WILLINGNESS TO LEAD

A framework for language teacher leadership development

Hayo Reinders

"I don't know who to pick for the team!"

"Just pick any of 'em and act like you're sure. That's called leadership."

- From Batman Lego 2

Abstract

What makes teachers want to lead? And what prevents them from doing so? In this introductory chapter I introduce a new concept, Willingness to Lead (WTL), to better understand the inhibitory and facilitating factors influencing teachers' readiness and willingness to assume responsibilities that go beyond their immediate classroom. I draw on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2020), as well as the contributions of the 26 authors of this volume, to offer a framework for establishing actions at the personal, organisational and professional levels to better prepare and support teachers.

The importance of teacher leadership

Perspective on leadership have developed significantly over the years. Especially in education it is now recognised that all teachers benefit from developing leadership skills and that the most successful and sustainable teams are those where responsibilities are distributed among teacher leaders, rather than centralised at the top. Previous models often placed considerable emphasis on a single leader and the qualities and behaviours needed to be successful in a leadership role. Over the years, leadership has come instead to be seen more as a process in which multiple actors play a role and leadership emerges as a result of what happens between people, the relationships they have and the context they work within.

We have also seen a shift away from a focus on technical processes, outcomes and resources to one that places people at the centre (also referred to as a move from a 'things to people' paradigm). Most importantly this shift has resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on developing teachers' leadership or "the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement ¨ (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 288). This shift has been noticeable in the field of language education too, with a number of influential publications covering the topic in recent years

(Coombe et al., 2008; Christison & Murray, 2009; Curtis, 2022, Knight 2022).

Language teacher leadership is important for many reasons. Laura Baecher, one of the contributors to this volume, summarised these in her 2012 article (p. 317-318) where she writes that engaging in leadership:

1) "improves teacher quality, and hence student learning, as accomplished teachers serve as models of practice for colleagues (York-Barr and Duke 2004);
(2) supports reform efforts, by guiding colleagues through implementation of new practices (Childs-Bowen et al. 2000);
(3) encourages the retention and recruitment of teachers through providing avenues for motivation and recognition (Hirsch 2006);
(4) provides opportunities for teacher leaders' ongoing professional growth
(Barth 2002);
(5) creates a more democratic school environment (Harris 2003);
(6) increases the sense of professionalism among teachers (Hinchey 1997);
(7) extends teachers' influence beyond the school and into the district (Danielson 2007); and
(8) extends principal capacity by reducing principals' workload (Barth 2001)."

One can add to this from the general education literature that there are important relationships between teachers engaging in leadership and academic achievement of their schools, as shown by a recent meta-analysis (Shen et al., 2020). However, as shown by a recent scoping review of the teacher leadership literature in language education (Reinders et al., forthcoming) there is almost no empirical research on whether teachers (want to) engage in leadership activities and how they could be better encouraged to do so. This chapter will explore this issue by drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior and the contributions to this volume to develop a framework of Teacher Willingness to Lead (WTL) to better understand the factors that inhibit or faciliate teachers assuming leadership roles.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was developed by Ajzen in the 1980s to explain why people do or do not engage in particular behaviours over which they have control (Ajzen, 2011; 2020). As shown in the model below background factors engagement in an activity is influenced by our attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. TPB has been used in hundreds of studies in fields ranging from healthcare (smoking, breastfeeding), to consumer attitudes and behaviours (decisions to buy 'green' products), and -relatively

sparingly- education (in particular in predicting technology adoption; Lee et al., 2010; Chu & Chen, 2016). None, as far as I am aware have been carried out in the area of teacher leadership.
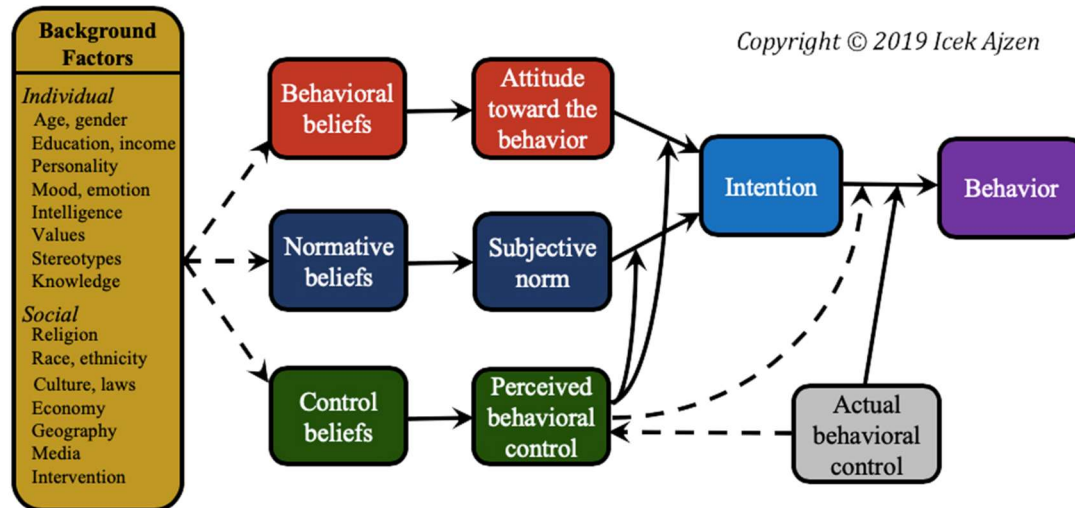

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2011).

In detail, *background factors* mediate propensities for and practical constraints on certain behaviours through a person's beliefs. *Behavioral beliefs* are the subjective probability that the behavior will produce a given outcome or experience. For example, a teacher may believe that assuming leadership responsibilities will lead to greater teacher agency. *Attitude toward a behaviour* is the degree to which performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued. Someone who thrives on having greater freedom with regards to the curriculum may be more positively inclined towards assuming leadership than someone who lacks confidence. *Normative beliefs* reflect the perceived pressure to engage in a certain behaviour. The greater the pressure and the stronger the connection with those who exert the pressure (e.g. a direct manager versus a colleague), the greater the perceived social pressure or *subjective norm* to engage or not to engage in a behavior. *Control beliefs* refer to the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour (for example, whether time is given to engage in leadership activities). *Perceived behavioral control* refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour (impacted by, for example, prior experiences with leadership, self-beliefs, and so on). These six variables determine a person's intention, or a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour.

TPB is not without criticism. The most frequently levelled is that it does not give sufficient weight to affect and emotions (see for example, Wolff et al., 2011). Ajzen (2020) has

countered that emotions and affect underpin and drive the components of the framework, such as attitudes and subjective norms. A limitation in the context of understanding teachers leadership, however, is that TPB is not intended to identify the origins or drivers of the various beliefs and attitudes (and their antecedent affective causes). Its purpose is instead primarily to identify likely engagement in certain behaviours. In cases where the background variables and their impact are well-known this is not a major impediment. For example, in the case of smoking, a decades-long literature exists that has identified the many variables that create conditions in which smoking is more likely to be taken up. In the context of language teacher leadership, however, much less is known about such behaviours and the conditions under which they emerge, and therefore, for a framework to be useful at a practical level (as well as as source for theoretically-driven research), it needs to combine the predictive value of the TPB model with a better understanding of teachers (in particular the 'background variables' in the model) and the contexts in which they work (in particular the 'control beliefs').

Specifically, I have argued (Reinders, 2023) for a recognition of teacher leadership as being situated at three levels: at the personal level (involving beliefs, attitudes, propensities etc), at the organisational level (the immediate context with all of its real-life obstacles and opportunities for leadership), and the professional level (involving for example the pre- and in-service training and support teachers have access to). In the next sections of this chapter I will review what we know from previous literature on the relevant variables on teacher leadership at these three levels and combine this with the insights from the chapters in this volume. Together, these then form the basis of a pragmatic framework for understanding and supporting teachers' willingness to lead (WTL).

The personal component of teacher leadership

For all its social and relational characteristics, teacher leadership is at its core a personal, values-driven commitment to advancement. For this reason, appointing people as leaders, without the prerequisite self-awareness and personal investment, is unlikely to lead to satisfactory outcomes, especially in the long term (Fullan, 2002). Teachers' personal goals and aspirations need to align with those of the wider context. Whether teachers are able to assess the potential alignment or not depends on a range of factors, in particular personally-held beliefs and attitudes about leadership. Prior experiences, misconceptions on the nature of teacher leadership (such as equating leadership exclusively with managerial and administrative duties), the belief that teachers cannot have a significant impact beyond their own classroom, or that leadership necessitates assuming a highly public role, can all have a negative impact (and are very common, in my own experience in facilitating teacher

leadership courses).

Equally important are the beliefs teachers hold about their own abilities and practices. Greenier and Whitehead (2016) found little awareness among the 56 teachers in South Korea of their own leadership, something echoed by Baecher regarding teacher leaders in New York: 'While 22 of the 24 teachers surveyed for this paper participated in many activities considered teacher leadership, less than one half of them recognized these activities as such' (2012, p. 326). This is a common phenomenon, with many teachers showing low levels of confidence in their leadership abilities (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Clearly, there is room for constructively challenging teachers' beliefs (see below).

Propensity for leadership is another component, something that TPB does not take into account (it focuses on intent, not the ability to carry out the intended behaviour). Greenier and Whitehead (2019) found that teachers thought 'the primary attributes of language teacher leaders […] were passion, and a predisposition towards collaboration and involvement. An underlying passion for languages, language teaching, and language learning was described by all of the teacher leaders […]'. Assessment tools exist that will give teachers insight into what is involved in leadership and their readiness for it. The Centre for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, for example, has created 'Teacher Leader Self Assessment' (https://cstp-wa.org/), covering six areas, including:

> Working with adult learners
> Communication: including 'building relationships' and 'technical skills'
> Collaboration: including 'collaborative skills' and 'organizational skills'
> Knowledge of content and pedagogy
> Systems thinking: this includes the headings 'working within a system' and 'skills of advocacy'
> Equity lens: including the headings 'self and identity', 'understand race, power and privilege', 'facilitate' and 'Applies Culturally Relevant and Responsive Practices'.

For all their usefulness, such studies and tools describe what successful teacher leadership looks like, not necessarily how to achieve it, or how to avoid the inevitable obstacles on the path to its development. For that we must turn to some additional sources of information, including the chapters in this book.

Starting at perhaps the most personal of all leadership planes, Tammy Gregersen and Hayo Reinders argue for the importance of wellbeing in the development of teacher leadership. They identify eight 'mature mental mechanisms' that impact teachers' effectiveness in the

long term:
> affiliation (confronting emotional adversities by looking to others for assistance or support),
>
> altruism (the dedication to fulfilling the needs of others), anticipation (considering possible emotional reactions to future problem), humor (seeing the lighter side of things)
>
> self-assertion (frankly expressing your feelings and thoughts to achieve goals)
>
> self-observation (reflecting on your own thoughts, feelings, motivation, and behaviour)
>
> sublimation (channeling emotions into socially acceptable behavior rather than expressing potentially unprofessional or "unacceptable" feelings or impulses)
>
> and suppression (deliberately choosing not to indulge in conscious thought, feeling or action, but instead focusing on more urgent matters without being distracted by every impulse that arises).

Although focusing on teachers' self-care, and recognising that this would have to constitute a prerequisite for (sustainable) leadership, Gregersen and Reinders remind us that 'teachers cannot do it alone. They need systematic institutional support (including social, cultural, and political) that prioritizes their wellbeing in all of the components of the education system'. In addition, the development of the above attributes and attitudes can be positively impacted by supportive colleagues, explicit instruction and guided practice and by integrating topics of self-care and personal wellbeing into teacher education. Linking back to the Theory of Planned Practice, all of these influence teachers' long-term attitudes towards leadership, their ability to negotiate social norms and regulate perceived behavioural control.

The ability to maintain wellbeing is particularly important when teachers face a range of obstacles in the form of normative beliefs and control beliefs that can impede their willingness and ability to assume leadership. Investigating these and how they uniquely impact subjective norms and perceived behavioural control differ for teachers of different backgrounds is an important first step in better understanding WTL. Laura Baecher, Araceli Salas, Luciana de Oliveira, Jennifer Pendergrass, Lenora Haranaka and Hind Elyas offer an impressive example of this that involved using collaborative autoethnography to 'explore how women in the field of English language teaching worldwide navigate their professional advancement'. By drawing on 'personal narratives as a source of understanding the complexities of leadership development' they were able to identify and develop a 'range of suggestions for the creation of empowering practices in which women in the ELT field can experience leader development and so have their voices heard, shared and amplified', such as the use of mentoring, networking and coaching, to name a few. This is an excellent example of leadership development at the personal level but obviously also something that could be encouraged and supported in the workplace and embedded in the profession

through initial and ongoing teacher development. Either way, I would contend such practices are a key factor in enhancing WTL.

Continuing with factors operating at the personal level Andy Curtis, Okon Effiong and Mary Romney used reflective interviews to provide insight for the experiences of 'visible minorities' as leaders in language education, whose voices 'appeared to be few and far between, if present at all' in the existing literature. The personal accounts show the delicate balancing of conflicting aspirations and burdens that such leaders face. It also shows the importance of critical self-reflection and a deep understanding of the various assumptions, experiences and expectations that impact them. Such reflection could be included into the professional discourse, whether in the context of initial teacher training or beyond it, in order to impact control beliefs, or perceived ability to achieve desired long-term outcomes. Curtis and colleagues offer a number of practical suggestions for addressing such issues that, I would argue, can enhance perceived behavioural control.

Together, these chapters and the existing research literature point towards a number of facilitative actions that can be taken to support WTL. These have been included in the Framework introduced further down. But first we must look at the role of leadership and its development at the organisational level.

The organisational component of teacher leadership

The educational context (school, university, centre) presents a complex web of interrelated affordances and obstacles for leadership to emerge. A number of such organisational conditions have been suggested (although often not based on empirical research). For example, the Institute of Educational Leadership offers a checklist (2008) that distinguishes between structural, interpersonal and social/cultural conditions. The former include access to resources (such as time). Many teachers already experience high levels of stress due to increasing workloads (Clandinin et al., 2015) and although assuming leadership roles has been shown to positive impact teachers' job satisfaction and wellbeing (Torres, 2019), there is an initial investment on the part of both the individual and the organisation, which requires adequate resourcing. *Interpersonal conditions* deal with the presence of positive relationships between teacher leaders and others, and the presence of effective teamwork between colleagues. *Social/cultural conditions* include the establishment of school standards and expectations for leadership; whether teachers are made aware of leadership activities; are encouraged to participate in and initiate leadership activities; whether there is a school-wide focus on learning and reflection; whether teachers are valued and respected; the presence of supportive principals/school leaders who model teacher leadership. This and

other similar tools (see the 'school orientation to school renewal' instrument for example: Shen et al., 2020) and checklists can be fruitfully used as a starting point for schools to consider where improvements might be made.

Investigating leadership at the organisational level, Xavier Gutiérrez, Leila Ranta and William Dunn provide an interesting example of a research-practice partnership that was set up to enhance collaboration between the university and the language teaching community using an online community of practice. This became a 'hub for developing teachers' leadership qualities and leveraging those qualities in support of pedagogical improvement, innovation and change'. One recommendation from their study is 'to devote greater attention to the concerns of practicing teachers and their classroom realities', so as to enhance teacher agency. Without such active involvement changes are likely to continue to be perceived as top-down impositions rather than opportunities for genuine collaboration and growth. The way in which organisations encourage and support such collaborations is clearly a key factor in teachers' norm beliefs and social norms, each of which impacts WTL.

Marella Tiongson's chapter deals with the specific case of interdisciplinary collaborations in the context of ESP writing classes offered by subject matter and language teachers in a Philippine university. It describes how in this and other contexts language goals often 'become subordinate to content goals, resulting in a lack of parity between language and content teachers, thereby relegating the language teacher to a lower position in the partnership'. She argues that one of the reasons why such disparities are hard to overcome is because of the academic insularity that exists, with different norms and epistemologies. In addition, deeper partnerships are difficult to achieve because 'teachers are not explicitly taught how to collaborate' and lack clarity on what the university's policies and expectations are. The variables Tiongson identifies are likely to negatively affect behaviour beliefs and norm beliefs and are likely to reduce WTL.

Clearly, there are many ways in which organisational conditions and actions can positively and negatively WTL . The Framework introduced in the final section includes recommendations for leadership-supportive mechanisms that can be implemented. However, first we look at the final level of teacher leadership, the profession.

The professional component of teacher leadership

The wider profession (and beyond that society as a whole) has a major impact on WTL. Initial and ongoing teacher training, the setting of standards and the general discourse within the discipline (for example at conferences, in journals and in informal (online) teachers'

community spaces), are some examples of the ways in which leadership is inculcated into teachers' awareness. As Smylie and Eckert (2017) and others have argued, teacher leadership is not sufficiently systematically developed in pre-service training and Curtis (2022) found the same for in-service teacher, considering it "one of the most commonly recurring themes" in the cases he analysed (2022, p. 108).

Underpinning much of the above is teachers' ability to recognise, reflect on, challenge and develop their multiple identities as well as the language ideologies around them. Elbwart and Keating's study in this volume concluded that 'critical reflection can lead to a change of attitudes and thus a (re-)construction of LTI in different learning environments which aim at providing a multifaceted perspective on language teaching', thus providing an avenue for teacher leadership development. Another such avenue is offered through critical reflection, or 'the process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's practices and routines" (Richards & Farrell, p. 7). Thomas Farrell, building on the concepts of John Dewey (1939), argues that 'the reflection itself must also be accompanied by a set of three essential attitudes to make it profound for the teacher or the leader'. These are, *open-mindedness* ('a desire to listen to more than one side of an issue so that we can give attention to possible alternative views'), *whole-heartedness* ('overcoming fears and uncertainties to continuously review their practice'), and *responsibility* ('careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads; in other words, what the impact of our reflection is, as well as who is impacted by our reflection'). Clearly such attributes and the ability to engage in critical reflection do not develop overnight. They have the dual characteristic of being both a prerequisite for developing one's own leadership and benefitting from others' leadership in encouraging and supporting it the professional context, in particular in pre-service and in-service teacher development.

At the level of structured teacher preparation for leadership, William Davis and Brianna Janssen Sánchez argue that 'a stronger understanding is needed regarding the pathways—both semiformal spaces and formal programs—through which language teachers' leadership capacity can be developed to prepare them to address the needs of their specific contexts'. Especially with regards to formal programs, more insight into their rationale and structures is needed, 'including how those programs conceptualize language teacher leadership, the components of the program, and how the program is experienced by those involved'. Davis and Sanchez identify a number of ways in which teacher leadership can be fostered. For one, 'through a combination of programmatic and community support, teachers can begin to understand that leadership is already part of their identity and work'. This involves challenging of preconceptions of what leadership (and management) entails and welcoming the diversity of experiences goals and needs of potential leaders. They offer a number of

practical suggestions for leadership programmes, such as drawing on previous participants as facilitators, modelling relational and distributed forms of leadership and facilitating communities of leaders, all of which will significantly impact teachers' control beliefs and perceived behavioural control.

Casting the net wider, Caleb Powers and Kathleen Bailey surveyed 223 teacher leaders of world languages in the United States of America to identify their leadership journeys, or 'the sequence, timing, and setting of experiences and influences that culminate in teaching professionals acquiring leadership responsibilities and (usually) gaining awareness of their potential to carry out those roles'. They identified six characteristics of leadership pathways: 'the timing and sequence of experiences; any catalysts that caused individuals to first act on their leadership potential; the locality, or context, in which the work took place; any external influences the leaders received; the leaders' motivations regarding their current responsibilities and/or future roles; and the individuals' overall perception of their pathways'. Their findings have important implications for the profession. For example, awareness of leadership was less likely to happen during university if it had not already developed earlier in teachers' lives. This means that professional programmes can probably do more to incorporate leadership awareness building and that future employers cannot assume that new teachers are clear on their potential on arrival into a new organisation. Another finding was that only a minority of respondents had had access to leadership training of any type and that informal resources such as role-models and mentoring were much more prevalent. This has implications for the types of support that organisations can offer and the ways in which teachers may be motivated to engage in leadership.

Framework

Integrating the three situational domains (personal, organizational, and professional) and combining these with the six components of the model for Planned Behaviour, yields a 3x6 grid. Combining the insights from the chapters in this volume with the general literature on the drivers of WTL, affords the drawing up of a framework for actions that can be employed by individuals, their schools and the wider community to support a move towards teacher leadership. Each of these presents a lever that can be adjusted, and is illustrated in the suggestions in each of the 18 cells that make up the Framework.

	personal	organisational	Professional
Behaviour beliefs	Guided or self-reflection on prior experiences of leadership Understanding personal values and aspirations Shadowing of (teacher) leaders	Modelling distributed, instructional and other forms of teacher-oriented forms of leadership Sharing and celebrating of teachers' successes Identifying and supporting emerging teacher leaders Using assessment tools to review the conditions for teacher leadership Measuring and sharing the impact of (teacher) leadership	Introducing the wide range of ways in which teacher leadership can be manifested Evidence from studies on the impact teacher leaders have had, teachers' experiences etc
Attitudes toward the behaviour	Sharing of experiences of language teacher leadership Identifying role models Developing a willingness to challenge one's assumptions and step out of one's comfort zone Wellbeing practices	Providing the necessary resources for leadership responsibilities Offering leadership pathways and training for teachers Explicitly recognising the wide range of leaders and leadership practices in the organisation Providing venues for teachers to share concerns about leadership and potential/perceived lack of parity	Challenging ideas about leadership Encouraging risk-tasking Identity work Preparing teachers for self-care and personal wellbeing

Normative	Learning about the types of leadership and the ways they can be put in practice	Offering choice through a range of (optional) leadership options. Recognising the wide diversity of needs, experiences and goals among the teachers	Inviting teachers to explore how leadership practices can help them to achieve their personal aspirations
Subjective	Aligning external demands with internal aspirations Employing self-care	Critically investigating existing leadership expectations and practices Focusing on teacher wellbeing	Focusing on teacher wellbeing
Control beliefs	Identifying inhibiting and facilitative factors and reflecting on how they can be overcome and who can be enlisted for support with this Networking Connecting with professional communities outside the organisation itself	Clarity on leadership expectations Provision of resources such as time and recognition for leadership activities Teacher leadership development courses and support Providing opportunities for networking Evaluations from teachers of their leadership experiences (leading and being led) in order to identify inhibiting and facilitating factors	Giving teachers tools to identify the opportunities for and obstacles to leadership Setting standards Developing resources Guidance on ways of dealing with obstacles Guidance on ways to enlist support and

Perceived behavioural control	Personal SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats)	Mentoring programmes	Constructive feedback
	Teacher Leader Self Assessment	Coaching programmes	Experiential learning opportunities during preservice training
	Confidence building	Experiential learning opportunities, such as co-teaching or leadership shadowing	Developing critical reflection
	Informal mentoring		
	Informal coaching		
	Participating in supportive networks		
	Wellbeing practices		

Behaviour beliefs: The subjective probability that the behavior will produce a given outcome or experience. **Attitude toward the behaviour:** the degree to which performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued. **Normative beliefs:** The perceived pressure to engage in a certain behaviour. **Subjective norms:** The perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behavior. **Control beliefs:** The perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour. **Perceived behavioural control:** People's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior.

Looking ahead

Three major caveats are in order. Theoretically, TPB assumes a well-defined domain with a clear understanding of relevant background variables and contextual drivers. We do not yet in the field of teacher leadership have such a knowledge base. A great deal more research is needed to identify and understand the interrelationships between the myriad background and situational variables that impact teachers.

Pragmatically, the framework attempts to explain intention and behaviour (and mediating variables therein), not predict outcomes. Just because someone is willing to lead, does not make them a good leader. Although many of the mediating variables that impact WTL (training, support) are likely to improve the chances of successful leadership behaviour, this is not guaranteed. In other words, there is practical merit in considering the use of evaluative tools, such as the Teacher Self-Assessment Tool developed by the Center on Great Teachers & Leaders (https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeacherLeadership_TeacherSelf-Assessment.pdf) to (self-)identify likely success. Additionally, the framework does not list all of the component parts that make up leadership itself, but rather the mechanisms by which WTL may be impacted. For example, 'mentoring' and 'coaching' are included, but what skills might be developed through such activities is not detailed. This happens during implementation.

Practically, the framework is in its first iteration. For one, gaps, overlaps (some of the borders between individual cells are porous) and inaccuracies will have to be addressed. It can be made more useful by linking to various resources that could be used for each of the activities, for example by linking from 'setting standards' (under Control Beliefs at the Professional level) to illustrations of such standards from different organisations and countries. This is planned for the next version of the framework. On the other hand, a potential benefit is that the framework can reveal potential gaps in our understanding and a need for more research.

The contributions to this chapter both individually and collectively highlight the importance of teacher leadership and the significant need for greater support for teachers in its development and the necessary research to underpin this. I am grateful to the authors for placing teacher leadership more firmly on the map and it is my hope that this chapter and the subsequent ones will inspire a new generation of researchers and practitioners to help us better understand teacher leadership and its development.

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