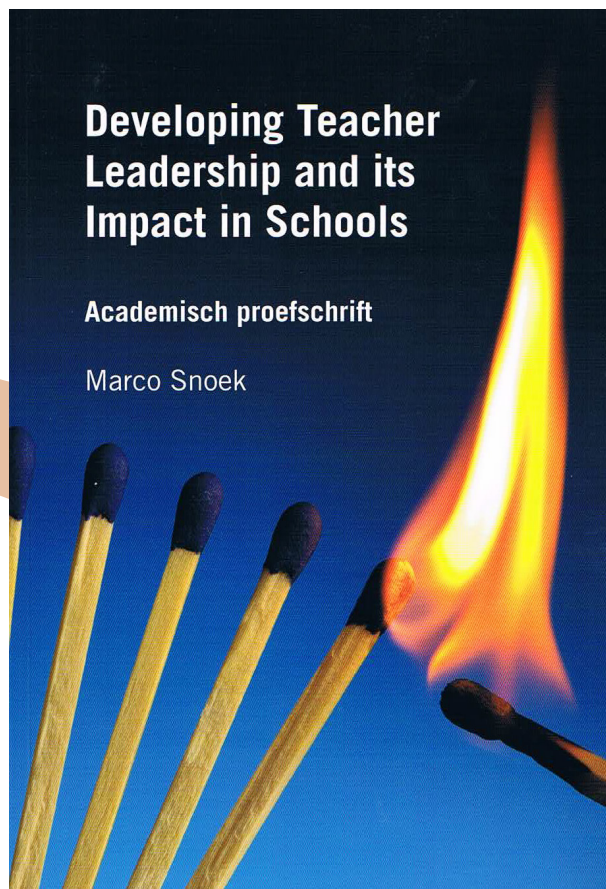


Review

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Marco Snoek, Developing Teacher Leadership and its Impact in Schools, Amsterdam University Press, 2014



Building on his previous writing on teachers, school improvement and teacher education Marco Snoek proposes to focus on teacher leadership that is considered in the contemporary literature as one of the key factors for in-

novation and quality improvement in schools.

Marco Snoek's book focuses on two main research questions, which can be formulated as follow: "What learning arrangements are effective in supporting teachers in developing their leadership qualities?" "To what extent and under what conditions can development of these leadership qualities impact practices in school?" The key aim of the presented research project was to provide insight into the extent to and ways in which in-service learning arrangements that focus on teacher leadership contribute to teacher development and school development.

To provide insight into the extent to and ways in which in-service learning arrangements that focus on teacher leadership contribute to teacher and school development Author identified specific learning arrangements that could be the context for his empirical research. The analysis of literature and 48 documents with future scenarios on education and teacher education led to identification of the trends in society and education that influence the design of learning arrangements for teachers and their impact on the dynamics and boundary crossing between schools and universities. The follow-

ing four potential prototypical scenarios for the future of teacher education were revealed:

- *The market-oriented scenario* - learning arrangements are the result of a customer-provider relationship. The dominant actor is the school and the school is perceived as a customer. The key focus is to meet the school's needs. Universities and other educational providers compete to offer schools their educational services.
- *The bureaucratic scenario* - the government and policy system are dominant for continues teacher development. The main focus is individual professional development in the context of formal quality requirements. Boundary activities are largely shaped in terms of imposed legal regulations and negotiations between policymakers and pressure groups from the other two activity systems.
- *The network scenario* - the dominant focus is bridging individual professional development and school development. The boundaries between the activity systems of the school and university are crossed. Institutional structures are replaced by a network structure with the mixed communities of practice of teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and researchers.
- *The professionalism scenario* - the dominant focus are professional groups of teachers and teacher educators who assume responsibility for their professional quality.

The analysis not only showed the roles of key actors that are part of different activity systems (governments, schools, teacher bodies, and universities), but at the same time it indicated that the future for teacher education is largely defined by the extent to which key stakeholders and their activity systems are open to boundary crossing and the willingness of these stakeholders to bridge institutional boundaries.

Based on an analysis of trends and developments in post-initial teacher education, three different types of possible learning arrangements for developing teacher leadership were recognized within Dutch context: (i) the academic development school as a school-centered context for teacher development (closely related to the market-oriented scenario);

(ii) a university-centered Master's program for teacher leadership (closely related to the bureaucratic scenario); and (iii) a partnership-based Master's program for teacher leadership (closely related to the network scenario).

These learning arrangements for teacher development within the Dutch context acted as the context for three empirical case studies, which showed the impact of the learning arrangements on leadership qualities of teachers and the impact on working practices and leadership practices in schools. It is worth noting that at this moment, no examples of learning arrangements for developing teacher leadership competences that fit in the professionalism scenario, can be found within the Dutch context.

The empirical study was based on the assumptions that successful school improvement is dependent on schools' capacities to initiate and manage change and development. Teachers – key actors in schools – can increase this change capacity of schools by using and supporting the change capacity of themselves. Within the book, teachers' change capacity is understood as the ability of teachers to provide the school direction and exert influence on their colleagues, school leaders, and other school community members. The role to provide direction and exert influence on others is indicated as 'teacher leadership'. One of the aim of teacher leadership is to improve teaching and learning practices that enhance student learning and achievement. Teacher leadership implies an active and responsible role of teachers that lifts up the level of teacher acting in his or her classroom, adding activities related to teacher inquiry, innovation and inspiring colleagues and the school as a whole. Teacher leadership may be fixed through formal or informal leadership positions. When it comes to the first case formal leadership positions are mandated or delegated to specific experienced or accomplished teachers. In the second case, the informal leadership positions may be dynamic when each teacher is recognized as having the potential to exercise leadership as part of his or her role, when leadership is shared and distributed among all teachers in the school.

The analysis of the case studies was based on the theories on transfer and boundary crossing. The case studies showed that a development of teacher leadership in schools requires learning arrangements that combine a focus on individual professional development and on school development. Master's programmes at universities can be considered as boundary zones, linking the school context and university context. In such a boundary zone, contexts are created in which different parties like master's students, their headteachers from the school and teacher educators from the university are engaged in a meaningful dialogue on providing the best possible learning context for pupils.

From the book we can learn that teacher leadership requires specific skills and knowledge. However, pre-service teacher education programmes do not adequately prepare teachers for leadership roles, leaving many teachers inadequately prepared to exercise leadership roles beyond their classrooms. Leadership qualities are not a standard element in pre-service teacher education programmes. In this context we can see that developing teacher leadership requires specific in-service teacher education programmes and specific learning arrangements. The programmes for teachers professional development should address the development of teacher leadership qualities.

The insights that result from the presented in the book research project have several very important implications for schools, universities, teachers, and policy makers. We see that schools can increase their capacity for innovation by recognizing the crucial role of teachers in innovation processes and by supporting the development of teachers' leadership and innovation capacities within their schools. However, any introduction of teacher leadership in schools will require clear positions and mandates for teacher leaders. For developing leadership at school, it is important to find a balance between structure and control and teachers' trust, agency, and self-steering in school. Both school leaders and teacher leaders should recognize and address the tension between strategically distributed leadership and culturally

distributed leadership. At the level of higher education the foundation for teacher leadership in the curricula for pre-service teacher education should be considered. Within school-university partnerships opportunities for collective in-service programmes that focus on shared agendas, and on school development as well as university development is needed. To achieve the real school-university partnership in designing the programmes for school leaders a new university flexibility to adapt curricula and involve school supervisors and management in designing tailor-made curricula is required.

This is an engaging and powerfully argues book based on the empirical research. The book challenges current views on educational leadership. It emphasises both the importance of teacher leadership and its impact on school development, and the importance of the establishing the programmes for pre-service and in-service teacher education with the focus on educational leadership. If you are interested in the development of education, especially through creation of the right conditions for the educational leadership then it is an important book.