

Leading for professional development & learning

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Key orienting concepts about leadership

“‘Distributed’, ‘participative’, ‘facilitative’ or ‘collaborative’ models of leadership call for a shift away from the traditional vision of leader as one key individual towards a more collective vision, one where the responsibility for leadership rests within various formal and informal leaders” (p. 20).

“...strong leadership may be necessary in the development of the high levels of collaboration and teamwork required for distributed leadership” (p. 27).

(Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006)

Key orienting concepts about leadership

- Leadership and professional learning are crucial for educational change ([Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2004](#)).
- New Zealand researchers have linked distributed leadership and professional learning ([Clarkin-Phillips, 2007, 2011](#); [Thornton, 2009](#)).
- Distributed leadership approaches recognise that positional leaders move beyond a leader/follower mindset, understanding **influence** as a function of leadership and including others in leading and decision-making ([Robinson, 2009](#)).

Research questions

What is the relationship between leadership and professional learning during educational change in early childhood?

- ❖ How do early childhood directors approach curriculum change?
- ❖ What processes and practices are utilised within an early childhood centre to facilitate participation in professional learning about EYLF?
- ❖ How can distribution of leadership support professional learning and change?

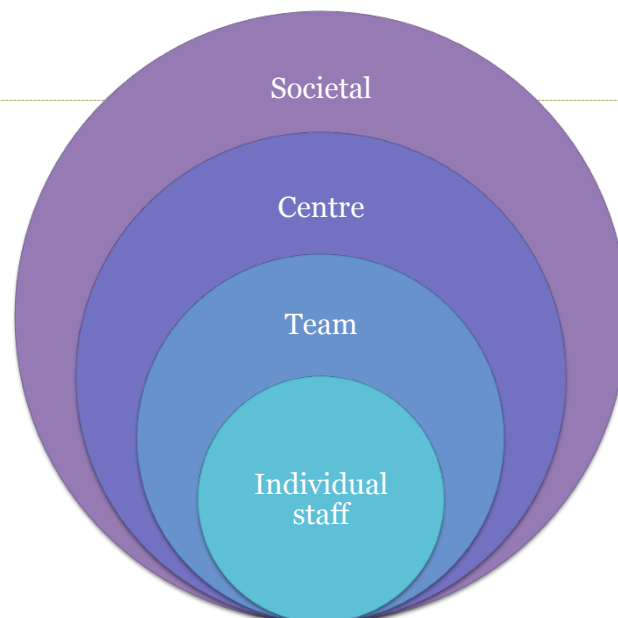
Leadership in context

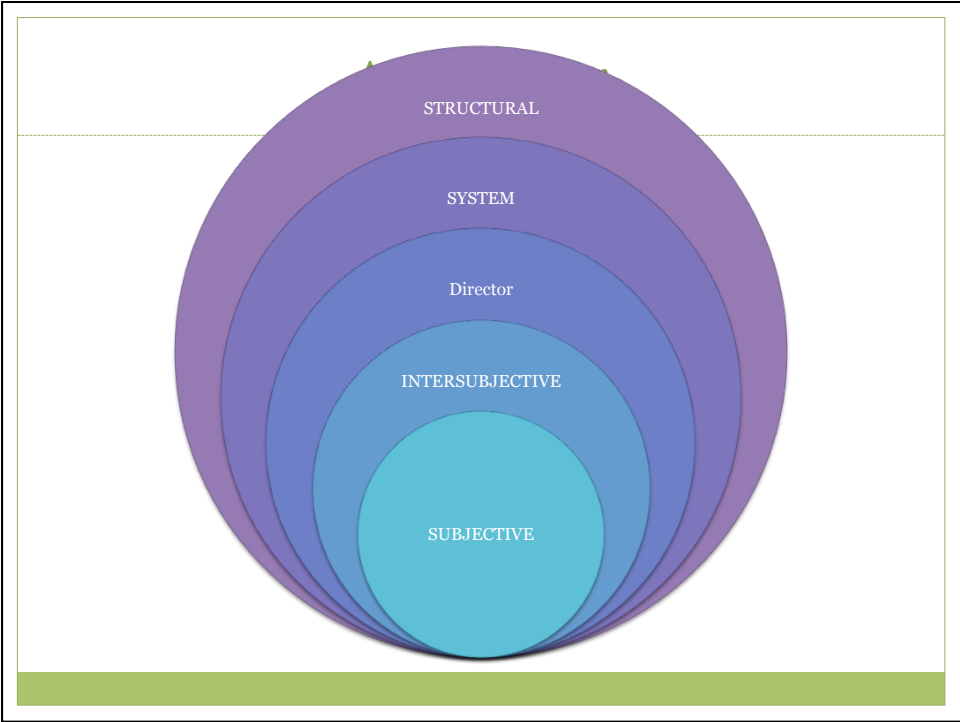
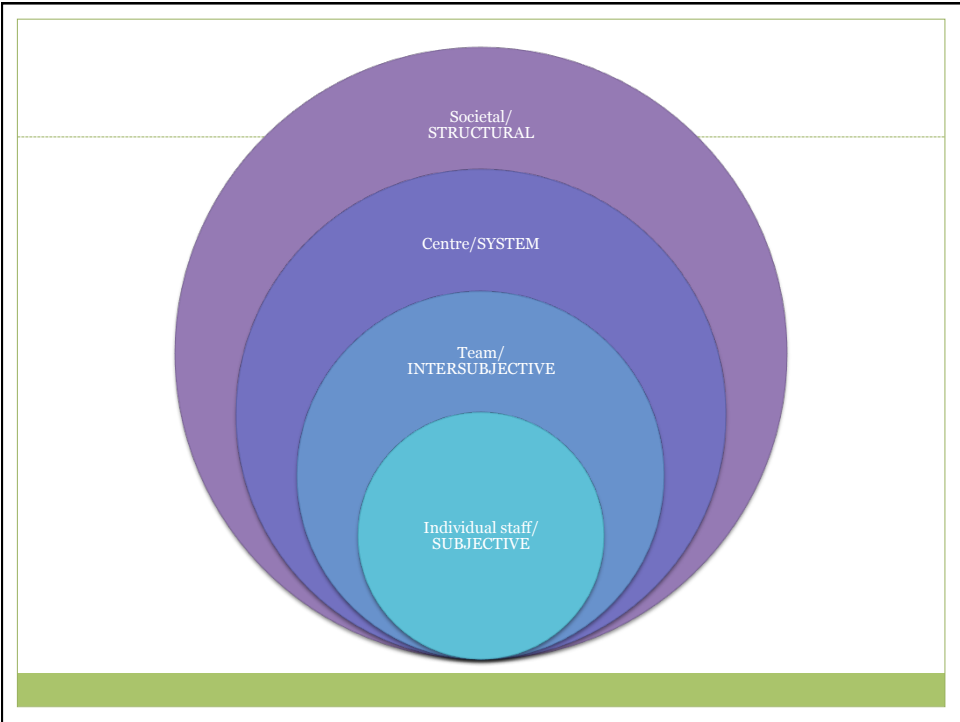


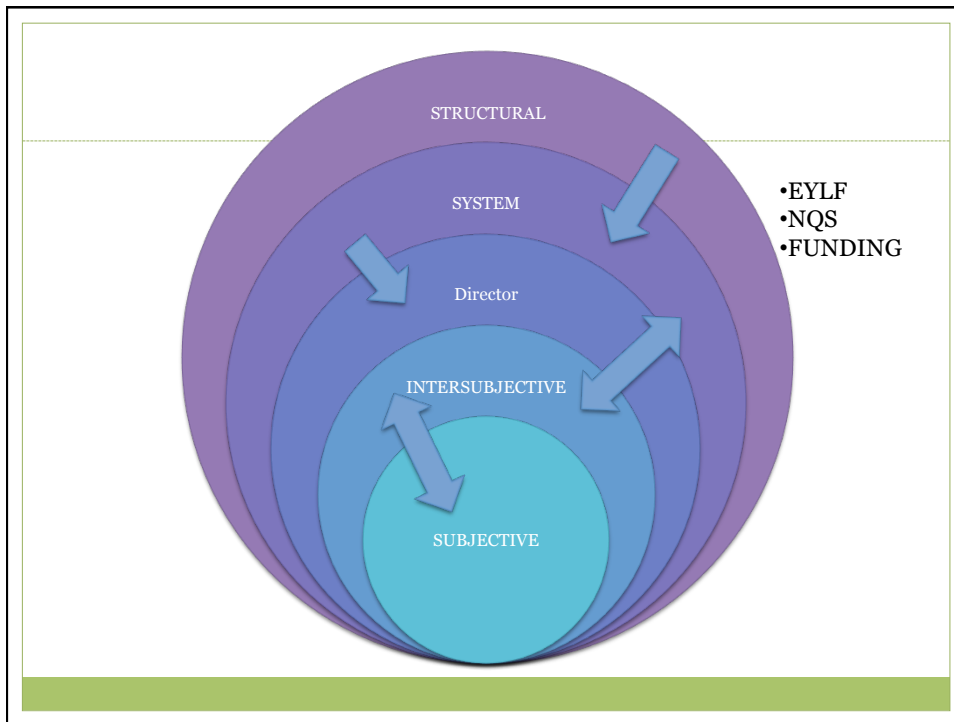
Aim is to examine leadership influence through understanding how different social dimensions impact on leadership throughout a centre...

- STRUCTURAL
- SYSTEM
- INTERSUBJECTIVE
- SUBJECTIVE

(Hujala, 2004; Nivala, 2002; Layder , 1998)







Methodology

- Philosophical approach – critical realism
- Adaptive research (Layder, 1998)
- Methods – qualitative and quantitative
- Data sources
 - ❖ **Focus groups of directors**
 - ❖ **Case studies – interviews and surveys**

What the research is showing directors believe ...

- Collaborative professional development is understood as being more supportive of professional learning for curriculum development and change *but* individualised professional development dominates
- Directors understand the need and value for sharing leadership *but* there are practical difficulties in achieving distributed leadership
- Centres lack systematic ways to bring educators together for learning & working together

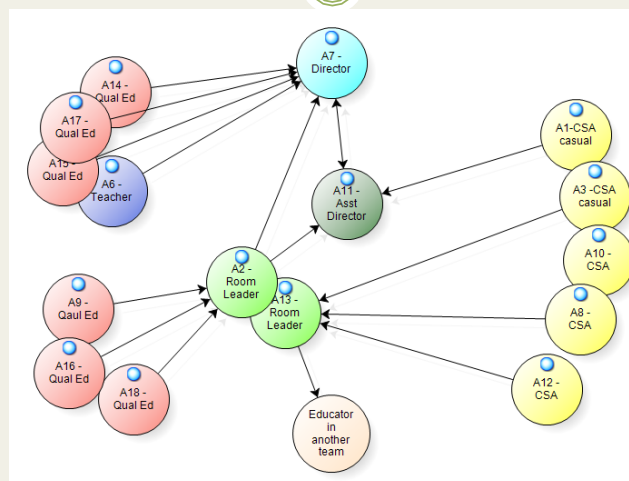
Learning from case studies

- Director is seen as the educational leader
- Leadership is distributed to positional leaders (room leaders)
- Leadership structures across the centre impact on collaboration and leadership
- Learning occurs in room team exploration and in day-to-day work
- Room leaders lead professional learning with their staff
- Project approaches support PD & L
- Leadership can be enacted by educators who are not formal leaders

Educators' views

- Educators value collective & collaborative PD&L
- Educators agree that receiving feedback is important
- Educators acknowledge that room leaders are leaders of professional learning and development & in translating new knowledge to practice

Professional support relationships



Leadership capabilities matter



Director:

- Pedagogical & curriculum knowledge
- Influence in PD & L
- Planning of resource allocations
- Developing the organisational structure
 - ❖ Leadership teams & functions
 - ❖ Child-free time for collaboration
- Centre culture – expectations, professional culture of learning and critical reflection

Leadership capabilities matter



Room leaders:

- Pedagogical and curriculum knowledge
- Inclusive style of leadership
- Supporting professional dialogue
- Leading learning & change in practice

Distributed leadership...

- Is about influence
- Works within a system of relationships
- Positional leaders play significant roles
- Inclusive environments open leadership to non positional leaders
- Built through professional conversations & feedback
- Flourishes in collaborative PD including projects
- Is shaped by organisational structures
- Can be understood as developmental & evolving

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