BENCHMARK FRAMEWORK FOR DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP
Issues raised from an online collaborative session 15.05.2103

THEME	QUESTION	RESPONSE
ENGAGE for formal leader pro-active support	Would senior management be an inhibitor to DL?	• Our experience is that DL is more effective when it has the support of senior leader, eg for the provision of for resources-eg for a COP • From our experience at CQU I agree • If DL needs support from traditional leaders, but they think their 'power' is threatened, it could be hard to get the process started • It is extremely important for formal leaders to support-hence Tenet 1 Engage Benchmarking • this had led Gronn to re-term DL as hybrid leadership • there is need to introduce the hybrid concept to those who are functioning in hierarchical roles • it is important to emphasise that DL is not a replacement for formal leadership • A key from research studies highlights the importance of formal leaders knowing when to step in and when to stand back to create space for leading from others to emerge • It is most effective when it has formal leadership support • For my organisation we would need all senior leaders to be aboard and linked to other strategies. • Some staff may react against this as they may not see that they have the capacity to do more as implied through a greater distribution of leadership work • It is a catch 22, you need a leader to lead the DL process + senior leader to champion process. • What we found is that the leadership role in the CoPs is important. There is need for people to push a good idea for change but also need for senior leadership support for the idea • This suggests the need to include a benchmark to identify the need for lead of a project

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ENABLE an institutional context of trust and culture of respect	Would not DL be a reflection of institutional climate in relation to what academics and staff are able to pursue in terms of decisions or recommendations?	- By its distributed nature it has to work without institutional support but its effectiveness will be reduced if there is no institutional support - It is both - it already exists (ie the potential for leadership) and it needs some intentional management. - Research from schools shows both are evident. - Leithwood argues for the need of intentionality. The structure of projects can provide this intentionality - yes I have always been interested in how you manage for distributed leadership - I am thinking in terms of what Cohen, March, & Olsen (1972) and Birnbuam (1988) called organizational garbage can or anarchic organizations both talk about fluid participation based on self-vested interest. Participation at the formal and the informal level thus have an interest challenge to trust and rationale for collegiality - People need to be open, to feel safe, that requires an environment in which trust exists

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PD to explain DL	How organic is distributed leadership and how 'organised' is it? eg. providing PD for staff etc	- One assumption I have found in my research of DL is that we can't assume people understand what DL is - For CoPs we talk about organic, nurtured & intentional as different emergent/start-up approach - I agree, it takes a while for the message about DL to get through – it is about facilitating peoples' leadership skills - You will note that the ASERT identifies the important role for PD. - Because DL is a very different concept from individual (heroic) leaders this needs PD - Our focus is on how DL can be enabled, so while DL can be organic, our focus has been on the factors that can enable, evaluate it. - We have found that DL needs facilitation - DL is applicable in HE because we can pinpoint organic examples – our emphasis is on how to assist and enable - Is a possible way to start is to focus on sub-units within a University where there is anecdotal evidence to suggest a distribution of sources of productive influence? The reason I raise is this due to the importance of culture, which in large orgs needs to be understood through its sub-cultures - I agree with Howard's suggestion. This is a good constructivist approach to introducing DL - It is how the Academy used to work collegially before it became more corporate and hierarchical

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participation by staff contributing their expertise to decision making	To extent does distributed leadership imply distributed decision making	- We have studied this in the context of L&T projects - where participants are often "free" to make decisions - The ASERT refers to different approaches to decision making – decision making, participating in decision making, contributing to decision making, engaging in decision-making – it will depend on what suits the institution - We have not been categorical because of the need to ensure that formal leaders don't reject DL - This needs more work - This comes back to Institutional readiness - Not necessarily. A person/ individual could take the lead on making a decision - It can be either - it may depend on the methodology you adopt, but certainly with PAR is organic - Managing up is always important - Need people working at multiple levels to engage in change

THEME	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	Is Institutional support required to enable DL to work Organisations decide to adopt element - therefore question is can introduce elements almost in complete ignorance of total model - and measure	• DL is appropriate for the HE sector because it employs people on the basis of their knowledge and thus has traditionally been structured to enable participation. This is different from the current more managerialist approach • DL is an excellent idea, but it is bounded by the formal university governance structure and the climate fostering participation vis a vis capacity to impact decision making. Possibly, this may be my USA experience coming to the fore, but DL, in my experience, has been used to augment decision capacity or subverted to meet other less, positive needs. • The ASERT identifies 16 elements, presented as a matrix to try to identify that all the elements need to be focused on When looking at benchmarks we identify all of the factors. The benchmarks have been designed so that an Institution can identify what they have and what they are not so effective in. The hope is that this introduces the institution to concept that there are other elements they need to look a
ENACT The design of participative processes to encourage and support engagement	Are CoPs a model of DL?	• We have not articulated CoPs as a DL practice, they operate on DL principles but we have not articulated this -we have concentrated on CoPs to share good practice • I've never thought to promote discussion of DL with Senior Leaders • Communities of Practice operate on DL principles - is a given - but do not articulate this • The ASERT identifies CoPs as an enabling action for DL

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EMERGENT **The action research, reflective, cycles of development**	Can DL be used in various contexts?	• DL can be useful as a strategy for a national OLT project. • The 'distributed' nature driving change in one uni can draw support & insight from colleagues in another uni. • Agreed, being successful in similar context gives ideas re process to implement in another context • The project has been focussed on individual institutions in DL but it is an interesting question to see how DL can assist project that working across institutions. • This goes to the question of how the DL enabling and evaluating frameworks could be useful outside the L&T focus • Yes, the model is useful in a range of situations.
EVALUATE Need to articulate purpose of DL and use multiple sources of evidence to evaluate, including reward and recognition of individual input	what might enhance or reduce the effectiveness of the draft benchmarking framework	• I think the introduction could include a section on how the benchmark could be used especially with comments on its flexible adaptation to different contexts • Re the benchmark related to participation in L&T being recognised and rewarded, perhaps it needs to be clearer that the staff themselves recognise how they have benefitted from the leadership opportunities? • I wonder if there is an appreciative approach to employing this sort of benchmarking process. Instead of asking, "Have you done X?" or how well have you done it? How about "when have you done X?" • Good point, as the potential for leadership and unseen leadership practice may go under the official radar