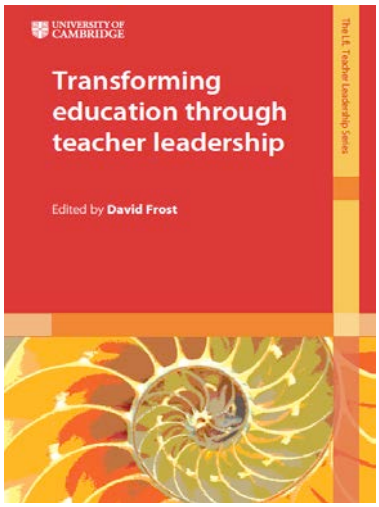
The HertsCam TLDW programme

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Editor's introduction

Val Hill is an Assistant Headteacher at Birchwood High School and has been involved in HertsCam since 2006 when she joined the HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning course with a goal to work out how best to support the improvement of teaching and learning in her school. She came to the view that the TLDW programme would be a good strategy through which she could achieve her goal. She writes here on behalf of many others who have been instrumental in developing the TLDW programme. These include: Jo Mylles, Deputy Headteacher at Sir John Lawes School, who started the first TLDW group in 2005 which continues to this day; Paul Barnett, Deputy Headteacher at Barnwell School, who has been running a TLDW group at his school continuously since 2006; Amanda Roberts, who worked as a consultant for HertsCam, supported Val in establishing the TLDW programme in her school in 2007 and founded other groups elsewhere. These individuals are TLDW veterans who, through the practice of facilitation, have refined the art of it and have helped others to become similarly expert. They were the founders of a tutor team, which has included more than 30 experienced teachers.

Key lessons about teacher leadership

- The flourishing of non-positional teacher leadership requires expert facilitation from experienced teachers and the use of tools and techniques designed for the purpose.

- Enabling teachers to design and lead development projects is a productive strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

It has become widely accepted that teacher quality is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement (OECD, 2011). This has led increasingly to a focus on systems to remediate those individual teachers who are identified as 'requiring improvement' (Ofsted, 2014) while, regrettably, little attention has been given by policy makers to ways in which the development of professional practice is transformed when it is something owned by, rather than done to, teachers. The HertsCam TLDW model offers a successful alternative approach.

The programme that became HertsCam began in 1999 when a partnership between the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and the Hertfordshire Local Education Authority was formed to provide a two-year part-time MEd course for teachers. While this was immediately successful, it was quickly realised that another level of provision was needed; one which allowed more teachers to participate in professional learning and develop leadership capacity. The concept of teacher-led development work grew out of David Frost's earlier work (1995, 2000) which focused on resolving the tension between teachers' professional learning and the development needs of the school as an organisation. The solution was the language of teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership: an emerging focus

The term 'teacher leadership' was prominent in the discourse of professionalisation in the USA in the 1980s and 1990s (Little, 1988; Lieberman, 1992; York-Barr and Duke, 2004). It continued to appear in the literature throughout the 1990s both in the US and Australia (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Crowther *et al.,* 2002). Meanwhile in England, the focus tended to be on training for 'middle leadership' and 'emergent leaders' to enable heads of departments and other team leaders to manage their teams more productively (Naylor *et al.*, 2006). Each of these approaches features the designation of a minority of teachers as 'teacher leaders'. In HertsCam we took the view that this places unacceptable limits on the development of leadership capacity. A more promising approach for us was to build on Hoyle's idea of 'extended professionality' (Hoyle, 1975, 2008) to propose that leadership could be a dimension of all teachers' professionality. Consequently we argued for an approach to teacher leadership, which does not assume that leadership is linked with positions in the organisational hierarchy of the school. Instead it recognises the potential of all teachers to exercise leadership as part of their role as a teacher. We believe that all teachers and education practitioners have some leadership capacity. After all, leadership is a dimension of being human. In HertsCam and the wider International Teacher Leadership (ITL) network, we argue that it should be seen as an essential part of teachers' professionality (Frost, 2011).

In the HertsCam model teacher leadership is conceptualised as the process whereby teachers

clarify their values, develop their vision of improved practice and act strategically to set in motion processes in which colleagues are drawn into activities such as self-evaluation and innovation. The approach rests on the assumption that the enhancement of human agency within a culture of shared responsibility for reform and learning outcomes for all students is essential for all members of learning communities (Frost, 2006). Our understanding of leadership reflects Yukl's classic definition (2010); it is about having intentional influence over others, to guide, structure and facilitate activities and relationships. What is perhaps distinctive in the HertsCam model is that leadership is not the prerogative of the few, nor is it linked to positional power.

We have pursued teacher leadership through the 'teacher-led development work' (TLDW) model (Frost, 2013) in which leadership is enacted by collaborating with colleagues, gathering and interpreting evidence in order to stimulate and support reflection, evaluation, deliberation and decision-making. The desired outcome is improvement rather than mere understanding. As a methodology, teacher-led development work might be taken to be merely another approach to professional learning, but in this approach, learning is not limited to the individual; it is extended to colleagues, the school as an organisation and members of the teaching profession more widely. It has been noted that professional development programmes that focus on the individual do little to build professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Where schools do invest in strategies to create high social capital, individuals develop confidence, learning from the interactions and relationships around them. If, as Schein (1985) suggests, the most important thing leaders do is to create and manage culture, perhaps TLDW has been so successful because it has helped to change the school culture through increasing organisational capital and human agency. Embracing this approach to leadership disperses the 'bottleneck' caused by decision-making and strategic action being confined to the few.

Teachers are usually driven by their strong sense of moral purpose (Fullan, 1993), but this alone does not guarantee improvement or change. As Fullan points out, without agency this moral purpose merely becomes martyrdom, yet mobilising teachers' moral purpose is essential in creating sustainable improvements in practice (Frost and Roberts, 2013). A common mistake on the part of senior leaders is that it is about getting teachers 'on board' by a relentless focus on the mission statement backed up by the carrots and sticks of high stakes testing, performance related pay and other instruments of incentivisation. Rather, in order to mobilise teachers' moral purpose, policy makers need to think differently about the nature of professional practice, seeing it not as matter of deploying the skills gained through training, but as the enactment of pedagogical principles through enhanced professionality. Such professionality includes the exercise of leadership and an active role in the creation and collective development of professional knowledge. Instead of undermining teachers' morale and disempowering then with top-down accountability strategies, policy could enable teachers by adopting strategies that both

draw on and enhance their human agency. It is this which the HertsCam model taps into.

The structure of the TLDW programme

At the time of writing there are sixteen TLDW groups supporting approximately 120 participants who are mostly teachers. In 2014-15 the programme is likely to double in size. Some groups have been sustained for a number of years; in one school over an eight-year period 58 members of staff completed the TLDW programme and 18 completed the MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning programme. This had a significant impact on school improvement and the quality of teaching and learning. Many of the TLDW groups include support staff such as librarians and learning support assistants. The evidence shows that these non-teacher members tend to be very successful and are regarded as adding value to their groups, schools and to HertsCam more widely.

The challenge is to use the most effective techniques and tools to mobilise teachers as agents of change. It is not sufficient simply to invite teachers to lead, assuming that all they need is time and space. Their previous experiences have not necessarily prepared them for this and their circumstances may not be conducive. The mobilisation of teacher leadership requires specific intervention in the form of structures, activities and tools designed to inspire and enable practitioners to exercise leadership. Deliberate and focused support encourages teachers to view leadership as an integral part of their role and enables them to act strategically to make a substantial and sustainable difference to practice in their schools.

A key element of the TLDW programme is a series of six school-based workshop sessions, each held at the end of a teaching day, across a whole academic year. These sessions feature activities that enable teachers to plan their development projects and derive mutual support and challenge as they discuss the progress and impact of their work. The tutors' use of specially designed tools, materials and techniques in these sessions facilitates a process of values clarification, reflection on development needs, consultation with colleagues about development priorities, negotiation of strategic action plans and the leadership of development work. The vignette presented below illustrates the nature of these workshop sessions.

Vignette – the first half of a typical TLDW session

> The meeting is held in a classroom at 3.45pm. There are two tutors, Derek and Rosie, who arrive at 3.30 to arrange the furniture and set out fruit, sandwiches, cakes and water. They arrange tables, boardroom style, and also set out a separate row of tables with chairs on both sides for a 'speed-dating' activity. Everybody has a big coloured card bearing their

name. Typed agendas are supplied and each member of the group has a bespoke ring binder prepared for them by the tutors. The first activity involves a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and Derek uses a PowerPoint slide to explain the categories. This is done by individuals first and then, after a few minutes of reflection and note-taking, accounts are shared through the speed-dating activity. Each person sits opposite another person and has just three minutes to explain how their project is going; then everybody moves along the row to explain it all to another person and so on. This is a good energiser, intense and engaging and gets everybody talking about their projects. The tutors debrief the activity by teasing out the issues and questions arising. The discussion focuses on the way that evidence is generated and can be used to make practice visible, to enable discussions with colleagues, to help us reflect on practice and evaluate it. The second activity involves using sheets of sugar paper to make lists of items of evidence. Derek explains that evidence should be authentic and perhaps ephemeral – an email, notes scribbled on a *pro forma* etc. This is done in pairs, then pairs join up to make fours, comparing lists and so on. Next, Rosie hands out a 'contract' – a theatrical device designed in the form of a scroll. The aim is to enable participants to set themselves targets. They write down something they promise to do by February half term and sign it. The tone here is amusing but quite firm, a style that fits well with TLDW. At 4.45pm there is a break for sandwiches.

All the school-based sessions are led by someone who is a member of the school staff and is also recognised and approved by HertsCam as a member of the Tutor Team. The team currently consists of around 30 teachers who often have significant responsibility for teaching and learning or a formal leadership responsibility in their school. Members of the team have access to a sophisticated package of tools and resources – the HertsCam Tutor Guide -distributed through a dedicated virtual learning site. Resources are adapted and developed by tutors and shared within the Tutor Team. To support consistency of practice within the team, a fortnightly tutor bulletin provides information relating to the programme, including key actions, calendar dates, network events and important deadlines while support for tutors is provided through twilight tutor meetings and an annual tutor conference.

The TLDW model assumes that, in order to be able to lead change, teachers need to work sequentially through a number of key steps. In this step-by-step approach tools and techniques are used to model and guide the process.

Step 1	the teacher clarifies their professional values
Step 2	they identify a concern
Step 3	they negotiate with colleagues to explore that concern
Step 4	they design and produce action plan for a development project – a process of change
Step 5	they negotiate with colleagues to refine the practicality of the project

The first five steps are essential to ensure that projects have maximum impact.

In Step 6, teachers lead projects that draw colleagues, students and their families into collaborative processes – the project itself. Each project enhances professional knowledge within the individual's school, but Step 7 enables project leaders to contribute to knowledge building in their networks and educational systems.

When teachers register with our TLDW programme they undertake to participate for one academic year in the first instance. Throughout the year they collect two kinds evidence: evidence of their participation in the programme and evidence of having led a development project. Group tutors encourage participants to use the various *pro formas* and tools that provide structure for reflection to record their ideas and experiences. Towards the end of the academic year, participants are asked to bring their evidence together, add appropriate commentary and submit the resulting portfolio of evidence. Tutors collect in the portfolios and assess against agreed criteria for the purposes of certification. We use a standard assessment sheet, which has headings as follows:

Focus of development
Participation
Development work
Impact
Analysis and reflection
Presentation
Outcome / result

The tutor's comments are carefully written to draw attention to the teacher's achievement but this is not academic achievement, rather it is about what the person has actually done to improve practice in the school. Once portfolios have been assessed, the whole Tutor Team comes together to compare their assessments and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the portfolios. This moderation process ensures that we apply a shared standard. Once assessment sheets are finalised and checked, successful participants are issued with the 'HertsCam Certificate in Teacher Leadership'.

A key dimension in the framework of support is the one-to-one tutorials that usually take place in school during the day and may also be followed up by email support. Typically they last for twenty minutes and focus on such matters as the participant's action plan. Teachers design a plan that addresses their own professional concerns and tutors critique these to ensure viability and

maximum impact. Most participants value these and find the feedback and guidance helpful (Wearing, 2011). Sometimes schools collaborate to provide tutorial support from a different perspective. Where this has happened, the tutor from one school visited the partner school to do the tutorials and vice versa. Tutorials help participants to think through their action plans and clarify what is being kept for the portfolio. It can also be an opportunity for tutors who are senior leaders in the school to identify opportunities and links that will enhance the teacher's development project.

Creating knowledge through projects

A common fallacy is that educational change results from practitioner research in which 'findings' are shared. The problem is that invariably the responsibility for leading change is left to someone other than the teacher who did the research (Frost, 2007). In HertsCam, we firmly reject this approach. In the TLDW programme the action planning stage is critical because this is a crucial opportunity to support teachers in designing a process that aims to influence others through the activity of the project itself. Action plans are modelled and exemplified through our materials before teachers are invited to design a plan that addresses their own professional concerns. Group tutors critique first attempts in order to ensure that project designs foreground leadership, collaboration and innovation.

The idea that teacher leadership can be best cultivated through development projects is perhaps unique. Just appointing someone to a role with the label 'Teacher Leader' can lead to vague and unfocussed activity whereas, a TLDW project has specific aims. It is personalised and relevant, with each teacher making a commitment to develop a particular aspect of practice related to their professional concern. Research indicates that teachers put a high value on the kind of collaborative, enquiry-based work that can flow from such project work (Pedder *et al.*, 2008). The idea of strategic action planning in which teachers devise and lead collaborative enquiry-based activities addresses the need identified in this research.

The building and refreshing of teachers' professional knowledge depends on teachers being able to share the story of their leadership of a development project. They do this face-to-face in network events, which are meetings of all the TLDW participants, tutors and those undertaking the master's programme. Teachers present their stories in workshops and join discussion groups to share and develop their thinking. They put up posters depicting their projects and invite feedback from their peers. They also share stories through written accounts on the network's website. When teachers share stories of development work, they are not just passing on technical information, they are also inspiring and spreading the virus of moral purpose.

Adopting this approach to support teacher leadership has implications for our pedagogy as teacher educators. It requires the abandonment of the concept of training; a behaviourist term that implies a deficit in the teacher's competence that has to be remedied by instruction by external experts. External expertise remains important but in the form of facilitation and critical friendship. Considerable ingenuity is called for to devise and use tools designed as scaffolding for teachers' reflection, discussion, planning and evaluation. Skill and sensitivity are deployed to create a sense of community within which there is sufficient trust and mutual respect to allow space for teachers' 'voice' and robust discussion and this is provided by the HertsCam Tutor Team.

Impact

Since the beginning of the TLDW programme we have been challenged by outsiders to demonstrate impact. Our view is that the priority is to enable the teachers themselves to plan for maximum impact and to assess the impact of their innovations. In collaboration with another HEI, a small-scale research project was devised to develop categories that could be used as a basis for planning, analysis and reflection. These emerged from a series of interviews with teachers who identified themselves as leading development work. A summary of the impact framework appears below.

> **Impact on pupils' learning**
> Attainment / Disposition / Meta-cognition
>
> **Impact on teachers**
> Classroom practice / Personal capacity / Interpersonal capacity
>
> **Impact on the school as an organisation**
> Structures and processes / Culture and capacity
>
> **Impact beyond the school**
> Critique and debate / Creation and transfer of professional knowledge / Improvements in social capital in the community
>
> (Frost and Durrant, 2002)

Since then, this framework has underpinned the design of tools and activities to enable teachers to plan, track and evaluate the impact of their development work as it is taking place. This framework and associated tools have been used in a variety of different ways not only by individuals but also by schools to assess the impact of various initiatives as part of their self-evaluation programmes.

The Network

A feature of the HertsCam programme is networking which is mostly done through regular Network Events and an Annual Conference. Our calendar of events normally includes around six each year. All members of the network, including the tutors and those participating in the master's programme, are invited to attend. In order to successfully meet the requirements of the certificated programme, TLDW participants are obliged to attend at least three of these events. Network Events take place in the 'twilight' period after a school day between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm. They are hosted by schools in the network and all the workshops are led by teachers. In these workshop sessions, teachers discuss their projects and share ideas about how to address their professional concerns.

In HertsCam we tend to use the term 'knowledge building' rather than 'knowledge management' (Collison and Parcell, 2004) because we want to indicate the particular dialogic nature of the process where members of the network present their work to each other and provide reciprocal critical friendship.

The launching of the Teacher Leadership journal in 2007 was a significant extension of our knowledge building in that it provided a means to capture accounts of teachers' development work and make them available to other teachers worldwide, thus giving teachers a voice within the public discourse about education reform (Bangs and Frost, 2012; Frost, 2008). A more detailed discussion of this point can be found in Chapter 17 below.

Evidence of success

The HertsCam programme has been the focus of a number of studies led by members of the network (Creaby, 2011a, 2011b; Hill, 2008, 2011; Mylles, 2005, 2006; Mylles and Frost, 2006) all of which informed a network wide evaluation study (Wearing, 2011). The resulting report from this illuminative study gave decision makers a clearer view of the way HertsCam works and its benefits, couched in terms of impact on schools as well as individual participants. The evidence presented suggested that the elements of the HertsCam Network are making a significant contribution to school improvement through the process of teacher leadership. The qualitative evidence points to teachers' improved collaboration and self-efficacy developed through models of democratic leadership (Wearing, 2011). The positive impact on the professional cultures of schools was a dominant theme in the accounts of headteachers and senior leaders of participating schools.

The evaluation study also enabled stakeholders and participants to know their network better and to clarify the principles that have emerged along the way.

1. The process facilitates and encourages enquiry as a leadership strategy.
2. Group sessions support active learning.
3. Scholarly values and skills inform discussion and development.
4. Group sessions support interaction, reflection and sharing of experiences.
5. Teachers are enabled to think critically about values, practice and innovation.
6. The process develops teachers' voice and self-efficacy.
7. Teachers' project work is characterised as the leadership of development work.
8. Teacher learning is supported through friendly relationships within the community.
9. The networking supports knowledge building.
10. Participation enables collaboration in and between schools.
11. Knowledge building is enhanced through a partnership with a university.
12. Teachers build professional knowledge through collaborative, critical discussion and exchange of ideas.
13. The network supports interactive professional learning for all.
14. Well-designed tools scaffold, exemplify and illustrate teacher leadership.
15. Headteachers support teachers' development work and ensure maximum impact in school.

(Wearing, 2011)

Such principles enable us to continue to pursue the goal of supporting high quality professional learning and schools' need to maximise their effectiveness. It remains our commitment to retain a focus on the moral purpose of improving the life chances of the students in schools by supporting teachers who wish to develop their own and their colleagues' practice, while at the same time ensuring that the critical scholarship entailed in this process can be recognised as academically valid. The combination of these aspects provides the conditions for human agency and social capital to flourish at a time when teachers feel under intense pressure and a sense of wellbeing amongst the profession is low. Smith (2001) draws attention to the mounting evidence suggesting that people whose lives are rich in social capital cope better with traumas and fight

illness more effectively. The HertsCam programme, therefore, is not just about 'warm fuzzy tales of civic triumph' (2001:3); it builds strong social capital and that makes an enormous difference to people's lives. Grossman *et al.* said 'schools cannot become exciting places for children until they're exciting places for adults' (2001: 950) and HertsCam supports that aim through its emphasis on collaboration, leadership and networking. We gain confidence and develop creativity through sharing our ideas with others. We experience the support to take risks, the encouragement to consult widely and the sense of moral authority to enact change. That's healthy, fulfilling and profoundly democratic.

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