A Passion for Teaching

Christopher Day
Chapter 7

Passionate learning communities

As emotional arenas, organizations bond and divide their members. Workaday frustrations and passions – boredom, envy, fear, love, anger, guilt, infatuation, embarrassment, nostalgia, anxiety – are deeply woven into the ways roles are enacted and learned, power is exercised, trust is held, commitment formed and decisions made. Emotions are not simply excisable from these, and many other, organizational processes; they both characterize and inform them.

(Fineman, 2000, p. 1)

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of texts about school and teacher effectiveness. Yet each one has failed to acknowledge that effective teaching and learning relies, at its heart, on the exercise by teachers of sustained passion (as well as compassion) in the classroom and as part of a wider school learning community. A key influence upon teachers’ capacity to do this is the part played by the school context.

Roland Barth presents assumptions about schools as a community of learners, according to which there is an implicit view of schools as places where students learn and adults teach, places that are ‘fundamentally different’ from those of the list makers:

- Schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside the schools is to help provide these conditions for those inside
- When the need and the purpose is there, when the conditions are right, adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes to the learning of the other

(Barth, 1990, p. 45)

Teachers’ perceptions and experiences of their work conditions – leadership, physical plant, resources, organizational features, and relationships – inevitably will affect their attitudes to and practices of teaching and learning. For example, a shared sense of values will bind staff together:

People feel their parts in the life of the group. When welcomed in a safe, vital, active group, they feel secure, vital and active themselves, and take pleasure in these feelings. When confined in a moribund or passive group, they feel deadened and passive themselves, and take no pleasure in these feelings. And when excluded from the group, they feel worst of all – cut off, isolated, alone and unhappy. Feeling is how social life appears in consciousness.

(Sandelands and Boudens, 2000, p. 47)

Those who are passionate about teaching for the ‘betterment’ of the pupils they teach will also have a stake in the betterment of all pupils in the school – and this means that they, with their colleagues, will want to ‘take charge of change’ (Stoll, 1999, p. 32).

School effectiveness is about a great deal more than maximizing academic achievement. Learning and the love of learning; personal development and self-esteem; life skills, problem solving and learning how to learn; the development of independent thinkers and well-rounded CONFIDENT individuals; all rank as highly or more highly as the outcomes of effective schooling as success in a narrow range of academic disciplines.

(McGraw et al., 1992, p. 174)

Whatever the definition of school effectiveness, schools will change most effectively when improvement comes from within.
School cultures

Essentially culture is about the way people are with each other in the classroom, department or school. It is characterized by the ways values, beliefs, prejudices and behaviour are played out within the micro-political processes of school life. It is often described as the ethos or climate, the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of our organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic ‘taken-for-granted’ fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment (Schein, 1985, p. 6). Just as conditions in classrooms affect the ability of teachers to provide the best learning opportunities for students, so the school culture provides positive or negative support for its teachers’ learning.

In reporting research on what matters most to teachers in their workplace context, McLaughlin emphasized the importance of the ‘school as workplace community’.

The school workplace is a physical setting, a formal organization, an employer. It is also a social and psychological setting in which teachers construct a sense of practice, of professional efficacy, and of professional community. This aspect of the workplace – the nature of the professional community that exists there – appears more critical than any other factor to the character of teaching and learning for teachers and their students... (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 99)

Jennifer Nias and colleagues (1989) have written extensively about forms of primary school culture that have different implications for teachers’ work and professional development opportunities. Schools that are ‘stuck’ or ‘moving’ (Rosenholz, 1989), ‘cruising’ or ‘strolling’ (Stoll and Fink, 1996), will inevitably affect teacher development. Norms for improving schools, identified by Stoll and Fink (1996) and summarized by Stoll (1999), clearly suggest the presence of a collective passion for improvement (see Figure 7.1).

Such a passion for establishing and sustaining these norms would reject, for example, the cultures of individualism (where autonomy, isolation and insularity rule); contrived collegiality (where working relationships are bureaucratically imposed); balkanization (where competition for resources and rewards exists and loyalties to ‘phase’, ‘subject’ or department come before those to the whole school) (Hargreaves, A., 1994). It would be likely to embrace collegial work relations in which the ‘person’ is as important as the ‘professional’ (the one nests within the other); where there is joint work through, for instance, critical friendships in classroom-based inquiry, mentoring, monitoring, and review; where values and visions for the school match values and visions in the classroom; and where there is emotional understanding:

... an intersubjective process requiring that one person enter into the field of experience of another and experience for herself the same or similar experiences experienced by another. The subjective interpretation of another’s emotional experience from one’s own standpoint is central to emotional understanding. Shared and sharable emotionality lie at the core of what it means to understand and meaningfully enter into the emotional experiences of another. (Denzin, 1984, p. 137)

Collegiality

Cultures of collegiality rely for their success upon the emotional understandings by all members of their own motivations, purposes,

1 I have a difficulty with the word ‘continuous’. It implies that we never rest and this is clearly impossible. For this reason, a much better word is continuing.
commitments and identities, and those of their colleagues. Judith Warren-Little (1981) provides both an operational definition of collegiality and a protocol for recognizing its presence in schools related to behaviours of the headteacher. There is collegiality when:

- Adults talk about practice
- Observe each other in practice
- Work together on planning, assessing, evaluating and researching teaching and learning
- Teach each other what they know about teaching, learning and leading.

To these might be added

- Adults share emotional understandings of and commitments to each other.

Cultures of collegiality should not suffocate teachers’ individuality or mute their continuing passion to exercise responsibility in their classrooms:

The press for teachers to work together as colleagues is strong, but so also is the desire or perhaps necessity for teachers to feel that they have the freedom and autonomy as individuals to construct classrooms that make sense to them and their students.

(Little and McLaughlin, 1993, p. vii)

In recent years, reforms have ensured that teachers work more closely in planning the curriculum and assessing pupil progress. And yet, passion for teaching remains principally an individual endeavour. There are few planning meetings called for the purpose of discussing and enhancing passion. Indeed it may be that too much collegiality takes much-needed personal energy away from classroom teaching, and that too much detailed collective planning denies the reality of classroom life, which requires of the teacher the ability to improvise in response to the immediate learning needs of students. Nevertheless, the emotions of teaching may be shared in collaborative cultures:

- in the small gestures, jokes and glances that signal sympathy and understanding; in kind words and personal interest shown in corridors or outside classroom doors; in birthdays, treat days and other little ceremonies; in the acceptance and internuxture of personal lives with professional ones; in overt praise, recognition and gratitude; and in sharing and discussion of ideas and resources.

(Hargreaves, A., 1989, p.14)

**Learning communities: classrooms and schools**

As helpers, we should only be pleased by what is in the students’ best interest. Laughing in public at another’s misfortune may be enjoyable if we are not interested in a relationship with that person and take no responsibility for their welfare. Good teachers, however, would take no pleasure in such behaviour if one of their students was the object of ridicule, because of how they feel about the teaching/learning relationship and the student as an individual.

(McWilliam, 1999, pp. 58–9)

Characteristic of outstanding teachers is that they respect and like their students, and are ‘committed to and skilled at connecting the two things they care deeply about – their subject matter and their students’ (Harrell, 1996, p. 12). It is the intimacy of the teacher–learner relationship that is an essential part of the teaching–learning relationship. It results in the ‘pedagogical tact’ that involves and invokes, simultaneously, perceptiveness, insight and feeling (van Manen, 1995, p. 41); and because teaching is, essentially, an interpersonal activity, such tact must in itself – at least in the moment of the connection – minimize status or power differentials between teacher, context and learner. That the result of this will be enjoyment and satisfaction for the teacher and the learner is undeniable.

Louis, Kruse and Associates (1995) suggest that professional school communities share five core characteristics:

- Shared norms and values
- Reflective dialogue
- Sharing of practice
- Focus on student learning
- Inclusivity.

Passionate teachers do not work in isolation. They are part of a complex web of social and interpersonal relationships that make up the
Table 7.1 Patterns of teaching practice in contemporary classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns of practice</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Education outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enact traditions of</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Subject static; knowledge</td>
<td>Routine, teacher-centred</td>
<td>Success with traditional students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice</td>
<td>learner role</td>
<td>given</td>
<td></td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower expectations</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Watered-down subject matter</td>
<td>Routine, teacher-centred</td>
<td>Limited success with all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and standards</td>
<td>learner role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate to</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Subject dynamic; knowledge</td>
<td>Non-routine, student-centred</td>
<td>Increased success with non-traditional students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage learners</td>
<td>learner role</td>
<td>constructed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 19)

It is clear from this that for teachers to be effective, they need to break out of predominantly transmission modes of teaching to those that are more dynamic and take students' learning needs seriously (Table 7.1 sets out the outcomes of some practices). Passion is not only about how teachers present themselves but also how students see their substantive (whole) selves valued in the approaches to teaching and learning. The kinds of 'reflexive conservatism' (Lortie, 1975, p. 240) in which teaching routines never change is the enemy of all who are passionate about teaching that connects with learners' immediate and longer-term needs.

Having a passion for teaching means working...

... to establish an active role for students in developing new, deeper subject knowledge that builds upon their interests, skills and prior knowledge ... [moving] towards teaching for understanding — emphasizing depth in students' content knowledge over coverage of many topics and skills, and problem-solving skills over mastery of the kinds of routines emphasized in traditional instruction.

(McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 25)

Yet to achieve this means seeking to understand the classroom from students' perspectives, focusing in the process of teaching upon building self-esteem through the knowledge and understanding of the student. The challenge of teaching the student as well as the subject is likely to result in higher levels of satisfaction, the intrinsic reward that helps to maintain teacher commitment.

The cultures of those schools in which teacher learning communities — and thus it might be assumed a climate for passionate teaching — were found, were described as opening each year with discussions of values, norms and practices:

Teachers become committed or recommitted to working within these schools' structures for collective problem solving ... [they] learn how to participate as partners in constructing school success ... trusting the community as a vehicle for teaching success and professional growth.

(McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 85)

Teachers felt that, although their work demanded an enormous investment of energy, 'the shared struggle' sustained their personal commitment and effort and professional growth (ibid., p. 88). In the concluding chapter of the research report, the authors point unequivocally to the
importance of teacher learning communities:

Principles for professional development policy, practice, and initiative that come from nearly two decades of US education reform underscore our conclusion that teacher learning communities constitute the best context for professional growth and change.

(McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 35)

Connecting teachers to development: promoting teacher learning

While by definition individual teachers are responsible for the quality of their work in the classroom, schools that espouse the ideals and practices of *community*, exercise a collective responsibility for the conditions in which teachers and students work, recognizing that the learning health of both is fundamental to their growth and development. To claim that a school is a learning community suggests the presence of a number of relational qualities.

- **Respect**: Teachers and students treat each other with respect and authentic courtesy.
- **Caring**: Encompassing but going beyond respect, caring is more particularistic and pro-active in that it acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and reaches out to initiate positive interaction, rather than being expressed only as a response to another.
- **Inclusiveness**: There are continual attempts to ensure that all participants are drawn into the whole range of interactions throughout the school, and none are left as outsiders. What is different about a school as a community is that teachers and students are typically not separated by physical division; for example, they might share a lunch room or students might be invited to participate in teachers’ meetings, and, perhaps more importantly, they share a common culture of assumptions and values in the school so that students and teachers are not pitted against each other.
- **Trust**: Members of a genuine community trust one another to the point where they are prepared to disclose themselves and their work to their colleagues because they know that such disclosure will be beneficial to their relationships and improve their work as teachers and learners.

- **Empowerment**: Both students and teachers feel empowered in a community because they know their voice will be heard and their feelings will count when it comes to expressing their concerns. This is especially important for students, who are often locked out of decision-making processes in schools and denied opportunities for influencing policy and practice.
- **Commitment**: A strong sense of attachment and a high level of investment of energy are features of a community; the school may be described as ‘like a family’ and there is particular attachment to the goals and values of the school which motivate members to achieve the best possible outcomes for all concerned.

(Raywid, 1995, pp. 32–9)

The challenge for teachers and their leaders is to sustain the passion as the needs of the students and society change and as teachers themselves grow older. McLaughlin and Talbert’s (op. cit.) research suggests that meeting this challenge is vital to the maintenance of healthy patterns in teachers’ work lives and careers. Table 7.2 summarizes the importance of school and department cultures to the patterns of teachers’ professional relations and careers they identified in the schools and departments they studied.

Yet passion for teaching is difficult to sustain in schools and departments that themselves do not promote the continuing professional development of all who work in them through, for example, mentoring schemes, regular peer observation, dialogue about teaching and learning, inquiries into practice for the purposes of further understanding and improvement, as well as the more traditional forms of ‘in-service’ activity.

Lieberman and Miller (1999) suggest ways transitions may be made from the more traditional views of teaching and learning that are no longer appropriate for the needs of schooling in the twenty-first century, to ‘new understandings of the social realities’ (p. 20):

1. **From individualism to professional community**: Working jointly to decide on common goals, develop programmes, deal with problems, and manage tensions between individuality and collegiality.
2. **From teaching at the centre to learning at the centre**: Planning based on outcomes and assessments of students and how they learn.
Table 7.2 Patterns of teachers' work lives and careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns of teaching careers</th>
<th>Colleague relations</th>
<th>Assignment to courses and students</th>
<th>Professional rewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stagnant or declining careers (weak community)</td>
<td>Professional isolation; social relations enforce privacy norms</td>
<td>Seniority logic: prerogatives of tenure</td>
<td>Intrinsic rewards vary by students taught; esteem based on social standing of students and the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent career trends (traditional community)</td>
<td>Co-ordination around course tracking and student testing</td>
<td>Expertise logic: teacher tracking by credentials</td>
<td>Intrinsic rewards vary by teaching credentials and assignments; prestige based on certified expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared career progress (teacher learning community)</td>
<td>Collaboration around teaching and learning</td>
<td>Equity logic: teacher rotation across course levels</td>
<td>Intrinsic rewards grow with collective success; pride based on professional growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MacLaughlin and Talbert, 2001, p. 78)

5 From managed work to leadership: Teachers relinquish 'power over' students in exchange for 'power to' affect student performance. This form of 'distributed leadership', which recognizes that everyone has a stake in success, is modelled throughout the school.

6 From classroom concerns to whole-school concerns and beyond: Teachers recognize that their work extends beyond the walls of their classroom, that they have an essential part to play in defining the school culture. They form partnerships and networks with other schools in order to extend their thinking and practices. They become 'activist professionals' (Sachs, 2003).

7 From a weak knowledge base to a broad knowledge base: Teachers base their teaching on new as well as old understandings of the way students learn and use the tools that best relate to this.

(Lieberman and Miller, 1999, pp. 21–3)

**Networks for learning**

Writing in a school improvement context, Michael Huberman (1995) proposed research-based, cross-school networks, 'with a focus on bridging the gap between peer exchanges, the interventions of external resource people, and the greater likelihood of actual change at the classroom level' (p. 193). Their aim is almost always systemic change and they consist of a number of schools that work together over extended periods of time with the support of staff from universities and other organizations with an interest in supporting improvement efforts. Because they meet over time, this creates opportunities for a wide variety of agreed intervention strategies by university staff and others, and for changes in the focus of their work together.

In a review of the American literature, Hord (1997) explored the concept and uses of professional learning networks, focusing primarily upon those in which whole schools or departments were involved. While recognizing that such communities of continuous inquiry and improvement are 'embryonic and scattered' (Darling-Hammond, 1996, p. 10), she identified several factors necessary for their development: (i) significant contributions made by school principals to provide supportive environments (Leithwood et al., 1997); (ii) staff involvement in decision-making, reflective dialogue through shared practice and peer review, and inquiry; and (iii) 'undeviating' focus upon student and staff learning (Louis and Kruse, 1995; Sarason, 1990). Although building collaborative learning networks takes time, the literature suggests that there are significant
benefits for both staff and students. Among these are:

- Reduction in the isolation of teachers
- Increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school, and increased vigour in working to strengthen the mission
- Higher likelihood that teachers will be well-informed, professionally renewed, and inspired to inspire students
- Significant advances into making teaching adaptations for students, and changes for learners made more quickly than in traditional schools
- Higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental, systemic change.

(Hord, 1997, pp. 27–8)

**Teachers’ learning – two examples**

Here is how two experienced teachers in America responded to the opportunity for the first time in many years, to engage in supported systematic inquiry into the consequences of different kinds of practice:

[It] opened my mind to certain strategies – and I have been teaching for more than a quarter of a century... but I didn’t realise there were other outlets – that I could use much better strategies. So I became a strategy seeker... I was open to the fact that it’s not my way or the highway anymore. I am opening up new approaches to my students...

(Quoted in McLaughlin, 2002, p. 100)

I could never see what a good school this is because I was into my own classroom. I never had the broad picture. And until I saw that, when I could really sit down and see the whole school, that’s when the light went on. You know, we have some holes, we have some gaps, but boy, we’re okay!

(Quoted in McLaughlin, 2002, p. 102)

In Australia, involvement in a school consortium involving collaborative inquiry with support from a small group of academics had similar effects:

It’s other teachers going through the same things as you. You find out what’s important to your colleagues and it makes you ready to reflect.

(Quoted in Loughran, 2002, p. 149)

and

I’ve come to know that people learn in different ways... I now know what is happening when someone is a good ‘swatter’ for exams while others need connections between ideas, or relevance to their life... So increasing experiences for students really matters and you need a wide range and use of questioning techniques... there’s a difference between knowing and understanding.

(Quoted in Loughran, 2002, p. 152)

Only by doing things together over time are the conditions for people to develop shared meanings, values and goals created. There is no substitute for what Michael Huberman (1995) calls ‘sustained interactivity’ of the kind to be found in collegial school cultures and school learning networks.

**The leadership role**

Organizations are not solely concerned with outcomes, processes and resources. They are also concerned with the human spirit and their values and relationships. Authentic leaders breathe the life force into the workplace and keep the people feeling energized and focused. As stewards and guides they build people and their self-esteem. They derive their credibility from personal integrity and ‘walking’ their values.

(Bhindi and Duignan, 1996, p. 29)

Headteachers have the prime responsibility for building, sustaining, storing, and communicating the schools’ culture. Recently, leadership studies have focused upon values – the ‘moral purposes’ and moral craft of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992); the roles of leaders in creating a ‘community of learners’ (Barth, 1990; Senge, 1990); and the capacities of leaders to ‘make a difference’ through their ability to ‘transform’ (Sergiovanni, 1995) or ‘liberate’ (Tampoe, 1998) rather than simply ‘transact’. The most popular theories are located in the ‘transactional’ and ‘transformational’ models identified more than twenty years ago (Burns, 1978), and lately re-invented through such terms as ‘liberation’ (Tampoe, 1998), ‘educative’ (Duignan and MacPherson, 1992), ‘invitational’ (Stoll and Fink, 1996), and ‘moral’ leadership
(Sergiovanni, 1992). What is clear from these, and the effective schools literature, is that successful leaders not only set direction, organize and monitor, build relationships with the school community, and are people-centred; but they also model values and practices consistent with those of the school so that ‘purposes which may have initially seemed to be separate, become fused’ (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 119). However:

Organizational culture only exists if the members of an organization share common experiences and encounters. It is precisely through such encounters that a culture is created. (Schein, 1985, p. 7)

For these to happen requires leadership that enables regular time to discuss, critically reflect upon and share ideals, ideas and practices within as well as outside the school day. There need to be opportunities for teachers to engage in different kinds of learning and development, through a range of formal and informal activities, some class-based (e.g. action research, co-teaching), some role-focused (e.g. mentoring, coaching), others off-site, through in-service courses, and others through networked learning communities that bring groups of schools together to collaborate on inquiries over a sustained period of time. Such emphasis upon continuing professional development will inevitably lead to and be underpinned by values of autonomy, openness to improvement and trust and respect.

Successful teachers have come to understand the importance of and are able to work with the intellectual capital embedded in all members of the school community, the social capital embedded in the relationships between individuals and groups, and the organizational capital embedded in the school’s structure and cultures (Hargreaves, D., 1999). Most importantly, they ensure that teachers are at the heart of the creation of such learning communities (Day, 1999). There is a tension between focusing effort upon building capacity in such communities that distribute power and decision-making, and the bureaucratic model of leadership suggested by the pressures of achieving success in the current results-orientated policy environment. Successful heads, it seems, ensure that one supports the other, despite the tensions evident between their purposes. Multiple rather than single forms of leadership seem to be what is required, then, in today’s English policy context. As Hayes et al. (2001) note in their empirical study of ‘productive’ leadership in Australian schools:

... style is not as important as the willingness of ... principals to contribute to the development of broad-based learning communities within their schools ...

(Hayes et al., 2001, p. 15)

They found, like Louis, Kruse and Associates (1995) in America before them that

... the most effective administration leaders delegated authority, developed collaborative decision-making processes, and stepped back from being the central problem solver.

(Louis et al., 1996, p. 193)

‘Moving’ (learning-enriched) rather than ‘stuck’ (learning-povertied) schools (Rosenholtz, 1989) are places in which there are commonly held core values and purposes, regular and frequent opportunities for the sharing of experience, exchange of ideas, norms of collegiality, peer observation and review, experimentation. There will be on- and off-site sustained professional development activities ranging from knowledge for practice (formal knowledge made available for teachers’ use); knowledge in practice (expert teachers’ practical knowledge made explicit and shared); knowledge of practice (teachers inquiring into their own and others’ knowledge of practice) (Cochrane-Smith and Lytle, 2001, p. 46); and most importantly, knowledge of self (teachers reflecting critically on their motivations, emotions, commitment, identities). In such schools, self-efficacy will be high. Such schools do not just make space for, but positively encourage, all in their individual and collective passion for teaching and learning. Collaboration tends to reduce teachers’ sense of powerlessness, and increase their individual and collective self-efficacy. Networked learning communities have this effect too.

**Collective efficacy and relational trust**

Schools where teachers’ conversations dwell on the insurmountable difficulties of educating their students are likely to undermine teachers’ sense of efficacy. Schools where teachers work together find ways to address the learning, motivation, and behaviour problems of their students are likely to enhance teachers’ sense of efficacy. (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 221)
In Chapter 4, efficacy was defined as the extent to which teachers believe they can make a difference in the learning and achievement of all pupils (Bandura, 1997). It is linked to feelings of personal and professional self-worth, confidence, and professional identity and commitment, and will vary according to situation, task and phase of development (Ashton and Webb, 1986). It is influenced by both individual histories and school or departmental work contexts (Goddard, 2000). It follows that whereas a teacher working in one set of circumstances may have low self-efficacy, that same teacher working in a different set of circumstances, or indeed at a different phase of their life, may have high levels of self-efficacy. We know from other research, also, that the complex interaction between the personal and the professional, and the external and internal environments in which they work, significantly affect teachers’ sense of well-being, confidence and, ultimately, their classroom effectiveness (Acker, 1999; Tromman and Woods, 2001; Lortie, 1975). Thus efficacy may be affected by relationships with colleagues and by the culture of the school as a whole.

Research in The Netherlands suggests a strong dynamic between self-efficacy, school culture and teacher learning and school improvement (Imants et al., 1993) (see Figure 7.2).

Learning communities need leaders who understand the importance of building learning communities for all staff and students that are physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually healthy; that depend upon integrity, sense of moral purpose, are trusting and trustworthy; and hold to an ethic of service and are ‘genuinely respectful of the intelligence and contributions of their constituents’ (Kouzes and Posner, 1993, p. xvi).

A study of the successful building of professional community in schools concluded that:

Human resources – such as openness to improvement, trust and respect, teachers having knowledge and skills, supportive leadership, and socialization – are more critical to the development of professional community than structural conditions. . . . The need to improve the culture, climate and interpersonal relationships in schools has received too little attention.

(Kruse, Louis and Bryk, 1994, p. 8)

In a longitudinal, intensive study of different elementary school communities in Chicago, Bryk and Schneider (2003) identified relational trust – an interrelated set of agreed mutual dependencies in all social relationships and interaction – as a core indicator of success, where, ‘[e]ach party in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role’s obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other parties’ (Bryk and Schneider, 2003, p. 41). They suggest that relational trust is dependent upon the understanding and application to relationships (between teacher–teacher, teacher–student, teacher–parents, all groups–principal) of four qualities:

- **Respect:** Marked by genuine listening and taking others’ views into account
- **Personal regard:** The willingness of individuals to extend themselves beyond the formal requirements of job definitions to ‘go the extra mile’ to reach out to students, colleagues and parents in an open way
- **Competence in core role responsibilities:** Reliance upon a concerted effort by all to create, maintain and where appropriate, work to improve work conditions (the head), community relations (all), and professional ethics and skills (individuals and teams of teachers)
- **Personal integrity:** Collective trust in moral and ethical commitment by all to the education and welfare of students is a primary concern.

(Adapted from Bryk and Schneider, ibid., pp. 41–42)
This cluster of qualities make up relational trust that itself fosters learning, reduces the sense of risk often associated with change, enables individual and organizational tensions to be resolved. According to Bryk and Schneider's (2003) research, this is 'much more likely to demonstrate marked improvements in students' learning' (ibid., p. 43).

Community does not emerge spontaneously from some relational reflex, especially not in the complex and often conflicted institutions where most teachers work. If we are to have communities of discourse about teaching and learning... we need leaders who can call people toward that vision.

(Palmer, 1998, p. 156)

In short, schools need leaders who are passionate about their calling. Even in those moving schools where continuous learning is an organic part of school culture, change is not always easy and must be led by principals who are clear in their vision and committed to promoting learning for teachers as well as students.

Responsibility for the professional learning culture of the school is at the centre of the cultural and educative leadership roles of headteachers. It is pivotal to enabling teacher development and, through this, school improvement. Indeed:

In a community of learners, the most important role of teacher and principal is that... of leading learner. One who engages in the central enterprise of the schoolhouse by displaying and modelling the behaviour we expect and hope students... (and teachers)... will acquire. As one bumper sticker puts so well: 'You can't lead where you won't go'.

(Barth, 1996, p. 29)

The role that the principal takes in supporting passionate teaching is a critical variable in determining whether it is seen as an 'add on' to the policy-implementation roles of teachers, or whether it is an integral part of the conception of school as a dynamic community of learning for adults as well as for students. I will highlight just two pieces of recent research that provide empirical data on the importance of leaders in this respect.

The first took place in non-educational settings, and focused upon the development of knowledge and skills in employment with workers at different levels in the engineering, business and health care sectors of twelve medium to large organizations in England. It confirms that a manager's indirect impact on learning through the allocation of work, as a role model and by creating/sustaining a micro-culture which supports learning from peers, subordinates and outsiders, is no less important than his or her direct impact through advice and encouragement, appraisal and feedback. ... (Eraut, Alderton, Cole, and Senker, 1997a, p. 109)

The second was a 360° study of successful school headteachers commissioned by the National Association of Headteachers, the UK's largest association. Analysis of all the data revealed a surprising consensus among the different constituencies in each school and between them. All held similar constructions of why the head in their school was successful. Their heads were:

- Values-led
- People-centred
- Achievement-oriented
- Inwards- and outwards-facing
- Able to manage a number of ongoing tensions and dilemmas.

All emphasized the sets of core personal values of the heads, based upon care, equity, high expectations, and achievement, which were clear to and shared by the overwhelming majority of the school constituencies and were the drivers of the life of the school. All emphasized the importance attached by the heads to monitoring standards in the school, to keeping 'ahead of the game' so that their schools responded rather than reacted to new external demands, testing them against their own standards, minimizing bureaucratic demands on staff. All spoke of the improvement-oriented collaborative school cultures that the heads promoted, and the emphasis upon continuing professional development that met both organizational and individual needs. All spoke too of the time and care the heads gave enthusiastically to their work, of the way the heads modelled their values. The heads themselves were clearly strategic, 'reflective practitioners', exercising a range of interpersonal skills, able to analyse, evaluate, articulate and communicate with a range of agencies locally and nationally (Day et al., 2000).
A passion for change

The characteristics of successful leaders and their ability to be simultaneously people-centred while managing a number of tensions and dilemmas highlight the complexity of the kinds of values-led contingency leadership exercised by these successful heads. These and other studies illustrate that there are no neat solutions to situations that hold within them so many variables; and that successful leadership is defined and driven by individual and collective value systems rather than instrumental, bureaucratic, managerial concerns. For example, in her research on disadvantaged schools in Australia, Thomson (2002) suggests that while there is some evidence that policies of devolution have (indirectly) led to improved student attainment, she also sees evidence of growing inequalities among students and schools, particularly those in disadvantaged contexts. Furthermore:

Principals in competitively developed schools must try to balance central requirements and local needs and interests, must run schools like multinational corporations but offer a family-like experience to students, and must answer the often uncoordinated and ever increasing flow of faxes, letters, forms, and e-mails, at the same time as 'manage by walking around'. Diminishing resources, rapidly intensifying workloads and escalating policy churn (the rapid replacement of one policy after another) is a moving stairway on which principals often struggle to maintain balance. (Thomson, 2002, p. 134)

Successful leaders placed a high premium upon personal values and were concerned more with cultural than structural change. They had all moved beyond a narrow, rational, managerial view of their role to a more holistic, values-led approach guided by personal experience and preference, in which they recognized the intimate link in successful leadership between the personal and the professional, and between the development of the individual and the organization. Here is a description of one such headteacher, drawn from a four-country study of passionate leadership. She is:

passionate about her work, is very committed, and underlines how she experiences many moments of pride. She has a clear focus on the purpose of schooling and is driven by her wish to make a difference in the students' life. She invests herself as a person in her job, and her story shows how professional knowledge is both about cognition and about emotions. She must do what she feels is right. Unlike many of her colleagues she does not look upon managerial accountability as a problem. As a matter of fact she misses external affirmation. She is willing to play with power, but she does not problematize the emphasis on hierarchical structure in the school system. That is taken for granted. (Moller, 2004)

There can be no doubt that headteachers are in the front line of the change agenda, responsible for mediating external agendas and leading in the building of the school as a learning community. Michael Fullan (1997) offers eight lessons for change that expose its complexity. Implicit in many of these is an acknowledgement of the importance of passion:

Lesson 1  Moral purpose is complex and problematic

Here, Fullan suggests that top–down initiatives that do not connect with teachers' moral purposes and demand only compliance are unlikely to gain teachers' commitment. There is need, therefore, for change to be driven by bottom–up energies as well as top–down mandates.

Lesson 2  Theories of change and theories of education need each other

Schools are different, so theory can only serve as a guide. Change leaders must recognize that there is no blueprint that will be appropriate to all situations and so be prepared to adapt.

Lesson 3  Conflict and diversity are our friends

The process of successful change will inevitably involve working through discomforts, tensions and uncertainties. It is important to acknowledge differences at the outset and, in doing so, address the emotional dimension of change from the start.

Lesson 4  Understand the meaning of operating on the edge of chaos

Because uncertainty is a constant feature of life in the twenty-first century, a key element of successful change is the willingness to take risks
and learn from experience, to be prepared to identify key situation-related priorities while trusting in the learning journey.

**Lesson 5 Emotional intelligence is anxiety provoking and anxiety containing**

An understanding of the power of emotion when facing the unknown is necessary, to manage one’s own and others’ emotions is vital.

**Lesson 6 Collaborative cultures are anxiety provoking and anxiety containing**

This is a recognition that for collaboration to be effective, all involved must accept and celebrate a degree of diversity. Acknowledging individuality within collaboration is an expression of trust, empathy and connectivity.

**Lesson 7 Attack incoherence: connectedness and knowledge creation are critical**

While teachers will spend much of their time in individual learning journeys, the moral purposes of the organization need to be agreed, understood, articulated, and communicated if growth is to be sustained.

**Lesson 8 There is no single solution: craft your own theories and actions by being a critical consumer**

Fullan’s final lesson acknowledges that in the end it is the teachers who will change the world of the classroom. It recognizes the importance to change of the ‘activist’ professional, someone who is part of a critically reflective community of activist professionals who are emotionally intelligent, committed to students and their own learning and achievement — in short, passionate about their calling (Fullan, 1999, pp. 19–29).

**Time to reflect**

**Emotional geographies**

Andy Hargreaves coined the term ‘emotional geographies’ of schooling and human interaction to assist in the identification of what supports and what threatens basic emotional bonds in teaching. He and his colleagues found five forms of ‘emotional distance and closeness that can threaten emotional understanding among teachers, students, colleagues, and parents’ (Hargreaves, A., 2000, p. 815):

- **Sociocultural geographies**: Where differences of culture and class can make teachers on the one hand, and parents and students on the other, alien and unknowable to each other.
  
  *Question*: What are you and your colleagues doing to make sure that this is not happening?

- **Moral geographies**: Where teachers’ purposes are at odds with those they serve and where there are no mechanisms to discuss or resolve these differences.
  
  *Question*: What are your moral purposes? How do you discuss them with colleagues, students, parents?

- **Professional geographies**: Where teacher professionalism is defined . . . in a way which . . . creates a distance between teachers and the clients they serve, and that is especially prejudicial to feminine, ‘caring’ ethics of teaching.
  
  *Question*: How is ‘care’ expressed by you through teacher and learner relationships and teacher–parent interactions?

- **Political geographies**: Where hierarchical power relationships distort emotional and cognitive aspects of communication between teachers and those around them.
  
  *Question*: How is leadership enacted in your classroom and in the school?

- **Physical geographies**: Where fragmented, infrequent, formalized, and episodic encounters replace the possibility of relationships between teachers and students, or teachers and parents with strings of disconnected interactions.
  
  *Question*: How does your school manage the learning community so as to develop it?

(Based on Hargreaves, 2000, p. 816)