Rethinking Leadership Practice for Large-Scale Change

Garrett C. Groves
VP Austin Community College
Texas Success Center: Community College Research Fellow
CCRC: Colleges Implementing Guided Pathways

- Community colleges implementing guided pathways as part of formal state or national initiatives
- Four-year colleges implementing pathways practices as part of state initiatives

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Research Question: How are shared and adaptive leadership practices demonstrated in GP colleges?
“The most common leadership failure stems from trying to apply **TECHNICAL** solutions to **ADAPTIVE** challenges.” –Heifetz

**Technical Problems**
- Easy to identify and define
- Clear solution (tried & tested)
- Solved by expertise or authority (by fiat)
- Requires small changes within clear boundaries
- People are natural receptivity to technical solutions

**Adaptive Challenges**
- Both the problem, as well as the solution(s), are difficult to define and require the insight of multiple actors
- Solution requires the insight of those closest to the problem
- Expertise and authority aren’t enough to get it done
- Raise hard trade-offs and require careful consideration of values as well as facts.
- People are naturally unsettled by adaptive challenges because of the inherent uncertainty

“...We have virtually no vocabulary to guide our talk and our thinking about leadership as a shared and interwoven dynamic.” – Bensimon & Neumann
Domains of Shared Leadership

1. Meaningfully Participative Decision Making
   a) included before, not after decisions are made
   b) expertise of faculty & staff built into process

2. Genuine 2-Way Communication
   a) creating space for disagreement
   b) multiple channels for listening

3. Authentically Distributed Power & Leadership
   a) frontline faculty & staff included in design and lead implementation
   b) feedback loops prioritize perspectives of those on the ground.

Change Management Leadership Models

Examples
• Kotter’s Change Management Model
• McKinsey 7-S Change Model
• Prosci ADKAR Model
• Lewin’s Model
• Bridges Transition Model
• Kubler-Ross Change Curve
• Satir Change Management Model

Entrepreneurial Leadership

Operational System

Complexity Leadership Model


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.12.001
## PILOT STUDY FINDINGS ON CREATING ADAPTIVE SPACE

### Core Elements Required for Strong & Effective Teams

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<td>National SME #1</td>
<td>National SME #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear Goals</td>
<td>Clear vision or goals without strategies</td>
<td>&quot;Clarity and Expectations&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Operationalize the big vision into structures&quot;</td>
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<td>Inclusive, Deliberative Communication</td>
<td>&quot;Deliberative and creative discussion&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Share Priorities and Team Goals&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Clarity &amp; Transparency&quot;</td>
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<td>Culture of Learning</td>
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<td>Risk-Taking Ethos</td>
<td>&quot;Encourage Creativity and Experimentation&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Provide Cover&quot;</td>
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<td>Horizontal Leadership</td>
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<td>Looking Beyond Rules and Tradition</td>
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<td>Ambiguity</td>
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<td>Elevate Success</td>
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<td>Champions</td>
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<td>Doggedness</td>
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<td>&quot;Maniacal focus&quot; &amp; &quot;Institutional Will&quot;</td>
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CREATING ADAPTIVE SPACE
Core Elements Identified for Strong & Effective Teams

- "SET THE TABLE"
  - Clear Goals
- Shared Decision Making
- Silo-Spanning Membership
- Measure/Document Success
- Inclusive, Deliberative Communication
- Risk-Taking Ethos of Mutual Support

Which elements are most important?
Which are easiest and hardest to cultivate in self and others?
What's missing?
Findings & Next Steps

Findings

- **Frameworks / Models Exist**: Though preliminary, several frameworks for additional research are available for testing key components of theory.

- **Preliminary evidence is encouraging**: While more is needed, there is sufficient correlative evidence to feed further research.

- **Missing an adequate theory of power**: Sharing leadership is different than sharing power.

- **Ignores critical questions about equity**: Distributing leadership may continue to reinforce existing patterns of systemic exclusion.

Possible Next Steps

- **Literature Review**: Refine and expand literature review on Shared, Adaptive and Complexity leadership theory.

- **Educational Leadership Case Study**: Develop an adaptive leadership case study for practitioners in the community college field (*Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*)

New Research Questions

- **Adaptive Space at Texas Community Colleges**: What is the empirical evidence of “adaptive space” at Texas community colleges implementing change under the GP movement, and what are the common elements?

- **Equitable Access**: How is adaptive space made accessible and equitable, despite existing institutional power dynamics and patterns of systemic exclusion by race and gender?

- **Community College Leader Evolution**: Among long-serving community college presidents in Texas, how have their leadership views and practices changed or evolved overtime?