Creative Leadership Now

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Foreword

At The Culture Capital Exchange, we are very lucky and privileged to work with the most amazing people. Many work in academia or in the arts. All are at different stages of their careers, including those who feel they may not yet even be in theirs and those who, for various reasons, have decided to step away from theirs or retire altogether.

This vital community of intelligent, creative and passionate people are the very lifeblood of TCCE, where most of what we do involves bringing people together to share ideas, exchange knowledge, find solutions to problems and to think, dream, plot, plan, laugh together and keep each other's spirits up. And it is the latter in particular that has been so important for so many of us over the years, and especially over this last year.

Last year we, like so many others, were forced to radically rethink how we work, as a result of the pandemic, and for an organisation that has been so people and event driven that was a challenge. But with the challenge also came opportunity.

The notion of work as something that meant having to all be together in the one place melted away for many, including us, whilst the notion of remote working came to the fore with bells and whistles.

We were incredibly fortunate during the first lockdown that our bid to Research England to establish the new National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange was successful. This new development also enabled us to think afresh about TCCE and it gave us the chance to bring more people onboard. And for the first time ever, it didn't really matter where those people were physically based. We advertised for a new post within TCCE and ended up working with not one but three wonderful women, all

living in different parts of the country. Dr Gemma Outen became our Programme Manager, and Pauline Rutter and Dr Rebekka Kill both became TCCE Associates.

Rebekka had come from a senior background in Higher Education and was fascinated by the subject of Leadership. Her interest has taken us on another new journey. On a brilliant sunshiney Friday afternoon in January we brought together around 20 people to talk about the notion of leadership and we ended up forming the TCCE Leadership Forum. Some of us did and some of us didn't feel comfortable with the term leadership. But somehow the labelling didn't matter much. Once again, what did matter was the space for people to share honestly, frankly and movingly their experiences and challenges of working in and through covid and their hopes for the future, whatever the 'new normal' might hold.

It is this same group of people who have contributed to this publication. I would like to thank each and every contributor for their generosity, their insights and their willingness to engage with us on the subject of creative leadership at a time when frankly things have felt so bleak. I would especially like to thank Rebekka for convincing us that in such bleak times, people actually want and need to talk about how they are feeling at work and how they are navigating really tough and challenging environments. This small volume marks, as such, this very particular and poignant moment and we at TCCE are so delighted to have played a role in bringing it to fruition. We hope you enjoy it and that it inspires you.

Evelyn Wilson, Co-Director TCCE and NCACE

Introduction: Thinking about Leadership Now

Dr Rebekka Kill

TCCE Strategic Development Associate, Academic Consultant and Coach

Over the last few months I have spent some time thinking; thinking on my own and thinking with other people. This all started with a blog I did for TCCE; I wanted to think about what might be coming next. I said "things are very hard at the moment and things are changing. The world is changing, and it will be permanently changed by what is happening globally." Well, change is still happening, and things are still hard, aren't they?

My questions, six months ago, were about leadership. I asked what kind of leadership we need, and what kind of leaders do we need to be? I also wondered how leadership is changing, given the current context of global pandemic? In order to explore these issues I asked a group of leaders to think about these questions, to talk about these questions and then to write something that explored their position on leadership. These leaders came from higher education and arts organisations from across the UK.

This group of thinkers have produced some beautiful texts. There are poetic ones, deeply personal ones, analytical ones; so much richness across them all. What is of real interest, when viewing them as a body of work are the emphases on ethics, humanity, empathy, compassion and generosity.

When I wrote my first TCCE blog, back in November 2020, there was very little new academic writing about leadership during and post covid, I had to resort to other sources of writing and found little inspiration. My conclusion then was that:

> We need to reinvent what leadership is, for us, for now, and for what happens next. And we also need to rethink how leaders are developed. And most importantly we all need to make time to think.

Six months on this is no longer the case, some interesting academic, and often reflective writing is starting to emerge from across the world. A good example of this is Amy Chanmugam's deeply personal essay *The menu of bad options: Academic leadership during the early pandemic* (2021). She talks about working in a university context during covid, 'As a human being, I got tired of trying to appear confident that everything will work out. It started to feel dishonest'. She also describes her approach to leadership during the pandemic, 'it's natural to want reassurance that everything will work out. I can't promise that, but in the leadership role I can talk about what we are doing to help.'

For Michelle Newcomb (2021) the pandemic was a feminist issue, she talks about the multiple roles that are expected of women who work and states that the 'social and professional expectations to perform well in all these roles became overwhelming'. For Newcomb, this has generated a newly reinvigorated resistance:

> Through this process of reflection, I found space for resistance. I've come to recognise emotional labour as a limited resource that needs greater acknowledgement (Lawless, 2018). Rather than expending this precious resource in maintaining neoliberalism, this experience has taught me to direct this resource where it matters; to myself and my family. It seems crude to commodify emotion for capitalism instead the pandemic has taught me to keep it for real, authentic connection.

Maak et al. (2021) describe 'communities of suffering' caused by the pandemic and they call for compassion, values and 'radical hope' as opposed to narcissistic leadership. They are also quite specific about the qualities we should expect from our leaders; 'systemic thinking and the ability to mirror environmental complexity; reflective and critical

thinking, and the ability to update one's views when evidence changes; reasoning and ethical skills, and thus the ability to evaluate and judge one's decisions in the context of the greater good.' But where does that leave leadership development? Maak et al., are also calling for new thinking in this,

> it is time to revisit the role of higher education in nurturing these qualities such that the foundations for reflective, relational, and responsible leadership are built. This means that we have to make sure that reflexive and epistemic learning are in balance (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2013) and that graduates have the ability to 'liquify' ideologies.

They go on,

> What are the forces that shape responsible leaders, their motivational drivers and epistemic imprints of their education? How can compassionate leadership become the norm rather than an exception?

Our leadership forum, think tank, or idea factory (I struggled to name it) is drawn from a relatively narrow field, but one whose voices are not currently represented in the published literature. Our group of leaders from arts higher education and the arts were encouraged to reflect, after our discussion, and to write up these reflections, we said, 'These can be personal, political, philosophical. They should be as honest and as vibrant as possible; reflecting the way that you spoke when we met.' I asked them all to keep their writing short, bite sized; to distil their thoughts. And the results were incredible. From a heartfelt letter to her daughter (Paynton), to beautiful poetic text (Rutter), from a bold manifesto (Wellington) to a thoughtful commentary on motherhood, vulnerability and grounded working (Chatzichristodoulou); there are emotional, angry, analytical, sensitive and beautiful texts throughout this publication; it is honest, authentic and very human.

Much of our work at TCCE has historically been about engaging with both aspiring and future leaders. Through our work, we constantly seek to catalyse change and think

about new modes of development, growth and transformation. So, what we have here is the beginning of something. It's not just about our leadership group being given space to think, and being given a voice. It's about the future of leadership. It's about how we can 'revisit the role of higher education' and professional development on leadership with this new thinking and in this new context. So, we are taking this further. This group, this publication and engaging with a broader group of leaders. We're thinking about how this can be the beginning, a pilot for a subject specialist programme of leadership development. But not leadership development as it was. This is about creating new pathways and navigating a different course.

> 'Leading in disruptive times means being able to navigate a different course, to create new pathways through the disruption.' (Harris and Jones 2020)

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Risk Registers, Reality Checks and Resetting Our Values; Reading the Pandemic as a Preface

Claire Malcolm
Chief Executive of New Writing North

For me, last year felt like a watershed on lots of different levels. A watershed that happened in the middle of a very extreme experience of the demands of leadership and of running an organisation. The durational challenge of this has been extraordinary. A moment to really consider why you're here and what you can do. Were our Risk Registers focusing on the right things?

Saying that, all of the pulling together and dialogue about what we're here to do and why we do what we do, internally and externally has been amazing. And the recognition that kindness counts and isn't an add on but necessary for our survival and wellbeing. I've both received and given kindness more during the pandemic.

I've also been lucky to be working with writers and producers on artistic work throughout this moment and some of it has felt incredibly pertinent – work with our climate writer in residence and with a group of writers exploring new narratives for our region. A reminder throughout this that it's how we tell the story of what we do and how we did it that has great power to shape our response.

I thrive in the change territory if I'm honest but I've never had so much of it to deal with on so many levels and I don't think it's ever felt as critical as it does now. It's not planned

change, just constant shifts and events to respond to. I've pushed myself to step up for others and in the end when you do that, you're doing it for yourself too.

New Writing North has worked all the way through this, pivoting projects to digital, finding different ways of doing things, trying to keep the money moving out to artists through our projects and keeping in contact with all the people that we work with. We did a huge amount of digital learning and transition very quickly as a team. I think that maybe what made last year bearable is just the fact that we were so occupied with having to do 20 different new things all at once. But this also played to New Writing North's core strength as we are pre-disposed to action and like learning by doing. It turned out that our core ways of working prepared us for resilience. But it was still hard and there have been moments of isolation, exhaustion and challenge that I'd be happy not to experience again.

During the year we've worked through a number of discussions as an organisation and in response have re-set our values as an organisation, so we are coming out of this clear about what we're here to achieve.

I'm on a number of external boards and participate in some of the newer collective actions happening in our region around anti-racism and climate so I've been meeting quite regularly with other leaders from across the sector. I never felt more certain that collective bodies are necessary and powerful, pulling us together to debate, reflect and act. And we will need to get to grips with how to do this more as we now move to repairing and rebuilding our cities and communities.

New Writing North declared a climate emergency in 2019. With this in mind it's hard not to view the pandemic quite differently – as a warning of what's to come. The chaos

of systems failing or struggling, money suddenly grinding to a halt, international connections collapsing, increasing mental health problems, the poor getting poorer and becoming more vulnerable and children struggling on the edge of care. We need to use this moment to focus people on what the bigger issues of the climate emergency are going to be, they will be as real as what we have experienced in the past twelve months.

I think as communicators and storytellers, we have a really profound role to play.

Claire Malcolm is Chief Executive of New Writing North and a trustee/board member of the North East Cultural Partnership, the Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear, the North East England Climate Coalition and the reading charity BookTrust. @nwnclaire

Leadership & Uncertainty: Moving from 'I' to 'We'

Dr Nicola Abraham[1]

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

> *Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people – they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress (Freire, 1970:121).*

Position

Navigating ongoing uncertainties, and daily changes in government guidance that necessarily shift to meet ongoing findings, research and statistical data on COVID-19, means that we need to rethink what we need from and how we work as leaders. It is no longer the case that rigid regimes of hierarchical power structures lend themselves to the needs of teams who require support and flexibility to traverse changing demands on their time, planning, expertise and knowledge base.

Context

Presently, I have the honour of being Principle Investigator on a Student Knowledge Exchange project – a collaboration between Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. Working directly with experts in dementia and delirium within the Dementia Care Team led by Consultant Nurse, Jo James, students undertake supported placements with patients. At present, all of our projects have been able to quadruple thanks to joint funding from Research England and the Office for Students, and are running via zoom. To maintain high quality interactions between patients and students offering creative, participatory and bespoke

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digital applied theatre projects, we have had to think differently about how to offer dynamic, caring, and flexible leadership to support the teams working in this unprecedented situation.

A Change of Personal Pronoun from I to We

'We' is an essential personal pronoun that we have adopted to navigate leadership challenges at this point of time. In our project teams, we use a horizontal team structure. This is partly to encourage knowledge exchange, but also to abandon unhelpful hierarchies that tend to hinder and disrupt rather than embrace and place equal importance on the expertise within our teams to help us overcome project hurdles. Encouraging creativity is essential if we are to draw the best from those we work with. Our teams offer a horizontal structure, which changes the power dynamic within a team to adopt, what radical pedagogue Paulo Freire would term a 'co-intentional' approach to learning from one another. This is a reciprocal process of knowledge transfer that does not make assumptions about who will be able to solve a particular problem, or who has the most valuable type of knowledge. This would not offer an inclusive approach to practice. Reciprocity instead encourages pluralism to draw upon one another's ideas rhizomatically and collaboratively, problem-solving together without judgement. This approach encourages active and actioned listening i.e. listening that results in actions rather than merely performing listening, which can frustrate teams and cause upset.

Adopting this approach alone is not enough. It is also essential and perhaps heightened at this point of time in the context of a third national UK lockdown, to ensure we embody a practice of care for those we work with. This is about looking out for one another, adopting radical kindness into our everyday interactions and working practice and ensuring we offer support and care for each other, our experiences and the challenges we are all facing on a daily basis. This may mean being adaptable in our

timetabling of activities, offering social online activities to unite as a team, to learn about each other and spend quality time investing in those we collaborate with. This approach enables the team to get to know one another, develop connections and empathic attunement with their team, even if they have not been able to meet in person for significant periods of time if at all.

Combining care, radical kindness, and horizonal team structures creates space for supported and ethical risk taking to overcome blocks in a project process. Thinking like water and collaborating through embodying what we term a pedagogy of reciprocity is essential to continue making meaningful interventions in acute hospital settings and supported living for people living with dementia. We have greatly benefited from this co-devised way of collaborating across multiple teams and projects, it has enabled us to meet the challenges the pandemic has continually put in our path to expand and advance our practice in innovative ways we hadn't previously thought possible.

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Leadership in Contemporary Higher Education: Knowledge exchange, datafication, and entrepreneurship

Prof. Lizzie Jackson

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Higher Education is operating in a far more complex, global, intellectual, technological, cultural, and business landscape than ever before. We are in a post-digital age where the digital is all around us influencing how we make sense of our world, but we are steadily moving towards the Internet of Things. This is essentially the ability to seamlessly embed, access and retrieve, information through sentient objects. We can be 'online', off-line, or even blend the two simultaneously. We can be 'here', 'there', and everywhere…at any time. Datafication has enabled these things.

Facing Brexit, and during a pandemic, leaders of universities have had to change focus and function, pivoting to provide online services in one or two weeks. Those who were more datafied were more able to cope. HEIs who also had more diversified incomes were also better able to cope with the sharp reduction in student fees and the ability to engage with international students. Universities who have embraced entrepreneurialism had additional areas of activity such as running co-working spaces, apprenticeships, or providing continuing professional development courses. This pivoting has required strong leadership skills and increased communication across teams coupled with excellent externally-facing CRM outwards to students. Work in Higher Education has changed, perhaps forever.

My three year study with Dr Michal Glowacki from the University of Warsaw (2015-2019) looked at the organisational culture of ten high technology clusters in North America and Europe. The findings clearly showed a range of highly transferable leadership skills and strategic orientations that will assist HEIs:

- Having an entrepreneurial outlook and adaptive internal structures coupled with quick decision-making offered institutional fluidity, resulting in increased resilience to changing external conditions.
- Departmental segmentation resulted in barriers to adaptation and slower decision-making.
- Pro-social workspaces (online or offline) increased knowledge exchange, but also increased levels of trust, and the ability to innovate.
- Partnership working between high technology firms and universities amplified knowledge exchange, hence the potential for innovation.

Essential Elements of Agile Leadership: In these rapidly changing times we need leaders who have exceptional emotional intelligence along with a willingness to adapt at pace (the *human* element). Leaders who can gather and make sense of data quickly, for example through data dashboards, will have an advantage (the *data* element). Lastly, leaders in HEIs who are skilled at partnership working will be able to amplify entrepreneurialism and therefore resilience going forward (the *collaboration* element).

It's time for Leadership cultures and styles to go 'Off Script'!

Dr Javeria Shah

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In my nearly twenty years in the education sector, I have probably come across all manager tropes. From the micromanager, to the completely detached, the competitive to paternal, the appropriating to the hyper emotional. All types and styles, offering their own hot take on what makes a company work and its employees work well. However, every trope that I have encountered has shared some grave errors in the treatment of operations and employees. This post draws on these themes to make recommendations for a reimagined leadership culture that is 'off script'.

Humans not Resources!

This is a call to re-humanise the employee. To stop treating them as 'resources' but to recognise the multifaceted individuals that make up our teams, departments, and institutions - and to support them in their work and professional development to establish trust and a community. A humanisation of the workforce is likely to lead to better employee wellbeing and commitment to the institution.

Detox!

Toxic work cultures are evidenced as causing a high staff turnover and a negative impact on employee wellbeing. Many of the issues can relate to microaggressions and associated gaslighting, negativity, indirect and direct bullying behaviours, resistance to change, and

dismantling practices that target positive change. Ignored toxicity whereby the onus is placed on the individuals to navigate these behaviours and cultures, compounds the toxicity. It is the managers' place to address behaviours and to create and enforce boundaries through an acute awareness of the people that make up their team(s) and to hold individuals to account. A regular 'detox' of teams through timely interventions, transparent dialogue, and regular professional development is crucial to the success of a detoxing process.

Promoting a work life balance

Untenable work schedules, reactionary rather than strategic work cultures that percolate to those at the coal face, and a lack of knowledge, empathy, or understanding towards employee's personal life commitments or needs, threatens their personal wellbeing, ability to do the job, and staying power. A work life balance can only be implemented if the employee is humanised and their right to such a balance is acknowledged and supported. This may include regular check ins to ensure that workload is tenable and not impinging upon an individual's personal life – and fostering a culture of respect through dialogical spaces findings from which feed into broader operations.

Safer Spaces

No space can ever be entirely safe in my view as we all bring our distinct experiences and worldviews into the workplace, and we may often share these spaces with individuals we will not usually encounter in 'normal life'. Therefore, it is an important responsibility for management to ensure that they get to know the individuals that make up the spaces under their leadership and subsequently a sustained effort is placed in developing bespoke working cultures in which employees feel heard, empowered, and respected.

Linking the rhetoric to the practice

We routinely come across positive rhetoric which promises to change work landscapes for the better. However, a procedural and auditory approach can often prevent a meaningful and authentic articulation of the rhetoric that is at play. Whether this is an Equalities Duty agenda which fails to translate to the lived experience of an employee belonging to a protected group, or a defunct appraisal process that fails to uplift an employee. It is time that institutional leadership cultures recognised the issues in 'talking the talk but not walking the walk' and began working towards meaningfully articulating the rhetoric to practice.

Capitalist management cultures do not work for pedagogic spaces

The student as client, the admission team as retailers, the facilitator as service provider, and the marketing team promoting it all ... it's a system that doesn't work! Pedagogic spaces will always struggle to fit such models and a transactional culture will only damage the individuals within. It is about time that we addressed this collectively as an education sector and challenged the commodification of learning and teaching. A culture that promotes student wellbeing but ignores the wellbeing of its staff can never create a balanced and fulfilled workspace. Every individual in a workforce should matter and be brought into a community culture that fosters mutual respect, voice, and agency.

What is an 'off script' leadership culture?

This is a culture that doesn't continue to adopt working approaches and practices that are proving not to work for the institution. It is a culture that is fostered from the very

top and percolates across an organisation to the coal face. It is a culture that is embedded in a humanisation of the workforce and underpinned with respect, integrity, and inclusion. It is a culture that recognises that one size does not fit all. Finally, it is a culture that emerges from learning and continued reflexivity that puts into practice the very rhetoric of wellbeing and equality that it claims to promote.

To achieve this, we need to ensure that the right people are doing the job and employees are supported through training and opportunities for career development. Skills and experience matches must go beyond the professional to lived experience. To move away from nepotistic cultures that hinder opportunities for talent that deserves a fair chance at applying for positions - and finally, to not limit management intellectualisations to business models but to incorporate psychology and socio cultural paradigms to better understand the world and subsequently, the workforce.

Making Time for Each Other; from Economic Paradigm to Empathy in a Pandemic

Dr Bill Balaskas

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Following the outbreak of the global financial crisis of 2008, it became evident that we had not only moved fully from the phase of "owner's capitalism" to "managers' capitalism", but – most importantly – that the "principal-agent problem" (the fact that managers have been running companies for their own personal benefit, instead of the shareholders' benefit)[2] had become an organic part of our economic paradigm, and much more: a deep cultural paradigm. Over the last two decades, this has been vividly reflected in the leadership of Higher Education Institutions and the cultural sector in the UK, as well as in our collective complicity in the rapid financialization of universities and cultural institutions. Unfortunately, despite the multiple shockwaves produced by the outbreak of another crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not seen a substantial move away from this failed culture yet. The situation that we are now facing on a planetary level is an emergency generated by a vicious circle of "financialization of the bios"[3] – namely, the direct and indirect transformation of all aspects of our lives (our time) into mere credit lines. Within this perilous environment, we need leaderships that openly and, perhaps, aggressively reject such models, which have been so dominant for

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[2] See: Michael C Jensen and William H Meckling, 'Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure' (1976) *Journal of Financial Economics* vol. 3, p. 305; and Jean-Jacques Laffont and David Martimort, *The Theory of Incentives: The Principal-Agent Model: Vol. 1* (2nd edn, Princeton University Press 2002).

[3] Matteo Pasquinelli, 'Communism of Capital and Cannibalism of the Common: Notes on the Art of Over-Identification' in Lanfranco Aceti, Bill Balaskas and others (eds), *Red Art: New Utopias in Data Capitalism, Leonardo Electronic Almanac*, vol. 20, no 1 (Leonardo/ISAST, San Francisco 2014) p. 75.

so long. We lost a unique opportunity when the crisis of 2008 exposed the oxymoronic nature of financial capitalism, and we ended up with Trumpism and a deadly pandemic caused – at least partly – by the abusive exploitation of nature. Now is the time to rethink who we are really working for: who are, in fact, our "shareholders" in universities and cultural organisations? And what is the difference between being a manager and a leader in our sectors? Of course, in order to do this, we need time; but, amid multiple crises, there is little time to pause. Thus, we have to weaponize time itself by rendering it strategic within the calendars of our institutions. It is through newly created or reclaimed pockets of time that alternative ideas will emerge; and it is through structurally maintaining such pockets, that ideas may be systematically cultivated and flourish. This means that we need to plan more than ever before. Yet, not in order to achieve multiple (and often conflicting) KPIs, or produce new "REFable" outputs. Rather, we need to plan for the very survival of our institutions through the survival of their capacity for empathy in its most elemental form: making time for each other.

Leadership as an Art

Dr Sara Jones

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The challenges for today's leaders are many and varied, and evolving at a pace that reflects the speed of change in the world around us. The three types of challenge that I find personally most interesting at this point are as follows.

Leading through uncertainty

It goes without saying that the world has perhaps never, in any of our lifetimes at least, felt so VUCA – so volatile, uncertain, ambiguous and complex. Leading in these conditions is particularly challenging. We are very familiar with the idea that our leaders today need to be agile, adaptable and resilient, and to support those around them to be the same, wherever possible. But this is more easily said than done – how might we begin to develop the skills to do this?

One thing that can help is to clarify purpose, both for individual leaders and those with whom they work. Once underlying purpose is clear, the way this is put into practice can be adapted on an ongoing basis, to meet the needs of new circumstances as they emerge.

A new balance may also need to be found, between the direction and the support a leader offers under challenging circumstances such as these. While many may crave the certainty of direction from their leaders, others may need a more nurturing and supportive style to see them through the tough times, meaning that leaders need to be able to adapt, not only to the changing circumstances themselves, but also to the resulting changes in the needs and expectations of those with whom they work.

Leading for diversity

At a time when many of the challenges we face are so complex, and multi-faceted, it is more important than ever to be able to bring together communities and coalitions from a wide range of different backgrounds to address these. Research tells us that innovation thrives on diversity of thinking, and to find new ways of being, and doing, that can move us forward from our current challenges, we need to draw on the widest possible range of talents.

The talent of bringing together individuals from a wide range of different backgrounds, with different, and often conflicting, points of view, is rare, but we must seek this out, and support it where we can. Rethinking organisation structures, to include more networks and fewer hierarchies – more collaboration and less competition – can also help here.

Leading online

Perhaps the newest set of skills today's leaders are having to develop are those of leading online. Leaders, like so many of us, are having to learn new habits and behaviours for doing all of things which can anyway be so tricky – sensing the needs of an individual,

the feel of a room, the pace that's needed to create momentum – through a layer of technology, which is itself evolving on an almost daily basis. The challenges this creates are immense, but great practices and opportunities are emerging, and I look forward, optimistically, to a world in which we are able to benefit from the best of both offline and online collaboration.

The sense that emerges, for me, from these reflections, is that leadership is, and must remain, very much an art - a creative practice involving empathy, expression and performance; experiment, adaptation and learning, in an ongoing effort to bring new and useful things into being, in the world around us. The need for creative leadership has never felt so great.

Leadership in the Arts and Culture

Professor Paul Hollins
Director Leeds Conservatoire

The expectations of Leadership in the Arts and Cultural sectors in the 21ˢᵗ century, post-pandemic have changed, in the context of Black Lives Matter have changed and dare I say it, leadership in a 'post'-post truth political landscape have changed.

Our Leaders must navigate the complexity of multiple perspectives and challenges together with the aspirational requirements of ever more discerning community stakeholders. The status quo, or just a safe pair of hands, is no longer a palatable strategy.

The challenge of navigating the increasingly complex social, political, economic and environmental landscape will involve empathy, innovation and agility in adapting our Arts and cultural institutions to be fit for purpose. Our Arts and cultural organisations must reflect not just the cultural past but cultural futures of the United kingdom. Our leadership needs to reflect the diversity of our population and of our thought.

The pandemic has served to highlight and arguably accentuate social and technical inequalities across communities in disproportionately effecting those from less privileged backgrounds. Social and cultural 'value' systems may have changed permanently to increasingly respect those who contribute to society in non-economic ways a readjustment to community homeostasis.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign has served to highlight cultural inequalities . The sector needs to recognise the significant shift in focus and in power. Yes, celebrate

our culture, our shared history in a way that empowers the often silent, missing voices of history and one that challenges dominant narratives.

In a 'post', post-truth political landscape our leaders need to be authentic, truthful and honest with their words and perhaps more significantly in their actions. The dominance of neo liberalism and the neo liberalist economic model need to be challenged and redesigned to reflect the changes in cultural value systems I refer to earlier.

Future Leadership Love Letter to My Daughter. How the Apocalypse made the leaders of my age think about the leaders that you will become.

Ceinwen Paynton
National Trust

In my day, 'Leadership' was a loaded concept, invented to talk about mens' success in the world of business, although that view was starting to change a bit by 2020.

Imbued with charisma and persuasion, a leader took individuals, or teams, or an organisation with Him in one direction. Usually His or the Business'.

But one thing that the Covid Crisis showed us in stark relief, is that when the unthinkable happened, this type of leadership didn't work. The unthinkable did happen and it made us stop and think. An 'apokalyps' in the true, Ancient Greek meaning of the word: laying bare, uncovering.
The Apocalypse made us think about what was important and it turns out, it is Us, it is You, it is not Him or the Business.

As a society, when the pandemic hit, we collectively went into survival mode. Safety, community, family, friends, food, connection with where we live and with nature became the only things that mattered. In other words, all of the things that had been seen as 'outside of work'. You will probably remember seeing on the news or have read about those female Premiers that led their countries with a measured, kind, human touch. They were open, honest and acknowledged the common ground, the outside of work things. They talked about the good of society first and the economy second. They

realised that when one stops working, the other will follow. Ill people don't care what the shops are selling and existential dread doesn't make for recreational retail. So, Human-Centred thinking and emotional intelligence trumped bombast during the time that the pandemic raged. Emotional intelligence even trumped Trump!

Many colleagues commented that during and after the pandemic, work felt kinder, more human. We saw a kind of collective emotional kitsungi in the work place, with the cracks being acknowledged and then filled with support for the person doing the job. Not in a 'soft' way but in a way that understood the homeschooling and the shielding. All of the things that we used to be told to 'leave at home' came to work with us and then they stayed, when we emerged, blinking, in to the post-Covid world and out of our home offices.

In the old world, we often talked about good leaders encouraging and developing their people, but this was still within the parameters of our work selves and personae. There were still plenty of leaders, and we all knew them, who thought of 'resource' not of Jane Smith who lives in Urmston, Manchester with her two children.

Companies perceived as having looked after their people saw rewards in the form of staff and customer loyalty, fostering a feeling of 'we are all in this together' which meant that recovery strategies like freezing pay and cutting the workforce were accepted- strategies hard to 'lead for' in the pre pandemic world.

Now that we are out of the other side, it's time to reflect, and that is why I am writing this letter to you. Your age group are the leaders in waiting, starting your working lives with this as your backdrop and it's not hyperbole to say that the world that you will live in is a different one to the one that I took for granted.

Some of that will be hard, but some of that is such an opportunity! As long as you stay focussed on what is real and human and what your society needs. If others are cynical or tell you that 'things have always been done that way', ask them why and hold them to account. Realise that things have only always been done that way because of who made those decisions and held the power. Don't slide back into things that weren't better and were actually broken long before you were born.

Don't let others persuade you to undo the gains made by facing a pandemic and using some common sense. Remember what this time showed us. Celebrate your team for who and what they are, with their backstories and cracks. Draw out what that gives your team. Don't commodify your people, encourage yourself and your team to be real. Be human, be human-centred, be You.

Leading Lightly

Suzie Leighton

Founding Director, The Culture Capital Exchange

Co-Director, The National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange

In lockdown I've been re-examining many aspects of how I live my life, parenting, working, looking after my health, friendships and relationship with the planet, as well as my responsibilities as a founder and trustee. The theme I keep returning to is that of lightness, or awareness of the traces we leave, be that on the environment, our friends and family and the individuals and institutions that we might lead. How can we ensure that those traces are beneficial and healthy? How can we nourish and provide strong stakes to support healthy growth and development, helping to let the light in? And, as leaders, how can we plan for our own gracious and timely exit to let new talent and thinking in when and where it is needed?

One of the major frustrations of the past year (for me in any case) is that the huge levels of disruption, hardship and for many, I think trauma is not too dramatic a word, has not been matched by rethinking of the kind of leadership that is needed to confront the issues faced by all of us today. There was and is a lot of talk about "build back better" but at every turn we are still confronted with the old style of "slash and burn" leadership, a new cohort of public and political sector leaders appointed from the same mold as their predecessors and, it seems a rejection of the need for deep and lasting change.

The issues are huge, and the macro is discouragingly, paralysingly overwhelming, so what is realistically achievable for me, the co-founder and director of a tiny SME and

voluntary sector chair? I may not have a huge platform, but I can use what I have to help support and raise up those who are doing important work without trying to centre myself and my interests. I can be clear and focussed in my purpose. I can listen better, more deeply and attentively and support my colleagues better as a result. I can be more generous in giving credit, thanks and acknowledgement. I can be braver in calling out failure of leadership in external situations when I see it. This is particularly important in issues of equality I believe, when those who are often the most discriminated against are usually the ones who have to find the courage to highlight injustice. I can develop critical friendships to help me confront my own failures, and let me know when it is time to exit stage left and let others grow and shine.

Being braver, confronting one's own need for change,and indeed one's own "sell by date" as a leader are all philosophically difficult things to do, and in a schedule crammed with everyday demands, priorities and tasks can seem nigh on impossible. A community of like minded (or even light minded) leaders to support and offer critical friendship seems like a very good idea!

Evolving leadership challenges: views from a non-executive leader

Prof Linda Drew

Creative Education Champion

Leading during Covid times, especially as a non-exec, brings particular challenges. I focus on just three challenges that have come into sharp focus for me.

Uncertainty – not just of the outcomes or of the processes that we all want to see, the what's happening now? Or the what will we do next? Uncertainty brings a new edge to agile and also to risk management. How do I even work with others to help define that risk? But we must seek it out in all the fuzziness. I must embrace uncertainty like pinning down an eel. I've been helping the executive teams I work with to develop agile and scrum project management and to reframe strategy for uncertainty in the next few years. We need to think in terms of outcomes, not timescales and be prepared to change our minds. Often.

Motivation – my own drive and the drive of the organisations I work with. As an extroverted thinker I derive my energy from the people I work with in cultural and learning settings. The creative and cultural ecosystem is strangely quiet right now, no performances, no galleries, no participation, no engagement. I have had to seek validation and partnership thinking from Zoom time with board members and regular individual phone calls. I have moved my own motivation from external to internal drivers and that's not easy or comfortable.

Listening – in this quiet and becalmed time, it's important to give time to others in our normally busy cultural and creative calendars. There is space now to listen if we prioritise it, and I certainly have been doing this. Working with other CEOs and leaders, I have been moving into a space of co-reflection and listening for the signs of stress and concern. Co-reflection for me is to connect with people and not to convince them of an opinion or point of view but to take time to hear what is going on. That busy diary full of meetings, exhibition openings and events has reduced by necessity to a skeletal meeting schedule which prompts constant action and reaction. Let's use this time to listen to others as we would want to be listened to.

20 things I try my hardest to stand by and strive for

Laura Wellington

Director Duke Studios

1. Be an ever evolving human being

2. Lose your ego - Know that you don't know everything, actively listen, create safe spaces to learn and have open conversations, enable others to grow

3. Create flatter structures - Be agile and nimble to make change quickly

4. Unlearn to learn a new - just because something has been done the same way for a long time it doesnt mean its the right way

5. Read and Listen broadly - racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sexism, ageism - be an active bystander

6. Support others - lift people up - enable others to grow

7. Be collaborative - genuinely collaborative - give and take - create together

8. Be honest and vulnerable

9. Trust others - it breeds magic

10. Always be more interested in other people than yourself

11. Be curious - ask a lot of questions

12. Appreciate the energy spent by others

13. Don't be the star - Be the coach... Get the best talent you can afford, create a culture in which individuals and the collective group do things they formally thought were impossible and set the vision.

14. Seek the quiet ones - they are the glue - don't choose easy

15. Disrupt the systems - Make meaningful change

16. Take risks - embrace the optimistic rebels/mavericks and invite the unknown

17. Mean business, but don't be mean in business

18. Take the time to learn the personalities of everyone around you - remember we are all human, all have different views, skills and contributions

19. Lose the judgement of others - If ever you feel the creep of a judgement, notice it

20. Don't take yourself too seriously

Grounded Working in a Global Pandemic

Prof Maria Chatzichristodoulou

Associate Dean Research, Business & Innovation

Kingston University

Questions around leadership at the time of a global pandemic:

- How to manage with compassion and sensitivity people who are on the verge of a melt-down?

- How to protect colleagues from continuous demands made upon their time and mental capacity while delivering on KPIs, at a time when both the HE and cultural sectors are under (some form of) attack?

- How to inspire others to inspire themselves within the context of this (and other) challenge(s)?

- How to be vulnerable as a leader, and how to invite vulnerability in others?

- How to acknowledge and talk about pain, illness, isolation and loss as part of our work conversations; how can those experiences inform our discussions and practices?

There might have been some positives:

We all had to practice 'grounded working' (as in, grounded research methods): people were suddenly seen to be working from within their specific conditions of home, with the children and toddlers and babies; the partner making tea in the background, using a rather loud kettle; the cats and dogs and other pets; the mess and chaos, often hidden behind the screen but sometimes hinted at, or being not-so-effectively erased from sight;

the personal touches (how I found out that my PA is a painter). To me, as a mum of two small children, this felt liberating despite the many challenges; for, while we were all in lockdown, working from home, with no access to schools or childcare, I did not have to pretend that my kids do not exist. It just wasn't possible any more to keep up their erasure from 'planet work'. They would burst into the picture of my screen, with their mucky faces and porridge stuck to their noses and claim their space, loud and clear (if not clean). And that assertion had a healing quality to it. I would like to find ways of continuing to practice 'grounded working' once we are able to return to the office.

Freed from Leadership: I prefigure

Pauline Rutter

TCCE Associate and Values Consultant

No longer called leader

I have taken the first step

Not down and out

But to the side.

And in the space I have left

A forest is growing

A green city of imagination

Breathing, stretching, alive with renewed agency

Rising up to a planetary canopy

Boundless but within boundaries[4].

No longer called leader

If invited, I will walk within this forest

To marvel at its infinite variety freed from norms.

Unwhitely[5] roots deep in a soil rich with equity[6]

Weaving a network that I could not imagine

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[4] Global celebration of diverse leadership on sustainability and climate justice at the Black & Green Ambassadors re-launch (2020)

[5] Brewis, D. (2021) TCCE: Mini Assembly on Equity and Social Justice in Higher Education and Creative Research

[6] Fakequity (2017)

Conjuring shoots of youth lead invention

Soft moss growing over the hierarchy[7]

Thickly branched ethics and twigs of care

Honouring the ancestral trunk named Fanon[8].

No longer called leader

I am taking the second step

Away from gnawing injustice fanned fires

Fight and virus[9] raging all around

The forest calling out for help

"No one is coming for us[10]."

So I take out

Power from one pocket

Privilege from the other and clear a path[11]

Not as self-appointed saviour[12]

But as humble ally.[13]

Using my words I tell the story

A moral tale, where I have played my part

Romancing others from their silos,

And whispering learnt wisdoms of right full language

That extols the wonder of this newness[14].

[7] Jones (2014)

[8] Anderson (2018)

[9] Templeton *et al.* (2020).

[10] Grenfell Tower Enquiry Phase 1 (2021)

[11] Bhopal (2018)

[12] Straubhaar (2015)

[13] Rskine, & Bilimoria (2019)

[14] Shades of Noir (2020) https://shadesofnoir.org.uk/

No longer called leader,

I have put some of myself aside to do this work

A day, a page, a pound, a breath.

From my garden so full and vibrant

A small seed given and exchanged

If it is not the one the forest needs.

I'll wait and hear (   ) silence for a while

As care full leaders of themselves

Dance, a path to celebration for these future days

Unmasked and reaching to a just horizon

Where all descendants arm in arm are waiting.

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Reflections on the crisis of leadership

Prof Layton Reid
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The public death of George Floyd witnessed almost live online, is a just

reflection of a worldwide crisis of leadership. An observation of a fundamental truth.

The systems are not as flawed as those that manage them. Institutions seemingly run for

the benefit of education oligarchs who revel in the administration of 'power without

authority' (Maritain) have eroded and undermined our institutions ability to adapt and

change.

 'Ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have'..(Baldwin).

Instead of action, over an absence of inclusion and diversity we are simply offered a

culture of more of the same "people like us' with a compassionate face.

What happened to the successes of the 60's, civil rights activism, and the creative

thinking which allowed our institutions to thrive.

It is no coincidence that the global outcry fixes its gaze at the institutions which govern

us. This pandemic has given us all time to think , reflect and consider our own personal

circumstances , and finally ask ...what if it were me?.

'Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is

faced' (Baldwin)

So, what has the crisis taught us ? Surveys by leading banks suggest that recent graduates think the most important issue after climate change is racial equity, not equality; and that inclusion means listening to, rather than appropriating the voice of the speaker.

Values, are now revealed, to be neither commonly held or understood between the generations, but, rather they are relative terms and; as organisations rush to re invent themselves; to become relevant, that same oligarchy though equipped is unwilling to change, rendered helpless by "cognitive dissonance",(Fanon1952), that state of disbelief when faced with the incontrovertible truth,. But there is reason to hope that a new generation can prove Baldwin wrong, when he says,

 'people can cry much easier than they can change'.

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'It is easier to cry than to change', (James Baldwin)

Human-Connected Leadership

Idrees Rasouli

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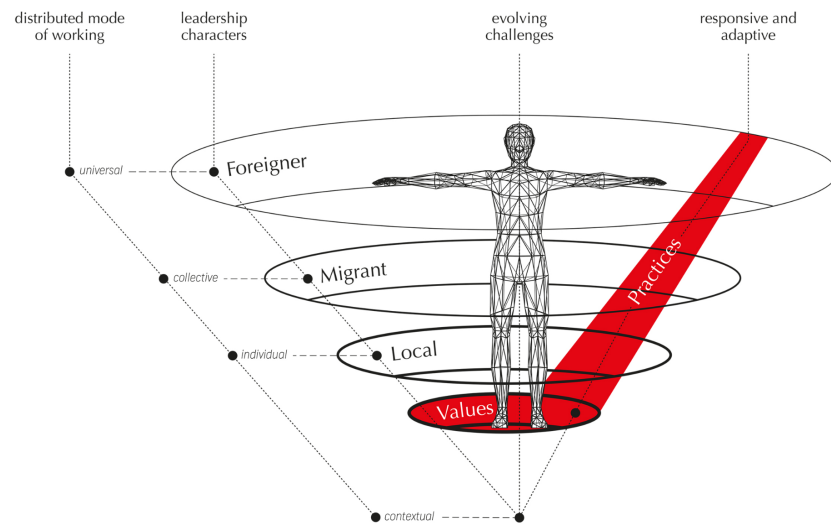
Leadership is a fluid practice, always in need of change and improvement. But the pandemic has changed the world's view on leadership. It has highlighted that the current styles of leadership, which are mainly reactive to situations, are not fit for a changing world. They do not allow us to change as individuals and restricts our ability to transform in a changing world. They restrict distributed and responsive modes of working in arts, culture, heritage, and higher education settings.

We have witnessed how traditional as well as contemporary styles of leadership lack flexibility in the face of a pandemic, and are less effective across different contexts, cultures, and scenarios. It is evident that the leadership style we choose

to apply at any given situation has a direct impact on the outcome we achieve. Yet there are no adaptive styles of leadership that would allow for

innovation in crisis or enable creative decision-making in an evolving scenario to achieve transformation. This personal observation has led me to develop the concept of Human-Connected Leadership, categorised as a continuum process of relevant and meaningful connection to society, resources at hand, and the immediate environment, and depends on a variety of factors - emotional intelligence, cognitive behaviour, context-specific situation, and personality, reflecting the situation we find ourselves in rather than our personal preference.

The Human-Connected Leadership style (figure), is developed around three different characters that define the cross-cultural interactions evidenced in a post-globalised world. It proposes the future leader as someone whose values are fluid to evolving challenges and their practice is adaptive and responsive to any given situation (context, culture, and scenario). The Human-Connected Leader is able to transform his/her character as the situation changes — from a local who is empathetic to individual needs, to a migrant who is caring to collective decision-making, to a foreigner who is compassionate to universal positive impact.

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