

TWG 2: Learners as learning leaders: how does leadership for learning emerge beyond the traditional teaching models?

As we open up to the broadening of contexts for learning, facilitated by pervasive technology to individual learners, we need to think about how leadership for learning emerges and can be supported beyond the traditional teaching models in a technology-enriched environment. In formal as well as in informal contexts, learning leaders, willing to take responsibility for learning in their context, develop new technical competencies. Consequently, their capacity for innovation along the broad spectrum of human activity is enhanced and continues to evolve. Learning leaders, which may include teachers, students, and other educators, manifest their leadership through boundary spanning, deep understanding of authentic problems, relational agency, engaging in problem-solving, overcoming design challenges, game playing, etc.

“Leadership is about providing direction and taking responsibility for making it happen”

OECD. (2013). Leadership for 21st Century Learning. Paris: OECD Publishing.

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Issues

- Lack of principles for understanding learning, leading, IT, and change
 - Conflicting understandings of student success and well being
 - Misunderstanding of IT as compartmentalized, potential “silver bullet”
- Imposed anonymity instead of recognition
- Equity and access
- Consistency/clarity of purpose

Guiding principles

1. Lead learners need to interact collaboratively, build relationships and trust, and ensure continuous development
2. Leadership for learning is distributed amongst participants and dependent on the opportunities present.
3. “IT” should also stand for “innovative teaching”: technology should not be the main topic but it should be integrated.

Identified Current Misalignments

1. Structure does not allow risk taking and failures, which can prevent innovation.
2. IT is compartmentalized and not integrated into teaching and learning.
3. IT Access is not ubiquitous
4. Evaluation/assessment is not consistent with desired outcomes
5. The learning environment (space, time, participation structures) is not conducive to natural learning patterns.
6. Incoherence between policy, research, and practice.

Emerging Questions from discussions with other TWGs

1. Need to create a joint understanding of “leadership”
2. Need to contextualize the concept of “lead learners” (teachers? students?) Lead learners emerge depending on the context
3. “Distributed” leadership used in terms of “emerging” leadership was more or less welcomed, but some tensions still exist (e.g., cultural differences and assumptions in France)
4. Distributed leadership: How do we define leadership and who we see as “leaders”? (opposed to working in silos, etc.)
5. Distributed leadership: fostering, growing, and practicing leadership/mentorship skills with the goal of sustained/-able gains; sharing leadership (amongst staff/teachers/learners) to create sustainability; providing learners with progressively challenging leadership possibilities as their skills grow
6. TWG 7: leadership for learning as a “mindset” (being able to use a situation, working w/ others); issue of assessment (how does one assess the learning across different contexts?)
7. TWG 13: not everyone was a fan of the idea of “Innovative Teaching” to describe “IT”; platforms (outside companies playing too big of a role); knowledge creation and context
8. IT is not necessarily innovative; they’re using it but not necessarily innovating with it; do innovative practices respond to a need (e.g., empathy)?
9. Some worry that the teacher role would disappear (Khan academy)
10. Students can exercise leadership for learning by, e.g., creating tutorials for other students, similar to Khan Academy, created by students for students
11. Creativity requires tremendous amounts of risk-taking. This idea overlaps with one of our observations/discussions.
12. Notion of “space” in learning environments

Strategies and Actions:

For All:

- A. Pay attention to developing a joint understanding of leadership, as it applies to situations of leading learning and innovative teaching
- B. Foster partnerships [untapped potential!] between researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.
- C. Get students involved
- D. Advocate to policy makers and policy influencers Leadership for Learning beyond the traditional teaching models
- E. Promote the outcomes of EDUsummIT and other similar
- F. [Risk-taking]
- G. [Knowledge mobilization towards policy makers]
- H. [Teacher preparation & PD]

Policy makers

- I. Develop a joint understanding of leadership, as it applies to situations of leading learning and innovative teaching

Practitioners

- J. Teacher preparation & PD

Researchers

- K. Teacher preparation & PD
- L. Knowledge mobilization towards policy makers