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Leading Academic Development in Dynamic Higher Education International Settings

Sue Bolt

Abstract

Within the super complex higher education environment academic development inhabits a dynamic domain that varies from institution to institution. Leading academic development requires the ability to effectively lead change, people, programmes, and yourself. This paper provides a critically reflective narrative of my experiences leading academic development across a lifespan in Australia and the UK. The narrative of my leadership development is shaped by my reflection on the University of Liverpool's *Leadership Commitment Framework* and the *UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education* and integrated throughout three case studies. The first case study, set in a large Faculty in an Australian university, explores inspirational, distributed, and entrepreneurial leadership; academic development initiatives are relatively informal in this case. The second case study, set in a large Australian university at the institutional level explores strategic leadership of processes and people; academic development initiatives are more formalised through university governance processes in this case. The third case, set in a Russell Group university in the UK, explores transformational leadership relevant to leading academic development teams and programmes in a highly regulated environment. Across the three cases issues of identity, influence, and power in relation to leading academic development in dynamic environments are explored and insights highlighted to provide advice and guidance to aspiring leaders of academic development and leaders of learning and teaching in higher education.

Keywords: academic development, inspirational leadership, distributed leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, strategic leadership, transformational leadership, identity, influence, power.

Introduction

This critically reflective narrative which integrates theory and practice explores some of my experiences leading academic development (AD) in higher education (HE), internationally. The theoretical framework that informs my reflective account integrates a discussion of AD and transformational leadership, because the transformation of academic practice has been fundamental to my leadership of AD. Because context plays a crucial role in how leadership is enabled and evidenced (Parkin, 2017; Taylor, 2005), this practice-based reflection on some of my experiences leading AD is presented in three case studies which include a sample of relevant anecdotes. A key message that emerges from the case studies is that institutional leadership of AD involves an interplay between the identity, influence, power, and/or impact of the person, with the institution, role, and strategies for leading people and processes (Taylor, 2005). The first case study is set in a large Faculty in an Australian university and explores inspirational, distributed, and entrepreneurial leadership. The second case study, set at the institutional level in an Australian university, explores strategic leadership. The third case is set in a Russell Group university in the UK and explores transformational leadership of AD teams and programmes in a dynamic highly regulated environment. Although the initiatives exemplified in the case studies are bound by time and space, the approaches to leading AD are applicable to other contexts. The three case studies present a unique perspective of my leadership development across a lifespan of leading AD in dynamic HE settings. My approaches to leadership development are interwoven throughout the three case studies, integrated with reflections on issues of identity, influence, and power, and shaped by my reflection on the *Leadership Commitment Framework* (University of Liverpool, n.d.) and the *UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF) for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education* (HEA, 2011). Insights derived from my leadership experiences and development may provide advice and guidance to aspiring leaders of AD and leaders of learning and teaching in HE.

Theoretical Framework

The issues of identity, influence, and power are relevant to AD and leadership which form the theoretical framework. In this chapter, these concepts are defined as follows. Identity refers to the attributes, beliefs, and values that distinguish a person or a group from others (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, n.d.). Influence means having the power to affect change in relation to a person or a thing without direct control (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, n.d.). Power means having the ability *to act or produce an effect*, to have *control, authority, or*

influence over others (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, n.d.). In AD power is shown through impact. Academic development may also be referred to as educational development, staff, or faculty development. In this chapter, AD refers to the continual professional development (CPD) of those who teach and/or support learning in HE whether they are employed as academic or professional staff. The purpose of AD is to enhance academic practice in HE learning and teaching at micro, meso, and macro levels in partnership with colleagues and students. Transformational leadership involves envisioning a goal, inspiring, and enabling followers to overcome challenges to meet the goal (Law, 2009). It is characterised by 1) *idealised influence* whereby leaders act as role models for their followers, 2) *inspirational motivation* whereby leaders provide meaning and challenge through a compelling vision, 3) *intellectual stimulation* whereby leaders foster innovation by questioning assumptions and encouraging creativity, and 4) *individual consideration* whereby leaders mentor or coach followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Parkin, 2017). Others include slightly different characteristics when describing transformational leadership. For example, House (1977 in Bass & Riggio, 2006) defines charismatic leadership as a combination of *idealised influence* and *inspirational motivation*, and Law (2009) lists the characteristics of individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and *charisma* which describes the leader as someone who *takes responsibility, makes personal sacrifices, shows determination, and shares the glory* which could align with the concept of *idealised influence* (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Parkin, 2017) but is quite different to Merriam-Webster Incorporated's (n.d.) definition of charisma as *charm* or the *personal magic of leadership*.

Academic Development (AD)

There is no homogenised conception of AD, nor the identities forged by leaders and developers who were described as a 'family of strangers' (Harland & Staniforth, 2008 in Green & Little, 2016) because the career paths leading to, and the nature of roles in academic development, are diverse (Kensington-Miller et al., 2015; McDonald & Stockley, 2008). The differing findings from Taylor's (2005) study of 'the leadership experiences of 23 AD specialists in 17 Australian universities' (p. 32) and Green and Little's (2016) global study of AD with 958 respondents from 38 countries, are interesting because they illuminate some of the complexities of AD. In Taylor's (2005) study 65% of respondents were female. In Green and Little's (2016) study 70.4% of respondents were female, 60.4% were 40-50 years old, 86% worked in public institutions, in most cases (68.6%) research was valued above teaching.

Taylor (2005) found that 87% of respondents were employed on academic contracts and 57% of respondents held the role of Director. Green and Little (2016) found that 37.2% of respondents were employed in academic roles, 29.3% were administrative/managerial, 29% had combined academic/administrative roles, and others were independent consultants. The expectations associated with roles in diverse contexts can enhance or inhibit the efficacy of academic developers and impact their perceptions and identities (Kensington-Miller et al., 2015). According to Green and Little (2016) 95.6% of academic developers teach. Although the majority of their 'students' were academics or teaching assistants, the nature of the teaching varied across contexts. Taylor (2005) found most respondents emphasised the importance of practice context and noted 74% of respondents identified workshop facilitation as a feature of their work, 70% were involved in quality assurance initiatives, 43% consulted with individuals or groups, and others were involved in teaching and learning initiatives such as technology enhanced learning and internationalisation. Although only slightly more than 50% of academic developers were contracted to conduct research, 82.3% of them conducted research (Green & Little, 2016); however, in Taylor's (2005) study, research was not identified as a key element in AD as institutional leadership. In my experience, what counts as 'teaching' and 'research' is contested; hence, there is scope for further research to investigate the impact of contextual factors and diverse perspectives on academic developers' identities and agency.

Furthermore, AD is perceived to inhabit a liminal third space that blurs boundaries and brings together people from diverse backgrounds (Behari-Leak & le Roux, 2018; Green & Little, 2016; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015; Whitchurch, 2008). For example, Green and Little (2016) found that 58.6% of respondents held a doctorate, the highest qualification for two thirds of respondents was not in education, although 34.1% of respondents came from professional fields, including education. Thus, some academic developers experienced liminality because of a dissonance between their academic backgrounds and non-academic roles (Kensington-Miller et al., 2015). McAlpine and Hopwood (2009) also noted that a third space that brings together those who do not normally work together provided rich development opportunities. In my experience it has been the norm to operate from and in a third space to lead AD across institutional boundaries and in transnational contexts.

Leadership Experiences and Development

Successful leadership is not bound by the personality traits of individual leaders (Haslam et al., 2010; Spillane, 2005; Taylor, 2005). Hence reflections on my AD leadership experiences are depicted in the case studies as "a synergy among variable characteristics of the person, the

AD role, development strategies, and institutional context” (Taylor, 2005, p. 31). Critical reflection on strategies relevant to the theory and practice of transformational leadership and change management, leadership and management is embedded in the case studies. My leadership experiences are informed by the *Leadership Commitment Framework* (UoL, n.d.) which identifies four pillars of leadership (credible leader, ambassadorial leader, inclusive leader, and impactful leader) founded on effective communication and networking. The elements of leadership depicted in this Framework are consistent with the literature relevant to the styles of leadership embedded in the case studies.

The categorisation of academic developers’ roles as academic or administrative/managerial can be contentious because, in HE identity, influence, and power are inherently linked to recognition and reward structures. Those on academic contracts can progress their careers without necessarily changing roles by demonstrating specified criteria and standards. Typically, academic promotion requires evidence of leadership for promotion to Senior Lecturer (C), Associate Professor (D), and Professor (E) (Australian University Teaching & Criteria & Standards, n.d.). Academic developers on administrative/managerial contracts must change jobs to gain promotion.

Many institutions, globally, have programmes accredited by Advance HE (formerly known as the Higher Education Academy or HEA) that enable those who teach and support learning in HE to develop their practice and gain professional recognition. Thus, leadership development can be accredited through demonstration of the PSF’s Descriptor 3 - Senior Fellowship (SFHEA) and Descriptor 4 – Principal Fellowship (PFHEA). Those with a “sustained record of effectiveness in relation to teaching and learning, incorporating for example, the organisation, leadership and/or management of specific aspects of teaching and learning provision” can apply for SFHEA by demonstrating effective approaches to teaching and supporting learning in response to seven criteria, including D3.VII “successful coordination, support, supervision, management and/ or mentoring of others (whether individuals or teams) in relation to teaching and learning” (HEA, 2011, p. 6). Those who can show “evidence of sustained and effective record of impact at a strategic level in relation to teaching and learning ... within their institution or wider (inter)national settings” can apply for PFHEA by demonstrating 5 criteria which include D4.II “successful strategic leadership to enhance student learning, with a focus on ... enhancing teaching quality in institutional and/or (inter)national settings” and D4.III “establishment of organisational policies and strategies for

supporting and promoting others (e.g., through mentoring and coaching) in delivering high quality teaching and support for learning” (HEA, 2011, p. 7).

Case Study 1

The first case study which explores inspirational, distributed, and entrepreneurial leadership spans seven years. It is set in the largest Faculty of an Australian university which had more than 50,000 students on 9 campuses in 5 countries (<https://about.curtin.edu.au/history-facts/facts-figures/>).

I started working in the Faculty as an early career academic in a non-traditional AD role as a lecturer and PhD student, after a successful career in the schooling sector of education at State, District and School levels. In this Faculty role, I reported to the Dean of Learning and Teaching who gave me an open-ended remit to support the development of teaching and learning. This open-endedness allowed me to explore how I could influence and enhance academic practice and enabled me to successfully complete my PhD and increase my understanding of how the institution and HE worked.

Reflecting on the situation, I note Haslam et al.’s (2010) commentary about a contingency approach to leadership characterized by an interaction between the qualities of the person and the situation that enabled them to lead. Integrally linked to the contingency approach, due consideration must be given to Lord and colleagues’ definition of leadership “as the process of being perceived by others as a leader” (Lord, Foti, & Phillips, 1982; Lord & Maher, 1990, 1991, in Haslam et al., 2010, p. 29). The nexus between personal qualities, situation, and the perception of others underpins credible leadership (University of Liverpool, n.d.), which requires an understanding of institutional and broader contexts, drivers for change, and the ability to communicate a meaningful vision and purpose to followers.

When the University was awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) grant for the Promoting Excellence Initiative (PEI), I was chosen as the Faculty PEI Mentor to increase the number of staff recognised nationally for teaching excellence. Previously, the University’s success rate was limited. I was invited to participate in University and national Teaching Excellence awards panels for five consecutive years. My experience on these panels enhanced my ability to mentor colleagues, who subsequently won Faculty, University, and national Teaching Awards. My success in supporting colleagues to gain recognition for teaching excellence, helped me build social capital and identity (Hollander, 1992), which helped me gain credibility as a leader and opened doors for further engagement with colleagues

through peer observation of teaching (Lord et al., 1982; and Lord & Maher, 1990, 1991, in Haslam et al., 2010).

Inspirational Leadership

In 2009, I was invited to work with the Director of Teaching in one of the six schools in the Faculty. Although peer observation of teaching was well accepted internationally, it was not widely practiced in Australian universities (Johnston, et al., 2020). We started with five academics who volunteered to participate in peer observation of teaching in Semester 1, then recruited another five volunteers in Semester 2. They were reluctant to be observed by their peers and preferred me, an impartial external colleague, to observe them. To build confidence in giving and receiving peer feedback we facilitated group debriefing sessions at the end of each semester, collected data to evaluate the initiative, and disseminated our findings through journal articles and conference presentations (Atkinson & Bolt, 2010; Bolt & Atkinson, 2010). In 2010, I continued to work with colleagues in the same school and started to work with colleagues from another school, we collected evaluative data, and disseminated our findings through journal articles and conference presentations (Bolt et al., 2013).

Participation in peer observation of teaching was voluntary and there was considerable resistance to it. As I had no direct authority, I led by influence which required me to build social capital so that colleagues perceived me as '*being one of us*' (Haslam et al., 2010). As my disciplinary background was different to my colleagues, I nurtured collegiality through inclusive leadership that demonstrated 'emotional intelligence and a coaching style to listen to, empower and develop others ... I role modelled honesty and integrity ... and built strong respectful relationships' (UoL, n.d.). When Haslam et al., (2010) noted that beyond '*being one of us*' leadership involved '*doing it for us*', they highlighted the importance of the fairness of the leaders' actions. When leading AD, fairness involves building a shared dynamic sense of responsibility for the development process. For example, to begin with, participants did not want to give or receive feedback on their teaching from peers, I accepted this but embedded processes to build their capacity and desire for giving and receiving peer feedback through the group debriefing sessions at the end of each semester. After two years, the group feedback sessions were no longer needed. Another example of fairness was how I shared leadership with the school Directors of Teaching, creating a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation for colleagues. As a team, the two Directors of Teaching and I won the 2011 Vice Chancellor's Innovation and Excellence Award for Inspirational Leadership and, individually, I was

awarded a Higher Education Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Fellowship. Gaining University and (inter)national recognition enhanced my leadership credibility.

Distributed Leadership

Leadership practice arising from the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation is a defining feature of distributive leadership (Spillane, 2005). When considering leadership practice, we must look beyond what actions are undertaken and examine how and why those actions were done (Spillane, 2005). When spreading the word to invite participation in peer observation of teaching in ‘town hall’ style meetings, I prioritised a values-based ethos above a procedural process-driven approach because I aimed to win hearts and minds, drawing on colleagues’ intrinsic motivation to promote engagement. The ethos I promoted was centred around the University’s core values of respect, integrity, fairness, and caring and incorporated the need for flexibility, professional growth, collegiality, equity, and academic freedom (Nash et al., 2014, p. 33). In 2011, we reached a tipping point that enabled participation to extend beyond the two participating schools.

I created the situation that enabled the tipping point to occur by convening a meeting with key stakeholders. I introduced the initiative through my ‘town hall’ pitch and invited collaborative decision-making using an impact-effort matrix, in which colleagues articulated their ideas for how best to implement peer observation of teaching across the Faculty and placed their ideas on a matrix ranging from high impact-high effort to low impact-low effort, and then collaboratively prioritised strategies and agreed actions and time frames. This process demonstrated inclusive leadership (UoL, n.d.) which ‘crafted a sense of us’ (Haslam et al., 2010) and led to development of a high impact-medium effort strategy that involved the large first year core modules that represented each school. This approach meant there was buy-in from all schools that enabled broad but staged engagement. I modelled practice and coached colleagues to implement peer observation of teaching in their contexts and empowered others to develop their practice individually and collaboratively (Nash et al., 2014). This approach showed impactful leadership (UoL, n.d.) because I inspired and motivated others, developed and enacted vision aligned to strategy and delivered results.

Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial leaders promote creativity and innovation in dynamic HE environments. They are not afraid to take risks, are enthusiastic, tenacious, horizon scan to identify and assess opportunities, and embrace change to generate continual improvement (Styron, 2015). The

Leadership Commitment Framework (UoL, n.d.) broadens the concept of entrepreneurial leadership by depicting an ambassadorial leader as someone who identifies, pursues, and fosters collaboration with internal and external partners and integrates planning for sustainability of initiatives. Entrepreneurial and ambassadorial leaders demonstrate their humanistic approach to leadership by valuing others individually and collectively by ‘making us matter’ (Haslam et al., 2010). For example, they contribute to raising the profile of the institution and/or teaching and learning, they nurture strategic partnerships, and enhance the development of groups and/or individuals within and beyond the university (UoL, n.d.).

In 2011, I was invited to participate in a successful bid for an ALTC grant to investigate ‘building a culture of peer review of teaching through a distributive leadership approach’ (Nash et al., 2014). The project was funded for two years and enabled colleagues from five universities to share, research and develop practice within and beyond their institutions. Findings from this project were disseminated through a national symposium, conference presentations, publications (Barnard et al., 2015; Nash et al., 2014), and a website with resources that was monitored for five years. The funding from this project enabled me to work strategically with the DVC Education to encourage participation in the national symposium and promote University-wide implementation of peer observation of teaching.

Case Study 2

Following on from my role in Case Study 1, I was seconded to an institutional role on an academic contract to lead strategic change initiatives in response to the University’s *Student Experience Learning and Teaching Enabling Plan*. Concurrent to this role and into the next, I was elected to the HERDSA Executive Committee. In 2016 I moved to another university to take up an institutional role as Manager Teaching Support, concurrently over several months I acted as Director for the Centre of Learning and Teaching.

In this case study which spans four years, I reflect on my leadership and development experiences at strategic level in relation to teaching and learning in institutional, transnational, and (inter)national settings (HEA, 2011, p.7). Leading at a strategic level requires the vision and capacity to connect people and processes with institutional strategy and the ability to embed transformational change into practice across an institution. This case explores strategic leadership to transform processes, mobilise people, and develop my career.

Strategic Leadership: Processes

One of the University-wide strategic change initiatives I successfully led was to envision processes to embed systematic peer observation of teaching in academic practice. The strategy I developed was called the Peer-based Professional Learning (PPL) programme. The motivation for the PPL, from a strategic perspective, was to strengthen applicants' evidence for academic promotion. I successfully created business plans, consulted with stakeholders, and navigated University governance processes (HEA, 2011; UoL, n.d.) to achieve this.

I managed expectations and competing demands to envision actionable evidence-based processes to inspire and motivate colleagues at all levels. For example, in the PPL, Senior Leaders wanted a process to verify performance against promotional criteria, academics wanted a developmental process, and I wanted to create an inclusive process that delivered sustainable results. To develop a strategy I reviewed the literature, reflected on data, and drew on my practice wisdom (Bamber & Stefani, 2016; Barrett, 2012). I envisioned a contingency-based approach that enabled colleagues to opt in at their point of need, underpinned by CPD to build capacity and foster ownership through distributed leadership, recognition, and reward. Unique aspects of the PPL included 1) reciprocal formative peer observation of teaching, 2) comprehensive peer observation aligned to standards (AUTCAS, n.d.; HEA, 2011), 3) mentoring and coaching for reviewers, 4) summative review based on evidence of prior peer observation and further development aligned to promotional criteria, and 5) Open Door Teacher initiative which stimulated dissemination and discussion of academic practice outside of a review process. Further to this, I extended our institutional exploration of approaches to recognition and reward by leading a team in an (inter)national Transforming Practice Programme (TPP). As a result, we developed a 360° Teaching Excellence Survey that deepened reflection and incorporated diverse perspectives of teaching excellence. Thus, colleagues were empowered to develop their academic practice and careers, in a context where peer observation was not widely practiced (Johnston et al., 2020) and an understanding of professional standards (AUTCAS, n.d.) was in an exploratory phase. This strategy generated a positive forward momentum that built capacity and enthusiasm for PPL. While leadership and management are often integrated in practice, leadership is characterised by direction and innovation, whereas management is characterised by organising and maintaining resources (Parkin, 2017). To drive change my practice was characterised, predominantly, by strategic leadership. When I left the institution, the focus shifted to managing formative and summative peer observation of teaching.

Strategic Leadership: Mobilising People

Another University-wide strategic change initiative I successfully led was to establish a Teaching Academy (TA). The motivation for the TA was to engage award winning educators in the development of others because hitherto there was no mechanism enabling them to systematically share their expertise across the University. The process of mobilising people to establish the TA occurred in four phases: 1) conceptualisation, 2) launch, 3) initiation, and 4) thriving. The aim of mobilising people was to address challenges and develop strategies enabling them to thrive collectively and individually (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Conceptualisation

Initially, I investigated models of TAs and analysed their characteristics in relation to the University's vision, to design a model and develop a business plan. To refine the model, I formed and chaired an Advisory Group (AG). I shared the model with them and invited them to dream with me to design, consult, resolve issues and champion the creation of an inspirational TA that would impact teaching and learning within and beyond the University. The consultation and approval process took about six months as the proposed model was shaped as it passed through Faculty and University Teaching Committees, Academic Board, and the Planning and Management Committee until finally the Vice Chancellor approved establishment of the TA as an entity. *The [TA] is an active, honorary network of exceptional leaders committed to and passionate about the collaboration and dissemination of teaching excellence at [the University]* (<https://www.curtinacademy.com/home>).

Launch

The AG was disbanded, I stepped away from the process, and a Central team called for expressions of interest to become inaugural TA Fellows and *create an independent, learned voice to advocate on behalf of learning and teaching*. Fellows would be recognised but not allocated specific time or payment, and they would work as a self-governing network. It would be up to individuals to manage their commitment. Nominees who met the eligibility and selection criteria were asked to submit a covering letter in which they addressed the criteria and outlined their proposed contribution to the TA; a short CV was also required. The two essential criteria included proven track records of sustained leadership in learning and teaching and evidence-based research and/or scholarship in HE. Nominees, also, were asked to address one of the other four selection criteria. Applications were assessed by a selection panel of internal and external representatives and 11 inaugural Fellows, including me, were selected and the TA was officially launched at a celebratory event in December 2014.

Initiation

As a self-governing network, the first task was to elect six Executive Fellows to lead the TA, then elect a Chair to lead the Executive. We quickly realised that to ensure continuity and maintain momentum we needed an effective method for the transferral of power from one Chair to the next. We reviewed the Terms of Reference and agreed to adopt a co-chair arrangement in which a Chair should serve for two years, the first year as incoming and the second as outgoing chair. As I had chaired the AG I was selected as the outgoing chair in the inaugural year of the TA. The co-chair arrangement facilitated knowledge sharing, the transfer of power and the sharing of responsibilities in a situation where everyone was busy, and time was limited. We also agreed the Executive would be refreshed annually to promote new ideas and shared leadership amongst a network of leaders. With an understanding that credible, impactful, inclusive leaders balance and connect strategy with operations to empower others and foster a culture of high performance (UoL, n.d.), I chaired a meeting with the Executive and Fellows to identify annual priorities and plan activities. This approach served well to establish the TA.

Thriving

Once initiated the TA prospered and grew, it changed, it was not static. Since I left the University at the end of 2015, the TA has continued to thrive and evolve to meet the changing needs and vision of the University. Like the TA, I also embraced new challenges. In 2016, I took up a new role as Manager Teaching Support in another University. One of my first tasks was to mobilise my team of Senior Academic Developers, Senior Learning Designers and Technologists, who had been brought together following a restructure. I helped them see how their roles related to University strategy and to each other and empowered them to lead in their respective portfolios to support teaching, learning, and the student experience.

Strategic Leadership Development

My strategic experiential approach to CPD contributed to leadership development for myself and for others as I engaged with international networks and communities of practice. For example, my engagement at a strategic level as a member of the HERDSA Executive Committee (2013-2017) enabled me to contribute to the research and development of HE policy and practice, dissemination of teaching and learning scholarship through publications and conferences, and professional development and recognition through HERDSA Fellowships. I contributed to the facilitation of national networks and the organisation of international conferences in Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong. I mentored colleagues

to apply for HERDSA Fellowships and built the capacity of others to assess portfolio submissions. I contributed to the HERD journal as an author and a reviewer.

My future-oriented, proactive approach inspired me to apply for an Australian Government Endeavour Executive Fellowship. Building on my experience, I was interested in developing networks and communities of practice between higher education institutions (HEIs) globally and wanted to build international relationships to promote the sharing of academic practice. As an Endeavour Fellow 2015 I received a grant from the Australian Government and was hosted by the HEA to engage in an extended visit with colleagues in diverse HEIs across the UK. I was able to share practice, make connections and further develop my understanding of professional recognition schemes internationally. This experience informed my transition to working in HE in the UK.

I was aware of the value of professional development and recognition through my experience as a HERDSA Fellow assessing portfolios, mentoring applicants and assessors, and as a member of the HERDSA Executive promoting the Scheme across the Society. Through my engagement in the TPP I was intrigued by the work of colleagues who introduced professional development and recognition through applications for Fellowships of the HEA at the Australian National University (ANU). Through my Endeavour Fellowship I spoke with HEA consultants and participated in HEA networks and PFHEA workshop events. After completing my Endeavour Fellowship, I successfully submitted my application for PFHEA with the support an ANU colleague whom I met through the TPP. Gaining PFHEA led to me being invited to assess PFHEA applications through a scheme offered by another Australian University. It helped me gain employment in the UK and participate in relevant networks.

Case Study 3

The third case which spans five years explores my transformational, operational leadership of AD teams and programmes in a dynamic highly regulated UK HE environment where universities are regulated by the Office for Students (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>), quality and standards are safeguarded by the Quality Assurance Agency (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/>), and Advance HE plays a leading role in the enhancement, accreditation and recognition of learning and teaching (<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/>).

The University was founded in 1881. It was the original red brick university and is a member of the prestigious research-intensive Russell Group of universities. It has 22,000+

students on campus, 7,700⁺ international students on campus, and 10,000⁺ online students from over 160 countries (<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/about/>). The University's *vision is to be a global University at the forefront of knowledge leadership ... global reach is central to its distinctive vision for the future* (UoL Strategy 2026). Informed by a Sino-cooperative model of transnational education the University established the Xian Jiaotong University of Liverpool (XJTLU) in 2006 (Gow, 2017; Lu, 2018).

Academic Development

When I started working at the University's Centre for Lifelong Learning in 2017, it was undergoing a restructure that reallocated educational development functions to four new areas; 1) the Leadership, Organisational, Professional, and Academic Development Academy (the Academy) in HR which took responsibility for people development, 2) the Centre for Innovation in Education (CIE) in Student Experience and Enhancement which took responsibility for curriculum development, 3) the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) in Humanities and Social Sciences which delivered the online Educational Doctorate, and 4) the Liverpool Doctoral College (LDC) in Research which supported postgraduate research students. The Academy included administration, Organisational Development, Equality and Engagement, Academic Development (AD), Research Staff Development, and the Prosper Project; team members were employed on Professional Services and Management Staff contracts. As Head of AD, it was my role to lead the AD team to review and redevelop academic provision, enabling colleagues to gain teaching qualifications or professional recognition. Table 1 shows the dynamic composition of the AD team 2017-2021; in the UK the academic year goes from August to July with classes starting in September, hence the calendar year is not represented. In this context, transformational leadership informed my team and programme leadership.

Table 1
Dynamic Composition of The AD Team 2017-2021

AD Team Members	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
1	.8 Academy .2 CHES	.8 Academy .2 CHES	1 FTE* Academy	1 FTE Academy
2	.5 Academy .3 CIE .2 CHES	.5 Academy .3 CIE .2 CHES	1 FTE Academy	1 FTE Academy
3	.5 Academy .5 LDC	.5 Academy .5 LDC	1 FTE Academy	1 FTE Academy
4	.4 Academy .6 CHES	.4 Academy .6 CHES		
5	.9 Academy .1 CHES	.9 Academy .1 CHES		
6	.6 Academy .4 CHES			
7	Zero hours - Academy	Zero hours - Academy		
8			1 FTE Academy	1 FTE Academy
9			1 FTE Academy	1 FTE Academy
10			1 FTE Academy	Maternity Leave
11				Cover for (10)

Legend: * Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Team Leadership

The restructure created a seismic shift in how AD was operationalised and impacted group dynamics significantly (Cummings et al., 2016) as we scrambled to establish new organisational identities while continuing to support staff development across the University. Table 1 shows that for two years following the restructure the AD team was comprised of colleagues with divided responsibilities and allegiances. This dynamic situation was further exacerbated because the AD programmes were delivered by colleagues in the CIE and CHES

teams not shown in Table 1. Two years on from the restructure the Director of the Academy and I consolidated the AD team by employing three new staff members and ensuring existing staff had full-time AD roles. The designated AD team had been in place for 7-8 months when the country went into lockdown, and we were asked to work remotely because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Like colleagues around the world, we made the tilt to remote working and online delivery, but unlike many others remote, online and hybrid working became the norm for us. Amid this situation we had to consider, also, how we interacted and collaborated with our participants and external colleagues as partners.

Transformational leadership can be applied effectively in dynamic complex environments because colleagues want to be inspired and empowered to overcome challenges successfully (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Operational leadership transforms vision into action (Parkin, 2017). The initial phase of group formation (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) was complex because group members faced competing demands due to their split allegiances to diverse organisational units. I adopted a community of practice approach that embraced the shared domain of educational development, amongst a community of developers involved in the practice of building capacity to enhance learning and teaching in HE (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). This approach enabled me to build relationships across organisational units during a period of transition that required members to adapt to their changing identities and responsibilities (Arruda, 2016). To continue to deliver and to drive forward the vision for the innovation of AD provision, required an integrated approach to management and transformational leadership of teams and programmes (Parkin, 2017). By giving *individualised consideration* and listening to colleagues (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Parkin, 2017) it was clear to me that colleagues were unsettled by competing demands and they wanted to settle within their designated organisational units. To resolve this issue and respond to the *Education Strategy Action Plan* required changing our AD provision. To hasten the withdrawal of our largest and most resource intensive programme I provided *intellectual stimulation* (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Parkin, 2017) by proposing the delivery of an intensive summer school programme to teach out the required workshops over four weeks, after which the workload on facilitators would decrease. Further to this I proposed an alternative course level assessment option that would enable participants to complete the programme in a timely manner. The withdrawal of old programmes and the introduction of new programmes for the commencement of the 2018-19 academic year helped to relieve the workloads of non-Academy staff, although the split responsibilities of the AD team remained a challenge. By the end of 2018-19 we had

successfully recruited three new staff and existing roles were dedicated solely to AD in the Academy.

As Head of AD, I fully integrated leadership and management to foster a high performing team. Parkin (2017, p. 58) broadly characterised leadership as being synonymous with *change, energy, and direction* and management as synonymous with *planning, action, and stability*. Transformational leadership provides *inspirational motivation* by articulating a vision and direction and empowers others to identify with the vision and take ownership to achieve it (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Parkin, 2017). Strategically, I planned a comprehensive induction to facilitate the *formation* of the AD team and convened a Planning Day to initiate the *storming* process (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

In preparation for the Planning Day, I shared portfolio responsibilities with the team and asked them to reflect on their roles in relation to others, consider what excellence would look like in their portfolios, and identify milestones they expected to achieve in 6- and 12-months' time. I asked them to reflect on any driving and restraining forces they perceived that could impact their work or the work of the team and how they might work collaboratively with each other to avoid duplication and draw on individual strengths to maximise impact and efficiency, and how we might measure and report our impact and efficiency.

The Planning Day was held in September at the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year a few weeks after the new staff commenced work. The agenda included a round table discussion of our roles and ways of working. After jotting our ideas on post-it notes we created a cline image in response to three questions, where are we now, where are we going, how will we get there? The second item on the agenda was an introduction to the use of Microsoft Teams, which was very new and unbeknown to us would be essential to our work in six months' time. Between morning tea and lunch, I explained the requirements, timeline and responsibilities associated with our application for the reaccreditation of our programmes, which was due in six months' time. We envisioned what our three accredited programmes could look like using divergent and convergent thinking processes. After lunch we used a tuning protocol (Hughes, 2016) to encourage blue sky thinking on key strategies. For example, a colleague shared ideas for creating our Developing Academic Practice Journal, and we followed the protocol to help refine the ideas. The Planning Day prepared the team for their roles in the delivery, innovation, and re-accreditation of our programmes.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted life as we knew it. Leading academic development, at University level, in a crisis required quick action to communicate key messages, provide answers to frequently asked questions, and ensure we continued to deliver our programmes effectively to support staff development. The team having reached the *norming* stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) were able to respond rapidly and adjusted to working remotely, delivering our programmes online and supporting academic colleagues to make the necessary changes to their teaching. In preparation for the 2020-21 academic year, I reflected on the team's performance and adjusted some roles and responsibilities which enabled us to reach our potential as a high *performing* team (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). In November 2021 we were recognised as finalists in the Global Academic Development Good Practice Awards for our integrated approach to developing teaching and scholarship.

Over the course of the pandemic, I effectively adjusted how I communicated with the AD team. Previously, we had fortnightly face-to-face team and individual meetings. I continued with fortnightly individual online meetings, however, in the first months of remote working, we met as a team online every morning for 30 minutes to check in with each other and discuss any issues. At the beginning of the new academic year in 2020-21, I initiated two weekly team meetings; on Monday mornings we discussed any issues and on Friday mornings we had a social catch up. With remote working becoming the norm, I reduced our team meetings to once a month, with an option for face-to-face meetings, although most meetings were online. The changes I made to team communications, appropriately, reflected the changing situations. We needed close frequent contact during the initial crisis, weekly formal and informal contact as we acclimatised to the situation, and to enhance sustainability in what had become the new normal monthly team meetings were appropriate.

Programme Leadership

My ability to respond to the *Education Strategy Action Plan* and redevelop the AD provision was constrained by professional body accreditation requirements and cycles and the University's quality assurance policies and processes for credit bearing courses. Table 2 shows programmes before and after the restructure (2017-18) that were accredited from 2016 to 2024. The categories in Table 2 show programmes that were removed (R), newly developed (N), and maintained (M). The years shown in Table 2 indicate the professional body's four-year accreditation cycles; note 2018-2020 indicated major changes within the 2016-2020 accreditation period.

Table 2*Overview of Academy Accredited and/or Validated Programmes 2016-2024*

Programme & Category		Accreditation and/or Credit	Target Audience	2016 2020	2018 2020	2020 2024
1. Teaching for Researchers	R	D1* 20 credits [2x10 credits]	Postgraduate Researchers (PGR) and Post-Doctoral (Post Doc) Researchers	x		
2. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA)	R	D1 via ULTRA	GTAs	x		
3. Certificate in Professional Studies Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CPSLTHE - CPS)	R	D2* 60 credits [3x20 credits] Level 6	New academic staff	x	x	
4. Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE)	R	D2 60 credits [3x20 credits] Level 7	Staff with > 3 years' experience	x		
5. Postgraduate Diploma Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGDipLTHE)	R	120 credits [60 + 3x20 credits] Level 7	PGCLTHE graduates	x	x	
6. Master of Arts Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (MALTHE)	R	180 credits (120 + 60 credits) Level 7	PGDipLTHE graduates	x	x	

Programme & Category		Accreditation and/or Credit	Target Audience	2016 2020	2018 2020	2020 2024
7.	Foundations of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (FLTHE)	N	D1		x	x
8.	Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice (PGCAP)	N	D2 60 credits [1x40 credit + 1 x 20 credits] Level 7		x	x
9.	Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice (Liverpool Online)	N	D2 60 credits [4x15 credits] Level 7			x
10.	Postgraduate Diploma Academic Practice (PGDAP)	N	120 credits [60 + 2x30 credits] Level 7			x
11.	Master of Arts Academic Practice (MA AP)	N	180 credits (120 + 60 credits) Level 7			x
12.	University of Liverpool Teaching and Recognition Accreditation Framework (ULTRA)	M	D1-4*	x	x	x

Legend* D1 – Descriptor 1, D2 – Descriptor 2, D1-4 – Descriptors 1-4 (HEA, 2011, pp. 4-7).

Prior to the restructure, the CPS was the flagship programme for AD provision. It was mandatory for all new staff to complete within the three years of their probation. Although the CPS was an accredited, modular credit bearing programme, the modules were comprised of core and optional workshops which participants could complete in any order and submit assessments whenever they chose to. The workshops were open to all staff whether they were registered on the CPS or not. Thus, in a research-intensive culture, the CPS integrated formal and informal approaches to encourage staff to develop their teaching on the main campus, and at XJTLU using the fly in fly out model until XJTLU became self-sustaining.

After the restructure, I assessed the situation by triangulating evidence based on evaluation, research, and practice wisdom (Bamber & Stefani, 2016). Evaluation data showed there was slow progression and completion rates, complicated pathways, and low enrolments for Level 7 (Masters) programmes. Research data showed there was scope for change. Reflecting on my practice wisdom (e.g., Bolt, 2010), I understood the need to address the issues raised by the evaluation data, consider contemporary approaches, and integrate formal and informal learning opportunities that 1) met HE policies for quality and standards, 2) fostered peer learning through communities of practice and networks, and 3) promoted the scholarship of teaching and learning. With an evidence-based understanding of this dynamic highly regulated situation, I successfully and systematically led a team to transform the AD provision and develop new programmes, as shown in Table 2, in compliance with University and professional body requirements.

Concluding Thoughts and Advice for AD Leaders

To achieve the aim of AD, which is to enhance academic practice, we ask three questions: 1) where are we? 2) where are we going? and 3) how will we get there? These simple questions provide insight into the complexities of leading AD in dynamic contexts. The first question highlights the importance of understanding the situation and our relationship with others because leadership emerges from the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation (Spillane, 2005; Taylor, 2005). In each of the case studies I set the scene by describing the situation. Case Study 1 showed how I nurtured interactions with first followers by ‘being one of us’, ‘doing it for us’, ‘crafting a sense of us’, and ‘making us matter’ (Haslam et al., 2010). The second question is about envisioning where to go by being strategic, horizon scanning, making decisions to set direction based on evidence and intuition and having the ability to communicate effectively and inspire followers (Bamber & Stefani, 2016; Barrett, 2012; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Law, 2009; Parkin, 2017). Case Study 2 showed how I aligned leadership with

institutional strategy and integrated evidence-based forward-thinking approaches to envision strategies that transformed processes, mobilised people, and enhanced career development. The third question highlights the need for operational leadership and development strategies that transform vision into action (Parkin, 2017; Taylor, 2005). Case Study 3 showed how I applied operational leadership to lead AD teams and transform AD programmes in a highly regulated HE environment. These cases exemplified development strategies that transformed processes and mobilised people in diverse contexts.

Also, the case studies showed how my identity, influence, and power as a leader of AD were developed and positioned in diverse institutional roles and settings. In my experience in academic and professional roles, AD inhabits a third space that brings together academic and professional attributes and colleagues for the purpose of enhancing academic practice (Green & Little, 2016; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015; Whitchurch, 2008). The positioning of AD roles as academic or professional can be contentious and troublesome because classifications are linked to reward and recognition and can impact one's identity. We should also consider the value of reputation which is a tradable commodity regardless of role classification. A credible leader is "self-aware and takes ownership for personal development, has a can-do attitude and manages own frustrations constructively and productively, and remains resilient in the face of competing demands" (UoL, n.d.). Case Study 1 showed how I built social capital through my interactions with colleagues and knowledge capital through scholarship, work experience, qualifications, awards, and publications. Case Study 2 showed how I extended my spheres of influence internationally by engaging with professional bodies to develop leadership and gain professional recognition.

Finally, the value of evidencing the institutional and personal impact of AD cannot be understated (Bamber & Stefani, 2016; UoL, n.d.). At a strategic level Case Study 2 comments on the achievement of two initiatives identified in the University's *Student Experience Learning and Teaching Enabling Plan*, 1) PPL, and 2) the TA; both of which stemmed from practice discussed in Case Study 1. At a strategic level Table 2 in Case Study 3 showed the changes in AD provision in response to the University's *Education Strategy Action Plan*. External recognition can provide further evidence of impact. For example, in Case Study 1 I was awarded a HERDSA Fellowship and invited to participate in an ALTC grant project (Nash et al., 2014); in Case Study 2 I was awarded an Endeavour Fellowship, PFHEA, and elected to the HERDSA Executive; in Case Study 3 we were recognised as finalists in the Global Academic Development Good Practice Awards for our transformed AD provision.

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Biography

Dr Susan Bolt (PFHEA) is Head of Academic Development at the University of Liverpool in the UK, where she leads a team that was recognised as finalists in the 2021 Global Academic Development Good Practice Awards for their integrated approach to developing teaching and scholarship. Dr Bolt is the Director of Studies for the Liverpool Online Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice which is accredited by Advance HE and delivered globally. Dr Bolt's passion for leading academic development in HE is underpinned by her prior work experiences and doctoral study in which she investigated professional development in dynamic environments. Prior to moving to the UK at the end of 2016, Dr Bolt worked at Edith Cowan University and Curtin University in Western Australia. Prior to working in HE, Dr Bolt held a senior role in the Western Australian Department of Education, and had extensive experience as a curriculum consultant and educator.