

The transition to formal school leadership contains a number of required learning experiences that need mainly to be accumulated during your working life, although it may also be configured by personal attributes or a personal history that has accumulated the relevant experiences in an unconscious, unplanned manner. It is my contention that, even with the formal requirement of licensure schemes such as NPQH, headteachers are not fully prepared for the position through prior training or experience and, consequently, require access to a range of development activities and support before appointment and during induction that will make them more effective in their new job. That belief has been established as a result of previous research I had carried out, singly and jointly in the UK and the USA, since before the beginning of the NPQH programme and the publication of national standards for headteachers (Male, 1996; Daresh and Male, 2000; Male and Merchant, 2000). That body of research had produced data that suggested that beginning headteachers were not fully prepared for the job, particularly in being able to deal with the transition to the formal leadership position that was integral to the concept of the post, findings that were also reflected in similar, contemporary studies (Dunning, 1996; Draper and McMichael, 1998). These are views I continue to hold despite regular changes to the content and structure of the national standards and NPQH.

The general trend of the literature and research on the transition to become the formal leader of an organization is that in order to be successful the new postholder must have a range of personal capabilities and skills sufficient for the demands of the job.

Particularly helpful in the framing of this transition from aspirant to practising formal leader are the conclusions of Gronn (1993) who, in studies of leadership succession, developed a four stage model that begins with Formation, passes through Accession to Incumbency and finally ends with Divestiture. During the formative stage the future leader is subject to a range of early influences from agencies such as the family, school and other reference groups which shape their personality as a leader. During accession to the post, the prospective leader makes progress to their future position through the creation of knowledge and expertise appropriate to the post. In some instances this is a planned accession by the individual, but it may also be a path that is unplanned with the prospective leader not necessarily recognizing themselves as a putative postholder during the learning process. The period of incumbency covers the total period of the post, from appointment to leaving. The period of divestiture covers the period of leaving for the retiring and the disenchanted or a period of re-invention for the enchanted.

It is possible, therefore, to use this leadership literature and theory base to predict some of the challenges faced by school leaders as they move from a state of anticipation about the new job to the point where they feel confident and competent in their new post. In other words they will have managed the process of transition in order to have become effective. The case was strongly made in the previous chapter, however, that the nature of headship made it a qualitatively different experience than formal leadership in other organizations and school systems. Fundamental to that argument was the rare combination of personal accountability and societal expectations that provide the headteacher with few refuges in the maelstrom of activity that typically surrounds the post. Making the transition to this formal

leadership position introduces a number of challenges that arise in addition to having accumulated the requisite skill base to be judged a potentially effective headteacher. These challenges permeate the period of preparation, induction and early stages of consolidation in the new post and affect every newly appointed headteacher, irrespective of their previous experience. Although, therefore, we can learn much from the literature and research concerning the succession of leaders, managers and administrators in general, moving to a headship position thus brings with it a unique set of circumstances relating not only to occupational expectations or standards but also to the personal and organizational dimensions of the transition. This chapter explores those three dimensions and will guide you toward an understanding that will be relevant to your specific context.

The Personal Dimension

The personal dimension of headship preparation and induction relate largely to the issues of reconciling your self-image and preferred behaviours with the demands of the post. Newly appointed headteachers undertake a journey of discovery about themselves and, in contrast to the other two dimensions, often find this aspect of the transition leaves them isolated and lonely. Whilst these feelings are more marked in first time headteachers, there is still enough evidence from studies into career transition to show that all headteachers find the challenge of the new job causes them to re-evaluate their image of self.

My research in this field demonstrates the key issues for the preparation of first-time headteachers are the formation of attitudes and values and the need for differentiated

development activities according to previous experience, gender, ethnicity and age. Meanwhile, the early stages of headship are accompanied by feelings of surprise, isolation and loneliness. Secondly, there is common need to divest previous attributes and behaviours in favour of new ones more appropriate to the demands of headship resulting in a period of cognitive dissonance in relation to understanding self. The evidence tends to demonstrate changed behaviour patterns by those moving into headship that frequently affects personal and social life, particularly for those who find themselves to be in a more challenging position than they had anticipated when applying for the job.

The Organizational Dimension

The organizational dimension, largely informed by socialization theory, highlights issues relating to understanding the culture of the organization, including recognizing the influence of the previous incumbent, and encouraging the exploration of alternative structures and systems as the new headteacher begins to influence the culture of the school. Central in these issues is the need for acceptance and the support of the existing staff, particularly the more senior members.

The Occupational Dimension

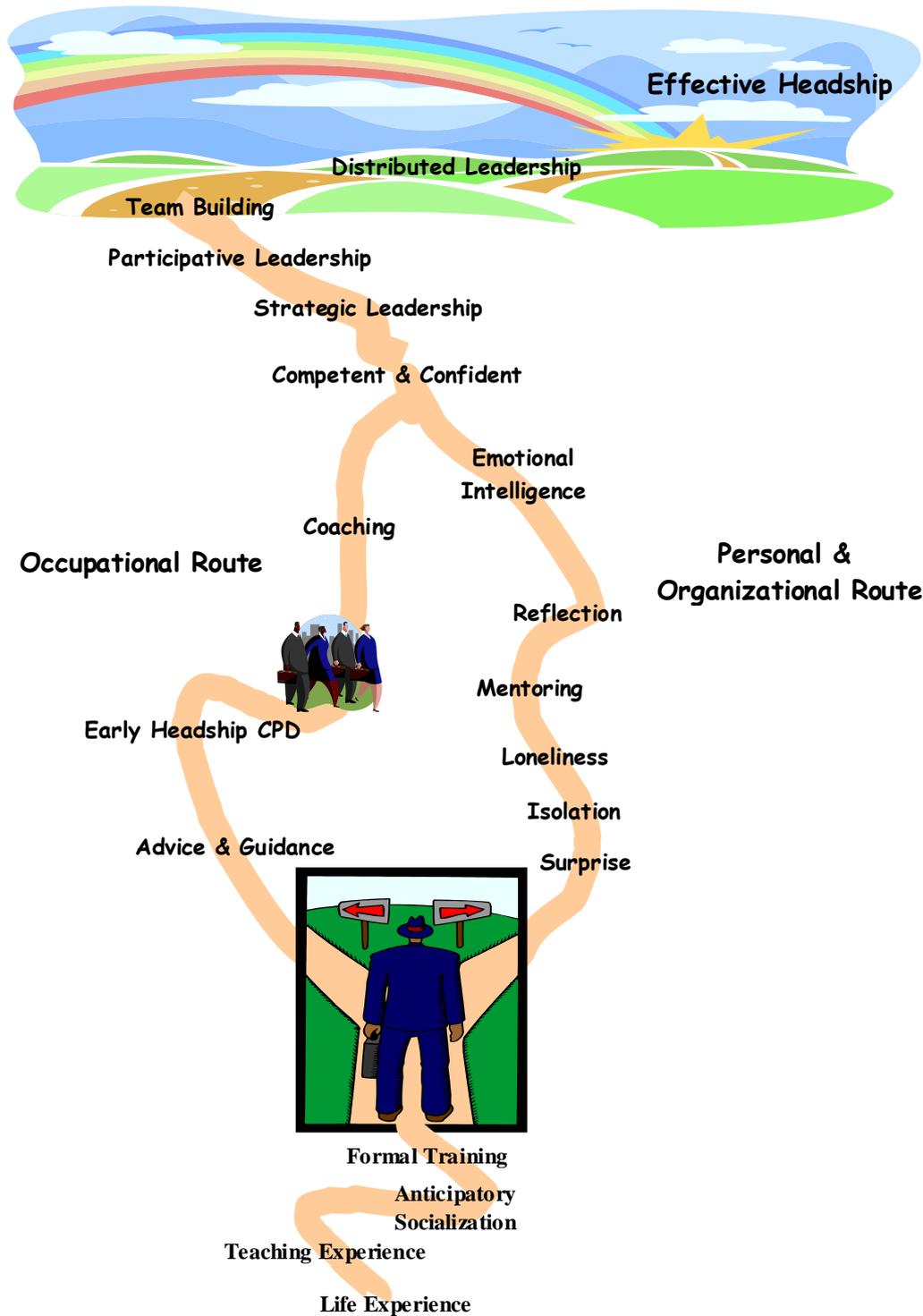
The occupational dimension focuses on the generic issues relating to the adaptation required by the aspirant headteacher to become effective in post. This includes the development of a range of skills in the preparation stage, with the probable need for differentiation according to the phase or type of school, and for that preparation to

provide a range of learning activities appropriate to the reality of the job in action. During accession and early stages of incumbency, there is a need for support systems that will allow beginning headteachers to explore their values in relation to the job as experienced and to recognize the staged development of their occupational identity. Such support systems are likely to include mentoring and networking with peers and more experienced colleagues to explore and resolve dilemmas and challenges emerging at a personal or organizational level.

The Routes to Effective Headship

The newly appointed headteacher thus has two routes to follow when first appointed, the occupational and the personal/organizational. The routes are pictured in the Figure 2.1 and clearly show the different issues to be faced before the first stage of successful headship is reached, the point where the incoming headteacher feels confident and competent in their new job. The occupational route is well populated, busy and closely focused on matching the incoming headteacher to the anticipated demands of the school system, whilst the personal and organizational route is lonely and indeterminate as the unique demands of the job and the school emerge. Both routes have to be followed, but it is only when those routes come together that the headteacher can become strategic. From that initial high point of competence and confidence those in search of effective headship strike out for the high plains of team working and distributed leadership which signify the desired destination of your travels.

Figure 2.1: The Routes to Effective Headship



Moving into Headship

Research into headship has demonstrated that few are prepared for the demands of the position to which they are appointed, with this statement holding true for second or subsequent headships. The nature of the challenge in such circumstances is clearly different, but there is ample evidence emerging to demonstrate that success in one school does not necessarily ensure success in a subsequent post. The experience of so called ‘super heads’ appointed to Fresh Start schools in England during the last days of the previous century provide a graphic example of the difficulties of transition from one headship to another, with only a couple of those originally appointed being able to effect real and lasting change in their new, challenging environment. Similarly recent research into second headships has demonstrated how difficult it is for a headteacher to be continually successful in subsequent schools (MacKenzie, 2005). First time headteachers, meanwhile, are shocked when they begin both by the intensity of the job and the relentless demands on them to address challenging and seemingly intractable problems (see, for example, Draper and McMichael, 1998; Daresh and Male, 2000). Typical of the participants in my surveys into beginning headship over the last few years are the comments of two primary school headteachers who point out that “none of us is prepared for headship” and “no amount of training prepares you for the actual total responsibility of the job”.

So what are the essential differences that make headship unique in its demands?

The first is the individual exposure provided by the combination of legal, systemic and societal demands that sets headteachers apart from others in formal decision-making positions within the school system. As the symbolic and pragmatic leader

within the school community the headteacher thus makes the transition from anonymity or vicarious responsibility in their previous job to personal accountability in their new one. This type of accountability is not as evident in other organizations or school systems across the world, thus making comparisons difficult.

Second is the requirement to make the mid-career transition to a job that bears very little resemblance to initial training. Although there are some claims that the experiences of teaching can contribute to success in headship, there are enormous parts of the job for which there are no discernible transferable skills (Draper and McMichael, 1998). Similarly, responses from participants in my research demonstrate they consider being a headteacher to be very different from being a teacher. All leadership and management processes involve the achievement of objectives with and through others and are thus second order activities. The learning experiences needed for this type of behaviour are not evident in initial training, nor have they been a central feature of teaching where typically most change has been effected through first order relationships. Until the advent of formal qualifications for headship prospective headteachers tended to learn these new skills and required behaviours through in-service education, particularly through work experience.

Third is the need to assimilate yourself into a school where not only are you the new member of staff, but are also the one who is viewed as the pivotal figure in the future success of the institution. There is no quarter offered to beginning headteachers who are expected, and have often been appointed, to add to the quality of the school. All too often no opportunity is offered to take stock, to become familiar with the particular circumstances and issues that are important to your new school community

and to evaluate a range of options for action. This is unfortunate as we know only too well that decisions made in haste can be repented at leisure. Very few people, however, seem prepared to give the new headteacher time to demonstrate their capability and expect some early evidence of their readiness for the job. The longer you go without that providing the evidence the quicker the honeymoon period of headship will evaporate. This is an unrealistic expectation and is in contradiction to the evidence base that suggests the early days in any new leadership post are about 'making sense' of the new situation (Gabarro, 1987; Reeves, Moos, and Forrest, 1998; Weindling, 2000), a period of transition successfully summed up by one of my respondents: "it is only after about 6 months in the job that you begin to appreciate what you don't know".

Fourth is the need to overcome the feelings of isolation and inadequacy that accompany headship. Making the transition to headship requires a transformation in views of self and of coming to terms of how others perceive you. The process can be deemed complete when you feel both comfortable and confident in the position, a process that can take months or years depending on the local circumstances you find in the school to which you are appointed. Headteachers perceive themselves to be most effective when they have reconciled their image of themselves at work with their personal self image. This is a psychodynamic approach that is best described as the reconciliation of situational self with substantial self (Nias, 1989). In layman's terms this is when you are acting in similar fashion both at work and at home (or play). In the early stages of the first headship beginning headteachers often search for an identity that will convey their authority and often model their behaviour to mirror others they have seen in that role. Subsequently they adapt and modify this behaviour

in order that it is aligned more closely to their beliefs, values, thinking styles and their preferred behaviours (Mahony, 2004). Those entering their second or subsequent headships are often more confident in their sense of self, yet can still find themselves struggling to sustain their preferred patterns of behaviour in this new social system. The processes of adaptation and modification that follow are the reconciliation of their situational self, frequently based on role adoption, and their substantial self, which is their natural way of behaving. In other words, effective headteachers are able to act and think at work in their preferred individual (and sometimes idiosyncratic) ways. Some people believe that the substantial self is formed through affective individual learning experiences and processes that are relatively impervious to change. This cannot be true, however, as substantial self is almost always affected by work situations and the headship may be a major factor in the re-alignment of personal self-image. That is not the main issue, however, as it is the reconciliation of the two images that is evident in effective headteachers.

These four factors represent powerful claims for the unique nature of the post and do provide reasons for considering the transition to headship as being of a different order and intensity than to formal leadership in other occupations and school systems. Despite these claims, however, many similarities can still be seen between headship and formal leadership and it is that knowledge, coupled with focused research into beginning headship, which allows us to draw some parallels and to anticipate many of the issues that will accompany the career transition to headship.

The Transition to Formal Leadership

Aspects of socialization theory are most commonly used to explain the succession to formal leadership and Barnett (2001) points to the way this knowledge base has been touted as a means of distinguishing between the aspects of personal development that relate to joining an organization and adopting an occupational identity. Most commentators make use of Merton's (1968) definition of socialization:

The process by which people selectively acquire the values, attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge – in short the culture – current in groups to which they are, or seek to become, a member.

'Socialization', however, is one of the vaguest terms employed in the vocabulary of the social sciences and has included descriptors drawn from a number of other disciplines, including psychology, sociology and anthropology (Brezinha, 1994). Merton's definition corresponds mostly to social situations, has been interpreted narrowly in examining issues relating to entering headship and is described as having two aspects: 'professional' and 'organizational' (Weindling, 2000). Organizational socialization is defined as the process by which one learns the knowledge, values, and behaviours required to perform a specific role within a particular organization (Schein, 1988). 'Professional socialization', however, attempts to describe the process which involves learning what it is to be a headteacher, becoming familiar with the real and potential power and authority associated with the position and adopting the mantle of 'boss' within the school community. A person begins to learn this prior to taking up the job, from their own experience of schooling and teaching, as well as through formal courses, but organizational socialization can only, by definition, begin after taking up the post.

Professional Socialization

Whilst useful as a descriptor of the process of adaptation to an occupational identity, particularly to a senior role in a social organization, 'professional socialization' is an imprecise definition by which to describe the transition to effective headship. Attempts to explore the development and support needed for the transition to headship have drawn on a number of other occupations where high-level decision-making in relation to other humans is a requisite part of the job. Daresh (1995), for example, explored law, medicine and training for the priesthood, searching for possible lessons for the development and support of future principals in the USA. Eraut (1994) talked of professional knowledge and competence, but used a wider field of alternative occupations, taking account of what he calls 'semi-professions' which do not have the range of traits associated with the so called 'ideal' professions of medicine and law. Studies such as these remained inappropriate to headship for several reasons, however, principally on the grounds that until the introduction of the NPQH licensure scheme there had been no formal requirement to prepare for headship and, furthermore, it is a mid-career development that requires a different range of knowledge and behaviours than those needed to enter teaching as a career. In contrast, members of the 'ideal' professions undertake vocationally oriented studies prior to entering the job as do most, if not all, of the occupations that could claim to be professions. Whilst it is possible to draw some parallels with other careers, the fundamental difference is that headteachers do not necessarily begin their career with headship in mind. All pre-qualified doctors, for example, expect to become doctors in time and so can manage the transition into the job in line with the development of

their knowledge base and competence, whereas few may have anticipated becoming managers of health care practices.

Weindling (2000), however, makes use of professional socialization to describe the transition to headship and argues that it can be learnt, at least in part, prior to taking up role. This has been described as a process of 'anticipatory socialization' whereby the prospective postholder prepares themselves through gathering social and technical experiences that will qualify them for the role (Taylor, 1968; Greenfield, 1985; Eraut, 1994). Most discussion of anticipatory socialization is posited on the notion that this is a deliberate process by upwardly mobile aspirants, but Merton draws attention to this process having the propensity to be both conscious and unconscious. In his discussion of anticipatory socialization, he states:

Conducive to this stage of anticipatory socialization is the structural circumstances of what can be called role gradations. The individual moves more or less continuously through a sequence of statuses and associated roles, each of which does not differ greatly from the one which has gone before. (Merton, 1968: 239)

These gradations serve as informal preparation that may go unnoticed by the individual performer at the time. In short, it may be an unconscious process that brings the individual to a position where there is a high likelihood of acquiring some of the values and orientations associated with new, but related roles and statuses (Greenfield 1977). Although Greenfield's work at that time was not tested empirically, the hypothesis bears a striking similarity to the way in which teachers pass through a number of graded roles on route to headship (Daresh and Male, 2000) and may go some way to explaining how some beginning headteachers appear to have assimilated a comprehensive range of technical and personal skills and capabilities

without necessarily engaging a formal programme of occupationally focused training and development. Whilst it is inevitably true that some teachers enter the school system with ambitions to be a headteacher, and thereby systematically prepare themselves in terms of knowledge and experience appropriate to the anticipated job, there is nothing inherent in their preparation as teachers that would lead to that conclusion. Not all of the qualities that make them successful as a teacher, therefore, will automatically transfer to headship.

Use of the notion of professional socialization as the theory base that explains the succession to headship has an attractiveness, however, as it can be demonstrated to cover the periods of formation, accession and the early days of incumbency, thus covering the period prior to achieving an occupational identity as well as the period of situational adjustment when newcomers take on the characteristics required by the situation in which they participate, some of which are contingent on earlier life experiences (Becker, 1964). Greenfield (1985) provides a useful perspective on the pre-entry stage of the career transition when he makes a distinction between the 'technical' and 'moral' socialization undertaken in preparation. He defines moral socialization as the development of attitudes, values and beliefs required for adequate performance in role, whilst technical socialization is concerned with the development of knowledge and behaviour that reflect technical, conceptual and social skills and activities associated with role enactment. The combination of these two socialization processes, he argues, provide individuals with the knowledge, ability and dispositions needed for performance in role.

Organizational Socialization

The discussion conducted on the transition to headship through socialization has focused, so far, on the processes by which the individual comes to terms with the demands of a job – in this case as a headteacher. An over-emphasis on formal leaders as single, self-conscious and self-actualized people, however, runs the risk of missing major components of the succession process (Weaver-Hart, 1993). There is a specificity of headship that moves it beyond the generic field in that each appointment is to a school, rather than a system. The dynamics of becoming a part of that organization are complex and interactive; to take on the mantle of formal leader for the same organization is even more complicated. Socialization theory, in this instance organizational socialization, has again been used to explain the process and to assist newcomers with effecting successful transitions to the job as formal leader of the school.

A large body of work exists on this aspect of the socialization process where previous writers have suggested stage theories to explain aspects of transition to the job experienced by formal school leaders. Weaver-Hart (1993), for example, made an extensive theoretical and empirical study of principals in the USA entering their new job that illustrated the range of influences that shaped the position. In completing the study, she drew on the concept of organizational socialization to examine the effects of leaders and organizations from many directions, recognizing that leader successors are newcomers who must be integrated into existing groups, validated by social processes, and granted legitimacy by subordinates and superiors before they can have significant impacts on actions taken by others. Her work allowed her to emphasize the two-way interaction between the new leader and the organization and to delineate

a three stage process of Encounter, Adjustment and Stabilization. The encounter, or arrival, stage begins immediately after appointment and requires much learning by the new leaders of the social setting in the school. The second stage, of adjustment, involves the task of fitting in. The new leader must reach an accommodation with the work role, the people with whom he or she interacts and the existing school culture. More stable patterns begin to emerge in the third stage by which time new leaders would have resolved conflicts about how their approach fits into the organization and will have located themselves within the context.

Whilst there is much to be learned from the Weaver-Hart study, there are differences between the nature of headship in England and the nature of principalship in the USA which must be considered. Headteachers have much more in the way of direct responsibility than their American counterparts. Principals are appointed to a system, the school district, and have a direct, upward line-management relationship with the superintendent. It is not uncommon to find a principal being appointed to a school by the superintendent and for the same principal to serve at that level in several schools within the same district. Governance is at a district, rather than school level, with an elected school board taking responsibility for all schools in the district. These governance and management structures contrast with those to be found in England which is far more localised. English headteachers in state maintained schools, for example, often find it difficult to nominate their 'superior' in the system and when asked to choose are torn between the governing body and the chief education officer of the local authority. The consequence is that many of the issues referred to by Weaver-Hart regarding relationships with 'superiors' are only either tangentially

relevant or largely irrelevant in using her work to understand the transition to headship.

In pointing out, however, that first-time principals experience a double socialization experience – professional socialization to school leadership and organizational socialization to their immediate work setting (Weaver-Hart, 1993) – she does provide us with an important lens by which we can view the transition to headship. The essential difference is the way in which the incoming principal or headteacher is viewed by those with whom they work most closely. To make the transition successfully the incoming headteacher must either satisfy the expectations of the school community or be able to adjust and shape their new colleagues' expectations through changing the criteria by which they are to be judged.

Van Maanen (1978) demonstrates that individuals, organizations and systems apply a number of tactics, unconsciously or consciously, to influence the integration of new members. The tactics employed by the incoming individual are related to their perceived status in the organization, with those destined for the formal leadership position being placed in the unique situation of both influencing and being influenced as they make the transition. This recognition leads, in turn, to the identification of different stages of capability, often defined by a period of time, according to the way in which the individual and the existing social system make mutual adjustments to accommodate each other's preferences. Typically the collective that is the organization or system seeks to assimilate the newcomer into its existing mores and patterns of behaviour. Acceptance of such a custodial response would lead to few changes in behaviour as the inherited past would continue to dominate at both the

individual and organizational level, leaving the new leader looking much the same as their predecessor (Weaver-Hart, 1993). This, however, is the natural response of the collective which tends, as a social group, to be conservative in nature. A new leader with a different perspective, belief or objectives may seek change and innovation, however. Leaders appointed on such a mandate may work either within existing systems and values, seeking only tactical changes to achieve higher levels of success or they may seek to effect radical change, rejecting many of the established norms and even redefining the ends as well as the means. Whichever approach is taken there will be a different set of learning experiences for the leader as they enter the job, make adjustments to their new circumstances and establish themselves in their new role. There is no universal truth to the way in which this process will manifest itself and no specific route map available prior to taking up post. There are general rules of engagement and tools of analysis available, however, which can provide greater understanding of the individual position during the transition period.

Factors relating to the transition to formal leadership have been placed into three categories of Context, Content and Sociality through the work of Jones (1986). He made use of socialization tactics identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) who had established the paired comparisons of collective or individual; formal or informal; sequential or random; fixed in time or variable; serial or disjunctive; investiture or divestiture. By making use of these paired comparisons in relation to the context, content and social aspects of leadership succession, it is possible for a new leader to map their specific circumstance and predict some of the experiences they are likely to meet during the early stages of their induction (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Socialization Tactics

Context	Collective	✓	Individual
	Formal	✓	Informal
Content	Sequential	✓	Random
	Fixed	✓	Variable
Sociality	Serial	✓	Disjunctive
	Investiture	✓	Divestiture

In terms of the context, Jones (1986) meant that the transition to the leadership position is either collective or individual and formal or informal. The content (the learning required) is either sequential or random and fixed or variable, while the social processes are either serial (with role models) or disjunctive and involve investiture or divestiture. These three categories of socialization tactics can be applied to all stages of the transition to formal leadership, including the period of anticipatory socialization.

Those preparing for leadership or entering a new organization or system, therefore, may do so either *collectively* as a group of people or *individually*. Individuals develop their capability, the range of skills and personal qualities on which they draw, *formally* or *informally*. Where the preparation and/or induction is conducted collectively similar messages can be imparted which can shape their future response as leaders to organizationally based issues. Alternatively, group preparation and induction can result in the individual members being able to draw on a collective authority that allows them to sustain individual values and beliefs within the new social system. Nationally or locally, therefore, it may be possible for the appropriate agency to prepare and induct new leaders in such a way as to diminish the custodial effect of the organization. Collective preparation and induction can thus impart a

systemic need over the [latent] organizational desire and we can see evidence of this in licensure programmes, such as NPQH, and with induction programmes run nationally, such as HIP, or locally by local authorities, independent trusts or the diocese. We can even see an occupational dimension to this with regard to professional associations and bodies, each of whom have a perspective on their members' behaviour and have established codes of practice and accompanying disciplinary procedures. An example of this type of group coherence can often be seen amongst those who have worked together in their development towards headship, such as members of a NPQH cohort. Here the members can often be seen to maintain contact with each other or meet regularly, using the strength of their relationship to share common issues of concern which help them to resolve individual issues. Headship is ultimately an individual occupation, however, and the newly appointed headteacher will be subject more frequently to the latent power of the organization or school system to socialize them than if they had joined in a group. Here the danger is that the new arrival has no common reference point internally. The message here in preparing to enter headship is fairly straightforward, therefore, in that the newly appointed headteacher needs a support network that extends beyond the school community to which they are appointed.

Similarly the induction may be formal or informal. In other words, the organization or system may have a planned series of events (*formal*), although this is seldom the case and most leadership transition is undertaken informally. Most studies of early headship show planned induction for headteachers of state maintained schools to be spasmodic in intensity, with no comparative data available for the independent sector. During the 1980s, for example, a major study of early headship in England found just

a quarter of newly appointed headteachers receiving any formal induction, inevitably run by the local authority, lasting more than one day (Weindling and Earley, 1987). By the middle of the next decade there has been some improvement as a result of two government funded schemes to support the early stages of headship. The first of these, the Headteacher Mentoring Scheme, made a significant impact in the two years it ran before the funding was effectively withdrawn in order to support more general leadership and management development activities (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington and Weindling, 1993). By the end of the decade, however, the majority of first time headteachers had registered for Headlamp, a government sponsored induction programme that supported their development during the first two years in post. With most LEAs registered as providers, headteachers in state maintained schools tended to receive a formal programme of induction as LEAs were the dominant force in the market for the development of beginning headteachers. A subsequent review of headteacher induction was critical of LEAs' efforts, however, indicating that no programmes were considered to be 'very good' (Office for Standards in Education, 2002). LEA-induction programmes, they found, failed to differentiate effectively for headteachers from different phases and where there was good practice it was inconsistently applied. Furthermore, engagement by beginning headteachers was variable. Whilst all LEAs provided basic information about the Headlamp scheme there was not much monitoring and evaluation of individual headteacher's spending or of its impact on the headteacher's capacity to take the school forward. About a quarter of headteachers had made no firm decisions about how to spend Headlamp money to best effect, with many reporting a lack of information about providers and courses. Consequently most headteachers spent the Headlamp money on a mixed programme of support and courses, from LEAs, universities and private consultants.

When Headlamp was withdrawn in 2003 and replaced with the Headteacher Induction Programme (HIP) the situation actually worsened for headteachers in maintained schools in England as LEAs were no longer able to be providers, the NCSL instead appointing just 20 providers nationally (later reduced to 12). The consequence was that not only did local authorities typically no longer support first-time headteachers, but they also find it difficult to support the induction of any headteacher new to their school system. With such a high portion of their overall expenditure having to be delegated directly to schools, local authorities found it difficult to provide some services, even where they were statutory responsibilities (such as headteacher induction).

In many instances, therefore, the quality of the induction processes for LEAs were questionable with a tendency for the administrative and legal responsibilities to dominate the agenda at the expense of personal development and organizational change. It was a 'sink or swim' process of socialization for most in this regard. Good practice, where it was seen, included good early contacts, good introductory meetings, support from link advisers and clear, relevant identification of needs that were specific to the headteacher and the school. Where established, networks of headteachers, particularly those meeting in phase groups, provided valuable support on the more wide-ranging aspects of headship. Link advisers' support was also valuable in most LEAs and in all phases, often because the focus of the visit was jointly agreed and specific to the headteacher's and the school's needs. Whilst these criteria provide a template for a model of transition, the status, funding and intent of employers has generally meant newly appointed headteachers have been forced to manage their own learning through the early period of their new career. As my

research has shown, most have successfully achieved this task in an informal manner including, in the vast majority of those appointed to headship before the introduction of the compulsory NPQH in England, managing their own preparation informally. Whilst their resourcefulness and resilience is to be applauded, this is no way to run a national system. Given the lack of intermediary agencies, however, this may be the only route to successfully managed transitions to headship in England for the foreseeable future, especially as HIP has had a troubled birth and is still struggling to achieve coherence at the time of writing.

The management of learning in relation to the content, or appropriate body of knowledge, needed during the transition to formal leadership varies according to the type of job. Where events are predictable, appropriate knowledge can be imparted at the most opportune time (*sequential*). Conversely, the situation may be so fluid, ambiguous and rapidly changing that the induction experience becomes informal and *random*. The timetable for the successful transition may also be *fixed* or *variable*. Some leadership positions, for example, are probationary with tenure judged on capability being demonstrated during a given time frame. Principals in the Chicago Public Schools, for example, have a four year renewable contract under the terms of their 1988 Reform Act which means they have to be judged as effective or capable by the third year at least if they are to retain their post. From what we know of headship we can conclude the post is more likely to be random in nature and variable in length. Incoming headteachers will invariably be exposed to knowledge on a needs-to-know basis, with such a potential outcome sitting well within the ‘sense-making’ period illustrated above. Few patterns are predictable in the first year of tenure whilst the newly appointed headteacher is building local knowledge, with subsequent years

being affected principally by the vagaries of policy makers. In the absence of a probationary period or fixed term appointments, the new headteacher's transition to success is again subject to local circumstance. The consequence is that headteacher learning is largely informal and random, with no clear indication or expectation of when the 'honeymoon' period will be over and the harsh reality of judgement will be made against them. Learning processes for new members are best supported by experienced practitioners, therefore, particularly those who also understand the pressures and demands of headship. Whilst incumbent members of the organization and system are an undoubted source of support in this learning it must be remembered they are already a part of those social processes and one of the key decisions of your headship will be whether you want to go with the flow or change the school. Making sense often requires an external perspective and colleagues in similar positions, but in different school systems, are often best placed to give you impartial advice and counsel.

The need for a different perspective can be also seen, for example, in the socialization process operated by a school community. When following on from a strong role model, the social pressure (sociality) requires the new member to become a part of a serial socialization process; where no significant role models exist the new member may build a whole new role. The school community may, for example, be seeking to continue a pattern of success and would be anxious to appoint a headteacher who would continue in much the same manner as their predecessor. This would be a *serial* appointment, seeking similar attributes and behaviour from the incoming headteacher, whereas a school community seeking change would be making a *disjunctive* appointment as it sought to break with the behaviours of the previous incumbent. It

would not be unusual, for example, to find a school where either the funding agency or the governing body sought change, whilst the remainder of the school community expected more of the same or vice-versa. Finding the intent and then achieving the appropriate balance will be the key skill of the newly appointed headteacher, a situation compounded by the fact that you bring your own perspective, aspirations and intent to the job. Most people setting sights on a headship have a sense of their ideal and the early days of their incumbency are characterized by the possible erosion of this idealism. This is identified in the discussion about the stages of headship arising from various studies of the job as a period of reconciliation when that idealism is either sustained or adapted to meet needs and circumstance, something that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Social pressures may also require that the new member divest old identities and concepts of self (*divestiture*) or reaffirm and reinforce the existing self-concept (*investiture*). When the new occupation offers little challenge to their skills and values their existing sense of self, the new member is reinforced and affirmed. When the demands of the new position are such that there is a need to make substantial adjustments to the new member's self concept and their professional identity is challenged, *divestiture* occurs. It is interesting to hear the views of serving headteachers in this regard who talk of losing a sense of identity, being treated and judged differently both by colleagues and the wider school community (Daresh and Male, 2000). Research into Scottish schools also shows how incoming headteachers experience the need to relinquish from some previous practices, even when they had been successful in previous work situations, and establish new practices in their new job. These detachments and attachments were weighted as gains or losses accordingly

(Draper and McMichael, 1998). More information on the gains and losses associated with detaching from the previous job and attaching to the new one can be found in Chapter 6.

Adapting these aspects of the socialization process to the work situation immediately demonstrates the potential for a large range of responses from the organization itself and from the attendant organizations in the social system. Headteachers are generally appointed to the school (the organization) to follow a previous incumbent who may have been a positive or negative role model and one who may have left for a multitude of reasons (e.g. promoted, sacked, retired, dead) with an accompanying image and memory. Consequently they may be expected to do nothing, something or everything in terms of style, social interactions and leading change. New headteachers can also experience disjunctive socialization if they differ significantly from the characteristics of those commonly appointed to the position. Women appointed to be head of a secondary school, for example, or the appointment of someone from an ethnic minority to the position of headteacher may have to negotiate their way through ambiguity with less support as there have been few similar role models and sources of support (Valverde, 1980; Shakeshaft, 1987; Ortiz and Marshall, 1988; Scheurich, 1995; Coleman, 1996).

The demands of the larger system also impact on the expectations of the new headteacher, with national and local government both contributing to the creation of the environment that determines both the means and the ends of the school process. Employers are usually keen to ensure that administrative routines are understood, with much in the way of their sponsorship for induction processes favouring those ends

rather than wider issues. Central government in England has made a significant impact on the school process in the last quarter of the twentieth century through a raft of legislation and the introduction of the genre of the market and a national system of inspection that has become the principal enforcement mechanism for government policies which, as has already been argued in Chapter 1, largely determined the management structure and process of maintained schools.

The existence of such a wide range of intervening variables makes it extremely difficult to predict the induction and development needs of a new headteacher. Some issues are personal and relate to the development of their self-concept and self-image in their quest for an occupational identity. Some issues are specific to the context of the school and are set largely within a local social system that does not lend itself to generalization in terms of determining a framework of preparation and support on a national scale. Finally, some of the agenda of national government may have stifled creativity at the local level, producing a custodial orientation whereby innovation is curtailed by the need to ensure minimum standards of performance (Jones, 1986). New headteachers face issues of divestiture, therefore, as they realign their previous experience and expertise with the demands of their new job, requiring them to have some personal support in preparation and through the early stages of incumbency.

Adapting to the Demands of the New Job

The majority of headteachers have managed their own preparation and induction to the point where they have achieved their occupational identity and this is still the likelihood for the foreseeable future. Even with the introduction of formal licensure

schemes preparation and induction processes are insufficiently developed to provide appropriate support to headteachers as they enter their schools. With the exception of the New Visions programme run by the NCSL, induction processes in England still fail to provide the opportunity for incoming headteachers to explore the personal, organizational and systemic challenges within non-judgemental and/or mutually supportive environments. Research into this aspect of headship demonstrates the centrality of such relationships in establishing effective support systems. Consequently learning to be the new formal leader of the organization has been “dependent on the mix of people, issues, power and events that happen to coincide” (Weaver-Hart, 1993) rather than an understood and planned process. The process of preparation and induction need not be a hostage to fortune, however, as we know the key elements of the transition process.

The single key factor that determines the success of the transition to headship is the willingness of the newcomer to adapt to their new circumstances in their quest to meet the needs of the school community they are to serve. This is best supported by knowledge of theories for action that allow for the unexpected and unknown to be evaluated before decisions are made and that allow for alternative solutions to challenges to be developed, rather than pre-conceived responses to perceived situations. This is the true art of formal leadership, to be able to create what I call decision-space. This is the skill to examine and explore issues for what they are, rather than what we expect them to be. To be successful in this regard you have to be prepared to deal with uncertainty, a practice to which we have not been conditioned as Anglo cultures militate against this kind of introspection, instead expecting firm and speedy decision-making from our leaders. This is a very personal issue and the one

that can cause a great deal of unrest and discomfort in the early part of the accession to post.

The first aspects of the transition that typically emerge on the personal and organizational routes are surprise, isolation and loneliness. My research and that of others active in this field indicates that such feelings and conditions are best countered through discourse with others who understand the pressures and challenges of headship, followed by a growing capability to be reflective and, ultimately, to become emotionally intelligent.

Talking to others who understand your situation is usually referred to as mentoring. This can operate at a number of levels, including at a personal level (in conjunction with a family member or close friend), collegial (within the organization), with peers (other beginning headteachers) or with seasoned veterans (with or without direct knowledge of your school). Mentoring is not to be confused with coaching, which is the act of teaching someone how to do something 'correctly', as it is an interactive relationship which will allow you to examine issues and challenges in the search for possible solutions. My favourite definition is provided in the evaluation of the Headteacher Mentoring Scheme (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington and Weindling, 1993). They describe mentoring as a generic term, covering a variety of activities, all aimed at providing support for new entrants to a job. The list of such activities includes advising, counselling, coaching and training with the processes to be both 'non-evaluative and non-prescriptive'. In this definition the onus is on postholders resolving their own problems and issues within their organizational context, thus providing the opportunity to be specifically focused rather than contingent on a set of

generic competences. The advice and counselling received through a mentoring relationship thus provides support for the issues arising from the personal and organizational route to effective headship, whilst coaching and training are issues for the occupational route.

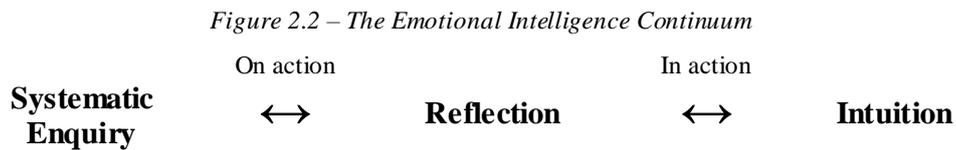
Mentoring was identified as the major support mechanism by respondents to my national survey, with nearly half (643 serving headteachers) identifying this in an open question as the most effective mode of support during the first year of a new headship and even more identifying the process as being just as important through the second year. It is important to note that mentoring does not need to be supplied by just one person and, although you may choose an official mentor or have one appointed to you, you are likely to turn to a number of sources in order to make sense of your new reality. We will look at some possible mentoring models in more depth in Chapter 6, but suffice it for now to say that mentoring is clearly the single most effective mode of support as you move through the early stages of the personal and organizational route of a new headship.

Ultimately you should be aiming for self-sufficiency in terms of resolving challenges and issues and this is where reflection and emotional intelligence are desired behaviours. Reflection is the art of thinking through issues and developing possible solutions. There are two aspects to reflection: *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action*. Most of us engage in reflection on action where we go over previous events in our mind or explore possible solutions to pending issues, but at all times in moments away from the cause of our thoughts. These can be deliberate thinking sessions or the invasive version which has you daydreaming or, worse still, awake at

nights. Reflection on action is a considered process, therefore, even when it does interfere with your concentration or beauty sleep. Reflection in action is a much more dynamic and immediate process, however, where possible solutions are played out against certain criteria during the course of the actual incident. Confronted, say by an angry parent, you need to think on your feet and check possible responses against your preferred code of conduct and the values you hold in relation to the behaviour you witness. Most headteachers I know, for example, would not respond to aggression with aggression as they hold values that correspond to civilized behaviour. They would be seeking to do two things – to defuse the tension in the situation (thus buying decision space) and to evaluate their likely responses so as not to compromise their principles.

Which brings me to the notion of Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI became very popular around the beginning of the new millennium and was touted frequently as a leadership quality of major proportions. Unfortunately EI is one of those two word buzz-phrases that have become popular in educational jargon that mean everything whilst telling us very little. In other words the concept is all-embracing, yet we do not have clear guidelines as to how to get it or develop it. Generally all we know is that effective leaders have a high Emotional Quotient (EQ) and are intelligent in the use of emotions. EI corresponds very well to two of Gardner's models of multiple intelligences, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1997). People who know themselves very well have a high level of intrapersonal intelligence, whilst people who understand the motives and actions of others are deemed to have high levels of interpersonal intelligence. EI can be represented as a continuum, however, that draws upon individual ability to understand and react appropriately to any given

social situation. Some people do this intuitively, whilst others prefer to engage in systematic analysis, with these two aspects representing the polar extremes of the EI continuum. Central to the continuum is the practice of reflection which, in turn, displays two dimensions of reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. The continuum I have described is represented in Figure 2.2.



The key to the model is to understand the process of reflection. As I have shown above, reflection-on-action is an after the event activity, when the intensity of the original event has receded, whilst reflection-in-action describes the capability to make judgements and decisions during the course of the event. In order to undertake reflection-in-action in an effective manner the individual must have a set of core values and beliefs that allow them to compare and contrast the possible effectiveness of various actions whilst still engaged in the original event. Hopefully you can now see why intuition, a seemingly unconscious process, is at one end of the continuum and systematic enquiry is at the other end. Intuition is an instinctive process which can generally be deconstructed at a later stage by reflecting on action and invariably displays adherence to a set of values and beliefs which, in this instance, are applied at a sub-conscious level in much the same way as some grooved physical activities can be undertaken.

The problem with EI is when the continuum is offered as a hierarchy of leadership behaviour, with intuition and reflection-in-action deemed to be higher order activities.

Where this occurs it is a reflection of society rather than an indictment of the individual. Western societies, as I have shown, generally favour instinctive decision-making in their leaders and reify those who can make decisions quickly, particularly if those decisions lead to effective action. The effective leader, however, is one who makes effective decisions and is one who can often create the necessary ‘decision-space’ in order to consider a range of actions. The ineffective leader is the one who makes a decision in haste and then attempts to justify the action even when the outcome can be shown to be of limited use. There is no need, therefore, for individuals to chastise themselves if they engage in systematic enquiry or reflection-on-action as their preferred mode of leadership action. They are still working on the EI continuum, reconciling their values and beliefs with others in the pursuit of effective decision-making.

The ability to create decision space is contingent on your willingness to engage with the unknown and to do this effectively you may have to review your theories for action. A wide-ranging investigation into the formulation of effective theories for action for increasing professional effectiveness undertaken over 30 years ago is still relevant in this regard. The enquiry established that individuals prefer to establish and sustain a number of governing variables that allow them to establish a degree of constancy in their environment (Argyris and Schön, 1974). Various strategies are then employed to keep the value of those variables within a range that is acceptable to them which frequently, they conclude, results in what is termed ‘Model I’ behaviour. Model I behaviours are posited on individual design and management of the environment, with self-protection a key motive. In establishing and maintaining such an environment the individual engages in a number of activities that are manifested as

defensive and political behaviours with a consequent restriction on innovation and creativity (Argyris and Schön, 1974). If the individual is the lead person in that environment then the organizational effectiveness is similarly affected.

Headship is characterized, however, by conflict and challenge, much of which emanates from other individuals in the social system who may resist being controlled and may seek to influence decision-making processes. As discussed in the previous chapter, the willingness of colleagues in Anglo societies to submit to individual authority becomes less as their own status and standing grows. The consequence for headteachers is that they will have a reduced capability to control the range of governing variables and may find their own values questioned in their new role whereas in their previous experience they were more capable of sustaining those values and variables (Argyris and Schön, 1974). Their response should be to adopt Model II behaviours, whereby they seek to design environments where other participants can develop responses to the various challenges faced by the organization and can gain experience of making things happen. In such organizations tasks are controlled jointly and protection of the individual and each other becomes a joint enterprise, with the organization and the individuals within it oriented toward growth.

The attractiveness of Model II is its acceptance of a non-linear environment. Its application to headship is relevant given an understanding of organizational dynamics, but it becomes even more relevant when considering the extent and rate of change that has become a feature of school systems. Occupational competence as a headteacher in this context requires the development of an individual theory of practice, consisting of the combination of practical technique and interpersonal capability. Headteachers,

therefore, should be exemplars of Model II behaviours, a challenge that may prove difficult if their previous experience (and success) was posited on Model I behaviours.

Assuming the argument for Model II behaviours to be acceptable, even desirable, for formal school leadership, help and guidance for making the transition are deemed variable, according to personal circumstances, but are usually based on the principles of effective professional learning which:

1. is based on personally caused experience;
2. is usually produced by expressing and examining dilemmas;
3. values individuality and expression of conflicts;
4. must be guided by an instructor who has more faith in the participants than they have in themselves;
5. who recognizes the limits of participants' learning methodologies;
6. whose idea of rationality integrates feelings and ideas, and;
7. who can encourage spontaneity. (Argyris and Schön, 1974: 98).

In Conclusion

The transition to formal leadership will require you to travel two routes, the occupational and the personal/organizational, with each presenting different, but complementary, challenges. The resolution of the personal and organizational challenges, typically exposed during the first year of tenure, should allow you to reconcile your skills and talents with the demands of the new job. This may mean you need to divest previous behaviours and develop new skills as you seek to manage this

transition. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that you will need to build upon your previous learning, gained through occupationally focused development and/or life experiences, in order to make sense of your new environment. The best support for that growth is, firstly, to recognize the need to think differently as the formal leader and to remain open to a range of choices in the resolution of challenges and opportunities that will emerge now you are in charge. Subsequently you will need to develop your capacity to be reflective in your quest to become emotional intelligent. When those attributes become part of your normal mode of operation you have reached the launch pad of effectiveness as the formal leader. At that point you can become strategic and begin to build the type of leadership capacity in others that supports high performance. You will, in short, have reached the high plains of leadership.

To adapt and learn from these messages from formal leadership in general headteachers will need to develop support systems that will allow them to make the transition from licensed to effective practitioner. In the absence of systemic forces to assist this transition, sadly still the case more often than not, this process will require a good deal of self-management involving mentoring and peer support. The tools and learning experience needed for this programme of self-managed development are to be found in Chapter 6, but for now recognize that there is no automatic rescue system for struggling headteachers and that you are the most important person in defining the support you will need to make a successful transition to headship.