Enabling Leadership Capacity for Higher Education Scholarship in Learning and Teaching (SOTL) through Action Research

ALARA webinar
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An acknowledgement
Aims of the session

**OUTLINE**
Outline the key concepts of Distributed Leadership, Action Research and SOTL

**EXPLORE**
Explore the relationship between DL and AR

**EXAMINE**
Examine the good practice action statements (to enable DL for SOTL AR)

**APPLY**
Apply DL to your own AR practice
Three key concepts

1. AR
2. SOTL
3. DL

• All three concepts were poorly understood by higher education researchers.
Three key concepts: 1. AR

Four-step model of Plan, Act, Observe and Reflect.

(after the Spiral of Action Research, Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014, 18-19)

https://sites.google.com/site/eportfoliomjb12/learning/action-research-5315
Three key concepts: 2 SOTL

Australian regulatory bodies expect that teaching staff are:

- knowledgeable about their disciplinary scholarship
- active in scholarship - continuing scholarship that informs their teaching.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
2. Scholarship Of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)

Build new knowledge (research)

Apply scholarship to practice

Transfer knowledge across disciplines & contexts

Knowledgeable teachers

Discovery

Application

Integration

Teaching

(After Boyer, 1990)
Three key concepts: 2 DL

What is distributed leadership?

Type words that describe this concept into the chat
3. Distributed Leadership

...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 area of expertise.

(Jones, Harvey, Lefoe & Ryland, 2014, p. 10)
3. Distributed Leadership

3. Distributed Leadership: 6E Tenets

1. **Engage** with a broad range of experts as well as positional leaders.
2. **Enable** a context and culture of respect for and trust in individual contributions to develop in order to nurture collaborative relationships.
3. **Enact** through processes, support and systems that encourage involvement.
4. **Encourage** through activities that raise awareness through a range of supportive actions.
5. **Evaluate** through a process that encourages engagement and collaboration.
6. Support ever **Emergent** change
Our methodological formula

4 step Action Research + Tenets of DL \times SOTL projects = Good Practice Action Statements
# Good Practice Action Statements

Harvey & Jones, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenets of distributed leadership</th>
<th>PLAN to …</th>
<th>ACT to …</th>
<th>OBSERVE that …</th>
<th>REFLECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGAGE</strong></td>
<td>Recognise, acknowledge and work with hierarchical leaders as well as encourage ‘experts’ from all levels of the university</td>
<td>Ensure ongoing participation from all levels of the university</td>
<td>Active participation, rather than attendance, is evident for all project activities</td>
<td>That participants are supported to develop a sense of ownership in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENABLE</strong></td>
<td>Achieve active commitment from all levels of the institution</td>
<td>Initiate support to develop a culture of trust, respect and collegiality.</td>
<td>AR project participants are achieving change through collaboration</td>
<td>Through regular collaborative group reflection sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENACT</strong></td>
<td>Structure for multi-level engagement, allow for fluid boundaries and provide adequate time frames</td>
<td>Develop a systematic and robust methodology</td>
<td>Processes are co-designed, flexible and agile</td>
<td>Through individual and regular reflection sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENCOURAGE</strong></td>
<td>Draw on existing SOTL theory and research</td>
<td>Design developmentally appropriate learning opportunities</td>
<td>Professional learning opportunities are offered and engaged in</td>
<td>On new insights and learnings from professional and action learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATE</strong></td>
<td>Build in evaluation from the start</td>
<td>Engage in ongoing formal and informal evaluation</td>
<td>Regular collection, recording, documentation and analysis of data is undertaken</td>
<td>On the evaluation data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENT</strong></td>
<td>Ensure multiple cycles of AR</td>
<td>Maintain flexibility in response to changing contexts</td>
<td>Over time, participants acknowledge their development of leadership capacity</td>
<td>That leadership capacity has been developed as individuals are acknowledged as leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity

Select one of the tenets of Distributed Leadership:

Tenet 1: Engage with-
Tenet 2: Enable through-
Tenet 3: Enact via-
Tenet 4: Encourage with –
Tenet 5: Evaluate by-
Tenet 6: Emergent through -

Consider how you could apply, or you have applied, the tenet of DL to your Action Research
Distributed Leadership: 6E Tenets

1. *Engage* with a broad range of experts as well as positional leaders.

2. *Enable* a context and culture of respect for and trust in individual contributions to develop in order to nurture collaborative relationships.

3. *Enact* through processes, support and systems that encourage involvement.

4. *Encourage* through activities that raise awareness through a range of supportive actions.

5. *Evaluate* through a process that encourages engagement and collaboration.

6. Support ever *Emergent* change

© Jones & Harvey, 2017, p.133
Key learnings

• The relationship between DL and AR is bi-directional and symbiotic
• AR and its reflective practice build leadership
• The Good Practice Action Statements can provide a simple and logical guide for using AR to enable DL
https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1803941


TEQSA. (2014). *TEQSA Guidance Note: Scholarship of teaching and learning*.

https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/distributedleadership/node/2
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