

Distributed Leadership as a Driving Force to the Teaching of Social Studies as an Integrated Subject in Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria

Khalil Yusuf Uthman
Social Studies Department
Federal College of Education Zaria Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The involvement of more than one subject approaches to social studies teaching are well in order and started from the complicated way of social studies challenges and the integrated problem-solving responses they demand. These approaches require academic teachers to come together across disciplines to integrate because the subject itself is integrated with virtually all the social sciences courses. Yet the divisions typical of colleges of education impedes collaborative teaching practice. This paper reports on the outcomes of a distributed leadership project in four Nigerian Colleges of Education aimed at enhancing the use of more than one subject approach in social studies teaching. Communities of teaching practice were created in four Nigerian Colleges of Education with participants drawn from a wide range of disciplines. The establishment and operation of these communities relied on a distributed leadership methodology that facilitates acts of initiative, innovation, vision and courage through group interaction rather than through designated hierarchical roles. Each community of practice found the distributed leadership approach overcame barriers to interdisciplinary social studies teaching. Cultivating distributed leadership enabled community members to engage in peer-led professional learning, collaborative curriculum and pedagogical development; and to facilitate wider institutional change. The detailed outcomes achieved by each community were tailored to their specific institutional context. They included the transformation of social studies curriculum, professional development in interdisciplinary pedagogy, innovation in student-led learning activities, and participation in institutional decision-making related to curriculum reform. This paper demonstrates that the distributed leadership model for sustainability education reported here is effective in building capacity for interdisciplinary social studies teaching within disciplines. The model is flexible enough for a variety of institutional ceilings.

Key Words: Leadership; Professional Development; Student-led Learning Activities; Curriculum Reform; Distributed Leadership

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INTRODUCTION

This paper reports on a case study of four Nigerian Colleges of Education using distributed leadership to activate and achieve the goal of encouraging the teaching of social studies

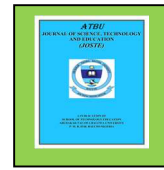
in an interdisciplinary manner. In the next coming decades, Colleges of Education graduates will be made to shoulder responsibility during their Professional and Personal lives for responding to Social Studies issues and related continued

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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challenges (Burandt and Barth, 2010). In performing their responsibilities, at this juncture, Colleges need to increase the extent and level of reforms if they are to incorporate Continuing Education as 'part of the core curriculum across all disciplines. Investigation by notable scholars have revealed that, teaching of Social Studies as a wholistic subject needs the incorporation of other teachers from the humanities because of its integrated nature, using team-teaching as the best approach to a successful knowledge delivery. The project formed by Federal College of Education Zaria, Federal College of Education Katsina, Federal College of Education Kano and Federal College of Education Yola aims at transforming social studies curriculum and facilitating wider institutional challenge. The study narrated in this paper centres on the research question: How can distributed leadership facilitate teacher's efforts by using interdisciplinary approaches to teach social studies in their various institutions?

LITERATURE

Distributed Leadership

The most recognized aspect of leadership theory in higher education school system is that which focuses on different rankings. Surely, in the present dispensation, much emphasis is on "top-down" rankings leadership practices as a pattern that multiplies accountability and efficiency of schools through corporation and reforms in administrative systems (Boldenef *al.*, 2009). There is a widely accepted belief that the need for colleges of education to become more active will improve the general knowledge of the limitations of conventional forms of 'top-down' leadership. These limitations include a lack of possible changes and accountability, and the prompt confrontation and resistance which undermine academic freedom and collegiality, that failed to bring together the leadership potential of those at levels lower than senior management (Avolio *et al.*, 2009).

A true and genuine leadership theory speaks mostly on collaborative leaderships and the schools leadership development (Freiderichef *al.*, 2009). Leaders are people who stands in the fore front in matters of leadership serving as

example for others to follow, which is exactly what the genuine leadership makes emphasis on. Theories of genuine leadership defines leadership as a quality of interpersonal relationships that encourages all participants to imagine and grasp chances for change. One of the most renown of these new theories is 'distributed leadership', a theory that relates mainly to the behaviour of organisations, but is also specifically suited to educational contexts Bennett *al.*, (2003). Presently in many secondary and primary teaching institutions, distributed leadership are mostly used but remains an under-utilised approach within the higher education sector, even though there are some clear pointers that this is changing (Boldene/ *al.*, 2008, 2009). It has also drawn surprisingly little attention amongst founders of education for sustainability (Pepper and Wildy, 2008).

The spread (distributed) leadership is regarded as an 'existing property of a group or network of flexible functioning individuals' (Bennett. 7:2003). It is described by managerial activities brought in to the system by members, rather than by people acting out prescribed "top-down" roles. It engineers collective action by combination and association of individual interests and capacities to bring about outcomes beyond those that could be achieved by people alone. The spread leadership theory (distributed model) does not pin point the importance of formal, delegated leadership in providing 'top-down' inspiration, guidance and instruction or the importance of individual efforts. Of course, one of the powers of distributed leadership is stressing on the potential for solid and distributed forms of leadership to be exclusively supportive (Bolden, 2008'). Distributed leadership explains the benefits of working together, exchange of ideas, shared purpose and shared ownership in leading schools change (Lefoe, 2008). This form of leadership resists representations of leaders that made name and inactive followers, and it means that boundaries of leadership are inclusive rather than exclusive. Spread leadership is a fluid potential held by a group that facilitates the capacities of individuals to take the lead and that merge this capacity with clear challenges and organisational

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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environments. This means that different people, alone and collectively, are likely to lead the association on different occasions and at different times depending on the particular challenge being faced on the specific context in which it is to be addressed (Bennett, 2003).

To examine the abilities of spread leadership (distributed Leadership) development to enable teachers to overcome current hurdles to interdisciplinary social studies teaching in higher education, the author used spread leadership in four different colleges of education as described in the following sections.

Nigerian Sustainability Education

To meet the expectations of colleges of education teachers, it is both necessary and challenging to establish and harness spread leadership so as to be able to face conditions of increasing academic workload pressures (Jacobs 2004), to devalue teaching and teacher improvement relative to research in these workloads (Chalmers 2011), and to make sure that the growing emphasis on competition associated with the corporatization of the academy is taking care of (Deem and Brehony 2005). In this context the establishing of team of teaching practice through voluntary means is significant. While grant funding enabled the part-time employment of a school linking officer at each institution, team members were offered no direct incentive to participate in the teaching practice, such as financial resources or workload compensation. Interviews with team members revealed that many felt under considerable time pressure and that giving time to participate in the community was not a decision taken lightly (Boston, 2013). This demonstrates that the focus and methodology adopted by the project was aimed at addressing the needs and aspirations of the academic staff in a diversity of career stages, roles and disciplines.

Each participants had different encouragement for being involved, a desire to overcome barriers to working together across subject areas was shared by all. Some were interested about the need for college teaching to be a part of the problems of multi-subject social

studies teaching, even though some of the participants were also keen in the importance of the project for other complicated real-world problems. Some were interested about the value of peer-led approaches to academia, which are better-off than the expert-led approaches to professional development that have become common in recent years in many colleges of education.

Purpose of the Study

Communities of practice

In 2011, following a 2009 first project at FCE Zaria, the four partner institutions began a two year program, financed by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to set up teaching collaborations with the sole intention of advancing interdisciplinary civic education through teacher leadership. Each college established its own 'Leadership Network for Social Studies Teaching', through the way it is done and group building activities in line with what Wenger (2000) describes as 'schools setting', and Cox (2001) describes as 'departmental learning communities'.

Inter-School Links

Beyond the objective of enhancing leadership and team teaching within institutions, the project sought to develop spread leadership across the four schools. The purpose for building inter-schools spread leadership development was divided in to three: first, to facilitate capable schools academic staff to learn from and be encouraged by each other; second, to further develop the theory developed in one school by applying it in different school settings; and third, to actually contribute to improvement within the higher education sector as a whole by implementing the theory in different schools distributing findings, spreading resources and building partnerships. The chief instrument for building inter-school academic staff in the last two years of the project were: a) establishing 'critical friend' partnerships between one of the three leaders of the Federal College of Education Zaria first project and the activator and integrator at each of the other collaborating school through field

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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visits and regular two-way communication; and, b) four practical two-day workshops and continues electronic conferences involving all activators and integrators, as well as information dissemination between schools through quarterly project gazettes.

Leadership in Colleges of Education

The FCE Zaria first project established four important specifications for each network or school setting:

A 'Linking officer' - a teaching academic who introduces and/or makes active group working together peer, employ other teaching academics and students to take a part in the community, and who oversees processes of evaluation and thinking deeply about learning within the community.

A 'Joining officer' - this is an administrative or academic staff appointed by the 'Linking officer' that maintains a changing role in the community, opens a typical communication and collaboration, manages the open demands of the community, supports collective decision-making, provides curriculum design and pedagogic support, maintains a resource safe maintenance, and documents and spread the activities and results of the community, including testing processes.

Employment, through self-appointment, of a cross-disciplinary team of academic teachers involved in class (or unit or subject) coordination and classroom teaching, taken from a diversity of professionalism and intra-departmental units, who are encouraged to improve social studies education across the colleges of education.

The starting and collective development and by the community of improvised peer-led academic learning activities, student-led learning activities, and institutional change strategies.

These four essential needs produces the starting point for spread leadership development by making sure that involvement in the community was based on shared interest in social studies and team teaching, as well as spread professional skills and responsibilities associated with curriculum development and

delivery. The requirements also ensured that the already introduced leadership roles inside the community (the Linking officer and joining officer) were openly associative and changing in nature, making sure that the work was assisted to continue by open and easily recognized forms of testing. While participation was open to people at all levels of the organized vertical rank of academic promotion, recruitment specifically targeted those at more junior levels, who often have unreasonable responsibility for roles such as class coordination, and who stand to gain glaringly from actions that build their leadership ability.

The four similar needs were wide and open to some explanations. Thus, for example, the mix of disciplines and of senior and junior staff differed at each institution. This softness was intentional, so as to allow for the local independence and context- dependent adaptation that are linked to spread leadership development. This independence enabled the motives and approaches taken by each community to be effectively constructed by its members, rather than being imposed by the linking officer working on instructions from the national project team. Each community was able to design itself in connection to their important yet different administrative and curricular structures, scales of operations, and histories of interdisciplinary sustainability education.

EVALUATION/METHOD OF THE STUDY

The methods of evaluating the project are detailed in and were endorsed by the appropriate research moral principles committee in each school. Integrators and activators played a central role in a continuous testing in four ways:

First, they filed the work and achievements of each community of practice as part of the needs for yearly reports to the financing body and of the production of quarterly gazettes shared in all the four colleges of education and through wider networks.

Second, they tested qualitative effects of spread leadership within their community by conducting semi- structured interviews with individual members and by facilitating discussions

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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of reactions within the group about challenges and opportunities faced.

Third, linking officers and joining officers themselves engaged in reaction practices, including information dissemination and discussions with their 'critical group' peers.

Fourth, in their role as members of the inter-school project team, linking officers and joining officers met every time, both in radio or practical communication, to inform members on successes and challenges, to pool experiences, and to copy the project in light of lessons learnt. A senior academic external examiner who engaged in project team workshops and meetings and who provided guidance to the FCE Zaria project leaders reviewed the evaluation material made by linking officers and joining officers. The compiled report of the external examiner has informed the present paper and is available. Finally, the free and experienced evaluation was provided by an international observers group which met every year to evaluate progress.

The following sections outline the activities undertaken at each school and test the effectiveness of spread (Distributed) leadership development as a way of overcoming differences to social studies team teaching. A key objective of each academic staff was to improve student learning in different subjects outcomes, with the testing of these results over time ongoing. The intention of this paper, however, is to identify outcomes already related to team teaching and improvement in skills of teaching.

RESULTS

Outcomes of Building Capacity for Interdisciplinary Social Studies Teaching through Distributed Leadership

The first most important outcome of the project was to bring about a close academic staff abilities of teaching in each participating school, collected from a variety of different subjects and administrative units. It was observed that, this achievement is not unimportant, and there is evidence that using a spread leadership model is conducive to the success of these schools. The detailed results achieved by each teacher were designed to their specific school context. General

achievements included the changing of social studies curriculum, professional development in interdisciplinary teaching practice, innovation in student-led learning activities, participation in institutional decision-making related to curriculum reform, and formal recognition of leadership capacities through career advancement. Each of the four institutional communities of practice is described below, before their key outcomes are reported.

Four Academic Institutions

At FCE Yola, the academic institution involved junior to middle level academics. The institution varied from between eight to ten teachers, spread across two distant campuses, with more than half of the members participating in the school for several years, with other members participating for at least one year. The FCE Yola school's key achievements included the implementation of team teaching activities in classes taught by individual school members, the introduction of a new team teaching undergraduate class, the building of a new academic institution in education designed to continue and the copying of the project's theory of spread (Distributed) leadership development as part of a school-wide team teaching scheme supported by senior management.

At FCE Katsina, social studies was taught through a newly established first year 'Social Studies' class, and as an 'add-on' in the curriculum of several schools. The FCE Katsina community of practice, totaled 15 members across the Schools of Science, Vocational and Technical, School of Languages, The School of Business Education Studies, School of Education, and the Academic Services Division. Members took up the important challenge of more fully integrating social studies teaching both within the social studies class, and across subjects and schools. A number of improvised, student-led, inter-subjects activities were used all through the project. These included new social studies teaching plan, coming together internationally on one plan, and changes of pedagogy by individual school members.

The FCE Kano academic staff numbered fourteen at the end of the two years and

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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included staff from disciplines including physics, biology science, Primary education studies, creative arts studies and political science. Through regular meetings, shared projects and co teaching this community that comprised both senior and junior academics enabled members to: share, reflect upon and change their teaching practices; engage in collaborative curriculum design; and, host public events on campus raising awareness of social studies and showcasing undergraduate student work. The community faced not only on joining social studies teachers, but also on joining researchers with teaching staff.

The largest of the partner institutions, FCE Zaria is a highly complex organization in which most formal 'leadership' training focusses on what managerial activities are supposed to do, as well as staff and budget management. Academic leadership in teaching is generally not well improved upon. In this context, and activated by a Head of School, the FCE Zaria community of practice was designed to associate with Colleges of education-wide strategic objectives, - structures and plans while demonstrating leadership through team teaching development. With a membership of forty five at the end of the project, this different group of staff and students were organized into four working groups focusing on the following work plan:

- 1) Curriculum Development,
- 2) Survey and Analysis,
- 3) Communications and Filmmaking, and
- 4) Public Events.

The following sections explore the three main types of outcomes achieved by the academic institutions: curriculum innovation, professional learning/career development, and institutional change.

Curriculum Innovation

One example of a specific and courageous outcome coming from the development of spread leadership is the formulation of a new team teaching undergraduate unit, 'Making Sense of Social Studies' at FCE Zaria. The class was developed collectively by school members and students and was taught for three years by a team of teachers coming from

different discipline of physical and social sciences, and the humanities. Forming this new class means useful leadership training for staff and students within the system. Students played a key role in the testing, improvement and judgment of the unit, by showing their ability to team teaching practice design and curriculum development. Students from across a range of disciplines took important roles in planning public awareness about the importance of Social studies in different trainings and fields. FCE Zaria also introduced, designed and developed team teaching activities used in classes taught by individual members. While individuals maintained responsibility for the plan and teaching of their own classes and other school activities, the community facilitated sharing of resources and ideas, team design, team teaching, and the transfer of specific teaching activities between classes of students in different disciplines.

Like FCE Zaria, the FCE Katsina approach included development of both discrete new teaching modules and renewal of teaching practice by every school members. In 2010, a joint activity was devised involving first year students from the Schools of Science and Social science Education, who worked in lawyer-scientist teams to respond to a simulated scenario concerning issues of boundary adjustment, global warming, and endangered species law. Each team developed their case and presented it in a dramatized way. Another example was a national work plan or program between FCE Katsina and FCE Pankshin science students who conducted a video conference to compare social studies attitudes in different cultures. In 2011, two community members initiated a conglomerate activity involving students of Language Arts, Social Studies and Primary education studies. Also, the group impacted on the study design in a number of subjects involving teachers from outside of die community. For example, a first level social studies subject now incorporates inter-subjects student-led assessment. In addition, many school members are contributing to subjects outside their disciplines, bringing their different expertise and experience of social studies into new subjects.

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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The FCE Yola experience was a little different, in relation to its large scale operation. As the schools grew, it achieved team teaching and research collaborations through the creation of effective working groups that provided a plan based on spread leadership. For example, in a Curriculum Development Working Group, postgraduate students initiated global warming research projects within their courses and brought these to actual expected result; while in a Survey and Analysis Group, students took the lead with innovative methodology and teaching practice, using, both teachers and the learners to mirror and store key issues for social studies teaching and improving the teaching and learning design. The Director media of FCE Yola TV became the leader of a Communications and Filmmaking Group focused on producing a series of videos called 'Social Studies Simply Explained'. These videos were the result of merger between media students, FCE Yola TV, the Institute of Environmental Studies and the FCE Yola Social Studies Research Centre. Meanwhile, a Research Fellow in the School of Education became the leader of a Public Events Group that developed models for a 'mock trial' and a 'Social studies simulation game', as well as a series of debates and workshops both teachers and learners.

In FCE Kano's academic institution, each academic members made some significant changes in the study design specifically trying to improve social studies related assessment. The group also used research on student behaviour change, which would later use an ecological footprint tool to design an improved social studies impacts across a semester. Precisely, the group motivated and inspired individual members to show new styles of leadership (their own and their students') within their teaching subjects, and to provide a space to build pedagogy and plan using "instruction as managerial skills". Spread leadership showed two main events that members coordinated. It is important to note that several staff member stake the lead in arranging weekly activities - an example of spread (Distributed) leadership yielding fruit without external activation or association. In the second year of the project, a 'Challenging Social Studies Student Creative

Exhibition' encourages creative arts responses to social studies; while 'Social Talk', engaged students, staff and the wider community in conversations about social studies in conjunction with poster design and panel presentations by public figures involved in social studies decisions.

Teaching Skills and Professionalism

All the four academic institutions have agreed to come together among colleagues irrespective of their departments or units, thereby taking on extra activities in addition to their primary assignments and extra workloads. This was intended to straighten their source of responsibility to the zeal of improving social studies or team teaching within the schools. But in fact members also discovered that team work and improvisation can lead to the effective management of extra work, and greater achievement of goals towards teaching skills and professionalism.

Streamlined career improvement is an important aspect of project's positioning of (Distributed) spread leadership. This on the other hand, has contributed to the success and longer life traverse of each academic institution. At FCE Zaria, professional development and career advancement included permanent employment to different positions which are promotable appointment to positions, the use of external grants, awards of teaching excellence (in the form of national and institutional awards and fellowships), membership of schools and inter-schools committees on learning and teaching, scholarly publications and conference presentations. Another important skills improvement outcome, arising from the creation of a new teaching unit, was that the school's 'linking officer', who was recruited in the college in an administrative capacity, became one of the leaders in the new department, starting from the often difficult transition from school administration in to teaching.

Leadership experience through school's activities at FCE Yola provided people with professional development: for example members of the student Environment Collectively used their involvement in the school to make solid their positions as learners leading and advocating for

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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more additional leverage on 'Innovative Campus' initiatives, while throughout the project the group linking officer achieved significant professional development and leadership experience.

Student-led activities were important for fostering spread leadership among members of the teaching network at FCE Katsina. In designing a dramatically trial on social studies phenomenon the linking officer and joining officer took lead roles together with a lecturer in environmental education; while in the poster project, leadership provided by the FCE Katsina student affairs office implemented important project aimed at improving the school. This unit supports FCE Katsina curriculum improvement, improvement in skill of staff, and the improvement of students' academic literacy. Some of the division's staff were acquainted with spread leadership theories and were happy to come across the chance to assist with putting this theory into real action. Involvement in the academic institutions gave useful chances for managerial growth for early academicians, including the linking officer and joining officer. The linking officer developed skills and confidence in leading inter-subjects and inter-school teaching activity, while for the joining officer, her networking role has opened other doors at the college of education, and in 2011 and 2012 she worked with several schools on curriculum design.

Although the linking officer-joining officer together with support staff initially drove the school's activities at FCE Kano, other members actively supported the process and took lead roles in script writing, provision of materials, arranging of fliers, and communicating to interested members. These results highlighted that, for the FCE Kano School members, spread leadership came about in a work plan supported by the linking officer and joining officer, but once activities were started, others were quick to answer and improve. As the community continues, its linking officer role was itself spread amongst members.

Schools Improvement

The four academic institutions, straighten by spread (Distributed) leadership, themselves emerged as models in inter-subject

and continuity of education in the wider school context. For example, at FCE Zaria this is clearly seen in the project's academic institution's theory being adopted in 2011 by the college's learning and teaching centre. Mainly as a result of the activities of the group since 2008, the college's 2012-2014 Strategic Plan for Learning and Teaching affirms the central importance of inter-subject curriculum and of making important responses to the continuity challenge. Meanwhile, at FCE Katsina the group's activities also gained important and acceptable position across the college and beyond. For example, the network's pedagogy were showcased at the 2011 FCE Katsina 'First Year Experience' workshop, and in 2011 the group's teaching improvisation were communicated to a department in Federal Ministry of Education concerned with educating society on social studies issues.

DISCUSSION

In all the four case study colleges, the results of spread leadership improvement pointed several viable possibilities. As pin pointed, the teams in each participating college were encouraged to establish achievable goals associated to their context and membership. As a result, four planned and mutually informing ways to spread leadership were made. The FCE Kano and FCE Katsina case studies show that motivated early professionalism, supported within a multi-college framework of mutual learning, can take on leadership roles without relying on their positions in a formal "top-down" position, with achievements in inter-subject teaching that are well known and used within their schools. At FCE Zaria, where the group grew for over four years, known leadership positions emerged over time while showing complete healthiness in furthering the yearning and aspirations of members to increase their influence and status within their schools and advance their careers through continuing education initiatives. FCE Yola showed how a school activated by relatively senior staff can create conditions conducive to leadership initiatives and therefore cutting across more than one academic subject in a wide range of academic, administrative and student roles.

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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This research undertaken by the four colleges of education has produced general guidance to actualizing spread leadership as a means to advance continuing education and evidence that this pattern of approach is applicable to a wide variety of school settings. The problem-based method took advantage of the scattered but specialized pattern of academic knowledge about social studies as an opportunity for working together to produce that same knowledge, professional learning, and improvisation for different subjects approach and school reform. The approach joint informal and peer- based forms of leadership improvement as a foundation for a joint different subject approach, rather than understanding leadership gradual growth as a separate and open additional function brought about by 'administrative' experts.

The research results showed that the general importance of giving an opportunity to teaching staff through peer mechanisms. In all the four academic Institution, encouraging members through spread leadership bring about 'significant individual achievements. Each group as a whole are encouraged in improving expertise that is strategic and visionary in nature, which enabled them to be agents of change within their various schools. Finally, empowerment was evident at the collegial level of the project, where working together and peer mentoring within the inter-colleges project team allowed the four schools opportunities to lead each other through acts of shared learning, inspiration and initiative and to share their learning through the sector more openly.

The facilitative leadership provided by linking officers and joining officers was critical to the success of the project at each school. While the inspiration and organization provided by the linking officer was important in the making of teaching community, the relationship maintenance performed by the joining officer proved essential to the longevity of the community, amidst the unfavourable institutional conditions reproduced by 'top down' and 'single' forms of administration (Dobson et.al, 2013).

The emphasis on copying to school's contexts, willing participation* unplanned creation

of relationship and unanimous decision-making within the academic staff (Cox, 2001) provided enough chance for all members to develop confidence and leadership skills, by portraying humble beginning and bearing the result of the joint outcomes. The leadership capacity of those in the roles of linking officers and joining, officers were also developed through the efforts of creating trust and similarities in joint efforts, while respecting the freedom and commitment of stake holders. The open intention to share leadership roles within members became a yardstick for both collective intention and personal desires which were expressed through the action of practical consideration.

CONCLUSION

In the next coming decades, colleges of education graduates will be made to shoulder responsibility during their professional and personal lives for responding to social studies issues and related continued challenges (Burandt and Barth, 2010). In performing their responsibilities, at this juncture, colleges need to increase the extent and level of reforms if they are to incorporate continuing education as 'part of the core curriculum across all disciplines.

As a means to achieve this, this paper argues that joint and comfortable forms of spread leadership encourages pioneers of education for continuity within colleges to bring about creativity in teaching practices, curriculum design and institutional structures across subjects boundaries. The research outlined here demonstrates that interdisciplinary social studies teaching is promoted by leadership that is occurring in response to environmental problems; that arises where it is needed rather than as dictated by top-down or job description; that is shared across groups and therefore arises from joint action; that empowers ail ranks of academia and also students; and that sometimes arrives unannounced and modestly and therefore needs recognizing, naming and celebrating.

The academic institutions discussed here built mutually beneficial joint action between previously disconnected academics who shared the aim of improving interdisciplinary education

Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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about social studies. The case studies show that in building capacity for interdisciplinary social studies teaching in four Nigerian colleges of education, a distributed leadership methodology was found to be an effective, flexible and pragmatic approach. Distributed leadership broke down hierarchical and disciplinary barriers between members to enable creativity and courage in design and delivery of social studies teaching, and to facilitate wider institutional change supportive of education for sustainability. Each college developed an ongoing, spontaneous interdisciplinary community of social studies teaching leaders that supported student-led interdisciplinary learning, developed teaching resources, enabled continuous professional development and helped foster institutional change for sustainability education.

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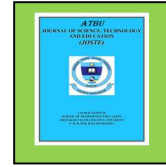
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Corresponding author: Khalil Yusuf Uthman.

✉ yusufkhalil63@gmail.com

Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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