



**LEADERSHIP *for* LEARNING**  
The Cambridge Network



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**  
Faculty of Education

## InForm 17

### LfL Travels

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*InForm's* purpose is to capture significant ideas that enhance our understanding of leadership, learning and their interrelationship.

This edition of *InForm* provides accounts of the impact of the Carpe Vitam Leadership for Learning Project, which was led by a group at the University of Cambridge and involved academics and practitioners in different parts of the world. The original international project generated a theoretical framework, including five research-informed principles that articulate the connections between leadership and learning:

- 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

More information is available at: [www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/about](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/about)

These five principles, elaborated in the eighth *InForm* (Feb. 2008), have continued not only to 'travel', but have also been adapted to different cultural and policy contexts. There is a growing body of evidence of ways in which principles are being expressed and enhanced in practice, aided by the use of 'tools' of different kinds. The original toolbox of strategies has been progressively complemented, so that it currently offers leaders at school and classroom levels a rich and practical repertoire.

Testimony from researchers and practitioners in Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, UK, Denmark, The Netherlands, USA, Ghana and Malaysia provide powerful illustrations of the principles in practice



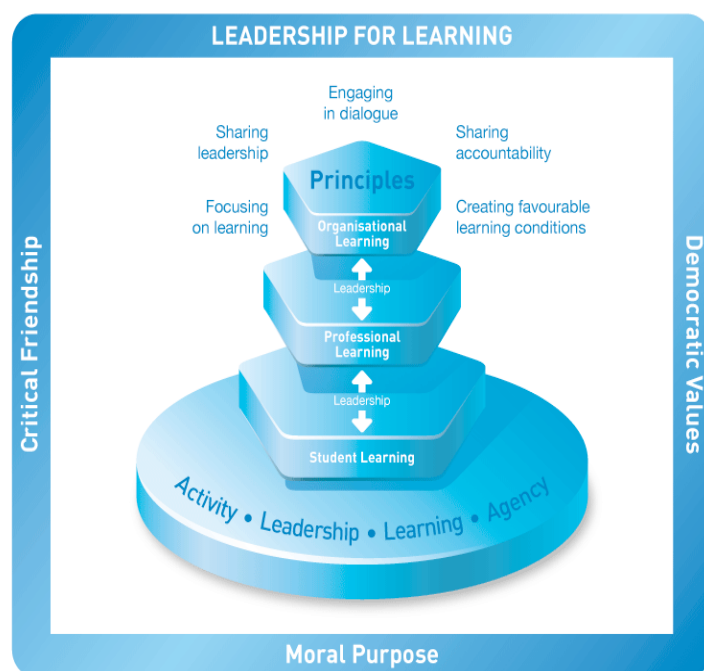
and indicate how these ideas continue to develop and inform professional practice. The accounts presented below are based on interviews and written testimony.

**Simon Clarke, Professor, University of Western Australia (UWA)**

*Simon Clarke's story features the teaching of a university masters level course for teachers in which the LfL framework is prominent.*

Simon's direct involvement in the original Carpe Vitam international leadership for learning project influenced his thinking and practice in a number of important ways. First, is the content and structure of the eponymous masters unit that he teaches at UWA. This unit is premised on the mutually supporting and reinforcing nature of the relationship between leadership and learning. More specifically, one of the tutorials is devoted exclusively to an exposition of the five principles of LfL as articulated by the Carpe Vitam project. In particular, consideration is given to the ways in which these principles may be applied to everyday practice. For this purpose, the so-called 'wedding cake' model is employed as a heuristic device for unpacking the complexity of leadership for learning within a school, as well as across its external environment.

Learning, leadership and their inter-relationship are also the main considerations of the major assignment that is integral to the unit. This 'special project' provides an opportunity for participants to develop an in-depth knowledge of an issue or phenomenon related to educational leadership and is germane to the context of the workplace. Its signal purpose is to contribute to organisational improvement. The process of undertaking the project is imbued with the foundations and principles underpinning LfL in a number of different respects.



A focus on learning is evident, insofar as many of the projects are primarily concerned with building the academic and social capacity of the students in the school. In doing so, the projects also reflect the recognition that the effectiveness of students' learning occurring in the 'classroom' is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of teachers' learning taking place outside the classroom. From this perspective, the projects serve to encourage the conditions for learning that help teachers build their intellectual and professional capacity.

In particular, the projects enable participants to create a dialogue by virtue of engaging in high-level collaborative activities, such as peer interaction, support and feedback. These activities promote a deepening of knowledge and expertise as information and insights are shared, common issues debated, innovative ideas tested, and tacit understandings developed. The projects may also entail a reflective process that goes beyond just 'thinking about' something superficially or uncritically. Instead, there is a depth of deliberation involved enabling a new stage to be reached in people's orientations towards practice. Relatedly, the projects promote the notion of the 'teacher as researcher'. Practitioner research is a potent means of identifying the needs of the classroom, assessing resulting development processes, and evaluating the outcomes of the changes that have been defined, designed, and implemented.

Some of the projects have recently been presented at a leadership for learning symposium. This event provided a powerful culmination to the unit and is, perhaps, the most conspicuous manifestation of sharing leadership and a shared sense of accountability. All of the five LfL principles featured explicitly at the symposium indicating that participants have connected with and been enriched by them throughout the process of undertaking the project.

Simon's thinking about forging links between leading and learning, according to the above considerations, has been articulated in the final chapter of O'Donoghue & Clarke (2010): *Leading Learning: Process, Themes and Issues in International Contexts*.

Simon has Bertolt Brecht's poem, *In Praise of Learning*, below, displayed in his office as a constant reminder of the essential goodness of the leadership for learning agenda (Brecht, 1970).

### **In Praise of Learning**

Study from bottom up, for you who will take the leadership, it is not too late!  
Study the ABC; it is not enough. but study it!  
Do not become discouraged, begin!  
You must know everything!  
You must prepare to take command, now!  
Study, man in exile!  
Study. Man in the prison!  
Study, wife in your kitchen!  
Study, old-age pensioner!  
You must prepare to take command now!

Locate yourself a school, homeless folk!  
Go search some knowledge, you who freeze!  
You who starve, reach for a book: it will be a weapon.  
You must prepare to take command now.  
Don't be afraid to question, comrades!  
Never believe on faith. See for yourself!  
What you yourself don't learn you don't know.  
Question the reckoning you yourself must pay it!  
Set down your finger on each small item.  
Asking: where do you get this?  
You must prepare to take command now!

**Uzma Javed, Director of Studies for a network of schools, Pakistan**

*Uzma Javed's story features the LfL framework being used as a conceptualising device for her doctoral research.*

Uzma Javed is currently Director of Studies at one of the largest private school networks in Pakistan, with 178 schools in 51 cities across the country, catering for over 60,000 students. Uzma became particularly interested in leadership for learning while in her previous role at a reputed university in Lahore. When setting up the Department of Educational Leadership and Management she could see the negative repercussions arising from a misconception that leadership is necessarily about one's position at the top of an organisation. Uzma was interested in different tiers of leadership and, through her research in the area, came across the Leadership for Learning Carpe Vitam project and framework.

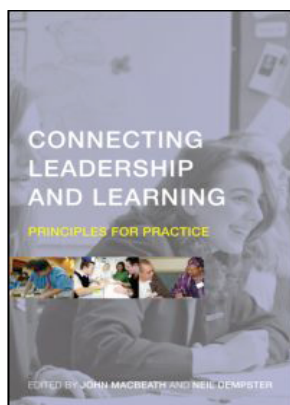
Aspects of LfL that particularly resonated with Uzma were that leadership is to be found in every team member, and that diversity and context are understood and appreciated. Indeed, context adds to meaning, rather than being seen as an obstacle. She also saw links between LfL and other research on personal learning and organisational development. Uzma therefore decided to explore Leadership for Learning further, making it the focus of her PhD thesis undertaken at the University of Birmingham. Her doctoral study explored the practicality and usefulness for schools in Pakistan of leadership for learning, as conceptualised through the Carpe Vitam project (Javed, 2013).

The research involved a case study approach with six public and six private secondary schools, gathering data from headteachers, teachers, parents and students (over 750 in all). It shed light on how leadership is construed and experienced differently by different stakeholders, and highlighted the importance of reflection and dialogue among all parties. Uzma completed her PhD in 2012. One of its original contributions lay in pioneering the use of leadership for learning in order to bring new insights for practitioners, policy-makers and researchers in the South East Asian region, and particularly, in Pakistan.

The five leadership for learning principles, as explicated in the book that resulted from the project

'It has given me the vision that everyone has the scope to go further, and if something goes wrong, we must not give up. It gives me a message of hope'

Uzma Javed



(MacBeath & Dempster, 2006) provided the framework for the thesis. Uzma used them explicitly in her study, discussing the ideas, reading related work, and using them for analysis. Dialogue for learning emerged very strongly as a missing link in public schools. Uzma adapted the 'wedding cake' model and, due to the context in which she was carrying out her research, modified the language. As she explained, "When working with people in the more remote areas of Pakistan for whom English is their fourth or fifth language, I have to simplify the terminology and I am more focused on the meaning that I want to convey".

Uzma has introduced the LfL model to various continuing professional development programmes, leading to principals and headteachers seeing the phenomenon of leadership in a new light. The key performance indicators for school leaders have been reviewed, strengthening the academic component and revising the headteacher's role as the leader of learning, rather than concentrating on administration as had previously been the case. There have also been changes in the curriculum document, in resources being used to help teachers and support students, and in the assessment model that uses different approaches including assessment for learning.

Often the changes are in mindsets, in a different view of leadership, who is involved, and in understanding the ripple effects of change. In her work with schools, Uzma is now taking a more interlinked and embedded approach to change. For example, when planning the introduction of new IT equipment, all the other related aspects such as teacher support, impact on learning, and changes to the assessment model are also considered. After only a year or so of using LfL in her role with the school network, it is probably too soon to make claims about effects on pupil attainment, but Uzma does give a lot of credit to LfL for changes in the schools. She says this is because the model talks about different levels and aspects of school life, not simply with reference to the principal. "LfL relates to the curriculum, assessment, accountability, student leadership, parental involvement, community – everything is there, it takes education as a complete package."

Uzma thinks that leadership for learning has not only helped her in her professional life, but also in her personal life. Through trying to deepen her understanding of LfL, she read other work by John MacBeath and was struck by claims that leadership has many links with personal epistemology. Uzma says that her own belief systems were affected: "It has given me the vision that everyone has the scope to go further, and if something goes wrong we must not give up. It gives me a message of hope".

#### **Priscilla Dawson, Trenton Public Schools District, New Jersey, USA**

*Priscilla Dawson's story explores how participation in the Carpe Vitam project influenced her practice as a school leader and district superintendent.*

In 2002, Priscilla was the Principal of Trenton Central High School in New Jersey, USA when she became involved the Carpe Vitam LfL project. Within the supportive framework of the Carpe Vitam project, Priscilla welcomed the opportunity to engage in deep reflection and think differently about

‘Lfl relates to the curriculum, assessment, accountability, student leadership, parental involvement, community – everything is there, it takes education as a complete package.’  
Uzma Javed

principalship. This led to the view that, in order to empower others, she had to learn to let go, and found that by doing this she actually became more effective. This was a powerful lesson.

One strategy was the creation of a new organisational structure – an instructional council consisting of teacher leaders, vice principals, schools counsellors and professional development facilitators. Any teacher could bring a problem to a meeting of the council. For example, a new teacher of English came along and spoke about a particular student who participated well in lessons, but when it came to producing any written work seemed unable to perform at all. The posing of this problem was very productive and generated many ideas and suggestions. One outcome was the idea of carrying out an inventory of all resources available to support students with particular needs and disabilities. It was clear that members of staff needed further structures that would support their professional learning without the threat of punishment or a negative evaluation. This led to the building of higher levels of trust.

Another strategy focused on enabling students to feel a stronger sense of ownership. The school used the Carpe Vitam project surveys to enable students to have a voice. They organised a weekend retreat for a selection of students with positions of influence. Included were students who often appeared in the ‘discipline office’ because “in their acting out they were getting other students to follow them”. The intention was to try to turn their leadership skills into something more positive for them and the school. The retreat would be the start of a conversation in which students could talk about their experience of schooling. This led to outcomes such as the setting up of peer-mentoring in which 11th grade students would mentor incoming 9th grade students.

Another strategy was that discussions within the senior leadership (administration) team would focus on teaching and learning rather than administration. Linked to this, was that teachers would belong to small ‘learning communities’ in which teacher leaders facilitated the discussion.

Tangible and quantifiable outcomes included a dramatic increase in the attendance and graduation rates. There was also a major increase in the number of students going on to college, including first-rate colleges. The assessment results were also dramatically improved. Moreover, these strategies changed the school’s professional culture. In the 1990s the workforce was highly unionised and so there was a strict limit on meeting time. In order to provide support for professional development, Priscilla extended Faculty meetings by one hour. In the first year, a huge proportion of the staff would simply get up and walk out after one hour but, over time, this changed markedly. By the end of her period of office teachers were clamouring for professional development support. A key factor was that many of the approaches used in the Carpe Vitam project had been adopted so that professional development activities actually helped teachers improve their pedagogy. They were able to see the evidence of change in their classrooms as students became more involved in the learning process, so improving the quality of their work. Priscilla believed that teachers wanted to make a difference, so when they saw it happening they began to develop a unity of purpose and a sense of empowerment.

For Priscilla, the language of Lfl was useful in enabling staff to reflect on their practice and discuss how leadership was promoting the learning of everyone in the building, so helping them to talk



about how they modelled learning for others. The language of LfL also enabled Priscilla to reflect on her own dialogic skills and how she herself related to staff. The language of dialogue, a key LfL principle, helped Priscilla to be more reflective as a leader, to reflect on communication with staff in ways that would empower them to think about their own practice. She would often reach for the notebooks in which she recorded activities she had participated in during the LfL project conferences, refreshing her memory of strategies that could be adapted for use in her practice as Principal of Trenton High School.

Priscilla carried her understanding of leadership for learning with her as she went on to become Assistant Superintendent in the Trenton District and when she taught on the doctoral programme at the University of Pennsylvania. Through her work with other serving principals and aspiring principals, she was able to pass on and enrich what was developed over the course of the Carpe Vitam LfL project.

**George Oduru and Yaw Ankomah, Directors of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast Cape Coast, Ghana**

*This story is of leadership at an academic institution, resulting in practical school improvement work through a country and development of national policy*

[www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce/initiatives/projects/leadership/index.html](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce/initiatives/projects/leadership/index.html)  
[http://issuu.com/cambridgeeduc/docs/inform\\_13\\_ghana?e=4604686/3684097](http://issuu.com/cambridgeeduc/docs/inform_13_ghana?e=4604686/3684097)

George Oduru from Cape Coast, Ghana, studied for his PhD at the Faculty of Education in Cambridge, and it was there that he first encountered Leadership for Learning. George's doctoral thesis focused on headteachers in Ghana, and concluded that they were unprepared for taking on the position and had a limited understanding of what was required to lead a school (Oduru, 2003). By 2008, George had been appointed as the Director of IEPA and participated in discussions shaping the newly formed Centre for Commonwealth Education (CCE) at the Faculty of Education in Cambridge. He was convinced of the need in Ghana to focus on school leadership, saying that without it, money spent on training teachers by taking them out of the classroom resulted in little change. He also stressed the importance of context, warning against the notion that knowledge can be transported to another place, and instead advocated the use of principles, the development of trust, and capacity building. These ideas shaped the Leadership for Learning Ghana programme, in which the IEPA, CCE and the Ghana Education Service are key partners.

The five Leadership for Learning principles inform both the 'what' and 'how' of the work in Ghana, but not before their applicability to the Ghanaian context had been examined and commented on by fifteen Ghanaian educators. These 'professional development leaders' as they quickly named themselves, were drawn from the Ghana Education Service, the University of Cape Coast, the University of Winneba and Colleges of Education, from the far north to the far south of the country. Working closely with John MacBeath and Sue Swaffield, they developed their understanding of Leadership for Learning, including studying the LfL framework and the book *Connecting Leadership*

and Learning, applying the ideas to schools in Ghana, and helping Cambridge colleagues to understand the context and issues. Since the programme started in 2009, the team has planned and led many workshops throughout the country, involving over 3000 school leaders. Although the main focus is building headteachers' leadership capacity, circuit supervisors, district, regional and national directors of education, and district training officers have all also been involved, so that they understand LfL, are able to support the headteachers, and can ensure that LfL becomes embedded and sustainable in the Ghanaian education system.

The LfL principles are referred to repeatedly in the workshops and are central to the way LfL is subsequently translated into practice in schools and classrooms across the country. They help clarify and direct attention to the values and actions that generate LfL practice. The Ghana Education Service's revised Headteachers' Handbook lists the LfL principles in its foreword, and devotes sections to each of the five principles that, it maintains, are crucial for headteachers to fulfil their central role of establishing connections between leadership and learning. The LfL principles are also used as a framework for collecting and analysing research data gathered through observations and interviews.



Along with the principles other aspects of the LfL framework also feature in the LfL Ghana programme, particularly moral purpose, critical friendship, and the relationship between professional learning and student learning. The 'wedding cake' diagram is used frequently, and is on display in many schools. The LfL questionnaire, which seeks perceptions of importance and practice, has also been used on a number of occasions. Initially with the professional development leaders, who then suggested some adaptations to suit the Ghanaian context. Subsequently, the revised questionnaire has been completed by the leading edge group of 124 headteachers at each of their three residential workshops, and by circuit supervisors, directors and district training

officers. The results have been used in three main ways: a) to inform workshop planning, for example, by devising activities to demonstrate the relevance of an item headteachers judged not to be very important; b) to make participants aware of other groups' values, for example, the shared priorities of headteachers, circuit supervisors and directors; c) to research changes in headteachers' values and reported practice over time. The LfL principles featured in weekly SMS text messages sent to nearly 200 programme participants over the course of a year. Together with the idea of layers of learning that is inherent in the wedding cake model, the principles were also used as the organising framework to select the stories of 'Most Significant Change' gathered from



schools as one way of evaluating the programme's impact:

[www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce/initiatives/projects/leadership/impact.html](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce/initiatives/projects/leadership/impact.html).

Case studies of Ghanaian schools have also revealed the impact of the LfL framework in a number of areas: headteachers' knowledge, attitudes and behavior; teachers' professionalism; pedagogical practices; pupil attendance and engagement; pupil attainment especially in reading; parental and community involvement; school environment and learning opportunities. Most recently, the LfL model has been represented on a handheld 'fan', an artifact with 20 'petals' detailing all aspects of the framework, specifically designed to support LfL practice in Ghana.

[www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/projects/lfltravels/lflfan.html](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/lfl/projects/lfltravels/lflfan.html)

Whilst George Oduru was the initial driving force behind the LfL programme in Ghana, it had been agreed by all parties, right from the start, that the work was linked with an institution not a person. Thus when George's term of office as Director of IEPA was completed, his successor Yaw Ankomah took over lead responsibility in Ghana and the LfL programme was sustained. For most of this time, the programme has also been supported by a local co-ordinator, Alfred Ampah Mensah, also based at the University of Cape Coast.

### **Susan Lovett, Senior Lecturer, Christchurch, New Zealand**

*Susan Lovett's story features the teaching of a masters programme based on the LfL principles.*

Susan Lovett, from Christchurch, New Zealand, spent a period of sabbatical leave with the Leadership for Learning (LfL) group at the University of Cambridge in 2009. She used that study time to reflect on one of her postgraduate educational leadership courses entitled 'Leadership for school improvement'. She reports that her "time at Cambridge was very enlightening to deepen and extend that course", and on her return to New Zealand she completely revised it, incorporating the LfL framework. Susan was especially drawn to the LfL principles as they relate directly to the focus of her course, and are accessible with easily remembered key words. Connecting leadership and learning, the book edited by John MacBeath and Neil Dempster (2009), is now the set text for the course, and Susan particularly appreciates the book's structure, which allows a deepening understanding of the principles.

The students on the masters course in Christchurch are introduced to several leadership frameworks or models, but Susan privileges the LfL framework and has integrated it into the assignments. In the first assignment students explore the leadership and connections with learning, while conceptualising leadership as an activity rather than as a role, and thinking about both direct and indirect leadership influence. Students consider and compare two or more frameworks, including exemplars from New Zealand. Susan notes that while different frameworks appeal to different people, LfL helps them seek out leadership actions in practice. For the second assignment, students are asked to find a journal article or book chapter with a case study of a leader of learning, then to critique the leader's practice using a LfL framework. They are prompted to look not only for

Susan likens LfL to “something dynamic, a pulse that keeps ticking”... “an organiser, a lens, a way of being really clear about a leader’s commitment to students’ and colleagues’ learning”.

what the case study says, but also for those principles on which it is silent; for example, where is the evidence that the leader has a focus on learning? The third assignment focuses on building leadership capacity, which involves capturing colleagues’ conceptions of leadership and prepares them for taking appropriate action. While principle four, shared leadership, features in particular on this task, all the other principles are also brought to bear when considering how to widen the compass of leadership.

Susan has noticed that her students have adopted the LfL framework and use it not only as prescribed in the assignments, but also in other ways. For example, in a job interview, a teacher talked about the leadership and learning connection using the LfL principles as an organising framework, explaining how to make a difference with students, staff and parents. Another, prompted by the ‘wedding cake’ LfL model, used the wedding theme as a metaphor throughout an essay. Since the wedding cake model is not in the MacBeath and Dempster book, Susan does not particularly draw attention to it, but students come across it themselves when studying LfL. Through supervision, Susan has also introduced other students beyond the leadership course to LfL. She says they found that it helped them with the analysis of data in enquiry projects, providing a way of naming, critiquing, looking for gaps and strengths. Examiners and other colleagues outside the leadership field have commented on the clarity of work produced by students using the LfL framework, and have warmed to it themselves. Susan describes LfL as “confronting”, as it is “not what people have come to expect leadership to be”, and that there are “light bulb moments”, when people see the connection between leadership and learning, particularly when they do not have a formal position of leadership. It is this emphasis on the connection between leadership and learning which, she says, has particular promise and potential for addressing the current leadership supply and succession challenges.

Susan likens LfL to “something dynamic, a pulse that keeps ticking”, as well as “an organiser, a lens, a way of being really clear about a leader’s commitment to students’ and colleagues’ learning”.

### **Neil Dempster, Emeritus Professor, Griffith University, Australia**

*Neil Dempster was one of the original participants in the Carpe Vitam project and went on to use the principles in a number of subsequent projects.*

Neil Dempster was one of the academics that came together in 2002 to launch the Carpe Vitam LfL project. He was also co-editor, with John MacBeath, of the book that reported on this project (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009). Following the conclusion of the LfL project, Neil has continued with project work in which the LfL approach is central.

Since 2009, the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) has hosted a professional development and research programme aimed at improving the capabilities of school leaders to lead the teaching and learning of literacy with a particular focus on reading. The programme draws heavily on the initial work of the Cambridge University-led Carpe Vitam Project, as well as related international work from the OECD, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia

itself. Originally funded as a pilot called Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL) by the Australian Government for application in low SES school communities, it has now been conducted in all states and territories with attendance by almost a thousand principals.

Knowing that there are approximately 10,500 schools in Australia gives an indication of the foothold gained by this initiative. In essence, the programme runs across two years with the first year devoted to five professional development modules, to which are attached specific 'homework tasks' for adaptation and application in each principal's school. By the end of the first year, principals have developed evidence-informed student Reading Intervention Plans with their teachers for implementation in the second year of the programme. This is accompanied by the monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the interventions, so that further planning can be undertaken locally following the completion of the two-year programme.

The PALL programme rests on five research-derived positions:

1. The position on leadership: Compelling research evidence shows that quality leadership makes a difference to children's learning and achievement; and it is about working together on a common moral purpose – in this case the improvement of children's literacy.
2. The position on reading: National and international research confirms that learning to read requires explicit attention by parents and teachers to the reading 'big six': (i) Early and ongoing oral language experiences; (ii) Phonological awareness; (iii) Phonemic awareness; (iv) Fluency; (v) Vocabulary; and (vi) Comprehension.
3. The position on interventions: Interventions in reading should be based on sound qualitative and quantitative evidence to target student needs across the school.
4. The Position on Shared Leadership: Achieving improvements in learning and achievement requires partnerships inside and outside the school to share the leading of reading.
5. The position on professional learning: Leadership learning is maximised when principals apply and evaluate their literacy knowledge and capabilities with their teachers in context, supported by valued mentors.

University-led research has documented the effects of the PALL programme and is published in a report available online through the APPA website ([www.appa.asn.au/pall.php](http://www.appa.asn.au/pall.php)).

Following the success of the take-up of the PALL programme, extensions into the leadership of literacy in the secondary school have been undertaken in South Australia and Tasmania. A report on the Secondary Principals as Literacy leaders (SPALL) programme has been published by the Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change (APCLC) and is available on its website ([www.ied.edu.hk/apclc/monographs.html](http://www.ied.edu.hk/apclc/monographs.html)).

A further extension into the leadership of literacy with indigenous school communities was developed and implemented over an eighteen month period during 2011-2012. A particular focus of this work was the inclusion of Indigenous Leadership Partners interacting with principals to

“The Carpe Vitam principles permeate both discourse and practice. New colleagues quickly learn that, at Barnwell, everyone has the opportunity to exercise leadership for collaboration.”

Paul Barnett

reach out, in with what is called ‘leadership both-ways’, to include Leaders of Reading drawn from the local Indigenous community. A full report of the research programme related to the PALLIC Project is available on the APPA website ([www.appa.asn.au/pallic.php](http://www.appa.asn.au/pallic.php)).

With the research evidence available through these three projects, there is no doubt of their operational effectiveness. They have made a difference to the leadership of teaching and learning related to literacy and this is evident in improved student outcomes. That said, there is also evidence that sustaining a concentration on learning is not as easy as it might at first appear, and it is not without ongoing challenges and difficulties in different social and cultural contexts. However, encouragement lies in the fact that research findings are now accumulating that show fruitful ways forward for school leaders and teachers anxious to sustain and add to the improvements they have been making.

#### **Paul Barnett, Deputy Headteacher, Barnwell School, Stevenage, UK**

*Paul Barnett’s story features a school leader who has engaged with LfL over a long period of time and has become influential on an international scale through his involvement with the teacher leadership initiative.*

Paul Barnett’s practice has reflected LfL values and principles for many years and he has engaged with the LfL network which, he says, helps him to “renew my commitment to those principles, reminding me of why I wanted to stay in education and make a difference to the opportunities for young people”. For Paul, LfL has been a constant companion on his professional journey. The values of LfL support an approach to school leadership at Barnwell which is inclusive, non-hierarchical and dispersed. The dispersed leadership approach that Paul talks about is encapsulated in the slogan that can be heard around the school: ‘We are not waiting for superman’, which was picked up on a visit to a school in Bulgaria as part of the International Teacher Leadership initiative (ITL). Paul had been one of the founders of ITL which built on the achievements of the Carpe Vitam LfL project and of the related HertsCam Network.

One of the five LfL principles is ‘shared leadership’, a key dimension of which is teacher leadership. This concept was at the heart of HertsCam, a network dedicated to teacher and school development ([www.hertscam.org.uk](http://www.hertscam.org.uk)). Paul engaged with the network when he enrolled on the HertsCam MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning in 2002, the same year that the Carpe Vitam project began. Subsequently, Paul enabled over 80 members of staff at his school to participate in the MEd or the Teacher Led Development Work (TLDW) programme. TLDW operates through school-based support groups, which enable teachers to design and lead development projects. This enables teachers to become involved in the process of change by identifying their own professional concerns and planning a project to address those concerns. The approach is known as ‘non-positional teacher leadership’ because any teacher, teaching assistant or educational worker can participate regardless of any particular position in the organisation of the school.

HertsCam attracted attention from a number of academics and people working in NGOs in countries as diverse as Turkey, Portugal, Serbia and Macedonia, which led to the launch of the ITL initiative in 2008. By 2011, fifteen countries had participated and established their own teacher leadership programmes (Frost, 2011). Paul was one of a team of strategists from within HertsCam who travelled to such places as Mavrovo in Macedonia, Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria and Corinth in Greece to help run conferences for facilitators of teacher leadership programmes. These events were revitalising for Paul, because they enabled him and others to refresh and articulate the LfL values and principles. For many of those participating in these international events, shared leadership was a radical concept and the HertsCam team were able to help to build a sense of self-efficacy for the facilitators and the teachers they supported.

At Barnwell, the work on teacher leadership resonated with strategies to promote student leadership which goes way beyond student voice. An example of this is taking place at the time of writing. A group of 30 students are enabled to collect evidence in 30 lessons over the course of the whole week. They use three categories to record something about themselves as learners and the activities that help them to learn. The students then put these 270 items of evidence together in order to present feedback to the teaching staff. Teachers' professional learning is thereby tightly linked to students' learning as illustrated in the wedding cake diagram used so often with the Carpe Vitam project. This type of work concentrates on getting students and teachers into a dialogue focused on learning:

Students are not making judgements on teachers' performance – they are reflecting on the activities that help them to learn – this feedback helps to show how variety in practice contributes to learning outcomes – so this is a direct link between students' learning and teachers' effectiveness – students reflecting on themselves as learners helps them to learn and through dialogue about learning.

Paul is keenly aware that external agencies tend to look exclusively at the test results as a measure of success, but in relatively disadvantaged communities, such as the one that Barnwell serves, attention has to be paid to longer term capacity building. It is clear that attainment levels at Barnwell are not as high as they need to be, but there are signs of steady improvement:

When you come into the school you see engaged students, calm lessons, - it's a quality that people remark on but its hard to quantify – results have improved but it is still a challenge and we need to work with a set of principles to drive the journey.

In schools such as this, staff recruitment is always a challenge. But a very positive sign is that there is good staff retention because the school operates as a learning community. Once teachers experience the way Barnwell works, they want to stay. Enabling colleagues to feel they are part of the conversation leads to sustainability. The Carpe Vitam principles permeate both discourse and practice. New colleagues quickly learn that, at Barnwell, everyone has the opportunity to exercise leadership for collaboration.



Paul continues to model the values and principles of LfL through his leadership style.

it is about leadership that encourages other people - to challenge and support and enable other people to take on leadership roles regardless of their position or role in the school. It's a supportive style – not just invitational. It has structure to it – people have opportunities to lead and will be supported in that.

Within the work of the ITL initiative Paul has been able to deploy this leadership style at the heart of which is recognising and valuing other people's contributions. He has played a vital role in enabling others to believe that it is possible to share leadership. This is truly emancipatory which makes working with people in other countries so joyous.

### **Cambridge International Examinations – Cambridge Schools LfL pilot project**

*Tristian Stobie – Director, Education; Cambridge International Examinations*

Cambridge International Examinations is 'the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds'. As their Director for Education, Tristian Stobie explained they are concerned with 'excellence in education and see this as a lot more than assessment'. The theme for their teachers' conference in 2012 was leadership and had introduced the LfL principles and framework – 'we were aware of the excellent reputation LfL had in this area and the enormous amount of experience they can share with our schools'.

Tristian was looking for ways to help create and support communities of professional practice across clusters of 'Cambridge' schools in order to enhance student learning. Working closely with LfL, a pilot project was developed involving seven schools on three continents - Europe, Asia and Australasia.

Schools were offered guidance materials and resources with which to work with the LfL principles and framework. A key part of this process was the LfL questionnaire, which has both staff and pupils versions, seeking their perceptions of leadership and learning practices and what they view as important for their schools. Over 1,000 staff and 270 students completed questionnaires, which were analysed by the LfL team in Cambridge. Each school received detailed feedback enabling reflection on practice and values in relation to the five LfL principles, leading to the identification of a focus for development integrated with their school development plans. Schools particularly valued the 'independent and neutral voice' and the in-depth feedback the LfL questionnaire generated.

The LfL project has... highlighted various things to us as a school, which may not have come to light otherwise. We consider the survey to be of immense value to any education institution, because it allows for an in-depth indication of the type of learning they offer to students.

We undertake a lot of internal surveys already (course evaluations, student satisfaction feedback, etc.), but LfL offered an independent and neutral voice – a way to reassess ourselves.

The questionnaire felt very authentic. Liked that it was customised to teachers and students perspective – usually only relevant to one party, but this could meet both needs.

The particular foci that schools identified included shared leadership, celebrating success in the school, accountability, measuring success, and dialogue. Schools in Malaysia benefitted from the local support of Professor Suseela Malakolunthu, while Sue Swaffield visited schools in Denmark and the Netherlands. The schools also supported each other through a series of virtual meetings during which they shared their progress, questions and issues, guided by LfL critical friend, Sue Swaffield.

Schools in the pilot have reported how the LfL framework and principles have enabled them to ‘think more strategically’ about professional development and student voice:

Reflecting upon how we learn as professionals and as an organisation AND encouraging our students to do the same, has enabled and enthused us to enhance leadership opportunities across the school.

We have found that the kids being in charge of how they learn has been instrumental to great learning.

The questionnaire has been developed into an online version with the intention of making it available more widely in 2015.

More information about the Cambridge CIE Pilot.

## Conclusion

The portraits featured in this edition of *InForm* illustrate both the extent of travel and also the variety of ways in which the outcomes of the Carpe Vitam project have travelled. Some of the vehicles are reasonably clear cut: masters programmes which draw on the LfL framework, for example, are central to Simon Clarke’s story and to Susan Lovett’s, while the LfL questionnaire is key to the Cambridge International Examination schools’ development work. Rather more diffuse, but nevertheless clearly discernible, are the cases where the values and principles have been influential through the leadership of key individuals such as Priscilla Dawson in the US and Paul Barnett in the UK. The LfL framework has also been a powerful tool in research, both in the form of doctoral studies, such as Uzma Javed’s and in the form of larger scale projects, such as those led by Neil Dempster in Australia and the leadership work in Ghana as portrayed in the George Oduro and Yaw Ankomah story. Other initiatives, such as International Teacher Leadership can be seen to have taken forward aspects of the LfL agenda, sometimes in ways, which are synergetic with national initiatives such as that in Macedonia. Less specifically, but just as important, are the ways in which the LfL ideas have been

carried forward through the values and personal epistemologies of practitioners. The accounts presented here show how individuals have been influenced by their experience with LfL and how they have gone on to influence so many others.

We know that the LfL framework, principles and ways of working have been adopted and adapted in other ways and in other places throughout the world. We continue to gather and investigate further accounts, and welcome details of other stories: please contact [lf@educ.cam.ac.uk](mailto:lf@educ.cam.ac.uk)

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