

HEIR 2014: From Research to Action



**ENHANCING TEACHING AND
LEARNING THROUGH DISTRIBUTED
LEADERSHIP;
FROM DOCTORAL RESEARCH TO
PRACTICAL APPLICATION
SARAH EDWARDS**



Presentation overview



- Introduction – researcher positionality and context
- Overall research question
- Distributed Leadership – key concepts and research evidence in HE
- The research approach
- Key findings – themes and discussion
- Practical outcomes
- Considerations and reflection

Researcher Positionality and Context



- HE Lecturer and Programme Manager
- Senior Lecturer for Teaching and Learning (School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events)
- MA Educational Leadership and Innovation
- University of Warwick (2009)
- Development of particular interests and research perspectives
 - - Policy and practice
 - - Distributed Leadership (Alma Harris)
 - - http://www.almaharris.co.uk/files/almaharris_cv.pdf
 - - Teacher Leadership
 - - Teaching and learning excellence (coinciding with publication of the QAA B3: learning and teaching chapter)



Overall research question



- How might the Distributed Leadership approach enhance teaching and learning within a specific Higher Education setting?

Distributed Leadership – core concept



- A core concept of Distributed Leadership is that:
- *leadership is not the preserve of the individual, but is a fluid or emergent property rather than a fixed phenomenon. This moves beyond trying to understand leadership through actions and beliefs of single leaders to understanding leadership as a dynamic organisational entity.*

(Harris, 2008, p173)

Current perspective



- ‘Whilst Distributed Leadership has had multiple interpretation in terms of concept, it has now become the normatively preferred leadership model in the 21st century’

(Bush, 2013)

Distributed Leadership study in HE



- Research around Distributed Leadership in Higher Education has seen some recent attention. This is in part, because it has been suggested that the distributed approach is being espoused increasingly as a means of delivering on the challenges of the changing landscape (Bolden et al, 2009).

Distributed Leadership study in HE



- The Distributed approach is also suggested as one way of working toward shared goals and mobilising leadership *across the organisation* (ibid). However, ‘whilst the literature increasingly claims that leadership in Universities is widely distributed, how it works in practice is little understood and studied’ (Bolden et al, *Developing Collective Leadership in Higher Education*, 2009, p4).

The alignment of teacher leadership literature with Higher Education



- *Teacher leadership is conceptually closely linked to distributed leadership, but is narrower, being concerned exclusively with the leadership roles of teaching staff, whilst simultaneously being broader than many practical operationalisations of distributed leadership that have often concentrated on formal positional roles..'*

(Harris and Muijs, 2007, p113)

Teacher Leaders



- One of the important points emanating from the literature is that ‘teacher leaders are, in the first place, expert teachers, who spend the majority of their time in the classrooms but take on different roles at different times’ (Ash and Persall, 2000).

Teacher Leaders



- Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p6) have suggested that ‘teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom and influence others toward improved educational practice’.
- Leadership of students or of other teachers
- Leadership of operational tasks
- Leadership through decision making or partnership

Research Objectives



- To develop a conceptual framework for the study of Distributed Leadership within the context of the UK Higher Education sector
- To critically review the main theoretical characteristics of the Distributed Leadership approach
- To critically review how Teacher Leadership theory may be applicable within a Higher Education setting
- To identify how Distributed Leadership is evidenced within Teaching and Learning practice
- *To suggest measures that may enhance how teaching and learning is led within a specific education institution*

The research approach



- Documentary analysis
- A case study offers an example ‘from which your experience, your phronesis enables you to gather insights or understand a problem’ (Thomas, 2011, p170).
- *‘Phronesis is practical knowledge. It is a model based on personal experience. It is personal and it helps us makes sense of particular situations’*
- *(Thomas, 2011, p214).*
- Self-completion questionnaires (return of 57)
- Semi-structured interviews of staff in both formal leadership positions and academic staff (16, opportunity sampling)

Key findings



- Leadership activity among academic staff was highly evident and reflected those leadership activities outlined in the teacher leadership literature
- The Leadership of teaching and learning was interpreted in many different ways, but overall lacked strategic direction (particularly with regard to the profile and communication of the T & L Strategy)
- For staff to undertake leadership activity there needed to be a much stronger sense of a 'Professional Learning community'. Shared practice was intermittent and inconsistent.

Recommendations

Leadership activity should be informed by the effective communication of the Teaching and Learning Strategy

Leadership activity should be underpinned by knowledge exchange from an active professional learning community

Distributed Academic Leadership

Staff networking around subject and pedagogic approaches should be aligned with the teaching and learning strategy

Leadership activity needs to be supported and recognised in terms of developing competencies that underpin an academic leadership role

The Teaching Exchange

teachingexchange [licensed for non-commercial use only] / Welcome to the Teaching Exchange! - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

Portal - University College Birmingham x PB teachingexchange [licensed for non-com... x +

teachingexchange.pbworks.com/w/page/62033559/Welcome to the Teaching Exchange!

ucb.ac.uk

Most Visited Customize Links Free Hotmail Windows Marketplace Windows Media Windows Add to My Bookmarks

teachingexchange

Get a free wiki | Try our free business product

log in help

Wiki Pages & Files

Search this workspace

VIEW

Welcome to the Teaching Exchange!

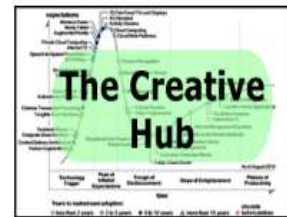
last edited by a.piggott@ucb.ac.uk 4 months, 2 weeks ago

Page history

Teaching Exchange

The Teaching Exchange is a Wiki for teaching staff to share information. It is edited by Alison Piggott, Sarah Edwards, Michelle Callanan and Chris Watson.

Teaching related resources should be forwarded to Alison or Sarah. 'Creative' resources to Chris or Michelle.



Navigator

- LT Group
- Test

- A new approach to FE induction
- Creative Assessment
- Creative Hub
- Creative Lectures

Pages Files options

SideBar

This is your Sidebar, which you can edit like any other page in your workspace.

This Sidebar appears everywhere on your workspace. Add to it whatever you like -- a navigation section, a link to your favorite web sites, or anything else.

Recent Activity

start

teachingexchange [lic...

HEIR. 2014 Conferenc...

Inbox - S.Edwards@...

EN 10:00

Example Pages

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying a workspace page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [teachingexchange.pbworks.com/w/page/64394859/Interesting Reading](http://teachingexchange.pbworks.com/w/page/64394859/Interesting%20Reading). The page title is "teachingexchange [licensed for non-commercial use only] / Interesting Reading - Mozilla Firefox".

The workspace page has a header with the text "teachingexchange" and a search bar labeled "Search this workspace". Below the header, there are tabs for "Wiki" and "Pages & Files". The main content area is titled "VIEW" and "Interesting Reading". It shows the page was last edited by a.piggott@ucb.ac.uk 1 month ago. The page contains a list of links to various documents and reports, including:

- [InternationalisingHEframeworkFinal.pdf](#) - HEA report on Preparing 21st Century Graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society.
- [EnhancingTNE.pdf](#) - HEA 2014 report on enhancing student learning and teacher development in transnational education
- [developing_research-based_curricula_in_cbhe_14.pdf](#) - HEA report on engaging students with research enquiry
- [case-studies-research-based-curricula.docx](#) - Case studies about engaging students with research
- [UniCollegeBirminghamFinalOct13.pdf](#) - HEA Annual Report on activity with UCB
- [HEA report engaging learners 2013.pdf](#)
- [Innovating Pedagogy report 2013.pdf](#) - OU publication
- [Facebookguideforeducators.pdf](#)

On the right side of the workspace, there is a "Navigator" panel showing a tree view of the workspace structure:

- LT Group
- Test
 - A new approach to FE induction
 - Creative Assessment
 - Creative Hub
 - Creative Lectures

Below the Navigator is a "SideBar" panel with the text: "This is your Sidebar, which you can edit like any other page in your workspace. This Sidebar appears everywhere on your workspace. Add to it whatever you like -- a navigation section, a link to your favorite web sites, or anything else."

At the bottom of the workspace, there is a "Recent Activity" panel.

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications: teachingexchange [lic..., HEIR 2014 Conferenc..., and Inbox - S.Edwards@... The system tray shows the time as 10:01.

Outcomes from the Teaching Exchange so far



- Specific workshops, e.g HEA applications, in terms of the UKPSF have resulted in increased professional recognition for staff, at both Fellow and Senior Fellow level
- Shared practice of innovative assessments have been written into new courses at validation e.g Pecha Kucha
- The exchange provides a platform for College wide updating and staff development e.g Talis Aspire, use of digital technologies within teaching

Moving forward...



- Challenges;
- To raise the profile of the Teaching Exchange so that it is the first 'port of call' for all staff enquiry and development
- To update and reflect upon how the T & L strategy is embedded and how academic staff may engage with it (or even read it)!

Considerations for discussions



- How are Teaching and Learning Strategies communicated within your institution?
- Have you seen an increase in the number of ‘Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning’, Centre for Enhanced Academic Practice etc.in your institutions?
- To what extent do you have a strong ‘Professional learning community’ in your institution?
- Any other comments/questions?

Thankyou for listening!

S.Edwards@ucb.ac.uk