



An introduction to the original LfL Carpe Vitam project & our principles and framework

Carpe Vitam

The Leadership for Learning Carpe Vitam Project (named after its Swedish sponsoring body) ran from 2002 to 2006. Seven countries, eight higher education institutions and 24 schools participated in exploring the connections between leadership and learning through conferences, workshops, school visits and inter-country exchanges. The Carpe Vitam project was a journey in a number of senses. It was a physical journey around different places and different countries. It was an intellectual journey of constant challenge to inert ideas and habits of thinking. It was an emotional journey, both in respect of having to move from our comfort zone and in respect of the social bonds that were formed through new relationships across national boundaries.

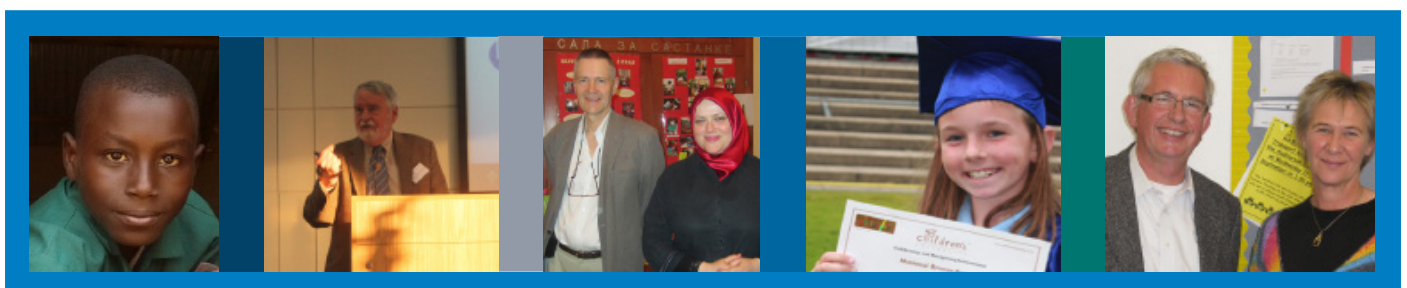
We did not start from a blank slate or from a neutral stance, but from a set of democratic values about leadership and learning. How those values could be translated into practical strategies at school and classroom level, however, was something we planned to discover through experimentation, reflection and collective debate over the life of the project. Part way through that process we began to identify 'principles for practice' that would help clarify and focus attention on the transformations in learning and leadership that were beginning to take place. These five principles broken down into a review of sub-principles were refined and developed throughout the project and are detailed on the following page.

The most significant outcome of the project was a set of principles that could be used by researchers, by school leaders, by teachers and students to make the connections between leadership and learning through reflecting on, or researching, their own practice. We came to represent the principles for practice as five statements.

Leadership for Learning practice involves:

- maintaining a focus on learning as an activity
- creating conditions favourable to learning as an activity
- creating a dialogue about Leadership for Learning
- the sharing of leadership
- a shared sense of accountability

These five principles are dynamically interrelated, with dialogue forming the connections, a focus on learning and shared leadership mediated by conditions for learning, and all framed by the fifth principle of accountability. 'A focus on learning' is quite deliberately placed first, because it can be considered as the prime principle, reflecting a commitment to making learning the number one priority – the core of Leadership for Learning. Each headline principle is elaborated through sub-principles that amplify and illustrate.



Leadership for Learning Principles



A focus on learning

Leadership for learning practice involves maintaining a focus on learning as an activity in which:

- everyone (students, teachers, principals, schools, the system itself) is a learner
- learning relies on the effective interplay of social, emotional and cognitive processes
- the efficacy of learning is highly sensitive to context and to the differing ways which people learn
- the capacity for leadership arises out of powerful learning experiences
- opportunities to exercise leadership enhance learning.

Conditions for learning

Leadership for learning practice involves creating the conditions favourable to learning as an activity in which:

- culture nurtures the learning of everyone
- everyone has opportunities to reflect on the nature, skills and processes of learning
- physical and social spaces stimulate and celebrate learning
- safe and secure environments enable everyone to take risks, cope with failure and respond positively to challenges
- tools and strategies are used to enhance thinking about learning and the practice of teaching.

Dialogue

Leadership for learning practice involves creating a dialogue about LfL in which:

- LfL practice is made explicit, discussable and transferable
- there is active collegial inquiry focusing on the link between learning and leadership
- coherence is achieved through the sharing of values, understandings and practices
- factors which inhibit and promote learning and leadership are examined and addressed
- the link between leadership and learning is a shared concern for everyone
- different perspectives are explored through networking with researchers and practitioners across national and cultural boundaries.

Sharing leadership

Leadership for learning practice involves the sharing of leadership in which:

- structures support participation in developing the school as a learning community
- shared leadership is symbolised in the day-to-day flow of activities in the school
- everyone is encouraged to take the lead as appropriate to task and context
- the experience and expertise of staff, students and parents are drawn upon as resources
- collaborative patterns of work and activity across boundaries of subject, role and status are valued and promoted.

A shared sense of accountability

Leadership for learning practice involves a shared sense of accountability in which:

- a systematic approach to self-evaluation is embedded at classroom, school and community levels
- there is a focus on evidence and its congruence with the core values of the school
- a shared approach to internal accountability is a precondition of accountability to external agencies
- national policies are recast in accordance with the school's core values
- the school chooses how to tell its own story taking account of political realities
- there is a continuing focus on sustainability, succession and leaving a legacy.

Framework

Learning is an activity for everyone, including students, teachers, school leaders, other adults, and the school as an organisation. We have adapted the 'wedding cake' representation of interconnected layers of learning (see figure below) from Michael Knapp and colleagues (2003), incorporating the five principles and the foundation of both leadership and learning as agential activity, all framed by moral purpose and democratic values. An earlier version of this model first appeared in Swaffield, S. and MacBeath, J. (2009).



Key References

MacBeath, J. and Dempster, N. (eds) (2008) *Connecting Leadership for Learning: Principles for Practice*. (eds), 2008, Abingdon: Routledge.

MacBeath, J. Frost, D., Swaffield, S. and Waterhouse, J. (2006) *Making the Connections: The story of a seven country odyssey in search of a practical theory*. University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education.

Swaffield, S. and MacBeath, J. (2009) *Researching Leadership for Learning across International and Methodological Boundaries*. AERA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

LfL Network

Join us and become part of the LfL network and we will send you:

- Ebulletins - termly updates from the network with news and comments
- InForm - our series of specially commissioned papers
- Invitations to events - LfL hosts regular events and seminars throughout the year at the Faculty of Education, but also participates in other events across the UK & internationally.
- Opportunities to engage - as a network we are actively engaged with collaborative knowledge exchange and creation.

www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/joinus

Teacher Leadership Blog

Read the latest posts and share your views on the various teacher leadership-related topics. To receive our posts straight to your inbox, visit the blog and follow the instructions.

www.lflteacherleadership.org