The Role of School Leadership in Teacher Career Progression

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My Life Story

• The school principal needs the credibility of
  – Having taught a class,
  – Worked on par with other teachers, and
  – Interacted with parents

• His/her leadership needs to be seen in
  – Being able to work with other people
  – Having initiative to see better ways of doing things
  – Using innovations in the classroom
In Singapore, the Director-General of Education needs to Start as a Teacher First
Teachers Matter

• Teachers are the backbone to the education system
• Teachers make a difference to the quality of learning
  – in the classroom and
  – outside the classroom
Raising teaching performance is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in student learning (OECD, 2005).
Some Mind-set Changes

• The Principal is first a teacher, second a leader
• Teachers are leaders, not followers
• Education is a profession of constant adaption and innovation
  – Because every student and every class is different

Especially in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous World
What do we want from our Teachers?

• They know what to teach
• They know how to teach
• They know how to find out if students have learnt
What is a Teacher’s Perennial Challenge?

It is not only equipment
It is not only resources
It is Whether the Student is Learning

Because that is our Core Business
That is what Teachers need School Leaders for

• To arrange for the resources and the equipment
• To organise the students into classes
• To deploy the teachers optimally

**But above all**

• To keep looking out for new pedagogies and new assessment trends to maximise learning
No School Leader can do this alone

• It helps to talk to other School Leaders
  – But they might be too busy
  – Or they might be too far away
• School Leaders have found a good idea is not enough
  – They need a Champion on the ground
• School Leaders need a TEAM
Who would you want in Your **TEAM**?

Teachers with

- **New Ways** of doing things
- **Experience** of how students learn
- **Ability to influence** other teachers
- **Energy** to get things done
With this symbiosis between teachers and school leaders, there is a future.
Give Teachers a Future

• **Show teachers where they can lead**
  – Coordinate teaching at one or two levels
  – Lead others in teaching one specialised area
  – Lead others to teach one or more related areas across all school levels

• **Areas can refer to subjects (most commonly)**
  – Areas can also refer to sports and extra-curricular areas
  – Areas can refer to student care and student development
Give Teachers a Future

• Show teachers where they can lead
• It will make leadership in your school much better
  – When they start in small groups, they gain confidence
  – They practise learning how to work with others
  – You have a critical number to whom you can talk about leadership
Give Teachers a Future

• Show teachers where they can lead
• It will make leadership in your school much better
• They won’t take over your job
  – When you coach them, you find yourself reflecting on your own leadership style and improving it
  – Worldwide, there is a shortage of school leaders
What a Career Path is actually about

• First someone helps you

• Then you try on your own

• Then you help others

• Then you help others to help others

PRACTICUM
BEGINNING TEACHER
COORDINATOR, LEVEL HEAD
DEPARTMENT HEAD, VICE PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPAL
This is today’s pedagogy

You learn best when you teach someone

also called The Protégé Effect
How Do We Learn?

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we discuss with others
- 80% of what we do
- 95% of what we teach to others

Talking, asking, repeating, naming, reproduce, remember, discuss, react, define

Write, interpret, translate, express, look over, identify, communicate, apply, use, plan, predict, find out, create, organize, summarize, analyze, differentiate, examine, catalog, participate, check

Explain, summarize, classify, structure, define, generalize, develop, try out, illustrate

-William Glasser
IN LEARNING YOU WILL TEACH, AND IN TEACHING YOU WILL LEARN
Phil Collins
Such a School would be called 

A LEARNING ORGANISATION
Elements of a Learning Organisation

Peter Senge

Personal Mastery

Shared vision

Mental models

Systems Thinking

Team Learning
The School Leader’s Role

- Recognise Current Reality
- Create a Shared Vision
- Change Mindsets
- Role-model Team Learning
- Help teachers see the Big Picture
The School Leader’s Role

• To maximise learning by building teacher capacity to handle
  – New technologies
  – Non-traditional pedagogies
  – Different assessment modes

• To be the gate-keeper
  – Identifying/building a framework
  – Resist going for fads
An Example of a FRAMEWORK

Map of Pedagogical Knowledge

The Skillful Teacher
Saphier & Gower

Foundational Beliefs

Curriculum Planning

- Overarching Objectives
- Planning
- Learning Experiences
- Class Climate

Institutional Strategies

- Clarity
- Principles of Learning
- Models of Teaching
- Routines

Motivation

- Space
- Time
- Routines
- Discipline

Curriculum Design

- Objectives
- Assessment
- Personal Relationship Building
- Expectations

Routines

- Attention
- Momentum
- Discipline
The School Leader’s Role

• It’s not about giving leadership positions
  – Avoid creating hierarchies that get in the way of team learning

• Instead help teachers to *Think Like Leaders* who
  – Know *why* they do what they do
  – Not only know *what* to do and *how* to do it
Start with the why (not with the what)

Outside in / Conventional

Inside out in / Remarkable

Why? = The Purpose
What is your cause? What are your values?

How? = The Process
The specific actions to realize the Why

What?
What do you do? The result of Why. The proof

The Golden Circle
according to Simon Sinek
Knowing the WHY

- Creates ownership
- Gives purpose
- Builds the team
What does Teacher Career Progression look like?
Teacher Career Progression

In Singapore, we started by formalising 3 Tracks in 1997

• Teacher Track
• Leadership Track
• Specialist Track
There was only one problem – it looked like teachers were not leaders.

The real issue – teachers had only been trained in one form of leadership.
Three Career Tracks

- **Teaching Track**
  - Principal Master Teacher
  - Master Teacher
  - Lead Teacher
  - Senior Teacher
  - Subject Head / Level Head

- **Leadership Track**
  - Classroom Teacher
  - Vice Principal
  - Head of Department

- **Senior Specialist Track**
  - Chief Specialist
  - Principal Specialist
  - Lead Specialist
  - Senior Specialist 2
  - Senior Specialist 1
Drawing the Tracks was Easy

Helping school leaders and teachers understand what it really means – that was a Long Journey
A Long Journey
*(it took more than 10 years)*
need
Conversations
Communication
Structures
The Conversations Needed

Step 1: School Leaders discuss what each level of leadership looks like.

Step 2: School Leaders coach Heads of Department to fit their level of leadership.

Step 3: Heads of Department coach their more experienced teachers to fit into their next level of leadership.

Step 4: Experienced teachers mentor beginning teachers and build their capacity.
Generative Conversations

- Shared exploration towards greater understanding
- Really listening
- Avoid judgemental words
- Using “yes, and” not “yes, but”
Communication

• Capacity Building
Communication

• Growth Mindset
Structures

School Organisational Chart

• 30% of teachers in a leadership position on the Leadership Track
  – Level Head, Subject Head, Department Head, Year Head
• 15% of teachers in a leadership position on the Teaching Track
  – Senior Teacher, Lead Teacher
• 2-3 Vice Principals to take care of
  – Academic Curriculum,
  – Student Development Curriculum and
  – Human Resource, Financial & Property Administration
Structures

• Leader, not boss
• Distributed Leadership
Structures

• Open Classrooms
• Professional Learning Communities
• Networked Learning Teams
• Professional Development
  – For Beginning Teachers
  – For 5\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} year Teacher
  – For 10\textsuperscript{th} year and beyond Teacher
• Learning Journeys
• Industrial Attachments
## Teacher Career Progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There is a leadership pipeline</td>
<td>• Promotion may become a pre-occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Job scope is clear</td>
<td>• People work for extrinsic rewards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tacit knowledge is tapped</td>
<td>• The classroom may lose the best practitioners</td>
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<td>• Teachers are willing to take on more responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There is a place for mentoring</td>
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- People work for extrinsic rewards
In Conclusion

- Schools need teachers to be leaders
- Leaders can be grown within a school using a common language that is based on a growth mindset
- Leaders can only grow in a community of fellow leaders
- Structures can help but only if the rationale for the structures is not forgotten
Thank you

The future depends on what we do in the present.

*Mahatma Gandhi*