a positive relationship with parents…indeed the union believes that a social contract should exist between parents and teachers…such a contract should cover a range of issues…this is vital as the uni believes that parents are public education's and teachers' most powerful advocates…the issue is not one of parents controlling teachers but one of how to secure a working partnership.*
>
> (Executive Member, Australian Education Union)

Standards - whose standards?

There was a consensus among the four unions as to their role in enhancing the professional self-efficacy of their members. In one area however, the NEA had gone further than the other Unions and that is in the area of developing teacher leadership standards. Although the AEU has played a central role in developing teaching standards at a federal level, both the NEA and its companion union, the AFT have taken a lead involvement in the US Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium which, from an independent position, has sought to define, through a set of standards, the nature of teacher leadership. The NEA, emphasises that the intention of the standards is not to set out a taxonomy of individual hoops through which teachers are expected to jump.

> *The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, (of which the NEA is a member), did not see the standards becoming a rubric or check-list…we viewed the standards as a series of broadly stated expectations or domains that define the critical elements of teacher leadership and would encourage professional conversations about what teacher leadership is.*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

Indeed the standards are seen as an encouragement for teacher discussion as to what kind of competencies they should gain and on the kind of professional development they should receive.

> *The development of a set of standards for teacher leadership was to encourage professional discussions on what constitutes the range of competencies that teacher leaders possess and how this form of leadership can be distinguished from, but work in tandem with, administrative leadership roles to support effective teaching and promote student learning…in addition, the standards could be used to inform the development of curriculum and professional learning opportunities to support teacher leaders' professional growth…they could also be used to develop higher education programmes…the last thing teacher leadership standards should be…(is)…a bolt-on to teachers' working lives and another set of boxes to be ticked-they should be internal and organic to the lives of classroom teachers.*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

The NEA views the development of such standards through a practical prism and, in a sense, a link is provided between the professional self-efficacy focus of the NEA's work and a more traditionally defined description of the role of a teacher union.

> *Teacher leadership opportunities could be a way of enhancing teacher compensation…such opportunities should not be viewed as a substitute for adequately compensating teachers…all teachers should receive professional salaries…however, teachers who take on additional responsibilities or leadership roles should receive additional compensation…teacher leadership supports career ladders and professional growth for teachers and offers a solution to the issue of teaching being seen as a flat career.*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

Indeed the NEA respondent expressed the view that teacher leadership addresses issues equal opportunities.

> *…teacher leadership creates a tremendous range of opportunities for women…(it)…seeks to address the issue of how to retain talented teachers in the profession.*
>
> (Senior Policy Analyst, National Education Association)

SECTION 5
CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A POLICY FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study was to provide evidence to support the development of a policy framework focused on the development of the professional capacity of teachers. Levin's thesis outlined in Section 1 above, that strong, pro-active unions are an important component of systemic improvement, is reinforced by the interviews with representatives of the unions/union federations selected for this study. If the views expressed by the teachers who took part in this study are taken as a benchmark, then the descriptions by the union interviewees of their approaches to enhancing teacher leadership are clearly in synergy. Bascia's (2008) description of 'what teachers want from their unions'- e.g. professional development and learning, establishing the right to participate in decision making, articulating and promoting a positive professional identity - matches the approach of the unions represented in this study. Not all unions currently choose to adopt this role, but clearly the evidence is that they have the capacity to do so. The ideas that teachers in this study put forward about enhancing their roles could contribute to the development, by unions, of practical strategies to enhance the processional capacity of teachers.

Enhancing the professional capacity of teachers

The teacher unions consulted in this study take two broad approaches to enhancing the professional capacity of their members. One focuses on professional issues which are the subject of dispute with the state as a means of enhancing the collective voice of teachers. The AEU's dispute with the Australian Federal Government is an example of this. Another focuses on targeting areas of provision and policy which make such a difference to teachers' lives and for which there is a need as evidenced by this study. The most obvious of these areas is the provision of support for professional development which, for some unions, has a wider policy purpose: that of enhancing the professional community and professional self-confidence of teachers. Indeed it has been argued that continuing professional development should be seen as a dimension of educational reform and innovation rather than as discrete training or personal development programmes (Frost, 2012).

The concept of teachers' working conditions needs redefining such that it can include the factors that enhance teachers' self-efficacy (Leithwood, 2006). This implies the value of enhancing the capacity of teachers to lead professionally, which is certainly reinforced by the evidence gained from the interviews with the teachers and the teacher unions in this study. The argument that teachers should shape their own professional lives in schools, and that their professional voice should be heard both individually and collectively, is now taking centre stage. The reasons for education systems encouraging high levels of individual self-efficacy are powerfully made in the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Study (OECD, 2009).

While recognising the limitations of the survey on which this report is based, there seems to be sufficient grounds to be able to identify a number of recommendations for policy makers to consider. These seven points are put forward as dimensions of an enabling policy environment.

1. Policy should lead to the provision of opportunities and support for teachers to exercise leadership in the development and improvement of professional practice.
2. Policy should seek to establish the right to be heard and to be influential at all levels of policy making including the content and structure of the curriculum.
3. Policy should protect and enhance teachers' right to determine how to teach within the context of collegial accountability.
4. Policy should support teachers in setting the direction of their own professional development and in contributing to the professional learning of their colleagues.
5. Policy should recognise the key role that teachers have to play in building collaborative relationships with parents and the wider community.
6. Policy should promote the role of teachers in pupil assessment, teacher appraisal and school evaluation.
7. Policy should enable teachers to participate in activities which lead to the creation and transfer of professional knowledge.

Support for these recommendations can also be drawn from many others sources. For example, evidence from a recent mass survey of teacher attitudes in the United States confirms the arguments that system wide improvement depends on enhancing teachers' voice. The benefits that teachers themselves say accrue from being involved integrally in determining practice and policies include: 'increased teamwork and collaboration among teachers', '(getting) policy in sync with best practices,' and '(putting) students first, creating more benefits to the students' (MetLife, 2010). This indicates a deep felt desire to influence proactively the discourse about what works in teaching.

Some policy makers will take a lot of convincing that teachers have the appetite or the capability to enact their professional lives in the ways referred to above. However, persuasive evidence is provided by a recent study 'non-positional teacher leadership' in 15 countries. The evidence presented there supports the view that:

> *…teachers really can lead innovation; teachers really can build professional knowledge; teachers really can develop the capacity for leadership, and teachers really can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. However, what is abundantly clear is that teachers are only likely to do these things if they are provided with appropriate support.*
>
> (Frost, 2011: 57)

The concept of *teacher leadership* carries the potential for focusing on a range of activities and conditions which enhance the professional capacity of teachers.

Teacher leadership and professional capacity

Teacher leadership has been promoted as a key lever in educational reform for many years, particularly in the USA. Notable milestones in the literature include: '*Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership*' (Little, 1988), '*Teacher Leadership: What are we learning?*' (Lieberman, 1992), '*Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders*' (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 1996), '*Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*' (Crowther et al., 2002) and '*Teacher Leadership*' (Lieberman and Miller, 2004). A recent breakthrough, referred to in the previous section, is signalled by the publication of the set of model standards for teacher leaders by the '*Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium*' in the US. The standards proposed are organised into seven domains.

The domains of competence for teacher leaders

- Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning
- Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning
- Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement
- Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning
- Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement
- Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community
- Advocating for student learning and the profession

The consortium's approach is to provide a voluntary structure and a vehicle by which teachers can be involved in using the standards for discussion and for measuring their professional growth is both exciting and challenging to those who see the development of teacher leadership as not being defined by an explicit consensus on standards. Consortium affiliation includes the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

However the assumption running through most of the work referred to above is that some teachers will also be selected and designated as teacher leaders. This is in contrast to the approach adopted in the International Teacher Leadership project which assumes that leadership is an essential dimension of teacher professionalism.

> (Teacher leadership) ….whereby teachers can clarify their values, develop personal visions of improved practice and then act strategically to set in motion processes where colleagues are drawn into activities such as self-evaluation and innovation. This approach rests on the assumption that the enhancement of human agency within a culture of shared responsibility for reform and the outcomes for all students is essential for learning for all members of learning communities.
>
> (Frost, 2011: 10)

Whether the emphasis is on the work of teacher leaders or on the exercise of leadership on the part of all teachers, there is nevertheless a degree of consensus that

educational reform demands that teachers need to be empowered and enabled to be influential.

The OECD's Background Report for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (OECD, 2011) also provides strong implicit backing for the concept of teacher leadership when it quotes from a report on a meeting of the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO about teachers.

> *The basic prerequisites for dialogue are a democratic culture, respect for rules and laws, and institutions and mechanisms that permit individuals to express their views individually or collectively through unions or associations on issues that affect their daily lives on both a personal and professional basis…this implies respect for professional freedom and the active participation of individual teachers in deciding a range of professional issues - curricula, pedagogy, student assessment and issues relating to the organisation of education.*
>
> (ILO/UNESCO, 2006: vi)

The Report also emphasises the importance of institutional arrangements which:

> *provide a forum for policy development and, critically, a mechanism for profession-led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, teacher induction, teacher performance and career development.*
>
> (OECD, 2011, Ch 4)

If teacher voice and leadership are essential to sustained and embedded educational reform then the establishment of institutional and structural arrangements are an important prerequisite to enabling teachers' voices to be heard. The collective voice and collective self-efficacy are vital. Whatever those arrangements might be; whether they involve teacher unions, subject associations or professional councils, it is important that such arrangements are owned by the teaching profession itself.

Individual voice or collectivity?

High levels of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs correlate positively with high levels of student achievement, according to Leithwood (2006), but the same report also highlights the role of collective self-efficacy. It is worthwhile to consider the role of organisations representing teachers, such as subject associations and unions, in enhancing the capacity of teachers to show professional leadership (Bangs, 2011). Such organisations can undertake not only to support the development of teachers' professional capacity, but also to promote teachers' professional pride and enhance their sense of collective self-efficacy. They can enhance the capacity of teachers, as individuals and collectively, to exercise leadership, both in and beyond their own schools. Teacher unions exercise leadership on behalf of teachers but can also empower their members as individuals to act strategically on initiatives which may be driven by values and principles not necessarily in line with current policy.

> *The collective agency of teachers' own organisations can provide national professional communities in which teachers can both enhance their learning and contribute to the formation of teacher policy.*
>
> (Bangs and MacBeath, 2012:)

This links to Levin's argument, already referred to, that the collective voice of teachers is embedded in many outstanding education systems.

> *Virtually all the top performing countries on international education measures have strong teacher unions…. (and while) …this does not imply causation…there are good logical grounds for thinking a positive relationship might exist…*
>
> (Levin, 2010)

The OECD goes even further, emphasising that the teaching profession and its organisations are a vital component of education reform.

> *The chances for success in reform can improve through effective consultation, a willingness to compromise and, above all, through the involvement of teachers in the planning and implementation of reform…the fact is that many of the countries with the strongest student performance also have strong teachers' unions and the better a country's education system performs, the more likely that country is working constructively with its unions and treating its unions as trusted professional partners.*
>
> (OECD, 2011)

Indeed, Fullan is critical of teacher policies in specific countries which fail to engage the teaching profession. Quoting the OECD, Fullan argues that:

> *unless the US and Australia back off low-trust strategies, and start engaging the profession in the solution… (OECD ibid)… they will get neither the commitment nor the skills sufficient for whole system success.*
>
> (Fullan, 2011)

The outcomes of the International Summit referred to above make it clear that teacher unions are prepared to engage in the development of teacher policies on the basis of equal partnership with governments whilst recognising that some governments take the view that unions inhibit rather than promote reform. In this respect, the OECD's report draws strongly on the evidence that teacher unions are essential to successful education reforms and supports social dialogue while warning that it 'remains a fragile process in decision making in most countries' (OECD, 2011 p.60).

While no teacher union can afford to be anything other than dispassionate about the opportunities available to it, it is undoubted that the policy climate has shifted internationally towards giving teacher unions substantial policy and evidence support where they seek partnership in creating teacher policies. However, this debate cannot take place without recognising the effects of government financial cuts on public services and the way that this has fuelled the tendency by some governments to deconstruct education as a systemic service, for example in England. For teacher unions this

opens up a range of paths which do not necessarily have to be contradictory. The first path naturally is to focus on protecting education as a national service. Within that, the evidence is that the most powerful arguments include highlighting the importance of countries maintaining and enhancing highly qualified professional communities of teachers. This argument points to Governments, in partnership with teacher unions, creating strategies for their countries' teaching professions which enhance teachers' capacity 'to decide (on) a range of professional issues', to quote the OECD. In short, it argues for teacher policies within those strategies to promote teachers' professional leadership within their schools and within education systems. This places a high responsibility on teacher unions. The evidence from our study is that teacher unions can provide the confidence and conditions for promoting teachers' professional autonomy and leadership. Teacher unions can both provide high quality professional development and can offer leadership in terms of policy for professional development. Teacher unions can and do promote evidence-based policies on the curriculum, assessment, standards, pedagogy, and evaluation, for example, and crucially provide the sites for their members to discuss and contribute to those policies.

In the most unlikely circumstances, given the current financial crisis, we believe that there are now significant new opportunities for teacher unions in Education International to enhance teachers' efficacy, voice and leadership in the areas set out in our study and to ensure that teachers' voices are heard in the process of educational reform.

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