

**Research Conference
Centre for Excellence in Leadership**

**Re-thinking Leadership:
New Directions in the Learning and Skills Sector?**

**Monday, 27th - Wednesday, 29th June 2005
Lancaster University, George Fox Complex**

Call for papers/presentations/other contributions

Leadership in the learning and skills sector has moved up the agenda following the publication of *Success for All*. What effect is this new emphasis on leadership having on relationships between stakeholders in the learning and skills sector, such as learning and skills provider organizations, leaders, managers, lecturers and teachers, students, and other relevant organizations?

There is a need for a broad-based and critical revisiting, review, and re-thinking of leadership, leadership research, leadership development, the themes apparent within the policy framework and the practices these aim to constrain and promote. This conference is intended for those directly engaged with or otherwise interested in leadership related research and practice. The objective is to provide an open, convivial, responsive and respectful forum where practitioners / researchers / those engaged in both, can pool insights drawn from their analyses of concepts and practices associated with leadership in the sector.

In addition, to the presentation of papers we would welcome contributions that will be delivered in ways that promote interaction and dialogue between delegates, for example that promote discussion, debate, group work, or that take a workshop, or other format. We also welcome contributions that deal reflexively or self-critically with our roles as researchers, practitioner researchers, teachers, leaders and leadership developers.

The following questions give a non-exhaustive indication of the types of issues we would like contributors to address:

- What does/should 'leadership' mean?
- What tools, technologies, practices are available for supporting leadership and how are they being used?
- In what ways do the dynamics of and between organizations, organizational development and evaluation, support or constrain the development of leadership practices?
- What assumptions do we have about leadership? How do they affect the learning and skills sector?
- Is the emphasis on 'leadership' a help or hindrance within the learning and skills sector?
- How do practitioners 'manage' leadership? Where have all the managers gone?
- Is the promotion of leadership, as we currently understand it, compatible with that of 'difference' or 'inclusivity'?

- How are competing values / ethics / interests catered for through the promotion of leadership, within policy and the dominant expectations of practice?

We envisage that contributions will fall within one of several streams:

1. **Current Leadership Research** - this might include contributions drawn from research into leadership related issues in other educational sectors, or other public or private sector contexts, but certainly will include contributions from a range of researchers and research groups concerned with education and skills, as well as updates on CEL based projects.
2. **Practitioner Research** - we also welcome contributions from practitioners engaged in leadership related research within the sector as well as updates from projects funded by CEL.
3. **The Policy Framework and Dominant Expectations of Practice: Influences on the Role of Leadership in the Learning and Skills Sector** - we invite contributions that illuminate the problems and possibilities of meeting the objectives these themes mark out, and / or that take a 'longer' or 'broader' view of the role of the learning and skills sector and leadership within it, both in the UK and elsewhere.
4. **Other Relevant Perspectives** - we are aware of the long and respected traditions associated with forms of access to learning and skills acquisition other than those provided, funded or otherwise supported through the state. We are also aware that the very concept of 'leadership' is not unproblematic in a number of respects and that alternative less hierarchical modes of learning provision do exist. We want to set aside some time and space for ideas and research centered on these and related issues, and to encourage a reflexive approach to our understanding of each of our own works and positions within 'the learning and skills sector'. For all these reasons and more, we also welcome contributions that problematise each of our endeavors in constructive ways that present alternative views, or that deal with the conflicts of interest apparent to most research, not least our own.

Submission of Proposals - Send an e-mail attachment with filename [RC1-Surname, First Name] to the research co-ordinator, Teresa Wisniewska (t.wisniewska@lancaster.ac.uk) by **Thursday, 6th January 2005**. Max length, 500 words. Please indicate which theme you would like to contribute to and whether you are submitting a proposal for a paper, workshop or contribution of another format. Acceptance decisions will be communicated by **Monday 14th February 2005**; and completed papers will be required by **Tuesday, 31st May 2005**.

Conference Committee:- Neil Clarke, Steve Fox, Marian Iszatt White, Ron Kerr, Tara Leach, Kim McGuire, Anjoom Mukadam, Annette Smith, Phil Watland.

Conference Administration:- Teresa Wisniewska and Ann Marie Mount

Any other queries can be directed to **Teresa Wisniewska** by email or telephone 01524 594211.