

Shaping educational leadership, inspiring enhancement. Reflections and future action

Julie Blackwell Young, University of Abertay

Martha Caddell, Heriot-Watt University



Exploring Educational Leadership in Higher Education

"Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen."

-Bennis & Nanus 1985



Exploring Leadership & Change



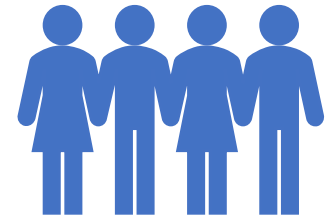
Quality
Enhancement



Theory of
Change



Privileged
Voices



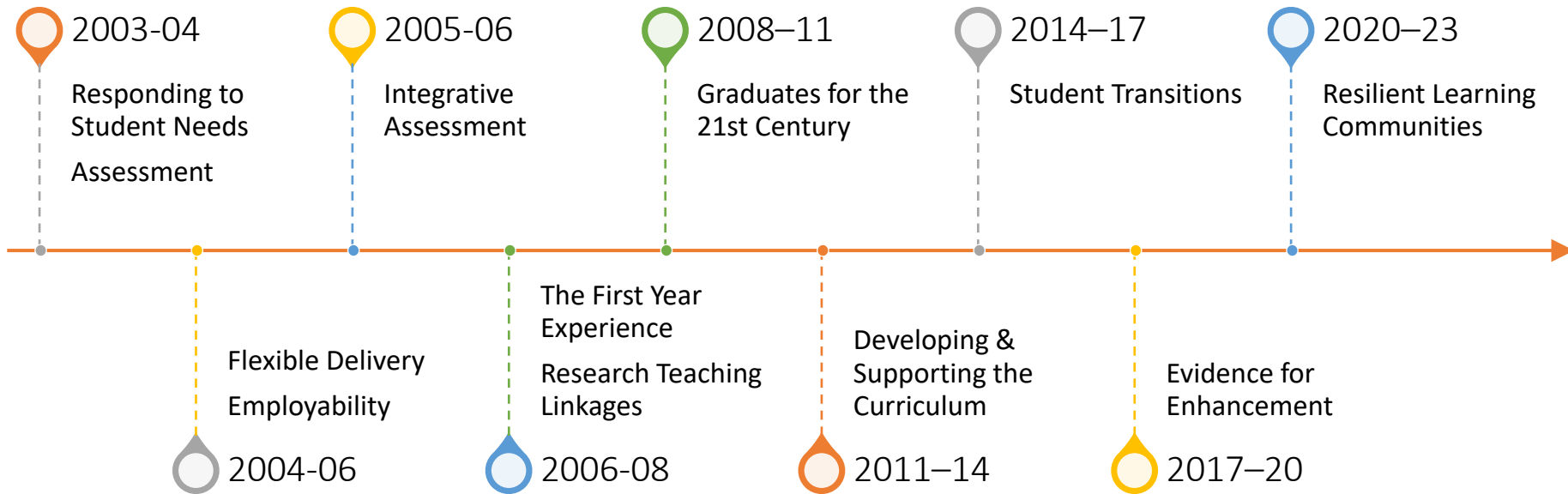
Leadership
Culture

SHEEC

**Theme
Leaders**

**Student
Leaders**

Changing Faces of Enhancement



Diversifying, diffusing ... and supporting leadership of enhancement.

From 'stuff development' to 'staff development' (Bamber 2023).

Spotlight: 2003-2008

Building confidence and collaboration within & between institutions.

- Learning at pace.
- Limited time for reflection and depth of engagement.
- Defining Scottish connections and distinctiveness.



Quality Leads
and Education
Developers

Individuals
within &
between
institutions

Policy
development
and learning

Spotlight: 2008-2017

Expanding the enhancement community.

- Nexus of policy interests and funding availability.
- Specialist skills & enhancement.
- Growth of participation: within and across institutions.



**Partnership in
Policy and
Practice**

**The Power of
Funding**

**Communities
of Practice &
Enhancement**

Spotlight: 2017-2023

**Data-Driven
Enhancement**

**Leading with
Compassion**

**Resilient
leadership,
collaborative
action.**

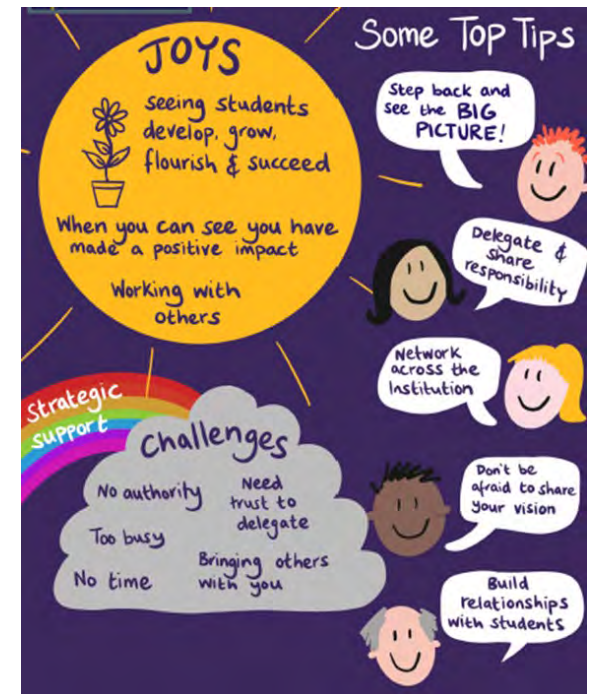
Skills. Collaboration. Support.

- ✓ Amplifying collective action within institutions and creating new spaces for sector collaboration.
- ✓ Emergency response drives strategic shift.
- ✓ Practical collaboration as the 'new normal'.

No Longer Invisible Superheroes Programme Leadership in the Spotlight

Collaborative Cluster activities (2017-23) amplified appreciation of programme as locus of enhancement & PLs as educational leaders.

- ✓ Amplifying voices.
- ✓ Connecting community.
- ✓ Driving sector change.
- ✓ Shaping institutional practice.



Programme Leadership in Focus

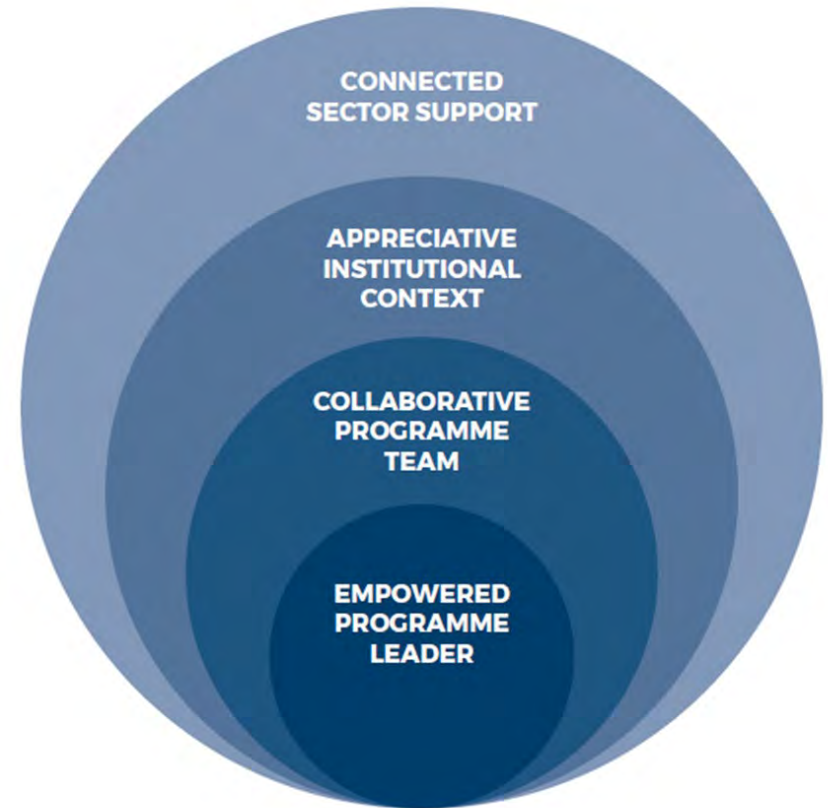
Spheres of impact & influence

Opening space to connect, recognise and amplify the pivotal role of programme leadership and share insight into how to harness this for institutional and sector learning and development.

Securing institutional appreciation of the role of the programme leader and team within the enhancement process, including the multiple voices and evidence that converge at this nexus.

Creating effective and dynamic programme teams that harness the strengths of diverse voices to support enhancement.

Exploring the programme leader role and their position as navigator and creator of evidence for enhancement.



Programme Leadership: Snapshots

Recent research highlights the hopeful exhaustion of programme leaders, situated at the nexus of institutional policy & action.

Rewards: genuine collaboration, realising abstract conversations, plans and designs in teaching/curriculum, and helping and supporting colleagues' development.

1. Don't.
2. Seriously... don't.
3. Refer to 1 and 2.

Never really knowing when the job is done. I am at the mercy of another emailed request to do something for somebody.

Institutional Landscapes of Support

Need to move beyond sense of resilience as 'individual bounce-backability' to creating supportive institutional culture – backed with support.

Role recognition & Reward.

Toolkits.

Community & Connection.

Shift in landscape of support for programme leadership.
Sector conversation ---> Institutional actions.

Programme Leadership: A Practical Manifesto



Programme Leadership is Educational Leadership.

- Role descriptions, recognition and reward.
- Workload: Time & Temporality

Programme Leadership is Team Leadership.

- Strengthening teaching team culture and practice.

Empower Leadership through Institutional Support.

- Induction, mentoring, networks.
- Toolkits & resources.

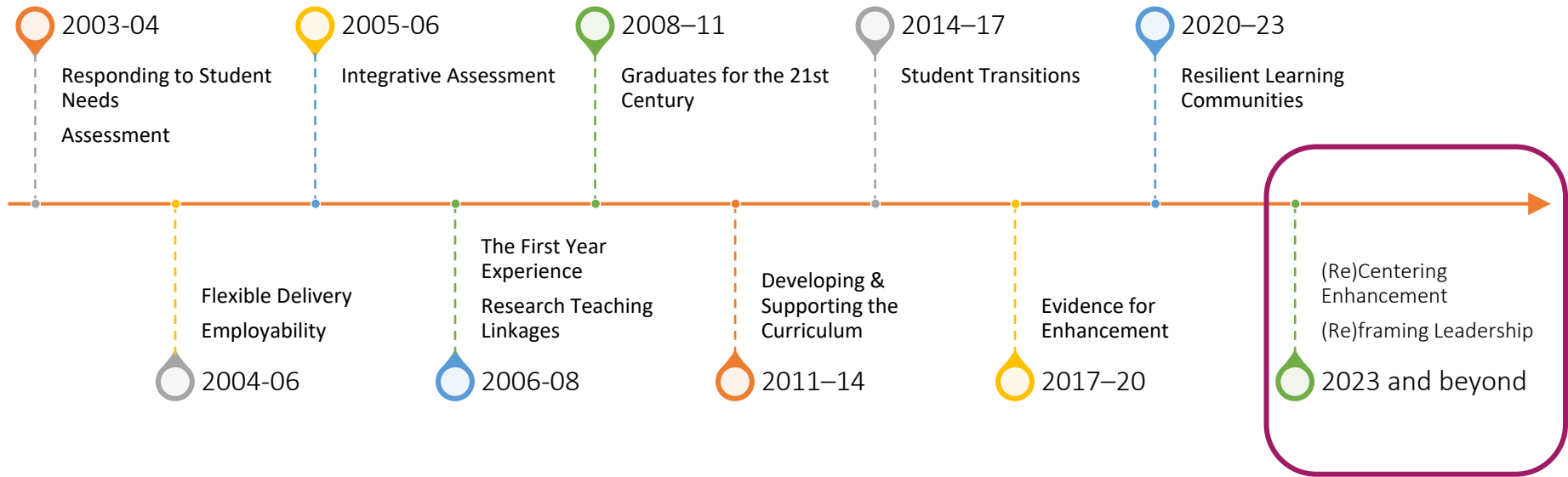
Programme Leaders open a gateway to enhancement.

- Involving PLs in institutional decision-making.
- Amplify and encourage PL voices.

Sector collaboration matters.

- Shape and share policy, practice, research.

Identifying & Supporting Connectors



Addressing the Challenge

Connecting layers of leadership and key enablers of enhancement.
Maintaining a focus on people, development and culture of support.
Clarity on Theory of Change & Culture of Leadership.



And so, where next?

- Release Manifesto for Programme Leadership.
- Amplifying action to support programme leadership.
- Celebrating & supporting culture of enhancement.
- Champion collaboration: institutional and sector.

References and Resources

The extensive suite of resources produced by the Collaborative Cluster on Programme Leadership is available on the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes sites. Resources cross-cut two Themes:

- [Resilient Learning Communities - Programme Leadership \(enhancementthemes.ac.uk\)](https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/programmes/Resilient-Learning-Communities-Programme-Leadership)
- [Enhancing programme leadership - Evidence for Enhancement \(enhancementthemes.ac.uk\)](https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/programmes/Enhancing-programme-leadership-Evidence-for-Enhancement)

Additional Reading

Bamber, V. (2023) [From student representation to student partnership | Wonkhe](#)

Caddell, M., Ellis, S., Haddow, C., & Davis, K. (2022). A national approach: Foregrounding programme leadership in Scotland. In *Supporting Course and Programme Leaders in Higher Education: Practical Wisdom for Leaders, Educational Developers and Programme Leaders*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127413>

Caddell, M. & Wilder, K. (2018) 'Seeking Compassion in the Measured University: Generosity, Collegiality and Competition in Academic Practice', *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*. 6(3).

Ellis, S. and Nimmo, A. (2018). Opening eyes and changing mind-sets: professional development for programme leaders. In Lawrence, J. and Ellis, S. (Eds), *Supporting Programme Leaders and Programme Leadership* (London: Staff and Educational Development Association), SEDDA Special 39, 35-39.

Thank you

