Teacher Leadership

Leading in turbulent times

Leading in turbulent times

- change is constant and volatile in the VET sector (Blom & Clayton 2002, Mitchell, 2007)
- It is 'a sector that needs saving through effective leadership' (Kelly et al. 2005)
- What is 'the place of leadership in less exalted positions—in the "engine room" of educational change' (Simkins 2005)

Teacher Leadership

- The Lead Vocational Teacher (LVT) in TAFE Queensland introduced in 2005
- Career pathway

Teacher Leadership

- 983 LVTs (1/9/2008 data provided by Department of Education, Training and Arts, Queensland)
- 35-65 age group
- Over two thirds are in the 50-65 age group (n = 744)
- Just under half are in the 55-65 age group (n= 477).
- Under a third are in the 35 – 50 age group (n = 239).

Teacher Leadership

- A need for effective leadership (Kelly 2005,Mitchell 2007)
- Research into leadership in VET focuses mainly on management (Falk and Smith 2003, Foley and Conole 2003, Mulcahy 2003 and Callan 2007)
- Foley and Conole (2003) discuss the premise of 'leading from any chair' and provide a generic leadership capability framework for all TAFE staff (in Victoria).
- Substantial research into teacher leadership in schools

Teacher Leadership

What is teacher leadership?
- Position of influence on the culture and direction of an organisation (Jameson & MacNay, 2007, Lumby 2003, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001)
- opportunity to sit with the grown ups at the table (Barth, 1999)
- It can happen on an informal or formal level (Donaldson Jr, 2007)
- through the basis of constructivist teaching methods, characteristics that teachers can bring to leadership (Lambert et al, 1996).

Teacher Leadership

- Shared and distributed leadership suitable for the knowledge era (Mehra et al 2006, Pearce 2004)
- Link between collaborative leadership and innovation (Jameson, 2007, Pearce 2004) – shared vision, joint decision making

Teacher Leadership

- Simkins (2005) asks: 'What about the place of leadership in less exalted positions—in the 'engine room' of educational change?' (p.16). He defines three emerging roles that require leadership:
- enhanced line roles managing and supervising staff
- project management roles
- networking roles for building partnerships (p.16).

Teacher Leadership

- Focus groups held end of 2009
- Representatives from Gold Coast, Southbank, Southern Queensland, Sunshine Coast, Tropical North, Brisbane North, Wide Bay, Barrier Reef and Skills Tech Acacia Ridge

Teacher Leadership

- How the role was implemented
- Tasks and duties
- Need for teacher leadership
- Shared vision
- Issues and future direction

Teacher Leadership

- Program Coordination (n=10)
- Administrative duties
- the induction and mentoring of new staff (n=5)
- arrangement of student orientation and graduation
- arrangement of casual replacement teachers
- liaison with universities regarding higher level qualifications
- student grievances and student counseling
- budget management (n=3)
- teacher representation and regularly liaison with TAFE management
- course development (n=2)
- management of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- maintenance of online courses
- teacher representation within communities of practice

Teacher Leadership

The need for teacher leadership:
- induction; mentoring and coaching of new staff
- business development
- course coordination, management and development
- acting as a conduit between management and teaching teams
- the management of AQTF and AVETMISS compliance.

Teacher Leadership

Shared vision?
- conflict of interest between the 'mighty dollar' and teaching excellence
- Increased administration
- Increased professional angst and ethical dilemmas.
- Reduction in resources
- LVTs as a go-between
- Lack of debate in the business of education

Teacher Leadership

- *Career Development Needs*
- *Teachers need reinvigorating, 'It's like a car you just can't drive it for 100,000kms and never, ever service it' (Focus group member)*

Teacher Leadership

Conclusions
- Examples of shared and collaborative leadership
- Compromised by a lack of recognition, shared vision
- Enabling teacher leadership