

Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Occasional Paper

Issues in the Development of Leadership for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

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Introduction

That “leadership” is considered important to society is largely uncontested. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs are full of stories highlighting the need for, and consequences of, “good” leadership. Our cultural histories, regardless of nationality, ethnic, or religious background, are full of heroes and heroines who are recognized for having provided exemplary leadership within our communities at some time or another. However, while “good” and/or “effective” leadership is almost universally recognized, its nature remains elusive. As Middlehurst (1993) has observed:

Neither in common parlance, nor in the literature on the subject, is there consensus about the essence of leadership or the means by which it can be identified, achieved or measured (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Although spoken about as a concrete and observable phenomenon, it remains an intangible and elusive notion, no more stable than quicksand. (p. 7)

Differing Conceptions of Leadership and their Implications for Leadership Development

Definitional and conceptual uncertainty plagues the research literature on leadership (see for example Stogdill’s (1974) synthesis and analysis of the enormous literature on leadership from 1920 to 1970s and Middlehurst’s (1993) synthesis of the literature up to the 1990s). It is hardly surprising then, that the term is used in a myriad of ways, to mean a variety of different things to different people.

For some, leadership is found in the particular “**traits**” or “**personal qualities**” of the individuals who assume leadership positions (Stogdill, 1948). For those who embrace this view, **building leadership capability is not so much a task of developing these particular qualities or traits in others, but one of identifying and appointing to positions of responsibility, individuals who already possess these qualities and characteristics.**

While there is little empirical evidence to support these “trait” theories of leadership, higher education institutions, among others, still embrace this approach to building leadership capacity. Search firms, engaged to identify individuals to fill senior leadership roles, utilise a variety of instruments and screening procedures to establish whether individuals possess the particular qualities or traits that are believed to be required by the person or persons appointed to such positions.

A second, common approach to conceptualizing leadership associates leadership with “**behaviour**” or “**style**” (e.g., Stogdill and Coons, 1957). According to this approach, leadership can be understood by examining the *behaviours* of those in leadership positions. Thus, ***the task of developing leadership capacity involves (a) identifying those specific “behaviours” (tasks and actions) associated with the type of leadership that we value or desire, (b) identifying the particular style (or styles) adopted by such leaders when they perform these behaviours, and (c) designing opportunities for others to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to adopt these behaviours and styles in their own work.***

During the late 1950s and 1960s, numerous studies (including the so-called Ohio State Leadership Studies, the Michigan Studies, and others conducted by Cartwright and Zander, 1960; Likert, 1961, and Blake and Mouton, 1964) were undertaken to explore the nature of leadership behaviour. These studies all identified two key dimensions of such behaviour. The first, “task-oriented behaviour”, is behaviour that is concerned with the achievement of group goals. The second, “people/relationship-oriented behaviour”, is behaviour concerned with maintaining and strengthening the group itself.

Subsequent studies focusing on leadership behaviour, including those focusing on leadership in higher education (e.g., Tucker, 1984; Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly & Beyer, 1990; Moses and Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1992; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993; Ramsden, 1998; Marshall, Adams, Cameron & Sullivan, 2000) have confirmed this finding, and as Wolverton, Ackerman and Holt (2005) have reported, compiled “laundry lists of tasks which fall under the purview of the department chair” (p. 228) and other leadership positions in higher education.

However, despite the apparent centrality of these two dimensions of leadership behaviour, it has been widely recognized for almost half a century that the search for a single behavioral model to describe “effective leadership” in all situations is flawed. As studies by Blake and Mouton (1964), Likert (1967), and others have found, the types of “behaviour” or “styles” of leadership that prove to be effective vary enormously among different tasks, when working with different groups or in different contexts, and for different individuals.

Recognition that “(a) different circumstances require different patterns of behaviour (or qualities) for a leader to be effective; (b) that a dynamic interaction between leader and context will shape the nature of leadership . . . (c) that context and circumstances place different demands, constraints and choices on leaders” (Middlehurst, 1993, p. 20) lies at the heart of the so-called “**contingency theories**” of leadership first espoused by Fiedler (1967), Vroom and Yetton (1973) and Hersey and Blanchard (1988).

For those who understand leadership in this way, the challenge of developing leadership capacity is not simply a matter of assisting individuals to acquire and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to modify or change *their* behaviour to fit the circumstances in which they are required to lead, but also the *knowledge and skills necessary to increase the “favourableness” of the situations in which they must lead* (i.e., to increase the “fit” between the needs of the context or circumstances in which they are called upon to exercise leadership and their preferred leadership style and behaviour). As Fiedler (1967) has suggested:

Leadership performance depends as much upon the organization as it depends upon the leader’s own attributes. Except perhaps for the unusual case, it is

simply not meaningful to speak of an effective leader or an ineffective leader; we can only speak of a leader who tends to be effective in one situation and ineffective in another. If we wish to increase organisational and group effectiveness we must learn not only how to train leaders more effectively but also *how to build an organisational environment in which the leader can perform well.* (p. 261, emphasis added)

Thus, ***building leadership capacity from a “contingency perspective” is as much a process of developing the organisation as it is one of developing the professional knowledge and skills of those called to leadership positions.***

During the 1970s, 80s, and 90s a number of other approaches were used to investigate and conceptualise leadership and, like the trait, behavioural and contingency theories discussed above, each have important implications for the ways in which leadership capacity might be developed.

The first of these, the so called “**power and influence**” theories, construct leadership as being associated with the use of power. According to Weber (1945), Etzioni (1961), French & Raven (1968), and House (1984) leaders lead (or influence others) by exercising the power they possess due to their:

- (a) position (legitimate power),
- (b) ability to provide rewards (reward power),
- (c) ability to threaten punishment (coercive power),
- (d) knowledge and expertise (expert power); and
- (e) personality (the extent to which others like or identify with them) (referent power).

They accomplish their goals by exercising their power to control information and resources, to ensure that their followers and others who might contribute to realising their agenda are motivated, energised and enabled to do so.

Thus, from this perspective, ***leadership development involves assisting individuals to develop their power bases and their capacities to utilise power to influence others to realise their own, and others’, agendas.***

“**Social Exchange**” theorists, on the other hand (e.g., Blau, 1964; Burns, 1978; and Kouzes & Posner, 1987) argue that leaders are afforded the opportunity to lead to the extent that they are able to fulfil followers’ expectations. They use their knowledge, skills, abilities, networks, and resources to satisfy the expectations of others. Central among these “social exchange theories” are Burns’ (1978) notions of *transactional leadership*, or leadership specifically aimed at meeting the self-interest of followers, and *transformational leadership*, where leadership is aimed at challenging and transforming followers’ expectations and inspiring them to transcend their own self interests for the good of the organisation.

According to Bass (1990), transformational leaders exhibit:

- (a) *charisma* (i.e., they provide vision and a sense of mission, they instil pride, and in return gain the respect and trust of followers); and
- (b) *inspiration* (i.e., they communicate high expectations; they use symbols and their own example to focus efforts; and express important purposes in simple ways);

and they provide:

- (c) *intellectual stimulation* (by challenging the status quo; promoting intelligent, rational alternatives; and strategies for careful and effective problem-solving), and
- (d) *individualised consideration* (by giving each individual personal attention, treating them with trust and respect, and assisting them to grow by acting as a coach or mentor).

One of the significant differences between this conceptualisation of leadership and those previously discussed concerns “who is called upon to lead”, and thus “who needs to be developed”. In each of the previous approaches to theorising and developing leadership, those who are the focus of attention are individuals who hold (or aspire to hold) formal positions of responsibility within their organisation. However, from a “social exchange” perspective, *anyone* within an organisation may be afforded the opportunity to lead.

Thus ***efforts to develop leadership capacity within an organisation need to focus on all members of the organisation, not only those in formal positions of responsibility.*** Further, ***developing leadership capacity not only involves assisting individuals to develop the intellectual capacity to plan, develop, implement and evaluate strategy (i.e., the capacity to fulfil the tasks of leadership) but also the emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998) necessary to motivate, inspire, influence, persuade, coach and collaborate with others.***

The final approach to conceptualising leadership and leadership development to be reviewed here, reflects the view that leadership does not exist “out there” waiting to be discovered, but rather “is part of the interactive process of sense making and creation of meaning that is continuously engaged in by organisational members” (Middlehurst, 1993, p.36).

According to Bolman and Deal (2003) “every organisation develops distinctive beliefs, values and patterns [of behaviour]. Many of them are unconscious or taken for granted, reflected in myths, fairy tales, stories, rituals, ceremonies and other symbolic forms” (p. 244). Those who become known as leaders within organisations do so because they fulfil roles and assume responsibilities that the group values and recognises as leadership within their organisational context.

One of the principal roles for leaders, according to this theoretical perspective, is that of “meaning maker”. Organisational problems are thought to arise when those within the organisation play their parts badly (i.e., they don’t behave in the manner expected of them), when the organisation’s symbols lose their meaning, or when its heroes, ceremonies, and rituals lose their potency (Bolman and Deal, 2003). Under these conditions, the role of leader is to rebuild the organisation’s culture – to restore the potency of its symbols, its rituals, heroes and ceremonies - by assisting the organisation to reinterpret and find meaning in its array of cultural artefacts.

Central to the leader’s efforts to fulfil this role are his or her awareness of (a) the organisation’s distinctive pattern of values and beliefs, (b) the ways these values and beliefs are (could be) represented and constructed in the organisation’s cultural artefacts (its heroes, ritual, ceremonies, symbols and the like), and (c) his or her ability to create symbols that inspire and communicate the organisation’s unique capabilities and mission for those within and outside the organisation.

Leadership development from this perspective, therefore, must ***assist individuals to develop a deep understanding of the nature of organisational culture, and of the ways in which individuals can act to “mould, reshape and transform culture in line with institutional objectives”*** (Middlehurst, 1993, p. 37).

While by no means comprehensive, this brief exploration of the various ways in which leadership is constructed and understood clearly highlights the challenge for those interested in developing leadership capability. It is not a simple process. It is not just a matter of developing the professional knowledge, skills, and capabilities of those appointed or aspiring to formal leadership positions. Rather, it is a complex, multifaceted process that must focus on the development of individuals as well as the organisational contexts in which they are called to operate.

In developing individuals, due attention must be given to the development of the task or domain knowledge that they require to effectively fulfil the responsibilities of their positions, as well as to the development of the personal and interpersonal knowledge and skills that they will require to effectively work with, and influence, others.

In developing the organisational contexts in which leaders must operate, due attention must be given to the structural, human, political and cultural dimensions of these contexts, and to the systemic nature of them (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Failure to recognise that changes made in one part of an organisational system will have an impact on other parts of the system, inevitably leads to organisational environments that stifle rather than enable the development of leadership capability.

Developing Leadership Capability in Learning and Teaching: The Current Situation

While there is a growing literature on “leadership” in higher education, relatively little of this literature focuses on the specific issue of *developing* leadership capability (see for example, Moses and Roe, 1990; Green and McDade, 1991; Middlehurst, 1993; Fender, 1993; UCoSDA, 1994; Ramsden, 1998; Marshall, 2001; Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005) and even less on the *development* of leadership capability in *learning and teaching*.

Most of the studies that attempt to address the latter issue are limited, in that they narrowly focus on developing an understanding of the knowledge, skills and capabilities required by leaders of learning and teaching (i.e., they focus on “what” to develop - see for example Stark, 2002; Stark, Briggs, & Rowland-Poplowski, 2002) and they are relatively silent on the question of “how” such leaders might be developed. Two current studies, one by Biggs (forthcoming) in the United Kingdom, the other by Marshall, Orrell, & Thomas (forthcoming) in Australia, both aim to address this deficiency.

Preliminary findings from the Marshall, Orrell and Thomas study indicate that efforts to develop leadership capability in higher education, in particular in relation to learning and teaching, vary widely across institutions within the sector.

While some focus on further developing individuals’ knowledge, skills, and capabilities *within their discipline* (i.e., developing their substantive subject knowledge - knowledge of facts, concepts, theories, frameworks, as well as their syntactic subject knowledge – knowledge about the ways in which subject knowledge is generated and verified), others focus on further developing individuals’ knowledge, skills and capabilities as *teachers* by enhancing their understanding of learners and learning, teachers and teaching, curriculum and pedagogy, and the contexts within which, and the technologies by which, they teach.

A focus on further developing individuals' knowledge, skills and capabilities as *leaders* by enhancing their understanding of, and skills in, "the tasks" which have been identified with effective leadership (e.g., establishing direction, planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, monitoring and problem-solving) is evident in many institutions, while programs aimed at developing greater *personal and interpersonal awareness* to assist individuals to better manage the emotional and social aspects of working with and leading others, are still somewhat of a rarity across the sector.

It is interesting to note, however, that while this variety of programs reflects the broad areas in need of development identified earlier, it is evident that across the sector, little effort appears to be made to integrate such programs to ensure that explorations of leadership and leadership development are grounded in discussions and efforts to improve learning and teaching.

Developing *leadership* for learning and teaching is often treated (and organised) as a separate activity from developing one's professional capability as a *teacher and learner*, and focuses upon those already appointed to formal positions of responsibility in teaching and learning (although some target those likely to succeed) rather than all members of the university community.

It is often understood as something that takes place in-service; just-in-time, and via a variety of loosely-coupled (if at all) interventions such as seminars, conferences, training programs, where participation in such programs generally remains voluntary, and typically focused on developing the capability of individuals, rather than both the individuals and the organisational contexts in which they are to operate.

While few studies have attempted to formally evaluate the success of such programs from the point of view of their impact on professional practice and/or student learning (e.g., Marshall, 2001; Dearn, Fraser & Ryan, 2002; Prosser *et.al.*, 2006), it seems reasonable to suggest, given (a) the current high levels of interest in improving leadership in higher education, and in particular in relation to learning and teaching, and (b) the fact that such programs have been widely available in the higher education sector in Australia for well over ten years, that these efforts have not been as effective as we might have liked.

How might we do better?

Developing Leadership Capability in Learning and Teaching: A Proposal for the Future

The answer to this question is complex and not immediately obvious. However, from the discussion of the different approaches to conceptualising leadership and leadership development provided above, and the extensive literature on large-scale, sector-wide educational change (see for example, McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Fullan, 2001) a few guiding principles can be developed (see Table 1).

The first of these concerns the construct of "leadership in learning and teaching" itself. **If we are to develop "leadership capability in learning and teaching" then we need to be clear from the outset what it is that we are aiming to develop.** While much has been written about "leadership" in general (see above), the notion of "leadership in learning and teaching" is greatly under-theorised. Relatively little

Table 1
Principles to Guide the Development of Leadership Capability for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Efforts to develop leadership capability in learning and teaching in higher education need to:

1. be grounded in a clear understanding of what “leadership in learning and teaching” is
2. be focussed on developing the capability of *all* those involved in planning, implementing, or evaluating learning and teaching and/or the organisational environments in which learning and teaching occurs
3. be focussed on assisting individuals to develop knowledge and skills in each of the eight principal knowledge domains associated with leading learning and teaching
4. ensure that professional learning opportunities for those involved in leadership of learning and teaching are routinely and systematically offered as part of each institution’s professional learning program for staff, and at appropriate times and in appropriate ways to meet the changing career development needs of staff.
5. be focussed on developing the organisational environment within which leadership for learning and teaching is to occur as well as on developing the individuals involved.

systematic research has been undertaken to examine this notion, so our current understanding of what it is, how it should be developed, how it should be measured, and what indicators and standards should be used to evaluate performance, is very poor.

If we were to transfer our understandings of “leadership” in other contexts to “leadership in learning and teaching”, we might answer the first of these questions by arguing that leaders of learning and teaching: (a) have a particular set of qualities or characteristics that enable them to be effective in their role; (b) engage in particular task-oriented and people-oriented behaviours; (c) adopt different patterns or styles of behaviour to meet the needs of different situations; and/or (d) seek to challenge and transform followers’ expectations.

But what are these qualities and characteristics, - these task- and people-oriented behaviours in relation to leadership in learning and teaching? How do leaders of learning and teaching adapt their approaches to leadership in order to meet the needs of different circumstances, and to challenge and transform their followers’ expectations in relation to what it means to teach and to learn?

More importantly, from the perspective of being able to evaluate performance and the effectiveness of any efforts that we might take to develop leadership capability in learning and teaching: What might be appropriate indicators, measures and standards for success?

It seems to me that **an essential part of the process of developing leadership capability in learning and teaching is to develop an active community of scholars working to resolve these dilemmas.**

To do so, however, we need to address some major obstacles associated with what is deemed “valuable” and what “counts” as research in our disciplines. Often pedagogical research, or research aimed at improving pedagogical practice within our disciplines is considered less important than pure or applied research in the discipline itself. A range of barriers: (a) *structural* (sectoral and institutional level rules for what does or does not count as research, and how much it may or may not count towards assessments of research performance), (b) *human* (lack of scholarship in the pedagogy of our disciplines to be able to define and undertake high quality research in this area), (c) *political* (heads of department and deans who advise staff not to “waste their time or careers” on such research as its “not the main game”), and (d) *cultural* (such as taken-for-granted and untested assumptions that we already know the answers to these questions), act as deterrents to research in this area.

DEST and bodies like the Carrick Institute have important roles to play at a national level in addressing these issues. They can do so to the extent that their individual missions allow, by ensuring that (a) pedagogical research or research aimed at improving pedagogical practice are identified as areas of research priority in their policies and programs; (b) funding is available to support such research through the various funding agencies or programs over which they have control, (c) the outcomes of such research can be counted, with the same weighting or value as any other research outcomes in any discipline area; and (d) quality research in this area is recognised and rewarded at a national level for the significant contribution that it makes to building the capability and quality of the nation’s higher education system. Collectively, such efforts will help to ensure that appropriate incentives are in place at the sectoral level to encourage institutions and individuals to engage with, or undertake such research.

The second critical principle for us to observe in our efforts to develop leadership capability in learning and teaching is to **focus on developing the capability of all those involved in planning, implementing, or evaluating learning and teaching and/or the organisational environment in which learning and teaching occurs**

But who are the individuals involved and in what ways do they need to be developed?

Before proceeding to examine these questions or make any further recommendations as to how leadership for learning and teaching might be developed, in the absence of any agreed construct of “leadership for learning and teaching”, it is necessary for me to make clear that the construct of “leadership” that lies behind my thinking, was first articulated by Kotter in 1990. While this construct of “leadership” was not developed from data collected exclusively in the higher education sector, or in relation to learning and teaching in particular, it has, in my experience of using it with a wide range of academic and professional staff involved in learning and teaching, considerable face validity.

According to Kotter (1990), leadership, like management, involves “deciding what needs to be done, creating networks of people and relationships that can accomplish [the] agenda, and then trying to ensure that those people actually get the job done” (p.5). What distinguishes leadership from management is that the leader focuses on the long-term; on establishing direction and broad strategies for change, and working with people to make meaning of the change and to garner their commitment to realising the change. Managers on the other hand, focus on the short to immediate term, developing plans and actions to enable all involved to know what needs to be done, how it will be done, who will do what, how progress will be monitored, and how

problems will be resolved should they arise. Leadership and management, therefore, while different, are inextricably linked – two sides of the one coin. For Kotter (1990) it makes no sense to talk about individuals who are leaders or who are managers, but rather, to talk about the relative degree to which individuals exhibit leadership or management behaviour.

If one adopts this view of leadership, then there is clearly a wide range of individuals in higher education institutions who exercise leadership roles in relation to learning and teaching. First, there are those in, or likely to be appointed to, formal positions of leadership responsibility (e.g., Program Coordinators, Heads of Department, Deans of Faculty, PVC/DVC (L&T)). Second, there are mainstream academic staff or those with no formal responsibility for leading and managing learning and teaching, outside their roles as convenors of individual units of study. Third, there are the host of professional staff who do not hold academic appointments but who are actively involved in the planning and decision making processes associated with the development of the organisational contexts in which learning and teaching occurs (e.g., department / faculty / central administrators; student learning service professionals, librarians, IT specialists, facilities managers, and laboratory managers/technicians).

While the organisational scope of their responsibilities may differ, and the particular contexts and foci for leadership vary between each of these cohorts of staff (see Table 2), the essential challenges to:

Table 2
Foci for Leadership by Cohort of Staff

Cohort of Staff	Foci for Leadership
Academic Staff Appointed to Formal Leadership Positions in Learning and Teaching	<p><i>Institution or Organisational Unit (Department / Faculty)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and quality assurance of courses and curricula • program marketing; • recruitment, selection, and support of students • recruitment, selection, and development of staff • development and maintenance of learning and teaching spaces and equipment; • development of viable financial models to underpin chosen learning and teaching strategies
Mainstream Academic Staff Responsible for Convening one or more Units of Study	<p><i>Unit of Study</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose of the unit of study & relationship to other units • learning objectives for the unit • content, instructional strategies, and learning activities for the unit • assessment and feedback strategies for the unit • formative and summative evaluation strategies for the unit
Professional Staff (those holding non-academic appointments)	<p><i>Specific Issues</i></p> <p>Provide expert advice and support in their areas of professional expertise to enable others with specific responsibilities for learning and teaching development, whether at the unit, program, department, faculty or institutional levels, to make informed decisions about future directions and strategies in their efforts to develop/improve learning, teaching and the student experience.</p>

- *establish a direction* for change or development,
- *develop a plan, strategy, and organisational arrangements* to realise the change,
- *make meaning* of the direction, plan, and strategy for key stakeholders (e.g., staff, students, members of professional registration boards, and the like) to ensure that they can, and know how to, contribute in meaningful ways;
- *monitor progress* against the stated goal and plan, and
- where necessary, *take corrective action* to ensure greater alignment between intended and actual outcomes

remain common for all.

Based on this analysis, eight broad domains of knowledge seem to be relevant in developing the capability of those individuals involved in “leading learning and teaching”. Knowledge and skills in:

- their discipline
- learning and teaching
- leading and working in teaching and learning teams
- managing learning and teaching development projects
- leading and managing an organisational unit
- organisational and environmental analysis
- organisational change
- social and interpersonal interactions

However, individuals will have different learning needs depending on the nature of their appointment and the stage of their career. For example, academic staff and others who have particular responsibilities for designing, developing, implementing or evaluating learning, teaching or curricula would benefit from opportunities early in and throughout their career to develop their knowledge and skills in:

- *learning and teaching* (generally and within the discipline of interest)
 - how people learn (different theories of learning)
 - implications for teaching,
- *program and curriculum design, development, and implementation*
 - how to conduct analyses to determine student’ learning needs
 - how to develop appropriate instructional strategies to meet students’ learning needs
 - how to develop assessment and feedback strategies to support learning students’ learning
- *program, curriculum, and teaching evaluation*
 - how to design effective strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching or different programs or units of study.

As staff are expected to work more regularly in teams and to assume responsibilities for leading whole programs of study and/or learning and teaching development projects, they would benefit from opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills in:

- leading and working in teams
 - how to effectively establish, maintain and dismantle a team
 - how to draw on and utilise the expertise within a team to realise team goals
- managing learning and teaching development projects
 - how to effectively define a project, secure competitive funding for a project, establish the organisational infrastructure required to support a project

(including defining roles and responsibilities of project staff, recruiting and selecting staff, inducting and managing the performance of staff); monitor team performance; disseminate and embed the results of a project in everyday practice; acquit a project

Later still, when opportunities arise for individuals to take on the role of head of department or dean of faculty, opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills in leading and managing the development of an organisational unit to support improved or high quality practices in learning and teaching would be of great benefit. In particular, opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in:

- *leadership of learning and teaching*
 - how to develop a sense of direction for change and/or development of learning and teaching programs and/or practices
 - how to make meaning of any proposed change or development in learning and teaching programs and /or practices for key stakeholder groups (students, staff, professional registration bodies and the like)
 - how to motivate and inspire staff to commit to a collective endeavour to further develop the department/faculty's learning and teaching programs and/or practices
- *management of learning and teaching*
 - how to develop strategic and operational plans for learning and teaching
 - how to organise and staff a department/faculty to support effective learning and teaching
 - how to design and implement effective strategies for monitoring and improving performance in learning and teaching at individual and organisational unit levels

Regardless of one's stage of career, or the nature or level of one's appointment, individuals looking to develop their capability for leadership in learning and teaching would benefit from opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in organisational and environmental analysis, organisational change, and social and interpersonal awareness.

As Kotter (1990) has observed, the "bottom-line" of leadership is to effect change (p.6). But before one can develop a direction for change, or a plan, structure, or strategy to realise a change, one needs to develop a keen understanding of the current and likely future state of affairs within and outside one's organisation. To do this, individuals need highly developed skills in organisational and environmental analysis. Opportunities for individuals to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and assess current and likely future strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in, or in relation to, their organisation's goals, strategies, infra-structure, and practices in relation to learning and teaching, would be of particular benefit.

Having developed a sense of how their organisation's learning and teaching programs and practice might need to change and/or develop, individuals with the responsibility for leading such learning and teaching development process at an organisational unit (department or faculty) or institutional level, must develop and implement an appropriate plan and strategy for realising the desired changes. This is a multi-faceted process requiring extensive knowledge, skill and experience in organisational change. While much can be learned from experience, having a variety of conceptual frameworks to help guide one's planning and decision-making processes can significantly increase the likely effectiveness of one's organisational change strategy (Bolman and Deal, 2003).

Central to our effectiveness in learning and teaching, or leadership and management, is our capacity to develop and maintain productive and harmonious working relationships with others. An inability to (a) monitor the effect of our own decisions and behaviour on others, and (b) modify our behaviour appropriately to maintain appropriate and effective working relationships can lead to poor learning outcomes for students and significantly undermine our capacity to lead. So, if leadership is a social attribution as asserted by the social exchange theorists (see Blau, 1964; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1987), then those involved in the leadership of learning and teaching would benefit from opportunities to further develop their social and interpersonal knowledge and skills, including their capacity to motivate, influence, persuade, coach and collaborate with others.

To ensure the effectiveness of efforts to provide learning opportunities of the type described above, it will be essential for those responsible to **ensure that such opportunities are routinely and systematically offered as part of each institution's professional learning program for staff, and at appropriate times and in appropriate ways to meet the changing career development needs of staff**. Thus, the development of leadership capability for learning and teaching should be seen as beginning with induction and orientation processes for new staff, and continuing throughout one's career via a series of appropriately sequenced and integrated learning opportunities, embracing each of the eight key domains of learning identified above.

Encouraging and convincing staff of the need or value of pursuing such learning won't be easy. In the absence of a culture within the academy that recognises leadership and management *as part of* teaching, learning, and research, and thus, as an integral part of every academic's work, it is unlikely that individuals will prioritize development in these areas. If however, individuals do recognise the need for development in these areas, they will undoubtedly encounter difficulties in finding appropriate learning opportunities, since, as identified earlier, many – perhaps most - higher education institutions today, organise professional learning opportunities in learning, teaching, leadership, organisational analysis, and social and interpersonal awareness as if they are separate and unrelated activities, leaving it to the individual to draw the appropriate connections between each of these core areas of learning.

Thus, if we are to effectively develop leadership capability in learning and teaching, we must also **focus our attention on developing the organisational environment within which leadership for learning and teaching is to occur**. We must *create institutional cultures* that clearly define for all key stakeholders, the nature of leadership in learning and teaching, and tangibly, as well as rhetorically, *value* same.

We must *establish clear expectations* that leadership in learning and teaching *is an integral part* of every academic's (and some professional staff's) jobs. To do so we might:

- *ensure* that leadership in learning and teaching features in the *job descriptions, position classification standards, recruitment and selection criteria, performance indicators, promotion criteria* of all academic staff
- *develop and implement appropriate indicators, measures and standards* for leadership in learning and teaching, that can be used to support performance management, promotion, and other career development processes
- *develop and implement workload models* that recognise and make provision for the legitimate (and often time-consuming) role of leadership in learning and teaching

- *develop and implement appropriate ways of recognising and rewarding all staff who perform well in leading learning and teaching, not only those in formal positions of leadership or management responsibility.*

Further, we need to ensure that our institutional cultures reinforce the belief that preparing oneself for one's leadership role in learning and teaching is an integral part of preparing oneself for one's broader role. To do so we might reconsider the structure, organisation, content, and processes associated with our current professional learning strategies for staff, and re-develop them to ensure that all staff have the opportunity, and the expectation, to develop, through appropriate *pre-service and in-service* professional development, the knowledge and skills identified above as underpinning effective leadership in learning and teaching. To this end we may need to reconsider:

- *how our institutions currently provide professional learning opportunities for staff (or prospective staff), both prior to, and after they take up appointments* (e.g., we may need to re-think the way we structure PhD programs or induction and orientation programs for adjunct staff, to ensure that those involved develop as part of their postgraduate experience or induction and orientation experience, knowledge, skills and experience in leading learning and teaching appropriate to the early stage of their careers)
- *how our institutions recognise and reward staff and their organisational units for their participation in, or for supporting participation in, professional learning aimed at developing leadership in learning and teaching* (e.g., we might reconsider our institutional funding policies and practices to ensure that they provide appropriate incentives, rewards, and support for organisational units to commit time, effort and energy to developing, or supporting the development of leadership in learning and teaching in an ongoing and systematic way)

While far from a comprehensive discussion of how institutions might need to develop their organisational environments to support the development of leadership in learning and teaching, the actions described above illustrate the complexity of the task. To ensure that our efforts are effective, we will need to ensure that we adopt an approach that:

- is **systemic** (i.e., it focuses on developing the whole system in which leadership of learning and teaching needs to be practised, including development at the *sectoral, institutional, organisational unit* (e.g., faculty, school, department, office) and *individual* levels).
- is **multi-faceted** (i.e., focus on developing all aspects of the system – structural, human, political, cultural, technological, and so on)
- is **coherent** (i.e., where the actions taken at one level or in one part of the system mutually support, rather than weaken or undermine, the actions taken in another. For example, it will be necessary to ensure that any criteria and standards that might be developed and used for assessing performance in leadership of learning and teaching at institutional and organisational unit levels, cohere with those which might be developed at the sectoral level).
- **uses a variety of policy instruments** to provide (a) the “short-term wins” that stakeholders will be expecting and need to remain motivated and committed to the process of change (e.g., mandates, inducements, dissemination strategies) as well as (b) the “long-term cultural change” necessary for sustainable development (e.g., system changing and capacity building strategies). For

specific details of each of these different forms of policy instrument see McDonnell & Elmore (1987), and

- is **guided by the principles of critical action learning** to ensure that decision making, strategy, and actions associated with the processes of developing organisational environments to support leadership for learning and teaching are regularly subject to critical review and revision on the basis of scholarship in the area, and not just taken-for-granted assumptions about best practice.

Failure to address the condition of the organisational environments in which leadership in learning and teaching is to be practised, may render efforts directed at developing the individuals involved, ineffective.

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