

What is Leadership for Collaboration?

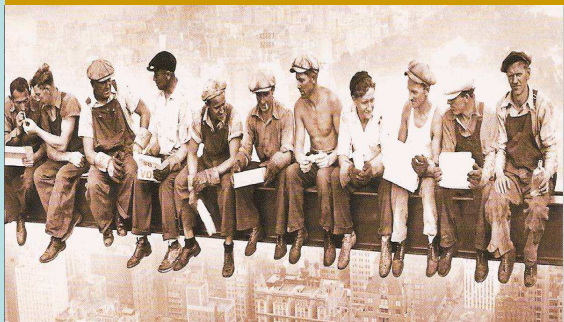


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Research Questions

- What is leadership for collaboration?
- Does the collaborative context(s) make different demands on leadership compared to the demands made in a single organisational setting?
- Does a particular assemblage of leadership competencies and practices used in inter-organisational collaboration exist and, if so, what does it look like?

Review of the Literature



Review of the Literature : General leadership

- Trait, style, contingency, 'new' (transformational, transactional and charismatic)

Criticisms

- Over emphasis on 'heroic' leaders
- Clear demarcation between leaders and followers
- Leaders at the top of organizations; unidirectional; hierarchical
- Ignores 'informal' leaders
- Shared, dispersed and distributed
 - relational process shared or distributed at different levels/ multidirectional
 - dynamic group phenomenon/teamwork/ mutual learning
 - Strong resonance with demands of collaborative arenas

Review of the Literature: Collaborative leadership

- Applies to both intra and inter-organizational contexts
- reflects the increasing interdependence and connectivity of public governance and the limitations of traditional hierarchical approaches to leadership
- Questions prompted:
 - whether it is a distinct leadership approach or a variant of an existing perspective such as distributed leadership
 - to what extent it can be relevant to both intra- and inter-organizational situations when the context and challenges in each may be different.

Review of the Literature: Leadership for cross sector, multi-organizational collaboration

- Building and sustaining high quality inter-personal relationships between a diverse set of stakeholders, fostering trust, managing power relationships and generating consensus.
- Building a common collaborative culture based on an appreciation of interdependence and common purpose, helping stakeholders appreciate connectivity, generating shared meaning from multiple constituencies.
- Understanding complexity and converting strategic intent into effective action.
- Combining diverse skills and experiences in new ways to foster creativity and innovation, facilitating learning and reflective practice.
- Leadership as potentially (but not necessarily) dispersed amongst individuals at all levels in different organizations.

Research Findings



Pilot Study

- Dec 2008: Pilot Q sort with 34 health and social care professionals in Wales (+few academics)
- **LfC as process facilitation:** most popular factor (particularly with health representatives); focused on the importance of leadership in fostering and promoting a shared collaborative process.
- **LfC as strategic action:** focused on the role of individual leaders as drivers and shapers of collaborative action.
- **LfC as relationship building:** in this factor LfC is contingent on the development and maintenance of trusting and productive relationships with leadership essential in supporting their development.
- **LfC as distributed leadership:** in this factor the focus is on leadership as a feature of the whole system in which it is dispersed, manifesting itself in groups and teams.

Second Pilot Study

- March/April 2009: Q sort with 38 senior public service professionals in Wales (Masterclass and Leadership Programme)
- Revised Q set following review of first pilot which included some entirely new statements along with some rephrased statements

FINDINGS

Factor 1: LfC as expert facilitation of collaborative action

Factor 2: LfC as navigating uncertainty and complexity in collaborative relationships

Factor 3: LfC as strategic shaping of collaborative capacity

Questions for Discussion

- What are the most important components of leadership for collaboration identified in the statements?
- Which are the least important and why?
- Within these statements which are the most important factors to consider?
 - ambiguity, dilemma, risk and loss of control
 - honesty, integrity, patience, drive, commitment
 - intellectually agile, able to understand complex problems and related risks and promote flexible responses
 - conflict management, bargaining, emotional intelligence, mediation and diplomacy
- What dimension or component of leadership for collaboration was missing from the statements?
- Is leadership for collaboration distinctly different from leadership within organisations?
 - If yes, what makes it different – the context and/or the skills needed?
 - If no, what are the key factors that are common to all kinds of leadership?

