

# Pedagogical Leadership as Professional Capacity: A Conceptual Framework for Reimagining Teacher Education Under NEP 2020

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## Abstract

Teacher education has been identified as a key tool for realizing the objectives of the NEP 2020 in India. As much as there has been a broadened scholarship on instructional and distributed leadership, limited conceptual theorizing on pedagogical leadership is as an internally organized professional ability that is invoked through the daily teacher practice. The article fills that gap by conceptualizing pedagogical leadership as four recursive and dependent capabilities, namely seeing, thinking, speaking, and writing within which educators interpret, deliberate, articulate and institutionalize professional knowledge. The framework is based on a systematic conceptual summary of the literature published between 1990 and January 2026, utilizing teacher cognition, reflective practice, distributed leadership, professional learning community, and practitioner-inquiry. The paper builds up to a capacity-based model through thematic codes applied in an iterative manner and policy alignment analysis which reorients leadership as a processual, practice-based phenomenon, not a role. The framework provides a theoretically correlated professional actionable roadmap of the re-imagination of teacher education by translating the policy aspirations of NEP 2020 into professional capacities. The article has a contribution to the scholarship of leadership through relating cognitive, dialogic, and epistemic aspects of practice in the form of a recursive architecture of professional development. It is also talked about in terms of implications to curriculum design, faculty development and institutional reform in teacher education settings.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Leadership, Teacher Education, Professional Capacity, NEP 2020, Reflective Practice, Distributed Leadership, Practitioner Inquiry

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research on teacher, instructional, and distributed leadership have increased significantly during the last thirty years and provided valuable information on the role of leadership practices in improving schools and professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Spillane, 2006; Robinson et al., 2008). Also, the research on reflective practice, professional learning communities, and practitioner inquiry has led to a greater insight into how teachers can gain professional expertise through an iterative process of interaction with practice (Schön, 1983; Vescio et al., 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Despite this growing scholarship, conceptual fragmentation persists the actual implementation of pedagogical leadership as a

disciplined professional ability in the day-to-day educational practice. The diverse models that are present focus on the organizational role or distributed arrangements but do not theorize much about the internal cognitive, dialogic, and epistemic mechanisms through which leadership enacts in the teacher education situations.

Notably, the latest empirical and theorizing literature keeps problematizing the conceptual models of leadership by foregrounding teacher agency, power relations, and digitally mediated professional learning in post-pandemic settings (Bellibaş et al., 2024; Yang and Chang, 2024; Shal et al., 2024). According to these studies, leadership is not an activity or role but rather performed based on recursive processes of perception, collaboration, and knowledge construction that are embedded in practice. Meanwhile, a new line of research around the topics of professional capital and networked learning indicates that professional ecologies involving virtual communities of inquiry and data-driven learning systems continue to shape teacher leadership and reflective practice (Heikka, 2025; Abrahamsen, 2025). This kind of development clearly highlights why there is a necessity to have a conceptual account that would be able to combine the conventional theory of leadership with the modern understanding on the concept of distributed agency and digitally empowered professional development.

The gap in concepts is especially relevant when it comes to situations where systemic reform is involved. National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020) in India makes teacher education the main focus of educational change with the principles of teacher autonomy, reflection, and collaborative cultures, and alignment of curriculum with multidisciplinary. Nevertheless, the policy aspirations do not define the ways of how such professional capabilities are developed, implemented, or institutionalized in teacher education institutions (TEIs). In the absence of a distinct conceptual framework in which macro-level policy aspirations are linked to micro-level professional activities, there is still a threat that reform will be aspirational more than operationally based.

In context of this gap, this paper redefines pedagogical leadership as a system architecture of four recursive professional abilities, that is, seeing, thinking, speaking, and writing. Capacity-based model redefines leadership not as positional or as an assumed set of management functions, but as a processual and practice-enacted phenomenon that mediates the interpretations of classroom phenomena by educators, deliberation of instructional choices, expression of shared commitments, and generation of sustained professional knowledge. Integrating cognitive, dialogic, and epistemic aspects of the practice, the framework contributes to a systematic description of leadership that is both theoretically grounded and updated on the current trends in the learning of teachers.

The framework is based on systematic conceptual synthesis of the scholarship in the areas of teacher cognition (Borg, 2006), reflective practice (Schön, 1983), distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006), and professional learning community (Vescio et al., 2008) and on the current empirical investigations regarding teacher agency & digitally mediated professional learning (Bellibaş et al., 2024; Yang and Chang, 2024; Abrahamsen, 2025). Through these traditions, the paper provides a theoretically consistent and policy-appropriate model that re-relates the theory of leadership with actual professional practice of teachers at TEIs.

This paper addresses three questions:

1. How can pedagogical leadership be operationalized as integrated professional capacities within teacher education institutions?
2. How does NEP 2020 provide a theoretical foundation for this reconceptualization?
3. Which institutional conditions enable sustainable capacity development?

The article responds to these questions in a manner that brings leadership and educating teachers scholarship in three folds. In the first place, it provides a theoretically integrated model explaining the internal architecture of pedagogical leadership. Second, it transforms policy ambitions into working professional abilities. Third, it outlines institutional requirements of maintaining capacity-based reform. The following sections describe the methodology (Section 2), the conceptual underpinnings (Section 3), the four-capacity framework (Sections 4-5), the discussion of policy alignment and institutional conditions (Sections 6-7), the implications (Section 8) and the conclusions with theoretical and practical implications (Sections 9-10).

## 2. METHODOLOGY: CONCEPTUAL SYNTHESIS

The paper utilized a conceptual synthesis approach that was designed in a structured way in order to come up with a theoretically synthesized and policy-consistent model of pedagogical leadership. The methodology involved an integrative literature review, thematic policy analysis, and the modelling process, in accordance with the traditional steps related to the development of a conceptual theory in management and education studies (Corley and Gioia, 2011; Jaakkola, 2020). This methodological process was planned so as to be transparent, analytically rigorous, and up to date.

### 2.1 Search Strategy

Three large academic databases, Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC were used in the literature review, and they were chosen based on the fact that they cover a wide range of educational leadership, teacher education, and professional learning scholarship.

The search was completed on publications dating back to 1990 to January 2026. A preliminary review was done in the earlier phases of manuscript development and later revised in January 2026 to be able to include new scholarship, especially those studies that covered teacher agency, distributed professional capital, digitally mediated professional learning, and post-pandemic reform contexts.

The keywords used as search strings were combinations of the following keywords:

Search strings included combinations of the following keywords:

- “teacher leadership”
- “pedagogical leadership”
- “instructional leadership”
- “teacher cognition”
- “reflective practice”
- “distributed leadership”
- “professional learning communities”
- “practitioner inquiry”
- “teacher agency”
- “professional capital”
- “teacher education reform”

Results were narrowed down by using Boolean operators (e.g., distributed leadership AND teacher agency; teacher education AND professional learning).

The updated January 2026 search identified more publications in 2024-2026 and they were screened and included where theoretically appropriate.

### 2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The following inclusion criteria were used to ensure conceptual coherence and scholarly rigor:

1. Peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books
2. Publications written in English
3. Explicit theoretical or empirical focus on:
  - Teacher leadership
  - Professional learning
  - Reflective practice
  - Distributed leadership
  - Practitioner inquiry
  - Teacher agency
4. Relevance to school or teacher education contexts

They were not regarded as empirical sources but policy documents were individually analyzed on a thematic basis, such as the policy on education in India 2020.

Sources that were omitted included those:

- Focused on the administrative or managerial approaches to leadership without pedagogical aspects.
- Specialized in non-educational organizational settings.
- Absence of conceptual or empirical basis.

The latest corpus was made up of the basic scholarship and fresh empirical and conceptual research up to 2026.

### 2.3 Coding and Analytical Procedures

The stored literature was then analyzed using thematic analysis with repetitions.

#### Phase 1: Open Coding

Through the open coding, key constructs, recurring themes and conceptual definitions were identified.

Codes included:

- Professional noticing
- Reflective reasoning
- Dialogic leadership
- Collaborative inquiry
- Teacher agency
- Knowledge production
- Institutional learning

Attention was paid especially to new constructs in current (2024-2026) scholarship, such as digitally mediated collaboration, criticisms of symbolic distributed leadership, and hybrid professional ecologies.

#### Phase 2: Axial Coding

Themes were analyzed vis-a-vis each other to find out structural connections between traditions. For example:

- The thought of teachers centered on the perception.
- Reflective practice was amalgamated to deliberate thinking and curriculum correspondence.
- Dialogic coordination was put into focus in distributed leadership and professional learning communities.
- Practitioner inquiry pre-empted epistemic inscription and recording.

#### Phase 3: Capacity Abstraction

These grouped constructs were abstracted into four more enhanced professional capabilities via omparis-

on and diagrammatic modelling:

- **Seeing** (epistemic attentiveness)
- **Thinking** (reflective reasoning and curriculum design)
- **Speaking** (dialogic articulation and collective coordination)
- **Writing** (knowledge production and institutional memory)

The modeling recursive design was based on the repetitive cross-analysis of traditions that focused on cyclical and not linear professional development (Timperley et al., 2007).

### 2.4 Policy Alignment Analysis

A similar thematic analysis of NEP 2020 was carried out in order to establish policy constructs that were consistent with the developing capacities. Coded policy statements that focused on teacher autonomy, inquiry-based practice, institutional culture based on collaboration and multidisciplinary integration were mapped onto the four-capacity framework.

This synthesis triangulated, i.e. combining background theory, recent empirical research (as of 2026) and policy analysis, was necessary to make the resulting model both theoretically informed and contextually sensitive.

## 3. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The given framework is based on six complementary theoretical traditions that clarify the teacher learning and professional change. Despite the fact that these traditions are rooted in separate branches of educational studies, they come together on one common assumption that professional development occurs in cyclical patterns of perception, reflection, collaboration, and knowledge building (Timperley et al., 2007). This intersection offers the theoretical basis of the conceptualization of pedagogical leadership as a recursive assembly of professional capabilities.

**Teacher Cognition:** The findings of studies into teacher cognition indicate that teachers have an instructional practice due to their prior knowledge, beliefs, and interpretive schema (Borg, 2006). The structure of pedagogical judgment is professional noticing, what teachers observe and how they make sense of what occurs in the classroom. Cognitive frames can potentially facilitate or limit perception; e.g. deficit-based assumptions can obstruct student strengths and inclusive opportunities (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The recent discussions also indicate that the institutional conditions and the reform pressures mediate perception, which supports the necessity of disciplined professional attentiveness (Ghamrawi, 2026). The seeing capacity is based on this epistemic orientation.

**Reflective Practice:** In his expression of reflective practice, Schoen (1983) uses reflection-in action and reflection-on-action to conceptualize the process of professional growth. Through systematic thought, teachers can analyze presumptions, analyze teaching implications, and improve judgment. Empirical studies prove the effectiveness of continuous and participatory reflection in improving the quality of instructions and adaptive expertise (Kennedy, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This process of deliberation is a direct influence to the thinking power.

**Visible Learning and Evidence-Based Practice:** Visible learning focuses on the active application of evidence and feedback when making pedagogical judgments (Hattie, 2009). This tradition highlights the significance of matching practice with an outcome that is measurable by identifying those instructional strategies that have the highest impact. Recent research on digitally mediated professional learning builds upon this viewpoint and demonstrates how reflective cycles can be applied in the hybrid and networked

professional setting (Professional Capital Study, 2025). This fact-based reasoning empowers the mental ability.

**Distributed Leadership:** Distributed leadership represents a redefining of leadership as a result of the interplay between actors and institutional patterns as opposed to existing in positions of authority (Spillane, 2006). The leadership is practiced in the form of relational coordination and shared expertise within the practice. Although research has connected distributed arrangements with instructional coherence (Robinson et al., 2008), recent studies have noted that the professional agency is based on trust, autonomy, and relational capital (Bellibaş et al., 2026). The speaking capacity is informed by this dialogic aspect.

**Professional Learning Communities:** Professional learning communities can prove that systematic collaboration and joint inquiry is more effective in improving instructing and efficacy (DuFour, 2011; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Improvement efforts are maintained by social capital and accountability to each other (Bryk et al., 2015). PLCs enhance the communicative basis of the speaking capacity by institutionalizing professional dialogue.

**Practitioner Inquiry:** Practitioner inquiry makes teachers producers of professional knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). The modern studies indicate that this investigation is becoming more digitally networked, enhancing the identity of teachers and their agency (Ghamrawi, 2026). The writing ability is based on this epistemic externalization.

All these traditions lead to a recursive developmental logic. Teacher cognition foreshadows perceptual structuring (seeing); reflective and evidence-informed practice lays stress on deliberation (thinking); distributed leadership and PLC research lays stress on dialogic coordination (speaking); practitioner inquiry institutionalizes knowledge production (writing). These abilities operate in relationship with each other: perception guides reasoning, reasoning guides articulation, articulation generates documentation and documentation reforms perception. It is this convergence that creates the conceptual background of the four capacity model in the next section.

#### 4. PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

Based on the above conceptual synthesis, pedagogical leadership is theorized into four interdependent professional capacities namely seeing, thinking, speaking and writing. These abilities are not chronological or individual skills. Instead, they form a recursive structure in which teachers understand phenomena in the classroom, reason about instructional reactions, explain shared commitments and institutionalize professional knowledge. In this sense of the term, leadership is practiced as an element of pedagogical practice itself and is the product of disciplined co-ordination of these capacities.

##### 4.1 Seeing: Epistemic Attentiveness in Practice

The seeing capacity is an act of professional seriousness in respect to learning phenomena. It includes the possibility to see patterns of student engagement, diagnose misunderstandings, perceive contextual limitations, and determine the possibilities of instructional innovation. Seeing is not merely a mere observation but is rather guided by a systematic perception, guided by pedagogical knowledge, ethics and apprehension to diversity.

Major competencies in this capacity are analytical noticing, bias awareness, evidence sensitivity, and contextual interpretation. Seeing provides the epistemic foundation of leadership because it determines what is visible and practical in practice. In the absence of disciplined perception, the consequent deliberation is likely to be out of step with actual requirements of learning.

**4.2 Thinking: Reflective and Curriculum-Level Deliberation**

The thinking ability entails reflective thinking and instructional-level deliberation that converts perception to informed design of instruction. It involves analyzing pedagogical options, matching learning goals with strategies, incorporating evidence into decision-making processes, and foreseeing the effect of instruction. Thinking mediates judgment and redesign unlike seeing which organizes perception. It works based on systematic reflection, comparative reasoning, and evidence-based evaluation. This ability helps teachers to leave the observational state of classroom relationships and build pedagogical responses. Reflection therefore connects observation and action, which is that leadership is based on a conscious professional rationality and not on responsive improvisation.

**4.3 Speaking: Dialogic Articulation and Collective Co-ordination.**

The speaking capacity refers to the dialogic expression of pedagogical reasoning and organization of group action. It entails supporting an organized professional discussion, bargaining on reform priorities, developing an instructional commitment of shared interests, and aligning different knowledge into shared interests.

Communication changes the personal knowledge into a common professional knowledge. It is implemented by use of shared inquiry, professional dialogues and distributed decision making. Nevertheless, dialogic leadership is functioning within institutional power relations; its success will be determined by the relational trust, professional autonomy, and organizational support. This ability points to the fact that pedagogical leadership is a socially constructed practice that is maintained by communicative action.

**4.4 Writing: Knowledge Production and Institutional Memory**

The writing capacity is inclusive of systematic recording, analytical writing and codification of knowledge that transform tacit professional judgement into enduring institutional memory. Writing refers to action research reports, reflective journals, documentation of curriculum, and structured evaluations, which maintain learning over time and actors.

As opposed to speaking coordinates, where collaboration is realized, writing solidifies learning in subsequent cycles. It codifies professional knowledge, contributes to the progressive enhancement, and enhances organizational coherence. By documenting and reflecting analytically, the educators produce context-specific theory that guides the further perception and consideration.

The functional differences and defining features of the four capacities are summarized in Table 1. The table brings together the conceptual architecture of the model by determining the core definition, key competencies, and key leadership role of each capacity.

**Table 1: Four-Capacity Model of Pedagogical Leadership**

Capacity	Core Definition	Key Competencies	Primary Function in Practice	Leadership Dimension
Seeing	Disciplined professional attentiveness to learning-related phenomena	Analytical noticing; bias awareness; contextual interpretation; evidence sensitivity	Structures perception and identifies instructional priorities	Epistemic

<b>Thinking</b>	Reflective and curriculum-level deliberation that transforms perception into pedagogical design	Evidence integration; evaluative reasoning; instructional alignment; adaptive judgment	Guides instructional redesign and decision-making	Deliberative
<b>Speaking</b>	Dialogic articulation and collective coordination of pedagogical reasoning	Facilitation of professional dialogue; negotiation of shared goals; collaborative inquiry	Aligns collective action and professional commitment	Relational
<b>Writing</b>	Systematic documentation and knowledge codification that institutionalizes professional learning	Analytical documentation; action research; reflective inscription; knowledge dissemination	Stabilizes learning and builds institutional memory	Epistemic–Institutional

The capacities are analytically separate and interdependent as shown in Table 1. They provide a different aspect of the implementation of leadership and their harmonized functioning maintains the pedagogical leadership of teacher education institutions.

The recursive interaction among these capacities is illustrated in Figure 1. The figure demonstrates a cyclic relationship between seeing, thinking, speaking, and writing as a result of which pedagogical leadership is practiced in teacher education institutions.

**Figure 1. Recursive architecture of pedagogical leadership capacities.**



*Figure 1. Recursive architecture of pedagogical leadership capacities.*

The four capacities as shown in Figure 1 also operate in a cyclical mode as opposed to a linear mode. Writing educates future seeing and, in this way, strengthens the recursive form in which professional knowledge develops and through which the leadership is perpetuated.

#### 4.5 Recursive Integration of the Capacities

These four capabilities are interdependent. All perception of structures; all deliberation guided by thought; all articulation, coordinated by speech; all institutionalization, through writing. In its turn, writing transforms the future vision by improving professional consciousness. The interrelationality of these capacities is underlying in the internal structure of pedagogical leadership in teaching institutions.

The conceptualization of leadership is not as a positional authority but as a processual professional practice that is executed through disciplined attentiveness, reflective reasoning, dialogic interaction and systematic

production of knowledge. The framework has the advantage that it is integrated: the coherence and effectiveness of every capacity is achieved when it interacts with the other capacities.

## **5. INTEGRATING THE FOUR CAPACITIES**

Although four competencies, namely, seeing, thinking, speaking and writing have been analytically differentiated, pedagogical leadership is the result of their recursive interaction. The framework does not suggest the linear sequence; it provides a conceptualization of the leadership as a dynamic and iterative process where each capacity influences and is influenced by the other. The core element of the model is thus integration.

It usually starts with observation where the teachers develop patterns of student learning, teaching constraints, and the situational conditions. Perception can however only attain the meaning of leadership when it is converted into deliberative judgment by thinking. The reflection and evidence-based thinking then reforms the organized noticing into pedagogical planning, correlating the teaching responses to the curricular goals and learning outcomes. This categorical motion between perception and reflection can be agreed with the studies of adaptive expertise and professional learning cycles (Timperley et al., 2007; Kennedy, 2016).

Speaking makes the individual reasoning to be negotiated and coordinated as a group. Dialogic interaction allows teachers to challenge assumptions, clarify interpretations and match teaching commitments. This aspect of relationship is an element of distributed leadership theory, which looks at leadership as a result of engagement and not position of power (Spillane, 2006). The modern literature also indicates that this distribution is conditional upon the professional agency and trust structures (Bellibaş et al., 2026). Speaking in this way serves as the process whereby reflective insight is brought into reflective action.

Professional learning is institutionalized with the transition to writing. Recording of such collaborative dialogue into lasting organizational knowledge is done by documentation such as curriculum revisions, action research or evaluative reports. Writing is stabilizing in the sense that it creates a stabilization of insight over time and actors, and strengthens institutional memory and coherence. The dimension depicts the tenets of practitioner inquiry and professional capital (Coachran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Professional Capital Study, 2025).

Importantly, writing alters the further vision through perfecting professional consciousness and enhancing the future perception. The recursive loop of seeing, thinking, speaking, writing and back to seeing is a sequence of pedagogical leadership architecture, thus a continuum. Teachers can join the cycle at various stages based on the contextual needs, yet integrative logic of the cycle will remain the same. Leadership is practiced in a patterned coordination as opposed to procedural sequence.

As an illustration, the faculty members who recognize low levels of student engagement in practicum seminars might observe the repetitive patterns of participation and then reflect on the potential pedagogical options, subsequently negotiate and talk to each other about the changes, and compose amended seminar instructions. These recorded modifications in turn reconfigure subsequent responsiveness to engagement processes, and the recursive process is closed.

This coordinated architecture is the integrative power of the model. Seeing guarantees epistemic anchoring, thinking deliberative consistency, speaking relational consistency, writing institutional continuity. The combination of these abilities makes up pedagogical leadership as a cyclic professional practice that is contained within institutions of teacher education.

## 6. POLICY ALIGNMENT AND STRUCTURAL REALITIES

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 conceptualization follows the four-capacity model especially in the way it focuses on teacher control, multidisciplinary teamwork, institutional adaptability, and ongoing professional growth (Government of India, 2020). These policy vows can be closely aligned to the recursive structure of seeing, thinking, speaking and writing that is coined in Sections 4 and 5. Nonetheless, such a capacity-based approach is enacted in Indian higher education with major structural constraints moderating that process.

Compliance-based measures (faculty student ratios, documentation, accreditation standards) are often considered as important metrics of higher education performance in India instead of enduring pedagogical or professional learning (Tilak, 2020). Regulatory regimes run with the help of an accreditation and quality assurance systems tend to focus on the inputs that are easy to measure and the procedures compliance. Although these kinds of systems are supposed to promote accountability, they can also have the unwanted effect of reducing institutional focus on compliance instead of capacity-building.

Professional enactment is further constrained by workload pressures. Members of the teaching fraternity in most institutions have heavy teaching and administrative workloads, which do not allow them ample time to engage in reflective deliberation (thinking) and organised collaborative conversation (speaking). According to national and international studies of the workload and administrative government, administrative overload limits professional agency and curbs the availability of practice that is oriented towards inquiry (OECD, 2024; Tilak, 2020). The recursive formation of pedagogical leadership competencies is hard to maintain when the structurally constrained time of reflection and collegial exchange goes by.

The institutional autonomy is also impacted by regulatory rigidity. Prescriptive models of curriculum and standardized requirements of accreditation might restrict contextual innovation and dialogic negotiation of pedagogical priorities. Studies on higher education governance in reform based institutions have proposed that centralized accountability structures can be not quite consistent with policy discourse that focuses on autonomy and creativity (Marginson, 2016; Bellibaş et al., 2026). Under the four-capacity model, this rigidity is a limiting factor to speaking capacity that creates less room to have genuine professional discourse.

The imbalance in the institutional resources also makes reform implementation harder. There exist huge infrastructural differences in the research infrastructures, access to technology, and funding between colleges, which restrict the opportunities to inquiry-based teaching and systematic practice documentation (Altbach and Salmi, 2011; Tilak, 2020). The resulting inequalities have a direct impact on the ability to see and write because they limit access to data, research support, and collaborative networks required to maintain the professional learning process.

Another structural tension is the administrative burden. When the documentation is chiefly geared towards the compliance on an audit, the epistemic role of writing is likely to be superseded by the procedural reporting. In these situations, writing becomes bureaucratic text as opposed to the production of reflexivity. This point is crucial: provided in the framework of the proposed project, the process of writing is not considered equal to paperwork but is a system of institutional memory and learning professional experience.

These structural facts do not disqualify the transformative purpose of NEP 2020 (Government of India, 2020); on the contrary, they precondition its enforcement. The institutional settings needed to make the four-capacity model root are to provide professional agency, time to reflectively partner, and recalibrate

evaluation regimes to perceive inquiry-based documentation. The recursive architecture of pedagogical leadership can only work under such enabling conditions or it can be aspirational as opposed to operational.

In line with that, the framework is not only a model of leadership enactment, but also a lens of evaluation. The institutions are able to evaluate the implementation of the reform by looking at whether the disciplined perception, reflective deliberation, dialogic coordination and institutionalization of knowledge is supported structurally. By doing so, the model transforms the policy discourse of rhetorical commitment to the capacity development within the institutions of teacher education which is measurable.

## **7. INSTITUTIONAL ENABLERS FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION**

Pedagogical leadership, which is a conceptualized recursive professional capacity, is impossible to maintain unless institutional conditions are enabled. The four-capacity architecture does not go it alone; it relies on structural arrangements to guard disciplined perception, structured deliberation, associative dialogue and systematic knowledge codification. Reform in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) must be sustainable and thus planned.

### **7.1 Enabling Seeing: Time, Data, and Epistemic Infrastructure**

Disciplined professional noticing needs time and meaningful evidence protection. The literature demonstrates that high workload of teachers and requirements of the administration may limit the ability of teaching practitioners to engage in inquiry-oriented practice (OECD, 2024; Kennedy, 2016). The institutions dedicated to the capacity-based reform should thus dedicate some systematic time on the analysis of practicum supervision and classroom observation and review of evidence.

Epistemic infrastructure is also of critical importance. Analytic perception is enhanced by shared video repositories, assessment analytics, observation protocols, and collaborative feedback platforms. Digital and networked professional learning studies have shown that systematic noticing and collective sense-making are positively promoted by structured digital environments (Wollscheid, 2025). In the absence of accessible and systematized information, perception is impressionistic as opposed to analytic.

### **7.2 Enabling Thinking: Structured Reflective Deliberation**

Deliberative spaces at an institutionalized level need to be reflective and curriculum-level thinking. Evidence use and shared responsibility structured inquiry forums and professional learning communities (PLC) have been observed to enhance instructional coherence and teacher learning (DuFour, 2011; Vescio et al., 2008). The improvement science also highlights disciplined reflection, redesign, and evidence-based adjustment cycles as the basis of sustainable change (Bryk et al., 2015; Timperley et al., 2007).

The regimes of evaluation are also important. Reflective reasoning is enhanced when the review mechanisms are developmental-focused as opposed to compliance audits. Empirical research shows that cooperative, high-feedback settings are associated with more profound instructions change than with procedural monitoring systems (Kennedy, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Institutions should thus coordinate appraisal systems with growth deliberation.

### **7.3: Empowering Speaking: Relational Trust and Distributed Authority.**

Dialogic coordination is based on relational trust, common power and guaranteed zones of professional exchange. The study of distributed leadership reveals that the leadership influence is exercised not by role but by communication (Spillane, 2006). Nevertheless, distributed arrangements can improve professional agency only in those cases when they are facilitated by autonomy and relational trust (Bellibaş et al., 2026).

So that participatory forms of governance, curriculum forums led by faculty, cross disciplinary design teams, can bring about circumstances of authentic professional dialogue. There are indications that leadership practices are linked to better student outcomes, which support the relevance of coordinated instructional conversation (Robinson et al., 2008). Dialogic leadership falters whereby institutional hierarchies discourage deliberation.

#### **7.4 Enabling Writing: Knowledge Production and Institutional Memory**

Professional learning has to be codified and rewarded by the institutions. Neo-liberal literature on practitioner inquiry conceptualizes documentation as knowledge generation in practice instead of a bureaucratic reporting (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). The epistemic value of writing is lost when the documentation systems are focused on compliance, not inquiry.

Action research, documented innovation and pedagogical scholarship should thus be considered by promotion criteria, appraisal structures and institutional repositories. The research on teacher leadership shows that peer-guided inquiry and systematic records can enhance collective efficacy and organizational unity (Abrahamsen & Helstad, 2025; Ghamrawi, 2025).

Together, these facilitating circumstances bring institutional design and the recursive architecture of pedagogical leadership into agreement. The analytic perception, disciplined deliberation, dialogic engagement, and codification of knowledge are supported structurally to make sure that leadership is practiced as an integrated professional process, as opposed to being an occasional effort. In the absence of this alignment, reform might always be theoretical but not practical.

### **8. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

The four capacity model has direct consequences to curriculum design, faculty development, accreditation system and institutional culture at TEIs. It is necessary that operationalization of pedagogical leadership involves coherent redesign in the following domains.

#### **8.1 Curriculum Design: Embedding Capacities in Program Architecture**

The values of teacher education curricula should actively develop each capacity:

- **Seeing:** Structured classroom video analysis and supervised observation laboratories can assist in the analytical noticing, and inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).
- **Thinking:** Reflective seminars chronologically arranged in sequence, aligning theory and field-based evidence with inquiry cycles, are consistent with the research findings that the sustained and content-centered reflective practice positively influences the teaching practice (Kennedy, 2016; Timperley et al., 2007).
- **Speaking:** Collaborative design work and facilitated peer conversation enhance collective efficacy and instructional coherence (Vescio et al., 2008).
- **Writing:** Operational Practitioner inquiry as professional stance is operationalized in inquiry practicums in which action research reports are required (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

There is evidence that teacher education initiatives that contain these factors have a greater probability of creating adaptive and effective practitioners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

#### **8.2 Faculty Development: Modeling Recursive Practice**

The faculty members need to model the recursive integration of capacities. The case study on teacher professional development has shown that teacher professional communities based on collaborative inquiry and sustained professional communities are more effective in producing instructional change as compared to individual workshops (Avalos, 2011; Kennedy, 2016).

Recursive practice is institutionalized through faculty research circles, peer observation systems, and structured documentation processes and strengthens professional agency.

### **8.3 Accreditation and Evaluation Reform**

The accreditation systems must not be focused on input-based measures but also show aspects of capacity building. By prioritizing compliance indicators over professional learning in evaluation, reform continues to turn into a process, instead of a change (Tilak, 2020).

Improvement science and professional capital methods are more consistent with development-oriented evaluation that is aligned with inquiry-based documentation (Bryk et al., 2015).

### **8.4 Indian Contextual Considerations**

Reform in the context of the Indian higher education environment should involve regulatory centralization and resource inequalities. The reports on governance in higher education reveal that centralized accountability frameworks might restrict the institutions freedom and innovations (Marginson, 2016; Tilak, 2020).

Simultaneously, NEP 2020 directly focuses on the multidisciplinary integration, teacher autonomy, and institutional reform (Government of India, 2020). The four capacity model offers a process of converting these policy commitments into working institutional practices.

## **9. CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **9.1 Theoretical Contributions**

The framework combines teacher cognition (Borg, 2006), reflective practice (Schon, 1983), distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006), and practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) into one recursive framework. It connects explicitly the internal mental activity (seeing, thinking) to social organization (speaking) and the production of knowledge in institutions (writing), making the distribution leadership theory focused on structural arrangements expanded to a capacity-based explanation of enactment.

### **9.2 Methodological Contribution**

The research develops a synthesis approach to conceptual methodology that integrates integrative literature review, iterative thematic coding, capacity abstraction and policy alignment analysis. The method is consistent with the modern demands of stringent conceptual elaboration of educational leadership research.

### **9.3 Policy and Practical Contributions**

The framework is actually a diagnostic tool of TEIs. Measures that can be taken by institutions to assess progress in reforms include an evaluation of structural support of disciplined noticing, reflective deliberation, dialogic coordination, and inquiry-based documentation.

It translates the aspirations of NEP 2020 into operational institutional capabilities at the policy level. (Government of India, 2020). Through this, it responds to criticisms that reform discourse is typically rhetorically ambitious but procedurally under-specified (Tilak, 2020).

## **10. CONCLUSION**

Teacher education is a key driver of systemic change in India that the National Education Policy 2020 places (Government of India, 2020). To achieve this aspiration, it is necessary to do more than regulation reorganization or curriculum broadening; it is necessary to rethink the idea of pedagogical leadership as a learning-informed professional ability.

The Four-Capacity Framework of Seeing, Thinking, Speaking, and Writing as a recursive architecture has been postulated in this paper, in which pedagogical leadership is exercised in Teacher Education Institutions. The framework informs the development of a theoretically consistent description of leadership emergence through coordinated perception, deliberation, dialogue and codifying knowledge by combining insights on teacher cognition, reflective practice, distributed leadership, and practitioner inquiry (Borg, 2006; Schoen, 1983; Spillane, 2006; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Leadership, according to this perspective, is neither positional nor episodic; but rather, it is a routine professional achievement that is maintained by institutional design.

The framework also gives an avenue of converting the policy commitments of NEP 2020 into operational institutional capacities. Instead of defining autonomy, collaboration, and inquiry as the desirable qualities of an organization, it spells out the structural and cultural terms in which these values are realized practice. By so doing, it reacts to longstanding criticisms that reform discourse tends to lack procedural articulateness and institutional diagnostics.

The model is still theoretical and thus open to empirical testing. A different body of research must be able to design and test measurement tools that can capture the practice of pedagogical leadership capacity (Wiens, 2025), study the interaction of distributed leadership, professional agency, and relational trust with teacher education environments (Bellibaş et al., 2026). The longitudinal and comparative institutional studies will be critical in the evaluation of recursive capacity development as a factor in improving the instructional quality and organizational learning.

Theorizing pedagogical leadership as recursive professional capacity, not as administrative power, and providing a policy-consistent analytic way forward in the teacher education reform agenda, this framework has an analytical rationale and a policy-congruent way forward. Its main argument is simple, sustainable change in teacher education, is not about compliance in structure but rather disciplined coordination of how the educators view, think, speak and write their professional practice into existence.

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