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What are we **learning about...?**

Community leadership in networks

Perspectives of leadership and participation

A development tool designed to explore
perspectives of community and network
participation and the leadership roles involved.

Community Leadership Strategy

Networked Learning Communities

learning from each other

learning with each other

learning on behalf of each other

Acknowledgements

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Lead Developers**

Perspectives of leadership and participation

Individuals within networked organisations need to understand their own contributions to, and roles within, their personal networks prior to engaging in wider community leadership or community capacity building activities. This development tool enables you to do this.

The activity is designed to help individuals examine their personal perspectives of community leadership through the following questions:

- What communities do you belong to?
- How do you engage with each community?
- Why do you belong to these communities?
- What motivates you to be involved?
- What leadership roles do you take on?
- Why do you take on these roles?

The activity invites involvement from participants at all levels within communities and organisations within a network. This could include teachers, community leaders, residents, pupils, parents and carers, school governors, multi-agency partners and colleagues from the business community, to name but a few. Involving a diverse group of participants in the activity will enable the generation of a wide range of perspectives and rich dialogue to promote understanding and awareness of different communities, their modes of engagement and the leadership roles involved. □

Perspectives of leadership and participation

Activity guidance

1 Individual activity

Draw a mind-map to answer the following questions:

- What communities do you belong to?
- How do you engage with each community?
- Why do you belong to these communities?
- What motivates you to be involved?
- What leadership roles do you take on?
- Why do you take on these roles?



15 mins

2 Paired conversation

Share your mind-maps and consider the following questions:

- What are the common factors which motivate community involvement?
- For the communities you belong to, what could be the added-value of collaborating with a school?
- What would a school network need to do to make you want to be part of it?
- What types of leadership activities contribute to communities?



20 mins

3 Group discussion

Two pairs join to make a group of four to consider the following questions:

- What happens when you take the community perspective?
- What matters in community involvement?
- What matters in community leadership?
- What does this mean for schools?
- What does this mean for communities?



20 mins

4 Plenary

Individual reflection – ask all participants to complete the Pause for thought reflection record (see page 6)

- What does this mean for your network?
- What does this mean for your own practice?



5 mins

Resources

- paper – of different colours, shapes/sizes
- coloured pens/pencils – you could provide pastels, wax crayons, felt-tips, marker pens etc.
- Post-it® notes or adhesive cards
- flipchart paper is useful for noting key issues
- A copy of the 'Pause for thought reflection record' (see page 6)

Notes

- ✓ Provide an example to illustrate the activity so participants understand the task (see page 5 for example).
- ✓ In the first instance ask participants to focus on their personal networks and communities rather than their work-based communities.
- ✓ Create a quiet reflective atmosphere.

Notes

- ✓ After ten minutes remind pairs to consider the questions as well as sharing their mind-maps.
- ✓ Provide Post-it® notes/paper to encourage note-taking of key points.

Notes

- ✓ After ten minutes ask the groups to create a flipchart summary of the most important points.
- ✓ Ask groups to post their flipchart summaries around the room for others to see.
- ✓ Following the session you may wish to type up the flipchart summaries.

Mind-map task – illustrative example

Photocopy this page.

Draw a mind-map to answer the following questions:

- What communities do you belong to?
- How do you engage with each community?
- Why do you belong to these communities?
- What motivates you to be involved?
- What leadership roles do you take on?
- Why do you take on these roles?

The mind-map is colour-coded to match the questions.



Pause for thought...?

Take a few moments to reflect on the quote below and on what you have learned from the mind-mapping activity.

“The role of the community in making the schools vital is just as important as the role of the school itself. For in a community where schools are looked upon as isolated institutions, as a necessary convention, the school will remain largely so in spite of the most skilful methods of teaching...

But a community that demands something visible from its schools, that recognises the part they play in the welfare of the whole... Such a community will have social schools, and whatever its resources, it will have schools that develop community spirit and interests. ”

Skilbeck, 1979

Pause for thought...reflection record

Photocopy this page.



What have you learnt about... community?



What have you learnt about... community leadership?



What are the implications for developing community leadership across your network?



How will this learning impact on your practice?



What are we learning about...?

The 'What are we learning about...?' series is designed to make public the learning that has emerged from NLCs in the last two years.

The first nine titles in the series will focus on:
What are we learning about...?

- LEA involvement in school networks
- Establishing a network of schools
- **Community leadership in networks**
- *'Making mathematics count'* in school networks
- The impact of school networks
- Sustaining a network of schools
- Facilitation within school networks
- Professional development in school networks
- Leadership of school networks

To order a copy of this series, please email
nlc@ncsl.org.uk quoting the reference
WAWLA/Community leadership

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