
UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Department of Education

**How do I improve my leadership as a team leader in Vocational
Education in Further Education?**

This dissertation is submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education (Educational
Management) by completion of six taught units and dissertation

Daisy Louisa Walsh

July 2004



Copyright

Attention is drawn to the fact that the copyright of this dissertation rests with its author - Daisy L. Walsh. This copy of the dissertation has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the dissertation and no information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.

Signed

.....

Acknowledgements

We Cannot Have Too Much Gratitude

Many people have influenced my journey through this Master of Arts in Education (Educational Management), of which this dissertation is the conclusion.

The restricted availability of space on this page makes it impossible to list all of them here. However, with my sincerest thanks I wish to personally and professionally acknowledge the following people who have helped shape this important milestone and proud outcome.

My parents, Clarisse and David Louise, who though thousands of miles away (in The Seychelles), have always believed in me and continue to do so, offering their encouragement and support.

My daughters, Hannah and Ellie, and husband, Kevin, for their emotional support.

My friend and colleague, Barbara, for proof-reading not just this dissertation, but all the six modules of my Master of Arts in Education degree.

My friends and colleagues: Tina, Laurie, June, Gill, Lolita and 'The Two Sarahs' who helped me improve my leadership practice.

Special recognition and thanks to my tutor, Jack - a constant source for my inspiration.

I will thank you all, always for what you have done...(Psalm 52:11)

We can never have too much gratitude in our life.

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to

My Wonderful Parents - Clarisse and David Louise

With love

Abbreviations

ALI	Adult Learner Inspectorate
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfEE	Department of Education and Employment
DfES	Department of Education and Skills
EQ	Emotional Quotient
FE	Further Education
CIF	The Common Inspection Framework
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualifications
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
MA	Master of Arts
MEE	Methods of Educational Enquiries
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OFSTED	Office of Standard in Education
PAL	Programme Area Leader
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
UK	United Kingdom

Abstract

“How do I improve my leadership as a team leader in Vocational Education in Further Education?”

This dissertation is concerned with showing how I, as a Programme Area Team Leader, for Vocational 'A' level, GNVQ and GCSE ICT, at a Further Education College in the United Kingdom, have focussed on my commitment as an educator and team leader in an action enquiry research.

Using a reflective journal I recorded my thoughts on significant events throughout my practice. Using narratives I constructed representations from the data gathered. I traced and explored my journey as a team leader in Further Education. My concern was to improve my understanding of my leadership practice for the benefit of my team and my students. In examining my self-development, I have extended my own professional knowledge. I aim to be a better team leader for the formation of a more effective team.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to my personal, educational and professional development as the team leader. Vocational education, its leadership and management, is uncharted territory for many school and further education teachers who hold leadership position. By putting the work of my dissertation in the public domain, I hope that other team leaders in a similar vocational education context can relate in part to some of my experiences.

Author Declaration

1. The author, Daisy L. Walsh, has not been registered for any other academic award during the period of registration for this study.

2. The material included in this dissertation has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award.

3. The programme of advanced study of which this dissertation is part has included completion of the following units:
 - Information Technology
 - Curriculum Studies
 - Managing Educational Organisation
 - Managing Educational Innovations
 - Managing Human Resources
 - Methods of Educational Enquiry

4. Where any material has been previously submitted as part of an assignment within any of these units, it is clearly identified.

D.L. Walsh

July 2004

Table of Contents

	Pages
Title page.....	i
Copyright	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Dedication	iv
Abbreviations	v
Abstract.....	vi
Author Declaration.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
Introduction.....	ix - x
Chapter 1: Setting the Scene.....	1 - 10
• Background - My starting point	
• Values: Personal Values as grounding for my leadership study	
• Spiritual Values	
• Context	
Chapter 2: The Power of Words.....	11 - 23
• Effective leadership and team leader's roles	
• Disaffected and disinterested stakeholders - the vocational FE assets	
• Continuing Professional Development to the rescue	
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	24 - 32
• Action Research is the approach	
• What is 'self' that is at the centre of our life?	
• Validation and data collection	
• The data collection instruments	
• My research - tracing the beginning	
Chapter 4: The Data, The Evidence.....	33 - 63
• The voices that validate and quantify	
• My first set of data	
• Welcoming the strangers who bring new life	
• Creating opportunities for empowerment	
• Transformational leadership - leading beside peers	
• Taking responsibilities for learner's growth	
• Black is Beautiful	
• Being is first, Doing is second	
• Experience is a wonderful thing	
• Staking my claim to creating a living education theory	
• Limitations of process and outcomes of data collection methods	
• Reliability and validity of questionnaire	
• Reflecting on my reflective journal	
• Ethical Issues	
Chapter 5: The Outcomes.....	64 - 70
• The Conclusion: There are no such things as problems; simply opportunities for solutions	
References	71 - 73
Reflective Journal.....	74 - 81
Appendices	

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to focus on my commitment as an educator, as a team leader, in academic vocational Further Education (FE) as I examine my professional practice with the question:

“How do I improve my leadership as a team leader in Vocational Education in Further Education?”

This dissertation is the culmination of three years study for a Master of Arts in Education (Educational Management) at The University of Bath. It is an action research study that traces and explores my journey as a team leader in Further Education. In examining my self-development, I have extended my own professional knowledge. I aim to be a better team leader for the formation of a more effective team.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to my personal, educational and professional development as the team leader of Vocational ‘A’ level, GNVQ and GCSE ICT in an FE College in the United Kingdom.

For ease of reading, I have divided my dissertation into five distinct chapters.

In Chapter 1 entitled, **Setting the Scene**, I discuss my starting point by outlining my background in both personal and educational context. The intention is to portray my educational values and stance. These are important because they strengthen my work and my commitment to vocational academic education. I justify on educational and academic grounds, the reasons for selecting the focus on my team leadership.

In Chapter 2 entitled, **The Power of Words**, I review a selection of literature that will inform the focus, the perspectives and the context of the dissertation.

In Chapter 3 entitled, **Methodology**, I describe the research methodology I intend to use. I justify my choice of action research and engage in the research design. Using Action Research, I set out a framework appropriate to the study of my leadership practice.

In Chapter 4 entitled, **The Data, The Evidence**, I describe how the data was collected and ethical issues. I analyse and interpret the data as evidence of my leadership influence. I discuss the limitations of both process and outcomes of the data collection methods.

In Chapter 5 entitled, **The Outcomes**, I evaluate the strengths and limitations of the study. I conclude by summarising the significance of this dissertation and its influence on my leadership practice as a team leader in vocational academic education in further education.