



Leading Change at the Programme Level

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To Discuss



Background to This Work

Local Context
National Context (UK)



This Study: What works in leading change in learning and teaching ?

The Course
Methodology & Method
Early Results



Conclusions

Common Emergent Themes



Next Step

Testing the ideas further



Context



Durham University Background

- Some Key Durham University Facts:
- Small Town in North East England (pop 52,200).
- University is historic (founded in 1832), high-ranking (e.g. 6th in UK, 92nd in QS) , Research Intensive
- Approx 20,260 students and 4330 members of staff (approx. 1690 academic) spread across four faculties (Science, Social Science, Arts and Humanities & Business)



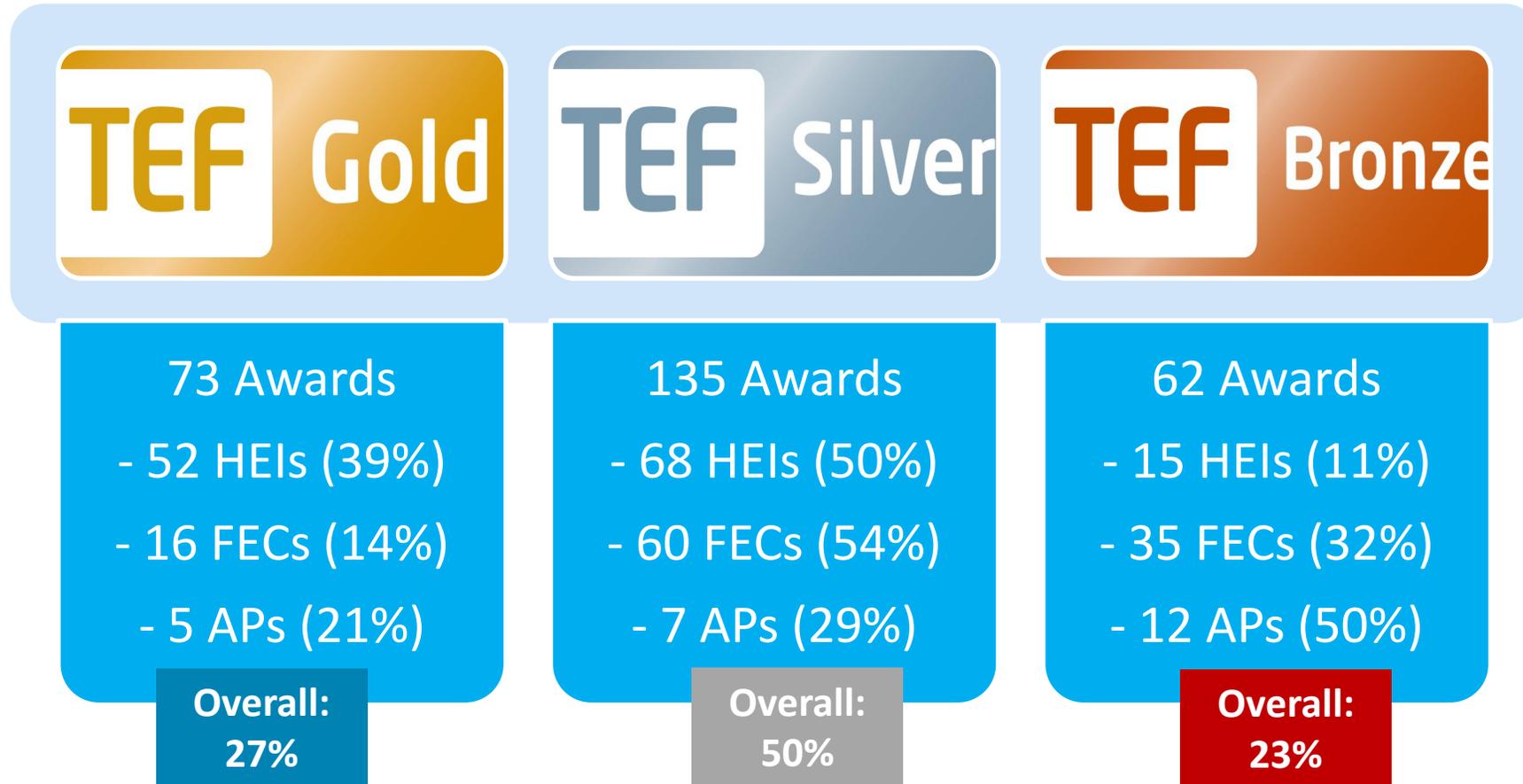
The National Perspective

- In 2015 the UK government initiated the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (analogous to REF for Research)
- The Government has stated that the **purpose** of the TEF is to:
 - better inform students' choices about what and where to study;
 - raise esteem for teaching;
 - recognise and reward excellent teaching; and
 - better meet the needs of employers, business, industry and the professions.
- Two Stage Process (metrics and written statement)
 - Metrics:
 - National Student Survey (e.g. teaching on my course ...)
 - Destination of Leavers
 - Written Statement (6 Pages)
 - Contextualisation for Metrics
 - Evidence of Teaching Excellence

[Independent review of the TEF: Call for views, p.7]

TEF Outcomes (TEF2 & TEF3)

297 awards: 270 full, 27 provisional





This Study

Structure



Programme Leaders

A programme lead is responsible for the running of a degree program, such as an undergraduate or masters degree

They lead on the day to day management of staff teaching on the programme, changing its curriculum design and ensuring it runs successfully.

They usually have no line management responsibilities and are a member of academic staff in the role for 3 years, so need to lead utilizing soft power.

They are almost always leading a change.

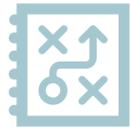
They weren't recruited to be leaders, so development and support in this space is critical

Developing a Teaching Leadership Programme

- To develop a program we consulted with experts externally and internally at all levels of the University
- We put active learning at the heart of every session
- Run by experienced programme leaders (both internal and external)



Leadership in Learning and Teaching



6 Day Course, taken by up to 20 Programme Leads. Its objectives are:

Explore from a strategic to an operational level the development of inclusive, innovative programmes in learning and teaching

Develop skills in embedding sustainable change with taught programs.



Individuals are nominated by their Head of Department, as they are leading (or about to lead) a significant change in their curricula

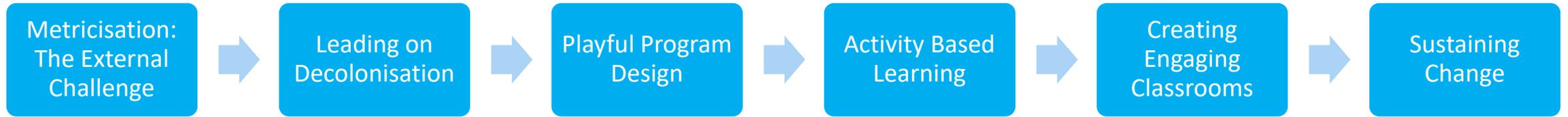


We utilise mentoring and Action Learning Sets as primary modes of participant support

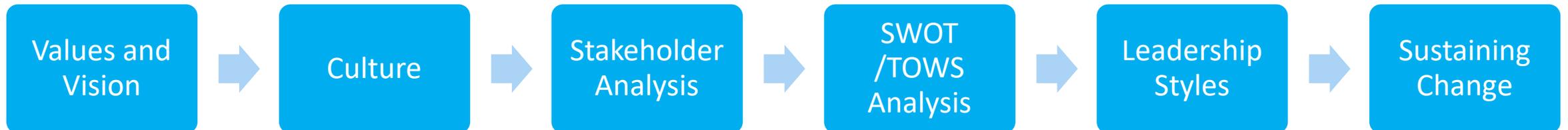


Each of the 6 days involves an external guest speaker (themselves a education leader at another institution) who focuses on a particular topic

Education Topics



Leadership Topics



This Study

- We gained ethical approval and have conducted 1-hour interviews with 12 former participants in the program to explore:
 - The quality of the support offered by the Leading Learning & Teaching Course
 - How they led their change project and how they measured its success
 - The challenges and opportunities of leading change in a University Environment
- The aim of this study was to explore the question what helps and what hinders leading change in learning and teaching in the context of the University ?
- We are developing a phenenographic analysis of the data collected for later publication, but at this stage will give a thematic overview of the issues raised by interviewees

**How is the Leadership
Course Received ?**

Leadership Course – Motivation to Engage

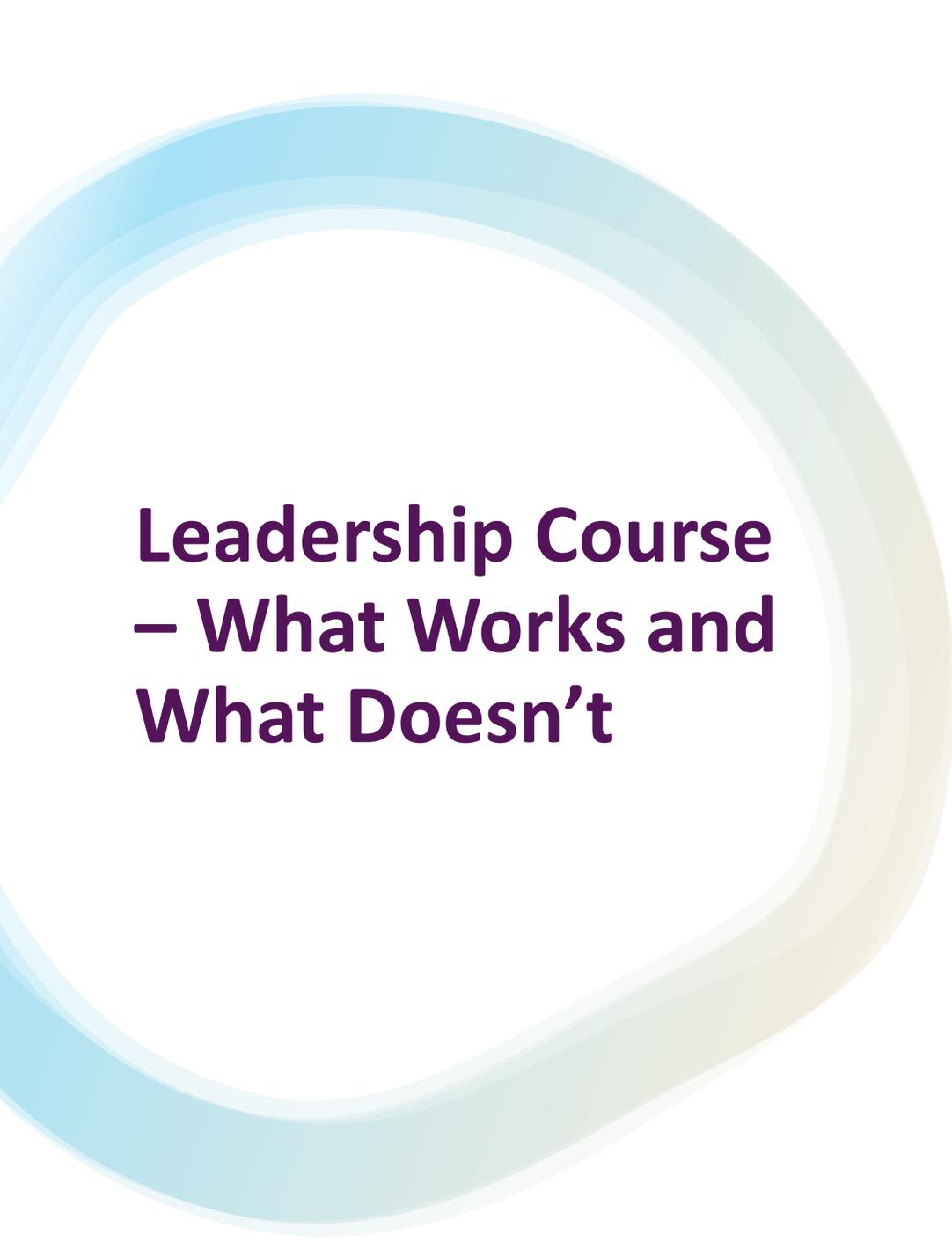
- Intrinsic Motivations

- “I think it was really to get a better handle on how to approach leadership to get some strategies and models in my head. And really, what attracted me was the chance to actually talk about leadership with the staff who ran the course, but also, the people on it.”

- Extrinsic Motivations

- “In all bluntness, it was largely a hoop driven activity for me for my promotion”





Leadership Course – What Works and What Doesn't

- *“Out of all the courses I've been on while I've been at Durham, that is the one which I've genuinely thought was useful as a course”*
- **What Works:**
 - Broad Range of External Speakers all who brought something unique
 - Lots of Space for Discussion with Other Participants
 - Mentoring to support my project
 - Education Leadership Theory into practice
- **What Doesn't**
 - Selling to Departments

Post Course – Development Needs

“I think I want to be better at getting the balance right between the amount of advice and guidance at work I provide for others and where I draw the line in how I do this”

“A big area for me is me knowing or having confidence that other people can do the stuff,”

“Having a trusting friend who can either stop you doing something that's completely mad or just gives you the confidence to talk things through, iron a few things out, avoid the crazy stuff, but actually help you to deliver what you're trying to achieve.”

**What Works in Leading
Change ?**

Leading Change – Scale of Project

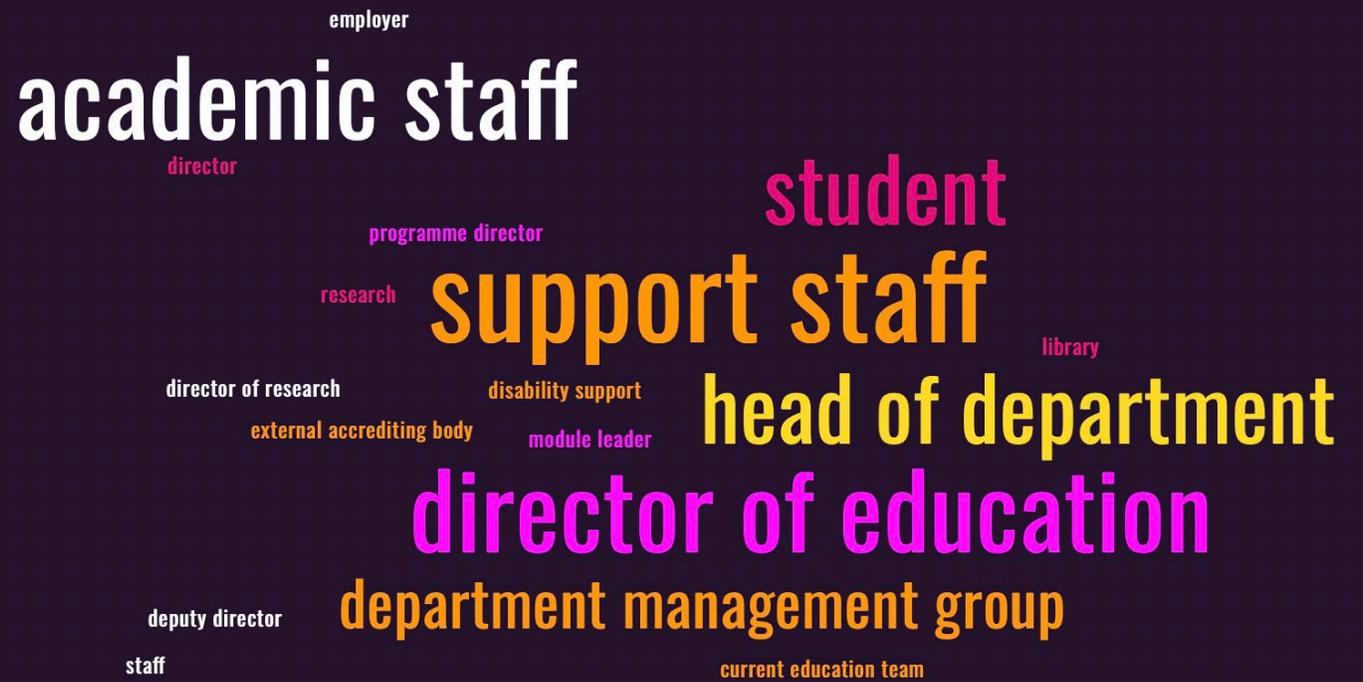


*“review of how
tutoring is thought of
in my department”*

*“redesign our fourth
year streams”*

*“Work with students
partners to decolonise
the Curriculum Across
All 4 years of our
degree programme”*

Key Stakeholders

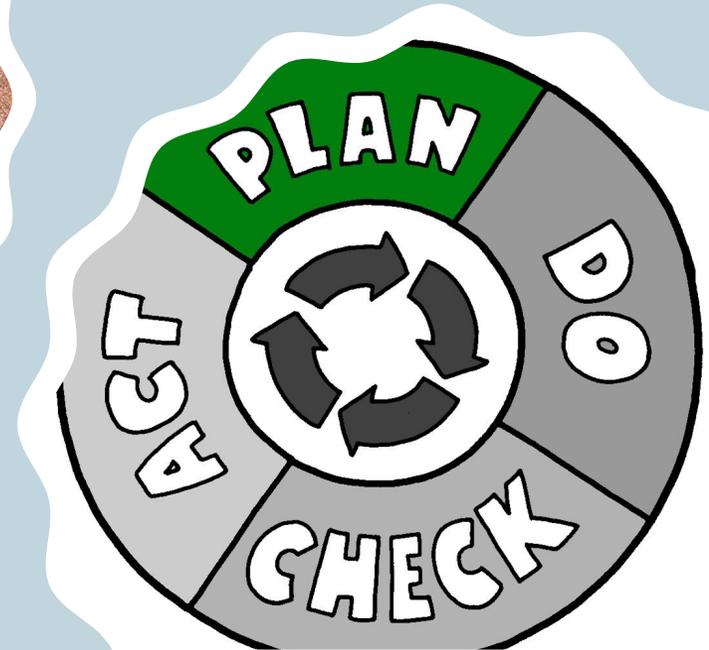


Leading Change – Challenges

“We seem to offer students more modules with less contact hours per module, and it just makes it really tough to link the different course material together into a coherent pattern”

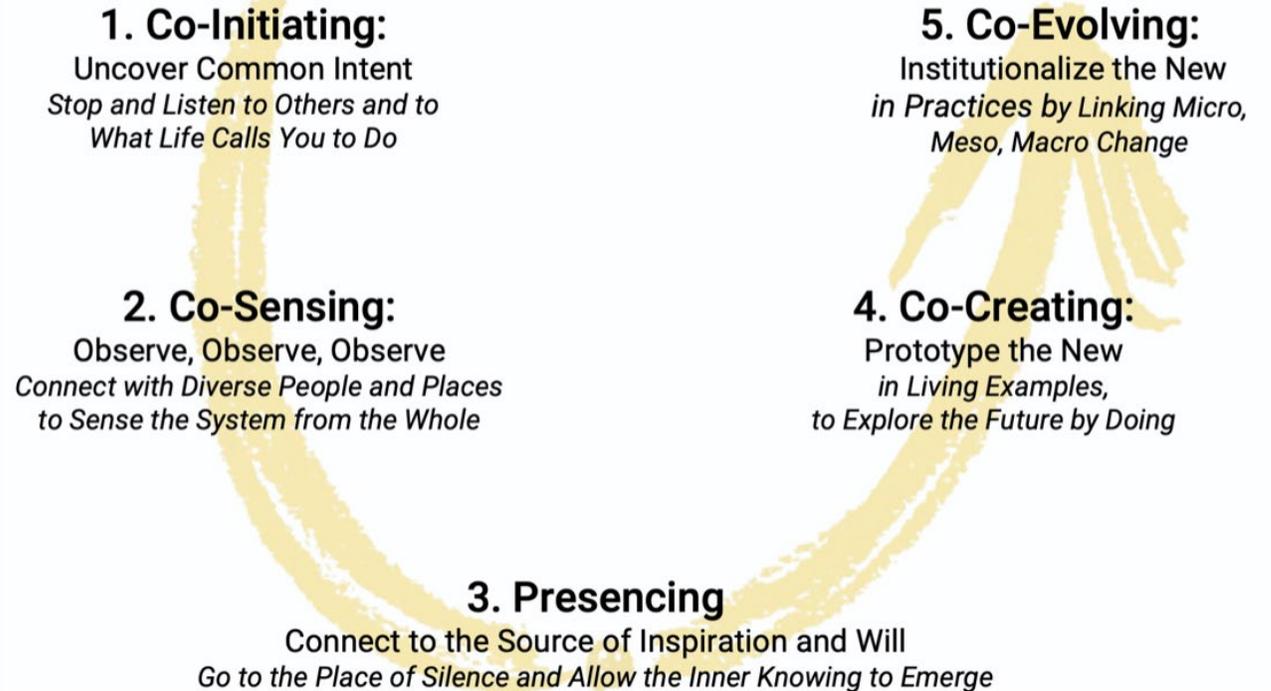
“But it was quite interesting trying to get people to stick to deadlines and do things. And when I did the course that was something that I didn't anticipate to that degree, how much micromanagement that would involve.”

“Obviously notwithstanding the relative autonomy that departments get, obviously, in some key areas, but in that sense, I've heard from XXXXX fairly recently apologizing that nothing much has happened on that, and I think it's probably just because they'd had so much else on their plate.”



Leading Change – Agility and Ambition

- “Its about having (or making) a shared vision – why you need to change and the positive outcomes of the change for students and staff.”
- “I mean, there was a whole range of teething issues, really. But, we started solving those quicker and quicker because as they emerged they then had the solution ready, sort of thing.”
- “I was dummy-testing everything with my own teaching. So, I'd dummy-test everything, get it to think it was right and working right, shared it with a few people, then, it went out to the populous.”

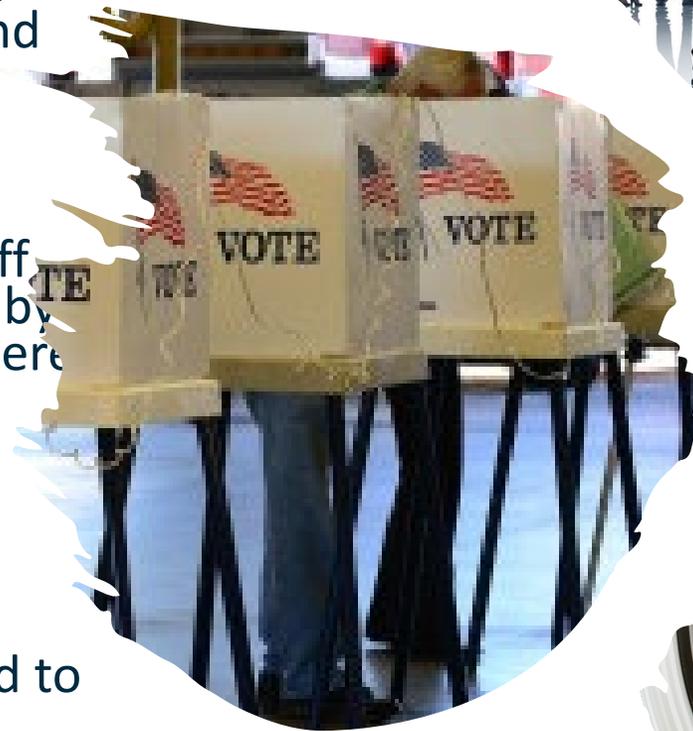


Leading Change – Most Important Factor

“I think to really understand what the benefits are and then communicate those out to people. Especially in university there's lots of demands on people's time and there's lots of other changes and things happening and there's lots of competing priorities.”

“The Departmental Board, which all academic staff take part in approves things, but doesn't approve by vote. Basically it approves by consensus, so are there any objections? This is often how things are questioned and derailed, it never votes”

“You've got to have the support from the management above you, but then its about consultation and buy-in and those would be linked to each other. So I think giving people the sense of ownership and input into the changes that we're doing.”



Leading Change – Biggest Blocker

“I think the thing is we need to recognise as a university that we're going to be in continual change. It's not something that you just do for a while, you get the answer right, and then you carry on with what you did before. So, I think we need to encourage a culture where there's an acceptance of change, but there is also time built into people's workflows for it.”



Leading Change

(adapted from (Kezar, 2018))

CHANGE APPROACH	CHANGE TACTICS	CHANGE METAPHOR
1. Scientific Management	Planned Top Down Plan – Implement - Evaluate	Military
2. Evolutionary	Processes on the outside pressure the organization Find and utilize external demands	Environmental
3. Political	Bring likeminded people together. Elevate new champions and groups	Parliament
4. Cognition	Provide professional development opportunities Work on increasing exchange of knowledge	Evolution
5. Cultural	Appeal to values and core principles Challenge tacit assumptions	Social

Conclusions

- The role of Programme Lead is critical in the successful leadership of degree programmes
- Through our study of those undertaking a Leadership programme designed for these individuals we've found:
 - Clear Project Mandate
 - Consensus building
 - Communication
 - Senior Leadership Support
 - Workload allocated to leading and delivering change for all involved
 - Having trusted friends/mentors as a leader is vital
- Next we'll explore the data in greater detail to look at the underlying themes through a phenomenographic approach

Gratuitous Plug 😊

Later This Year



References

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