

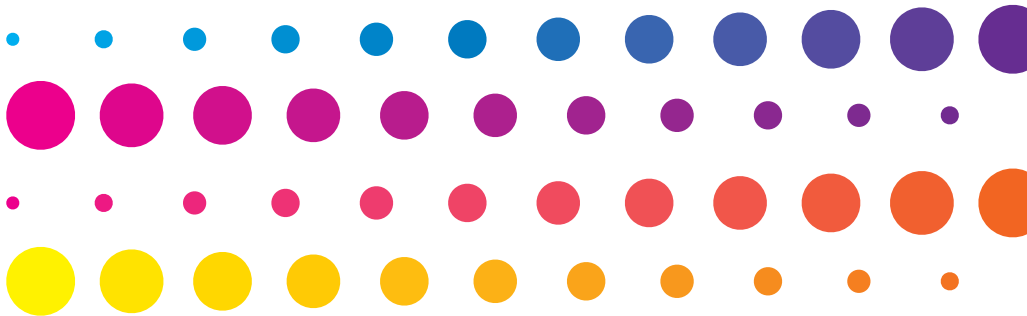


Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
THE SCHOOLS NETWORK™

Leading system redesign – 2

The changing profession

Sue Williamson
November 2008



Leading system redesign – 2

The changing profession

Author

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Mission of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust works to give practical support to the transformation of secondary education in England by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community.

THIS PUBLICATION

Audience

Headteachers and educational practitioners at all levels

Aims

To show the vital interaction between the changing roles of school leaders and the redesign of school systems

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1 Introduction

There has never been a better time to be in education.
We are in a renaissance period for school leaders.
Paul Tarn, Headteacher, Harrogate High School

The first decade of this century has witnessed the beginning of the end for the autonomous school. Initiatives such as Every Child Matters and the 21st century outward facing school are driving a level of collaboration unheard of even a few years ago. We have seen headteachers creatively transforming the school workforce, innovating to redesign their schools and, in many cases, support the development of other schools. They have done this within a strong accountability framework ensuring that the students currently in school now are successful while planning and innovating for later generations. A core feature of the work of these system redesigners has been the identification and nurturing of the next generation of school leaders in a diverse workforce.

Our work with schools over the last four years has led us at the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to conclude that if we are to personalise learning for all students, we have to stop tinkering with 20th century systems and processes. We must radically redesign the system so that it is fit for the 21st century. In *System Redesign – 1*, the 20 basic building blocks of schooling that need to be questioned and then configured in a new way to meet the challenges of 21st century schooling were identified.

The five leadership reconfigurations identified are:

- Flatter, less hierarchical staff structures
- Distributed leadership
- Leadership development and succession
- Decision-making methods
- Student leadership

Although I will refer to student leadership, this is explored in depth in *Leading system redesign – 3*. The case studies in this pamphlet show how headteachers are creating different solutions to redesigning their schools for the 21st century and are taking advantage of a wider remit to work with other schools. The pamphlet examines the impact of one of the institutional reconfigurations – from single to multiple institutions – on school leadership and the wider range of opportunities that are now available to headteachers to lead system redesign. The teaching profession is also changing with the emergence of generation Y (see *Leading system redesign – 1*) and the embedding of workforce reform. Most importantly there is a new confidence within the teaching profession to share their practice and ideas, and to develop the science of learning and the art of teaching. To maximise the impact of these changes, headteachers have to review existing practices and structures, and, in many cases, make radical changes.

Recent system leadership initiatives such as the national leader of education/national support schools and the introduction of the role of executive principal give headteachers new challenges and opportunities, and help to keep them in the system. As the roles of headteachers are redesigned, this affects the roles of other leaders in the school or cluster, and leadership becomes more distributed.

For headteachers to be involved in one or more system leadership roles, and/or to create time to innovate, it is essential that the school has broad leadership capacity. This creates the conditions for more staff to be involved in leadership roles both within and outside their own school. It has implications for the training and development of leaders at all levels, with more training taking place on the job.

The distribution of leadership goes beyond the teaching staff. In *System redesign – 4* we saw how schools have tried to remove the academic/pastoral divide and how this has affected the structure and composition of the leadership team, with many postholders being non teachers. Increasingly we have seen members of the non teaching staff, such as the school business manager, joining the senior leadership team; and they are looking for further promotion and development. The diversity of professionals within the leadership of a school or cluster requires a different approach to professional development and training.

Schools are developing as professional learning communities. Meetings focus on teaching and learning rather than administrative matters; there is regular sharing and reflecting on practice and an emphasis on mentoring and coaching. The personalising learning agenda has meant that schools and practitioners are focusing even more sharply on classroom practice and developing a greater understanding of how children learn. This renewed focus on learning has affected the roles of both senior and middle leaders, for example some schools have heads of learning rather than heads of subjects. Students also are more involved in their learning and in the organisation of the school. In many schools students are part of the school leadership (see *Leading system redesign – 3*).

School leaders working on system redesign are distributing leadership at all levels. Many practitioners have been empowered to work on whole school issues at a very early stage of their careers. They may join the senior leadership team without the experience of being a head of department or head of year – the traditional career path for the current generation of headteachers. This requires training and development that supports new emphases on learning and leadership, as well as subject development. In the case studies presented here, the headteachers are personalising learning for staff as well as students. Professional development is personalised, often delivered in-house at regular intervals, and supported by mentoring and coaching. This approach places greater onus on school leaders to keep reviewing their staffing structure to ensure there are adequate opportunities and support structures.

This pamphlet explores how some school leaders are:

- Empowering teachers and students to redesign learning
- Redesigning schooling through a focus on personalising learning
- Redesigning leadership by unleashing the leadership potential of teachers and students and providing the support mechanisms and opportunities to demonstrate whole school leadership

The headteachers in the case studies have the following in common:

- They have adopted personalising learning as their school's strategic intent and recognise that learning has to be redesigned to meet the different needs of a child in the 21st century
- They are confident that they have the basic systems and processes in place to achieve excellence and are creative in developing the time and capacity to innovate and redesign
- They recognise that they must unlock the talent and energy of all staff and enable them to become imaginative innovators who will develop deep learning and influence the future redesign of the school
- They are prepared to take risks and will challenge some centrally imposed strategies, based on their strong moral purpose and a belief that every child matters
- They recognise the importance of networking at all levels

While the schools are at different points in their journey of system redesign, we will see in the case studies that these heads have created a culture of personalisation through co-construction, innovation and distributed leadership.

2 Leading system redesign within a hard federation

Headmasters have powers at their disposal with which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested.

Winston Churchill

The first case study is an example of how an executive principal is leading system redesign by working with four schools that are moving towards a hard federation. It highlights the different style of leadership and working required of an executive principal. The executive principal in this case, David Carter, has a strong commitment to personalising learning and has used the nine gateways and the four deeps to redesign learning within John Cabot Academy. He is now applying his knowledge and expertise to the other schools joining the John Cabot Learning Federation. The executive principal is also committed to identifying and developing leadership talent and is always seeking to attract the highest quality professionals to the federation. He has had to radically rethink his leadership role as he has moved from being responsible for one to three academies.

Case study 1: John Cabot Academy

How do you make a difference as an executive principal?

David Carter took over the role of executive principal (EP) of John Cabot Academy (JCA) and Bristol Brunel Academy (BBA) in April 2007, before both schools opened as academies at the start of 2007–8. At this point, JCA became the educational sponsor of BBA. Since then, a third school, Bristol Metropolitan College, has joined the federation, and it will become an academy in September 2009. The federation will be formalised into a single trust in 2009, called the John Cabot Learning Federation and sponsored by the governors and trustees of JCA.

David Carter is also a national leader of education (NLE) working with Maidenhill School in Gloucestershire, a school currently in special measures. The role of executive principal requires outstanding strategic and operational skills and this has retained and revitalised David's interest in school leadership, as he has been a principal for over 10 years in two successful schools.

He now plans his diary around a two-week pattern that enables him to spend seven of the 10 days in the three federation schools, a day per fortnight at Maidenhill, a day planning and evaluating and a day working outside the federation. The core role has four key areas:

- Identifying the best practice in the federation, celebrating it and then sharing it as widely as possible
- Taking the lead on assuring the quality of work
- Developing the next generation of leaders succession planning
- Generating income to fund innovation in the federation

Setting the context

David believes there are two approaches to the role of executive principal. One is to maintain what he describes as ‘a silent and hidden persona, working more from the shadows’. The other is to find a balance between being the strategic leader and the visible presence, which adds capacity to the leadership teams in the schools across the federation. It is early days at Bristol Metropolitan, but at both JCA and BBA the staff and most of the students know who the executive principal is and what his role is. It is vital that the EP does not compromise the position of the academies’ principals, and knowing when to step back is as critical as knowing when to step up. David believes that most principals, taking on an executive role, would want to carry on their involvement with assemblies, CPD, duties, doing some cover and other of the day to day tasks.

Bringing the core purpose alive

The EP is perfectly placed to look for and make judgements about best practice. This can be done by taking themes across the schools: sometimes these may be learning themes such as assessment for learning or student voice; at other times he will focus on a curriculum area for a month and get inside the skin of a department. This is followed up by creating structures for the departmental teams to work together, by sharing teachers, secondments or exchanges, or simply meeting to share ideas. From 2008–9, nine of the most effective teachers from the federation will work as a core teaching and learning team, developing the best practice into support programmes and logging the work so that it influences teaching and learning as widely as possible. In 2009–10 the next nine teachers will be identified and mentored by the cohort of 2008–9. If the federation continues to do this, it will build a critical mass of outstanding teachers who are coaches as well as practitioners.

In July 2008 JCA and BBA held their first joint conference, at which 150 staff came together to share their experiences. This will now be an annual event, and from 2009 staff from the federation will deliver all the workshops.

David has devised a system of accountability built around 10 key performance indicators (KPIs). Each has a clear focus – on student attainment, behaviour, attendance, student engagement, etc. Each is led by one of the federation's strategic leadership team, made up of the EP and the three academy principals supported by a federation principal. An assistant principal takes responsibility for getting accurate data on a regular basis to update the KPIs and supports each responsibility holder. In addition, one middle leader from each of the three academies leads on the KPI in their home school. This gets the message and the emphasis down into departments and away from senior leaders' offices. It also closes the gap and reduces comments that start with 'SLT want this by...'

David is confident that this quality assurance process gives him effective feedback on performance across the three schools regularly enough for intervention if there is a downward trend.

Developing leadership capacity

This is vital if the federation is to sustain the progress made in the first year. It should be able to find from within the next generation of assistant principals, vice principals, and principals and of course the next EP. The EP believes that while there is a need for high quality middle and senior level training, the most effective thing is to provide real experience of leadership work that prepares staff for the next level. Key factors are the excellent teacher programme outlined above, and the use of middle leaders within the key performance indicators structure.

One big advantage the federation has is that the three academies, along with Maidenhill School, which is only 25 miles from Bristol, are so close geographically. As a result, it is easy to place an AP in one of the partner schools and create either a short-term secondment or exchange. This could be due to the need for intervention work; this was very successfully done last year in one faculty area where the JCA faculty leader worked at BBA for four months while the faculty leader from BBA moved to JCA to cover his timetable without the leadership responsibilities. This gave the BBA faculty leader time to focus on his own teaching and to think about the strategy for his faculty when he returned.

Another way to create the leadership link is to create a joint focus for the exchange, or for setting up a new project. This could be flexible but the idea of 'commissioning' action research is most appealing to the EP, as it is new and fresh. How do boys achieve? How do you improve literacy skills? How do you integrate EAL students? These are three possible projects for 2008–9.

From 2009–10 it is the EP's aim to appoint a director of leadership development, who will work across the federation supporting leaders and teachers as well as support staff. This person will become the glue to bind the succession planning model together.

Income generation

To achieve some of the ambitious developments the federation has planned will require additional resource, which is why income generation has become one of the EP's core roles. The federation has agreed that from 2009–10, each academy will pay a per-student sum into a central budget, and will receive a dividend return at the end of each year based on additional income that comes into the federation. This additional income will come from consultancy, SSAT associate headteacher work, NLE work, National Challenge and SIP work and sponsorship. The EP's aim is to generate an annual income of £500,000 to support the central posts needed to take some of the work burden from the academies, while funding some of the joint curriculum initiatives.

Conclusion

The EP uses three indicators to determine the difference the federation makes over the next three years.

- All three academies will be oversubscribed and parents will want their child in the federation first and foremost, and be less concerned about which academy they are registered at
- 70% of the year 11 students across the federation will leave year 11 with 5+A*–C grades, and 55% will have these with English and maths
- The community of East Bristol will recognise that education has made a difference to their children and that their life chances are better than they would have been five years ago

David Carter is a very experienced headteacher, who has a well thought-out philosophy of personalising learning. This philosophy has enabled him to redesign schooling at John Cabot. The development of the federation has allowed him to share his knowledge and expertise with a greater number of staff and to develop the federation's leadership potential. John Cabot runs a programme of innovation days for other schools, and may be described as a producer of culture and knowledge as defined in *Leading system redesign – 1*. The innovation days are led by different staff and are good indicators that the staff have been empowered to redesign learning.

Crucially, David Carter recognised quickly that he could not work in the same way as when he was the principal of just one academy. He has redesigned his role not for administrative convenience but to enable him to identify best practice and support the focus on deep learning. His experience of working with the governing body at JCA has led him to apply business methodology for strategic leadership.

Like many headteachers and principals he is developing as an entrepreneur, as described by Joseph Schumpeter: 'He or she feels the dream and the will to found a private kingdom. Then there is the will to conquer: the impulse to fight, to prove oneself superior to others,' to succeed for the sake of it, not for the fruits of success... 'Finally, there is the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply of exercising one's energy and ingenuity.'

Working with a group of schools enables the executive principal to be creative in establishing new posts, such as head of leadership development. Such posts can have major impact not only within the federation but, by collaborating with other clusters and organisations, in the wider system.

The development of the John Cabot Federation raises issues about governance. At the moment, the John Cabot Academy as the educational sponsor of the Bristol Brunel Academy has the majority of nominees on the Bristol Brunel Academy governing body (seven nominees on a governing body of 13). As the federation develops, governance issues will need to be addressed, including who will make the strategic decisions for the federation? With the increasing variety of collaborations, there needs to be a radical rethink of governance structures within the system.

The federation has a strong focus on teaching and learning and is using outstanding practitioners to mentor other colleagues. The pool of mentors is being increased each year and they will broaden their experience by working across the federation. The executive principal is creating a teacher learning community – a type of network strongly advocated by Professor Dylan Wiliam. They:

- Contradict teacher isolation
- Reprofessionalise teaching by valuing teacher expertise
- Deprivatise teaching so that a teacher's strengths and struggles become known
- Provide a steady source of support for a struggling teacher
- Grow expertise by providing a regular space, time and structure for systematic reflection on practice
- Facilitate sharing of individual teachers' untapped expertise
- Build on the school's collective knowledge base

Professor Wiliam recognises that it takes time and a lot of practice to undo old habits and to become effective in delivering in a more effective way. The executive principal in this case has been able to plan strategically across the federation to develop the talent pool and to use it to develop other practitioners.

The national system redesign network enables John Cabot Learning Federation, working on both a formal and informal basis, to access the best thinking and practice in designing schooling for the 21st century.

Questions

1. Are the KPIs proposed by David Carter the ones you might use in your school? Are there any you would add? Is this the right way to monitor the progress of a school and/or a federation of schools?
2. As executive principal, what issues would you step forward to deal with and on which issues would you step back?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working as a site principal within a federation of schools?
4. How would you plan to replace the executive principal? How is your school succession planning?
5. What would be your approach to establishing a teacher learning community?

3 Leading system redesign by distributing leadership

Enterprises which thrive in the information-rich economy tend to image their personnel in new ways. The enterprise and its members are flexible; they can make quick, strategic decisions; they encourage innovation and entrepreneurship; they value creativity rather than conformity; they give members the power to take local decisions and to exercise initiative; and they regard the people in the organisation as partners rather than property.
Professor Hedley Beare

The next case study shows how the executive principal of Outwood Grange College (OGC) has been able to offer additional leadership opportunities by partnering another school that was experiencing difficulties. OGC is an 11–18 years, mixed comprehensive of over 2,200 students. It is a high performing specialist school and in November 2006 was described by Ofsted as outstanding in every category. The governing body of OGC appointed Michael Wilkins as executive principal, so that he could drive the strategic direction of the college to becoming world class and could contribute to the education agenda regionally, nationally and internationally. The story of OGC's journey to personalise learning for all students is described in *The Deeps in Action* – but the key points from the case study that apply to this pamphlet are:

- Putting students first – ie organising the school around the needs of the students rather than the staff
- Developing leadership capacity and succession planning
- A stage not age approach to appointments
- Developing the college as a professional learning community

The structure of the leadership team at OGC has been designed to increase leadership capacity and to fast track outstanding practitioners into leadership roles. All vice principals follow a very systematic mentoring and coaching programme, are exposed to everything the principal has to deal with and have the freedom to lead on a number of major whole college initiatives. This enables them to experience the breadth of issues that have to be dealt with by a headteacher. They are able to perform at the highest level, knowing that support is simply a telephone call away, or indeed a visit at short notice from the experienced executive principal. Vice principals are appointed on the basis that they must agree to travel up to 50 miles to work in another school, and this gives the executive principal the capacity to work with other schools.

When Michael Wilkins took on responsibility for HHS, one vice principal was appointed college principal of OGC and a second was appointed acting headteacher of HHS. Julie Slater had been prepared for the role of college principal when as a vice principal (deep leadership) she had shadowed Michael Wilkins. Julie's appointment as college principal is on a temporary basis for one year and two terms and comes early in her career. The appointment provides the staff with a focal point and indicates the importance to staff – even in a successful school – of having a clearly defined leader.

There is a clearly defined OGC way of schooling and all staff are expected to follow its systems and processes. Such consistency of approach is not a straitjacket but a framework that enables students and staff to work together on improving learning and raising achievement. The staff debated how personalising learning could be achieved at OGC and initially worked on the nine gateways, but found the four deeps more helpful in taking the thinking forward and revising staffing structures. Practitioners, as well as the senior leadership team, are used to sharing expertise and innovating for learning. This brings a very special dimension to the partnership between OGC and HHS.

Case study 2: Harrogate High School

In 2007, North Yorkshire Local Authority carried out a review of Harrogate High School (HHS), an 11–18 years, comprehensive school with 1000 students, and decided that if Ofsted were to inspect the school it would be placed in special measures. A number of factors led to this conclusion:

- In 2007, 43% of the student population gained 5+A*–C GCSEs, but only 29% achieved 5+A*–C with English and maths
- Behaviour was poor in both classrooms and corridors. The students owned these areas. As one year 12 commented, ‘A good day at Harrogate High is when I don’t get abused in the corridors’
- Teachers were unable to teach, particularly practical lessons, and the LA was highly critical of teaching and learning
- Staff morale was very low. The Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) restructuring meant that some staff were facing a reduction in salary. Many staff were looking for other jobs – including some who had been identified as outstanding teachers
- The senior leadership team were also demoralised – they were busy firefighting. They were also frustrated by a lack of empowerment to lead and the lack of clear processes for decision-making. There was little professional development in leadership
- The school was operating a deficit budget

The local authority contracted with OGC to support HHS. In the early days of the partnership, the HHS staff believed that they were being ‘done-to’. Michael Wilkins, the NLE, was very clear that at stake was not suggesting what *could* be done, but what *had to* be done.

Getting the behaviour right so that teachers could teach was a priority. Personalising learning was a focus for improvement at HHS, and it enabled OGC to be very clear about their expectations and what was wanted for all students and staff from day one. Personalising learning was universally supported as a way of raising the aspirations of all young people.

The senior leadership team of HHS spent two days with the OGC team, and learnt how they were organised around the deeps. The HHS team decided they wanted to be organised on the same lines – figure 1 shows the structure. As with the OGC model, it allows relatively new practitioners with leadership potential to be members of the senior leadership team and exposed to whole school issues.

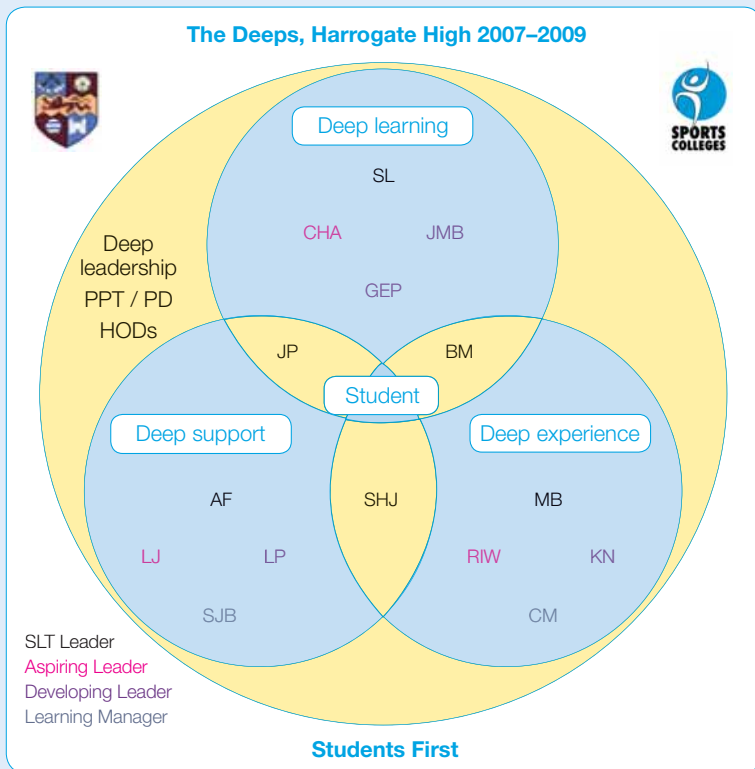
Harrogate decided to take the deeps as an organisational device a step further – organising two departments – PE and humanities – on this basis. Figure 2 shows how the PE department is now structured. For the previous 10 years staffing in the PE department had been unstable, and it had been restructured three times. Following time spent at OGC, they focused on raising standards of teaching and learning.

When Ofsted inspected HHS in May 2008 it determined that the school was satisfactory with some good features. The inspection recognised the importance of the partnership with OGC and noted that the foundations for improvement were in place: ‘The partnership has greatly strengthened leadership and management at the highest level. There is a clear vision for the school, and staff and students are buying into the vision. The leadership skills of middle leaders are developing, helped by a systematic approach to staff development. Leaders feel empowered.’

An important factor in the improvement was the ability of the executive principal to bring leadership at all levels to HHS. The strategy of exposing OGC’s vice principals to the full range of responsibilities enabled Paul Tarn, one of the vice principals, to become acting headteacher of HHS. He could lead with confidence as he had the support of the executive principal.

Paul Tarn says: ‘The move into headship is the single greatest step in any teacher’s career. In the teaching profession we see many colleagues move rapidly to assistant and deputy headteacher posts but stop at that point. It’s analogous to taking your first solo flight when you have only ever sat beside the pilot. What you really need is to take the controls in a supportive environment. How many deputies step up to headship to fill a gap temporarily, then immediately make the move to headship in their own or another school?’

Figure 1: Harrogate High Leadership Structure – January 2008



Deep leadership

PTT Paul Tarn
 PD Pauline Dolata

Headteacher
 Assistant Headteacher

Deep learning

SL Saira Luffman
 CHA Charlotte Alderson
 GEP Geraldine Potts
 JMB Jane Moss-Blundell

Assistant Headteacher
 Aspiring Leader
 Developing Leader
 Developing Leader

Deep support

AF Ann Francis
 LJ Lydia Jackson
 LP Luke Parkinson
 SJB Jackie Best

Assistant Headteacher
 Aspiring Leader
 Developing Leader
 Learning Manager

Deep experience

MB Mark Broxham
 RIW Rickie Wilson
 KN Karen Naylor
 CM Carolyn Merson

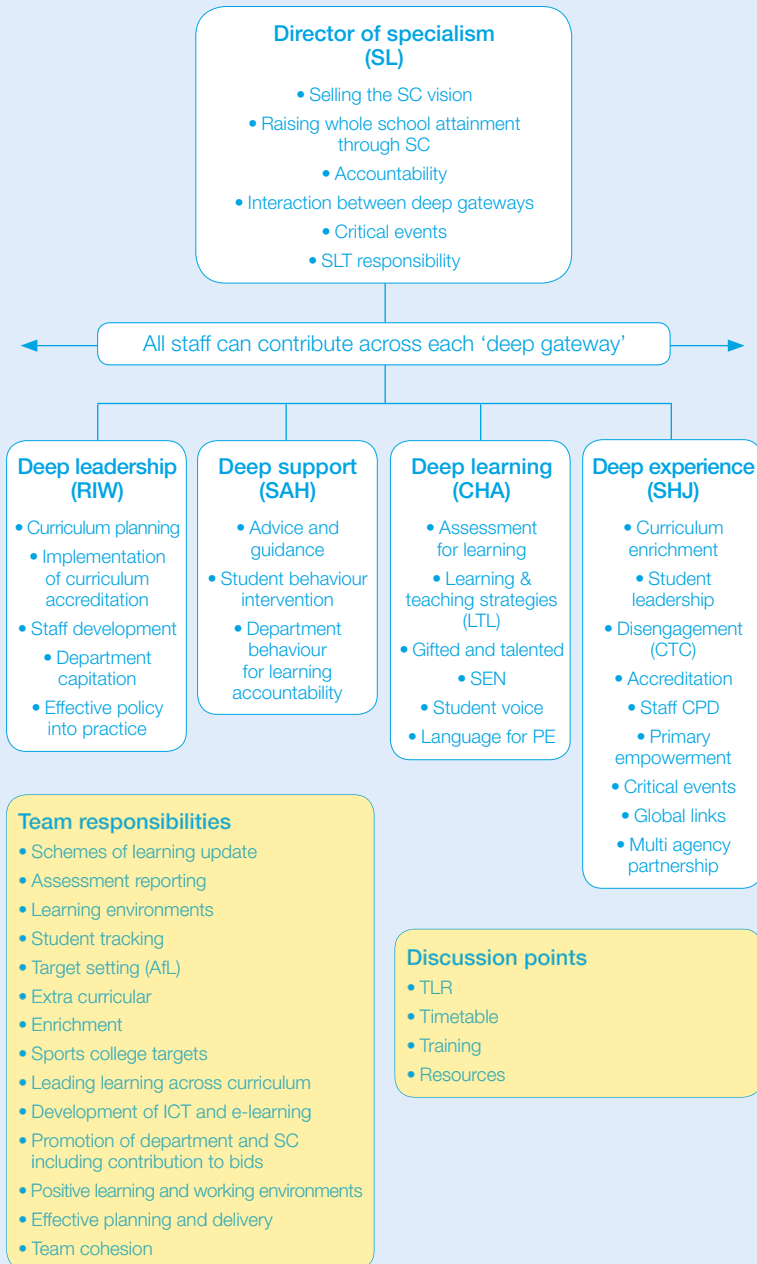
Deputy Headteacher
 Aspiring Leader
 Developing Leader
 Learning Manager

Associate Assistant Headteachers

JP Janet Paley
 BM Brian Miller
 SHJ Sheriden Hutchinson-Jones

Deep Learning/Support
 Deep Learning/Deep Experience
 Deep Support/Deep Experience

Figure 2: PE department structure



'The answer to school improvement lies within schools. There are many highly effective leaders in our schools, at all levels: the power of the deeps is to unleash that potential. The executive principal model supports a new headteacher in the all important first weeks of headship. First day – you sit at your desk, tidy your pencils and your PA asks if you would like a coffee – first big decision made! Not so bad this job – then the difficult ones land on your desk – the irate parent, the major staffing issues...You know the answer but it is good to hear someone else confirm it.

'The relationship I had with Michael was one of high support in the first few weeks, rapidly moving to one of a fellow head to bounce ideas off. The real power of the executive principal however is his access to specialists. What a head would not have the capacity to tackle alone is made possible by a multitude of highly effective professionals moving on a number of fronts. This high challenge, high support approach works at all levels throughout the organisation.'

A successful year has been recognised with a satisfactory Ofsted report and the GCSE results improving from 44% 5+A*-C to 80% – but most importantly the staff at Harrogate are rapidly developing the confidence and competence they need.

What next?

Is the improvement sustainable and can Harrogate High School go on to become an outstanding school? The school's leaders are confident enough to state that they would not allow a new headteacher to make decisions that would disrupt their progress. The governing body has also been involved in the transformation and has gained confidence through working with OGC. The vice chairman describes the relationship with OGC as 'a happy marriage' and that the NLE has given them 'a big vision'. She has seen the staff freed up to use their skills and the senior leadership team empowered. She believes that the school cannot be allowed to slip back to the old, unsuccessful ways of working.

The partnership has also demonstrated the benefits of networking and of staff being enabled to seek out best practice. The governing body's vice chairman says that for the first time, she has seen students investing in their own learning. There is a strong belief that Harrogate High School can go on to be an outstanding school.

Leading system redesign

The executive principal has been able to redesign roles, responsibilities and relationships in two schools. He has redefined the role of college principal at Outwood Grange College and provided its leaders with new roles, challenges and opportunities. Staff have the chance to work in a different learning environment. It has also been a learning journey for the executive principal, as his role is constantly evolving. He acknowledges that he underestimated the impact of the deeps and intends that the reorganisation of the SLT on the basis of the deeps will be the first action he takes at the next school he supports.

HHS staff at first were supported as innovators for learning, but quickly empowered to lead innovation at OGC as well as at their own school. Talented professionals at all levels can contribute to personalising learning and system redesign. HHS assistant headteacher Saira Luffman was looking to make a sideways move from the school, as she was frustrated by the lack of opportunity to demonstrate leadership. During the first meetings with OGC staff she felt that it was very much a 'done to' model. Now she sees herself as fully involved in developing deep learning at HHA and wants to go on to headship. In the next academic year, she will be part of the team working with OGC staff to support a school identified in the National Challenge, and is discussing with them the introduction of the deeps in departments. This is typical of how the relationship between the two schools has developed from 'done to' to working with.

'The use of the deeps at both departmental and whole school level has created both individual opportunity and whole school capacity,' she says. 'The opportunity to unlock the potential of some excellent colleagues has ensured retention in the school and empowered potential future leaders with the freedom to lead in a supportive environment.'

Questions

1. Does your staffing structure provide opportunities for staff to undertake roles across the school?
2. How do you identify and nurture talent in your school?
3. In what ways can a headteacher prepare a deputy for headship?

4 Creating capacity for system redesign

The most refreshing thing about school transformation is hearing colleagues, regardless of how passionate they are about their subject, talking about the features of good learning and the features of good leadership.

Neville Coles, headteacher, Priory Community School

In the previous two case studies we have seen how school leaders have had the opportunity to exert a wider influence in system redesign by working with multiple institutions. This is of course not the only model. The following case study is about three schools in the same county that have created capacity for innovation by collaborating on system redesign. Unlike the previous case studies where the executive principals are very experienced having been headteachers in two schools, the headteachers in this case study are all new or relatively new to the role.

Case Study 3: Somerset transforming learning partnership (STLP)

The Somerset transforming learning partnership (STLP) is a network of three Somerset schools that share some key features:

- The three schools are broadly similar in size, have similar catchments, have similar attainment outcomes and share similar whole school strategic goals
- They are committed to the concept of transformation, and are all using personalising learning and system redesign as a framework
- All three schools are using the nine gateways and the four deeps to restructure roles in the senior leadership teams and to create new and innovative posts for teaching and associate staff
- The three headteachers recognise the importance of their leadership in transforming their schools and are members of the deep leadership think tank

Whitstone School, where Tony Wilson is headteacher, is an 11–16 years, co-educational school with 720 students in Shepton Mallet. In 2007 50% of students achieved 5+A*–C GCSEs. Tony has been a headteacher for two years. Neville Coles is in his second year as headteacher of Priory Community School, which is one of four Weston schools and is pursuing Trust school status. In 2007 56% of students achieved 5+A*–C GCSEs. Tony Bloxham is in his second year as headteacher of Preston School, an 11–16 years, co-educational school with 950 students. In 2007 63% of the students achieved 5+A*–C GCSEs.

The partnership has created intellectual and leadership capacity within each school by establishing innovation groups in deep experience, deep support and deep learning across the three schools.

In deep experience, the three schools are working independently to design a curriculum model that provides for greater personalisation of time for learners, starting with English and maths. The collaboration will seek to develop a model to support 100% attainment in English and maths at C grade or better. The areas of focus that have been identified are:

- Curriculum design from 11–16
- Pathways of learning for English and maths

The innovation group, consisting of a deputy or vice principal from each school, will evaluate the three models and develop a shared professional development programme for teaching staff in English and maths. This will allow all three schools to move more quickly on redesigning their curriculum and improving achievement in these subjects.

In deep support, the three schools are at different stages in developing more effective personalising of support for learners. Each school is committed to developing associate staff roles, aiming for all staff to have a stake in learning. The schools are practising sequenced innovation: Whitstone School will be moving to vertical tutoring in September 2008 and will pass to Preston School the lessons learnt so that they can introduce the system in September 2009. Priory School will then decide if they wish to introduce vertical tutoring. The deep support innovation group, again consisting of senior leadership team members, will be:

- Developing a plan for the management of change where the three schools can support each other
- Clearly articulating the benefits of vertical tutor groups
- Sharing curriculum materials for academic mentoring

Aspiring headteachers from the three schools will benefit from leading a major innovation and the support of peers.

In deep learning, the focus is on co-construction with students. The schools are: training students as researchers; developing a model and associated training for student-led plenaries and peer assessment; and showcasing new models of co-construction. The three schools are developing a joint approach to assessment for learning (AfL). This innovation group's objectives are:

- To know how AfL can be used and fully understood by all staff in all three schools
- To establish a meaningful network and effective lines of communication
- To create an AfL policy, teacher's guide and relevant resources across all three schools

The collaborative working will include joint training sessions in six focus areas: lesson objectives, feedback, questioning, peer and self assessment, success criteria and climate for learning. Resources will be shared on the 'MyPriory' virtual learning environment. Experimental learning sessions will use AfL in the classroom with peer observations. These lessons will be recorded and documented. This innovation group provides a large pool of staff and student talent and the three schools aim to co-construct an AfL policy fully supported by students.

The partnership has been particularly helpful to the three headteachers, because the regular contact and shared strategic vision have enabled them to mentor, challenge and support each other. Meetings allow them to reflect on change and plan accordingly. The three headteachers get on well together and the partnership has stimulated creative thinking. It has allowed the schools to sequence innovation so that they can learn from each other about effective change management. The three headteachers see the partnership as critical to their schools' progress towards personalisation and their own development as school leaders.

Each school's intellectual capital has been significantly increased through the partnership. Other members of the leadership team have had opportunities to lead on innovation and to experience how the other two schools operate. The partnership helps to overcome the issue that many schools raise: how can I find the time to innovate when I have to meet the obligations of the school improvement agenda? The partnership is allowing the three schools to innovate quickly but within a secure framework.

Questions

1. Do you agree about the benefits to the three schools and their staff of collaborating in this way?
2. Could such a model work if the schools were radically different?
3. Considering how this model appears to have created more capacity in each school, what changes could you make to increase capacity within your own school?

In case study three, the headteachers in the three schools voluntarily decided that they wanted to work together, as they could see the value of collaborating to redesign their schools. In the next case study, all the schools in the local authority have agreed to participate in an innovation project focusing on redesigning learning. The local authority applied for Building Schools for the Future funding to enable Foxhills Technology College to install a temporary building that will enable the implementation of a radically different curriculum and way of working for its own and other schools' year 7 students. To enable the innovation, the governing body of Foxhills Technology College has restructured the senior leadership team to allow the headteacher to become an executive headteacher to work with the local authority, other schools, and organisations such as the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

Case Study 4: Foxhills Technology College, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire

Foxhills Technology College, which also has performing arts specialism and is a high performing specialist school, has had rising standards at key stage 4 for the last seven years. Its contextual value added is among the top 4% nationally and Ofsted recently judged it to be 'good with outstanding features'. The school is recognised for its curriculum, student care, student voice, inclusion, community partnerships and workforce reform.

The local authority, North Lincolnshire, works closely with schools to redesign education to meet the needs of all students. The authority and the school's leaders and governing body agreed the need for greater leadership capacity. As a result, the school's governing body decided to appoint two headteachers: an executive headteacher and a headteacher associate. The executive headteacher takes a strategic overview (and overall responsibility) and concentrates on the future, while the headteacher associate is responsible for the current, line managing the senior leadership team of deputy headteacher, six assistant headteachers and two non-teaching assistant heads.

The two headteacher model has allowed the executive headteacher to take on a more diverse role. In addition to the strategic overview and future direction of the school he carries out consultancy work with a local authority, a higher education college, schools and other educational bodies. With the local authority, the executive headteacher is working with other schools in the authority to develop an innovative approach to teaching and learning through a North Lincolnshire Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative and a BSF rebuild.

Within the school, the focus is on:

- Restructuring the workforce
- Creating schools within schools
- Changing specialism to meet new community and school needs
- Community engagement
- Local partnerships for performing arts and sport

In addition to the changes in the role of the headteacher, the roles of a wide variety of personnel across the school are changing. The restructuring of the workforce for the creation of schools within schools is giving staff increased energy. The new model has assistant headteachers (both teaching and non-teaching) running the mini schools, as well as having some whole school leadership responsibilities. The mini schools also have lead teachers of learning, overseeing learning and acting as subject consultants (not line managing subject teachers in the other mini schools); teaching assistants; technical support assistants; and non teacher pastoral officers. They are all working together supporting students' learning and development.

Leading system redesign

Foxhills' governing body appointed Steve Gallaher as executive headteacher to enable him to contribute to the national education agenda, but also to lead a project to redesign education within the school and the local authority. The Discover project, as it is called, will be based in a purpose-designed temporary block erected at Foxhills. The block will house year 7 students, who will work in a radically different way, being supported to use their time as they want while covering the curriculum. The local authority and other local headteachers support this project. The plan is to share its lessons in due course with the other schools; then this redesigned way of working will be implemented in North Lincolnshire's other secondary schools.

This is a stage in a long journey of innovation to personalise learning for all students, which has meant changing attitudes throughout the system. The Discover project could be a good example of learning through innovation.

The restructuring of the senior leadership team allows the executive headteacher to seek out best practice in personalising learning and system redesign. This knowledge can be fed back to Foxhills and the other schools in the authority. The school's headteacher associate has the support of an experienced leader during his early time as a school leader, and can contribute to a major innovation project that is redesigning learning at his own school and other schools in the authority.

Questions

1. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of this style of executive headship?
2. Foxhills is in a small local authority; could this model work in a large authority?
3. Are there innovation projects that you might instigate with a group of local schools?

5 Redesigning leadership

The case studies illustrate how schools are moving away from traditional leadership models in order to try and achieve the profound transformation required in 21st century schools. Some school leaders have the opportunities and challenges for system redesign presented by leading more than one school. Others are collaborating to enable innovation to take place at a faster pace.

The final case study is an account of one school's attempt to re-engineer leadership, but the change has not been rapid. Skipton Girls' High School's journey to empower both staff and students has taken six years. Many factors have influenced the process – new ways of working, new structures and new systems. An emerging leadership model has moved from directive to facilitative, under headteacher Jan Renou. Key aspects of decision-making about the personalisation of learning have been driven into the core of the school, at first from the senior leadership team to middle leaders, and now to classroom teachers.

Case study 5: Skipton Girls' High School

At the beginning of Skipton Girls' change in leadership approach, discrete subject areas were amalgamated into faculties, with the expectation that they would operate in networks, initially at micro level. New directors of studies led faculties and their meetings brought staff together from across subject disciplines. Working groups, centred initially on the engineering specialism, also began to open up greater cross-curricular working. Some of the new directors of study were uncomfortable with their new levels of responsibility and accountability, while others relished the new opportunities. Overall, the experiences gained and the new collaboration proved crucial to future success.

Moving tutorial arrangements to a vertical system in 2005 further eroded established hierarchies. For the first time a major initiative was driven by senior leaders other than the head, working with a group of middle leaders and through consultation with the whole staff and student body. The leaders' self-belief increased, the academic/pastoral divide narrowed, and the focus shifted to learning in all aspects of the school's daily life.

The school then reconfigured parts of the curriculum. An accelerated KS3 and enhanced KS4 have generated many challenges but provided the impetus for middle leaders to debate the underlying principles and practicalities. Around this time SSAT designated Skipton Girls' as a development and research hub, first for student voice and then deep learning.

Embedding and enabling change

The faculty structure was streamlined and the new learning directors became part of the senior leadership team.

Skipton's learning directors, teachers and students began leading workshops at local meetings and regional and national conferences. Contacts with schools across the country flourished. Staff and students discussed practice in different contexts, considered policy and procedures and shared expertise. External endorsement affirmed some of their groundbreaking work, and boosted enthusiasm and the confidence to question existing practice and implement change.

Learning directors are handling increasingly complex challenges. In the last year, they have devised and led all whole-school training, which has stimulated new levels of collaborative thinking and engagement. Learning directors have become the leadership coaches and mentors for aspiring curriculum leaders and others, and are important contributors to succession planning. They support curriculum leaders in broadening innovation, lead clusters of staff and students to explore new ways of working, and take ownership of the next wave of change.

Building on the peer and academic mentoring which have blossomed in the wake of vertical tutoring, learning conversations among students and between students and staff are offering exciting possibilities. Some staff, especially younger teachers keen to explore the potential of new technologies, have relished the opportunity to encourage student leadership of learning, sometimes through use of a virtual learning environment.

Instigated by students for students, academic peer mentoring has become a powerful dimension of student learning for both mentor and mentee. It is founded on the principle that the most effective form of learning is to teach someone in the same or a different age group. The easy and speedy assimilation of learning and enlightenment which appears to occur through mentoring is proving helpful in developing practice as teachers and learners take forward the co-construction of learning.

Next steps

Generation Y – the cohort born roughly after 1980 – is growing up against the rise of instant communication technologies made possible through use of the internet, such as email and texting, and new media used through websites like YouTube and social networking sites.

A number of themes emerge as Skipton works to empower students in steering a truly personal route in their learning:

- The skills and attributes of the ‘thinking student’ need to be explicitly developed and embedded, in collaboration with the student body
- Essential knowledge, skills and understanding must be available and accessible to the whole community
- Opportunities should be available across the full age range (stage not age)
- The school needs to expand on the embryonic work with year 9 to develop project and problem based learning
- Students should be able to negotiate a package of learning in an agreed timescale, in which the learning is owned by the student and facilitated by the teacher
- Students should be encouraged to take more responsibility for decisions about the operation of the school
- Skipton must take full advantage of the virtual learning environment to establish learning networks with staff and students in other classes, schools locally and across the UK, and eventually on a global level

Grounded in shared values, Skipton is working towards supporting generation Y (and Z!) pupils, keeping pace with the cycle of dynamic change in technology and society.

Leading system redesign

Skipton Girls' High School was a successful selective school (100% 5+A*-C including English and maths) that worked in isolation and saw little need to innovate. The appointment of a new headteacher stimulated a change of culture, a focus on distributive leadership, and decision-making being driven down to middle leaders. These changes were started through one innovation – a vertical tutor system – and using this to redesign other aspects of schooling, including the curriculum. The vertical tutor groups ensured the involvement of all teachers and enabled the headteacher to demonstrate to all stakeholders that the traditional structures of the school might be changed to personalise learning for all students. It also ensured that staff had to adapt their expertise and skills to the new system, as well as collaborate in new ways.

The appointment of the school as a development and research hub ensured that the school networked on a regional and national basis. Staff were empowered as innovators and gained confidence by researching best practice and sharing their own work with other schools. Gradually the school's staff have seen the benefits of involving the students in co-constructing their learning experiences, and this is opening the door for other innovations.

Questions

1. How would you encourage established staff to rethink their teaching practice?
2. How could you restructure your middle leadership to allow decision-making to be distributed more widely?

6 Generation Y as tomorrow's school leaders

The newly qualified teachers coming through, in both primary and secondary, are better trained. They have the language, the processes and are much more strongly embedded in their practice; and they are not just nipping at the heels of the people who have been there for years, they are actually knocking them over and passing them.

*Trudy Bothwell, executive headteacher,
St Hugh's CofE Maths and Computing College*

It is perhaps not surprising that around the world there is a shortage of high calibre applicants for leadership positions. Good headteachers have always identified potential leaders and supported their development, but the normal pathway to headship has been to gain experience in a variety of schools. The appointment to headship is often a lottery, and many newly appointed headteachers feel isolated.

The development of the role of executive principal can be seen as one way of avoiding a shortage of leaders. It certainly can be an effective way of developing and supporting vice principals into the principal's role with the executive principal as the mentor and coach. However, the case studies in this pamphlet and elsewhere in this series of publications demonstrate that there are many newly appointed practitioners wanting to take on whole school leadership. The challenge for school leaders is to provide a structure that enables these young or less experienced leaders to enjoy leadership and remain keen to become the next generation of headteachers.

Some schools have reorganised their leadership team on the basis of the deeps as this creates the space for practitioners with leadership potential to be part of the leadership team from a very early stage in their career. At Outwood Grange College Kim Walton, in her third year of teaching, is an assistant principal. This stage not age approach to career development is a key part of leading system redesign. The importance of empowering generation Y staff is highlighted in *Leading system redesign – 1*.

Kim Walton did her initial teacher training at OGC, and in her first year of teaching mentored a student teacher and participated in the in-house middle leaders programme. In her second year, she applied for one of the deeps posts, was unsuccessful, but was appointed acting head of the design and technology department. Eight months later she became assistant principal. Her mentor is the college principal and she is also supported by the senior leadership team. The college has a support framework for her and other young leaders, who are an essential strand in its leadership strategy.

Harrogate High School also adopted the deeps as an organisational framework. The deep learning, experience and support teams each comprise four people, including an aspiring leader, and at least one developing leader. In the deep learning team, the aspiring leader is Charlotte Alderson, who is in her second year of teaching. She decided not to apply for a head of department post, as she preferred to continue with the temporary post in the deep learning team. She will be applying for an assistant headteacher post without head of department experience.

This is how she describes her journey: 'Reflecting on the last two years, I feel fortunate to have gained the position of PE teacher at Harrogate High School. The stage not age approach to leadership has enabled me to develop my skills in leadership. At the start of my second year I became head of deep learning at department level. I was passionate about creating a vision for my team, while challenging underperformance. The confidence and skills gained enabled me to secure the role of aspiring leader for whole school deep learning. I thrive on having the responsibility for leading innovations and presenting in whole school development time. The school recognised my passion for supporting/developing staff within the department and other curriculum areas and I became NQT/ITT coordinator this year. I aim to become an assistant/deputy head in the next few years and believe that this is aided by the endless support, opportunities and encouragement from the school.'

Both Kim and Charlotte are members of generation Y, ie they are born between 1980 and 1994. Research shows that the characteristics of generation Y are:

- Multi-taskers
- Heavily influenced by peers
- Collaborative
- Value flexibility
- Work life balance seen as critical
- Motivated by being trusted to get on with things
- Keen on equality, feedback and openness
- Dislike e-learning
- Intolerant of poor management
- Will leave if their needs are not being met

These characteristics can be identified in the career progression of Kim and Charlotte. When Harrogate High School was operating unsuccessfully, Charlotte was frustrated by the lack of opportunity and was considering leaving teaching.

All schools are employing generation Y staff and they need to consider the implications. The lessons from the case studies are:

- Invest in training and development for generation Y and those who manage them
- Provide exciting work – dealing with whole school issues or working on learning across the school falls into this category
- Provide mentors/coaches – Kim is mentored by her college principal and Charlotte by her assistant headteacher for deep learning
- Promote rapidly – Kim has been fast tracked to the senior leadership team; Charlotte is preparing to apply to join the senior leadership team
- Consider flexible working arrangements – this is not always easy in the school situation, but a network of schools offers more opportunities

The messages in relation to generation Y staff apply in varying degrees to all staff, of course. Other generations will share some of the characteristics of generation Y, and it is important that the talent of all staff is utilised. There needs to be recognition that staff may seek leadership roles at different times in their careers and in different ways. Staff development must be sensitively handled and personalised in the same way as schools are trying to personalise learning for students.

Questions

1. What support mechanisms would need to be in place to ensure the success of an inexperienced member of the senior leadership team?
2. In what ways can generation X (born between 1965 and 1982) and the baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1965) support generation Y in developing as school leaders?
3. What challenges might the empowerment of generation Y to redesign learning present to today's school leaders?

7 The impact on professional development

As new roles emerge within schools and clusters and as practitioners take different career pathways, professional development will need to change. All the schools in the case studies are taking a greater responsibility for the training and development of the whole school workforce. Schools are moving away from external training to in-house, peer-to-peer professional development. In *Leading system redesign – 4*, there is a comparison of the 20th century model of CPD with the 21st century model:

20th century

Occasional, irregular
Sharp boundaries
An add-on to practice
Focused on the individual
Mainly out of school
Cascaded from a central source
Lecturers and consultants
Expert to novice
Abstract knowledge
Designed by external providers
Reflection on action
Exclusively for teachers

21st century

Continuous, regular
Blurred boundaries
Fused with practice
Focused on the team
Mainly school based
Moved laterally by peers
Mentors and coaches
Peer to peer
Craft knowledge
Designed in house
Reflection in action
Joint staff and students

Schools have used the five statutory training days in creative ways to support professional development. They tend to use most of the time allocated for meetings to focus on learning and teaching. Many schools have staff training at an agreed time every week. Outwood Grange College and Harrogate High School have professional development sessions every week after school. Oriel Specialist Mathematics and Computing College in Great Yarmouth have their training in the first part of the morning, so that the staff can apply their learning when the students come in later. The case studies highlight that delivery is mainly by colleagues, and, as more schools work in groups, training may be delivered and take place in a partner school.

Many schools are developing as professional learning communities. Staff are given the opportunity to research best practice, and visit other schools to learn about particular aspects of teaching and learning. This might be done on an individual basis, but more commonly a team of staff are involved.

For example, the deep support team at Harrogate High School investigated vertical mentoring. The team consisted of six members of staff, including director, deep support; two associate assistant heads; aspiring leader; developing leader and a learning manager plus four students from years 12, 11, 9 and 7. The research task was to:

- Produce a short report outlining the pros and cons of vertical tutor systems
- Compare with lateral tutor groups and evaluate the benefits of moving to a vertical system. Include anticipated resistance from parents, students and staff
- Consider which years should be included

The team visited four schools: Skipton Girls' High, David Young Academy, Bradford Academy and John Cabot Academy, and researched the work going on in six other schools. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was undertaken and in-depth reports prepared on the four schools visited. The team produced an action plan for implementation and presented this information to the governing body. Once the governing body had approved the proposal, the deep support team took responsibility for the implementation. This included presentations to staff and students; visiting primary schools; allocation of staff and students to mentor groups; staff training programme; newsletter to parents; and a year 6 induction and mentor group team-building morning.

The development of schools as professional learning communities means that staff training is embedded within the culture of the school, and staff at all levels can contribute. Schools are less inclined to invest in one-off training days unless they are critical to their mission. While the new technologies can offer flexibility in the delivery of training, face-to-face is still the most popular method of delivery with practitioners. The introduction of Teachers TV is a new method of peer-to-peer professional development. Each teacher decides what he or she needs to know and when. The programmes are linked to the internet and teachers can interact with other professionals who are interested in similar developments.

The development of training schools gives the profession more opportunities to develop the next generation of teachers. Schools such as Outwood Grange College and John Cabot Academy are now developing bespoke leadership programmes for their own staff and for their areas. While the schools in the case studies are at various stages in developing as professional learning communities, all the school leaders see this development as critical to taking their schools forward.

8 Reflection

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

Undoubtedly this is an exciting and challenging time for headteachers. There are numerous opportunities to redesign the system – whether in a new academy or undertaking system leader roles. The role of executive headteacher/principal is a relatively new one and operates in a variety of ways. It allows the school leader to operate completely at a strategic rather than an operational level, and it means that there are more opportunities for leadership within the school. It may well be that a new headteacher will be able to develop their thinking and leadership skills more securely if working with an executive head. However, they must be given the opportunity to network and to innovate or they will not be experiencing true leadership.

Headteachers working in difficult circumstances face a different challenge. Many will not have had enough time to transform their schools. As impressive as the transformation of HHS is, the school is still only classed as satisfactory by Ofsted, and has a long way to go to become outstanding. Experienced and inexperienced headteachers who have taken a decision to lead a failing school or an academy now have the additional pressure of the National Challenge. They are facing adverse publicity and the possibility of losing their jobs if the school closes. They may be forced into a partnership with another school – this can work as we have seen with HHS and OGC. Many of these headteachers need time for their medium and long term strategies to work. Teachers need time to develop new and better practice.

As we can see from the case studies there is no one model of system redesign. This is not surprising, considering that successful headteachers are often mavericks and entrepreneurs, who have created a brand/school that is very successful within their context. We can see that OGC and JCA are moving in this direction. These headteachers have the skill and expertise to customise their systems and processes when working with other schools, but also the strength not to compromise on what must happen. The implication from the case studies is that there will be a number of successful school brands with a number of partner schools. We do not know what the maximum number of schools in a group can be. If executive heads train their colleagues for this role are we looking at groups of 100 schools and more?

It is reasonable to conclude that we may see the education system consisting of groups of schools. If the system moves to greater collaboration and partnerships, practitioners could spend their whole careers working within one school group. This has not been the traditional route to headship, as governing bodies and local authorities want candidates to have gained a variety of experiences in different schools. John King, executive principal at Gable Hall and William Edwards Schools, would like to see secondments being used creatively to complete the training and development of staff. Staff working in rural areas could spend time in an urban context, for example. Alternatively, a vice principal from Outwood Grange College could exchange with a vice principal from John Cabot Learning Federation for a year. This would also help transfer knowledge about the systems and practices that work well in a particular group of schools.

The headteachers in the case studies are also committed to identifying, empowering and developing practitioners with leadership potential. Most of these practitioners are generation Y and the headteachers have created supportive environments that allow them to use their strengths and fulfil their needs. This generation of practitioners are taking different pathways to headship, which requires different leadership training programmes. Much of this training will be delivered in-house and on the job with the support of a mentor – older generations will have much to contribute here.

National training programmes such as SSAT's Developing Leaders for Tomorrow and Aspiring Heads programmes play a critical role, as they expose participants to different leadership models and approaches.

The programmes that involve participants in undertaking an innovation project need to move away from individual projects to group projects. This will help generation Y to use their social networking skills in their careers. It is likely that we will see more headteachers appointed in their early 30s – possibly late 20s – and they will demand a different menu of support to the current generation of headteachers.

Many schools are involving some students in their staff training, but we have not reached a stage yet where there is a specific training for generation Y staff with students, as advocated in *Leading system redesign – 1*. However, as you will see in *Leading system redesign – 3*, schools are co-constructing with students their thinking and practice on learning, and this is having an impact on staff development and training. As this work evolves, schools will naturally involve students in other aspects of school life. The more the staff work with the students, the greater the influence of the students' way of working on the staff.

As more schools focus on learning and there is peer-to-peer delivery of professional development, we should see a common language of learning. The ambition must be that the various groupings of schools agree to share their innovations in an open source approach. This approach is natural for generation Y. The feature of 21st century schooling could be a diverse range of schools and partnerships, but all sharing the responsibility of identifying leaders at an early stage of their careers and investing in talent management for the good of the system. This will require further system redesign as generation Y replaces the baby boomers and generation X.

We will always have the issue of some schools not doing as well as others. There needs to be a variety of approaches to supporting these schools to improve. For some, working with a more successful school will be the answer and others may need to be closed and reopened as academies. For others again, the answer might lie in collaborating with similar schools in the same way as the three Somerset schools. Another supportive approach could be through the creation of innovation clusters or networks that challenge but recognise that everyone can be an innovator and has something to offer. Leading system redesign must entail releasing the talent of all staff and students to lead.

Surely there has never been a better or more challenging time to be a leader?

Annex A

Sources and suggestions

See also outside back cover

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Annex B

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Whitstone School, Devon

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SSAT publications on personalising learning:

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Personalising learning – 3
Personalising learning – 4
Personalising learning – 5
Personalising learning – 6

Second series

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Deep learning – 1
Deep learning – 2
Deep experience – 1
Deep experience – 2
Deep support – 1
Deep leadership – 1
Deep leadership – 2
The Deeps in Action

Third series

System Redesign – 1
System Redesign – 2
System Redesign – 3
System Redesign – 4
Leading system redesign – 1
Leading system redesign – 2
Leading system redesign – 3
Leading system redesign – 4

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