TIDSSKRIFT FOR NORDISK BARNEHAGEFORSKNING
NORDIC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

Knowledge Development through Hybrid Leadership Practices

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PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE, VOL.8, NR. 6, P. 1-14, PUBLISHED 9TH OF DECEMBER 2014

Abstract: This article considers the formal teacher leaders' practices of leading knowledge development at the department level in early childhood education and care. To better understand these practices, we have utilised the hybrid leadership theory, along with qualitative shadowing and stimulated recall interviews. Our analyses demonstrate that these teacher leaders encourage knowledge development by functioning as hybrid leaders in their communities of practice, while our findings show that there are four leadership approaches to knowledge development that emerge from everyday work: providing professional guidance, acting as a role model in work performance, putting practices into words and supporting desired teaching practices. Moreover, our study reveals that the leading of knowledge development is dependent on teacher leaders' practical knowledge and their influence in their communities of practice. We therefore posit that the provision of knowledge development through and within the relationships that comprise communities of practice is crucial developing ECEC as learning organisations.

Keywords: Knowledge development, communities of practice, formal teacher leaders, practical knowledge, qualitative shadowing

Introduction

The knowledge development of staff has been singled out as a particularly crucial factor for the quality improvement of Norwegian early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions as learning organisations (MER, 2010, 2013; Vannebo & Gotvassli, 2014). A characteristic of a learning organisation is that all staff is engaged in creating and sharing knowledge to best achieve the aim of the organisation (Senge, 2006). According to Vannebo and Gotvassli (2014), despite an emphasis on

ECEC institutions becoming learning organisations, the national curriculum and other related documents do not actually explain what this process looks like. In a shared and collaborative way of working, which characterises ECEC centres at the department level, participating in social relationships and communities of practice is crucial for the process of knowledge development and thus for becoming a learning organisation. A community of practice is a group of individuals who share interests and problems with a specific topic and who gain a greater degree of knowledge on this topic thorough their regular interactions (Wenger, 2000). Over time, this practice has become a tool for facilitating knowledge sharing in learning environments (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

At the department level in ECEC institutions, formal teacher leaders[1] and assistants share issues and problem-solve with each other throughout the work day. This therefore highlights a need to investigate how site-based knowledge development is generated during everyday work and informal settings contrary to planned and formal settings. In communities of practice, were work is shared among the group members, one could assume that knowledge development is self-leading, self-organising and naturally emerging, but some recent studies have pointed to a shift towards a focus on the role of the formal leader of the group in facilitating and supporting the other community members (staff) to achieve successful learning (Wenger, 2000, 2004). In an ECEC context, a shared and collaborative approach to work means that all staff at the department level, both formal teacher leaders and their assistants, are performing pedagogical work with children. Leadership at the department level is of special interest because formal teacher leaders are those who operationalise the aims and methods of education and ensure that their practice communities are functioning as learning organisations (Børhaug & Lotsberg, 2014). Although every member of a community of practice uses knowledge in their pedagogical activities, the teacher leader has a formal responsibility as a community leader to lead knowledge development among their staff and to ensure that their staff have a shared understanding of the aims and methods of the organisation (MER, 2011).

Acknowledging that knowledge development is shared through interactions within communities of practice, this article takes the position that formal teacher leaders' active roles must be taken into consideration when developing ECEC institutions into learning organisation, as knowledge development and learning communities must both be supported and encouraged by leadership to be successful. Interestingly, current research has questioned the lack of theorising the connection between leadership and communities of practice, and there are few considerations in the literature of how to best lead communities of practice (Fallah, 2011).

Therefore, this article describes the leadership practices of formal teacher leaders regarding site-based knowledge development at the department level based on Gronn's (2011) hybrid leadership theory and expands this focus by emphasising the importance of teacher leaders' practical knowledge. We argue that the hybrid leadership theory provides a more holistic understanding of leadership, knowledge development and communities of practice. Applying this theory enables both solo and shared leadership to be investigated in a more coherent way, which leads to the following research question: How do formal teacher leaders encourage and foster knowledge development in their communities of practice? To answer this question, we have conducted qualitative shadowing and stimulated recall interviews.

In this paper, we first introduce the hybrid leadership theory, followed by the empirical context and research design of the study. We then describe the knowledge development practices of leaders, which

[1] In a Norwegian ECEC centre formal teacher leaders are early childhood teachers with a bachelor degree who have positions as department leaders. This means that they have multiple responsibilities for teaching and leading both staff and children (MER, 2011).

we discuss in relation to hybrid leadership in ECEC institutions. Finally, we conclude by suggesting implications for our findings.

Hybrid Leadership

Hybrid leadership is combinations of concentrated individual leadership which co-exist alongside patterns of distributed leadership and emergent leadership (Gronn, 2008). Hybrid leadership demonstrates the complexity of leadership roles, in which both hierarchical and heterarchical leadership styles are intertwined (Gronn, 2008, 2011). At department level in ECEC this means that leadership is a mix or a combination of the formal teacher leaders' solo leadership styles, and distributed leadership style. According to Gronn (2008, 2011) hybrid leadership framework is fruitful because it has the potential to offer a more holistic understanding of leadership practices than distributed leadership. Were distributed leadership is 'stretched over' the social contexts involving the whole staff (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), hybrid leadership merge or combine solo and shared leadership styles:

> (…) a more accurate representation of diverse patterns of practice which fuse or coalesce hierarchical and heterarchical elements of emergent activities. For all these reasons, I raised the possibility of slightly refining current meanings of distributed leadership along with the need to better think through its relationship to two closely allied conceptual domains, power and democratic leadership in organisations. (Gronn, 2008, p. 155)

Knowledge development is a process that takes place in a participative context, where learning is distributed among staff and not looked upon as the responsibility of one person (Lave & Wenger, 1991). On the other hand, the self-leading nature of communities of practice does not mean that staff (assistants) know everything or can do all the work without help. They manage their knowledge in dialogue with the leader of their community of practice (Wenger, 2004), which in this case is the formal teacher leader. Hybrid leadership theory reflects a mix of individual work responsibilities and collaborative leadership and highlights the significance of the leader (Gronn, 2008). Investigating leadership and knowledge development through the lens of hybrid leadership theory considers the formal teacher leaders solo leadership actions within a community of practice were the whole staff participates in knowledge sharing in a learning environment. This theory questions the duality of participative learning and individual leadership actions. Rather, hybrid leadership enables us to investigate intertwined site-based leadership practices within communities of practice.

By acknowledging that knowledge development and leadership actions are emergent from everyday work and situated in a particular practice, it is difficult to plan for such `emergence´ (Gronn, 2007). In this case the teacher leaders' actions have to be purposeful and intentional guided by her or his practical knowledge. The formal teacher leader must manage the suddenness of emerging situations that may arise during the day, using her or his practical knowledge to act purposefully in a particular situation. These purposeful actions, which are guided by his or her practical knowledge, are praxis, since praxis is realized in the very doing of an activity itself (Kemmis, 2012). Praxis is activity that arises from phronesis, which is a kind of personal and ethical knowledge that comes into play in practice itself and enables concrete demands of practical situations to be met (Kemmis, 2012). Theorising emergent hybrid leadership practices enables leadership praxis to be highlighted in the leading of communities of practice.

Before we present our empirical findings, the following section briefly describes the methods used in our study on leadership.

Methods and Background

The research question of this study is how formal teacher leaders encourage and foster knowledge development in communities of practice through the lens of hybrid leadership. This is a small-scale study that is part of a larger project focusing on the leadership practices of formal teacher leaders. To gain detailed descriptions of these leadership practices, we conducted qualitative shadowing as a means of understanding practices (Hognestad & Bøe, forthcoming). Shadowing can be explained as 'a research technique which involves a researcher closely following a member of an organisation over a period of time' (McDonald, 2005, p. 456). Qualitative shadowing is a method that is situated in localised practice, which means that the researcher follows a practitioner closely and therefore is able to access detailed and rich data in a particular work setting. In our qualitative shadowing study, we applied investigator triangulation, which means that two researchers, or shadows, followed the informants: One of these was a 'near shadow', who conducted contextual interviews and compiled field notes, while the other 'more distant shadow' recorded video observations. While in the field, we had the opportunity to experience leadership practices in relation to everyday work through observations, encounters and conversations. We were able to sample these practices as they unfolded throughout the formal teacher leaders' days.

During a fast-paced workday, situations emerged that required ethical considerations. In shadowing there is a need to take account of ethical situations that appear without warning. This undermine the importance of *research ethics on the move* (Dewilde, 2013) where we as researchers had to adjust to changing circumstances in a situation. Conducting shadowing we became very close to the informant`s practices, and this presupposed an ability to combine knowledge, judgement, understanding, feelings and intuition to act in an appropriate way (Macklin & Whiteford, 2012, p. 93). In our fieldwork, *research ethics on the move* were applied to situations in which we dealt with concerns about the children and parents and spontaneous meetings with sensitive content. For both the distant and close-shadows, it was important to make quick decisions on whether or not certain situations should be documented as data. Being two shadowers were a great advantage in sensitive situations, because it provided an opportunity to have brief exchanges of opinion.

In addition to shadowing, we conducted six separate stimulated recall interviews, during which the teacher leaders watched selected video situations from leadership situations and commented on what had happened. The stimulated recall interviews were effective for obtaining the teachers' comments on their work practices and the meaning of the leadership actions involved (Dempsey, 2010; Haglund, 2003).

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select the participants (Bryman, 2012). The main criteria for the informants were that they had to be formal teacher leaders with at least 5 years of experience in that type of role. As shadowing imposes strong restrictions on the research sample size (Mintzberg, 1973), we decided to study six experienced formal teacher leaders for 1 week each during their work within their ECEC department. All six participants in this study were women between the ages of 30 and 55 and were early childhood teachers with a bachelor's degree. The shadowing data were gathered between 9 am and 2 pm, a period during which all the staff at their institutions were working at the same time.

Our data analyses involved watching and analysing the video recordings as a team and reading the interview transcripts and observational field notes several times. We first categorised all the video data according to Vie's (2009) leadership taxonomy. Like Vie, we recognised the flexibility and possibility of developing new concepts inherent in Mintzberg's (Mintzberg, 1973) description of his own method (Vie, 2009). In our analyses, we emphasised achieving a balance between structure and open-ended coding. The use of an abductive method made it possible to use a to-and-fro pattern of the data, as it enabled us to read and analyse the data many times. Structure and openness may appear to

be opposite ideals, but according to Arman, Vie, and Åsvoll (2012), abduction is an analytical method that acknowledges sensitivity and surprises during readings and interpretations of data. For example, when we found that the video data included instances of leadership actions that did not fit into the defined taxonomy, we resolved this surprising element by cross-checking the video data with the field notes and interviews. The abductive method of analysis enabled us to rethink the new phenomenon and to create a new category of leadership activities. As a result, we added the new category of *leading knowledge development* to the established taxonomy of Vie (2009). Finally, in this small-scale study focused on knowledge development, we organised the interview data according to this category and extracted meaning using content analyses (Creswell, 2013).

Findings.

Formal Teacher Leaders' Approaches for Providing Knowledge Development in Their Communities of Practice

From the content analyses, we discovered four leadership approaches for providing knowledge development in everyday work: providing professional guidance, acting as a role model in work performance, putting practices into words and supporting desired teaching practices. In a hybrid leadership context, the provision of knowledge development sometimes occurs when the formal teacher leaders and their assistants work together and participate with a group of children. Other times knowledge development occurs when the formal teacher leader steps forward and facilitates and fosters the assistants' work performance.

What is evident from our findings is that these actions occur as a response to emerging situations or events that occur during everyday work. These actions often overlap and are characterised by negotiations between the hierarchical and heterarchical leadership approaches. Leaders constantly shift between these two positions during the day. However, our data show that when solo and shared leadership and knowledge are intertwined, they better support knowledge development. This article presents our findings in the form of selected episodes that involved the four approaches. Excerpts from our shadowing data and the stimulated recall interviews demonstrate the hybrid practices of leading knowledge development and how practical knowledge is implemented in everyday work situations.

1. Providing Professional Guidance

Our video data show that formal teacher leaders respond to their assistants when they ask for professional guidance in their work. In one episode, the formal teacher leader looks into the group room, where the assistant is playing with blocks with a group of children. The assistant notices the leader, stands up and walks out into the hallway with the leader. The assistant addresses the leader, and, speaking in a low voice, explains her worries about a child playing in the group. The leader is supportive of the assistant's worries, and they have a professional talk about the child's need and the value of play. The leader encourages the assistant to take advantage of the play situation and emphasises the importance of observing how the child interacts with the other children. By providing professional guidance, she directs attention to the teacher's responsibility to support the child's learning processes in relation to the core values of play.

For the teacher leader, encountering a situation in which the assistant needs guidance and advice is very complex because she has to interpret and respond to the sudden situation she faces. When she encounters the particular situation, it does not exist in a fixed plan that tells her what to do, how to approach it and what should guide her reaction. Therefore, providing professional guidance is not a method—it is an event in which the leader has to grasp the particulars and decide how to act. In

this case, helping the assistant solve a concrete task was related to immediate practice. In the stimulated recall interview, the informant made the following statement:

> *When I faced this situation, I become very conscious about the opportunity I had to guide the assistant there and then. This is an assistant who is willing to learn and often asks for guidance. I believe that it is in such moments of everyday work that knowledge development has the greatest potential. When I lead knowledge development among staff members, I build on my own knowledge of teaching children, and I express an awareness of our roles and responsibilities as professionals to arrange for fruitful learning conditions and interactions for the children, placing the focus on what is the best thing to do under the circumstances. I think it is important to take the assistants seriously when they express uncertainty in pedagogical work and wonder about something.*

When this teacher leader encountered this particular situation, it was not something that she had planned or prepared for; instead, it was a situated opportunity for professional guidance. In this practice of providing professional guidance, the formal teacher leader acts as a core member in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Because of the power of her professional knowledge, her perspective is considered legitimate; thus, she takes a hierarchical position in leading professional guidance. In communities of practice, other staff members can also achieve core status (Lave & Wenger, 1991); however, in our data, it was apparent that it is the formal teacher leaders who receive this position.

When faced with a sudden problem, the teacher leader tries to get an overview of the situational factors so that she or he can understand the concrete demands of the situation. In situations in which she or he creates a space for professional guidance, the leader does not act as a sovereign expert leader; rather, this particular study participant emphasised how sensitivity and openness to the questions that arise are important. When this teacher leader communicated with the assistant in the hallway, several questions arose: How can she preserve and safeguard the child's best interest? How can she guide the assistant? How can she meet the organisation's internal and external expectations? Following up on her responsibility as a community leader, she appears to be a link (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) between the core values of her teaching and the communities of practice that she leads. Providing professional guidance is one way to strengthen a particular community of practice and to provide assistants with professional guidance and support; thus, they develop a shared understanding of core values in the community.

When this formal teacher leader was providing professional guidance in the hallway, she was suddenly interrupted by a child who asked for help to solve a conflict. We therefore turn to this episode, which was a new event that activated new questions for the leader to respond to.

2. Acting as a Role Model in Work Performance

The formal teacher leader and the assistant were standing in the hallway when a child addressed the assistant because he had a conflict with his playmate. The assistant and the leader went to the children, and the assistant waited for the leader to take the lead in the situation. Using the plural pronoun 'we', the leader included the assistant in her talk with the children and tried to resolve the conflict so that both children's needs were taken into consideration. The assistant stood beside the children and the leader and carefully watched what was happening.

Emphasising the significance of being a role model for staff, all the teacher leaders in our study were aware of how their pedagogical practices must set good examples and thus establish

standards for best practice. The informants acknowledged that being role models was important to guide specific desired practices.

To create organisational practices and a collective praxis, the leaders found opportunities to use their positions as qualified teachers to influence their assistants' work performance by acting as role models. In the stimulated recall interview, the participant emphasises how her professional knowledge as a teacher is an active part of her provision of knowledge development:

> *When I entered the situation, I had a lot of things in my head. As I entered the situation a bit quickly, I was a bit insecure about what had happened. At the same time, I noticed very quickly that the children needed help solve the conflict. At the same time, there was another important aspect because the assistant was watching me help the children. I am aware of my role as a model from which the assistant learns*.

Confronted by a new situation, the formal teacher leader once again had to interpret and respond to contextual and situational challenges. While standing in the hallway among other children playing, she had to take the children's needs, the assistant's knowledge development, her role as a model and the unforeseen shift in leadership actions into account. This multidimensional interpretive activity characterises hybrid leadership, setting it apart from leading as being well-planned and rational. In this complex interpretive activity, the leader must deliberate upon and judge each situation.

In a new situation, the leader's work performance is subjected to interpretation by the assistants. Working together in a community of practice enables knowledge development and learning to be an integral part of everyday work, as the teacher leader acts as a role model subjected to interpretation by the assistants at the same time as she or he participates as an equal member in their community (Wenger, 1998). In this situation, the formal teacher leader and the assistant shared first-hand experiences in which learning was not a separate activity. Rather, acting as a role model was so familiar that it escaped notice. When a teacher leader becomes a role model, knowledge development is activated through her professional practical knowledge. The purpose of being a role model is more than the assistant simply observing and copying the formal teacher leader's behaviour; instead, it is an interpretive activity in which the situation and situatedness of a practice encourages the assistant to confront the situation and be challenged by it (Gadamer, 2004). In other words, by interpreting a specific practice (the activity happening in a particular setting), the assistant (and the leader) is engaged in a process of knowledge development in which her preknowledge is subject to modification and change. Rethinking the concept of imitation is helpful for understanding knowledge development in everyday work and how knowledgeable formal teacher leaders become core members of a community of practice and thus a significant source of an assistant's knowledge development (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Another study participant also emphasised her role as a model in her learning community:

> *As a teacher leader, being a role model is a bit scary. I am a role model for good and for bad, and I am pretty humble about this part of my leadership role. All the steps I take and the activities I do are important. What I am doing and what I am not doing are being observed. In everyday work, I will be a role model.*

Based on our data, acting as a role model becomes significant for providing knowledge development in communities of practice. All of our study participants were aware of how their practical knowledge influenced staff members and how this is a powerful leadership strategy.

3. Putting Practices into Words

When formal teacher leaders and assistants share responsibility for pedagogical work, leaders generate knowledge development by sharing first-hand experiences with their assistants. This gives them opportunities to put practices into words. In the following episode, one formal teacher leader and her assistant are sitting on the floor observing and supporting the play going on around them. Three children, aged 1 to 2 years, climb up and down a slide as they act out the well-known fairy tale 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. The formal teacher leader acts like she has one of the roles in the play, but she steps behind and lets the children lead the play. Whenever there is a lull in the action, the leader comments on the children's interaction and play to her assistant; she also states how she think this fruitful play situation is a result of organising small playgroups. This is followed by a short conversation between the leader and the assistant, in which they share their experiences about children's play.

In our study, the participants expressed how everyday activities served as a space for articulating practices that were directly connected to their work performance. When the working conditions made it possible for the teacher leaders to participate in pedagogical work with their assistants, their multiple roles and intertwined practices of teaching and leading became the base of knowledge development. One of the participants put it this way:

> *I guess it is a way of putting into words the practice that has eventually become a common practice. I think practice is important for us to talk about together, and it may be a way of teaching, to make her [the assistant] conscious of what is going on. I think this is a very good way of working, when you have time to sit like this and talk about practice there and then instead of bringing it up fourteen days later in a formal meeting.*

Here the participant recognises that situated practice is important for common reflections about practice. In this case, she acknowledges the practice community and everyday practice as a learning arena, but at the same time, she acknowledges herself as a teacher leader, as she articulates and comments on situated practice as a way of theorising what is going on. Passing on knowledge to assistants is a leader's attempt to provide for the assistants' professional understanding of their work. The formal teacher leaders in our study emphasised that this is not just a one-time activity; rather, it has become a practice of providing knowledge development that is embedded in their situated work. In this particular situation, hybrid leadership created an opportunity for knowledge development through the social relations of practice, in which power relations define the process of knowledge development. The participants in our study highlighted their leadership roles and the importance of supporting and encouraging knowledge development among their staff.

For the formal teacher leaders in our study, putting practices into words with the purpose of teaching their assistants was a challenge because some of their assistants sometimes expressed reluctance to engage in pedagogical theory. Hence, when the majority of the staff is assistants without formal education, someone feels threatened by professional pedagogical language. The study participants were aware of differences in staff members' levels of competence and how differences in competence level challenge the leading knowledge development. They stated that they found it challenging to use their professional language and theories when communicating with their assistants because of the differences in staff competence.

> *The language must be understandable and not just words that go over their heads. It has to be understandable, so I have to make it professional understandable language*

> *because then the staff feel much more competent. This is something that I get feedback on, that they learn something.*

Another informant put it this way:

> *Maybe we should use more pedagogical concepts and expressions. However, we cannot do that because then some of the assistants drop out along the way.*

This statement expresses why the teacher leaders feel that they must use everyday language when they put practice into words, as this makes it more understandable for their assistants. It is also their way of building and supporting learning arenas in their communities of practice.

4. Supporting Desired Teaching Practices

The formal teacher leaders in our study were very conscious of the importance of responding to their assistants' initiative and work performance when they acted in relation to the core values and the purpose of education. The following scenario shows how a formal teacher leader can support her assistant's work performance when the assistant takes the initiative to share her thoughts and experiences about outdoor play. When the leader meets the assistant in the entryway to help her take off the children's winter jackets and boots, the assistant enthusiastically tells the leader about how she has used ice and snow as materials in her pedagogical work outside. The leader listens to the assistant and acknowledges the assistant's work as she smiles and encourages her use of natural materials in play. The assistant states that this is a way of working that she wishes to continue. The teacher leader supports this way of working, responds to the assistant's work and shares her own experiences of playing with natural materials outdoors.

Supporting desired teaching practices often happens spontaneously during the transition to a new activity or when conditions make it possible to meet and talk together. To encourage assistants to share their experiences of their work performance, teacher leaders emphasise that an open and listening attitude is important for developing and improving knowledge. When supporting desired teaching practices, formal teacher leaders not only encourage their assistants to share their experiences; they also create communicative spaces that generate knowledge development by supporting and emphasising desired practices. In a stimulated recall interview, one of the study participants made the following comment:

> *In what way we, as leaders, encounter situations like this is crucial to building a learning relationship with an assistant. My aim is to create a trusting and caring relationship with the assistants because I know this is crucial for quality improvement. So, how I act has a huge significance in a wider perspective, improving quality in pedagogical work.*

Supporting desired teaching practices by engaging in reflections on staff members' experiences enables core values to be shared by the teacher leaders and the assistants, in whom the appropriate actions for future pedagogical practices are supported and given direction. To ensure best practices that are in line with the national curriculum, the formal teacher leaders acknowledge and underline their assistant's performance when they demonstrate a desired practice. As the formal teacher leader from the previous scenario expressed,

> *I think it is great that the assistant took the initiative to tell me about her outdoor*

> *experience with the children and her creative way of working. And then I tried to support her on that, that this was a great practice. Although it was a bit hasty, I think it is very important.*

Our study participants believed that the interactions of individual members inside their communities of practice are important for strengthening the community. Strong relationships are seen as crucial for building sustainable communities of practice in which the provision of knowledge development is directly related to quality improvement. In this way, formal teacher leaders can influence their colleagues' collective practices/praxis.

Discussion.

Providing Knowledge Development through the Hybrid Leadership Style

There is recognition among researchers that communities of practice serve as learning arenas in which knowledge development is an act of participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In ECEC institutions, researchers have found that the practices of knowledge development and learning have developed from within their communities of practice (Vannebo & Gotvassli, 2014). However, this requires the interaction of staff members in site-based work, as it is during these interactions that knowledge can be developed. Developing knowledge is the practice that is happening inside the community of practice, while this study has shown that this practice is also included in the action of teacher leaders. However, few studies have focused on the nature of leadership in supporting communities of practice (Fallah, 2011) and particularly how formal leaders play an active role in these communities (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). As a contribution to the current literature, this study demonstrates that formal teacher leaders play an active role in providing knowledge development in communities of practice. As hybrid leaders, the four practices of knowledge development described in this article —providing professional guidance, acting as a role model in work performance, putting practices into words and supporting desired teaching practices —show that teacher leaders take a hierarchical position to find opportunities to provide knowledge development in non-hierarchical settings. By acknowledging leadership as being fluid and emergent rather than fixed and planned, these are situated practices; that is, they are embedded in everyday work, where leaders have to grasp the particularities of a situation to determine how to effectively respond.

ECEC leadership practices involve uncertainty and unforeseen events, including a hectic work pace that is fragmented and frequently interrupted. This requires spontaneous and contextual decision-making. An uncertain practical situation is not a situation where decisions, aims, means, models and strategies are clearly relevant and applicable. Leaders must first decide and deliberate what kind of situation they are encountering, what is at stake and how they can best respond (Kemmis, 2012). Therefore, to provide knowledge development among staff in everyday work, leaders must engage with situational factors.

Formal teacher leaders' professional knowledge has been discussed in relation to a close-knit working community, which is characterised by a week division of labour between formal teacher leaders and assistants (Steinnes & Haug, 2013). Steinnes and Haug (2013) refer to Eraut's division between individual and cultural knowledge to illustrate the tension created by the present staff composition. In communities of practice, cultural knowledge represents common ways of doing and reflecting on what has developed from mutual experiences where teacher leaders and assistants have worked in cooperative relationships. Breaking through cultural knowledge with their individual knowledge that is gained through education and other work experiences could be difficult because of

the collective tradition in their communities of practice. Therefore, effectively providing knowledge development is a challenge for most formal teacher leaders.

Most members of communities of practice have personal desires to share knowledge and learn through interactions, and the community leaders can support and encourage their participation (Fallah, 2011). However, there are negative effects of external knowledge development, and compulsory participation can damage the learning community (Fallah, 2011). If the formal teacher leader detaches herself from her communities of practice and become an 'external' community leader, she is only contributing to the group rather than working through and within relationships of the practice community and her individual knowledge could become alien and threatening. It is suggested that the responsibility for developing the assistants knowledge should lie with head/top leaders or owners to prevent the provision of pedagogical work and staff development at the department level from becoming two competing roles (Eik, 2014). In contrast to the head/top leaders or owners of ECEC centres, formal teacher leaders directly lead their staff by sharing first-hand experiences, including face-to-face interactions in which their leading improves the staff's performance and there and then supports the communities of practice. As our findings show, hybrid leadership practices for knowledge development are significant for strengthening communities of practice. Therefore, we argue that it is inappropriate to weaken hybrid leadership practices by depriving the multiple responsibilities of being a leader and a teacher leading knowledge development.

The participants in our study have emphasised how the use of everyday language and social relationships are of huge importance in strengthening a learning community. As a hybrid leader, the teacher leaders must act as a legitimate member of their communities through their presence (e.g., sharing first-hand experiences with their staff). In this way, they are able to share their individual knowledge and thus guide knowledge development from within. We have focused on how the early childhood teacher leaders adapt their professional language to match their assistants' everyday language. However, we have also stressed how this could weaken teacher leaders' professionalism (Eik, 2014; Nørregård-Nielsen, 2006); for example, using everyday language linked to first-hand experiences could be insufficient to challenge the cultural knowledge in a community of practice. Nonetheless, communities of practice presuppose trusting and supporting relationships, so the use of everyday language could be understood as the formal teacher leader's way of building democratic relationships among the staff and, at the same time, maintaining a position as an equal member of the community.

Through the lens of hybrid leadership, it becomes clear that the four practices for providing knowledge development are mixes of orchestrated and emergent leadership approaches. Focusing on hybrid leadership enables practices for knowledge development to encompass the concepts of both instruction and pedagogy. According to Biesta and Miedema (2002), no distinction between these two concepts should be made. The hybrid leadership practices for knowledge development contain both instruction and pedagogy, which results in the transformation of skills and knowledge and the utilisation of pedagogy that incorporates moral and value-related perspectives. Our data show that these four practices for providing knowledge development demonstrate how the actions of the teacher leader are connected to their values and beliefs about education. By demonstrating or supporting best practice, the hybrid leader provides knowledge development without separating pedagogy from instruction. This mixed approach shows how practical knowledge is put to work in everyday practice of the leading of knowledge development. This practical knowledge is comprised of actions (praxis) that are realised through a hybrid leadership approach that is connected to the capacity building of communities of practice and ECEC institutions as learning organisations. However, the actual implementation of this hybrid leadership approach for knowledge development means taking responsibility as a community leader for providing a shared understanding of the core values of a

community's members. As our study shows, the hybrid leaders' actions regarding knowledge development become a link between core values and their community of practice.

Conclusion

In our study, we have asked how formal teacher leaders encourage and foster knowledge development in their communities of practice. More specifically, we have explored the provision of knowledge development from the perspective of the hybrid leadership theory (Gronn, 2008, 2011), which has been used to demonstrate how four basic approaches for providing knowledge development are actually mixes of hierarchical and heterarchical leadership practices. These are as follows: providing professional guidance, acting as a role model in work performance, putting practices into words and supporting desired teaching practices. Our study has also revealed how formal teacher leaders balance control, authority and power with adequate influence, trust, support and participation to achieve successful learning communities. Through the lens of hybrid leadership, we argue that the provision of knowledge development through and within the relationships that comprise communities of practice are crucial because these communities are the social fabric of a learning organisation (Wenger, 1998).

What is evident in our findings is that the provision of knowledge development emerges from everyday life, where situational factors are taken into consideration. In these situations, the various leadership actions regarding knowledge development are not perceived as grand ideas or great acts, such as implementing external methods or programs aiming for change and development. In contrast, by providing knowledge development using hybrid leadership practices, within which solo and shared leadership practices are intertwined, leaders can—through their participation in communities of practice—take advantage of situated work. Because they are present and available, these leaders are able to confront the situations that arise and engage with the situational factors. Thus, presence is more than just being physically present with others—it also includes an authenticity that emphasises the leader's practical knowledge as a special form of attention, sensitivity and awareness to others and includes a responsibility for taking purposeful action (Duignan, 2008; Marsh, Waniganayake, & De Nobile, 2013). Hybrid leadership practices for the provision of knowledge development make it clear that a leader's presence can serve as a catalyst for building and supporting learning communities.

According to hybrid leadership theory clarified by Gronn (2008, 2011), we argue that it is productive to add practical knowledge and thus highlight praxis that characterise a particular leadership practice. Expanding the focus of hybrid leadership worked through this article by describing the dynamics of the four approaches of leading knowledge development praxis is realised.

Possible implications for leaders' providing knowledge development in ECEC institutions as learning organisations relate to an increased awareness of how the provision of knowledge development is dependent on the formal teacher leaders' practical knowledge and their influence in their communities of practice. Understanding how knowledge development is led in informal situations will enable ECEC leaders to advance their understanding of how to create collective learning arenas with a commitment to become a learning organisation (MER, 2011). However, to strengthen site-based knowledge development as a continuous process, further attention must be paid to how social and educational working conditions enable and constrain practices for the provision of knowledge development.

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