Educational change: A view from the bottom up

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ABSTRACT

Despite the availability of an abundant amount of guiding literature, only about 30% of planned educational changes are successful. Clearly there is something essential missing from our understanding of how to successfully lead educational change. A review of the literature provides an awareness that success is far more likely if the leader pays as much attention to the needs of those who are bringing about the change as they do to the elements of the planned change strategy. Arguably, however, this still maintains a top-down perspective of the change process. Hence the departure point of this article is its presentation of a change process from the perspective of those explicitly affected—that is, a view from the 'bottom up'. Specifically, this article presents and discusses both quantitative and qualitative data from research conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand involving primary school teachers who changed the class levels in which they taught. It seeks to provide a unique contribution to the development of successful educational change strategies by presenting the teachers' views about the most effective leadership practices during times of change.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the impact of modern science, technology, transportation, the globalisation and internationalisation of education, communications, business and employment, change in today's world seems both endemic and dramatic. Many would argue that they are surrounded by, and enriched by, the impact of change. But this does not necessarily mean that everyone automatically accepts change if it personally impacts upon them. Hence within an organisational context, including that of education, the likelihood of employee resistance to change is ever present. Indeed, overcoming resistance to desired organisational change is a challenge for leaders that few appear capable of overcoming (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005).

Specifically, this article presents and discusses both quantitative and qualitative data from research conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand involving primary school teachers who changed from teaching at one class level to another. The study was designed to investigate the phenomenon of teacher transition, and in particular the impact that changing class levels has on teacher professional learning. Specifically, this article addresses the following research question: what place does leadership have in teacher transition between class levels? In this way, this article seeks to provide a unique contribution to the development of successful educational change strategies by presenting the teachers' views about effective leadership practices during times of significant change. From this, we present a conceptual framework illustrating the characteristics required to effectively lead educational change.

LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

It is not surprising to find seminal educational literature highlighting concern about the lack of success in the leadership of change. For example, as far back as 1998, Fullan wrote that "despite massive inputs of resources and despite numerous different types of plans and strategies, very little significant change has occurred at the school level corresponding to the intended consequences of these innovations" (p. 217). More recently Hargreaves (2005) argued that despite all of our previous endeavours and our "impressive knowledge base and expertise about the strategic and cultural aspects of educational change, too many change efforts remain disappointing and ineffective. Successful school change on a widespread basis continues to be infuriatingly elusive" (p. 282). This impression of school principals' incapacity to successfully lead educational change is further supported by Clement (2014) who writes that "despite decades of educational reform, the way teachers teach and students learn has changed little and…government policy mandates have minimal impact on teaching in classrooms" (p. 39). Arguably many school principals are yet to learn how to successfully lead educational change.

In addition, it would seem there is no point in looking to the corporate world for the answer because its organisational change success rate is as bad if not worse. Indeed, large-scale international research indicates only a 30% or less success rate for desired organisational change (De Smet, Schaninger & Smith, 2014). This longitudinal research on behalf of the large multinational research and professional development corporation of the McKinsey Company, shows that this 30% success rate has remained consistent since 1995, regardless of the nature of the organisational context. This view is supported by internationally acclaimed business management and leadership researcher and speaker Margaret Wheatley, who writes that "senior corporate leaders report that up to 75% of their change projects do not yield the promised results" (2006, p. 138). Hence it is not surprising then that Harvard Business College professor Gary Hamel suggests that

> perhaps the problem with [change] leadership is that we have reached the end of management. Perhaps we have more or less mastered the sciences of organizing human beings, allocating resources, defining objectives, laying

> out plans, and minimizing deviations from best practice. (2007, p. 4)

Clearly there is something essential missing from our understanding of how to successfully lead organisational change regardless of its context—educational or corporate.

It would, however, be false to think that there has been insufficient research attention towards rectifying this change leadership deficiency. Indeed, this unsustainable level of change failure has continued despite countless published views on how to successfully lead or manage change (Branson, 2010; Fullan, n.d.; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Moreover, this literature has progressed from initially promoting largely pragmatic detached prescriptions, where the change process was described in a pre-determined logical sequence and those charged with actually implementing the change had little influence upon the process, to that of a far more aware and considerate perspective. For example, Burns, (2010) states that managing change effectively requires a leader who is "relational, collective and purposeful" (p.18) and that it is important for leaders to work alongside their followers to understand their values and principles. Others add that leaders must have the ability to engage in honest dialogue and develop authentic relations, which are based on trust and transparency, in order to successfully lead change (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). These examples align with transformational leadership, which can be defined as a process whereby leaders change others through creating, communicating and modelling values while also inspiring and motivating them to perfom beyond their expectations (Bass, 1985). A more recent interpretation of transformational leadership is transrelational leadership, which provides a greater emphasis on first building the supportive relationships that are needed to be able to overcome resistance and challenges in order to successfully lead others through change (Branson, Franken, & Penney, 2016).

An expansion of Kurt Lewin's well known *Unfreeze, Change, Refreeze* model (see, for example, Rosenbaum, More, & Steane, 2018) includes the view that the leader should involve people in the process and provide support and training. Also, Kotter's (2015) *8-Step Model* encourages the leader to form powerful coalitions amongst those involved in the change and to create short-term wins for them. Schein's (1992) change model posits the expectation that the leader should carefully review the need for a possible change after having thorough discussions with those who will be involved in making it happen about the likely implications of the change. Fullan (n.d.) argues that successful changes always reflect a very moral purpose, such that the leader maintains a very inclusive, open, transparent and relational approach throughout the change process. More specifically, a number of authors (see Blenkin, Edwards & Kelly, 1997; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1997; House & McQuillan, 1998) urge leaders of change to monitor, and respond constructively, to the likely socio-political reactions to the change process rather than just the logistics of the process itself.

The socio-political perspective acknowledges that organisations like schools are heterogeneous entities, such that they are inevitably sites of ongoing political, social and cultural struggles as individuals and groups apply various strategies, and various sources of power and influence, to further their

own interests. Bridges (2009) explicates this understanding further by arguing that a person's reaction to a proposed change is not so much about the actual focus of the change *per se* but more about how they see themselves coping or not coping with the transitional implications that they believe will result from implementing the change. Hence Bolman and Deal (2008) yearn for wise leaders of educational change—leaders who have high levels of personal artistry so that they can respond appropriately and effectively to today's challenges, ambiguities and paradoxes.

Arguably, however, this literature still maintains a top-down perspective of the change process because its viewpoint is from that of the leader. Like much of such change literature, these authors are describing how the leader-centred process can be adapted if need be in order to engage or re-engage those they are leading through the change process. Hence the point of departure of this article is its presentation of a change process from the perspective of those explicitly involved in making the change happen. Largely, educational change leadership has ignored the voices of those personally affected by a change. Such change literature has maintained a hierarchical perspective whereby the leader remains in control and in positional power. In other words, the leader is at the top and those affected are considered to be at the bottom. The authors challenge this perspective and give a voice that is long overdue to those affected by change.

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL ABOUT TEACHERS FROM AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND CHANGING CLASSES?

In Aotearoa New Zealand, once teachers graduate from their initial teacher education course, there are no formal requirements to teach a range of different class levels. As a result, while there are teachers who frequently change class levels others do so less often and some teachers do not at all. While in some countries this change is mandatory, in others, such as Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, this is not, so thereby it can be a major educational change in the professional life of a teacher. Thus, we argue that exploring such an event through the voice of a teacher provides worthwhile data about leadership of change.

While the change from teaching one class level to another can bring about some benefits, it can also be a challenging and stressful time (Carlyon, 2013, 2016a, 2016b). Developmental changes in relationships can occur, both within the individual and the social context when a teacher transitions (Beach, 1999, 2003), and teachers are required to learn new knowledge, new ways of teaching and to form new relationships (Newell, Tallman & Letcher, 2009; Vogler, Crivello & Woodhead, 2008). This calls for teachers to let go of some of their familiar practices and old conceptions (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning, 2001) in order to then adapt their skills, behaviours and beliefs in a new context (Bullough & Baughman, 1997; Fullan, 1993). Such a complex process demands both emotional and physical energy from teachers, making it important that they are adequately prepared for the change. Challenges can arise which are related to the reasons why teachers may change class levels and how these transitions are managed by school leaders (Carlyon, 2016b; Carlyon, & Fisher, 2012). Other transitioning challenges that teachers can encounter are associated with getting to know different students, adapting to

new ways of planning and adjusting to unexpected cultural differences (Bullough, 2008; Carlyon, 2014).

Each of these challenges has the potential to impact upon the teacher's professional identity. A teacher's professional identity is the lens through which they view themselves, and it influences the extent to which they attach meaning to themselves and their experiences (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Crow, Day & Moller, 2016). The professional and social interactions and communications that individual teachers have with others are pivotal factors that influence their formation and ongoing development of a professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day & Leithwood, 2007; O'Connor, 2008). A professional identity is not a stable phenomenon, but rather it is something that develops and changes throughout the teacher's professional life as they experience new people, new contexts and new professional expectations (Beijaard et al., 2004; Erikson, 1968). Moreover, any change to their practical, political or contextual educational landscape has a considerable influence on their professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Huberman, 1989).

For primary school teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand, the change to a new class level is highly likely to have an impact on their sense of professional identity. It is not simply a pragmatic process because of its possible psychological impact. Thus, this understanding expands the universality of this particular research. According to Bridges (2004; 2009), the reason that many organisational change initiatives fail is because the change process is mostly seen as being essentially physical when indeed it is predominantly psychological. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) add to this perspective by arguing that "people do not resist change, per se. People resist loss…Although [the leader] may see with clarity and passion a promising future of progress and gain, people will see with equal passion the losses [the leader is] asking them to sustain" (p. 12). More particularly, Schein (2010) explains how this sense of loss is formed from psychological anxieties around concerns about 'survival' and 'learning'. Survival anxieties arise because some people think that something bad will happen if the change does not take place. Learning anxieties arise where people believe that the presumed new knowledge, skills and dispositions are either beyond their capacity to achieve or markedly contrary to that which they prefer. Arguably, both of these anxieties have the potential to arise during the transitioning phase of a primary school teacher moving to teach a different class level. Thus, the views of such teachers during this transition period provide a valuable insight into their experiences of the principal's leadership practices.

The challenges faced by teachers while transitioning to a new class level are not always acknowledged by principals and the consequences of this are that these teachers are often expected to simply cope by themselves (Seah, 2003). Thus, an important outcome of this particular research is to highlight the crucial role that school leaders play in helping teachers successfully transition through educational changes. School leaders must be required to ensure good support systems, such as mentoring, are in place and the benefits of a supportive school culture are not ignored (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; You, Kim & Lim, 2017).

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Since the research sought to hear the voices of the teachers experiencing change, an interpretive methodology was adopted. This methodology is recommended when researchers are concerned with learning how people construct meaning and develop their understandings of how to act in social situations (Neuman, 2006; Radnor, 2001). In support of interpretive methodology, both qualitative and quantitative data from teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand primary schools was gathered. Teachers who had taught at year levels 1–8 were invited to participate on a voluntary basis via an email sent out to all schools. Of the 536 teachers who chose to participate by completing an online survey, 486 indicated that they had taught more than one year level (i.e., Group A), and 51 had taught only one year level (i.e., Group B). The teachers identified a variety of reasons for why they did and/or did not change year levels, including that sometimes they, themselves, initiated a change and at other times a change was initiated by someone else. Some of the reasons for the change included: for organisational purposes; professional learning; and career development. All teachers are each identified by a teacher identification number (TID). The online survey comprised a range of questions including dichotomous, multiple choice and open-ended questions. In addition to completing the survey, four teachers, who had all transitioned multiple times, were then invited to also participate in an individual semi-structured interview. The following pseudonyms were used to protect their anonymity: Ashleigh, Brigit, Carol and Dean.

RESULTS

Data from the study show the kind of experiences, understandings and preferences teachers have when affected by change. First these data describe a particular school culture believed to be conducive to producing effective change. More specifically, these data emphasise four important responsibilities played by the school leader in this culture. These being adequate and appropriate support, sufficient opportunities to prepare, communication, and awareness.

School culture conducive to change

Results indicated that school culture plays a significant role in teachers' experiences of change and school leaders have an important responsibility to ensure the culture is conducive for them to transition successfully. This was highlighted by the teachers in Group A, 344 (71%) of whom identified school culture as having some impact. Some teachers experienced school cultures that were conducive to change, particularly those where changing class levels was considered to be a positive practice and teachers knew they could trust their school leaders to support them. This is illustrated in Table 1 (below), which shows 465 (96%) teachers saying they agreed to some extent that changing class levels was widely accepted as a positive practice. Additionally, the notion of risk taking was identified by a number of teachers with comments such as, *was allowed to make some errors along the way. It was all good for my professional development as a primary school teacher (TID838).* When teachers can see the benefits for themselves and the school, this helps

teachers to form positive perceptions of change and, as the comment by *TID539* exemplifies, become more willing to *take risks that take you out side of your comfort zone.*

While taking such risks can be challenging and confronting for teachers, when teachers know that school leaders will not criticise them if they make mistakes, this encourages them to have greater autonomy over their learning. Like others, Brigit believed that *principals and deputy principals can't come down on you like a ton of bricks if you make a silly mistake … otherwise you're going to be too scared to try new things.*

It seems important for teachers to feel a sense of belonging when they undergo change. For example, Carol remembered feeling like she didn't fit in her new team: *I felt like I stuck out…I didn't think I belonged. 'Cause they were talking about stuff I didn't know anything about … I felt really, really dumb.* Clearly not all school cultures are conducive for teacher transition and in fact collective responsibility and/or trust with leadership is not always evident in schools:

> We cannot assume that our leaders are trustworthy, as I know of several situations where syndicate leaders have gone behind inexperienced staff backs to meet their own agenda. (TID328)

> Some decisions made by senior leaders have not always been fair and transparent…it must always have the students' best interest at the heart and not the other way round. (TID828)

The teachers in the interviews agreed that having a high level of trust in their school leaders was vital. Brigit said that in one of her schools, in which she changed class levels, the principal was approachable and readily available for all staff if they wished to talk with him, and this in turn had a positive impact on the culture of the school. She described the principal as having an open door policy: *You could go in, vent your feeling[s], get it off your chest and not feel that you're going to get in trouble for it later.* Brigit also explained how the principal was sensitive to individual teachers' needs and was skilled at helping teachers to see their own strengths.

Table 1: Aspects of school culture which were evident

How much do you agree:	NAA %	AL %	AMA %	AGD %
Change widely accepted	4	26	43	27
Honest dialogue	10	29	39	22
Risk taking	8	29	42	21
Collective responsibility	8	29	37	26
Trust with leadership	7	24	37	32

Note. NAA=Not at all, AL=A little, AMA=A moderate amount, AGD=A great deal

Brigit's emphasis on the important role of the school leader was strongly supported elsewhere in the findings where 387 (80%) of the teachers in Group A identified *school leadership* as having an impact on them when they changed class levels. This is aptly summarised in the following comment by *TID813:*

> It really depends on the school…I was in a school where the leadership was weak, the staff morale low and there was a lack of support in just about everything.

Therefore, in order for teachers to successfully negotiate change, it is important that school leaders understand that a school culture with particular characteristics is needed. This culture needs to be transparent, collaborative, caring and affirming. School leaders should understand that it is incumbent upon them to create and sustain this kind of culture. This responsibility is described in more detail in the following four sections.

Adequate and appropriate support

Having adequate support is integral, because as pointed out by *TID18*, change *is full of uncertainties and initially quite daunting (especially jumping from year 1 to year 6).* Data showed this can be attributed to concerns such as behaviour management, pedagogical content knowledge and being able to manage the increase in workload. Some of the comments included: *Had to completely reshape personal teaching pedagogy, particularly regarding classroom management and behaviour (TID331); was always concerned that my level of maths knowledge was never up to that level (TID394); everything needs to be done from scratch. There just isn't the time to keep starting over and certainly not the support because everyone is overloaded (TID740).*

For those teachers who did receive some support, this was found to be invaluable and the comment by *TID949* that *having at least one person to rebound off is imperative* was indicative of others. Despite this, as Table 2 (below) shows, there is a variation in the level of support that teachers received and who they received this from, with 298 (61%) teachers in Group A indicating they received little or no support from their principal/school leader. *TID791* said there was an expectation to *just suck it in and get going.*

The teachers in the interviews experienced similar challenges, and Brigit likened it to feeling as though she was *skating around on some marbles* and said *it was quite traumatic…everything is a challenge and everything is a struggle.* Brigit further explained that there was no consultation about how to best support her, and when she was given a teacher aide and parent helpers this became more challenging for her:

> So I had the teacher aide saying to me, 'Oh what do you want me to do?' And me going, 'Well I've never had a teacher aide before.' It made it really hard. And they also gave me another parent helper too. So I had a parent helper and a teacher aide all asking, and expecting things from me, and all the kids expecting things from me. It would have actually been a lot easier just to be left for a little while by myself without them throwing all these people at me.

Table 2: Personnel who provided support

	NAA %	AL %	AMA %	AGD %
Colleagues	6	32	34	28
Mentors	32	25	26	17
Team syndicate leader	13	29	35	23
Principal/school leader	26	35	23	16

Note. NAA=Not at all, AL=A little, AMA=A moderate amount, AGD=A great deal

Examples such as these, show teachers want adequate and appropriate support from their leaders when they transition. While support may be in the form of upskilling in a particular curriculum area or classroom practice, it is apparent that individual teacher needs are quite different and, as such, so is the support they require. The view that *support for teachers needs to be managed better (TID779)* was commonly held and strongly articulated.

Sufficient opportunities to prepare

Data highlighted that there can be a significant increase in a teacher's workload when they change class levels, and they are not always given sufficient time or opportunities to adequately prepare for this extra demand. This again draws attention to the place of leadership and, in particular, how school leaders facilitate change in their schools.

While support to change can be in many different forms, the teachers were asked to indicate the level of support they were provided to have extra time to prepare, go and talk with other teachers, observe them teaching and also find and familiarise themselves with the different resources they may require.

Table 3 shows that in some schools teachers received support and were given opportunities to prepare, as shown by the following teacher's comment:

> Positive attitude is encouraged and support to make change is also delivered where possible, e.g., time to observe others in that year level before moving. Sharing of resources and planning etc is huge, especially when someone is new to the team. (TID791)

Table 3: Support received

	NAA %	AL %	AMA %	AGD %
Extra time to prepare	66	23	10	1
Talk with others	17	39	31	13
Observe others	39	42	15	4
Resourcing	40	42	14	4

Note. NAA=Not at all, AL=A little, AMA=A moderate amount, AGD=A great deal

Teachers want opportunities to help them prepare, such as observing others and sharing resources. As *TID682* points out, when this occurs they appreciate it: *I now have a new principal who has been very supportive in allowing me to go to other schools and observe this year level and attend lots of PD…I am grateful I have had this opportunity.*

From the interviews, Brigit said that in one of her schools the teachers were encouraged to observe each other during their class room release time (CRT), and this was *hugely helpful…I find that's how I learn best too, watching other people.* She added. However, that, due to the busy workload and constant change happening in the school, she found that finding opportunities to have conversations about these observations was often difficult.

Table 3 (above) also highlights that 193 teachers (40%) said that they had been given no additional time to find and familiarise themselves with the different resources required for teaching their new class level. Ensuring that they had the necessary resources required a significant amount of work for these teachers, and, in addition, three of them pointed out that they had to fund it themselves: *It is extremely expensive to re-resource for each year level as we spend so much personal money on classroom environments and 'extras' (TID739).*

Other important considerations illustrated in Table 3 are that 321 (66%) of the teachers in Group A indicated that they had been given no extra time to prepare, 187 (39%) were not given any opportunities to observe others teach different class levels, and 83 (17%) of the teachers said they did not have opportunities to talk with others about what it is like teaching different class levels. The following comment was typical of other teachers who felt change could have positive outcomes, but more preparation was required: *If I had had the chance to observe…and speak to teachers about their programmes before I took this role on I think it wouldn't have been so stressful (TID953).*

With respect to these issues, Ashleigh too explained that she did not have an opportunity to observe in the class level she was changing to and talked at length about how this impacted on her experience:

> I didn't have a clue what I was going in to...it was *all* horrible. It was *all* horrible…I was working through morning tea, I was working through lunch, after school. I was always in my class room. Planning, marking, trying to decorate walls and hang up stuff…I just didn't have a clue…it was the content and just not really meeting their needs…me not understanding what those needs are at that level.

When asked about the opportunities she had to prepare for changing class levels, Carol said, *I spent a day at my mum's school and I observed in the classroom there.* Although she found this to be very useful, she described feeling *ripped off* because she was not given opportunities such as these in the schools in which she worked. She was critical of school leadership for this and she held the view that *if you are the syndicate leader you should pick up the slack, and you should be able to stop what you're doing, and take stock of where your team is at.* Here, preparation for change comes to the fore, but more

so it illustrates that those being affected believe the responsibility for this lies squarely with the school leader.

Communication

The following teacher perspective highlights the importance of schools having good communication and transparent processes when assigning teachers to classes, particularly when they are reluctant to change:

> There was no discussion about my change in year levels. I was literally the last person to know and had no idea that the change was going to take place. Bad leadership on the part of my Principal...I was really angry that no consultation had taken place. It would have been nice to be asked even if it was already a done deal. (TID251)

Teachers want to be involved in discussions and decisions about change that may impact on them. Unfortunately, this does not always occur, as TID530 points out: I have felt left out of decisions and very much side-lined.

Findings also brought to light that when change is not widely accepted in a school as a positive practice and teachers do not change class levels this can create problems for teachers who may wish to do so. Five teachers from Group A said they felt stuck or trapped and unable to transition due to poor communication between teachers and school leaders. There was some dissatisfaction with school leadership allowing teachers to stay teaching at the same class level and, thereby, preventing others from moving to teach at that level, with 15 teachers drawing attention to this issue.

Like others, both Carol and Dean had experienced a desire to change to a different class level but being unable to do so because other teachers did not want to move and consequently felt that better communication with school leaders was required. Carol was told a space had to become available, and she was not informed about the reasons why she was unable to move. Dean too explained: *In my first four years, I actually asked, at the end of every year, 'can I go up and teach year 5/6?' And I was never allowed to go up to that level.* He said that in another school towards the end of each year the teachers were required to list the class levels they wished to teach in order of preference: *Like a questionnaire type thing.* Yet teachers were not given any opportunities to engage in any discussions with school leaders about the questionnaire: *I would have liked a conversation around it because otherwise you make it up in your head anyway.*

Clearly teachers do not appreciate being told what is going to occur, but rather they appreciate being involved in discussions, having their voice heard. This is aptly summarised by TID159*: The successful transition comes down to the leadership, school-wide culture, collegiality, communication (clear and transparent).*

It is evident that teachers want their school leaders to engage in clear communication and give adequate consultation when planning teacher placement in classes. Particularly when they are directly involved, teachers want to be given the courtesy of being included in decision-making and discussions.

Table 4: Perceptions

	NAA %	AL %	AMA %	AGD %
Self-confidence	15	23	33	29
Image others hold	35	23	27	15
Views others hold	40	28	23	9

Note. NAA=Not at all, AL=A little, AMA=A moderate amount, AGD=A great deal

Awareness

It is important that school leaders have awareness and understanding of some further challenges that teachers face when experiencing change. This is shown in Table 4, which illustrates the responses from the teachers in Group A when they were asked how much impact factors such as their own *self-confidence, professional image that others had of you, and others' views about which teachers are best suited for particular class levels.*

As Table 4 indicates, a large number of teachers attribute self-confidence as having a significant impact on the way they think about change. Responses show that even experienced teachers can lack self-confidence about the change and some school leaders may not be aware of this. A teacher with more than 11 years of experience teaching pointed out that *there is a real sense of fear. Management need to be aware that competence in one year level does not necessarily equate to a feeling of comfort across the curriculum (TID674).*

Findings highlighted that teachers want their school leaders to be aware that there are perceptions that exist and how these can impact on teachers. One such perception is that *there is still a stigma, as if you change to a lower year level you are being 'down-graded'* (TID403). The impact of these perceptions can be significant, as described by TID474:

> *A couple of parents questioned me about moving to year 7 and 8 once they heard I would be moving year groups One parent seemed very surprised—as if I surely wasn't capable after teaching year 2 pupils.*

This illustrates the need for school leaders to be aware of perceptions and demands that exist and be responsible for actively providing the necessary support to overcome any challenges that may result.

DISCUSSION: THE LEADERSHIP TEACHERS WANT DURING TIMES OF CHANGE

Together the findings presented here show that teachers want a particular kind of school leadership to help them during times of change. Aligned to Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera & McGregor (2010), the findings clearly highlight that not only does an empowering school culture encourage teachers to offer their ideas and opinions but also they confirm the vital role that school leadership plays in establishing this kind of culture. Furthermore, while these findings endorse Fennell's (2005) suggestion that "power and leadership are interchangeable and expandable resources to be shared by all members of the community" (p. 163), they bring to light that this is not always evident in

schools. Thus, as a consequence of this research, the authors present a conceptual framework to illustrate the characteristics of school leadership required to effectively lead educational change. Fig. 1 defines these characteristics as relational, trusting, supportive, one who facilitates a culture conducive to change, is understanding of the challenges, and is a good communicator.

Although the characteristics of effective leadership of change are differentiated in the framework, in reality they are interdependent and co-create each other. The framework illustrates that it is essential for effective leaders of change to be able to form and sustain good relationships. For this to occur, it is important that school leaders' actions reflect they have the ability to identify any phenomenological concerns in their teachers by having a high empathetic ability (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017). When school leaders are both physically and emotionally present, this lays the foundation for open and honest communication to occur and for mutual trust to develop. Such trust allows teachers to take risks without fear of being judged. It is vital also for school leadership to have an awareness of the challenges faced by teachers in times of change and actively provide necessary support. Finally, having the ability to communicate well and able to facilitate a culture of change are characteristics of an effective leader of change. Importantly though, as these are interdependent and co-creative, we argue that leaders of change must understand and enact each of these characteristics.

Fig. 1: Characteristics of effective leadership of change

CONCLUSION

While the leadership approach that teachers want in times of change includes elements of transformational leadership, the framework the authors put forward here extends this further and is more akin to transrelational leadership (Branson, et al., 2016). This leadership approach provides an emphasis on building supportive relationships so that practical help is accepted as support and not manipulation. Branson, et al. (2016) suggest that the essence of transrelational leadership is "to move others, the organization and the leader to another level of functioning by means of relationships" (p. 155). As such, transrelational leaders are not just interested in transforming others, but they have the skills to recognise their follower's initiative and the significant contribution they can have in the leadership process. These leaders have the skills to nurture growth and development (Wheatley, 2006) and enhance the relationships and influence they have with their followers (Branson, 2010). They also know that developing a culture that is accepting and encouraging of change is an essential component of leading change effectively (Carlyon, 2016a; Carlyon, & Fisher, 2013). In this sense, transrelational leaders are desired because they have the ability to empower all those involved with the courage and confidence to meet the challenges of change.

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