

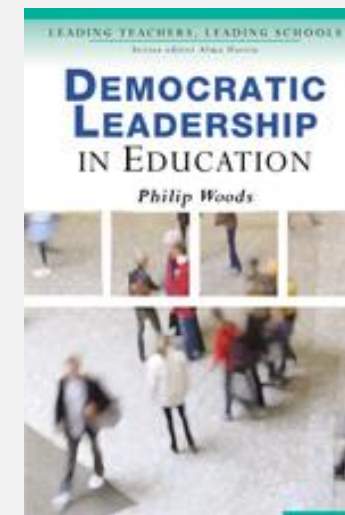
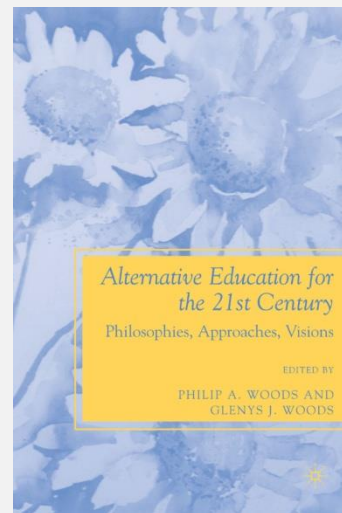
Understanding Distributed Leadership:

A review of leadership as a dispersed phenomenon involving everyone in the school

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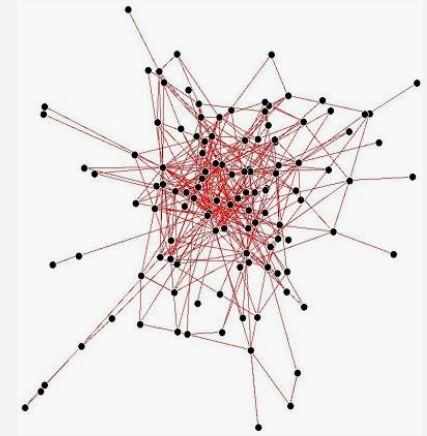
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Several themes emerge from the major studies and reviews on school leadership in recent years:

- ❖ recognising leadership as interactive and emergent, not linear
- ❖ distributed leadership
- ❖ clear strategic direction
- ❖ focus on learning
- ❖ contextual sensitivity
- ❖ relational and ethical qualities



DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP



Applied DL is the development of:
a culture that

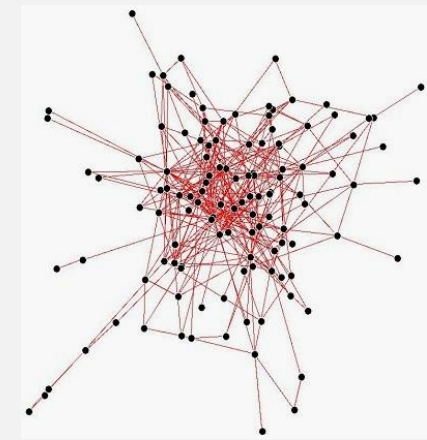
- ❖ views leadership as emerging from ongoing flows of interactions across the organisation and its hierarchy, not simply the actions of the single leader or small leadership elite
- ❖ values participation and innovative ideas from all staff and students
- ❖ recognises that this view of leadership can be developed in order to improve organisational effectiveness

institutional structures that

- ❖ spread leadership opportunities beyond formal senior roles
- ❖ facilitate flexible, collaborative working relationships across traditional boundaries and hierarchies
- ❖ tend towards the creation of flatter hierarchies



DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: ATTRactions

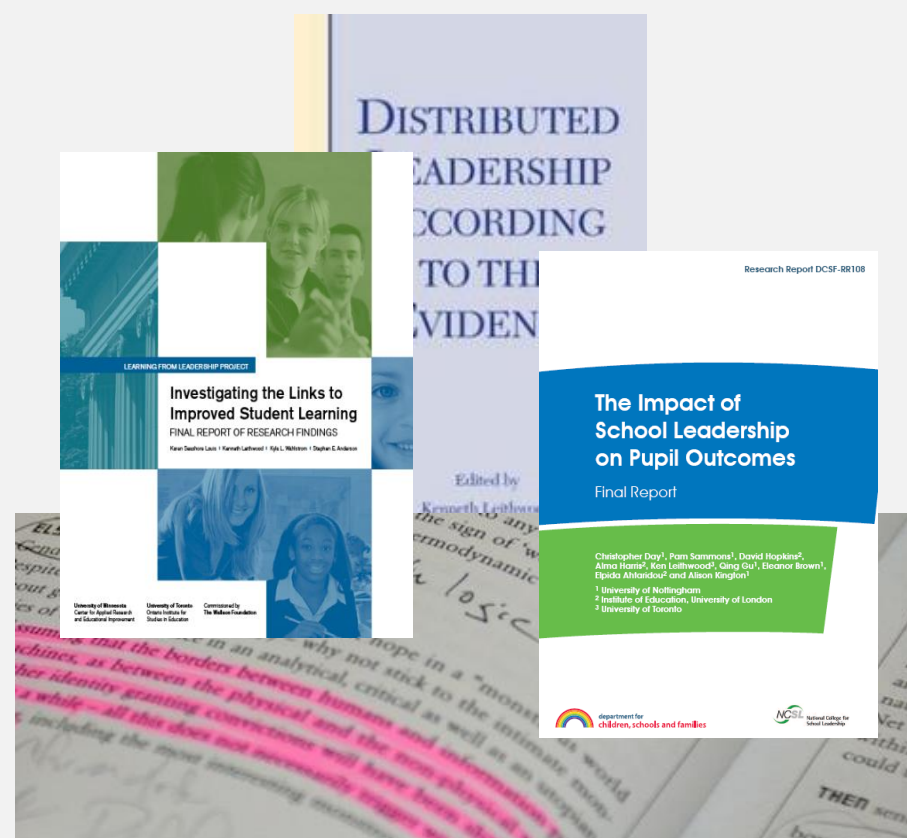


- ❖ **analytical:** It recognises the reality of life in organisations - namely, that senior leadership power is mediated by people across the organisation.
- ❖ **instrumental:** It increases capacity, motivation and commitment - more people being involved means more knowledge, more innovation, more learning, a better spread of workload, and better ability to respond to external expectations.
- ❖ **normative:** It promises to be more fair, more democratic and to give people more meaningful working lives.



RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Accumulating research data suggest positive associations of distributed forms of leadership with learning - both teachers' learning/professional development and students' learning.



However, we have to be cautious in claiming too much from the research.



RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Factors associated with positive effects of distributed leadership:

- ❖ cohesive culture and trust
- ❖ strong co-ordination and planning
- ❖ focus on students' learning
- ❖ capabilities of senior leadership to increase distributed leadership
- ❖ capacity building ('there is a need to develop people before leadership can be effectively distributed', Day et al 2010: 142)



CHALLENGES

purpose and meaning

anchoring distributed leadership in a deeper understanding of human growth and values that frame learning

inclusion and social justice

practising distributed leadership so it becomes a force for inclusion where different voices and ideas can really be heard and social justice advanced



FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN YOUR SCHOOL

	Example questions
cohesive culture and trust	<p>Are the schools' values and aims agreed and shared by all?</p> <p>What priority does the school give to inclusion and social justice for staff and students?</p> <p>Do we need to take steps to agree and establish our values?</p> <p>Do we need to improve trust and inclusion amongst staff and amongst students?</p>
capacity & capabilities	<p>Thinking about the capacity and capabilities of (a) senior leadership, (b) staff and (c) students to support and contribute to distributed leadership,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- what are their strengths?- what capabilities need to be strengthened and developed?
focus on students' learning	<p>Are we clear as a school about our educational purpose?</p> <p>Is learning too narrowly defined by targets and measures by which the school is assessed?</p> <p>In what ways can we make sure that distributed leadership helps to improve learning for all students?</p>
strong co-ordination & planning	<p>What would be the most important parts of an action plan to develop or increase distributed leadership in the school?</p> <p>What would be the first action to take?</p> <p>At the end of the action plan, what would be different about the leadership and learning in the school?</p>

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