

Focusing on Learning in a High Accountability System

Buckinghamshire Academy for School Leadership Conference

Steve Munby, CEO, Education Development Trust
(formerly CfBT Education Trust)



Transforming lives by improving education around the world



**Transforming lives by improving
education around the world**



We believe that every child has the right to be a powerful learner, wherever he or she is in the world and in whatever type of context.

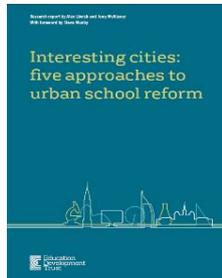
We are passionate about the power of education. We believe that a high quality education can help to transform lives, empower children and young people and open up opportunities and choices.

Our partnerships with governments and with schools are about building skills and sustainability - not dependency.

We fund a major programme of educational research, which is part of our mission

<p><small>Report created by Tim Leach and Leo Wilton #88 authored by Tim Leach</small></p> <p>Interesting cities: five approaches to urban school reform</p>  <p><small>Education Development Trust</small></p>	<p><small>Report by Helen Be Tunstall, Rosalind Lee, Gillian Eastwood and Wesley Jarman, with Linda Robinson. Oxford University Department of Education</small></p> <p>Effective teaching</p>  <p><small>Education Development Trust</small></p>	<p><small>Report by Tim Wilby and Gill Goss</small></p> <p>School improvement in London: a global perspective</p>  <p><small>Education Development Trust</small></p>	<p><small>Report by Christopher Day and Pamela Leeson</small></p> <p>Successful school leadership</p>  <p><small>Education Development Trust</small></p>
			

We are widely acknowledged as “leading edge” internationally



Launch of “Five Interesting Cities” in Dubai and in Delhi



‘Inspiring Leadership Conference’ in UK with NAHT and ASCL



Global Dialogue with Michael Fullan, John Hattie, Vivianne Robinson, Tony McKay and Steve Munby



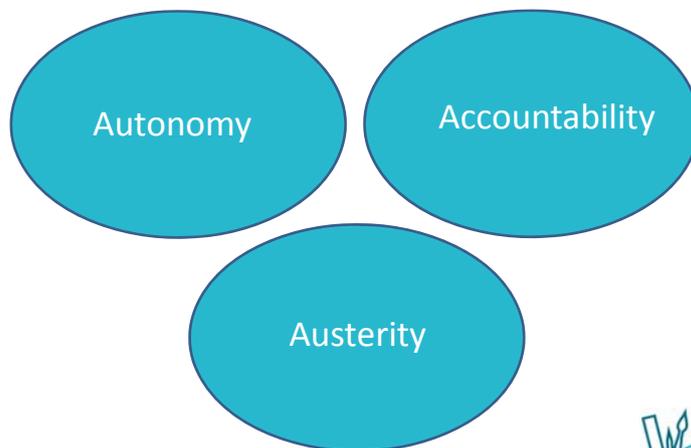
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME (SPP)

Vision:

To build a sustainable self-improving school-led system, where schools are jointly responsible for the improvement of themselves and others.



The system for the next few years



**CAMERON TO
MOBILISE TOP
HEADS FOR
'ALL-OUT WAR'
ON MEDIOCRE
SCHOOLS**

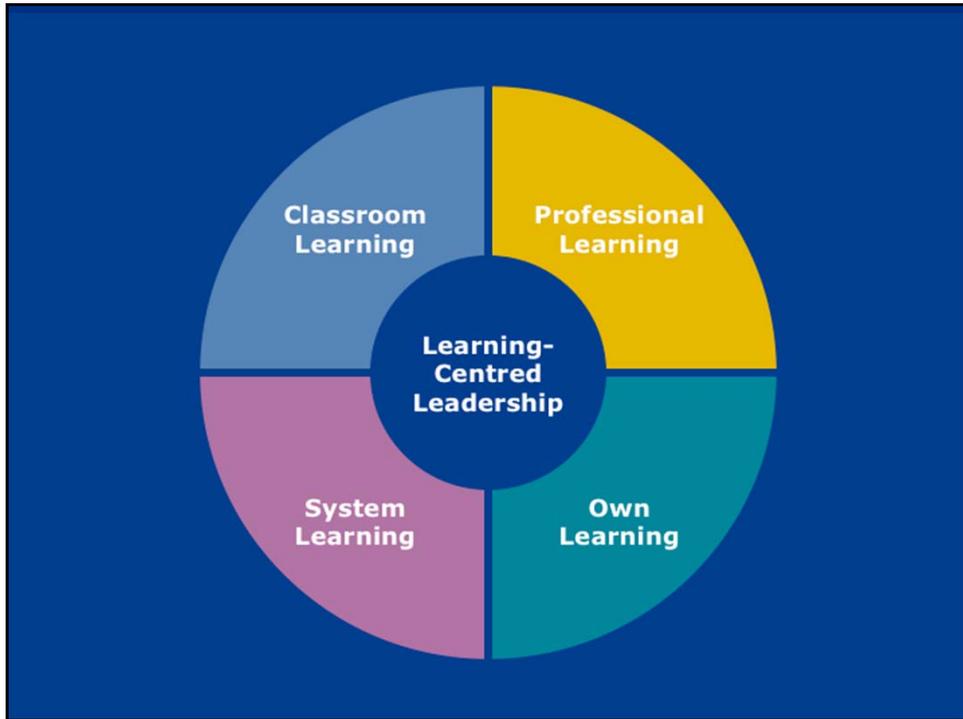


Extreme pressure without capacity, results in dysfunctional behaviour.



Michael Fullan
'The Principal' 2014





1. Leading professional learning and classroom learning in a high accountability environment



Learning-centred leadership in a high accountability system

1. Develop, with the school community, a compelling vision and a school accountability system that embraces the national one – but is broader and right for your context. Invite people to go with you on the journey.



Learning-centred leadership in a high accountability system

2. Focus on the classroom and the children's progress within that broad accountability structure. Everyone needs to know that this is what matters most in the school - and to you as the leader. Always Better Learning.





Once a commitment is made, the goal will seem larger, bolder, and more exciting... leaders need to fix on it like a laser beam. They need to see it intensely, even obsessively. They feel it. They hear it. They taste it. They smell it. It becomes part of them, their very identity, because it is something they are committed to make happen, come what may, whatever it takes.

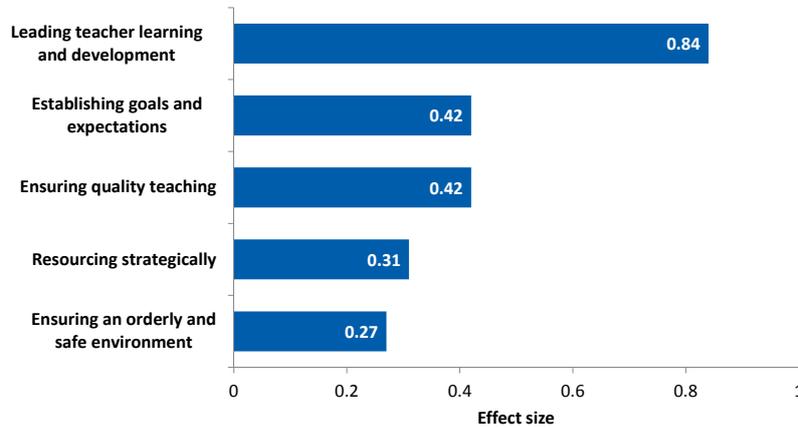
*Stephen Denning,
The Secret Language of Leadership*

Learning-centred leadership in a high accountability system

3. Model learning as a leader and prioritise your time to support teacher development.



Leadership practices that have the most impact on student outcomes:

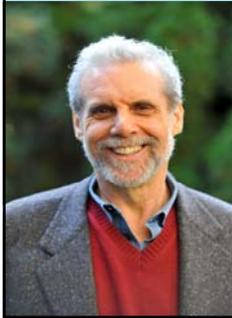


Source: Viviane Robinson 2011 – Student-Centred Leadership

The more leaders focus their relationships, their work and their (own) learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes.

Vivianne Robinson

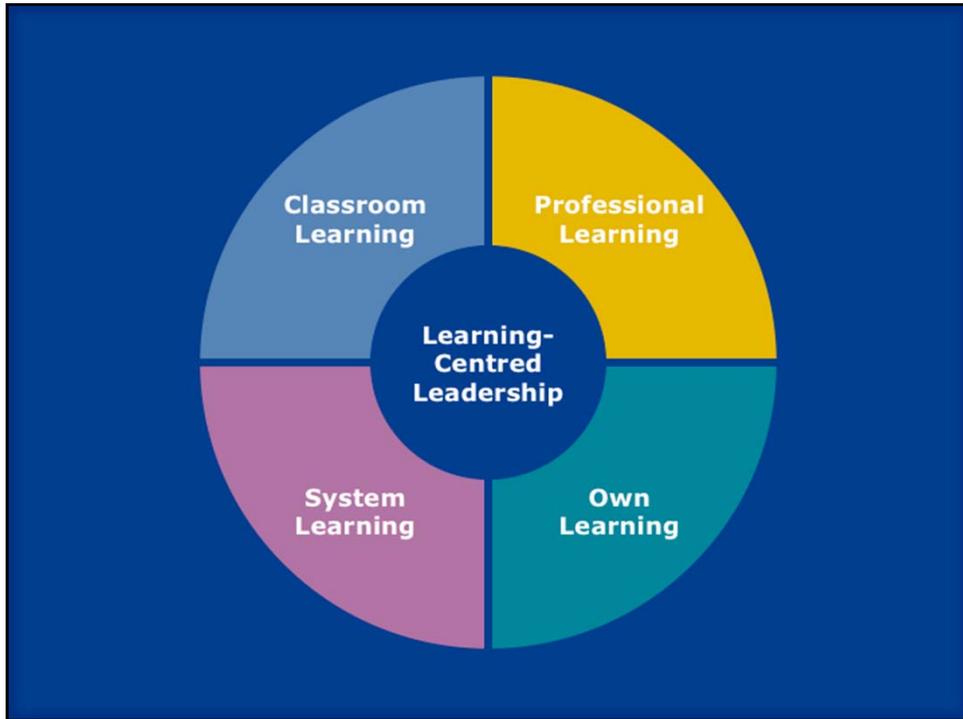




The “10,000-hour rule” — that this level of practice holds the secret to great success in any field — has become sacrosanct gospel... The problem: it’s only half true. If you are a duffer at golf, say, and make the same mistakes every time you try a certain swing or putt, 10,000 hours of practicing that error will not improve your game. You’ll still be a duffer, albeit an older one.

Daniel Goleman





2. Learning-Centred System leadership in a high accountability environment



School autonomy and high accountability - without capacity building and investment in leadership development can lead to four problems:

1. **Isolationism.** Schools can become closed and insular– either due to over-confidence or due to insecurity or just because they are too busy
2. **Competition.** A tendency for schools to compete so they are less likely to share and collaborate and to learn from each other
3. **Variability.** Those with capacity and advantage tend to get better whilst those without capacity get stuck, thus creating a bigger gap between good and not so good schools
4. **Leadership Supply Issues.** Leadership roles, especially headship, are not so attractive (especially in fragile schools) and those who do step up are unlikely to have had exposure to outstanding practice in different contexts



The main problem common to these schools was that the headteacher, who in several cases had recently left, had allowed the school to lose focus on quality – schools had simply drifted along and become out of date.



*Sir Michael Wilshaw
HMCI Annual Report*

Most had not made any arrangement for external support and challenge until it was too late and serious decline had set in. The academies in question had an overly optimistic view of their current position.



*Sir Michael Wilshaw
HMCI Annual Report*

Well positioned Headteachers said that... being graded by OFSTED as at least Good and preferably Outstanding was what mattered most... the Headteachers we interviewed thought it was inevitable that the weak would get weaker and the strong stronger. They felt that increasingly competitive local fields are creating winners and losers.

*Source: 'The restructuring of schooling in England'
Goldron, Crawford, Jones and Simkins, 2014*



We are now trying to develop a notion of communities of schools to bring isolated schools together to form something which creates a much stronger collective base, and a much stronger local infrastructure to support our self-managing schools. That is a potentially exciting new development to try to redress some of the real limitations of our self managing system without going down a recentralizing path.

Vivianne Robinson

The UK has the highest index of principal leadership among OECD countries... An index that measures the involvement of school leaders in areas (that are) key to improving teaching practices... The index includes tasks such as working with teachers to support their performance, monitoring students' work or observing instruction in classrooms.

Beatriz Pont, one of the authors of preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century, OECD. March 2012

England leads the world in school leadership and in collaboration across schools. But investment in leadership development has dwindled significantly and support for leaders and future leaders is becoming increasingly ad hoc. Collaboration is still patchy geographically and not enough of it is outcomes-focused. The challenge now is to give new impetus to school leadership and its development, especially in challenging, rural and coastal localities, and to make outcomes-focused collaboration voluntary but inevitable.

Steve Munby

Towards 'collective autonomy'

So, if top down change is “one size fits all”, lacks context and threatens the autonomy of schools and leaders and if bottom up change is not coherent and leads to isolation and too much variability, what is the solution?



Reasons not to develop outcomes-focused collaboration

1. The status quo is unsatisfactory but the alternatives are not yet proven.
2. There are few successful examples to learn from nationally.
3. Rewards are distant and lack specificity but the dangers are in the present.
4. Teachers and leaders are time-poor (especially in small schools) and under more pressure than ever before
5. This kind of collaboration can show up your areas for development and be challenging personally.
6. The existing high stakes accountability –which makes or breaks careers and reputations –is based on individual schools and does not directly incentivise collaboration.



Lessons Learned from *'Five Interesting Cities'*



System Improvement Leaders

Traditional Leaders of School Systems

Preoccupied with the interests of students	Preoccupied with the interests of politically powerful adults
Establishes a judicious balance of professional challenge and support	Emphasises either professional support or professional challenge but not both
Actively engages with and visible to Leaders in the Middle	Typically active and visible at central office level. Not close to schools
Persistent, consistent and sustained approach to long-term reform	Regularly sponsors new short-term initiatives without seeing the existing ones through
Treats teachers and leaders as part of the solution	As part of the problem, teachers and leaders are criticised and ground down
System leadership action is based on a coherent Theory of Change, aligned to evidence and monitoring data	Leadership insights based on political dogma or on messages in the media and what seems to be popular at the time
Champions school-to-school knowledge transfer and joint practice development as the key driver of change	Imposes top down legislative or policy 'solutions' to school effectiveness problems
Knowledgeable about promising approaches used by other systems	Introspective, with limited professional engagement beyond the immediate school system
Leads change at pace but builds coalitions and ensures that enough of a critical mass will go with the change (voluntary but inevitable)	Either risk averse and slow to change or requires too much incoherent change which alienates teachers and leaders.

Munby and Fullan 2016

Critical success factors for effective system-wide school collaboration

- Purpose should be to improve outcomes.
- A clearly articulated shared moral purpose.
- Transparency, honesty and trust. Sharing data and publishing outcomes.
- Effective and robust peer review is the engine that drives improvement
- A long term commitment to continuously improving practice
- From collaboration to shared professional accountability
- Engage with students, teachers, families and communities (not just heads)
- Welcome scrutiny and support from other partnerships - a connected local, regional and national system.



The challenge of peer review

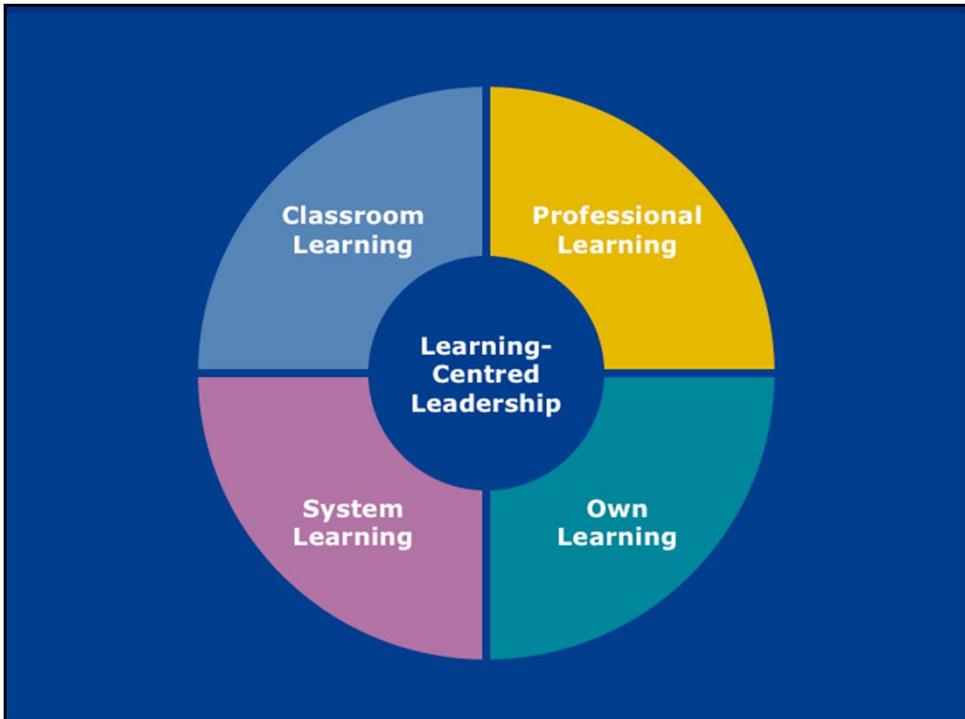
Receiving feedback sits at the intersection of...two needs - our drive to learn and our need for acceptance.....And most of us have a higher opinion of ourselves than others do of us. We judge ourselves by our intentions while others judge us by our impact.

Stone and Heen

The challenge of peer review

To set up a healthy feedback system, you must remove the power dynamics from the equation – you must enable yourself, in other words, to focus on the problem not the person.. Candor isn't cruel. It does not destroy. On the contrary, any successful feedback is built on empathy, in the idea that we are all in this together, that we understand your pain because we've experienced it ourselves.

Ed Catmull - 2014



3. Being a learner and a leader. Staying fresh and challenging complacency. Understanding the value of asking for help.

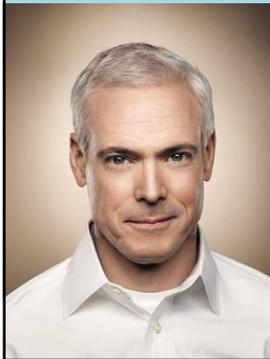


The importance of a growth mindset

If parents want to give their children a gift they teach them to love challenge, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning.

Carol Dweck





Like inquisitive scientists, the best corporate leaders we've researched remain students of their work, relentlessly asking questions – why, why, why? – and have an incurable compulsion to vacuum the brains of people they meet.

Jim Collins



What makes us vulnerable makes us beautiful.

Brene Brown

Don't take yourself too seriously and take yourself as seriously as death itself. Don't worry. Worry your ass off. Have iron clad confidence but doubt! ... Be able to keep these two contradictory ideas alive and well in your heart and head at all times. If it does not drive you crazy it will make you strong.

Bruce Springsteen

Leading at times of intense challenge and high accountability

- Detached involvement is the essence of leadership
- Feeling good is a skill
- As leaders we need to walk into the wind
- Accept that crises are going to be the norm



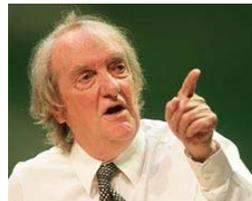
You may not control all the events that happen to you but you can decide not to be reduced by them.

Maya Angelou



Leadership in times of change

1. Regard crises as the norm and complexity as fun
2. A bottomless well of intellectual curiosity
3. A complete absence of paranoia and self-pity
4. Unwarranted optimism



Sir Tim Brighouse





No short cuts to this kind of leadership

They want to be who leaders are but cannot: they want the benefits of leadership, without the price; they want the respect, dignity and title of leadership, without leading people to lives that matter; they want the love leaders earn, act by painful act, without, in return, having the courage, humility, and wisdom to love.

Umair Haque

*It is time to acknowledge who you really are...
To go in, to the life that's been waiting for you...
It is time to stop looking upwards at others ...
What you have is enough ...
What you are is ready ...*



*Looking For The Castle, Second Time Around'
By William Ayot*