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**Learning & Teaching**

## **Final Report**

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Lessons learnt:  
identifying synergies in distributed leadership projects

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## List of acronyms

ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council Limited
AF	Action Framework
ASERT	Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool
CoP	Community of Practice
DL	Distributed Leadership
DLM	Distributed Leadership Matrix
LCDF	Leadership Capacity Development Framework
LEAP	Leaders in Effective Assessment Practice
L&T	Learning and Teaching
GREEN	Growing, Reflecting, Enabling, Engaging and Networking
PACED	Participative, Acknowledged, Collaborative, Engaged, Developed
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
REALISED	Recognition, Encouragement, Acknowledged, Leadership, Integrated, Systems, Environment, Dissemination
RMIT	RMIT University
SER	Self-Enabling Reflective

## Acknowledgements

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## Executive summary

The aim of this project was to identify a common understanding of how distributed leadership is conceptualised and practiced in the Australian higher education sector in learning and teaching.

The objectives of this project were to:

- identify the synergies between the outcomes of four ALTC Projects funded as Institutional Leadership (Distributed) Grants by the partner institutions
- develop a distributed leadership matrix of contextual conditions and leadership skills needed to achieve an effective distributed leadership process
- develop a flexible self-evaluative tool to encourage and support a distributed leadership approach to learning and teaching improvements.

The project commenced in November 2009 and proceeded through three action research cycles before being completed in June 2011. The project consolidated the importance of four factors.

- i) A focus on *actions* rather than simply processes or structures.
- ii) The design of a *reflective* process to scaffold action through cycles of change as new issues and ideas emerge.
- iii) Development of a dynamic process to *enable* distributed leadership that goes beyond evaluation.
- iv) Recognition of the *hybrid* nature of distributed leadership that values working alongside, rather than replacing formal leaders.

The project produced a resource in the form of a two-part Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool to be used to assist institutions that are considering the adoption of a distributed leadership process. Part 1 of the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool is identified as an Action framework. This provides a description of how the philosophy and principles that underpin distributed leadership are identified in terms of the dimensions, values and criteria for distributed leadership. The cells that are created through the intersection of these dimensions, values and criteria identify actions required to use a distributed leadership process to achieve change. Part 2 of the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool is a Self Enabling Reflective process of scaffolded reflective prompts to assist participants in identifying actions needed to move towards a more distributed leadership approach.

## 1 Introduction

Distributed leadership is being recognised in a variety of developed countries as an emergent leadership concept relevant to the culture of the educational sector as a whole (primary, secondary and higher education).

This project explored the synergies between four funded projects using a distributed leadership approach to building leadership capacity in learning and teaching. Three of these projects used an issue-based approach (assessment, on-line learning and student feedback) while the fourth had used a people-based approach to improve assessment practice (faculty scholars). These initial projects were:

### **RMIT University ALTC Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-7 *Developing multi-level leadership for excellence in learning and teaching***

Problem Addressed:

The lack of clarity at institutional level in relation to leadership and responsibility for use of student feedback, the multiplicity of staff involved in the exercise and the possibility that many staff members lacked appropriate skills to undertake the task effectively.

Project outcome:

Participative, accredited, collaborative, engaged, devolved (PACED) distributed leadership model for the use of student feedback to enhance student learning and teaching practice. This model is supported by a recognition, encouragement, acknowledgment, leadership, integrated, systems, environment and dissemination (REALISED) change management model.

### **University of Wollongong ALTC Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-9 *Distributive leadership for learning and teaching; developing the faculty scholar model***

Problem addressed:

The need for the strategic development of potential leaders for teaching and learning across multiple levels of the university to support succession planning was addressed through the development and trial of a leadership capacity development framework (LCDF).

Project outcome:

Growing, reflecting, enabling, engaging and networking (GREEN) leadership capacity development framework for faculty scholars. This framework was further developed by Flinders University together with partner universities (Smigiel et al 2011).



**Macquarie University ALTC Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-12**  
***Leaders in effective assessment practice***

Problem addressed:

The need to incorporate, into a coherent institute-wide framework, the existing assessment-related good practices of individual lecturers.

Project outcome:

Leaders of effective assessment practice (LEAP) model that combines the synergies of distributed leadership with participatory action research (PAR) to achieve sustainable outcomes.

**Australian Catholic University ALTC Leadership for Excellence Project**  
**LE6-8 *Development of distributed institutional leadership capacity in online learning and teaching***

Problem addressed:

The development of distributed institutional leadership capacity in the pedagogical and evaluative dimensions of online teaching and learning in the university. Pedagogical dimensions were defined as those relating to the principles and practice of online teaching and learning, at both design and implementation stages. Evaluative dimensions referred to the evaluation of online teaching and learning design, materials, processes, practices, outcomes and impacts.

Project outcomes:

Distributed leadership capacity building training and support strategic plan for online learning built on the Wenger theories of knowledge sharing within organisations, which has become an embedded formally funded position within each faculty.

A critical common factor identified during this analysis was the need to support a complex interplay of participants from across the institution between formal managers and formal and informal leaders at all levels of the institution and between academics, professionals and administrative personnel involved in a range of functions.

## 2 Approach and methodology

### 2.1 Approach

The project based its theoretical framework on the conclusion reached at the first ALTC colloquium on distributed leadership, that, a distributed model of leadership is needed in higher education (ALTC Colloquium 2006).

The project adopted the ALTC concept of distributed leadership as focused on operationalising approaches that are multi-level and institution-wide as distinct from positional/structural leadership that focuses on various levels of academic leadership, or frameworks for academic leadership. It justified this approach as capacity development for both formal and informal leadership within higher education institutions.

### 2.2 Methodology

The methodological framework that underpinned the project built on the common methods and strategies of an action research methodology and participant reflection that was used in the four initial projects. This approach received ethics approval from the RMIT Business research ethics committee in 2010 (Project No. 1000114) and based on this similar ethics approval was granted by the research ethics committees in each of the partner institutions.

Over an eighteen month period the project used a participatory and inquiry-based action research methodology of reflexive inquiry (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). This provided the opportunity to implement and research change simultaneously using action research cycles of planning, acting, observing/ reflecting and replanning.

The action research methodology offered the benefit of an emphasis upon collaboration and collegiality. This was considered essential to this multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary, multi-university and multi-campus project. It also enabled feedback from a broad array of leaders in learning and teaching from a diverse array of Australian higher education institutions.

The project activities that contributed to the action research approach included a series of project and reference group meetings, seminars and conference workshops and communities of practice (CoP) in each of the partner institutions including:

- project team monthly meetings online as well as four strategically timetabled face to face meetings (December 2009, May 2010, December 2010 and January 2011)
- reference group meetings (three - May 2010; December 2010 and February 2011). Each meeting was held in two parts to minimize disruption to reference group members. All meetings were held in Melbourne and in Sydney and included teleconferencing with reference group members from other states (Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland). Project team members attended these meetings
- communities of practice meetings were held in each of the partner universities

- feedback from leaders of *Learning and Teaching* from a cross section of Australian universities was obtained through workshops at two ALTC leadership project meetings (February 2010 and 2011)
- a conference showcase was held at the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) annual conference in June 2011
- a conference session was held at the Tertiary Education Management Conference (TEMC) annual conference in August 2011
- feedback was received at a workshop in February 2011 of a related distributed leadership ALTC leadership project LE10-1726 *Building distributed leadership in designing and implementing a quality management framework for an online learning environment* (Deakin University lead).

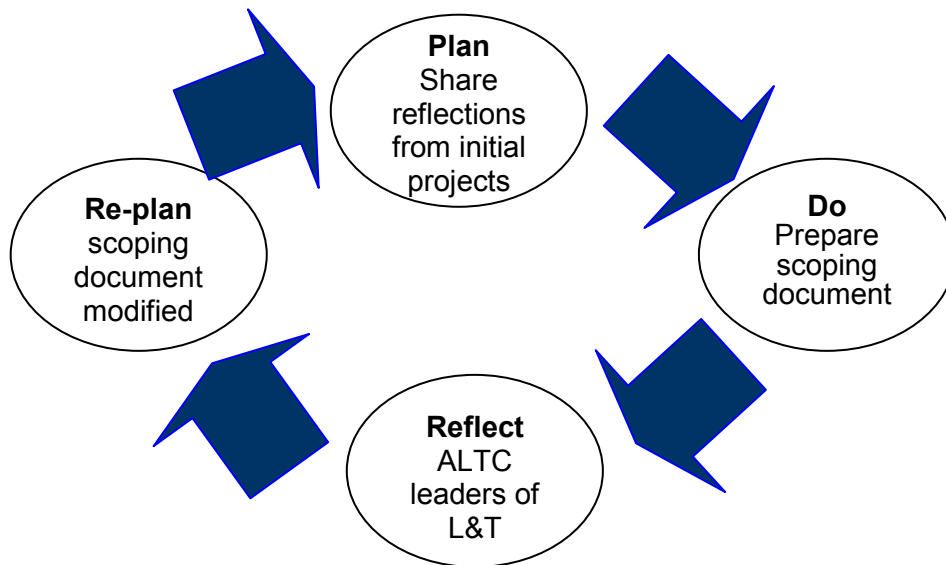
These activities are summarized below.

**Table 1 Action research activities 2009-2011**

Activity	Date	Participants
Project team face-to-face meetings	December 2009	4
	May 2010	4
	December 2010	4
	January 2011	4
Reference group meetings	May 2010	13
	December 2010	12
	February 2011	12
Communities of practice meetings Australian Catholic University University of Wollongong Macquarie University RMIT	June 8 2010	5
	June 9 2010	5
	June 9 2010	7
	June 15 2010	4
ALTC leadership project meetings	February 2010	28
	February 2011	30
HERDSA conference showcase	June 2011	20
TEMC conference seminar	August 2011	40
ALTC leadership project LE10-1726 seminar	February 2011	7

The great strength of the action research model was its inherent flexibility that enabled adaptation of the project in response to ongoing evaluation that was achieved through reflective practice of the project team and the reference group at each project phase. This resulted in the project proceeding through three action research cycles.

### 2.2.1 Action research cycle one: Scoping document



**Figure 1 Action research cycle one: Scoping document**

The planning phase of first action research cycle commenced at the first project team meeting with members sharing their reflections on the initial four projects, the models, frameworks and programs that resulted from these projects and the change processes implemented during the projects. The action arising from this was a scoping document of the synergies and similarities between the projects. The reflection phase of this cycle occurred with the project team presenting the main findings from the scoping exercise to a cross section of leaders in learning and teaching from recipient universities of ALTC funded leadership projects at the 2010 ALTC leadership project meeting. In order to validate the scoping document these leaders were asked to consider the applicability of the findings to their own institutions. Participants were asked to:

- using a 10 point scale, from not important to extremely important, to rate the importance of five variables (context, culture, change/development, activity and conflict resolution) for the achievement of an effective distributed leadership approach using examples from within their institution
- identify any additional variables that should be included
- identify any measures that have been developed to evidence the effectiveness of distributed leadership in their institution
- discuss the question of whether a distributed model of leadership is needed in higher education.

Nineteen written responses were received. Analysis of these responses was undertaken by the project team using a mixed method approach of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This identified that 42 per cent of respondents rated *context and culture* as very important or extremely important; 60 per cent rated *change/development* as very

important or extremely important, 68 per cent rated *activity* as very important or extremely important, but only 23 per cent rated *conflict resolution* as very important or extremely important.

The respondents grouped the variables into two categories, *context, culture, and conflict resolution*, which were all deemed to be important with means of between 7.3 and 7.5. The variables of change/development and activity had higher means of 8.6 and 8.9 respectively. The difference between the means of these two categories of variable suggests that the participants believed the variables of *change/development* and *activity* were more important than *context, culture* and *conflict resolution*. However care needs to be taken given the small sample size (n = 15-19). It is also not possible to distinguish the relative importance within the two categories as the intra-category differences are not significant because of the small population size.

The qualitative analysis showed a mixed response to the existence and effectiveness of examples of distributed leadership. Most examples were within (dispersed) faculty structures rather than at the (central) university level. Many participants mentioned formality and power associated with the higher levels of the structure rather than distributed leadership. There was also concern at the use of the term 'power' in the working definition used [viz, a distribution of power through the collegial sharing of knowledge, practice and reflection within the social context of the university (Wollongong LP)] as it was felt that the use of the word 'power' could sideline the argument around leadership. A number said that perhaps the notion of responsibility was more appropriate in this context.

There was little evidence of the effectiveness of distributed leadership in institutions, with most participants claiming that examples of distributed leadership were in their early stages and no measures of effectiveness had yet been developed. Some responses identified problems that have led to the cessation of some experiments with distributed leadership

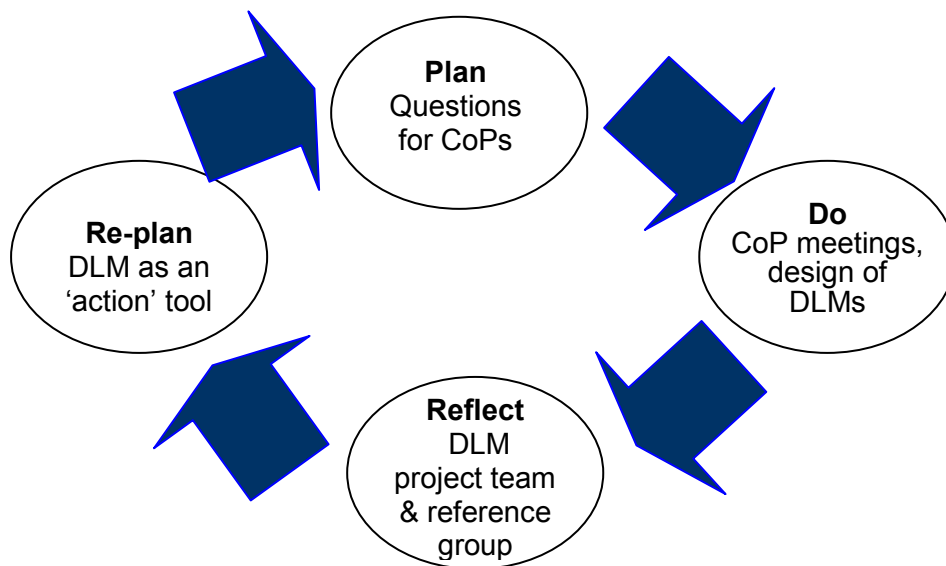
There was a mixed response to the questions related to the variables of distributed leadership. The main contextual factor mentioned was the interplay between formal leadership and authority. Many responses mentioned *culture* as an important variable, however, there were differences of opinion as to what *culture* constituted. Some mentioned *culture* as it relates to concepts of collaboration and autonomy, others saw it as relating to the specific nature of the deployment of distributed leadership e.g. online projects, mathematics projects etc. The variable *activity* was identified as a central factor by many participants, with some saying that it was important by definition. A number of comments stated that distributed leadership needs to have a shared purpose and outcome. There was some confusion with the *change and development* variable. Some responses suggested this be separated into two variables, while others focusing on the relevance of the *scale of change and development* required and others focused on the interplay between *change and development*. A number of participants made extended comments about the variable *conflict resolution*. This may reflect that for some, issues occurred with their experience of being part of a distributed leadership project which required some degree of conflict resolution. There were two groups of responses to this variable, one that felt that it should be intrinsic to the process of distributed leadership and another that processes need to be put in place where distributed leadership is being trialled to assist in preventing conflict from occurring.

In addition to the variables identified in the scoping document a number of other variables were suggested by participants including: identity (individuals/group), openness, trust, geography, respect and complexity/size of change.

Finally, the issue of the relationship between formal and distributed leadership was raised. For example, one group said that for distributed leadership to be successful it needs to be supported at the university level. A corollary of this comment from another group was that distributed leadership needs to be a bottom-up process. While another group felt that distributed leadership was not always the best model and in some cases other leadership models were more effective.

Based on this feedback the scoping document (Appendix 1) was modified by the project team and discussed with the reference group. This led to the second cycle of action research.

### 2.2.2 Action research cycle two: Distributed leadership matrices



**Figure 2 Action research cycle two: Distributed leadership matrices**

The second action research cycle commenced with the scoping document becoming the basis for the project team to probe their initial findings more deeply and to extend their review so as to draw upon a larger body of data. Consequently, a series of further questions were developed (see below) with the intent that they would be presented to the original participants representing the four original projects. These participants met as a community of practice at reflective workshops in each of their respective institutions. The current project team leader, in collaboration with the respective project team member from the particular institution, facilitated these workshops.

The questions for the CoPs, related both to the contextual conditions and leadership skills needed for distributed leadership, were:

- i) What was the focus of your project? What main external and internal factors encouraged you to implement this? How was your project influenced by university policy and university leadership?

- ii) What motivated you to become involved in the project? What previous engagement had you had with learning and teaching issues?
- iii) What challenges were there in developing a collaborative process?
- iv) What processes, factors and resources were most effectively (least effective or negative) in encouraging collaboration? How was conflict resolved within the group?
- v) What skills, personal traits, personal behaviours were most effective in encouraging collaboration to progress the project? What support would most assist new academics taking on a similar role to that you undertook?
- vi) What effect has your involvement in the project had on you as a leader in learning and teaching in your institution? What new relationships have you formed?
- vii) How has your involvement in the project affected your view of the leadership role of academics?
- viii) Any further comments you want to make?

A summary of the reflections from the CoP is presented in Appendix 2. This became the basis for a second phase of planning and action by the project team to produce two distributed leadership matrices, a Distributed Leadership Matrix of Dimensions and Inputs and a Distributed Leaders Matrix of Values and Practices.

### 2.2.3 Distributed leadership matrix of dimensions and inputs

The Distributed Leadership Matrix (DLM) of Dimensions and Inputs (Table 2) presents a map of the five inputs required by institutions to move from a centralised to a distributed concept of leadership and the five dimensions (and elements) of distributed leadership. The five inputs needed to move towards a distributed leadership approach were identified as: encouragement for involvement; creation of processes; development of shared leadership; provision of resources to aid collaborative opportunities and support for engagement. Each column of the DLM of Dimension and Inputs identifies the elements that make up a particular dimension, for example the elements for the dimension of 'Context' are found in the range from power to influence.

The DLM of Dimensions and Inputs provides institutions with the opportunity to map what inputs are needed to achieve the dimensions needed for distributed leadership. It supports the institutions' ability to identify the elements required to achieve each dimension by combining them vertically. It also provides the ability to identify how the elements are a factor of each input by combining them horizontally.

The DLM of Dimensions and Inputs identifies the five dimensions as follows:

- Context – where leadership moves from a reliance on power to that of influence. This requires encouraging involvement based on trust rather than regulation through creating a process by which positional leaders support staff with expertise. This requires formal leadership training to include shared leadership concepts, including distributed leadership. It needs resources in the form of finance and time for staff to engage in collaborative activities. It

further support for the engagement of staff by positional leaders (at all levels) to ensure that work-plans identify participant's contribution to collaborative activities

- Culture – where leadership moves from a reliance on control to one of autonomy. This can be achieved by encouraging involvement by identification within a university's visions and strategy of the value of staff expertise and through establishing decision-making processes that respect staff expertise. This encouragement can include staff engagement and representation in shared, decentralised decision-making committees. Resources to recognise personal and group contribution to collaborative activities are needed as well as support for participants through rewards/recognition that build upon the leadership expertise they have gained
- Change – where leadership is from the bottom-up and encourages greater participation by more staff. This includes encouraging interdependent multi-level involvement by creating processes that provide opportunity for practitioners to influence policy rather than policy being simply developed from the top and devolved down for implementation. In order to develop this shared leadership approach, there is a need for senior executives to demonstrate support for all stakeholders to be engaged. Resources in the form of mentoring and facilitation of collaboration are needed as well as systems and infrastructure to support engagement of all stakeholders
- Relationship Management – where leadership focuses on collective rather than individual identities. Participants are encouraged to self-identify as leaders as well as teachers and scholars, with processes created to encourage collaboration through means such as communities of practice and action research teams. Shared leadership should be facilitated by professional development activities as the philosophical and conceptual base for distributed leadership, as well as opportunities for dialogue and networking. Resources are provided that encourage regular meetings (both face-to-face and online) across the universities. Collective engagement is supported by the development of diagnostic tools through which outputs from the collaborative activity can be demonstrated
- Activity – where leadership assumes a shared purpose through cycles of change. It is essential that participants in distributed leadership are encouraged to become involved by planning activities following a process that facilitates participants' engagement in action research through cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Shared leadership is developed by encouraging reflection on previous action aimed to identify critical success factors and lessons learnt from previous action. Resources in the form of time (particularly for the reflective stage as this is often forgotten) costed as part of the project activity, coupled with support in the form of a skilled facilitator assisting participants through the action research process are needed.



**Table 2 Distributed leadership matrix of dimensions and inputs**

Inputs (required to move towards distributed leadership)	Dimensions (and elements) of distributed leadership				
	Context  From power to influence	Culture  From control to autonomy	Change  From top-down to interdependent, multi-level and bottom-up	Relationships  From individual to collective identity	Activity  Shared purpose through cycles of change
<b>Encourage Involvement</b>	Move from regulation to trust	Value staff expertise identified in university vision and strategy	Policy influenced by practice at multi-levels and multi-functions	Create opportunities for self-identification of participants as leaders as well as teachers/scholars	Establish action research cycle with identified plan, role, activity timetable and responsibilities
<b>Create Process</b>	Formal leaders to support informal leaders	Develop culture of respect for expertise	Introduce opportunities for practice to influence policy	Encourage collaborative groups	Development of action research cycles and reflective practice techniques and tools
<b>Develop Shared Leadership</b>	Formal leadership training to include distributed leadership	Encourage representation on decentralised committees	Senior executive support involve all stakeholders	Professional development workshop on distributed leadership	Encourage reflective practice as methodology
<b>Resource Collaborative opportunities</b>	Time and finance for collaborative activities	Leadership contribution recognized	Mentor and facilitate collaboration	Encourage regular meetings (face-to-face and online) & cross university networking	Fund time for reflective activities
<b>Support engagement</b>	Work-plans identify contribution	Leadership contribution rewarded	Systems and infrastructure support	Diagnostic tool to demonstrate outputs	Skilled facilitators

## 2.2.4 Distributed leadership matrix of values and practices

The DLM of Values and Practices (Table 3) presents a map of the four practices required to broaden leadership from a positional to a relational distributed leadership concept identifying values that underpin the five dimensions of distributed leadership. This change in emphasis from personal capabilities (skills, traits, behaviours) to practices recognises the fundamental change from an emphasis on leaders to leadership. It includes a focus on a relational perspective of leadership that draws from the relational literature. These practices for leadership were identified as:

- self-in-relation – emphasis on interdependence
- social interaction – ability to create conditions for collective learning by exercising certain strengths, abilities and relational skills
- collective learning – through learning conversations progressing through a four stage dialogue of ‘talking nice’, ‘talking tough’, ‘reflective dialogue’ and ‘generative dialogue’
- growth-in-connection – focus on mutuality where the boundary between self and others is more fluid and multi-directional. Movement occurs from mutual authenticity (bringing self into the interaction) to mutual empathy (hold onto self but also experience other’s reality) to mutual empowerment (each is in some way influenced or affected by the other, so that something new is created).

The DLM of Values and Practices presents institutions with the opportunity to map what practices or combination of practices need to be encouraged to achieve each of the values. The DLM of Values and Practices uses the five values thus moving from:

- a context of power to influence focuses on the acceptance of *trust* rather than relying on regulation as a basis for leadership. Participants need to be able to see their ‘self’ in relation to others and recognise their interdependence rather than being ego-centric. It can be achieved through a proactive and resilient approach to developing and sustaining social interactions. The focus needs to be on issues rather than positions to be presented and on growth to be achieved by participants working independently but also accepting responsibility for the collective.
- a culture of control to autonomy in which *respect* is present for the expertise of those involved. Participants need to be adaptable to new ideas, ambiguity, change and to recognise their peers. At the same time the expertise of each of the participants is recognised and valued. Participants who can work outside their comfort zones in order to grow find it easier to adapt to this culture.
- a top-down to bottom-up leadership style involves *recognition* of leadership capabilities of many more persons engaged in the institution than those in designated leadership positions. Participants who can mentor and encourage colleagues as well as being willing to share different philosophies are more comfortable with this. In order to grow, participants need to balance being forthright with being flexible.

- individual activities to *collaboration* involves recognition of the value of an amalgamation of individual's value of collective identity (conjoint agency) rather than simply as a sum of individual activity. Participants need to be forthright in bringing forward their views as an individual but to be prepared to be flexible in adapting these views to accommodate others so that they proceed beyond self-interest. Participants need to be willing to both listen and communicate. For growth, participants need to accept shared goals and not be authoritarian
- a shared purpose through cycles of change, involves *reflective practice* by both the individual and the group in which participants adopt a critique, rather than critical approach in order to achieve shared goals. The growth occurs through a focus on fostering mutual outcomes.

Based on the two distributed leadership matrices the project team met with the reference group in November and December 2010 to reflect on the implications of the DLMs for action. The issues that emerged from these meetings became pivotal for the next stage of the project and resulted in more emphasis being placed on the development of the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool. These issues were:

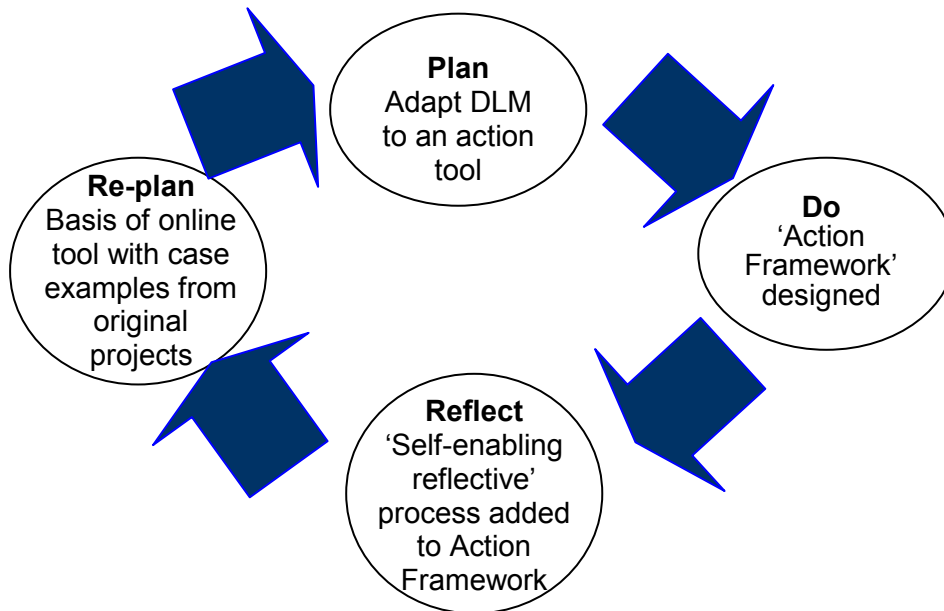
- i) confirmation of the importance of the DLMs to assist a more structured approach to distributed leadership for the sector and assist understanding of how distributed leadership *can be encouraged, supported and promoted*. Detailed information of what action is needed to encourage distributed leadership is needed, together with empirical examples of distributed leadership
- ii) agreement that while the existing DLMs could provide a rubric of cells to identify dimensions and inputs needed for distributed leadership, there was need for a tool to underpin the rubric
- iii) agreement that the DLM of Values and Practices is more about the behaviours needed by individual leaders and that, as these are already covered by the existence of many capability frameworks for leaders, this matrix would be better used to provide a set of indicators for institutions. The DLMs are more valuable as the basis upon which to develop an enabling tool for distributed leadership
- iv) agreement that the cells could be configured to contain a series of questions upon which institutions can take action by identifying what needs to be done and the priorities for action. This led to the third cycle of the action research project.

NOTE: The possibility of the DLMs being developed as an online interactive tool and also developed as a benchmark tool underpinned by a self-evaluative tool providing lists of questions was discussed as an extension of the current project. It was suggested that such a tool could also include suggestions of how to improve the performance of distributed leadership in particular sets of circumstances. It was agreed that such a tool is beyond the current project but could form the basis of a further application for an ALTC leadership project grant in 2011.

**Table 3 Distributed leadership matrix of values and practices**

Practices of leadership	Values for distributed leadership				
	Trust not regulation	Respect for expertise	Recognition of leadership capabilities	Collaboration as 'conjoint agents'	Reflective practice for continuous change
<b>Self-in-relation</b>	Not ego centric	Adaptable-open to new idea, ambiguity & change, authentic credible	Mentor encourage	Forthright but flexible	Reflective as individual and group
<b>Social interactions</b>	Proactive resilient	Recognise peers	Willing to share philosophies	Beyond self interest	Critique not critical
<b>Dialogue through learning conversations</b>	Represent issues not positions	Learning and teaching expert	Accept free ranging discussion	Willing to listen, good communicator	Share goals
<b>Growth-in-connection</b>	Accept responsibility, work independently	Work outside comfort zone	Forthright but flexible	Accept shared goals, not authoritarian	Focus on growth-fostering outcomes

### 2.2.5 Action research cycle three: Action self enabling reflective tool



**Figure 3 Action research cycle three: Action self enabling reflective tool**

The third action research cycle commenced with a meeting of the project team in January to explore how the DLMs could be developed into an enabling tool for distributed leadership. This resulted in the design of an 'Action' framework (Table 4) and a 'Self-Enabling Reflective' (SER) process (Table 5), together acting as an 'Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool' (ASERT).

The Action framework is for use in identifying the terms of the dimensions, values and criteria for distributed leadership. The dimensions of distributed leadership on the Action framework are:

- i) context
- ii) culture
- iii) change
- iv) relationships.

The values associated with these dimensions are:

- i) trust rather than regulation
- ii) respect for expertise

- iii) recognition of contribution
- iv) collaboration.

On the other axis the criteria for distributed leadership are identified. This includes identification of:

- i) people involved in distributed leadership
- ii) processes are supportive of distributed leadership
- iii) professional development required
- iv) resources needed to support distributed leadership.

The cells that are created through the intersection of these dimensions, values and criteria identify the actions required to use a distributed leadership approach to achieve change. For example, a context in which trust rather than regulation is emphasised involves people relying on the expertise they can offer to inform decisions supported by processes through which informal leadership is recognised. The provision of professional development to build leadership capacity strengthens this informal leadership. Finally, resources such as space, time and finance, to support collaboration need to be made available.

The Self-Enabling Reflective process provides reflective prompts scaffolded to assist participants to identify action needed to move towards a more distributed leadership approach.

The ASERT provides an instrument for institutions that have identified that distributed leadership can be used to build leadership capacity for change.

The ASERT was validated at an ALTC meeting of a group of leaders of learning and teaching (recipients of ALTC funded leadership projects) in February, 2011.

**Table 4 The Action framework of the ASERT**

Criteria for distributed leadership	Dimensions and values to enable development of distributed leadership			
	Context Trust	Culture Respect	Change Recognition	Relationships Collaboration
<b>People are involved</b>	Expertise of individuals is used to inform decisions	Individuals participate in decision making	All levels and functions have input into policy development	Expertise of individuals contributes to collective decision making
<b>Processes are supportive</b>	Informal leadership is recognised	Decentralised groups engage in decision making	All levels and functions have input into policy implementation	Communities of practice are modelled
<b>Professional development is provided</b>	Distributed leadership is used to build leadership capacity	Mentoring for distributed leadership is provided	Leaders at all levels proactively encourage distributed leadership	Collaboration is facilitated
<b>Resources are available</b>	Space, time & finance for collaboration are available	Leadership contribution is recognised and rewarded	Flexibility is built into infrastructure and systems	Opportunities for regular networking are provided

**Table 5 The self enabling reflective process of the ASERT**

Step	Reflection on practice	Reflective prompts	Example
<b>One</b>	Identify where a distributed leadership approach is to be enabled	Is this an Institute wide focus, or does it affect a particular section, group of people, program or project?	Institution-wide Note: if it is an institution wide focus to introduce a distributed leadership approach at multiple levels the questions needs to be asked about each level
<b>Two</b>	Identify the <i>criterion</i> (from the action framework above) for distributed leadership on which to focus	Which of the four criteria will provide the initial focus for this project?	People are involved Note: each of the criteria will need to be considered given the integrated nature of distributed leadership. The order for such will depend on the particular focus.
<b>Three</b>	Identify the <i>dimension</i> and the associated values (from the action framework) for distributed leadership in relation to the chosen criteria	Which of the four dimensions will provide the initial focus for this project?	Context Note: each of the dimensions will need to be considered given the integrated nature of distributed leadership. The order for such will depend on the particular focus.
<b>Four</b>	Reflection on current action (as identified in the intersecting cell of the action framework)	What is the extent to which the identified action item occurs currently?	Expertise of individuals is used to inform decisions i) more regular communication and consultation was encouraged using both face-to-face and electronic media ii) project newsletters were established to share practice on a regular basis Individuals (both academic and professional) are asked for input on their experience as a means to inform policy.
<b>Five</b>	Reflection for further action	What action could be taken to identify existing opportunities that have not yet been taken advantage of?	Individuals were asked to contribute their expertise more directly to decision making processes
		What action could be taken to identify new opportunities?	Individuals (both academic and professional) could be asked for feedback in areas in which their expertise is not currently utilised



Step	Reflection on practice	Reflective prompts	Example
		What action could be taken to generate new opportunities?	Professional development could include exploration of issues that could benefit from input of expertise more broadly
		What action should be taken to ensure these new opportunities are sustainable?	New ideas are openly celebrated
<b>Six</b>	Reflection to ensure integrated concerted, supportive action	How does the proposed action arising from these reflective prompts affect the other criteria and dimensions?	Involving people within a context of trust and supportive processes through which informal leadership is recognised
		What change is needed in the other four criteria to ensure that the proposed action is implemented?	Individuals were recognised for their contribution of ideas in meeting notes
<b>Seven</b>	Identify a plan of activity to achieve the desired action outcome	Indicative questions: What action needs to be taken? Is there a preferred sequence? Who needs to be involved in action? What time period is involved? Is there need for training/facilitation in reflective processes? What finance is needed?	Each of the original projects identified examples of ongoing multi-level, multi-functional groups that continued to operate across academic, executive and specialist functions. One project (RMIT) in relation to infrastructure, another (ACU) in relation to the linking of technical and pedagogical issues for online learning another (Macquarie) to engage all relevant personnel in issues related to assessment, the fourth project (Wollongong) to implement change to assessment practices both domestically and internationally in offshore campuses.
<b>Eight</b>	Reflect on the outcomes of the action taken in terms of the desired action outcomes	Indicative questions: What worked well? What needs improvement? Who else should be involved? What changes are needed in future actions?	Action research cycles enabled changes in this project that resulted in greater focus on enabling distributed leadership than evaluating it.
<b>Nine</b>	Adjust the reflective process as needed to flexibly accommodate the specific institutional context and culture	Indicative questions: What difficulties has the process of reflection encountered that is related to the specific institutional context? Do these difficulties warrant a change to the process?	In one project (RMIT) the timing of the project team meetings was changed from late afternoon to early morning as this was found to encourage participants to be more reflective.

### 3 Project deliverables

The project resulted in a number of deliverables including:

- a scoping document that identified the similarities between the elements of the various models and the synergies in the cultural change processes required to achieve a distributed leadership outcome from the four completed distributed leadership projects of the partner universities (see Appendix 1)
- two Distributed leadership Matrices – The DLM of Dimensions, Inputs and the DLM of Values and Practices needed to achieve an effective distributed leadership process
- a flexible two-part Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool (ASERT), consisting of an Action framework and a Self Reflective Enabling process to assist universities that seek to encourage and support a distributed leadership approach to learning and teaching improvements and to encourage capacity development
- a synthesised review of the literature and resources on distributed leadership, including contextual and leadership skills requirements (see Appendix 3).

## 4 Uses and advance of existing knowledge

Higher education is in the process of significant change as it seeks to respond to the many and varied pressures upon it. These pressures require both institutional change (to structures, processes and rules) and individual change for all employees in universities, whether they are academic, administrative or professional staff. These changes have led to much discussion about what constitutes leadership in higher education and how to build systematic, multi-faceted and collaborative leadership capacity. For academic staff the traditional dual role as teacher and researcher is being expanded to include a leadership role. Traditional leadership theories that focus on the traits, skills and behaviours of individual leaders provide little assistance in the broader notion that all academics are leaders. The emergent idea of distributed leadership presents a more inclusive notion of leadership for universities and thus provides a useful approach to develop the leadership of academics and professional staff. As Ramsden (1998, p.4) identified some years ago, leadership in higher education is:

a practical and everyday process of supporting, managing, developing and inspiring academic colleagues....leadership in universities should be by everyone from the Vice Chancellor to the casual car parking attendant, leadership is to do with how people relate to each other.

Gronn (2000) described distributed leadership as the complex interplay that bridges agency and structure:

The structural patterns taken by various social and organisational formations are activity-dependent, and an analysis of the activities engaged in by particular sets of time-, place-, space-and culture-bound sets of agents permits an understanding of agential-structural relations through the process of structuring (Gronn, 2000, p.318)

Gronn termed this 'concertive action' and proposed that, when combined with activity theory (Engestrom 1999), a distributed leadership framework offered a new conception of workplace ecology in which contextual factors are incorporated to identify both a more holistic perspective of organisational work and a focus on emergent approaches. Thus not only would the complex interaction between subjects, objects and instruments be included but also the rules, community and division of labour that impact on activity.

Although the project team set out to develop a definition of distributed leadership it was decided that because distributed leadership itself is context specific it is not possible to encapsulate everything in a single definition. However, the project team was able to describe the major elements of distributed leadership as it occurred in this project as follows:

*Distributed leadership for learning and teaching is a leadership approach in which individuals who trust and respect each other's contributions, collaborate together to achieve identified goals. It occurs as a result of an open culture within and across an institution. It is an approach in which reflective practice is an integral part enabling action to be critiqued, challenged and developed through cycles of planning, action, reflection and assessment and re-planning. It happens most effectively when people at all levels engage in action, accepting leadership in their particular areas of expertise. It needs resources that support and enable collaborative*

*environments together with a flexible approach to space, time and finance which occur as a result of diverse contextual settings in an institution. Through shared and active engagement, distributed leadership can result in the development of leadership capacity to sustain improvements in teaching and learning.*

The project confirmed that to successfully introduce distributed leadership in an institution the *context* in which it occurs is critical. Distributed leadership has less focus on structural, hierarchical and directive leadership, in which regulation is the main determinant of activity, and more on the environment in which the leadership occurs. However, this does not preclude all regulation, as external government policies were seen as effective in influencing senior formal university leadership to move from an almost sole focus on research to one where recognition of the importance of developing leaders in learning and teaching (who can lead quality improvement) is increasing.

Distributed leadership does not preclude the need for different styles of leadership to be utilised across universities. Importantly, it is recognised that a distributed leadership approach can exist alongside, rather than replace formal leadership. Adopting a distributed leadership approach appears to be effective in developing an internal context in which teaching academics, with no formal leadership or managerial authority (power), can influence institutional action in learning and teaching. In this regard, distributed leadership is seen as a means to build individual leadership capability in learning and teaching as part of an overall plan to increase institutional leadership capacity.

The project also found evidence that a *culture* of academic autonomy that encourages, values and recognises an ability to produce innovations which improve the quality of learning and teaching is critical to a successful introduction of distributed leadership in universities. The project team recognised that this accords with the traditional university structure of academic boards and committees that has accompanied the research culture in which individual discipline expertise is recognised. A distributed leadership approach has had the effect of increasing academics' awareness of their contribution, not only to teaching but to leadership in learning and teaching, across universities. It is believed that distributed leadership will contribute to the longer term motivation of academics to continue to explore quality improvements in learning and teaching through pedagogy and adopting a more sustainable approach towards influencing the learning and teaching of their colleagues.

The project also confirmed certain processes are needed to be in place for distributed leadership to be effective. The contribution of a bottom-up approach to *change and development* is central to distributed leadership. In addition, there is a need for change to be embraced, rather than rejected, given the evidence across the higher education sector of resistance to change. It was also clear that support from senior formal leaders, particularly the deputy vice-chancellor (provost) responsible for learning and teaching, and experts within the learning and teaching units, was both necessary and pivotal in enabling bottom up changes. Thus, rather than a power exchange occurring, what was found was the ability of a distributed leadership approach to introduce a participative approach to change in which individuals feel safe.

Previous research in the UK identified conflict resolution as vital in putting distributed leadership in place. However the project team found it should be regarded as much broader. By taking a broad view of conflict resolution it leads to a more positive acceptance of the opportunities created by distributed leadership for developing improvements in learning and teaching. Given this, the project team broadened the

concept to one of relationship management between participants emerging as potential leaders through this informal process and existing structures of traditional leaders. Given the recognised importance of the support of formal leaders, this led to a focus on the need for formal leaders to be linked into the processes. This engagement between formal leaders and those involved in distributed leadership was seen as a two-way process to ensure that agreement was reached between the needs of formal leaders for 'quick fix' solutions and those in informal distributed leadership positions who desired sustainable quality improvements and solutions informed by the latest scholarship in pedagogy. Thus, the dimension of conflict resolution was replaced by the broader concept of relationship management. Thus the project team identified the central role of *relationship management* between the many people involved in distributed leadership was central to the development of a collaborative culture.

## 5 Critical success factors and impediments

The critical success factors and impediments related to the project action and implementation included:

- i) the action research framework for the project enabled emergent issues to be discussed and adjustments to be made as a process of continuous change and improvement to the project. This was ably assisted by the willingness of the ALTC to accept recommendations for changes to be made within the parameters of the overall funding agreement
- ii) active engagement of all members of the reference group in preparing for the meetings and contributing ideas provided new insights that assisted the project team to progress the outcomes from the project beyond what had originally been envisaged
- iii) communication across geographical distances proved a constant challenge, but the identification of a relatively inexpensive phone conference facility was useful. The provision of funding for several face-to-face meetings was found to be essential
- iv) the challenge of accommodating different institutional procedures, particularly with regard to legal agreements and accounting procedures was challenging
- v) employment of an experienced project officer with both outstanding project management and research skills provided an essential contribution to the project.

## 6 Dissemination

Dissemination occurred through two distinctive strategies. The first was through the engagement of others in a multitude of settings both within the participating universities and externally, and the second strategy was through information provision.

### 6.1 Engaging others

The project engaged other colleagues by:

- consultation with communities of practice at participating institutions
- sustained dialogue with the reference group
- presentations at two leadership forums within the ALTC leadership network
- presentations for the broader higher education community at national and international conferences.

### 6.2 Information provision

The project resulted in a broad dissemination of findings and resources including:

- a website located at *www.distributedleadership.com*
- two posters prepared for ALTC leadership project meetings in 2010 and 2011
- two refereed conference papers:
  - Jones, S; Applebee, A; Harvey, M. & Lefoe, G. (2010), Scoping a Distributed leadership matrix for higher education. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the 2010 Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia
  - Jones, S; Harvey, M; Lefoe, G; & Ryland, K. (2011), Working together to ride the waves: the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool Distributed leadership. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the 2011 Tertiary Education Management Conference, Association of Tertiary Education Management.
- two conference workshop/showcase sessions:
  - Jones, S; Harvey, M; Lefoe, G; Ryland, K. & Schneider, A. (2011), From evaluating to enabling; the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the 2011 Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia
  - Jones, S; Harvey, M; Lefoe, G; & Ryland, K. (2011, August), Working together to ride the waves: the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool for Distributed leadership. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the 2011

Tertiary Education Management Conference, Association of Tertiary Education Management.

- a paper submitted to the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management
  - Jones, S; Lefoe, G; Harvey, M. & Ryland, K. (Submitted August 2011), Distributed leadership: a collaborative framework for academic, executives and professionals in higher education.
- two workshop sessions at the ALTC leadership project annual meetings February 2010 and 2011
- presentations to related ALTC leadership projects February 2011
- reports (ALTC and reference group) on:
  - feedback from the 2010 ALTC meeting on the nature and context of distributed leadership
  - design of the Distributed Leadership Matrix for the project's reference group and other interested parties
  - design of the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool for the 2011 ALTC leadership meeting and the project's reference group.



## 7 Evaluation

Evaluation of the project occurred on a regular basis as part of the action research approach. In effect, each member of the project team engaged in reflection individually, as they prepared and contributed to writing, meetings and workshops. Team meetings, both face to face and online, provided excellent opportunities for collaborative reflection. This collaborative reflection not only built upon the individual contributions, but at its most effective, resulted in new, often synergistic and innovative learning and insights to guide and inform project development. The reference group provided a particularly useful evaluative forum. In addition feedback from the leaders of learning and teaching representing institutions across the higher education sector and the ALTC leadership project meetings in 2010 and 2011 provided valuable formative evaluation of the validity of the project findings as they emerged.

## 8 Linkages to other projects

Projects in the ALTC identified distributed leadership category deal with institutional change through the use of experts and enthusiasts, building networks and communities of practices. Sixty two ALTC leadership projects have been funded since the start of the category. Nineteen of these are categorised as distributed leadership (including three that are consolidation of initial projects) and eighteen were funded as disciplinary or cross-disciplinary networks utilise a distributed leadership approach to network disciplinary experts. In addition, several ALTC fellowships utilise a distributed leadership approach, including a fellowship in 2011 focused on the contribution of communities of practices. The combined experience of the completed projects is that distributed leadership, with its top-down policy, bottom-up implementation focus, can be effective in building institutional leadership capacity. This experience could be used to undertake a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the increasing number of finished and current distributed approaches and to identify benchmarking indicators that are emerging.

This project has direct links to the following:

- i) the four previous ALTC distributed leadership projects that this project was based upon:
  - a. RMIT ALTC Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-7 *Multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback to enhance learning and teaching* (LE6-7)
  - b. Macquarie University Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-12 *Leaders in Effective Assessment Practice*
  - c. University of Wollongong Leadership for Excellence Project LE6-9 *Distributive Leadership for learning and teaching; developing the faculty scholar model*. This project was extended to the Flinders University Leadership for Excellence Project LE8-691 *Sustaining distributive leadership in learning and teaching: cascade and perpetual effectiveness of the faculty scholar model*
  - d. Australian Catholic University LE6-8 *Leadership capacity for online learning and teaching*.
- ii) five projects informed by the ASERT including:
  - a. Deakin University Leadership for Excellence Project LE10-1726, *Building distributed leadership in designing and implementing a quality management framework for online learning environments*
  - b. Swinburne University Leadership for Excellence Project LE9-1228 *Learning without borders: linking development of transnational leadership roles to international and cross-cultural teaching excellence*
  - c. University of Tasmania Leadership for Excellence Project LE9-1183 *Distributed leadership through cross-disciplinary networks*

- d. University of Southern Queensland Leadership for Excellence Project LE10-1734 *Leadership capacity for communities of practice in higher education*
  - e. RMIT Leadership for Excellence Project LE9-1246 *Strengthening leadership capability through a strategic knowledge network.*
- iii) a further project Leadership for Excellence Project LE11-2000 has been funding (2011-13) to use the principles and practices identified in the Action Self Enabling Reflection Tool for distributed leadership to develop a systematic, evidence-based benchmarking framework for distributed leadership to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching.

## 9 Conclusions

This project clearly demonstrated synergies between all the previous four projects upon which it draws in a distributed leadership approach to building capacity for leadership in learning and teaching and consolidated the importance (and challenge) of four factors as follows:

- i) a focus on *actions*

The need for institutions to focus beyond policies, procedures and structures to practices underpinned by valuing, trusting and enabling the input of many people who offer different forms and types of expertise, and greater preparedness to share responsibility for outcomes. At its best a focus on action would enable a more integrated approach in which academics, professional and administrative staff engage in collaborative activities.

- ii) the design of a *reflective* process to scaffold action through cycles of change

The need to adopt a more longer term focus in which short-term 'quick fix' approaches are replaced by collective engagement that proceeds through multiple cycles of planning, action, reflection and replanning. This requires professional development, facilitation and mentoring in action research/reflective techniques.

- iii) development of a dynamic process to *enable* distributed leadership that goes beyond evaluation

While recognising the value of assisting institutions to *evaluate* their processes and practices against the identified dimensions, value and criteria for distributed leadership, the project identified the importance of developing a resource to *enable* institutions to undertake action to encourage a distributed leadership approach. This was achieved, in the first instance, through the design of the ASERT resource.

The project team and reference group recognised the value that could be obtained from extending the project to produce more case study examples of the ASERT to improve the performance of distributed leadership in particular sets of circumstances.

Fortunately this has been made possible as part of a further project Leadership for Excellence Project LE11-2000 has been funding (2011-13). This project will use the principles and practices identified in the ASERT to develop a systematic, evidence-based benchmarking framework for distributed leadership to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching.

- iv) recognition of the *hybrid* nature of distributed leadership.

The need for a more collaborative approach that values working alongside, rather than replacing formal leaders, as a hybrid leadership concept.

## 10 Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

That the ASERT is further explored as a tool to facilitate cross-functional collective action between academics, professional and executive staff.

### Recommendation 2

That distributed leadership, and the ASERT as a tool for distributed leadership, is incorporated into leadership development courses offered for staff in universities.

### Recommendation 3

That the ASERT process is further developed to identify case studies to illustrate its usefulness in a variety of contexts and situations (this recommendation will be partly achieved as part of LE11-2000).

### Recommendation 4

That further discussion is held on the value of reconceptualising distributed leadership as hybrid leadership.

## Appendix 1 Scoping document

The scoping document that resulted from the project team examining the four models, frameworks and programs developed and change processes implemented during the initial distributed leadership projects identified the following common factors:

i) context

The need for change driven by contextual factors related to both external and internal pressures. In all cases the projects were designed to respond to external (government) emphasis on the need for the higher education sector to improve the quality of learning and teaching. This was combined with internal (university) concerns related to the need to build existing leadership capacity in learning and teaching at the same time to encourage research output. These dual demands led universities to review existing hierarchical leadership approaches through the establishment of more inclusive (distributed leadership) approaches designed to produce more standard policy.

ii) culture

The importance of adopting a new leadership approach that supports the existing and deeply embedded culture of academic autonomy was evident across projects. In each project academics were invited, based on their interest in leading improvements to the issue under discussion, to self-select. This resulted in the participation of academics at various stages in their careers in the informal leadership roles they adopted as well as academics that held formal leadership roles. In each case it was acknowledged that support from colleagues in formal management and leadership positions was essential for the success of the project.

iii) change and development

The need for change that incorporated a new, more integrated approach between the formal senior leaders making policy at the top of the organisation and the informal leaders implementing policy (academics-as-teachers) was recognised. The change under discussion had institute-wide impact designed to produce a mix of new top-down policy with bottom-up implementation strategies. In each case, the important role played by the deputy (pro) vice chancellor in positively and overtly encouraging, endorsing, supporting and recognising the contribution being made by the informal leaders and in providing mentoring and coaching support was identified.

iv) activity

In each project, teams of people, academics and professional staff, with expertise in a broad range of relevant knowledge, ideas and values were involved in a collaborative process of change. In three cases the process involved cycles of change using an action research approach that relied upon reflection on and in action by the participants, while in the fourth case a monthly report on progress was made to faculty committees and participants were encouraged to use reflection as a key activity documented in journals.

In each case the participants were assisted by professionals in the learning and teaching units who adopted a facilitative role using regular sharing of individual reflections on activities and change such as through the embedding of appreciative inquiry in team activities.

The importance of the institutions adopting an approach to resources provision that recognised the importance of providing time for networking and communicating opportunities, training in leadership and professional development was acknowledged.

A common finding was also that on-line communications were not regarded as effective as face-to-face.

v) relationship management

The action research process enabled relationships to be developed such that any conflicts were able to be identified in a timely manner and adjustments made. Despite lack of formal conflict resolution procedures, project methodologies enabled indirectly processes to address conflicts.

## Scoping document

Area of interest	RMIT	ACU	Macquarie	Wollongong
<b>Issues identified</b>	Student Feedback and Leadership: Developing Multi-Level Leadership in the Use of Student Feedback to Enhance Student Learning and Teaching Practice	Development of Distributed leadership capacity in online learning and teaching	Leadership and Assessment: Strengthening the Nexus	Distributive Leadership for Learning and Teaching: Developing the Faculty Scholar Model (Assessment)
<b>Models developed</b>	P.A.C.E.D Distributed leadership Model	Framework for on-line learning and development	Leaders in Effective Assessment Practice (LEAP)-	Faculty Scholar model distributed leadership defined as: 'the distribution of power through a collegial sharing of knowledge of practice and reflection within the socio-cultural context of the university' Five domains: Growing Reflecting Enabling Engaging Networking Cascading model
<b>Culture change</b>	R.E.A.L.I.S.E.D Change Management Model	Context of significant change to explore advantages of online for L&T	Commenced with no university culture recognition of the role and importance of assessment at commencement –no University policy on assessment LEAP model basic tenets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge essential role of influencer</li> <li>• Enact within PAR model</li> <li>• Allow time for capacity building</li> <li>• Allow participants to define leadership as appropriate to context</li> <li>• Provide needed resources and support</li> </ul>	Capacity development Framework for leadership in HE Formal leadership training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive sessions, outside teaching times, away from university</li> <li>• Leadership training and PD that is regular, part of comprehensive program &amp; engaging though meeting needs of participants</li> <li>• Includes awareness raising, knowledge building, skill development and personal reflection as well as networking for relationship building</li> <li>• Authentic learning tasks</li> </ul> Networks and linkages developed across disciplines
<b>Universities involved</b>	Single	Single-multi-campus	Single	Four( 2X2 as cascading process)



Area of interest	RMIT	ACU	Macquarie	Wollongong
<b>Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-select into 3 Action Research teams (ART)</li> <li>Positional appoint from Head of School (HoS) and Managers of Support services</li> <li>Individual reluctance of non-formal participants to view their role as leaders</li> </ul>	6 Academic Online advisors 0.5 time release for 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-select as Action Research Enables (AREs)</li> <li>Positional appoint (influencers)</li> <li>LEAP Teams</li> <li>Individual reluctance non-formal participants to view their role as leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-nomination rather than delegation-submitted EOI outlining the Faculty-based project</li> <li>Participants at various stages in their careers and assumed a variety of leadership roles</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ART –Appreciative Inquiry used</li> <li>Participants kept a reflective journal</li> <li>Plenary – used as CoP for communication &amp; as reflection (pause points).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>individual</li> <li>collective – for wider dissemination across university</li> </ul>	Played a central (developmental) role Participants encouraged to keep reflective journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement in reflective practice</li> <li>Participants keep reflective journal</li> <li>Requires formal opportunities and training</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership formal and informal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ART (Facilitators) not part of formal leadership structure</li> <li>Project team – mix formal and informal positions (ART Leaders, Facilitators, DVC(A); Univ. L&amp;T Director &amp; L&amp;T Dean Academic Development; HoS; Heads Service Development</li> <li>Vital role of DVC(A) as sponsor &amp; champion</li> </ul>	Strong executive-level support project team members not part of formal leadership structure but in Phase II started to take part in university committees/meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AREs not part of formal leadership structure of university</li> <li>Supported by Champions (Influencers) (HoD; Assoc. Dean L&amp;T or Dean of Division or Faculty)</li> <li>Need top level support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome-participants see themselves as leaders and appreciate their leadership potential from an awareness of what leadership is and how it can be developed</li> <li>Strategic mentoring and coaching assist consolidation</li> <li>PD essential</li> <li>Support from key persons in university ensures project sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Project stages</b>	Phases identified by Plenary sessions Same teams involved in each phase	3 stages: Specialist training in pedagogy Activities to develop leadership capabilities Ongoing leadership roles funded by Faculties	3 Phases – cascading to include new departments Participants in each phases assisted next stages	2 stages - cascading process First generation participants – key supporters for second generation as mentors
<b>Resources used</b>	Literature Experts (from Discipline), Conference attendance	Literature internal and external experts, a few conference attendance only by Online Advisors (OA) who presented outcomes of their research projects	Literature Experts Conference attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance provided to reduce participant workload</li> <li>Opportunities to build relationships internally and externally with colleagues - 3 day retreat &amp; Leadership workshop</li> </ul>

Area of interest	RMIT	ACU	Macquarie	Wollongong
<b>Communication</b>	Develop collegiality & communication within ARTs and across university between Academic and Students Services groups	Importance of communication and relationships 3 years later initial OA group still strong on communication	Development of collegiality & communication not usual in University HE	Opportunities for dialogue
	Website for communication but not very effective	Online communication was important. Weekly use of video conference effective in Phases 1 and 2	Website for communication but not very effective	Online collaborative space for participants Website developed with significant resources
<b>Collaboration</b>	ARTs Project Team	collaboration with in the project team was good but from project team to wider university more fragmented	LEAP Teams	Provide opportunities for institutional groups to establish social connections & plan ongoing collaboration and communication
	Plenary as CoP at end of AR cycle Participants, vertical slice leadership, general community & students	'Bytesize' training sessions offered by OAs well received	Fora for cross university collaboration as CoP	National Round Table at end of phase included participants, experts and professional associations Central contribution of CoPs
<b>Service support</b>	Fundamental change – Members of Project Team (Survey group [CES]; IT/AV; Property Management Establishment of Structured consultative group (L-SAG)	Support from Project Support Group; IATL Director, Director of Flexible T&L,	University Information Management Unit supported with CEQ data	Academic Development Centre providing professional support
<b>Influencing ability &amp; credibility of non-formal leaders</b>	Recognition and Reward Awards Promotion	Formally identified Online L&T Advisors. In Phase 2 appointed rep to university committees.	University recognition of individual contribution to L&T Excellence – Awards Promotion Structure position University Committees representation (access to info.) Control of resources Authority to obtain co-operation	Many have taken on full-time L&T roles
<b>Student involvement</b>	Passive (CES feedback) Active – ART activities Plenary session	none	Steering Committee members	
<b>Outcomes – leadership capacity building</b>	ART Leaders and members developed leadership profile Appointment ART Leader and member to structured L&T position		AREs became recognised as expert Some formal recognition with appointment of one to Assoc. Dean L&T	Many participants acquired leadership positions, roles and responsibilities during the project

<b>Area of interest</b>	<b>RMIT</b>	<b>ACU</b>	<b>Macquarie</b>	<b>Wollongong</b>
<b>Critical success factors</b>	Finance (time) for Project Officer	Adequate understanding of role in initial stage	Finance (time) for Project Manager	Training and agreement on leadership task Finding time for reflection Maintaining engagement of scholars and senior leaders
<b>Challenges</b>	Insufficient recognition in proposal of plethora of tasks and need for more money for PD support Participant staff turnover	Non-inclusion of PM in project brief Limited face-to-face contact after Stage 1	Participant staff turnover Time frame	Need to Improve online facilities for communication and reflection Time allocation Time needed to establish Staff changes
<b>Future action</b>	Establishment of ongoing Learning Space Advisory Group Distributed leadership concept used to underpin project on assessment		Measure to evaluate developed	Repository for resources developed Develop form of test of measurement of leadership capacity development

## Appendix 2 A summary of reflections from the communities of practice

Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
<p>Culture for distributed leadership</p> <p>Scoping doc</p> <p>Self-select – interest in L&amp;T issues</p> <p>Universities have a natural distributed leadership approach</p> <p>Academics self-identify as teachers and researchers but not leaders</p> <p>Not about power exchange</p>	<p>What motivated you to become involved in the project?</p> <p>What previous engagement had you had with L&amp;T issues?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional design</li> <li>• Educational lead 'ship</li> <li>• recognition for doing the work anyway</li> <li>• build on PhD into complexity and change and linked it to background in IT</li> </ul> <p>All had strengths in T&amp;L                      "we would have had more than 100 years of teaching between us."                      Each-mix of pedagogy &amp; healthy scepticism towards the use of technology for its own sake.                      "what the OA team recognized early on was that we all felt that we had a healthy scepticism towards the use of technology for technology sake and that is important to have a correct pedagogical approach that we weren't just diving in for the sake of diving in"                      Need level of passion and commitment to the project. No need to know about distributed leadership                      How passionate do you feel about this?                      You'd want to know that you had a real commitment to the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invited or identified directly following prior interest in L&amp;T nominated by the dept. L&amp;T director</li> <li>• possible area of interest for research</li> <li>• interest in L&amp;T</li> <li>• two engaged in dyadic sharing of the role mix of strength in L&amp;T and research – teaching research nexus</li> <li>• changes within own department - felt could feed back into development at dept. level driven by the assessment</li> <li>• not satisfied with own practice and wanted to improve</li> </ul> <p>All motivated by assessment (versus leadership) to start, indeed reluctant to consider leadership -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of Schools nominated/committed the School</li> <li>• HoS nominated ART leaders because :</li> <li>• formal role in L&amp;T</li> <li>• interest in L&amp;T</li> <li>• School was about to establish an L&amp;T function</li> <li>• course Co-ordinators of large classes</li> </ul> <p>New formal leadership role in L&amp;T- this provided a tangible project distributed leadership aspect was largely absent at the beginning- focus of ARTs was on improving student learning experience rather than leadership aspects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• previous engagement T&amp;L through workshop programs, internal grants.</li> <li>• frustrated at lack of opportunity for L&amp;T leadership role- Faculty research focus</li> </ul> <p>"Opportunity to extend myself but wasn't sure about being a leader".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• move from collegiality to managerialism</li> <li>• opportunity to be a front runner within the Faculty; seen as innovator in the area.</li> </ul> <p>"The place I did want to lead was in T&amp;L ... my passion was teaching &amp; my talent was teaching".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passion for teaching; isolated with teaching focus "Supported and validated, working with like-minded people".</li> <li>• Faculty may have missed opportunity if not</li> <li>• Synchronicity – project already in planning stage – opportunity for support to implement projects.</li> <li>• brought in for curriculum development, intensive teaching focus.</li> <li>• Up until this opportunity there was an 'invisible list' of 'chosen few' for leadership positions-this opened up the opportunity</li> <li>• All had strong interest and passion for teaching.</li> </ul>

Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
Change and Development  Process of Change  Scoping Doc.  Top-down policy  Bottom –up implementation  Role DVC(A) as champion  Need formal leadership support	How was the project influenced by university policy and university leadership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchronicity with new leadership</li> <li>• Director of the IATL, the project leader and Deans prepared grant</li> <li>• 2006 university mandated the use of on-line system-</li> <li>• Concurrent new eLearning policy development and appointment of senior eLearning position.</li> <li>• strong project leader who was situated within the formal management structure.</li> <li>• Recognised it was an educational change process not a quick fix</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest of colleagues for better assessment (L&amp;T), we could facilitate or catalyse change in L&amp;T</li> <li>• New Provost and L&amp;T unit support critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University had new L&amp;T Strategy-with commitment to top-down policy, bottom-up implementation</li> <li>• DVC(A) support critical to process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of DVC(A) critical - met regularly with group and supported.</li> <li>• Initially uncertain why he met with them but gradually realised the importance of the relationship</li> <li>• Structurally not supported – formal components of university focus elsewhere.</li> <li>• Partnered with external university created challenge in first year as 2<sup>nd</sup> university was not as supportive, not meeting as regularly, facilitator changed.</li> <li>• cross campus communication was a real challenge - during project very difficult but after the project kept up communications.</li> </ul>

Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
Activity associated with distributed leadership  Scoping Doc  Collaborative process of change  Cycles of change using Action Research  Use of reflection	What challenges were there in developing a collaborative process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 day workshop</li> <li>• sessions (2 days) in training were very influential in helping OAs to handle project</li> <li>• Process did not end up with equal participation from all campuses</li> <li>• Levels of familiarity with online varied</li> <li>• Set times for meetings</li> <li>• Share leadership</li> <li>• Reflection:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• used throughout the 3 workshops and continued when OAs worked in Faculties.</li> <li>• consolidated into quarterly reports for management (university level committee) and more regularly for Faculty reporting.</li> <li>• incorporated into conference publications as evidence of changes.</li> <li>• Due to characteristics of OAs and distributed nature of UACU, the regular meetings video conferences were strongly collaborative with each OA playing a role. Only challenge during their time was writing the research and report output together.</li> <li>• Needed to develop understanding that role was pedagogical support not just technical support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credibility (personal and being in the right place at the right time) – influenced by context</li> <li>• Debate on AR as a methodology (from those with science/positivist backgrounds).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At first hard to get people to share their experiences because it was often very personal</li> <li>• In 1 School had offered redundancy package and therefore there was fear about sharing-HoS was initially asked not to come to meetings</li> <li>• Once had shared it was cathartic and led to further sharing</li> <li>• Need to overcome people's resistance to being scrutinized - but some saw it as an opportunity for resources to do something</li> <li>• Scepticism –here we go again. Senior staff hesitant to change because nothing had resulted from previous attempts to change</li> <li>• Staff who had tried things in the past and had not been listened to</li> <li>• Regular meetings with staff</li> <li>• Link to College Incentive funds</li> <li>• Involve Discipline leaders</li> <li>• Resources-funds to try initiatives</li> <li>• Mentoring system</li> <li>• Empower people to feel their contribution has been used</li> <li>• Need to have formal structure of forums to share innovations</li> <li>• Have people in the same room where they have to talk and listen</li> <li>• DVC(A) role as champion was very significant</li> <li>• Bring everyone involved in making decisions about L&amp;T into the meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plans developed – this is where the concept of distributed leadership started to make sense</li> <li>• one stuck religiously but others adapted as needed throughout project.</li> <li>• On campus regular meetings – formal and informal – facilitator kept things moving – essential.</li> <li>• Regular meetings for reflection on AL process.</li> <li>• National roundtable in 1<sup>st</sup> year very difficult with partner university.</li> <li>• Different motivation and commitments and politics being played out meant it was challenging.</li> <li>• In second year – additional f2f meant relationships stronger and able to continue planning through regular meetings.</li> <li>• Group large enough for flow of ideas and people to step in – small group personality clashes could be problematic.</li> <li>• Need to feel safe and facilitated</li> <li>• Central role of L&amp;T person from central unit vital</li> </ul>

Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
<p>Relationship Management</p> <p>Conflict resolution processes or collaboration?</p> <p>Scoping Doc</p> <p>No discrete conflict resolution mechanisms</p> <p>Potential for conflict between distributed leadership participants and formal leaders</p> <p>AR process enabled potential conflict situations to be timely addressed &amp; adjusted</p> <p>Need longer timeline for change without pressure</p> <p>reference group of external and internal experts for discussion &amp; advice</p>	<p>What processes, factors, resources were most (least) effective in encouraging collaboration to process the project?</p> <p>What support would most assist new academics taking on a similar role to that you undertook?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal conflict resolution methods</li> <li>Problem = all perfectionists.</li> <li>frustrated because they were unable to get full base data and were not able to do what they wanted to do.</li> <li>The formal leaders needed a quick fix, but OAs wanted to ensure depth and complexity of data, particularly as eLearning is not a single issue-caused a problem</li> <li>Uneasy relationship with faculties –complexity of the project-needed to be independent of the Faculty</li> <li>Able to influence formal leaders</li> <li>Bought a mix of strengths</li> <li>No-one controlled the group-respect for each other</li> <li>Need a formal leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided the belief that I could do it (e.g. A/D L&amp;T college)</li> <li>Concept of 1) empowerment, but need people to understand that anyone can be involved.</li> <li>2) accountability - Many do not want to be involved</li> <li>Research – Teaching nexus is fundamental</li> <li>AR process is diffuse, inefficient, slow, and this also applies to distributed leadership</li> <li>\$350 : fund students to peer learning conference, towards L&amp;T fellowship project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academics don't like to be told what to do</li> <li>focus on research</li> <li>Merger of 2 disciplines had created tension</li> <li>Lack of focus on L&amp;T previously</li> <li>Challenge of traditional collegial structure being broken by a new hierarchical approach</li> <li>Problem that people are not listening to what is coming from the top down</li> <li>University staff have varying ideas of power and leadership</li> <li>New staff were enthusiastic-tired staff encouraged to become involved</li> <li>Need to ensure all staff have some L&amp;T PD</li> <li>Opportunity to get to know other people in the university at the same time undertake research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional management not trained in leadership</li> <li>Cross university collaboration &amp; communication</li> <li>Conflict decreased over time.</li> <li>2nd year larger group - easier to get people on board, more inclined to share the load</li> <li>Personality influences responses; not speaking up – white-anting</li> <li>Setting up 1-1 support process which negated group process.</li> <li>Dissident in the project</li> <li>Communication f2f critical. Technology supported communication a challenge – not resourced as well.</li> <li>Time consuming – can't be self-serving</li> <li>Time to get to know one another</li> </ul>

Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
<p>Skills for distributed leadership</p> <p>Scoping Doc</p> <p>Recognition that distributed leadership is about creating a context for leadership development</p>	<p>Q5 What skills, personal traits, personal behaviours were most effective in encouraging collaboration to progress the project/ What support would most assist new academics taking on similar roles to those you undertook?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to accept complementarity of skills</li> <li>• ability to listen to each other</li> <li>• trust and respect.</li> <li>• Able to work independently</li> <li>• People with a critical approach - academics are naturally able to hold and accept a diverse arrange of views-academic debate</li> <li>• Collaborative rather than authoritarian</li> <li>• Need to give and take</li> <li>• Share a goal</li> <li>• Lack of ego</li> <li>• Represent an issue not a structural part</li> <li>• Able to work outside comfort zones</li> </ul> <p>Ability to mentor others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing people carefully (willing to take responsibility and the personality of the individual – many, many variables when considering the LEAPers, their dept. colleagues, and more – accept that in some contexts it may not work – instead work towards a critical mass) – it is more than just the process</li> <li>• Willing to listen</li> <li>• Open minded</li> <li>• Adaptive</li> <li>• Credible</li> <li>• Resilient</li> <li>• Willing to accept responsibility</li> </ul>	<p>Need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be proactive</li> <li>• encourage others –i.e. take initiative to build interest</li> <li>• have people who are recognized for their expertise in L&amp;T</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “was surprised at things that were identified as Leadership”</li> <li>• realized that many of things we took for granted involved leadership”</li> <li>• “I thought of myself as not being a leader” You can be a leader doing some of the everyday stuff that you do”. “Organised in the way we worked”.</li> <li>• “Initially just wanted to get on with something concrete – the project – but overtime discussions led us to a better understanding of what leadership meant”. “</li> <li>• Doing things then reflecting on the leadership part of it” best way to learn about leadership</li> <li>• Easy-going but opinionated</li> <li>• Happy with free ranging discussion</li> <li>• Quirky</li> <li>• Forthright-but flexible</li> <li>• Peculiar set of skills that typical leaders don’t have.</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Good communication skills</li> <li>• External motivation</li> <li>• Willing to function through the group</li> <li>• authentic.</li> <li>• beyond self-interest</li> <li>• willing to share philosophies and understanding –</li> <li>• willing to focus on how to achieve project outcomes rather than individual project</li> <li>• open to new ideas</li> <li>• able to deal with ambiguity</li> <li>• able to conduct robust conversations without taking it personally.</li> <li>• Recognize peers regardless of position</li> </ul>



Variable	CoP Question	ACU	Macquarie	RMIT	Wollongong
Outcomes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University formalised roles in each Faculty – changed name to eLearning coordinators.</li> <li>• established a sound pedagogical grounding in online learning recognizing that the university was moving into a broader environment where online is encouraged for a mixed design and practice.</li> <li>• Some participants to accepted new positions, formally within the university structure, even if only for a short term</li> <li>• permission, freedom to learn and acknowledge and permission to think and engage more broadly across university</li> <li>• learnt to trust yourself and abilities</li> <li>• university community–is full of really generous people</li> <li>• Awareness that all academics can lead and don't have to be in 'formal' positions.</li> <li>• Rather than leadership equals setting directions, exerting influence sorts of things - effective academia actually equals distributed leadership is about developing members of a group NOT standing up as a power play</li> <li>• developed relationships with formal leaders</li> <li>• need designated leaders but how they operate varies</li> <li>• understand university structure of decision making more</li> <li>• understand leadership is a process not a person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed conceptions of, and role of, leadership “teaching is a leadership activity”, it is not top-down, can be collaborative. It was a gentle development</li> <li>• “Aha” moment – separating leadership from positional authority</li> <li>• External factors can impact on collaboration post-project that can detract from (or reduce) project achievements/ outcomes</li> <li>• heightened awareness, building of critical mass, while acknowledging there are some who strongly resist change (examples of those who deal with this by leaving the organisation or laying low)</li> <li>• Taken on formal leadership roles (director of L &amp; teaching- act to be more inclusive, supportive)</li> <li>• Co-operative roles in department – the culture developed to now be more open, allows discussion</li> <li>• Involvement in L&amp;T continued post-LEAP</li> <li>• Built skills into an internal L&amp;T fellowship</li> <li>• University restructure to formalise role of A/D and Directors of L&amp;T for each faculty (could be influenced by external factors) – enforces the value of L&amp;T, improved procedures. L&amp;T will not go away, you have to change now/ adhere to new policy.</li> <li>• Recognition and reward is important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created formal L&amp;T leadership position</li> <li>• L&amp;T now recognised as a criteria for promotion</li> <li>• Major change to university came with the establishment of a cross-functional infrastructure group</li> <li>• Become formal L&amp;T leader</li> <li>• Gained Promotion</li> <li>• Obtained TLIF grant but no personal gain re promotion or position</li> <li>• Influence into L&amp;T rather than power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized difference between management and leadership</li> <li>• Does flag you as a potential leader</li> <li>• Networking assist</li> <li>• Aware of opportunities around the university</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 Literature review

### Leadership in Higher Education (HE)

Middlehurst et al (2009) question whether there is something distinctive about leadership in higher education in comparison to other organisations. They believe that there is no singular aspect that sets it apart from other organisations. However, they feel that there are some characteristics that have greater emphasis in HE compared to other entities such as their decentralised nature, the culture of autonomy and collegiality. They also point to the possible tensions between 'those who wish to preserve the privilege and power of the bureaucratic class from those who hope to build less structured and less tightly managed organizations' (Middlehurst, et al., 2009, p 329).

Bryman (2009) in his review of literature on ways to determine effective leadership styles in HE found that because the literature lacked a consistent way of using key terms it was impossible to form a cumulative view of what is effective leadership. However, he does believe that a leader needs to create an environment 'for academics and others to fulfil their potential and interest in their work'(Bryman A, 2009, pp 66). However, Bryman like Middlehurst et al (2009) believes that 'higher education institutions are not as distinctive' (ibid) as sometimes thought but again it is the intensity of what is expected of academic leadership that sets it apart from other types of leadership. For example, he believes university employees want their leaders to ensure autonomy, consult, foster collegiality and fight for them with senior managers. It is this last point that he believe distinguishes middle managers in HE from those in other organisations.

Scott et al (2008) argue that higher education in Australia has been the subject of a range of broad social pressures to change and this has generated the need for institutions and leaders to be 'change capable'. Thus, leaders not only need to be good managers but also lead their institutions into new directions by engaging people in the process and reshaping the operating context of their institutions. They do this by enabling staff to learn how to do the necessary changes through ensuring effective and supportive learning environments. Scott et al believe that leaders themselves need support to enable such changes to occur and they prefer 'role-specific, practice based, peer supported and self-managed learning' (Scott et al., 2008) to more formal and generic workshop learning. They believe that 'current approaches to leadership in higher education need to be radically reconceptualised' (ibid).

Bolden et al (2008) examine the forces acting on HE and how leaders have responded to them. They centered their argument on the notion that leading implies learning. Thus, they focus on the capabilities' of leaders and how they can be developed. They argue that although leadership is one of the least understood phenomena known to human kind, it is essential for change to occur, such as that sought in higher education. They consider as a result of this lack of understanding, leadership is often subject to 'a somewhat individualistic and management approach' (Bolden et al., 2008b, pp 359). This approach they believe causes tensions between individual and collective performance, centralised and decentralised control, and economic and social aims. The result of these tensions is that leadership in HE is multilayered and multifaceted in which agency and structure interact at the group level through social capital and identity. They further believe that although leadership is widely distributed across universities, individual leaders play a critical role. Thus, they believe a hybrid model of collective and individual leadership occurs.

### Leadership and management

Simkins (2005) examines models of leadership found at various level of the education community from schools to higher education. He sets out two models of leadership, one he terms 'traditional' leadership that focuses on the individual and another that he terms

'emerging' leadership that focuses on the context of leadership. He argues that making sense of leadership is as important as seeking what works in leadership in education. He further argues in terms of leadership development, the work of Crochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), around the idea of knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice and knowledge-of-practice, could be useful. He concludes by outlining six ways it might be possible to make sense of leadership: i) the way leadership is conceived; ii) the role and purpose of organisations; iii) the changing role of leadership; iv) the way power and authority are shared; v) across inter-professional and organisation boundaries; vi) using leadership development (Simkins, 2005).

Middle university managers' (deans) roles, argue de Boer et al (2009), have become more demanding, senior, strategic, complex and managerial. They emphasise the role of middle management in change as being critical, as such positions can impede change as well as aid it (de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009). Indeed, they suggest that is the middle management levels that are more critical to change than top managers. Deans in this context are individuals that have a responsibility of a number of schools and are generally the individuals at the highest level of leadership that have discipline based responsibility, those above them usually have institutional responsibilities.

Bush (2008) examines the concept of leadership and management in schools in the UK since incorporation in 1988 and concludes by examining leadership for learning. He attempts to determine the difference between management and leadership and takes a middle ground between the extremes, on the one hand, saying that leadership and management are totally different, and on the other hand, saying they cannot be separated. However, he does conclude by arguing that it is leadership that is critical to the success in the education sector, but goes on to say the influence of leadership (as displayed by a school's principal) on students' learning outcomes is small. He also argues, despite this, that leadership is central to encouraging good teaching and this can be done by focusing leadership energies on classroom learning, rather than on budgets and HR matters (Bush, 2008).

### **Hierarchical leadership**

Pounder (2006) examines the decoupling of teachers' leadership from formal leadership through the notion of transformational leadership. He argues that transformational leadership largely depends upon characteristics of individuals such as their ability to be influential, charismatic, and inspirational and an ability to intellectually stimulate students etc. These attributes he believes contribute to such individuals as being good teachers. However, this claim lies on the assumption that a classroom can be 'considered to be a small social organisation' (Pounder, 2006) and therefore the benefits of transformational leadership in the commercial world can be transferred to the classroom. Also he believes there is no evidence that such approaches in the school transfer to higher education.

Lumby (2003) believes leadership in the UK further education sector has become invested in more power and become more distant, focused on external factors and non-teaching related systems. This he states has been labelled 'boys own' style of leadership (Lumby, 2003). He argues a new wave of light touch management has been criticised as merely replacing overt control with subtle manipulation. This leadership style he believes is the result of five factors: student profile, competitive environment, staff stability, and size and curriculum range. He considers for leadership to be developed in colleges the individual needs to be removed as a central tenant of leadership and replaced by engagement with the whole community.

The aim of Bolden et al's (2009) study was to develop ideas about how leadership could be enhanced through the encouragement of collective behaviour. They address this through five themes, structural approaches to leadership, individual motivation, collective leadership, context of HE and leadership development (Bolden et al., 2009). The study focused on leaders in formal position but they believe its findings to be more generalisable to individuals

in informal positions, as they conclude that bottom-up and horizontal leadership plays an important role in universities. They also recognise that formal leaders often depend on informal leaders and informal leaders are often the formal leaders of the future. They identified that a significant aspect of university leadership is found in the committee structure and often decisions are made by consensus and leaders of such committees need to be 'authorised' to speak for the group. They state that any leadership development plans must acknowledge the changing context of an institution. For example, they believe there has been a significant shift from the collegial style of working into a more corporate style in UK higher education. They identified a need for leadership development to move from a generic focus to one that is specific to the needs of the different roles found in universities.

### **Academic autonomy**

Woods et al (2004) explore the idea of distributed leadership through the dualism of structure and agency. In the context of their study they see structure as being about the institution, culture and social elements of distributed leadership. Whereas they see agency as the actions of those involved with distributed leadership. They acknowledge that the two constructs are closely related and it is not possible to identify which comes first. They do however firmly believe that distributed leadership 'is a property of groups of people, not of individuals' (Woods et al., 2004, p. 449). They also address the tension between control and autonomy in education, which they believe is inevitable given that although academics are self-motivated (for example in their research interests) there is a need for institutional direction. They see this being resolved by a hybrid form of leadership where distributed leadership exists alongside formal leadership.

Petrov et al (2006) report on a study of the attitudes of leaders in the UK HE sector on distributed leadership. They found there was a high level of support for the notion of distributed leadership across the participants in the study and similar views about what it was and that it needed to exist alongside formal leadership. However, they report many saw distributed leadership as devolution of responsibility for resources, particularly budgets. They found that there was recognition that some leadership was bottom up and this was like in the case of Woods et al (2004) in the area of research (Petrov et al., 2006). Petrov et al found that whilst some senior managers distributed leadership down to the head of school level, below that its penetration become at the behest of the head of school's own style of leadership. They found one of the benefits of introducing distributed leadership was better team work and relationships between academics and professional staff. They concluded this occurred because, by its very nature, distributed leadership involved all those in the area of interest. However, they felt that one of the disadvantages of distributed leadership was that it could produce a 'silo' effect, where projects or activities are undertaken in localise teams and there is no clear direction for the institution. They also felt that distributed leadership could slow down decision making.

### **Non hierarchical leadership**

Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) examine what they consider as a new form of leadership that are not dependent upon individual or heroic leaders but rather on leadership 'embedded in a system of interdependencies at different levels within the organisation' (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 21). They call this new leadership 'shared leadership' which they believe has the potential to 'transform practices structures and working relationships' (ibid). They identify three shifts required to introduce shared leadership, it is distributed but interdependent, it is embedded in social interaction and leadership is seen as a learning process. However, they believe in reality most organisations will retain a 'figurehead' at the top but these leaders are supported by leadership distributed within their organisations that they purport to lead. They also see three paradoxes in shared leadership, leaders in formal position are the ones who have to introduce or allow shared leadership, shared leadership is often invisible to

organisational structures, and the skills required for shared leadership may not advance individuals engaged in such an approach in a leadership hierarchy.

Collinson et al (2009) argue that in the UK further education (FE) sector a blend of individual leadership and delegated leadership is the most effective (they note that the notion of what is 'effective' is contested itself) and liked by staff. They see this blended leadership as being very similar to that of Gronn's (2008) hybrid leadership. Their study set out to determine how leadership was 'enacted, distributed and experienced at various levels' (Collinson & Collinson, 2009, pp. 369) in FE colleges. They found that there was a consistency in views amongst the participants in their study. Most participants acknowledged the importance of leadership and many thought the key aspects of leadership were openness, engagement and collaboration. There was, however, a difference in the views amongst their participants in the Further Education sector, in comparison to those in Higher Education about what constituted distributed leadership. They reported that most of their respondents saw it as 'top-down' delegation rather than 'bottom-up' engagement and Collinson et al thought this might reflect the difference in culture with regard to the presence of research and the resulting notion of academic autonomy.

### **Elements of Leadership**

Bryman (2009) asked leadership researchers to give their views on leadership and what this means for a leadership competency framework. He reported that participants were sceptical about competency frameworks as they ignored contextual factors and there was a feeling that any leadership framework which ignored context was ineffective (Bryman, 2009). In this regard there was a strong feeling amongst the participants in their study that HE provided a unique context for leadership that meant that leadership approaches used outside of HE often did not work within HE. The participants felt this was particularly due to academics being first loyal to their discipline and then to their institutions. Bryman also argues that academics are by their very nature critical and need to be told why they need to do something rather than simply being told to do it. However, he states that a number of factors were identified for good leaders including, trustfulness, and integrity, consultative and tackling problems.

Burgoyne et al (2009) in their baseline study of leadership in HE view investigated the national UK HE investment in leadership development. The issues the review address includes: does such investments work, what are the leadership capabilities that are supposed to be improved, what institutional performance is improved by the investments, what conditions are required to improve capabilities, how are careers influenced and does leadership development fit into the notion of learning organisations (Burgoyne et al., 2009).

### **Conceptions of Distributed leadership**

Gronn (2009) argues that aggregation of leadership in distributed leadership may not represent the way leadership works. He maintains that a conception of distributed leadership that recognise its varying texture may be of more benefit, particularly as a way of recognising the role of the individual within distributed leadership. He goes onto suggest that the role of the individual is subsumed in an aggregating process and thus may hide what is really occurring. He believes that to ignore the role of individuals either in formal position of leadership or in distributed leadership does not reflect the reality of what is occurring and holds back thinking on the way to improve leadership in institutions. He considers that a 'hybrid' form of leadership, where individuals within distributed leadership structures are recognised is a better unit of analysis than distributed leadership alone (Gronn, 2009).

A study by Bolden et al (2009) on distributed leadership in UK higher education revealed two views of distributed leadership, 'devolved' (top-down) and 'emergent' (bottom-up.) The devolved approach was put forward by formal leaders as the way they conceived distributed

leadership. For them leadership was distributed when they delegated functions and responsibilities (particularly budgets). The emergent view of distributed leadership was observed amongst research activities where individual academics developed their research interests and lead these developments without direction from the formal leadership of their institutions. Thus Bolden et al argue that distributed leadership that emphasises collective leadership and responsibility does not adequately describe distributed leadership as the majority of leaders believe it to be practised. They also argue that distributed leadership does not offer the ability to develop leadership but rather it is a useful 'rhetoric' to shape leadership in higher education. They also point out that many see distributed leaders as a way of shrouding 'the underlying dynamics of power' (Bolden et al., 2009).

A study by Gosling et al (2009) based on the same data as the Bolden et al (2009) article above, argues that the concept of distributed leadership is highly limited in what it can achieve in terms of a leadership strategy. They examine the usefulness of distributed leadership as a descriptive, corrective, empowering or rhetoric device. Gosling et al argue that distributed leadership has limited usefulness as a descriptive device as they found little evidence that what was actually occurring in HE could be described as distributed leadership. However, they do believe it could be useful as rhetorical device as a way of moving away from the leadership being centered on personal traits and behaviours. They, like others, put a caveat on this last point and say it could, 'distract from the systemic degradation of academic autonomy and creeping managerialism' (Gosling et al., 2009, p. 308).

Gronn (2000) argues that the role of leadership is vital in the success of organisations saying that structure and labour follow on from leadership. He believes activity theory is the best way to understand the role of leadership, particularly if it is distributed (Gronn, 2000). He believes activity theory is useful as it foregrounds the division of labour in an organisation necessary to understand distributed leadership. He also points to the role of specific tasks as the basis where distributed leadership is most effective.

Woods et al (2009) examine the possible role of democracy in work, given that the nature of employers generally does not have democracy as the basis of their relationship to their employees. Most employee relationships are of contractual nature where an individual agree to undertake some form of labour for remuneration and thus fall outside the setting for a democratic process. Despite this, Woods et al believe there may be advantages to employers to introduce democratic leadership along the similar lines of distributed leadership but taken a step further. They also acknowledge that there are some disadvantages such as a slowing down of decision making. They feel perhaps the most likely success of democratic leadership is as an extension of distributed leadership particularly in an education environment to ensure ethical outcomes are ensured (Woods & Gronn, 2009).

Bolden et al (2008) further report on data from a study of leadership in UK higher education. They focus around the appointment of formal leaders within universities. For example, they cite evidence that suggests it is harder to fill Heads of School positions than those at senior levels and there are different pressures that leaders at various levels experience (Bolden et al., 2008a).

The role of distributed leadership is examined by Lumby (2009), where there are collective aims across a number of schools. He argues that distributed leadership in itself does not address the issue of self interest in such partnership arrangements. He believes that distributed leadership focuses on the mechanics of leadership rather than on its moral or ethical aspect. He says 'Theories of distributed leadership, while they engage with how we understand the construction of leaders, are silent on its purpose' (Lumby, 2009, p. 321).

## **Distributed leadership in schools**

Muijs et al's (2007) study looked at three schools with different leadership styles being used by the head teacher. They argue the ability to share leadership by the teachers is at the behest of the head teacher rather than being an emergent property of the teachers involved. A number of practical issues were also raised about the motivation of the teachers as not all wanted to be leaders and others felt it was what their managers were paid to do and they were not (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Harris (2004) examines the concepts and underlying motivations for the introduction of distributed leadership in the school sector. She believes it is occurring as head of schools realise that they cannot lead all the activities needed to improve school performance. She very much situates distributed leadership as something that it is under the guidance of the head teacher rather than something that emerges from teachers themselves, which can be argued to be the case in the higher education sector (Bryman, 2009). She also indicates that it is difficult enough to demonstrate the effect of leadership on education outcomes let alone the effect of distributed leadership on such outcomes. However she does believe that distributed leadership does have the ability to build capacity within a school and this may be one of its major benefits (Harris, 2004).

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