

<p>Institution: University of Wolverhampton</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 25 Education</p>
<p>Title of case study: Improving leaders' and practitioners' ability to develop collaborative initiatives and learn from each other</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact Impacts highlighted in this case study derive from research into the leadership of collaboration in, between and among educational organisations. This has resulted in a range of outputs and processes which have had an impact on how leaders and practitioners work in partnership; design joint professional development programmes; and evaluate and sustain collaborative working. The research has also influenced the development of collaborative improvement programmes in local authorities and national government agencies. This had led to impacts on the leaders of collaborative improvement initiatives, including the development of school-to-school networks, with a specific focus on evaluating the impact of their work.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research Research findings The core team for this research comprises Jopling and Dhillon, along with Hadfield while he was CeDARE's Director of Research from 2008 to 2013. Their research has developed leadership theory in education by identifying the influence of the multiple personal, professional and organisational networks that leaders occupy, and how their interaction affects the leadership of collaborative reforms and inter-organisational partnerships. By adopting a perspective that focused on the intersections of multiple 'formal' and 'informal' leadership structures, they have been able to advise and support leaders designing and implementing partnerships and networks. The research has also expanded the nature of the structural analysis used to study leadership activity by recognising the impact on collaboration of a range of 'deep' social structures, based on cultural norms, shared educational values and social affiliations, all of which affect leaders' professional identities. By adopting a multi-level model of collaborative leadership, the team has identified key issues in the coordination and development of leadership capacity in networks of schools, colleges and other post-compulsory education and training organisations. These theoretical advancements also led to methodological innovations, including the increasing use of social network analysis to map the flow of interactions and relationships among leaders, organisations and practitioners.</p> <p>Underpinning research The research described in this impact case study has its origins in team members leading the National College of School Leadership's (NCSL) research into its Networked Learning Communities (NLC) Programme (Jopling, 2004-06). On the completion of the programme, Jopling joined the University of Wolverhampton and, working with Hadfield, developed a meta-synthesis of recently completed research into the potential of collaboration to support schools in complex and challenging circumstances (Hadfield and Jopling, 2007). At this point they joined colleagues already at the university such as Dhillon whose research was exploring partnership working among further education colleges, universities and other post-compulsory education providers (see reference 6 below). At this time the team also made links with Burton who was leading research into learning networks in Liverpool. Burton has since joined CeDARE, increasing critical mass and expertise in this research area. During the REF period, the team has developed theory around collaboration and applied it to practice in a range of educational contexts (references 1-3 below). Significant research has included investigations of local authority support for school networks in North Somerset (2005; 2012); an evaluation of the National Strategies' leading teachers programme, which was based on collaborative lesson study (2011, reference 4); and research support for the creation of professional learning communities for teachers across Wales (2010). Finally, the Longitudinal Study of Early Years Professional Status (2009-12) involved analysis of leadership networks in and between early years settings, using social network analysis to track the impact of leadership development.</p> <p>Dhillon's research has focused in particular on collaboration in a regional partnership of post-compulsory education and training organisations (references 1 and 5). This is one of the partnerships central to the developing work of the Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education (CRADLE), which was established in 2013 to extend and research such collaborations.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research

References 1, 2 and 5 have been submitted to REF 2014 and reference 6 was submitted to RAE 2008.

1. Dhillon, J. K. (2013) Senior Managers' perspectives of leading and managing effective sustainable and successful partnerships, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 41, 6: 736-750
2. Hadfield, M. and Jopling, M. (2012) How better network theories might improve school leadership research *School Leadership and Management* 32, 2: 109-121
3. Hadfield, M. and Jopling, M. (2011) School networks, networked learning and network theory in Day, C. (ed.) *The Routledge International Handbook of Teacher and School Development*. London: Routledge, 516-526 - <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415669702/>
4. Hadfield, M., Jopling, M. & Emira, M. (2011) *Evaluation of the National Strategies' Primary Leading Teachers Programme*. London: National Strategies <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/PDF/sed-cedare-leadingteachers.pdf>
5. Dhillon, J. K. (2009) The role of social capital in sustaining partnership. *British Educational Research Journal* 35, 5: 687-704
6. Dhillon, J.K. (2007) Trust, shared goals and participation in partnerships: reflections of post-16 education and training providers in England, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 53, 4: 503-515.

4. Details of the impact

During the REF period, the team was involved in both applying research findings to educational policy and practice and undertaking new research. They developed tools and materials based on their research to support the leadership, design and evaluation of collaborative working. They also designed and ran professional development activities for local authority and school staff in Wales, North Somerset, Walsall and Leicester on collaboration and networking. This extended to facilitating and coordinating a range of regional and national school-to-school networks and acting as consultants to local authorities and central government departments. As an external evaluator, Jopling in particular has assessed the effectiveness of a number of school-to-school networks.

Taken together, this work had direct impacts on:

- how local authorities and school leaders mobilise individuals to collaborate
- the leadership and design of collaborative improvement initiatives
- how leaders and practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of partnership.

This has led to improvements in the effectiveness of these initiatives and in some cases positive impacts on student learning and achievement as outlined below.

Some of the key impacts during the period related to the application and extension of findings from research into NCSL's NLC programme. Jopling and Hadfield designed the major programme reviews and evaluations and led the research team on what remains probably the largest programme of learning networks in the world, involving over 1500 schools and over 650,000 pupils. The programme influenced practice in schools and shaped government policy, leading to the introduction of Primary Strategy Learning Networks from 2006 and influencing collaborative elements of more recent developments such as teaching schools. After its completion NCSL used a number of the tools designed by the team in its programmes of leadership development, including leadership for the 'Narrowing the Gap' initiative (2008-10) and work with Local and National Leaders of Education (2007-13) (see 5a-c).

The research has also formed the basis of external evaluations of collaborative professional development initiatives for the DfE and local authorities. The evaluations undertaken for North Somerset local authority (2008; 2012) highlighted the potential of its networks of school to develop middle leaders and influenced their revised leadership development policies and provision of school support and improvement. An evaluation of provision for Leicester City Council (2009-11) highlighted innovative practice that led to changes in approaches to school-community links and the management of advanced skills teachers. A commissioning toolkit developed for schools (2010-11) for Walsall Children's Services based on the team's research was used with all 128 schools in the authority. The evaluation for the Department for Education of the National Strategies' Primary Leading Teachers Programme (Hadfield, Jopling & Emira, 2011), which

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focused on the use of collaborative lesson study in teaching and learning, was used as part of the government's summary of the impact and effectiveness of the National Strategies (see 5e below). Finally, the Longitudinal Study of Early Years Professional Status, which explored collaborative leadership in early years, was cited by Government in its response to the Nutbrown Review of early education and childcare qualifications in 2013 and used as a case study in the British Educational Research Association's *Why Education Matters* (2013) briefing to government. The 13 videos which form part of the multimedia case studies created from the research (www.cedare-reports.co.uk/eyps) were viewed over 1200 times between January and November 2013.

Regionally, in the schools sector CeDARE was the lead research partner for the Black Country Challenge (2008-11). Evaluations of the City Challenge programme's impact (Hutchings *et al*, 2012) demonstrated a range of impacts on pupils and schools including increases in pupil attainment in English and Mathematics at three times the national rate of improvement. In post-compulsory education, Dhillon's research has informed the work of the Black Country Partnership for Learning and the development of regional strategies for widening participation in post-compulsory learning (Dhillon, 2013), including the university's investment in CRADLE in 2013.

Hadfield advised the Welsh Assembly Government in 2009-10 on the rollout of its national Professional Learning Community programme and worked on the design and delivery of Leading Learning for School Effectiveness (LLSE). This project involved him in designing and running a series of seven workshops for over 400 local authority officers and headteachers from 12 Welsh local authorities. LLSE became the pilot for the National Professional Learning Communities programme delivered to 2000 Welsh schools and the materials developed by the team have been incorporated into national training and are hosted on the websites of the four Local Authority Consortia in Wales to support school leaders (see 5d). The team's thinking about evaluation and impact assessment has directly influenced the design of the professional learning communities website which is the national platform to support professional learning in Wales.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

a. The materials to support practitioners developed from the research into the Networked Learning Community can be downloaded from:

<http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/learning-networks-publications-directory.pdf>

b. The external evaluation of the Networked Learning Community which identifies its impact on pupils' achievement can be found at:

<http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/network-research-series/reports/how-networked-learning-communities-work.pdf>

c. A range of materials and tools developed by members of the team have been incorporated into National College programmes. This tool on developing collaborative planning was used in the Closing the gap initiative and QCDA's Building the Evidence Base for the Curriculum research:

<http://twww.ncsl.org.uk/public/download?id=33205&filename=defining-a-focus-for-an-enquiry.pdf>

d. Materials developed by the team are part of the South East Wales consortium resources for developing PLCs

http://www.sewales.org.uk/view_folder.asp?level2id=75&depth=2&level2=76&rootid=75&nextlevel=76&folderid=76

e. The evaluation of National Strategies Primary Leading Teachers Programme was part of the government's summary of the impact and effectiveness of the national strategies. The government summary can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175408/DFE-00032-2011.pdf.