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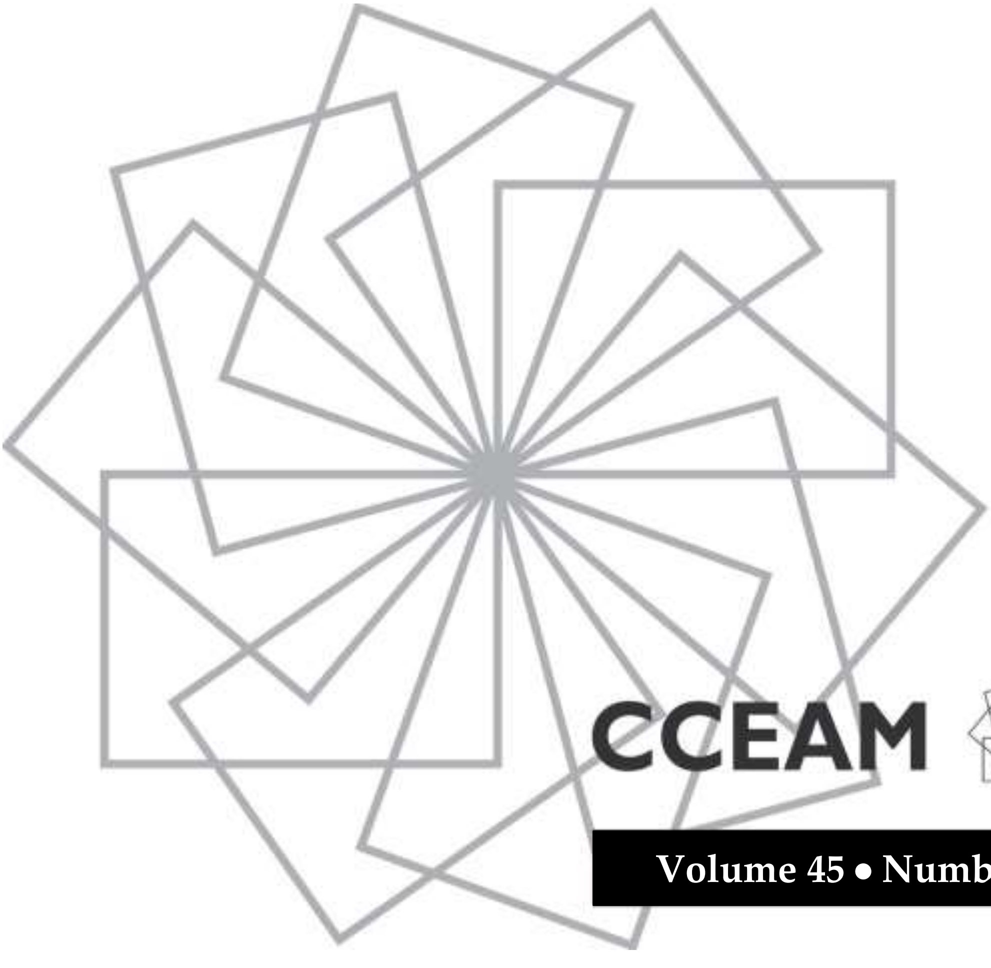

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The University of Melbourne
3010 Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

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The University of Melbourne
3010 Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

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Editorial Note

Organisational Influence of Teacher Leadership: Perspectives from Four Countries

As early as the 1960s, researchers began to look at the construct of teacher leadership, with a focus on the teacher as classroom leader (Bossert 1977; Nelson 1966), particularly in terms of teacher leader's interactions with students in the classroom (Misumi, Yoshizaki & Shinohara 1977; Morrison 1974). Beginning with the international trend for school accountability, the move to increase professionalism, and the emphasis on student outcomes, more recent literature has addressed teacher leadership in terms of collaboration and the teacher's role in whole school reform (Harris 2003; Muijs & Harris 2003; Murphy 2005; York-Barr & Duke 2004).

Despite this apparent evolution in understanding teachers, not just as leaders in their classroom but as school-wide leaders who contribute to school improvement, the view persists that teacher leadership is a limited perspective. *Teach to Lead*, organised as a partnership between the US Department of Education, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the Association for Curriculum and Development, states on the website's front page that the organisation's work is 'expanding opportunities for teachers to lead without leaving the classroom' (http://teachtolead.org). To fully appreciate the work of teacher leaders, schools might heed the call to 'recognise the talents of the most effective teachers and deploy them in service of student learning, adult learning and collaboration, and school and system improvement' (Curtis 2013: iii).

This special issue of *International Studies in Educational Administration* presents research that expands our view of teacher leadership to embrace a system-wide perspective. Researchers in this issue document the practice of teacher leadership in four countries, Ireland, Scotland, China, and the United States. The authors view teacher leadership from these differing contexts through the lens of reform and improvement. From these studies, the reader can gain a perspective on the ways in which teachers as leaders contribute to the school system beyond the classroom. The issue begins with cases of teacher leadership contributing to teacher development in Ireland, Scotland, and China.

In the first article of this issue, *Evolving Perspective(s) of Teacher Leadership: An exploration of teacher leadership for inclusion at preservice level in the Republic of Ireland*, Fiona King views teacher leadership from the perspective of preservice inclusion teachers. Noting that literature on teacher leadership is scant at the preservice level, King argues that this level is where teacher leadership should begin. This study associates teacher leadership for inclusion within a moral purpose and the enactment of values. King approaches teacher leadership from the perspective of teacher as change agent. As part of a Republic of Ireland university's teacher preparation programme, a module on leadership was developed. Through the process of understanding change, presenting research to others, collaborating on a blog, articulating their values on twitter, attending a professional conference and reflecting on these experiences, the preservice teachers in this study felt better prepared to lead as teachers, better understood the concept of teacher leadership, and were more comfortable taking on leadership roles as new teachers. The lived experiences of collaboration and leadership gained through this preservice module resulted in leadership role clarity as the aspiring inclusion teachers gained understanding of the importance of collaboration, reflection, and their responsibility for all students, both within and beyond their classrooms.

In the second study, *Policy Fudge and Practice Realities: Developing teacher leadership in Scotland*, Torrance and Murphy also examine teacher leadership as a critical element in educator preparation. However, this study investigates masters' level leadership development in light of the connection of policy to practice. Torrance and Murphy take a critical view of Scottish policy as it addresses teacher leadership in Scotland's schools, noting the lack of clarity in policy's definition, roles and responsibilities for teacher leadership. Further, Torrance and Murphy argue that both literature and policy fudge the concepts of 'teacher leadership' and 'teacher leader', resulting in a perception of teacher leadership providing a link in the school leadership hierarchy. They identify a lack of consultation with the profession at the policy development stage along with lack of recognition of conceptual complexities leading to a number of practice tensions, including an exclusion of voices at the school level and sometimes headteachers' fear that distributed/teacher leadership may negatively impact accountability goals. This mixed methods study involving teacher respondents in a leadership development programme examines teacher leadership from the teacher's perspective, rather than the policy perspective. Findings from the survey that measured motivation, understanding and experience of teacher leadership as well as interview data recording the teacher's lived experiences, inform the reader of the deficiencies of policy fudge. While policy fudging, or interpreting policy for self-interests, may be intentional at the macro level, the policy is outlined as purposefully vague. This allows for less conflict at the macro and meso level but may be deciphered with less clarity at the implementation level.

The issue's third article, *Developing Early Career Teachers' Leadership Through Teacher Learning*, while also examining teacher development, is situated in China where school systems are, by design, hierarchical with a single leader. Unlike the other articles in this issue, the Chinese case emphasises the role of the principal in developing teacher leaders. Teacher learning activities, as assigned by the principal, allow, empower, and inspire teachers to lead. This study's focus on the principal as support for the development of teacher leaders through learning is an important addition to literature in contexts where sharing leadership is rare.

With the fourth article in this issue, we move from developing teachers to teachers who have established themselves as teacher leaders in their respective schools. *Teacher Leaders' Influence on Teachers' Perceptions of the Teacher Evaluation Process* is an examination of one USA state teacher evaluation system, with teacher leaders joining school principals in the evaluation of teaching. Bradley-Levine, Romano and Reichart describe how the Teacher Development and Evaluation Model (TDEM) puts teacher leadership in the centre of school improvement in one local education authority (LEA) system. Finding that principals had limited scope, time, and content knowledge to adequately conduct teacher evaluations, the LEA offered remuneration and reduced teaching load to some teacher leaders to serve as evaluators alongside the principal. This study examines teacher perceptions of the evaluation process through the Teacher Leader Inventory and open ended response questions. These authors found that teachers who identified as teacher leaders showed more positive perceptions of sharing leadership than did other teachers.

The final article in the issue, *Organisational Influences of Collective Efficacy and Trust on Teacher Leadership*, speaks to the connection between teacher leadership, trust in colleagues and principal and teacher collective efficacy in the school. Flood and Angelle document quantitative results from three surveys, the Teacher Leadership Inventory (Angelle & DeHart 2011), the Teacher Efficacy Belief Scale – Collective Form (Olivier, 2001), and the Omnibus-T Scale (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 1999). Flood and Angelle found a strong and significant relationship between collective efficacy and teacher leadership. As noted in the article, these authors posit that teacher leadership moves past the notion that leadership is vested in an individual and suggests that teacher leadership more closely approximates a manifestation of the *real* collaborative efforts of individuals working as a collective towards a shared goal within schools. Moreover, trust was also found to have a strong relationship to teacher leadership. The connection between these three variables is an important addition to the literature on teacher leadership.

This special issue of ISEA contributes to the literature on teacher leadership in several ways. While teacher leaders are often viewed as those who are leaders in pedagogy and are experts in student engagement, the studies in this issue examine the work of teacher leaders from an organisational perspective. Formal roles and principal selection are ways in which teacher leaders gain decision making authority. However, the authors here move beyond formalised positions, to teachers as leaders for change. The research includes perspectives of teacher leadership in four countries. The international perspectives presented in these studies provide the reader with considerations of teacher leadership, and their *ways of being*, as practiced in multi-national contexts. Finally, the importance of the constructs of trust and self-efficacy as essential to successful teacher leader practice may begin a dialogue about looking beyond the expertise of teacher leaders to additional positive outcomes which may result from their support.

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Pamela S. Angelle

Editor of the Special Issue, *Organisational Influence of Teacher Leadership: Perspectives from Four Countries*
The University of Tennessee

Policy Fudge and Practice Realities: Developing Teacher Leadership in Scotland

Deirdre Torrance and Daniel Murphy

Abstract: *Scottish policy developments in initial teacher education, professional standards and career-long professional learning reflect a growing understanding of the leadership role teachers can play, particularly in curriculum and pedagogy, in improving the experiences and outcomes of pupils. In the policy rhetoric of re-professionalisation, unpromoted teachers liberate their professional creativity, leading 'bottom-up' approaches to school improvement. However, there are policy and conceptual tensions in the construction of 'teacher leadership', the related term 'teacher leader' and the practice realities experienced by teachers seeking to play this leadership role in their professional settings. This article explores these tensions in a small-scale mixed methods study of teachers participating in Masters-level 'leadership development' programmes. The study considers the policy and practice environments, motivations, supports and barriers that faced these Scottish teachers seeking to develop their leadership practices and capacities. A lack of clarity at national level for framing the practice of teacher leadership is identified. School staff require to develop for themselves understandings of the complex interplay between bottom-up and top-down leadership, local understandings of 'what teacher leadership means and how it works in our school', within a supportive culture. This was not found to be the norm. The article concludes by outlining implications for policy and practice, including the need to address a national 'policy fudge' around teacher leadership that adversely affects practice realities. As part of that, there is a need for further discussion around who is responsible and accountable within a distributed leadership perspective, for what and to whom?*

Keywords: teacher leadership, teacher leaders, school improvement, distributed leadership, professional learning

Introduction: Teacher Leadership – Theory and Practice

Over the past two decades, teacher leadership has become a major theme within policy, research and literature broadly located within a distributed leadership paradigm (Harris 2004; Mangin & Stoelinga 2008). In their historical review of the teacher leadership literature, Angelle & DeHart (2016: 89) identify that in the late 1980s, teacher leadership entered a 'third wave', with an emphasis placed on 'collegiality, collaboration, and continuous learning'.

A number of definitions of teacher leadership focus on pedagogy: teacher leadership influence is exercised largely in the classroom or learning context, through relationships with peers, identifying areas for improvement through critical reflection in and on practice (Torrance & Forde 2016). Through collaboration and mutual accountability, teachers take professional responsibility for enacting changes to practice, enhancing self-esteem and work satisfaction, increasing motivation levels, as well as performance and retention levels. In so doing, '[l]eaders get their power not from the hierarchy above but from those around them' (O'Brien 2016: xiii). This kind of teacher leadership practice may help develop a learning community, building networks of support and expertise to strengthen school organisation (Torrance 2018). It requires skills in working with adults, focused on innovating and improving practice for the benefit of pupils. It requires teachers to develop a strong sense of their own agency (Pantić 2015), self and collective efficacy (Angelle & Teague 2014), legitimising and extending their reach from the semi-private context of their classroom to influence practice within the wider school. Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2009: xvii) summarise this understanding in describing teacher leadership as:

> … action that transforms teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together on behalf of learning, and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community.

Such instructionally focused leadership can promote professional empowerment (Murphy 2005). Rather than teachers being workers within a bureaucratic hierarchy in which power and control radiate downwards through detailed instructions, teachers in this perspective are viewed as independently accountable professionals, using expert judgement to make situationally specific decisions for their immediate instructional context, contributing to new forms of 'participatory governance' (Murphy 2005: 18). This perspective sees leadership as a relationship of social influence, and leadership influence as being fluid across the organisation, rather than locked into hierarchical roles and remits (Torrance 2013, building on Timperley 2009 and Spillane & Coldren 2011). Professional authority and credibility derive not from hierarchical position per se, but from expertise (as perceived by self and others), demonstrated in real situations. This, in theory at least, enables all members of a school community to contribute to school leadership based on their authority, influence and legitimacy (Diamond & Spillane 2016).

However, the term ‘teacher leader’ sits alongside this vision of ‘teacher leadership’. ‘Teacher leaders’ may have been allocated or delegated specific roles or tasks, either with or without additional remuneration, by their managers. Arguably this suggests a more closed, limited concept of leadership. Where leadership and its influence on others is distributed in this way, it is questionable if power is actually distributed (Fitzgerald & Gunter 2008). At the micro level, school managers use their positional power to set the context for teacher leadership (Little 2002). As the professionals held publicly accountable for the performance of ‘their school’, they may hesitate to distribute power. Incorporating teacher leadership into hierarchical management systems can be seen as a way of harnessing the potential flexibility and creativity of fluid forms of leadership, whilst mitigating the risks of unpredictability in teacher leadership (O'Brien 2016). Perhaps surprisingly, theoretical constructs provide little guidance on this dynamic. Much of the distributed leadership literature ‘lack[s] a critical, questioning approach to power. … A much greater understanding is needed of power in the practice of distributed leadership’ perhaps through the construct of ‘social authority’ as ‘everyone is involved in the ongoing production of authorities by contributing to who is accepted as or excluded from exercising authority and leadership’ (Woods 2016: 155). Indeed, Diamond & Spillane (2016: 151) argue that ‘power asymmetries in leadership practice’ merit attention in progressing understandings of distributed leadership.

Such conceptual tensions in the definition of teacher leadership are amplified by an apparent downgrading of ‘management’ within an all-embracing concept of ‘leadership’, with management much reduced in status (Gronn 2003). Within that paradigm, the promotion of distributed leadership often fails to acknowledge that ‘distributed leadership is not a panacea; it depends on how it is shared, received and enacted’ (Harris & DeFlaminis 2016: 143).

Teacher Leadership – the Scottish Context

Although education systems in developed countries share certain features, they have unique policy contexts. Historically, Scotland’s comprehensive schooling system has been free to all pupils (Lingard & Ozga 2007; Paterson 2003a), and its teachers have been held in high regard, valued both by the public and by politicians (Munn et al. 2004; Paterson 2003b). Global travelling policies such as the re-professionalisation of teaching have been mediated by embedded practices and cultures leading to ‘a very specifically Scottish ideology of education’ (Paterson 2003a: 30). The key organisations driving policy at the macro level are:

- Scottish Government setting national policy in education through legislation, a national regulatory framework and funding local authorities to run schools and employ teachers;
- General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) setting professional standards for all teachers and responsible for the five-yearly cycle of *Professional Update* (GTCS 2012a), the process of professional re-certification for all teachers launched in 2013;

- Education Scotland, with both support and improvement roles, incorporating Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education [HMIe], responsible for quality assurance.

At the meso level, 32 Scottish Local Authorities run schools, employing and managing teaching staff. Local Authorities work within the framework set by national policy, but also have their own identified priorities, taking initiatives and producing policies and guidelines for schools. Although national agencies develop and decide policy, implementation is local, with potential political tensions between these different levels of the system.

At both macro and meso levels, negotiation about how desired government policy should be implemented involves teachers' professional bodies (unions), the most prominent being the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). They influence both policy and implementation through local and national 'joint negotiating committees' where they protect teachers' rights and conditions of service. It can sometimes appear that negotiated agreements are driven not by educational vision but by political compromises, 'an accommodation of interests rather than an agreement of the best way forward educationally' (Murphy, Croxford, Howieson & Raffe 2015: 146). In this policy development context, policy 'fudge' plays a key role in allowing each of the key players to interpret the eventual outcome to suit their own purposes (p. 155). It is said that, 'the key individuals in the Scottish policy community can fit in a single room, meet frequently and may do so again the following day wearing different hats. Such meetings are often preceded by phone calls, informal chats and other back door soundings' (p. 146).

At its best, this 'collaborative model' (Raffe & Spours 2007) ensures all voices are heard and, working through a consensual evolutionary model, can even out the potential disruptive character of change. However, there can also be a tendency to hear only 'inside' voices, excluding the wider civic community and those who work in schools (as opposed to those who represent them in discussion and negotiation). In such a well established policy network (Rhodes 1997), 'policy community' and 'leadership class' (Johnston & MacKenzie 2003: 97), policy may mirror the interests or values that 'inform the dominant discourses in the socio-political environment' (Bell 2007: 9). This is the context of recent Scottish teacher leadership policy and practice development.

Through documents such as *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* known widely as TP21 (Scottish Executive 2001) and the *Review of Teacher Education* (Donaldson 2010), the development of a professional and policy consensus on the language of teacher leadership can be observed. TP21 mandated extended collegial working and lifelong professional development. It also stripped out and simplified in-school management layers with an expectation of more participatory decision-making at school level. Donaldson (2010: 15-16) used constructs of 'extended professionalism' and 'expert practitioners', while also making use of the words 'leader' and 'leadership' an astonishing 149 times (as opposed to management's 17 entries), to define the new professionalism.

It was helpful in facilitating this broader policy consensus – one which recognised the potential of 'teacher leadership' to empower teachers professionally – that the EIS (2010: 4) developed a positive policy position on teacher leadership, though it was a policy which, unlike Donaldson (2010), made a clear distinction between 'leadership' and 'management':

> This policy paper … recognises that every qualified teacher has, by definition, a leadership role to play in schools, but this is not to underestimate the important, and separate, roles and responsibilities of those in management positions in schools.

Both Donaldson and the EIS thus made use of the concept of teacher leadership, but with potentially different meanings. These developments culminated in significant revisions to the Standards governing the professional practice of Scotland's teachers. The Standards specify the professional values and commitments, knowledge and skills, abilities and actions of Scottish teachers (GTCS 2012b: online). The leadership role outlined in the Standards reflects both the longer term government concern to stimulate workforce reform and engagement with the school improvement agenda seen in TP21 and a desire on the part of the profession to develop teacher agency and influence (GTCS 2012b: online):

> All teachers should have opportunities to be leaders. They lead learning for, and with, all learners with whom they engage. They also work with and support the development of colleagues and other partners. Different forms of leadership are expressed across the suite of Professional Standards including leadership for learning, teacher leadership and working collegiately to build leadership capacity in others.

A number of related policies emphasise the creative leadership potential of teachers. Education Scotland, the arms-length government-funded body charged with both improving and inspecting Scottish education, made this new expectation of 'teacher leadership' explicit in their strategic plan (Education Scotland 2013b: 25):

> Curriculum for Excellence, the most comprehensive reform of education provision from pre-school to adulthood in a generation, is explicitly designed to give practitioners much greater professional freedom in deciding exactly what and how they teach to motivate and develop their learners. … detailed decisions about service delivery increasingly rest with front-line professionals and local bodies in the belief that they are best placed to decide how to achieve outcomes in local circumstances.

Echoing this, the Scottish Government established and funded in 2014 a Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL), whose mission is to:

> … work in partnership with the profession and other national organisations to deliver an education system … where every teacher … benefits from excellent leadership learning and development … (SCEL 2017: online)

In the recent consultation paper on proposed changes to the governance of Scottish schools, the Scottish Government (2016: 9) underlined the intention that local professionals were best placed to make situationally specific decisions on practice:

> [W]e want to see more decisions about school life being driven by schools themselves starting with a presumption that decisions about children's learning and school life should be taken at school level.

This expectation that all teachers participate in and contribute to leadership reflects the internationally prescribed distributed perspective on leadership (Spillane & Coldren 2011). In this way, 'global travelling educational leadership policy has been mediated by embedded Scottish practices and cultures, negotiated through consensual policy networks' (Torrance 2018: 4). However, although the broad thrust of this policy intention is clear, different potential elements of 'teacher leadership' are left in an uneasy tension. Autonomy, agency and the exercise of social influence – all key ingredients in the 'teacher leadership' literature and characteristic of the EIS definition of teacher leadership – are missing from the new Standards for teachers in Scotland, resulting in a contained and poorly articulated expression of teacher leadership. Expressions of teacher leadership in the Standard for Full Registration (GTCS 2012c), for example, are limited to building working relationships. As Torrance and Forde (2016: 118-119) identify, it is only in the Standard for Career Long Professional Learning that such expressions are extended to include the development of curriculum and pedagogy, albeit within a restricted conceptualisation of practitioner enquiry:

> The construction of teacher leadership is premised upon collaborative practice and this form of leadership evolves from knowledge to action and from participating and exchanging with peers to explicitly influencing others and directing activities. … there is no reference to exercising social influence.

Moreover, the Standards continue an on-going policy fudge across the related activities of leadership and management, such that teacher leadership may be seen to involve both delegated responsibilities and accountabilities within a management hierarchy, along with influence resulting from expertise, owned by the teacher, independent of any management role. Assigning 'leadership' of pedagogy and curriculum development to teachers as part of workforce reform, through the conveyed status of expert practitioner, may seem logical for policy makers. Indeed, part of the attraction for politicians is that responsibility for pupils' success or failure can be assigned to teachers (Humes 2000). However, tensions between different interpretations of 'teacher leadership' feed into different practice narratives across the Scottish school system. Without a fuller, agreed conceptualisation, how 'teacher leadership' is seen from the 'bottom up' may be very different from how it appears from the policy maker's desk.

The Study

This article reports on a small-scale mixed methods study of Scottish teachers following leadership development programmes, with both theoretical and practical components – teachers committed, therefore, to developing their leadership capacities. Aspects of the study, using part of the Scottish data, were reported in an earlier paper comparing parallel teacher leadership development experiences in Scotland and New Zealand (Torrance, Notman & Murphy 2017). This article focuses in greater detail on the particular themes that emerged from the Scottish study.

The data set was generated from two 20 credit equivalent postgraduate Masters courses, funded by the Scottish Government and delivered jointly by University and Local Authority staff. The first –*Developing As A Leader* (DAAL) had a 'short and fat' design (October 2014 and June 2015), supporting 22 participants who drew on existing leadership experience. The second – *Developing Teacher Leadership* (DTL) – had a 'long and skinny' design (October 2014 to January 2016). Although most DTL participants had less leadership experience, in practice no noteworthy differences emerged in the data, as evaluated in two reports compiled for key stakeholders (Torrance & Murphy 2016a, 2016b). The results reported here are therefore based on the combined data set.

The research study design approximated Maykut & Morehouse's (1994) adaptive model. The interpretive paradigm within which the study sits accepts that multiple realities exist for both observer and observed (Morrison 2002). Data collection involved open-ended questionnaires – pre-course (all 45 participants) and post-course (32 of 45 completed; completed anonymously) – both of which probed motivations, understandings and experience of teacher leadership. Fourteen individual semi-structured interviews (selected from eight DTL and nine DAAL volunteers), collected rich qualitative data and contextual insights and were conducted on site or by telephone. Participants were encouraged to speak in their own terms (albeit informed by their reading and participation in the course) referring to their own experience, rather than seeking to demonstrate knowledge of the literature. They validated the transcribed responses. While there was a spread of gender, sector and range of leadership experience in each cohort, the interviews produced rich individual insights rather than reliably generalisable data.

Constant comparative analysis of the data ran concurrently with data collection in a process of inductive cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994). Although the small sample size and participant self-reporting prohibit generalisations, the insights gained into teachers' leadership thinking and experiences may have relevance across and beyond Scotland. As in all Masters-level learning, there was an expectation that participants engaged in processes of policy interrogation, exploration of theory and critical reflection on practice. A number of themes emerged sufficiently clearly to be reported below, then discussed in terms of their implications for future policy and practice.

The Course Participants

The following tables detail the key characteristics of the two groups of course participants and of those, the respondents contributing to the data set available for analysis (questionnaire and interview). The majority of quotations included in the analysis which follows were taken from the interview responses.

Table 1: *Developing teacher leadership* overall course cohort data – 23 participants

	Age	Length of Service	Gender	Sector
Male			8	
Female			15	
Mean	33.7	6.1		
Median	31	5.5		
Primary Sector				8
Secondary Sector				14
Nursery Sector				0
Primary & Secondary Sector				0
Special Education (Primary) Sector				1

Table 2: *Developing teacher leadership* course participant contributors to analysis data sets

	Entry Questionnaire	Interview	Course Evaluation
Number	23	7	17
Gender	15 F / 8 M	5 F / 2 M	12 F / 5 M
Sector	8 P / 14 S / 1 SpEd(P)	2 P / 5 S	6 P, 11S
Mean Age	33.7	34.7	
Median Age	31	35	
Mean Service (years)	6.1	7.2	
Median Service (years)	5.5	7	

Table 3: *Developing as a leader* overall course cohort data – 22 participants

	Age	Length of Service	Gender	Sector
Male			8	
Female			14	
Mean	40.1	12.1		
Median	38	9		
Primary Sector				12
Secondary Sector				8
Nursery Sector				1
Primary & Secondary Sector				1
Special Education (Primary) Sector				0

Table 4: *Developing as a leader* participant contributors to analysis data sets

	Entry Questionnaire	Interview	Course Evaluation
Number	22	7	15
Gender	14 F / 8 M	3 F / 4 M	9 F / 6 M
Sector	12 P / 8 S / 1 N / 1 P&S	5 P / 2 S	7 P / 7 S / 1 N
Mean Age	40	43	
Median Age	38	38	
Mean Service (years)	12	10	
Median Service (years)	9	8	

Cohort Comparison:

- *Developing As A Leader* participants were on average 7 years older and 6 years longer in post;
- *Developing As A Leader* participants were more likely to be primary teachers

Table 5: Course participant group comparison

	Developing Teacher Leadership	*Developing As A Leader*
Interview	5/15 Female; 2/8 Male	3/14 Female; 4/8 Male
	2/8 Primary; 5/14 Secondary	5/12 Primary; 2/14 Secondary
Course Evaluation	12/15 Female; 5/8 Male	9/14 Female; 6/8 Male
	6/8 Primary; 11/14 Secondary	7/12 Primary; 7/8 Secondary; 1/1 Nursery

Conceptualisations of 'Teacher Leadership'

Teachers defined or discussed teacher leadership differently to forms of leadership with specific targeted responsibilities. It was a quality rather than a responsibility:

> It's really part of your identity as a teacher and not a job or a role you're given. (DTL3)

The practice of teacher leadership did not require a title. It involved specific *expertise* and *professional credibility*, owned by the teacher, *voluntary not instructed*:

> The individual has to be interested and passionate in whatever they're doing, otherwise it doesn't get done well if it's pushed on to you and you don't want to do it. (DTL12)

Some worried that the concept could be divisive if some teachers were seen to be 'leaders' and consequently others felt excluded:

> The idea of a 'label' does make me feel uncomfortable as that introduces the idea of a them and us. (DTL22)

To avoid what were seen as the potentially exclusive characteristics of 'leadership', different terms such as *active teaching* and *collegial working* were suggested. One respondent extended the range of the concept in an inclusive way to include everyone in a school community:

> I'm uncomfortable that it's only for teachers... when you start talking about teacher leadership, others like classroom assistants and parents and janitors etc. might feel they are not involved. The term distributed leadership, once you define what it means, is more inclusive... e.g. cleaners can be leaders in their area... we need to be careful about the language we use and I don't think TL is the correct term. (DAAL 8)

For many it was easier to say what teacher leadership was *not*. For example, most resisted the idea that teacher leadership was delegated, some complaining that headteachers were using the concept to justify increasing the range and number of delegated tasks. Some bemoaned the 'flattening' of the professional hierarchy which followed on from TP21's removal of ‘layers’ of management, from secondary schools in particular (as previously discussed). Teacher leadership was, in this view, part of a pattern to save money - teachers being expected to undertake more delegated work without extra remuneration.

Many respondents were keen to separate ‘management’ from ‘leadership’. Management was perceived as staid, systems-related and less personal, concerned with paperwork, organisation, bureaucracy and the allocation of resources, conveying specific responsibilities and accountabilities. Leadership was perceived as open, flexible and practical, offering opportunity rather than controlling:

> [W]ith leadership you need to believe in something and have a personal commitment to the values of the area involved whereas management is a list of tasks, organisation, paperwork… leadership is more personal than management – it's about driving and engaging change that leads to improvement. (DAAL 21)

It was also recognised that teacher leadership could be negative in its influence, with teachers who ‘leave you feeling worse’:

> [N]egativity about anything that anyone suggests, often saying things that undermine other people … dragging down their own potential and those of others. … It comes from bitterness or maybe problems outwith school … being treated badly themselves. DAAL 7)

Given the strong practical focus of many definitions of teacher leadership, it is not surprising that respondents had much more to say about its practice, exemplifying rather than defining it:

> For me it’s about teachers on the ground, at the chalk face, driving forward an initiative they see as important, to address pupils’ needs. (DTL 17)

Teacher leadership was found in modelling, in sharing, in showing, not telling:

> It's a way of working where you work collaboratively with your peers towards a common goal. (DTL23)

Teacher leadership operated through collegial peer influence (rather than ‘power’), putting pupils first, focused on practical solutions rather than complicated policy:

> It's about many different things – relationships, knowledge of people, knowledge of the school, being self-aware but having an awareness of other people and the impact of your actions … influencing colleagues, pupils, stakeholders to take the school forward. (DAAL 8)

For many respondents, ‘the kids’ came first:

> [M]y focus is to do the best for the kids in my school … doesn't have to be massive changes. (DAAL 1)
>
> [T]o do what's best for the school and its learners. (DAAL 8)

Those exercising leadership displayed an encouraging manner, generosity of spirit, a positive outlook. Some of the clearest descriptions were of role models, who were calm, passionate about education, sincere, trustworthy, with sound, well-articulated educational principles linking theory and practice, and strong interpersonal skills. They focused on what is best for children but tempered their idealism with practical realism. 'The best leaders' one respondent said, 'are the nicest people':

> One teacher started at the same time as I did at X Academy... it's just her whole manner, her personality, always positive thinking, intuitive about pupils' needs and interested in all pupils. She's always keen to try things and use new ideas, keen to share and work with other staff members … She's someone who can learn in all situations and wants to improve. (DAAL 14)

On the other hand, teacher leadership in action could be negative in character, with some teachers displaying insincerity, untrustworthiness, disinterest in others' viewpoints, telling not showing. These teachers were seen to be in it for self (e.g. promotion) not pupils and could abuse their status or power.

Teacher leadership, as practised in Scottish schools, was seen as a change still in process:

> When I started teaching no-one talked about teacher leadership and now it's become a kind of expectation... e.g. newly qualified teachers … they're hungry for it. ... It's become a standard interview question, even for an unpromoted post now, 'what leadership tasks have you taken on? How have you demonstrated your leadership skills?' …. It'll be interesting to see how that goes in the future... ten or fifteen years down the line … With younger teachers coming through it's already blurring... they've seen themselves as leaders from the get-go. (DTL13)

Motivations in Teacher Leadership

Only seven out of the 45 respondents in the initial questionnaire mentioned extrinsic motivating factors behind their teacher leadership aspirations, such as increased possibilities of future promotion. One complained that delegated responsibilities under the heading of 'teacher leadership' did not attract additional remuneration:

> [T]here's no reason why leadership activities should not be paid ... [it] should be in there somewhere or many will think this is just about getting jobs done on the cheap. (DAAL 7)

Intrinsic motivations were much more common. For some there was pride, excitement and a sense of ownership in potentially making a difference on a wider stage, something that was not 'imposed'. Almost all specifically talked about developing their practice for the benefit of pupils, exerting an influence beyond their own classroom:

> [M]y goal is genuinely to improve my own practice, that of others and to ensure that the outcomes for pupils are better. (DTL 13)
>
> It's about developing me as a teacher [while] sharing my knowledge and experience as a teacher with others. I want to influence the way the school develops and improves ... that's a huge thing – not just to support an individual child but to make a difference for the majority of pupils. (DAAL 14)

A generally positive optimistic tone suffused these responses:

> It's about taking the lead and being positive … I've seen so many brilliant teachers do just that. (DTL 17)

Some motivations were more specific to the individuals involved. One was excited by developing collaborative work – initial teacher education focused too much on the teacher as an individual. One was motivated by the example of other 'brilliant teachers'. Others mentioned specific areas of interest or enthusiasm where they wanted to lead e.g. 'growth mindset' and 'numeracy'.

Such intrinsic motivations could be harmed by external delegation of leadership tasks that a teacher might feel unable or unwilling to fulfil, compounded by lack of appreciation. The teacher had to 'own' their motivation:

> … local headteachers have given me and the others a task to complete but if that's not something you're into yourself you're not as enthusiastic. (DAAL 8)
>
> … at a personal level, retaining motivation when no-one says 'well done'... That's it – you finish one thing and there's more to do. (DTL 17)

Cultural Factors Influencing the Development of Teacher Leadership

Cultural factors influenced the developing practice of teacher leadership, both in the school community – where informal chat, old habits and interpersonal factors were at work – and nationwide, where the changing professional culture of the Scottish teaching profession was exerting local influence and new teachers were expected to play a leadership role within their classroom and through collegial influence in special areas of expertise:

> I have hope in the new teachers and the new input they are getting ... but … for people who have been teaching for twenty years of maybe thirty it is like, 'what seriously you really ask me to do what? I didn't sign up for this' and they are just trapped. (DAAL 21)

Contrastingly one respondent, a late entrant to teaching, was less hopeful. Initial teacher education still emphasised the individual too much, with little preparation for collegial approaches:

> [O]ne of the biggest things is that when you qualify as a teacher and the training that comes afterwards, there seems to be an expectation that we'll all just work together and everything will be hunky dory. (DTL 23)

These teachers reported that there was still a long way to go before national policy messages were translated into local practice. Many teachers were said to be unaware of the new expectations within the Standards:

> Although it's now embraced in the Standards, most of the staff in my school didn't actually know that. (DAAL 6)
>
> It's therefore difficult for people to take on … teacher leadership … when it is not well understood… there isn't the intellectual conceptual background for it. (DAAL 7)

At least in part, this was a consequence of policy overload:

> [T]here's so many initiatives coming from a higher level. (DTL 12)

Even where the new Standards were in use, there was a fear expressed that they may be used in a 'tick box' manner ('what leadership responsibility have you undertaken this year?'). Moreover, the experience and opportunities of the teachers in an individual school were likely to be profoundly influenced by the interpretations of teacher leadership developed locally through interpersonal relationships, local understandings and the influential words and deeds of specific teachers – the local school culture.

For a culture to develop that facilitated teacher leadership, it was deemed essential to have a supportive headteacher and management team, setting a tone in which creative 'bottom-up' teacher leadership was valued. Yet in the experience of the participants in these programmes, Scottish schools present a very chequered picture. 'In my school the concept of teacher leadership is very undeveloped' was a not untypical response. Respondents also mentioned managers who did not understand it, or felt threatened by teacher leadership.

Those practising teacher leadership must be allowed to try things out, rather than 'hung out to dry' (a phrase used by two interviewees) if initiatives were not successful. Trust was vital:

> [T]here has to be an open and trusting relationship between teachers and formal leaders if teachers are to get the right kind of support. (DAAL 6)
>
> [C]ollegiality and trust are the key words. (DAAL 21)

Where these were missing, teaching colleagues could also make life difficult:

> When you put your head above the parapet, you get a bit of … 'they're doing us a disservice because if that gets embedded then we'll all end up having to do that'. (DTL 13)
>
> [S]ome colleagues contribute to the them/us culture and meet new ideas with a kind of hardened cynicism. (DTL 22)

Such cultural factors influencing teacher leadership interacted with management systems to facilitate or inhibit the flourishing of teacher leadership.

The Role of Management

Managers needed to make time and resources available and to enable effective shared communication within which, the headteacher's support was made clear. The poor management of leadership activities could lead to too many teachers competing for time, resources, influence and priority, rather than collaborating:

> [W]ithout effective systems to fit things into the vision … you get these manic pockets around the school where you find out 'oh so and so's doing this' and then 'oh so and so's doing that' and someone else is doing something else … things popping out of nowhere, things happening here, questionnaires being distributed there ... if somebody … isn't taking the reins and evaluating what's going on, it becomes disconnected, sporadic. … it can become like a kind of runaway train ... you need the freedom but it does need to be managed. (DTL 13)

Work overload was identified as a key inhibiting factor, whether emanating from the top-down national policy overload or from more local pressures:

> In (X High School) 80% of the working groups are suggested by the Depute Headteachers and Principal Teachers. How do you turn it round so that 80% can come from the teachers who work directly with the pupils and know the issues? (DTL 23)

Many more challenges than opportunities were identified at school level. These all needed good management:

- potential mismatches between school and teachers' priorities
- favouritism in the distribution of leadership opportunities
- balancing the time needed for leadership activities and the time needed for teaching
- stress (a little was seen as good, too much as bad) and consequent burnout
- worries about budgets – current levels of support for teacher leadership development might not be sustained.

But teachers also had to accept responsibility. It was not a 'one way street'. A teacher exercising leadership had to be seen as credible by their peers.

Despite many such concerns, the overall tone of the interviews was critically positive – these teachers wanted more responsibility, to have a wider impact in their school community for the benefit of their pupils.

Professional Development through Teacher Leadership

Despite any difficulties encountered in contextual practice, both sets of respondents reported enhanced professional development. They understood better Scottish policy development and the role of the teacher Standards. The professional literature was perceived as stimulating. Greater knowledge of research increased confidence in developing and expressing views and even influenced practice. A few acknowledged difficulty in finding the time to read and for some the literature was seen as difficult to access. All respondents indicated that the course enhanced their self-evaluation, with beneficial effects on their practice:

> I have identified areas of strength and weakness in my leadership. (DTL 6)
>
> It has really changed my mindset regarding my practice. (DTL 24)

All felt generally better prepared for leadership, with a stronger, more confident professional identity:

> Nothing is going to knock my change in understanding/thinking. There has been a fundamental shift in my attitude. I will not get disillusioned with the idea of teacher leadership. (DAAL 7)

The collegial character of teacher leadership – the agency and power of teachers working together – was often mentioned. However it was also felt that the opportunity to learn and develop passed by those who needed it most:

> [T]he people who end up doing this kind of stuff are the people who would be doing this stuff anyway... they're the people who are open to it. The people who need it, don't do it. (DAAL 1)

For some, the continuing tension between teacher leadership as a general concept and specific leadership roles/tasks remained contentious.

> [T]he more I see myself in a teacher leadership role, the more aware I am of it being an uneasy position. It makes me wonder about how sustainable teacher leadership is for an individual – could an individual remain as a 'teacher leader' throughout their career without being seen as a puppet? Or as 'hogging' all the limelight? (DTL 22)

Discussion and Implications

Although the teachers in this study were committed to learning about and developing their leadership, they identified tensions in the articulation and practice of teacher leadership. Both literature and policy fudge the concepts of 'teacher leadership' and 'teacher leader'. The former suggests more fluid and 'bottom-up' leadership practices – autonomy, agency, creativity, situational judgement – owned by and open to all teachers; the latter suggests specific leadership roles or tasks assigned to some teachers only. The revised Standards, a policy tool for workforce reform (Torrance & Humes 2015) to which all Scottish teachers are meant to consult for their on-going professional development, draw loosely from 'teacher leadership' and 'practitioner enquiry'. The concept of 'policy fudge' is used by Murphy & Raffe (2015: 155) to encapsulate a characteristic aspect of Scottish educational policy, which has both advantages and disadvantages.

> Policy 'fudge' – vagueness about policy goals and strategies – can be helpful, allowing parties with different views to find common ground. It can reflect the fuzzy nature of a service that has multiple aims … Fudge, however, can cause damage … [it] may reduce conflict but it also reduces clarity.

It could be argued, that the policy fudge in the conceptualisation and practice of teacher leadership in Scotland was intentional – representing a political compromise. *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson 2010: 5) proclaimed, 'There is an urgent need to challenge the narrow interpretations of the teacher's role'. The policy implementation documents that followed did little to take up that challenge. While the presentation of teacher leadership as unproblematic on the one hand side-stepped the need for challenging conversations at policy level, on the other hand it simply shifted the challenge to the contextualised practice of teacher leadership, in which hierarchical and informal leadership performing different if complementary roles, are now expected to intuitively coexist in harmony within a distributed perspective. In so doing, the macro level fudge has become a micro level issue, where there is no common understanding between teachers and managers of what teacher leadership involves. Such a common understanding would recognise the complex interplay between bottom-up leadership, focused on the leadership of learning and top-down (delegated/distributed) leadership, focused on the overall strategic direction of the school. Although a supportive culture (Angelle & Teague 2014) legitimises and enables informal leadership, culture is not in itself enough. In schools where there is support for teacher leadership activity but it is poorly managed, 'manic pockets' of practice can develop. Good management develops common understandings, but also clarifies priorities and recognises where space and time are needed.

Other policy initiatives have failed to address 'who owns the space where teachers' pedagogical expertise is recognised and collaborative processes are enacted' (Torrance & Forde 2016: 122). On the one hand, *Curriculum for Excellence* (Education Scotland 2013a: 25) promotes itself as 'explicitly designed to give practitioners much greater professional freedom in deciding exactly what and how they teach to motivate and develop their learners'. On the other hand, 20,000 pages of 'advice' were created to 'support' teachers with implementing the new curriculum and many teachers remain unclear whether or not they have the freedom to exercise their own judgement or must do as they are told (The Herald 2017). Underneath lies a question of whether every teacher has capacity to lead (Harris & DeFlaminis 2016). Scottish policy is also unclear on the relationship of leadership to management.

The highly motivated teachers in this study grew in confidence, when their professional learning about teacher leadership as a concept was scaffolded, taking ownership of and practising teacher leadership. They perceived of their enthusiasms, their specialities, their interests as very different from management. But it was not only these teachers who were exercising leadership power in their school settings. Many referred to colleagues whom they saw as having a negative leadership influence, holding back positive developments. Teacher leadership power is thus more fluid and flexible but also more volatile and unpredictable than the power and authority vested in school management layers, in the structures of accountability and responsibility for Scottish schools, and in the local authorities that employ teachers. Within a distributed perspective, further discussion is needed around who is responsible and accountable, for what and to whom?

At the macro level, these issues could form part of the current national discussion on the governance of Scottish school education (Scottish Government 2016). The consultation phase (now closed) could have provided the ideal vehicle for an informed civic and professional discussion of the character and responsibilities of the teacher as a public professional: To whom is s/he accountable and in what measure? To their clients – the pupils and parents? To their employers – the elected local authorities? National government, and its agencies and inspectors who set policy, provide most of the resources and have often required compliance. How are tensions in these sometimes conflicting responsibilities and accountabilities best resolved, in a manner which liberates the professional creativity and agency of the teacher? The professional Standards – both as policy implementation tools, and as supports for teachers' self-evaluation and professional learning (Forde & Torrance 2016) – could play a role in clarifying the meaning of teacher leadership. It remains to be seen whether the governance review will lead to a clearer, and more widely understood, conceptualisation of teachers' leadership or whether a typical Scottish policy fudge will continue to cause the problems and tensions typical of the practice realities experienced by the teachers in this study.

Given the confusions, clarifications, competing interpretations and different interests at play at the different levels of the Scottish school system, competing interpretations of teacher leadership may well continue to sit side by side in tension. The different perspectives on teacher leadership in the literature and policy will thus continue to create practice tensions and dilemmas for individual teachers. These tensions and dilemmas, evident in the experiences of our teacher leadership respondents, were perceived as both potential challenges to be overcome and as potential obstacles hampering further development. School managers, by helping to develop a clear consistent local understanding of 'what teacher leadership means, and how it works in our school', may help to resolve some of the tension at local level, but teachers themselves have a proactive role to play. It was evident in the responses of the teachers in this study that the professional development programme provided a language and confidence to embrace a stronger collegial professional role and, despite challenges and obstacles encountered, a willingness and enthusiasm to take on leadership responsibilities and exercise situational judgement for the benefit of their pupils.

Conclusion

Local developments in Scotland reflect a wider global policy movement to re-professionalise teaching through new and enhanced expectations of the teaching profession, utilising discourses such as ‘teacher leadership’ and ‘expert practitioners’, encouraging the active engagement of teachers in school improvement processes. Tensions between differing conceptualisations of teacher leadership, and its relationship to formal management hierarchies, run through both the literature and the experiences reported in this Scottish study. In the absence of a clear, coherent Scottish account of the concept and consequent practice implications of teacher leadership, the complicated interactions between formal and informal leadership expectations will continue to cause tensions in the relationships and practices of individual school communities. In enacting policy into practice, the teachers in this study made sense of normative/aspirational theory and policy tools, whilst encountering practice realities. Their experience demonstrates both the school-level tensions encountered if some teachers have a greater understanding of policy intentions than their peers and, in some cases, their managers, but also the positive possibilities of liberating the creativity and professional agency of teachers.

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Author Details

Deirdre Torrance
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh, UK
Email: deirdre.torrance@ed.ac.uk

Daniel Murphy
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh, UK
Email: daniel.murphy@ed.ac.uk