Shifting Constructions of Headship/Principalship in Scottish Education:

Implications for Professional Learning and Empowerment in School Communities

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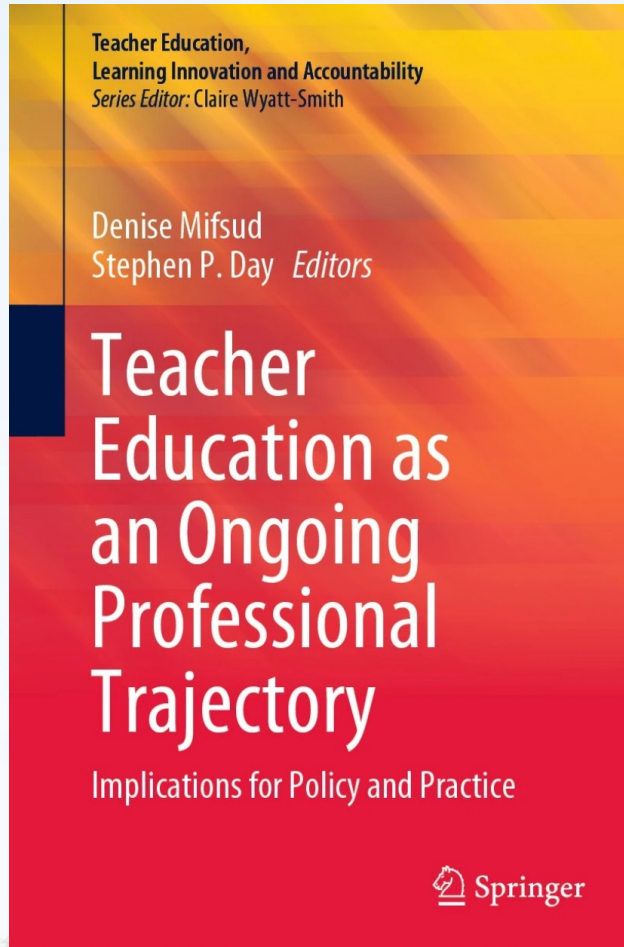University of Glasgow School of Education

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Teacher Education, Learning Innovation and Accountability
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Teacher Education as an Ongoing Professional Trajectory

Implications for Policy and Practice

Springer

Mitchell, A., Torrance, D., Harvie, J., Forde, C. and McMahon, M. (2023) The changing role of the headteacher in Scottish education: implications for career-long teacher education. In: Mifsud, D. and Day, S. P. (eds.) *Teacher Education as an Ongoing Professional Trajectory: Implications for Policy and Practice.* Series: Teacher education, learning innovation and accountability. Springer: Cham, pp. 181-204. ISBN 9783031286193 (doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-28620-9_9)

Presentation Format

1) Contemporary Constructions of Headship (Principalship) in Scotland
2) Policy Intentions: HTs (Principals) leading Learning Communities
3) Delphi Method: Findings from a case study school
4) Implications for Professional Learning and Empowerment in School Communities

headship
policy
research
learning
empowerment

Contemporary Constructions of Headship in Scotland

Collaborative / networked Leadership

Schools as Learning Organisations

Centrality of Teacher Professionalism

The Standard for Headship in Scotland (Scottish Executive 1998). Defines competence in school leadership and key management functions performed by headteachers to achieve the key purpose of headship.

Ambitious, Excellent Schools: Standard for Headship 2005 (GTCS 2005). Professional actions required to provide vision, direction, and a high standard of education and care, to develop in all children and young people people the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2004).

Standards for Leadership and Management (GTCS 2012). Outlines the professional actions of Headteachers to establish, sustain and enhance a positive ethos and culture of learning through which every learner is able to learn effectively and achieve their potential.

The Standard for Headship (GTCS 2021a). Updated to reflect the current educational landscape including the centrality of teacher professionalism (what it means to be a teacher in Scotland), professional values, social justice and a greater emphasis on inclusion , diversity and equality.

The Headteachers' Charter (SG 2019) highlights the **specificity of the role of headteacher as a leader "open to constructive support and challenge" who is both responsible for the school community and accountable, through "statutory, contractual and financial obligations", to the local authority** while the role is articulated in the GTCS Standard for Headship (GTCS 2021) as **"the lead professional"**, with **"responsibility and capacity to enable and empower individuals and teams"; a leader who will "proactively contribute to leadership at system level".**

Leading Professional Learning:
The role of the Headteacher

- Be the lead learner
- Champion high quality professional learning for all staff
- Build and sustain a professional school team / enable team professionalism
- Communicate high expectations of CLPL
- Establish principles and approaches that promote and offer a wide range of CLPL opportunities with equal access for all

# Leading Professional Learning: The role of the Headteacher

- Support and empower others to lead effectively and to improve
- Support all teachers to be leaders of learning
- Build capacity and capability through professional learning
- Create time and space to engage in high quality professional learning using approaches that are relevant, authentic and ongoing
- Facilitate engagement with networks and learning communities to develop professional practice together

Delphi Method: Leadership in a Case Study School

Forde, C., Torrance, D., McMahon, M., & Mitchell, A. (2021). **Middle Leadership and Social Justice Leadership in Scottish Secondary Schools: Harnessing the Delphi Method's Potential in a Participatory Action Research Process.** *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM)), 49(3).*

Torrance, D., Forde, C., Mitchell, A., Harvie, J., & McMahon, M. (2021). **Using the Delphi Method to Investigate the Work of School Middle Leadership Teams.**
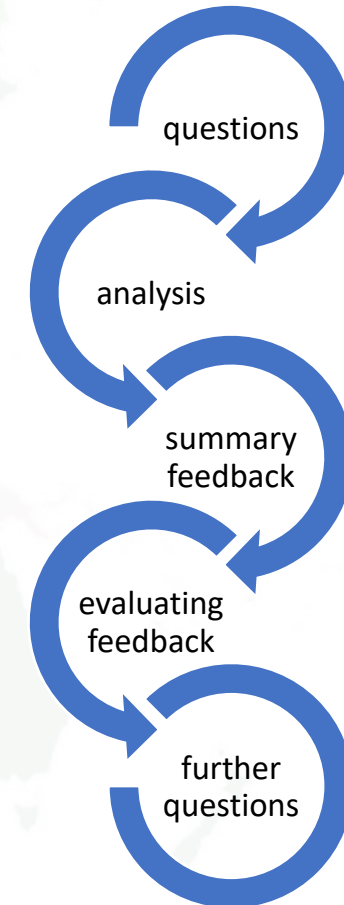
questions

analysis

summary feedback

evaluating feedback

further questions

HT Role Enactment: Impact on Practice?

Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The specific responsibility for cultures, practice and engagement of professional learning lies with the headteacher.

The Future of Headship Research Project

The role of middle leaders and deputy headteachers in social justice leadership

Report for *Case Study Secondary School* in Scotland

February 2022

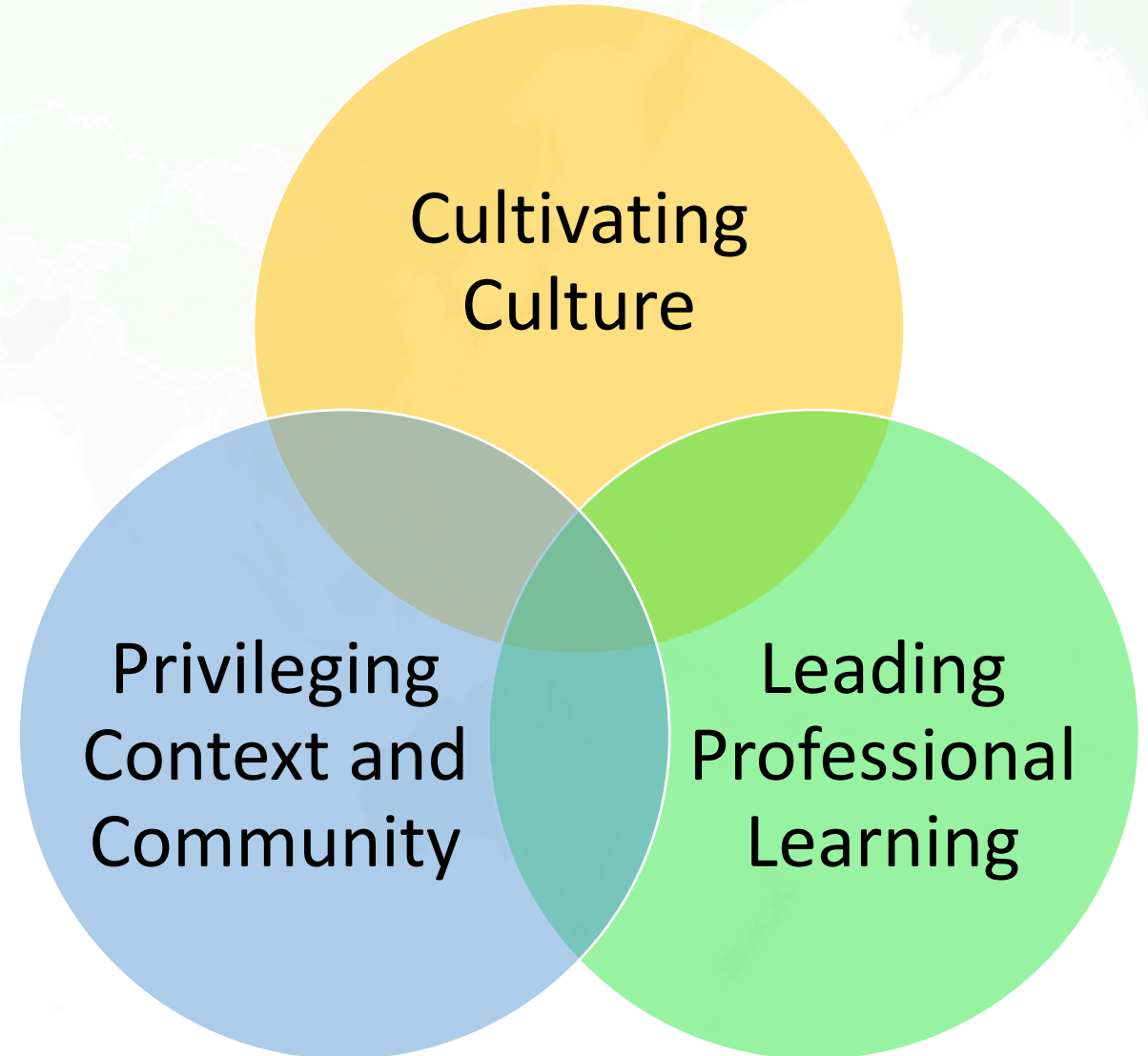Contemporary Constructions of Headship in Scotland

Collaborative / networked Leadership

Schools as Learning Organisations

Centrality of Teacher Professionalism

Cultivating Culture

Privileging Context and Community

Leading Professional Learning

Cultivating Culture

"Having a good senior leadership team in school who understand the importance of social justice, inclusion and equality and can support the wider team to deliver this".

"Another help is being included in senior management discussions about plans for aspects of school life. This helps me to feel included, playing a role in shaping the future and respected for my opinion and contributions".

"Being part of a leadership team that refuses to stand still, but always wants to move forward and improve - and is willing to take risks and be creative to do so – provides exciting opportunities for social justice leaders".

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Privileging Context and Community

"Being part of a school where the leadership team as well as the staff (on the whole) are working together as a community for the good of the whole community".

"Staff are afforded opportunities to partake in awareness-raising sessions which highlight our school context within the bigger picture of local authority/national priorities to promote inclusion and equality".

"Being heavily involved in the embedding of [school] values [...] and this helped me gain a wider perspective on ethos, vision and values".

Leadership of Professional Learning

"Very supportive school leadership who are keen to facilitate opportunities for staff to develop their practice and to take on leadership roles"

"Opportunities to attend quality CLPL".

Professional Reflection Through Participation in Research

Grateful to have the time and space to allow reflection and conversations to take place.

*I appreciated the chance to have some **time to dedicate to reflecting on my role in the school,** my professional journey thus far and focus for future professional learning*

*….Delphi method **very positive if somewhat time consuming….my own reflections are captured and articulated wel**l*

*…forced me to **stop and reflect**… to appreciate and measure our work…the results at each interval **reflected my views**….interesting to see that my own **individual perspective was similar to my colleagues** in most instances. I see us **considering these findings**…. For example, **education policy**…We should then consider policy… **how it best fits our school … in our context** to improve the experiences and outcomes for our young people and families*

Implications for the Headship role

Cultivating Culture

Privileging Context and Community

Leading Professional Learning

in the gift of the headteacher

Collaborative constructions of school leadership have implications for career-long teacher education with headteachers ultimately pivotal in the enactment and enablement of such practice across their school communities.

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Thank you SERA

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in Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh