# Thoughts on the Development of Teacher Leadership
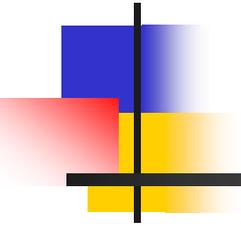
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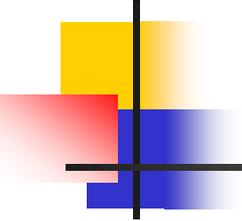
My Work in Teacher Leadership Development

Research.

University teaching and administration.

Consultation and collaboration with schools and school districts.
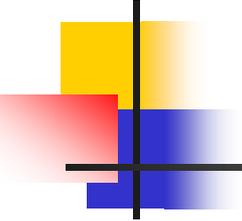
Problems to Be Solved: The Logic

Teacher leadership as an instrument for:

- School and classroom improvement.
- Teacher learning, professional development, motivation, recruitment, and retention.
- Improving the effectiveness of administrative leadership.
- Developing teaching as a profession with a career path.
- Democratization of schools.
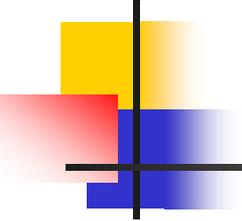
Problems to Be Solved: The Evidence

Lots of literature. Less empirical research.

Logic and action ahead of the evidence:

- Few outcomes examined systematically. Many aspects of the logic untested.
- Much evidence anecdotal and equivocal.
- Teacher leadership development largely unexplored.
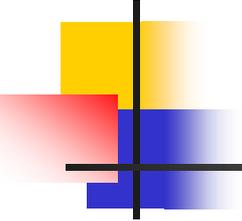
Six Considerations from Research and Experience

1. The presumption of "goodness."
2. The myth of "the natural."
3. The empowerment paradox.
4. The new "we-they."
5. Who is a leader anyway?
6. Teacher leadership for today's schools or tomorrow's?
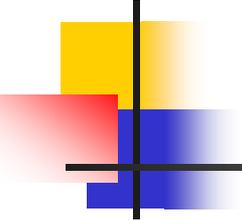
1. The Presumption of "Goodness"

Weak evidence on effects.

What is "good" depends on outcomes sought and means of attainment.

Enactment ≠ accomplishment.

Recognizing the prospects for:

- Ineffectiveness.
- Effective pursuit of the wrong things.
- Unethical behavior (gasp!).
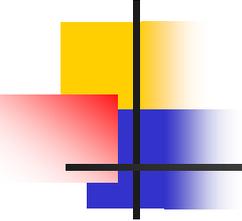
2. The Myth of "The Natural"

Moving past "appoint and anoint."

- The "good teacher, good leader" error.
- Underestimating the individual capacities needed for leadership work.
- Overlooking the situational character of leadership, the dynamic person-job-context "fit."

An imperative for teacher leader preparation, development, and support.
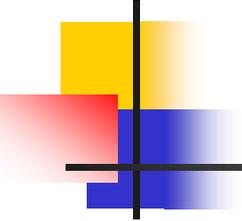
3. The Empowerment Paradox

Teacher leadership depends on administrative leadership.

New work, new roles for administrators.

- Develop and support of teacher leadership.
- Create a context for teacher leadership.
- From "parallel play" to "joint play." New zones of prerogative, influence, and work.

An imperative for administrator development and support.
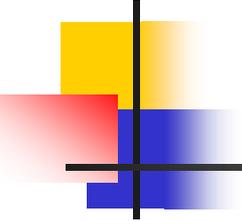
4. The New "We-They"

The teacher collegium and the "unity" of leadership and followership.

- Interdependence of leaders and followers.
- Redefinition of roles and relationships.
- New "metric" of status and influence.
- Challenge to traditional organizational norms.

An imperative for developing faculties for teacher leadership?
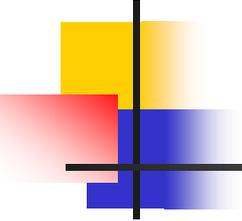
5. Who **Is** a Leader Anyway?

The ambiguity of leadership in schools.

- What is leadership? Purposes and functions?
- Who leads? Who influences?
- The work of leadership? Who shares that work?
- Leadership as a property of individuals or organizations?

Teacher leadership—forcing clarity or contributing to confusion?
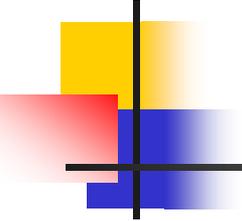
6. Leadership for Today's Schools or Tomorrow's?

Uncertainty and rapid change.

Changing student populations.

New demands for student learning and teachers' work.

New organizational forms.

- Professional learning communities.
- Continuously improving organizations.
- High reliability organizations.
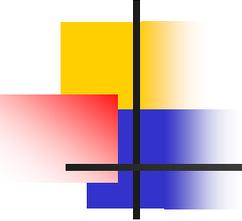
Five Key Questions for Teacher Leadership Model Development

1. What are goals are we trying to achieve by developing models of teacher leadership development? What are our "theories-of-action"?

2. What roles, what work will teacher leaders be prepared to perform? What objectives will they be prepared to achieve?

3. Which teachers should be prepared for teacher leadership? What capacities—knowledge, skills, and dispositions—should be developed?

4. How should capacities for teacher leadership be developed? By whom? Where?

5. Should the focus be on developing individual teacher leaders? On "systems" of leadership? Work redesign for all?