

# Distributed Leadership

## IDENTIFYING THE PLACE OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING in HIGHER EDUCATION



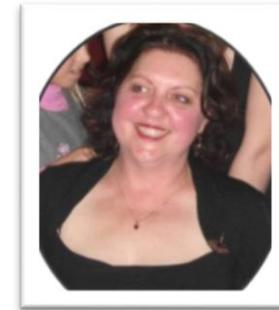
Assoc. Prof. Geraldine Lefoe  
UoW



Prof. Roger Hadgraft  
RMIT



Prof. Sandra Jones  
RMIT



Dr Marina Harvey  
Macquarie University



Dr Kevin Ryland  
RMIT



## **This showcase aims to....**

1. Discuss the contribution of distributed leadership to building capacity for leadership in learning and teaching
2. Present the findings of a cross-institute, national survey of leadership for learning and teaching
3. Invite participants to participate in a community of practice on benchmarking distributed leadership.



## OLT Project underpinning the national survey:

*develop a systematic, evidence-based benchmarking framework for Distributed Leadership to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching.*



<http://www.distributedleadership.com.au/>.



## Description

*A form of shared leadership that is underpinned by a more collective and inclusive philosophy than traditional leadership theory that focuses on skills, traits and behaviours of individual leaders (Jones et al 2011).*

*rather than*

## Definition

as DL is more dependent on how leadership is perceived than on any formally recognised position of leaders.



## **Ascertaining Institutional Context Readiness for Change**

1. Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool (ASERT)
2. Pilot Audit of ALTC DL Projects
3. National Survey
4. 6E Conceptual model of DL



## **1. Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool (ASERT)**

- Designed by the Project team as an outcome of ALTC project (DL9-1222)

# Distributed Leadership

Criteria for Distributed Leadership	Dimensions and Values to enable development of Distributed Leadership			
	CONTEXT Trust	CULTURE Respect	CHANGE Recognition	RELATIONSHIPS Collaboration
People are involved	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
Processes are supportive	Leadership is implemented as a shared process not just a position	Decentralised groups engage in decision making	All levels and functions have input into policy implementation	Communities of Practice are modeled
Professional development is provided	DL is a component of leadership training	Mentoring for DL is provided	Leaders at all levels proactively encourage DL	Collaboration is facilitated
Resources are available	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 supported



## 2. Pilot Audit of ALTC DL Projects

### Results

- Broad spectrum of alignment of projects to the criteria of the ASERT, ranging from -0.44 to 1.81.
- Support for the utility of the scoring system that was developed and utilised to ascertain the enactment of distributed leadership.
  - Note: a more complete showcase of these findings was presented at HERDSA2012



## 3. National Survey

### Aim:

to identify distributed leadership related systems and frameworks that are currently employed to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching across Australian higher education institutions.

### Analysis:

90% (of 110 respondents representing 47 Australian higher education institutions) had used a distributed leadership approach in the project they were identifying for the survey purpose.



## 3. National Survey

### Key findings:

- there was a correlation between DL and ‘increased engagement in learning and teaching’ and ‘building and sustaining collaboration’.
- distributed leadership actions have been employed to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching
- evidence of significant involvement of a broad range of people and supportive processes BUT
- fewer professional development opportunities were available and there was little evidence that resources, apart from finance, were provided.



## **SURVEY RESULTS-** alignment with the ASERT

1. Evidence of acceptance of the need to take action to develop and encourage a context of trust

responses that reported the involvement of a broad range of people with expertise in learning and teaching, particularly the degree to which informal leadership by these experts was recognised and the number of projects that had finance allocated to them.

However, the low level of professional development offered or available in distributed leadership suggests that more needs to be done to support the understanding and enactment of distributed leadership.



## **SURVEY RESULTS- alignment with the ASERT**

2. Evidence that there is a high level of acceptance of the need to take action to develop and encourage a culture of respect for individual expertise.

Responses that reported the participation of individuals in decision making for the project

However, need for more exploration into the extent to which groups at different levels of the organisation are engaged in decision making.

Furthermore the low level of mentoring provided for distributed leadership and the lack of recognition or reward for individual leadership contribution suggests that there is need for more action to enable a culture of respect for expertise.



## **SURVEY RESULTS- alignment with the ASERT**

### 3. Evidence of a broad commitment to enable change:

responses that identify input from academic and professionals from all levels and functions into policy development and implementation.

responses that showed encouragement by formal leaders for broad participant engagement in projects designed to produce change.

However the survey was unable to explore in any further detail the extent to which flexibility in infrastructure and systems is being enacted.



## **SURVEY RESULTS- alignment with the ASERT**

### 4. Evidence of the importance of collaboration

But it was not possible to determine the extent to which the expertise of individuals contributes to collective decision making.

Despite this there was recognition of the importance of developing collaborative relationships through communities of practice, formal meetings and networking opportunities to enable collaborative relationships to develop.

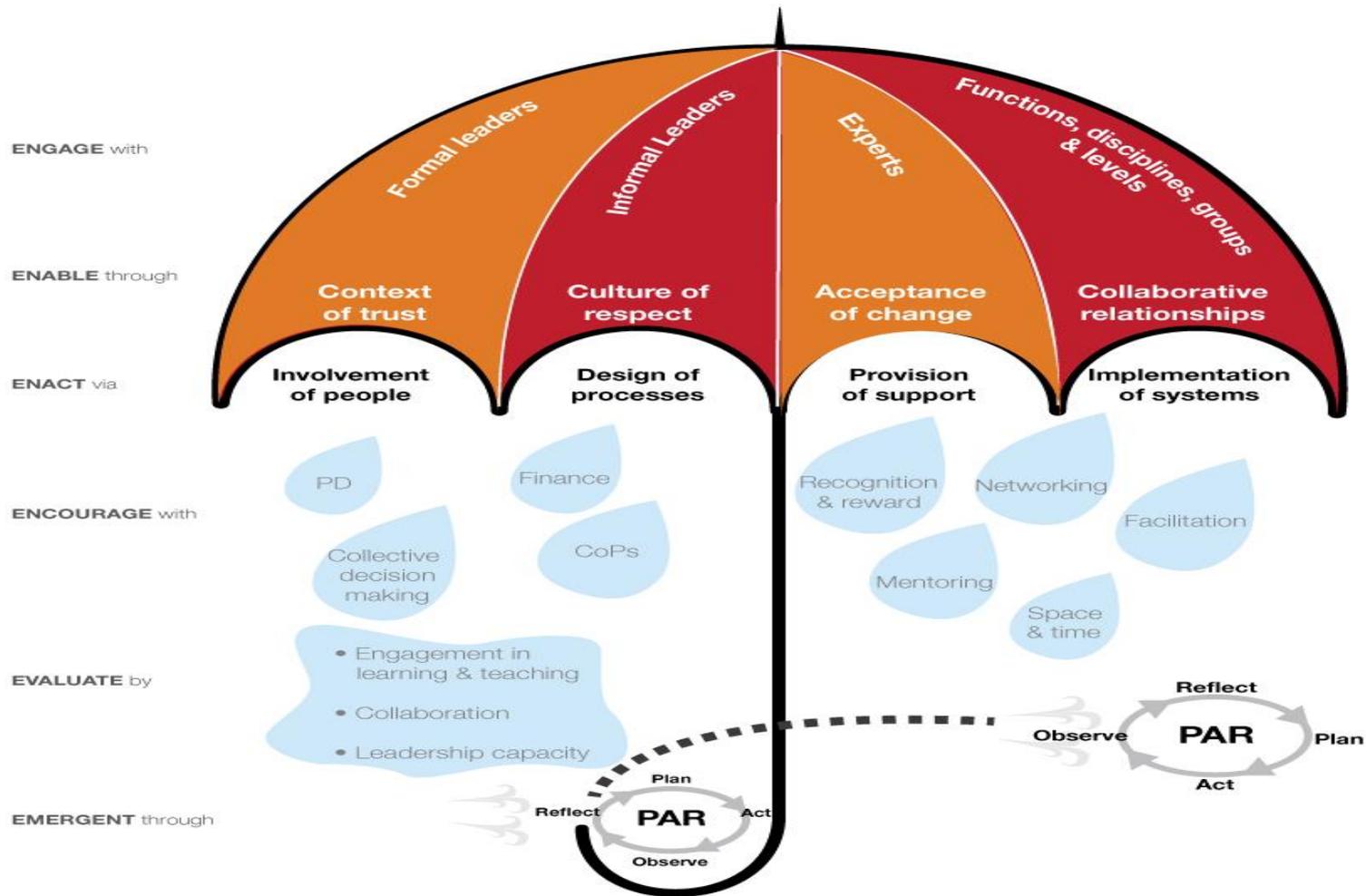


## **SURVEY RESULTS- Summary**

- distributed leadership is being employed to build leadership capacity in learning and teaching in the Australian higher education sector.
- validation of the ASERT items and dimensions presents the ASERT as full of possibility and potential for supporting an approach and concept of Distributed Leadership specific to the higher education sector.
- but there is need for greater clarity in what is meant by the conceptualisation, meanings and processes of distributed leadership was recognised.
- this was achieved through identification of a 6E Conceptual model of Distributed Leadership

# Distributed Leadership

## DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP 6E Conceptual Model





# Distributed Leadership

## EXPLICATING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: THE 6E conceptual model

Six basic tenets –

- **Engages** with a broad range of formal and informal leaders and experts from all relevant functions, disciplines, groups and levels.
- Is **Enabled** through a context of trust and a culture of respect coupled with effecting change through collaborative relationships.
- Is **Enacted** via the involvement of people, the design of processes, the provision of support and the implementation of systems.
- Is best **Evaluated** by using evidence of examples of increased engagement in learning and teaching, collaboration and growth in leadership capacity.
- Is an ever **Emergent** through sustainable process of cycles of Participative Action Research.
- Is **Encouraged** with professional development, mentoring, facilitation of networks, communities of practice, time, space and finance for collaboration and recognition of, and reward, for contribution to raise awareness and scaffold learning about distributed leadership.