University leadership as engaged pedagogy: A call for governance reform

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Abstract

Responses to COVID-19 impacts have shown how quickly universities can change, given the impetus. However, global disruptions to university learning and teaching have not yet been matched by any significant change to university leadership. Taking gender equity as our focus, we argue that pedagogical disruption should extend beyond the classroom to reshape academic leadership. In this commentary we critically reflect on the question 'How can university leaders share power to nurture caring and ethical academic leadership'? Taking some cues from disruptions to university learning and teaching, we call on the work of bell hooks to propose a holistic vision of university leadership as a form of critical pedagogy — 'engaged pedagogy'. We draw on combined experience in professional and academic roles at six universities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to share composite vignettes of holistic leadership practices grounded in integrity, collaboration and personal wellbeing. Our commentary concludes with practical suggestions for changing university governance in a time of disruption so that leadership as engaged pedagogy can be practised more widely.

Practitioner Notes

1. Globally, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have shown how quickly universities can change, given the impetus.
2. Pedagogical disruption should — and can — be extended beyond the classroom to reshape university leadership.
3. Engaged pedagogy offers guiding values and practices for reshaping university leadership culture and practices to foster wellbeing as a source of empowerment in a time of disruption.
4. Vignettes illustrate engaged pedagogy in action as a form of practical wisdom to guide university leadership renewal that promotes gender equity.
5. Governance reforms that have proven successful in promoting university learning and teaching quality are suggested to foster university leadership as engaged pedagogy.

Keywords

Gender equity, leadership, engaged pedagogy

Introduction

If the COVID 19 pandemic has taught universities anything it is how quickly they can change, given the impetus. Reacting to the sudden need to close campuses, universities transformed learning and teaching (L&T) globally, moving fully online in just weeks (Morinono et al, 2020; Garcia-Morales, Garrido-Moreno, & Martin-Rojas, 2021). To be effective, change must be systemic and sustained and embedded in culture. As Garcia-Morales, Garrido-Moreno and Martín-Rojas argue (2021), renewal follows disruption and 'successful transformation of universities from old learning systems should foster a participatory culture, engage participants, and promote evidence-based decision-making and transparent assessment of outcomes' (p.2).

Taking gender equity as our focus, we argue that pedagogical disruption should extend beyond the classroom to reshape university leadership culture and practices by challenging managerial exercise of power from the top down and by promoting collaboration over competition (Fraser & Butler, 2016). In a context where 'being acceptable to one's line manager is critical', the status quo is routinely maintained (O'Connor & White, 2011, p. 908). It makes sense to take some cues from lessons learned during disruptions to university L&T. Further, since many of the women leaders in higher education (HE) are in roles related to L&T and community engagement (Allen, Butler-Henderson, Reupert, Longmuir, & Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2021), it also makes sense for L&T leadership to be a site for activism and change and for women academics to be instrumental in making such change happen.

For many current educational leaders, enacting change will involve a process of unlearning to disrupt practices that enable the status quo (Santamaría, Jeffries and Santamaría, 2016). At the individual level, this requires the courage and commitment, which women in educational leadership positions are already demonstrating (e.g. Devlin, 2021). Less common is the articulation of clear examples of how shared leadership practices can work and governance processes to support the culture change needed to systematise such practices. In response to this gap, we shall provide examples and suggestions throughout this paper. As Grant (2016) proposes in the US context, university diversity reports all too often show the effects of the glass ceiling but do not propose action that will enable change, nor clarity about accountability and how change will be managed. In response, Grant proposes setting up 'multiple diversity accountability and incentive systems at the institutional and individual levels' (2016, p.176). We are guided by that approach in our commentary.

We critically reflect on the question 'How can university leaders share power to nurture caring and ethical academic leadership?' to present an alternative vision to the managerial culture typical of Anglophone universities. This leads us to propose university leadership practice as a form of critical pedagogy espoused by bell hooks — 'engaged pedagogy' (1994; 2010) and to suggest governance reforms to foster the culture change needed to promote leadership as engaged pedagogy.

While hooks' focus was on L&T in the classroom, pedagogy is also relevant in workplaces where 'people are teaching each other across traditional workplace boundaries of age and status, and across departments and work' (Fuller & Unwin, 2002, p.105). Leaders have pedagogical roles as coaches and mentors and in facilitating the development of others (Fuller & Unwin, 2002). This is particularly important in universities because education and practices, sharing are their reason for existing, and learning and teaching are where they have the greatest reach. We argue that academic leaders are both teachers and learners who *learn from* and *with* their teams and that university leaders should embody the attributes that their institutions aspire to develop in their graduates.

We begin with a brief outline of university leadership culture and reform before explaining leadership as engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994; 2010). We then outline proposals for governance reform to effect necessary culture change. Inspired by Kift and colleagues (2021) who propose a 'stats and stories' approach to the development of contextualised HE equity narratives, our commentary and suggestions draw on multiple data sources. These include statistics (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2021; Devlin, 2021), literature on educational leadership and shared insights gleaned from decades of combined lived experience in professional and academic roles at six (6) universities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. With the consent and approval of the women who inspired them, we use composite vignettes as testimony of our own lived experiences (Porritt, 2021) to illustrate engaged pedagogy in action as a set of leadership values and practices that anyone can adopt, regardless of role. Our paper concludes with suggestions for governance reforms to foster culture change that promotes gender equity in HE by recognising and rewarding leadership practices that involve mutual recognition, a holistic approach and power sharing.

University leadership culture and reform

Gender equality is a sustainable development goal of the United Nations (United Nations, n.d.), yet gender-based inequity is globally persistent and prevalent across school education systems (Porritt, 2022). Internationally, 'women dominate in the teaching workforce, yet men dominate as leaders' (Porritt, 2022, p. 126). This trend extends to universities. In Australia, women outnumber men in the university workforce. Despite some gains, women continue to be under-represented in the professoriate and over-represented at lower levels of academic classification (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2021). Women are still in the minority in senior university leadership. In 2020, an opportunity to disrupt the status quo in terms of the gender composition of Australian university leadership was missed, as most newly appointed Vice-Chancellors were male (Devlin, 2021).

The top-down managerialism that is typical in Anglophone universities reproduces norms and underpinning values, beliefs, assumptions and world views to construct the 'hidden culture or curriculum' that too often excludes women from educational leadership, especially those from diverse backgrounds (Santamaría, Jeffries, & Santamaría, 2016, p.19). Further, managerialism fosters power relations that produce and often reward what one colleague graphically describes as 'suck up, bully down' behaviours. In an autoethnographic account of a university workplace change process, Morley (2018), recounts experiences of 'aggressive managerialism, culture of compliance and silence, and the bullying this can engender' (p.79). Importantly, she notes that managerialism fosters competition over cooperation. Similarly, Fraser and Taylor (2016) comment that 'unbridled competition is now celebrated' in the academy, often with divisive consequences (p.112). Morley's account is ultimately a call to action in which she argues that 'collectively we could benefit from re-imagining our universities as more democratic and collegial institutions' (2018, pp.86-87). Morley notes that the future of universities is not only shaped by managerialism but also by the agency of academics (2018). Here we see a connection with our proposition that university leadership should be reconceptualised and enacted as a form of critical (engaged) pedagogy to promote universities as caring and cooperative learning communities instead of being sites of individualistic competition for scarce resources.

We also see an irony in disconnection between managerialist culture and the so-called 'soft' skills, such as collaboration, ethical practice and communication that are considered vital for Australian university graduates (Oliver and Jorre St Jorre, 2018). Role models are essential for students to develop these attributes and who better to look to as role models than university leaders as well as teaching academics? Misalignment between equity policy and practice is prevalent in Anglophone

universities (e.g. Santamaría, Jeffries, & Santamaría, 2016; Grant, 2016; Devlin, 2021). However, while failure to 'walk the talk' is common, it is not inevitable.

Numerous scholars have worked to define alternative leadership approaches that address longstanding inequities reproduced by top down managerial models (Ravitch, 2020). Many share a critical orientation that seeks to uncover biases and deficit beliefs and identify actions leading to change. For example, Santamaría, Jeffries and Santamaría (2016) propose research-informed critical leadership practices such as drawing on positive characteristics of racial, gender and cultural identity; considering multiple perspectives; building trust; and being willing to engage in critical conversations to enact change. Such practices emphasise the significance of social contexts and relations in which leadership is practised. Tracing feminist perspectives on leadership, Blackmore also emphasises the importance of context and notes that simply recognising diversity is insufficient to address power dynamics (2013). We agree with Netolicky (2022, p.212) that 'Educational leadership scholarship and practice must question Western assumptions, norms, and agendas, and work to find ways of being, doing and leading that are good for all, not just for some.' This points to the contribution of a holistic approach to leadership such as engaged pedagogy, which recognises, values and seeks to engage diverse experiences, knowledges and aspirations.

Proposing the value of multilevel distributed leadership in schools, Alfadala, Morel Paquin and Spillane (2022) contend that '…leadership is most importantly leadership of teaching, and teaching is an embedded, relational practice' (p.81). This is equally true in universities where distributed leadership has been a popular theory of leadership during the 21st century. Jones et al (2014) characterise distributed leadership in terms of relations of trust and respect, collaboration around goals, open institutional culture and cycles of action and reflection involving multiple actors according to their expertise. In Australia the work of Jones and colleagues (2014) proposes distributed leadership as a means of building L&T capability alongside the operation of formal leadership roles. Distributed leadership theory focuses on practice rather than on leaders, followers and tasks as is typical of managerialism (Bolden, et al., 2015). Bolden and colleagues (2015) suggest distributed leadership as 'a means of reconnecting academics with a sense of collegiality, citizenship and community' (p.4). Thus, distributed leadership and engaged pedagogy connect to the extent that they are both outcomes focused and communal in approach.

However, distributed leadership has been critiqued for its under-theorisation of power dynamics in leadership practice (Lumby, 2019). One of the key claims about distributed leadership is that it reduces the power of individual leaders, yet examples reported in educational research literature tend to involve a senior leader, such as a school principal, delegating work and often setting the terms for this (Lumby, 2019). As Lumby contends (2019), 'empowering' others on such terms actually increases the individual leader's power and they retain control over outcomes by virtue of their authority. A further limitation of distributed leadership is that it fails to account for the lack of symmetry in power relations, as not all have equal access to leadership opportunities. Presently, there is little evidence about how different actors exercise influence to make distributed leadership work. It is not clear whether distributed leadership systems reflect patterns of discrimination and differential power relations evident in other leadership systems (Lumby, 2019). In contrast to distributed leadership, engaged pedagogy directly engages power relations and diversity through mutual recognition, full participation and a holistic approach that attends to cultivation of wellbeing as well as minds. When leaders learn *with* and *from* team members, power relations remain fluid, and decision-making and agency can be exercised in different ways without pre-defined parameters. The vignettes that we present below are based on our own lived experiences of leadership as engaged pedagogy and illustrate these processes in action.

More than a decade ago, Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2009) suggested that distributed leadership had more power in rhetoric than in reality. A perceived gap between the *what* and the *how* of

distributing leadership in universities is the impetus for our proposal that university leadership practice should be reconceptualised and re-enacted as a form of engaged pedagogy in the wake of disruptions caused by the pandemic.

An emerging and promising example of shared leadership in universities is senior co-leadership. This form of job sharing involves allocating different parts of a role to two people in such a way that duties and responsibilities are distinct and clear and shaped around capability and availability (Edge, 2022). In this way the requirements of a single leadership role can be performed by two people. For example, Edge (2022) and a colleague shared an executive position at a prestigious UK university for three years. This enabled them to maintain their substantive academic roles and research agendas while also performing a high-level international leadership role. Edge argues that this created 'diversity in one role' by combining the skills and experience of two very different academics (2022, p.137).

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have emphasised the risk when senior university leadership roles are 'one deep', leaving gaps when one person is away or incapacitated (Edge, 2022, p.137). Edge comments that her 'experience of co-executive leadership convinced her 'how much stronger and resilient leaders and organisations could be if, from the top down, there were examples of shared roles that are *two deep*' (2022, p.137).

'Servant leadership' is another relevant form of leadership compatible with engaged pedagogy to the extent that it involves the sharing of power. As defined by Nasereddin & Sharabati (2016) 'The servant-leader shares power, responsibility and authority with others, and puts the needs of others first and helps them to develop and perform better' (p.1096). In servant leadership we also see connections with engaged pedagogy as a leadership practice shaped by an ethics of care and service to a learning community.

Blackmore proposes that 'good leadership is something we all recognize but find difficult to define' and that discussion of educational leadership often lacks an explicit theoretical and political positioning (2013, p. 139). We respond below to the challenges of defining and enacting university leadership by illustrating leadership in action as engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994; 2010).

University leadership as engaged pedagogy

We call on engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994; 2010) for guiding principles and practices for sharing power and reframing leadership practice in universities as a form of teaching and learning. Engaged pedagogy connects with the reflective practice that is core to being a scholar and is shaped by:

- *Mutual recognition and full participation* of teams (every voice can be valued and heard, and diverse knowledges are engaged in a learning community).
- A *holistic approach* that involves knowing colleagues as complete humans who bring complex lives and experiences, aspirations and hopes.
- *Sharing power* by being willing to share leadership, to take risks (to put oneself on the line) and to foster learning that enhances colleagues' capabilities to live and work meaningfully.

Although first conceived nearly three decades ago, engaged pedagogy remains relevant for university L&T as a means to engage in critical thinking and debate in a 'post truth' context (Greenwood-Hau, 2021). Further, as a student-focused and caring pedagogy it is particularly relevant in the context of disruptions to HE caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic (Baker et al., 2022). In their recently published study of culturally and linguistically diverse students' experiences of online learning. Baker and colleagues (2022) propose that 'post-COVID disruptions in the sector have created the conditions for exploring opportunities to enact the engaged pedagogy which hooks (1994) advocates' (p.10). hooks (1994) is explicit that engaged pedagogy is not only concerned with

the mind, but also recognises the importance of knowledge 'about how to live in the world' (p.15). Further, as Low argues, hooks' work has a significant spiritual dimension which 'emphasises wholeness and healing' alongside 'critical consciousness' (2021, p.10). Reconceptualising and re-enacting how to live and learn to promote wholeness is particularly apposite in disrupted universities. Further, since we began writing this commentary, reflection on the significance and relevance of hooks' academic legacy has a heightened impetus and poignancy following hooks' death in December 2021.

Adopting engaged pedagogy in the practice of leadership requires coherence between values and practice and ongoing examination and overcoming of bias. This is one of the reasons that we argue that leadership as engaged pedagogy requires courage and commitment. As hooks (1994) proposes in relation to teaching, this means leading in a 'manner that honors the diversity of our world and our students' (p.32). It also emphasises wellbeing, including a commitment from leaders to promote their own wellbeing as a key step in leading to empower others. Vitally, leadership as engaged pedagogy means sharing power so that the workplace, analogously to the classroom, 'functions more like a co-operative where everyone contributes to make sure all resources are being used, to ensure the optimal well-being of everyone' (hooks, 2010, p.22).

However, as Greenwood-Hau (2021) notes in a university teaching context, while engaged pedagogy can open up spaces for critiquing hierarchies and exploring different knowledges and insights, it doesn't guarantee action to challenge these. That is why we have also included illustrative vignettes and suggestions for governance reform below.

Vignettes of university leadership as engaged pedagogy

Rather than representing findings from a formal research study, we use the following composite vignettes to round out our critically reflective commentary by illustrating leadership as engaged pedagogy in practice (Jasinski, Nokkala, & Juusola, 2021). Vignettes have precedent and value in HE research as a means of generating and representing data (Jasinski, Nokkala, & Juusola, 2021). In this commentary, we use vignettes to 'bridge the divide between theory and practice' (Jasinski, Nokkala, & Juusola, 2021, p.522). These vignettes provide comprehensive and representative examples that draw from events and insights relating to more than one person (Jasinski, Nokkala and Juusola, 2021. By using composite vignettes, we aim to offer examples that speak *to* others without intending to speak *for* others, which can be a limitation of individual case vignettes.

To develop these vignettes, we thought about and discussed values and practices that, for us, showed evidence of engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994; 2010) through:

1. *Mutual recognition and full participation* of teams where leader and team learn from each other as a learning community.
2. A *holistic approach* that involves engagement beyond a surface level.
3. *Power sharing* in an atmosphere of trust, reciprocity and commitment that was actively facilitated and nurtured.

As noted earlier, the context for this commentary is a critical reflection on the question of how university leaders can share power to nurture caring and ethical academic leadership rather than a formal research project. Consequently, we did not undertake a formal human ethics process in developing the following vignettes but, instead, managed ethical considerations informally. To develop these vignettes as authors, we wrote about our experiences separately before sharing and discussing them. Some of the leaders we talked about had senior positions, while others led by example without having formal leadership positions. We believe that leadership is a set of values and practices that go beyond role designation.

We each shared the vignettes and commentary that follows in a de-identified form with the women leaders who inspired the vignettes. We both asked them to review what we had written and requested approval to share the material included below. We also asked if they would like to be acknowledged by name. They all provided written approval for us to publish the vignettes that follow, unanimously endorsed the ethos of this paper and all agreed to be acknowledged by name, as reflected in the acknowledgements included at the end of this paper.

During our discussions as authors we found common values, practices and roles that different women leaders had played in our professional lives and began to group and name these. This was important for making leadership as engaged pedagogy explicit, to show what is possible given courage and commitment. The descriptions that we have used below were also influenced by previous work on academic identities that we undertook with other colleagues, including one of the leaders referred to in the vignettes below. In a previous paper (Goldingay et al, 2017), we identified some fluid, intersecting subject positions of social work academics, including discipline gatekeeper, enabler, keeper of tradition/status quo, early adopter, the flexible academic, the academic educator and the 'pracademic'. In a subsequent paper (Ryan, 2020) we took a pan-discipline approach, identifying 12 subject positions that included *enabler* (facilitating social mobility and a 'level playing field'; acting as mentor and co-learner) and *innovator*, a positioning that not only sees that new practices, improvements and innovation are valuable, but also actively works to bring them about. We have included *enabler* and *innovator* among descriptions of values, practices and roles in the following vignettes because we saw connections between previously identified academic subject positions and related values and practices described below. However, in this commentary we have used these labels broadly, just for illustrative purposes. They are not derived from discourse analysis; however, consistent with our previous work, the following labels do not describe fixed categories and are not intended to be mutually exclusive. For example, one inspirational leader features in two vignettes.

In the vignettes below, we have indicated individual experiences by referring to author 1 or author 2. Otherwise, they are a composite based on shared experiences, values and practices. Overall, they affirm a shared belief that 'With your knowledge and my knowledge we can grow together' (Hutchen as cited in Goldingay & Mataki, 2014).

Enabler

Author 1

Early in my university career, when I was the project officer on a national L&T project, an *enabler* gave me the chance to have a small but active part in the research component. Through the opportunity to conduct some interviews, analyse some of the data and participate in inter-coder discussions with academic members of the team, I gained invaluable skills and experience that were instrumental in helping me obtain my next, more senior role and extremely helpful for my own PhD study. When I later applied for my first academic role, this enabler helped me reframe my CV for academic work. From time to time she still shares information about opportunities and, when we occasionally connect, is generous with insights, anecdotes and laughs.

Author 2

When I was early in my academic career, a dynamic L&T enabler and connector responded to an email I sent to thank her for an inspiring talk. We had many values in common and the next thing I knew she was inviting me to be on a conference paper. Following that, she invited me to some presentations about L&T funding opportunities. She encouraged a few of us to form a group and showed us how to apply for seed funding, then guided an application for substantial funding which we were successful in securing. Over the course of the project, she subtly but surely supported me

to take the lead and gradually moved herself to the back. She linked us in with high profile scholars in the field – and her generous vision of what we could achieve despite our inexperience never wavered.

Reflecting leadership as engaged pedagogy, both enablers showed mutual recognition and enabled full participation by working from a presumption of intelligence and contribution by all team members. The enablers took the time to know us as whole people, finding out about our goals and aspirations and generously supporting these at critical points in time. Most importantly, the enablers shared power. They were willing to seek insight and input from all team members, showing recognition for different knowledges and experiences. At the same time, the enabler identified by Author 1 was always firm about making decisions and taking responsibility and expected team members to be accountable regardless of role or seniority. In Author 2's case the enabler intended all along to grow future leaders with no expectation of direct benefit or recognition of this for herself. Similarly, any benefit that flowed to the enabler in Author 1's case would have been the private satisfaction of altruism.

Connector

Author 1

Knowing I was keen to supplement my part-time contract employment and research experience, a *connector* brought me into a research project with a team of colleagues whom I've since collaborated with over many years. This connector was able to see the potential in bringing us together. She recognised our common values, approaches and experiences and the collective potential of these. Since then, this connector has influenced me in different ways, but always through fostering links — to people and ideas. She also remains a touchstone. I can sometimes hear the connector's questioning voice when I am exploring ideas.

The connector (Author 1) demonstrated mutual recognition and a holistic approach in being able to see connections between Author 1's background in law and equity practice and, more recent, learning and teaching role and the research team's shared focus on inclusive learning and teaching. Thanks to her recognition, Author 1 was able to make sense of what had until then seemed to be an ad hoc professional life. This helped to connect core values with disparate practices to shape an ongoing focus on inclusive learning and teaching and research.

Catalyst

The guiding metaphor for this subject position comes from the discipline of chemistry where a catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a reaction without itself being consumed. Related to a person or thing, it precipitates a change or reaction (Collins, n.d.). In relation to leadership, we have drawn on this notion of a leader creating an environment that enables, supports and encourages great things to happen for others with no intention or need for recognition for themselves.

Author 1

Over many years and several universities, a *catalyst* has encouraged me to take up different challenges. She appointed me into my first continuing academic role. Since then, she has given me significant projects to coordinate with minimal direction and maximal focus on guiding principles and values. Like an enabler, she works from positive presumptions about capability. She is always available to provide advice or intervention when needed but otherwise leaves space in which to develop, even when imposter syndrome and doubt creep in, making moves into discomfort more challenging (Porritt, 2021). In this way her practice mimics the chemical catalyst in prompting change without being enfolded herself. Through her example I have learned to sit better with uncertainties and let philosophy and values be anchors within unsettled and performative contexts.

From this catalyst, I have learned to more explicitly articulate my own standpoint, values and philosophy, and pay attention to how they are embodied in my own and others' practices.

Author 2

I wouldn't be where I am today without the active interest taken in my growth and development by a very senior and dynamic leader. In many ways she was a catalyst because she generously listened to my half-formed ideas and extended them, resourcing me to act and be in the lead without needing or expecting any acknowledgement or leadership role for herself. It was like no matter how much she shared and gave to me, she never felt she was losing any of her own status or gravitas. So, the chemistry analogy is fitting as she worked to generate a positive impact within me and within our school without in any way feeling that she herself was being consumed or lessened.

Our experiences of catalysts were very similar. Both catalysts demonstrated mutual recognition in seeing latent leadership capabilities along with shared values and educational philosophy, and provided opportunities whereby we could enact and develop these in our own ways and time, without set parameters. Both catalysts were willing to share power and leadership. They were clear about their rationale and their values and modelled these, fully bringing themselves to their practice, being willing to share strengths and experiences and also to share vulnerabilities. Consequently, these catalysts could hold space for themselves and for others as a source of compassion and strength.

Innovator

Like catalysts, *innovators* make things happen, but they do this by generating things that were not there before, creating spaces, artefacts, relationships and processes where each is enriched as a result.

Author 2

Relationships and reciprocity are at the heart of the inspirational innovator's style. Collaboration and partnership building are English words for her approach, but there is so much more to it than that. Her commitment to and interest in those she leads is beyond the surface level, as she uses her vision, courage, and creativity in finding ways to bring people together to create things together. She shares power and leadership by bringing people into her vision. She intuitively sees the potential that is there and carefully facilitates environments and circumstances that can bring it to fruition. She brings people together from all areas and all levels, fostering trust and inspiring collective commitment, enriching all in the process. This leader had a vision to create a teaching resource designed to develop cultural responsiveness amongst social work students. It was the first of its kind and she generously introduced us to key local First Nations people and was unwavering in her support as we struggled to grasp what were new concepts and new ways of thinking for our group. When funding came through for a launch of the resource in NAIDOC week (due to the support of the catalyst mentioned earlier) the innovator again shared her vision of an event that brought the local Aboriginal community and the university together, fearlessly involving the most senior people in both these groups to create a truly memorable and transformative event.

Author 2's experience working alongside an innovator was transformative and empowering. The innovator embodied the practice of mutual recognition and reciprocity on a deep level. She created new spaces for engagement and the capabilities of the entire group were enhanced beyond what they could ever have imagined. They were introduced to a world that was previously unknown to them and this started them on a journey of decolonising practices that rippled into their respective work areas and personal lives.

Enacting change in leadership practices

At the individual level, Netolicky (2022) notes the importance of role models to provide inspiration to women seeking to break the 'glass ceiling'. However, as we explored earlier, overcoming inequities goes beyond a focus on the individual. It needs to involve culture change and systemisation. Changing leadership practices to improve gender equity means engaging with difficulty and complexity and making space for diverse knowledges and perspectives. Reformed practice may not always be successful in traditional terms (Netolicky, 2022). We agree with Netolicky (2022) that the goal of educational leadership should be to embrace alternative models and reframe traditional notions of success. This means that universities will need to allow space for change to take time and for practices to develop iteratively and with sensitivity and adaptation to context.

This points to the value of what Bush and Glover (2014) describe as a 'contingent leadership' approach, in research on school leadership in the UK. They propose that popular leadership models represent rarely embodied ideals and argue that they are all limited (and partial) because they focus on one particular aspect of leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014). 'Contingent leadership' recognises the need to adapt leadership to context rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach (Bush & Glover, 2014, p.564). However, Bush and Glover also note the limitation that the pragmatic, adaptive nature of contingent leadership comes without a 'big picture' perspective (2014, p. 567). Consequently, they conclude that contingent leadership needs to be combined with a focus on leadership for learning to promote successful schooling (Bush & Glover, 2014).

The importance of adapting leadership styles to suit the different preferences of university staff was affirmed in a quantitative analysis of US faculty and professional staff preferences around leadership styles (Mews, 2019). Mews (2019) found multiple leadership preferences including differences between faculty and professional staff. For example, faculty showed higher preference for inclusive and consultative democratic leadership, whereas professional staff preferred transactional leadership that provides clarity and incentives for expectations of performance. Mews (2019) concluded that leaders need to adjust their styles to such preferences as necessary. This connects with the relational and contextual basis of engaged pedagogy and our proposition that university leadership should be adaptively practised as engaged pedagogy.

However, as we have argued earlier, individual practice is not enough to effect change. Sustainable change requires transformation of culture. With L&T leadership as the proposed site for activism and change, we next suggest some reforms to university governance to foster culture change needed to promote leadership as engaged pedagogy.

University governance reforms to foster culture change that promotes leadership as engaged pedagogy

Drawing on recent experience we can learn from what has worked in governance strategies related to university L&T. One such example is at the second author's institution, which enlisted governance strategies to change culture related to the status and importance afforded to quality L&T. Traditionally, research is valorised above teaching and service in universities, both in Australia and overseas (Rogers & Swain, 2021). This is a longstanding and often unquestioned status hierarchy. Nevertheless, a concerted program led by several women leaders effectively positioned teaching as an equally valuable endeavour, leading to sustained 'impact' over several years in excellent ratings according to Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT). It was a multipronged approach, building in clear accountability and recognition and reward of effective practice. Two relevant strategies were:

1. Promotion possibilities where teaching excellence was as valued and recognised as excellence in research.
2. University, Faculty and School level awards that recognised excellence in teaching and achievements in enhancing L&T processes.

Given the effectiveness of these strategies to create L&T culture change we argue that a similar approach could be used to create and embed a culture of power sharing in leadership within academic institutions. To create an environment where power sharing, enacting mutual recognition, full participation and a holistic approach are culturally embedded, it is important to consider:

1. How can power sharing and the practice of mutual recognition, full participation and a holistic approach be measured? Who defines these and on what basis?
2. How can we incentivise people to share power (including ways to reward it that would outweigh any perceived losses to vested interests)?

Other scholars have also grappled with some aspects of these questions. For example, van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill, & Stride (2007, p.232) explored the effect of an upward feedback program on leadership behaviour, both as indicated by self-ratings and subordinates' ratings. Aligning with engaged pedagogy, they included 'Fairness', 'Integrity & respect', 'Participation and empowerment', and 'Valuing diversity' amongst other items. A notable finding of their study was that leaders lacked insight into the impacts of their behaviour. In addition, feedback from staff who had rated their manager only minimally improved following the upward feedback process. In some instances, negative feedback resulted in managers showing even less effective leadership and empowerment of staff due to lowered self-concept and self-efficacy. As a result of these findings, the authors recommended that any upward feedback program be very carefully implemented and note the gap in knowledge in how to deliver feedback in such a way as to improve leadership performance. They also suggested recruitment and selection processes that screen for integrity and ethical practice, together with finding ways to incorporate the 'value' of diverse knowledges and perspectives on performance (van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill, & Stride, 2007). Thus, a careful approach to finding ways to articulate, measure and incentivise power sharing is needed.

Recognition and reward of practices that promote a learning community could benefit women academics who are less likely to achieve conventional academic impact measures such as grant-getting success (Fraser & Taylor, 2016). For example, indicators of academic contribution that relate to community, such as testimonials by email from students and community groups, could be recognised as measures of impact (Fraser & Taylor, 2016). Leadership as engaged pedagogy could be embedded into performance expectations through recognition and reward models that value community engagement and collaboration in research foci and publications (Fraser & Taylor, 2016). Existing and aspiring leaders could be incentivised using promotion schemes which include power sharing as a criterion. This could be built into yearly performance conversations as a compulsory objective for every leader. During promotion processes, a leader's team members could be asked questions such as 'In what ways were your ideas included in decisions that were made?' 'How did your leader enable you to develop your skills and expertise?'

Dumuluescu & Mutiu (2021) note the need for those in leadership roles to set a clear vision, expectations and motivations. Some ideas to achieve this include working closely with Human Resources to create organisational values and displaying posters and organisational screen savers that promote power sharing in leadership (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2015). Engaged pedagogy as illustrated in the vignettes included earlier offers guidance in framing and practising these values inclusively. HE institutions could provide similar guidance for their staff by developing and sharing vignettes about power sharing practices in similar ways to those who are recognised for winning competitive research grants.

Awards could also be created to recognise a leader's consistent performance in power sharing as evident in values and practices such as mutual recognition and holistic approaches to working with teams. The creation of a process where team members can nominate their leaders for awards based on power sharing and mutual recognition is one way to alter the power balance so that those most affected by a leader are those able to voice how they experienced leadership, as we have illustrated in the vignettes provided earlier. These awards could come with financial rewards along with recognition among colleagues and other senior leaders to add further incentive.

Conclusion

With the goal of promoting gender equity, we have argued that current disruptions to HE offer a unique opportunity for renewal of university leadership. We have taken inspiration from the speed of change to university L&T globally. Just as Baker and colleagues (2022) propose engaged pedagogy as a means for effecting inclusion in university L&T, we propose the practical value of engaged pedagogy to promote inclusive university leadership practices. We briefly introduced principles and practices of engaged pedagogy. These encompass mutual recognition and full participation by teams to promote learning communities; a holistic approach that actively values the multiple experiences, knowledges and aspirations that different team members bring; and the importance of power sharing. We used vignettes to illustrate these values and practices in action.

While individual actions are important and anyone can practise leadership regardless of their role, cultural reforms are needed to enact systemic change. We have drawn on educational leadership literature to identify some relevant models of leadership reform and positioned engaged pedagogy in relation to these to show how it can make a practical contribution to sharing leadership that attends to differential power relations. Focusing on leadership as a social and situated practice, we also noted how COVID 19 impacts have shown the limitations and risks of individualised, 'one deep' leadership (Edge, 2022). We have suggested some practical and demonstrably effective reforms to university governance that could change university management culture by recognising and rewarding leadership as engaged pedagogy.

Graduate attributes and university leader attributes can — and should — be congruent with espoused values. Engaged pedagogy offers practical wisdom about how university leadership could shift from a focus on individual leaders (currently predominantly male) to a focus on leadership as a pedagogical practice that is diversely embodied. This could strengthen universities' integrity and potential as caring learning communities and offers a preferable alternative to the operation of universities as divided institutions in which atomised individuals compete for scarce resources.

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