

Fighting fragmentation in university and school relations: Boundaries en boundary crossing in a Master's programme on teacher leadership



Overview

- Leadership of teachers
- A 'theory of innovation'
- From 'transfer' to 'boundary crossing'
- Boundary crossing in a Master's programme
- Balancing qualification and intervention

Leadership of teachers

Two roles of teachers:

- Primary role: supporting learning processes of pupils
- Secondary role: being member of a modern professional organization and a modern profession: Being an innovator, researcher, colleague, collaborator, ...

(TALIS 2010)

Teacher leadership:

‘the process by which teachers, individually and collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement’

(York-Barr & Duke, 2004)

Leadership qualities of teachers can not be taken for granted, but need to be developed.

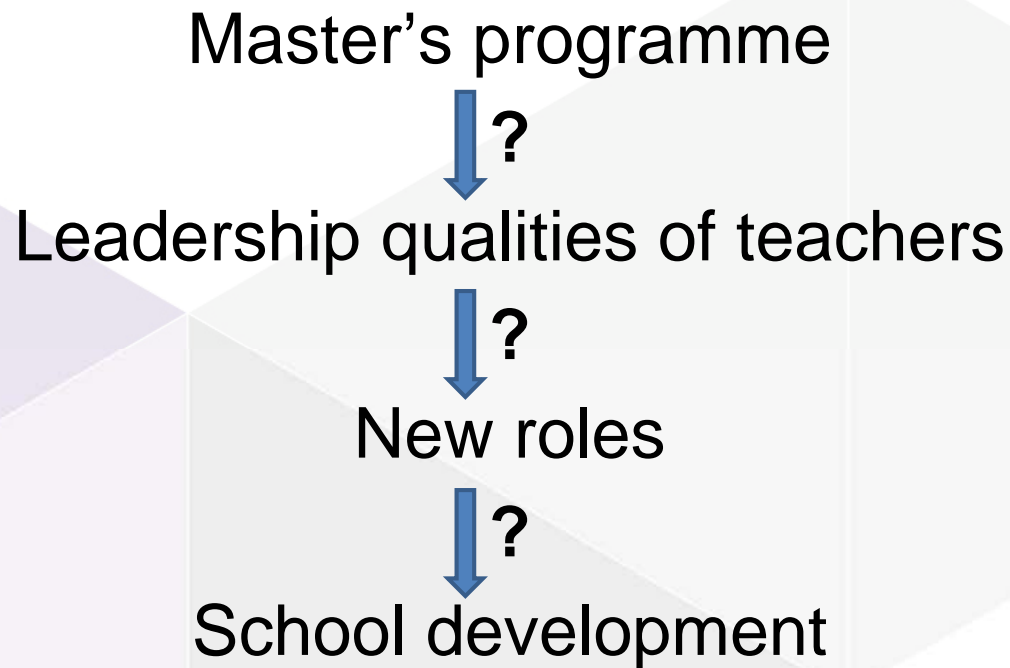
What is the aim of teacher development?

Individual professional development?

Improved teaching and school development?

How are these two related?

A theory of innovation?



To what extent and in what way does a post-initial Master's program for teacher leadership contribute to teacher development, to new (leadership) roles and to school development and which factors influence this?

Transfer of learning

Three factors:

- Training design
- Competences and motivation of the participant
- Organisational climate at the workplace

(Baldwin & Ford 1988, Bunch 2007, Arthur et al. 2003)

Organizational transfer climate

Strategic alignment

Opportunities to apply new competence

- Work routines, recognition, accountability

Support and feedback by supervisors

- Expectations, feedback, involvement, support

Support and feedback by colleagues

- Expectations, feedback, involvement, support

(Rouiller and Goldstein 1993; Burke and Hutchins 2007; Baldwin and Ford 1988; Clarke 2002; Tracey and Tews 2005; Holton III, Bates, and Ruona 2000)

Low level of transfer

- No expectations by the school (personal development vs school development)
- No new roles
- No recognition, no accountability
- No feedback, support, commitment and ownership of school leaders
- Little interest in theory and research

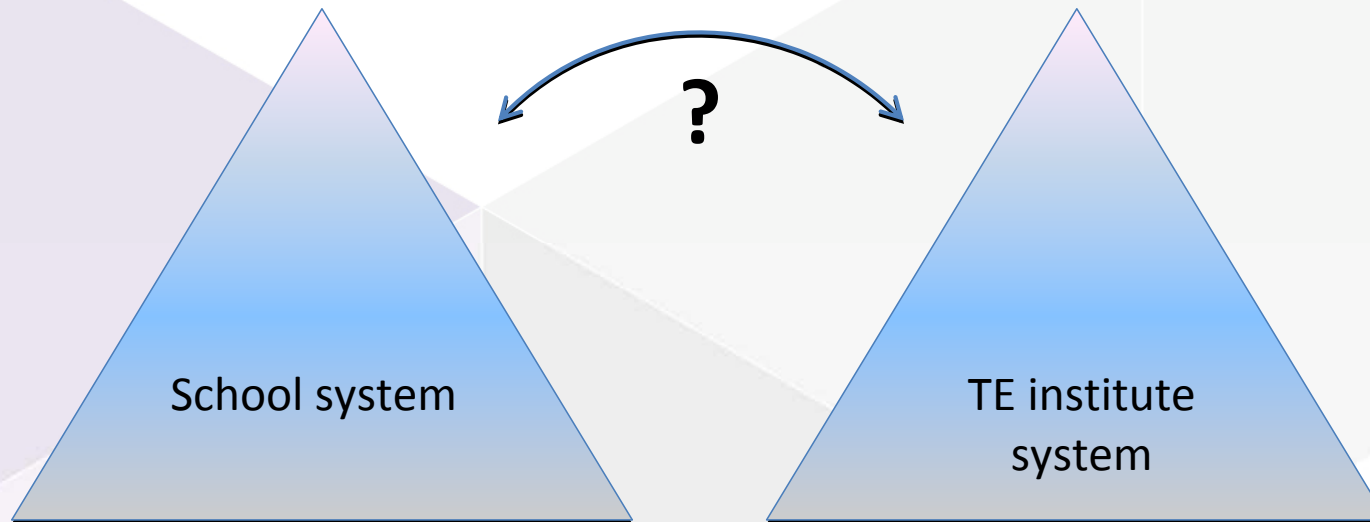
High level of transfer

- Supportive transfer climate
- Strategic partnership with supervisor
- Room and time for interaction with colleagues
- Reciprocal process: teacher leaders influence their organizational context → transfer climate is not a static condition

From 'transfer' to 'boundary crossing'

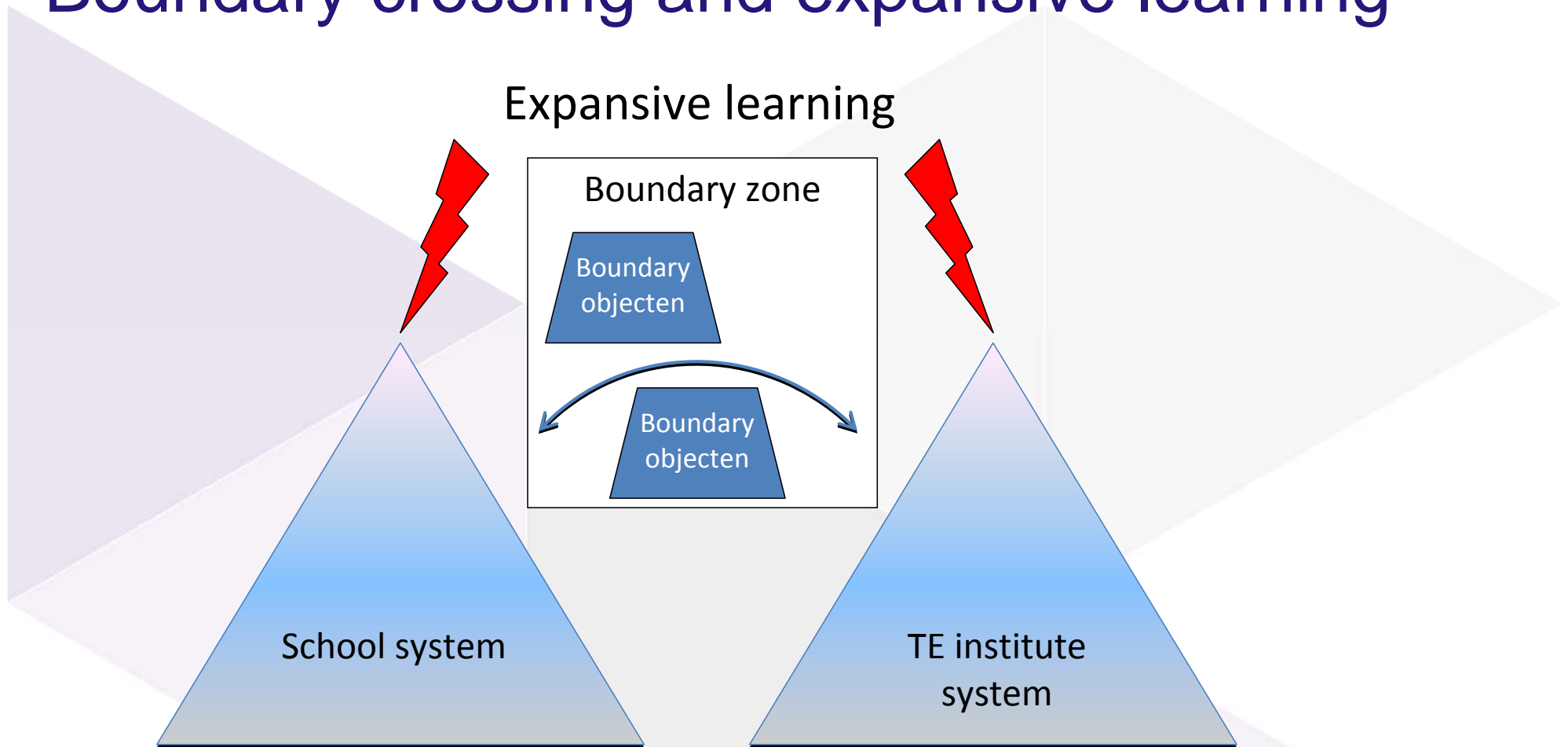
“The literature on boundary crossing and boundary objects has a different focus than the literature on transfer in various ways. Although transfer is mostly about one-time and one-sided transitions, primarily affecting an individual who moves from a context of learning to one of application (e.g., from school to work), concepts of boundary crossing and boundary objects are used to refer to ongoing, two-sided actions and interactions between contexts. These actions and interactions across sites are argued to affect not only the individual but also the different social practices at large.” (Akkerman & Bakker 2011, p136)

Separated systems



Boundaries and boundary crossers

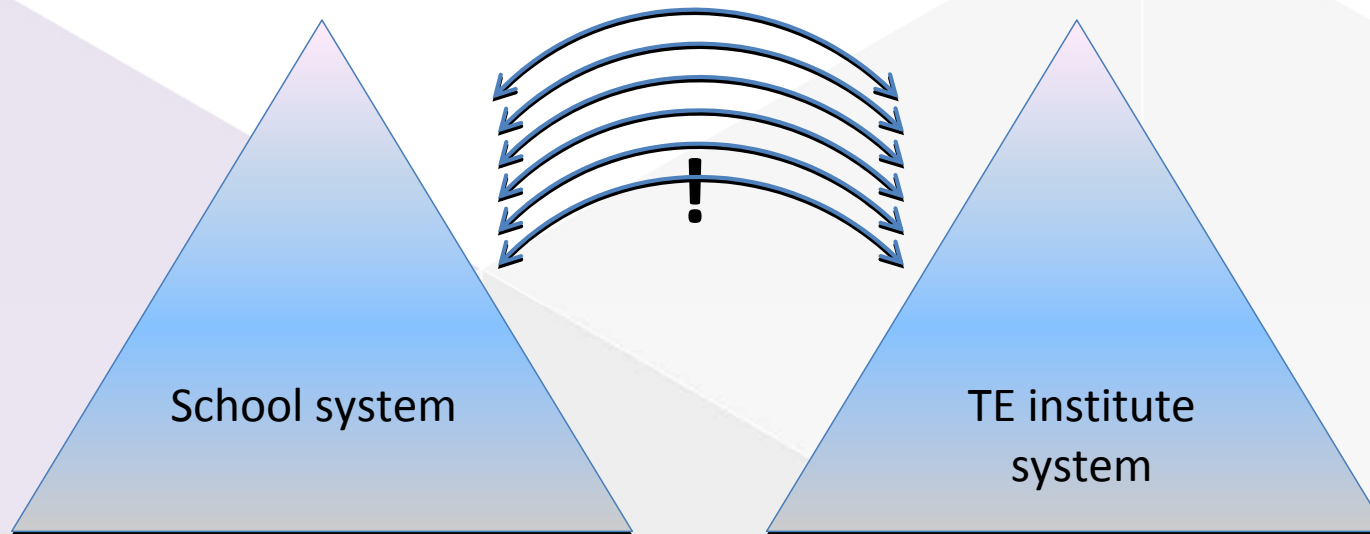
Boundary crossing and expansive learning



Boundary object: opportunity for meaningful dialogue between stakeholders from different activity systems, leading to expansive learning within both activity systems

Separated systems

strengthening boundary crossing



How does the school understand the Master's programme?

'Corporate curriculum': the organization's perspective on a learning design that aims at mutual effects at the level of individual and organizational behaviour, **bridging individual professional development and school development** (Kessels, 1993).

External curriculum consistency: 'the homogeneity of the notions of parties involved on what the problem is and how it can be solved by means of educational provisions' (Kessels, 1993, p.27).

Strengthening boundary crossing

Design process

- Strategic alignment
- Shared ownership

Programme

- Connection between course content and school agenda
- Collective programme
- Boundary crossing by supervisors
- Boundary crossing by university teachers

Methodology

45 appointed senior teachers from three vocational schools

Shared design

Shared monitoring

Qualitative research

Focus on boundary crossing activities, new roles, leadership performance, impact on working practice and leadership practice, personal characteristics, organisational characteristics

Impact

Limited change in formal roles, but new self understanding:

- Theory based (self confidence)
- Analytical, reflective (instead of quick solutions)
- Stronger strategic awareness

Multiple pockets of innovation

Impact on working practices (e.g. by coaching colleagues) and on leadership practices (through increased self-awareness of teams and team learning)

Critical factors

- Strategic alignment
- Collectivity
- Connection to formal positions

Limitations

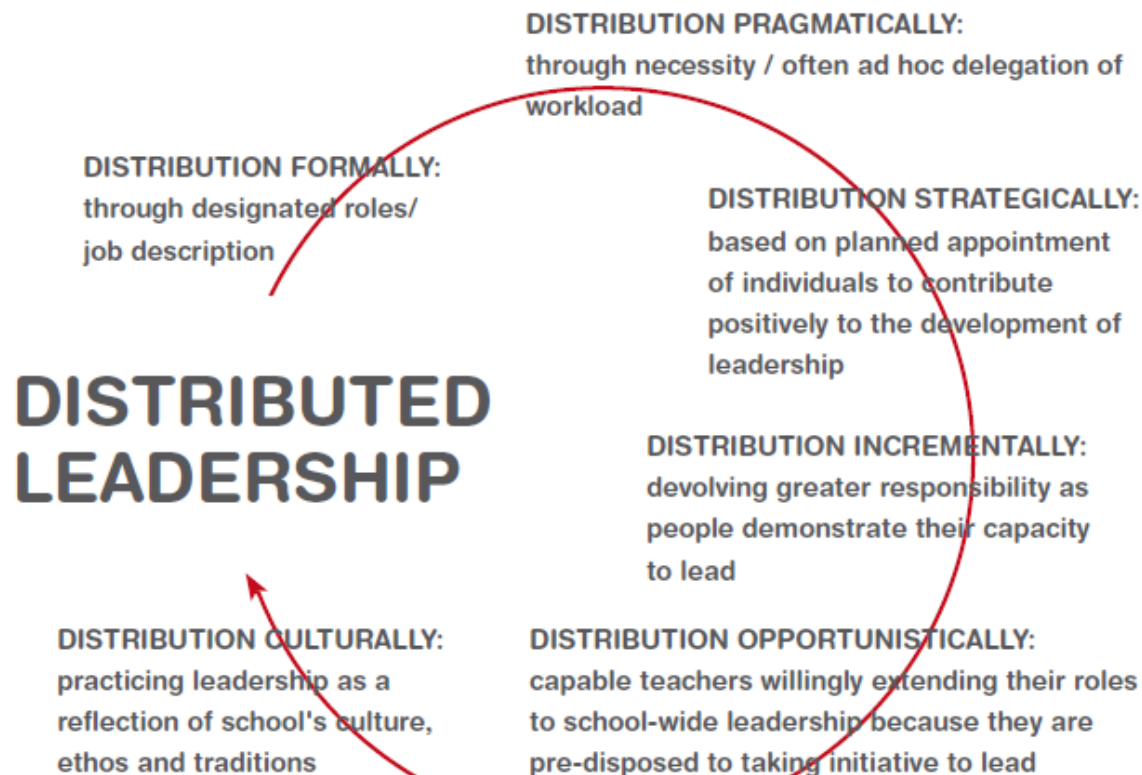
- Ownership of supervisors
- Boundary crossing by university teachers

Leadership based on structure or culture?

Based on organizational structures and formal mandates?

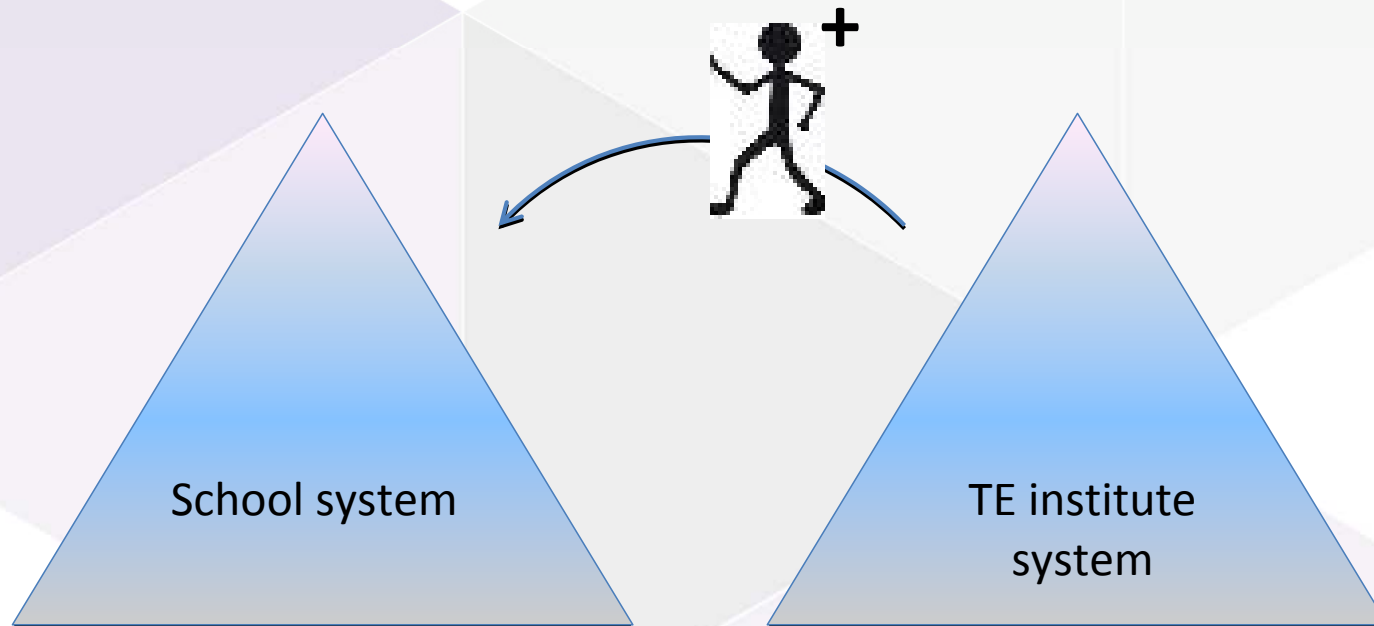
Or open to all, flexible and integrated in the organizational culture

Taxonomie van MacBeath



A Master's programme focused on Qualification

Traditional Master's programmes focus on qualification of individual participants



... or on Qualification and Intervention

What about expansive learning / changes at the work place
What about expansive learning / changes at the university?

