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Managing for agility in constant change: HR strategies for teaching center leaders

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Abstract

Centers for teaching and learning (CTLs) exist in dynamic contexts and need to be agile, with skilled, adaptable teams to prepare for and respond to changes. In this article, we provide CTL leaders with relevant and eminently practical strategies from the human resources (HR) literature, offering guidance in the four areas of organizational structure, direction-setting, capacity-building, and accountability. For each area, we address pivotal challenges with practical approaches grounded in existing research and theory to provide options for CTL leaders in their quest to have well-functioning, agile units. Examples focus on helping existing centers to adapt and refocus, as needed, in response to evolving contexts and priorities.

Keywords: change management, teaching centers, human resources, organizational design

Within colleges and universities, centers for teaching and learning (CTLs) require flexibility to succeed. The pandemic experiences have highlighted this need (see volume 39, issue 3 of *To Improve the Academy* [2021] for numerous examples), but even pre-pandemic, the challenges of our VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world were apparent (LeBlanc, 2018). As such, CTLs need ongoing flexibility. This flexibility is identified as organizational agility, which

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Dyer and Shafer (1998) define as the ability to continuously adapt, not to a one-time event but as an ongoing process. We contend that CTLs' agility stems from their structures and staff, which are the responsibilities of CTL directors.

From leading institutional projects to managing staff and budgets, the work of a director can be vast. Dawson et al.'s (2010) research identified more than 20 competencies directors need to succeed, including change management, facilitation, relationship management, and policy development (p. 19). While these competencies remain critical, the landscape of CTLs has continued to shift, with CTLs expanding in size and areas of responsibility (Forgie et al., 2018; Randall et al., 2013). CTL leaders need to focus not just outwardly on institutional-level work but also inwardly on their own burgeoning units. One key aspect of this inward focus is human resources (Dawson et al., 2010).

The human resources (HR) field studies how to lead people (Hunt, 2014) with research and practice literature at both the individual and organizational levels (e.g., hiring, staff development, compensation, and organizational design). While CTL leaders may work closely with their institutional HR partner, they may be unfamiliar with HR theories and strategies that can help them with this aspect of their work.

Historically, professional development in CTL administration has been sparse. Wunsch (1993) claims that "administering is rarely discussed openly . . . formal training in faculty development 'directing' is rare, most skills are learned on the job . . . [and] the major job training is undertaken by individuals struggling in isolation" (p. 274). Many CTL directors are also relatively new in their roles and would benefit from guidance (Beach et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2018). Focus on human resources management is typically not addressed in the educational development (ED) literature or at conferences, and research on the organizational structures of CTLs is also rare. Three exceptions are Beach et al. (2016), who focus on

centralization, number of staff, and reporting relationships; Randall et al. (2013), who describe the variation in CTL organizational structures; and Forgie et al. (2018), who report on the evolving scope of practice for Canadian CTLs and raise future research questions about optimal structures. In response to these gaps, as an educational developer, a CTL director, and an HR professional, we sought to connect relevant key insights from the HR literature to the context of CTL leadership and administration. We aim to describe how CTL directors—or others in leadership roles—could apply these theories and strategies to create agile centers that are positioned for success.

Changes Affecting CTLs

In North America, limited research into the structures and practice of CTLs provides some insights into how these types of units have been changing. Forgie et al. (2018) studied the experiences of Canadian CTL leaders to better understand the mission, mandate, deliverables, and role of strategic planning in these units at research-intensive universities. Their work revealed key changes in the structures and work of CTLs, including how all 14 CTLs started with small staff complements that gradually grew, determining that Canadian unit sizes ranged from nine to 71 people. In the United States, median staffing numbers are reported to be lower, at one to eight people, and unit reorganization is common (Beach et al., 2016). During the pandemic response in 2020, many centers added staff to adequately support instructors with remote teaching. In all of these cases, some hires were permanent, whereas others were contract. Being responsible for a growing staff with evolving team membership may require different strategies and approaches than are effective with small groups. Growth in unit size represents a significant shift for CTL leaders.

Forgie et al. (2018) also determined that the scope of practice for CTLs has expanded over the past few decades:

> All directors stated that the role of their CTLs had changed over time, reflecting broader changes in the post-secondary teaching and learning environment . . . the roles that a CTL may perform have expanded greatly since the 1960s. The directors noted there is still a focus on the individual teachers, but there has been a shift from remediation to support, and a shift from the individual to quality improvement on a broader scale. (p. 5)

Increased areas of responsibility for the unit also increase the challenge of directing it since there are more content areas and possibly more staff members to manage (Beach et al., 2016; Randall et al., 2013). Beyond workshops and individual consultations, CTLs now often focus on institutional initiatives involving accreditation and quality assurance; emerging educational technologies (beyond the learning management system); online, flexible, and blended learning initiatives; open educational resources; internationalization; undergraduate research; scholarship of teaching and learning; and Indigenization and anti-racism. In response to pandemic pivots, CTLs are reexamining which services to offer and in what format (in person, online, blended). The plurality and complexity of these initiatives makes staffing assignments and priority-setting challenging. In addition, expectations and work to evaluate and externally report on CTL initiatives and contributions have increased (Ellis et al., 2018; Kolomitro & Anstey, 2017), often without corresponding budget growth.

As a result, CTL leaders may need to rethink their units and staffing as well as how they approach their work to prepare for and respond to these kinds of changes. This article provides relevant theories and practices that CTL leaders can use to enhance unit agility when working on four key areas of HR: organizational structure, direction-setting, capacity-building, and accountability. Our primary focus is on leaders of established (proficient and accomplished) CTLs

who may need to make changes to enhance center agility. Leaders of developing CTLs (as per Collins-Brown et al.'s 2018 POD-ACE Matrix) may also apply the guidance within their centers as they plan staffing, adapt to change, and develop formal and informal partnerships across units.

Methods

This article provides a practical synthesis of strategies in four HR aspects relevant to CTL agility based on literature and author experience and informed by needs of CTL leaders. With the goal of curating relevant theories and practical strategies, we developed an initial list of potential staff-related issues and then asked 17 colleagues at a national CTL leaders' meeting to augment and prioritize our initial list. We sought topics that CTL leaders can feel challenged to address in the context of constant change. Our focus was on established CTLs with ongoing staff members, not faculty members seconded to CTLs. Our user-driven approach aligns with Patton's (2015) pragmatic utilization criteria, focusing on actionable HR practices to share.

Themes that emerged from both our initial ideas and the CTL leaders' additional suggestions aligned with four established aspects of leading staff. As authors, we engaged in over 15 focused discussions to unpack these aspects in relation to CTL contexts and identify specific HR-focused theories and strategies to help CTL leaders. The HR content was assessed for utility, clarity, and relevance based on the authors' decades of practice wisdom (Bamber & Stefani, 2016) through experience in CTL leadership, educational development, and human resources.

Within a pragmatic utilization lens, CTL leaders reading this article are encouraged to assess the relevance, credibility, and actionability of the presented theories and strategies and to consider transferability to their specific contexts. The identified HR strategies, while well documented, are best treated as principles that benefit from being adapted to context rather than blindly reapplied (Hunt, 2014).

Critical HR Components for CTL Leaders

Challenges to agility and the prioritized needs of the consulted CTL directors align with an established set of four interrelated HR aspects (e.g., Quinn, et al., 1996):

1. **Organizational structure** specifies how a workforce is organized as seen in organizational charts and reporting lines.
2. **Direction-setting** encompasses overall vision and strategy as well as individualized role direction and goals.
3. **Capacity-building** includes supporting individual team members' development in needed knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
4. **Accountability** includes meaningful feedback for development and constructive performance management.

To enhance organizational agility, CTL leaders may need to make changes to one or more of these areas. While they may choose to focus on the specific aspects in any order, the interrelationships among them reinforce the complexity of addressing any one of them, underscoring the value of guidance when working within HR. Throughout the rest of this article, we provide such guidance.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure often manifests in organizational charts and job descriptions that reflect both reporting structures and role design. Since priority areas and emergent trends can change rapidly at CTLs (even within an annual cycle as observed during the pandemic), having staff organized so they can quickly shift their focus is important and is facilitated by an agile structure. This agility is also critical in times of CTL expansion, mergers, job loss, or leaves of absence.

The pivotal challenge is having an organizational structure that is manageable and clear enough to be functional and to thrive.

CTL directors may need to refine or change their unit's structure to achieve these goals and secure necessary approvals from senior leadership.

Understanding Organizational Structures

In HR, the design of an organization's structure is intended to address its function and to help the organization meet its objectives (Amburgey & Dacin, 1994; Langton et al., 2010; Walker & Lorsch, 1968). An organization's size and environment further affect its organizational structure (e.g., Bluedorn, 1993; Pennings, 1992).

In ever-changing contexts, organizations need agile yet manageable structures. The key is to find the right balance along two main intersecting continua: **reporting design** (flat versus hierarchy) and **role design** (functional versus cross-functional) (Langton et al., 2010).

Reporting design (flat versus hierarchy) considers both the agility and feasibility of manager-to-staff reporting ratios. Flat-reporting structures, in which all staff report to one manager, offer agility but become less feasible as the number of staff members increases. Conversely, hierarchical-reporting structures, with multiple layers of management, offer feasible leader-to-staff ratios. However, having layers results in departmentalization and can hinder the ability of reporting lines and job functions to respond with agility to changing priorities.

Role design (functional versus cross-functional) considers the specificity of roles and ranges from a focus on functional roles (staff focus on one or two educational development topic areas each) to a focus on cross-functional roles (staff work in multiple roles, perhaps for a specific academic unit) (Langton et al., 2010). A functional role design structure allows for considerable role clarity, giving staff a sense of "dividing and conquering" the work, and reduces the need to integrate and collaborate, though it can lack agility (Langton et al., 2010). Conversely, cross-functionality in roles allows for organizational agility as staff contribute to multiple initiatives but

can lead to lower role clarity and greater scope creep for individual staff. This cross-functional structure may also necessitate shifts in how staff define a role, including reducing ownership over specific areas. Over time, cross-functionality may result in excessive redundancy in roles, which can increase pressure to coordinate and even integrate roles.

Each CTL director should determine an appropriate structure within these two continua—flat versus hierarchy and functional versus cross-functional—with the ideal balance varying according to each CTL's context (see Figure 1). In practice, the extremes of these continua result in staffing inefficiencies or a lack of resiliency. A functional + hierarchical structure can create factions that limit responsiveness to changing priorities. Similarly, a functional + flat structure risks creating silos that may compete or leave the CTL vulnerable when a staff member departs with their specialized knowledge and skills. Conversely, a cross-functional + flat structure is highly agile but may be chaotic and lack enough role clarity, particularly as a CTL grows. Finally, a hierarchical + cross-functional structure can result in very unfocused and uneven work distribution with unclear reporting and workloads.

Ultimately, an ideal structure may require a degree of hierarchy to make the CTL manageable while also leveraging the agility of at least some cross-functional roles. In the HR literature, the modified matrix structure provides a solution (see Figure 1, top right quadrant, close to center). It challenges the common single manager organizational structure and offers an optimal balance that enables both clarity and agility.

Modified Matrix Structure

The original matrix structure was developed in response to organizational growth in the 1950s and was characterized by assigning a pool of shared staff to multiple projects in a flat structure (as cited in Quinn et al., 1996). These staff reported to multiple managers, which posed

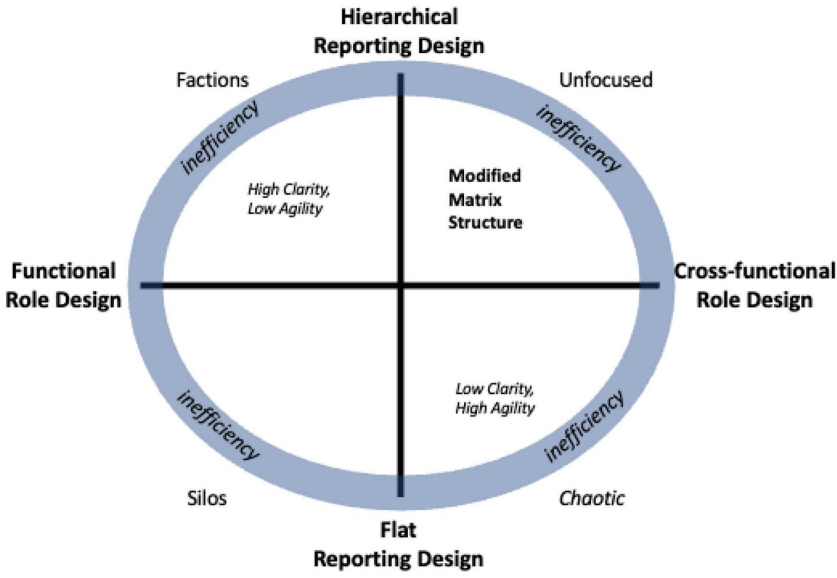

Figure 1. Reporting and Role Design Continua With Qualities Noted for the Extremes

significant challenges in role clarity and priority-setting. Quinn et al. (1996) developed the modified matrix structure to provide greater role clarity, stability, and guidance for prioritizing projects while enabling some agility. In the modified matrix structure, each staff member has one manager who serves as their workload advocate and mentor. However, staff may cross-report to other managers or team leads for specific projects or tasks.

On an organizational chart, the relationship to the main manager, who oversees performance and addresses any workload challenges, is shown as a solid line. Cross-functional reports are shown by dotted lines.

Sample modified matrix structures within a CTL appear in Figures 2a and 2b. In the larger CTL example (Figure 2a), one learning management system (LMS) team member has a cross-functional connection (dotted line) to the lead for e-portfolios, which reflects leveraging their educational technologies expertise (Quinn et al., 1996). However, this staff member

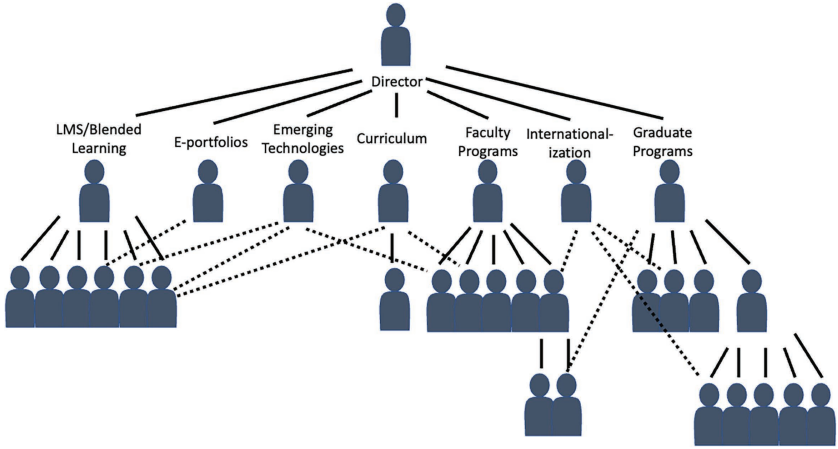

Figure 2a. Sample Modified Matrix Structure in a Larger CTL

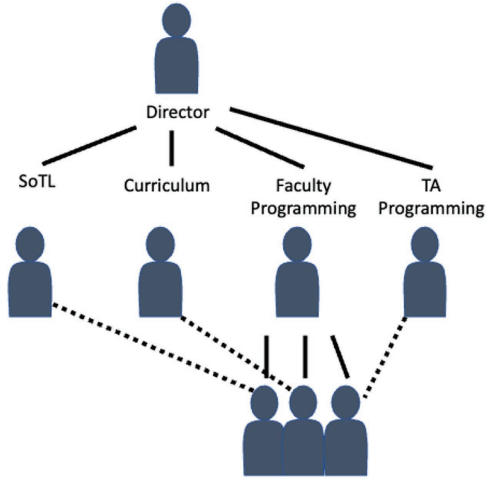

Figure 2b. Sample Modified Matrix Structure in a Smaller CTL

still has both role and reporting clarity, with the LMS/blended learning lead as their main manager for performance and any workload challenges (solid line). CTL leaders may also want to formalize partnerships that exist between individual CTL staff and those in other units at the institution by including them as formal connections in their organizational chart.

Table 1. Pros and Cons of a Modified Matrix Structure

Pros	Cons
Formalizes reporting relationships that may have previously been informal, eliminating the need to ask colleagues for favors to get assistance	Requires onboarding staff into each cross-functional area with its new norms, acronyms, terminology, micro-culture, and team member relationships
Maintains a clear reporting structure as the staff involved still have one main manager	Demands coordination between area leads and managers to avoid double-booking staff
Helps to keep staff from feeling overwhelmed by having one main manager to help manage their workload	Risks decreasing staff role clarity and stability around expectations and project prioritization
Addresses tension for managers or leads who need staff help for projects yet do not have any (or sufficient) direct reports	Increases risk of overwhelming staff if too many skills or too much knowledge demanded or too much task-switching
Provides agility to formally connect staff to other areas when needed to address ebbs and flows	

The percentage of staff who cross-report to multiple people varies by CTL context, as does the amount of time they spend working in cross-functional areas. Pros and cons of this structure, to be considered before adoption, are noted in Table 1.

Additional Guidance for Determining Organizational Structure

1. ***CTL size.*** While there is no single recommended reporting ratio, the number of reporting staff should ideally reflect the amount of integration, feedback, onboarding, and coordination needed (Bluedorn, 1993; Meier & Bohte, 2003; Pennings, 1992). The more time required per staff member, the smaller the manager-to-staff ratio needs to be, requiring more hierarchy. In modified matrix structures, consider the time demands on managers from both direct-report staff and cross-reporting staff, including day-to-day project communication and coordination between managers.
2. ***Variety in tasks.*** Complexity influences the suitability of an organizational structure (Meier & Bohte, 2003). For example, imagine that one manager talks individually each day with seven staff who are all responsible for similar tasks, such as running a standardized workshop. Now imagine the staff members' projects are diverse across

topic areas, academic units, timelines, and approaches. Greater variety calls for a smaller team-to-manager ratio and more hierarchy (Quinn et al., 1996).

3. ***Change rate.*** Where projects are ever-changing or demand varies greatly across the year, greater structural agility is needed. Greater flexibility to shift staff members across areas to meet changing project foci and workload is provided by lessening role specialization (Langton et al., 2010). To maintain role clarity and reduce stress, a high degree of change may also require a smaller manager-to-staff ratio for increased integration and attention to building collaborations.
4. ***Funding.*** Funding restrictions affect structural considerations (Pennings, 1992). Specifically allocated funding could require specialized (functional) roles or entail the creation of specific hierarchical teams. With a mix of project and general funding, CTLs may have pockets of required hierarchy within the overall structure.
5. ***Structural clarity.*** CTLs may be organized according to thematic areas, academic units, operational functions, and/or specific client groups. CTL leaders should identify what will resonate in their CTL and institutional contexts, so staff understand their roles and the institution's community knows whom to contact.

CTL leaders may need to change their organization's structure to enhance their center's agility. Such changes often require close coordination with HR partners to ensure that institutional policies and rules are followed. These partners may have additional options and factors for CTL leaders to consider. In addition, union rules or the leader's position in their organization may limit their ability to change the CTL's structure. In these cases, addressing the remaining HR components can still support CTL agility.

Direction-Setting

CTL staff members benefit from understanding "what we do," "how and why we do it," and "where we are going" as a unit. These

components of direction are ideally expressed informally in conversation; formally in a CTL's vision, mission, values, and strategic plan; and individually in annual performance goals. When a CTL's direction needs to change in response to institutional or sector shifts or a center restructuring, this can require individual staff members to be flexible around roles and goals. Shifts in areas of responsibility should be considered in relation to functional/cross-functional role design, as outlined in the previous section. This section provides guidance on how to help staff through CTL direction changes and changes to their individual roles and goals.

Identifying a Change Process

Directional shifts in a CTL can lead to staff uncertainty and stress, making it hard to be agile. Identifying a change process can help CTL leaders manage their staff through a pivot. Bridges and Bridges (2016) provide one model. They emphasize the psychological transitions needed to implement a change and identify a three-stage process (with corresponding emotions and actions):

1. an ending phase, including losing and letting go (fear and denial);
2. the neutral zone of recalibration (mixture of resentment, uncertainty, anxiety, low morale, higher than normal turnover, high innovation, and generativity); and
3. a new beginning (openness to learning, high energy, renewed commitment to the group).

When informing staff about the need for change(s), CTL leaders should expect staff to be in the initial *letting go stage* and help them figure out what the changes may mean for them as individuals. There can be resistance when setting a new sustainable direction or expanding an existing one, with staff asking, "Why rock the boat?" CTL leaders can help staff with the process of letting go by soliciting and validating their questions and concerns.

In the *neutral recalibration zone*, staff can feel lost and the leader may not have answers to help. Uncertainty is characteristic of this stage, reducing comfort with strategies that would normally increase staff autonomy, like participatory decision-making (e.g., Kaner, 2014). Though paralyzing for some, the instability of the neutral zone can be exciting for others. This stage represents a chance to create and introduce new structures and initiatives generated by CTL leaders or staff and can be leveraged as an effective transformative stage. The *new beginning stage* is when the changes coalesce and openness to learning and commitment to the group is renewed: it is the time to settle in to a new normal. Today's pace of change may no longer allow for fully settling in before the next change begins, requiring CTL leaders to address the turnaround and new letting go responses without much time in the coalescence stage.

Strategies to Support Transitions

1. ***Make the stages of transition explicit.*** When moving to a new direction, CTL leaders can acknowledge and convey to all that people can be in various stages of transition (Bridges & Bridges, 2016). Articulating the transition process helps to remind leaders and staff not to get frustrated with colleagues who are at different stages.
2. ***Focus on trust-building.*** Recognize that open engagement takes trust and contributing can feel very vulnerable. Individual staff may vary in terms of their confidence in sharing their feelings or engaging in participative goal-setting. Taking time to build trust (Covey & Merrill, 2008) creates deeper connections with staff and can help them feel more comfortable bringing forward questions and concerns (see Capacity-Building section). CTL leaders also need to be as transparent as possible about the rationale underlying any changes to assist with trust-building. Strategies for building trust with and among staff include positioning relationship-building with CTL colleagues as a legitimate part of ED work (e.g., West et al.,

2017), making time for staff to learn one another's stories as people and providing spaces for them to feel seen and heard.

3. ***Engage staff.*** Encouraging staff contributions when revising the CTL's direction is important. Guidance comes from Kaner's (2014) four values of participatory decision-making: encourage full participation, seek mutual understanding, develop inclusive solutions, and identify shared responsibilities. Kaner's models and tools for collaborative problem-solving, community transformation, and collaboration incubator also provide relevant information for CTL leaders (https://collaborativeleadersnetwork.org). When possible, offer staff multiple ways to participate. For example, engaging everyone in ideation might increase uncertainty for some staff, so an alternative is to have an opt-in working group that brings a draft back to the larger group.

By considering organizational change phases, CTL leaders can plan a thoughtful and intentional process for helping staff co-create and transition to a new center direction.

Guidance on Individual Goal-Setting

For strong organizational alignment and meaningful work life, leaders should aim to bring the CTL direction to life in individual staff goals (called goal cascading in HR; Hunt, 2014). Even if the institution does not promote the use of annual performance goals, identifying goals or expectations for a project, role, or year helps staff find meaning in their work and understand how they contribute to their CTL.

When a CTL's direction pivots, individual staff may also need to be agile, taking on new roles or areas of responsibility or sharing ownership of a project or service area with CTL colleagues or another unit. One way to support staff when making such changes is to revise their goals with them. CTL leaders should seek to give staff as much agentic voice in goal-setting as is feasible to achieve commitment, where the

person "not only agrees to the request but also actively supports it as well" (University of Minnesota Libraries, 2010, Chapter 13.3).

Another HR strategy for goal buy-in is to consider each individual's constellation of motivations. Hunt (2014) lists five motivations that people have, in varying combinations, when working. Considering these motivations (as summarized in Table 2) can assist leaders in understanding why staff prioritize some goals or projects over others. When discussing or developing goals, CTL leaders can listen for staff values in their statements or concerns or provide the motivations table to spur conversation.

Undoubtedly, motivations will vary across a team, which can require adjustments to messaging. When speaking with a group about CTL changes, communicating multiple relevant motivations can also help

Table 2. Recognizing and Responding to Staff Motivations (citing Hunt, 2014)

Motivations	What staff value	What CTL leaders can provide
Purpose driven	Seeing "how their work contributes to a greater strategy or vision" (p. 135)	Clarity on how a new project contributes to the strategic plan or the CTL's mission
Mastery driven	Developing and testing abilities and "proving to themselves and others that they can accomplish difficult goals" (p. 136)	Positioning of a new project as a challenge and giving recognition for accomplishment
Competitively driven	Comparing "how well they perform relative to others" (p. 136)	Comparisons to prior performance, averages, or strategic benchmarks
Transactionally driven	Receiving benefits or rewards including "financial bonuses, prizes, promotions, and other rewards with clear monetary value" (p. 136)	Tangible rewards within limited CTL budgets (e.g., CV additions like guide authorship; time in lieu; writing time to publish on a project; funds to present at a conference; nominations for institutional training or merit; or title as a "lead" or "senior")
Security driven	Being able to "count on future employment and access to certain career opportunities" (p. 136)	Expectations for stability, to the extent possible (e.g., a new project will be theirs for a couple of years, funding is expected to be stable to next year, changes in their role will be minimal)

messaging resonate with all staff (e.g., address job security, clarify contribution to strategic plans, speak to opportunity for individual growth). Reflexively, a leader can also identify their own motivations to avoid any tendency to focus primarily on what motivates them when communicating with staff.

Individual motivations are sensitive to context and may shift over time as institutional, CTL, and personal contexts change (e.g., institutional cuts can heighten security-driven motivations, while a student-focused strategic initiative can further purpose-driven motivations). CTL leaders are urged to attend to even long-time staff members' motivations when co-developing goals. If a staff member seems resistant or even unresponsive, consider their motivations and transition stage and whether those are being adequately addressed in discussions. Reframing this type of negative response from the perspectives of motivation and transition can restart a stalled conversation and help support staff in making changes.

Capacity-Building

Furthering CTL agility and assisting staff in making changes through capacity-building involves CTL leaders supporting their staff in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) required to be flexible and achieve success in their roles. As approaches to teaching shift and the demands on CTLs change, educational developers may need to develop their knowledge in blended instructional strategies, skills for consulting and running workshops virtually, and their attitudes for valuing lifelong learning (e.g., McDonald et al., 2016). Knowledge and skill development are typically straightforward for CTL staff given the myriad resources available to help (e.g., readings, workshops, conferences) as well as focused training, social learning, reflection, and practice (Hunt, 2014). These professional development opportunities enable CTL staff to prepare quickly, and even collaborate with other units, to respond to priorities.

However, support in developing desired attitudes may be less prevalent. CTL leaders can face challenges when a change in structure or direction unearths individual attitudes that create barriers or diverge to spark deep conflict or mistrust among center staff. Such attitudinal issues suggest limited staff willingness to adapt to changes, which can seriously impact center agility. Attending to staff members' attitudes and making explicit any related assumptions and implicit beliefs allow leaders to address such challenges.

Defining Attitudes

The first step in building capacity around attitudes is understanding what makes an attitude exist and perpetuate. While attitudes include the values that people hold, more specifically "an **attitude** is our assessment of ourselves, other people, ideas, and objects in our world" (Petty et al., 1997). In this social psychology framing, attitudes are contextual, learned, and changeable. But they are also deeply rooted in three components, which the Tripartite Model of Attitudes identifies as affective (feelings and emotions), behavioral (past and future activity), and cognitive (thoughts and beliefs), as originally labeled by Rosenberg et al. (1960) and is currently taught (e.g., Daffin & Lane, 2021). Attitudes are also composites that can contain internal contradictions (e.g., "I find presenting scary, but I regularly volunteer to present").

Attitudes are vitally important because they deeply shape workplace behavior and resulting culture. An individual's attitudes about their work and workplace can predict that person's behavior and, once formed, persist unless addressed, particularly when the attitudes form based on direct experience (e.g., Daffin & Lane, 2021; University of Minnesota Libraries, 2010, Chapter 4.2). For example, a staff member's bad experience with a collaborator who did not contribute fairly to a shared project may result in an attitude of anger or fear around collaborating, actions to reduce collaborations, or division of work in visible ways rather than a joint deliverable. The staff member may

also have beliefs, thoughts, or assumptions about the foolhardiness of relying on others. Often implicit and tricky to shift, attitudes impact intended and resulting behavior, including potentially stopping staff from engaging in tasks or adopting expected approaches that emerge from changes in CTL directions or roles.

Tulgan (2017) cautions leaders to be wary of the common managerial mistakes of "treating attitude as a personal issue, an internal state of mind that is off limits; treating attitude as an unchangeable matter of personality ('that's just who I am'); and talking about attitude in vague terms or indirectly" (para. 4). In addition, waiting to address, or avoiding, the uncomfortable situation that conflicting attitudes create is not effective: inaction can cause real harm to the CTL since inappropriate attitudes can become further entrenched and be adopted by additional staff members. Knowing how to encourage shifts in attitudes is an important leadership skill. As a result, we identify three strategies to support attitudinal change, based on the limited HR behaviorist approach to shift individuals' attitudes via training (e.g., Hunt, 2014), social psychology (see Daffin & Lane's 2021 summary of findings), and practice wisdom.

1. ***Identify expected attitudes and behaviors indicative of them.***
   When CTL leaders recognize an attitudinal challenge, a general strategy is to ensure clarity across the unit about what attitudes are expected. One approach that can assist is to have clearly articulated CTL values that staff help to co-create. It is easier to point to a source that all staff are aware of and have bought into than to have the CTL leader articulate a perspective that only they may hold. The value statements ideally include examples of behaviors that show how to enact the values.
2. ***Unpack the problematic behavior.***
   Staff need to understand what they are doing that is creating a problem. Consider the example of a staff member speaking to CTL colleagues about how faculty are just problems they need to fix. The underlying attitude shows a disrespect for faculty, which makes

it hard to develop collegial client relationships, and the behavior of voicing this opinion to colleagues can encourage others to adopt the same attitude and/or result in tensions within the workplace with those who hold other perspectives. Neither resulting situation is good for the CTL. When a CTL leader meets with the attitude-challenged staff member, they need to identify the problematic behavior and its effect on others in the CTL. But they also need to seek to uncover the feelings and past experiences that underlie the attitude (e.g., Does the staff member believe faculty know nothing about teaching? Were they belittled by a faculty client? Are they insecure about their role?). Beliefs often arise from direct experience with layers of emotion-encoded experiences influencing memory and interpretation (e.g., Phelps, 2004). In addition to supporting staff to reflect, CTL leaders can also benefit from stepping back to examine their own feelings, beliefs, and values related to the behavior.

3. ***Provide an opportunity for a better experience.***
   To address problematic assumptions about other people and situations, CTL leaders can provide staff an opportunity to learn from a more positive experience (Hunt, 2014). To extend the previous example, the staff member could be teamed up to do a faculty consultation with a colleague who is known for providing support to faculty in a respectful manner. After the consultation, a debriefing conversation would seek to uncover the consultant's underlying assumptions (e.g., faculty are learners) and how those influenced their feelings about the situation. If consultants view faculty clients as learners who come to seek new ideas, it is easier to work with them respectfully than if they believe faculty are inept or there to judge them and their ideas. Shifting attitudes works best when new ways of thinking can develop in low-stakes contexts or supportive cultures in which a new set of beliefs is present.

At their root, attitudinal shifts have emotions, beliefs, and behavioral patterns that take time, care, and patience to uncover and address.

Attitudinal changes are often not quick, but direct interventions can support agility and create an improved working environment. In times of change, underlying emotions and beliefs can be heightened, but CTL leaders still need to act. When the impact of a negative attitude is particularly problematic, additional accountability measures may be required (see DIRECT feedback in next section).

Accountability

It is important to engage with staff on how well they are adapting to changes that enable unit agility. CTL leaders can use a variety of approaches for accountability conversations (depending on context, as formal performance management processes vary by institution). The most critical piece for engaging staff is to have meaningful conversations that are both relevant to the individuals and support appropriate growth toward CTL goals. To have meaningful conversations, leaders may need to first adapt their approach based on their perception of how staff perform goal-associated tasks. This section describes an HR framework that may help CTL leaders decide how best to approach performance management conversations and strategies with their staff.

Understanding Task-Related Perceptions

Change situations often result in staff taking on new or adjusted tasks or goals, so it is important to communicate clearly and directly about staff performance in their areas of responsibility. As a game changer for practice and scholarship in this area, Posner (2004) highlights Ralph and Walker's Adaptive Mentorship framework (Ralph, 2004; Ralph & Walker, 2011a, 2011b), which can be used to identify staff members' confidence and competence with specific tasks. Staff confidence and competence can vary across different parts of their role (e.g., facilitating a workshop or coordinating speakers), specific processes (e.g., co-designing a workshop with a faculty member or designing a workshop

solo), or contexts (e.g., facilitating an optional workshop or facilitating a departmental retreat).

CTL leaders and managers can observe their staff to develop an assessment of each individual's confidence and competence. Staff can also be asked to provide their own perceptions of these two dimensions for their tasks or goals. Seeking such self-assessments from staff can help build their self-awareness and support capacity-building. However, to provide honest responses, staff need to trust their managers, which may be a challenge during times of change and uncertainty (see Direction-Setting). It can be helpful to remind staff that managers want them to succeed. In addition, having an ongoing functional accountability process normalizes a reflective and agile approach to adapting and celebrating ED work.

Within the Adaptive Mentorship framework, Ralph and Walker (2011a) recommend managers adjust their approach according to each person's confidence ("self-assurance and feelings of security or safety," p. 295) and competence ("ability to perform a skill accurately with a level of expertise," pp. 295–296) for a specific task or role. Figure 3 describes what managers may see and how they could respond based on a staff person's confidence and competence.

Three Approaches for Accountability Conversations

Staff benefit from clarity and shared understanding with their manager through engaging in accountability conversations. This section provides specifics about the approaches identified in Figure 3.

Coaching

When staff demonstrate moderate to high competence and confidence, coaching offers an excellent approach to accountability conversations. Coaching enhances shared trust and respect and engages staff as equal thinking partners. Coaching can empower individuals to identify their own goals, identify areas to change, and evaluate

High Confidence, Low Competence in the task (Enthusiastic beginner/ implementer) What managers see: Staff believe that what they are already doing is great, but the performance is not sufficient. Response: Give detailed and directive task-focused feedback and encouragement toward the change(s) identified rather than positive feedback on existing approaches. *Direct feedback is needed.*	**High Confidence, High Competence in the task** (Confidently doing great work!) What managers see: Staff are doing a great job and appear comfortable. Response: Discuss specific tasks as needed; little need for detailed and directive task feedback or encouragement (because they do not need it). Still adjust to Hunt's five motivation types to make the most out of a little encouragement. *A coaching approach often works well here.*
Low Confidence, Low Competence in the task (Tentative/nervous beginner) What managers see: While excited and ready for most tasks, staff avoid certain tasks or get emotional (e.g., upset, complaining). Response: Give highly detailed and directive feedback on task and be highly encouraging. Adjust to align with their combination of Hunt's five motivation types. Provide or arrange for mentorship that includes scaffolded learning with guided or modeled practice. Set goals for guided skill development and ensure feedback is given.	**Low Confidence, High Competence in the task** (Great work, still doubting) What managers see: Staff who are nervous, doubting, checking, "Am I doing this right?" Response: Be highly encouraging but give only a little detailed and directive feedback on the task as needed to raise confidence. Provide or arrange for mentorship that includes encouraging praise or rewards (as per Hunt's five motivation types) and opportunities for feedback to hear the impact of their work to build confidence. Set goals for continuing the good work and seeking feedback.

Figure 3. Summary of Ralph and Walker's Adaptive Mentorship Quadrants

their current progress. Drawing on Ellinger and Bostrom (1999), Kenny (2017) outlines numerous specific coaching behaviors for CTL leaders, such as empowering behaviors like holding back from giving solutions (p. 85). Kenny also provides specific questions for CTL leaders to use or adapt for providing feedback while also explaining how the staff's work has contributed to the CTL and institution (pp. 84–91).

Mentorship for Confidence and Competence

When a change is unfamiliar, Ralph and Walker (2011b) suggest considering staff confidence and competence. If they have low confidence with low competence, then a CTL leader can provide or arrange for

scaffolded opportunities to build ability and improve confidence, such as shadowing a mentor or training with growing independence and opportunity for feedback. For staff with low confidence yet high competence in the task, CTL leaders can reward them (see Hunt's five motivation types in Direction-Setting section) and help them gather and reflect on focused feedback on their impact or strengths.

Direct Feedback

When coaching or mentorship has not provided desired results or competence remains low, CTL leaders should provide direct feedback. Difficult feedback should be delivered carefully while focusing on behaviors. Our third author has used the DIRECT feedback model (Ring, 2010) in his own management roles and coaching practice and has trained over 100 leaders in this approach. This step-by-step model is designed to support even difficult conversations to specify and correct behaviors or demonstrated attitudes. Briefly, the DIRECT feedback model involves:

- clearly articulating observable **data** (D);
- explaining resulting CTL **impacts** (I);
- identifying **requirements** of the team member (R);
- doing an **exploration** to discuss GUIDE (goals understanding, insights, design and enable change; E);
- obtaining **commitment** (C); and
- determining how the plan will be **tracked** (T).

Providing direct feedback can be challenging. CTL leaders may benefit from the resources and details on Ring's website (https://destinationleadership.ca/videos) or seeking professional training through an HR unit. Role-playing and practice are particularly helpful. Before providing DIRECT feedback, CTL leaders are advised to consult HR partners and review institutional HR processes, especially if the conversations could lead to discipline, coaching out, or transition in employment.

CTL leaders benefit from having a range of approaches for engaging staff who are differentially progressing along these two continua of confidence and competence, particularly in times of change.

Conclusion

Facing rapid, complex, and ongoing change, CTLs must meet the challenge of being agile through their organizational structures, direction-setting, capacity-building, and accountability. In response, this article draws on established HR literature and strategies to address this challenge and meet the practical needs of CTL leaders. With a pragmatic utilization lens (Patton, 2015), we recognize that one size does not fit all and invite CTL leaders to assess the relevance and utility of the strategies selected.

Future studies of HR aspects within CTLs could assess the effectiveness of the strategies shared and their impact in specific center contexts. Our article also does not address systemic cultural contexts and considerations, particularly CTL work with Indigenization, decolonization, internationalization, and equity, diversity, and inclusion that would benefit from a critical analysis of whether structures and strategies support or hinder desired systemic changes. In general, future critical scholarship into the nature of CTL leadership and organizational culture is needed. Applications will vary with consideration of a CTL's context and degree of leader autonomy regarding the four HR aspects. We look forward to leaders publishing applications. For now, this article offers research and strategies informed by practice wisdom for successful CTLs during times of change.

Biographies

Carolyn Hoessler is a nationally awarded leader in educational development, former chair of the Educational Developers Caucus, and a credentialed evaluator with the Canadian Evaluation Society. Carolyn's

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Donna E. Ellis is an educational development leader, having served as a former president of the POD Network and now president-elect of the International Consortium for Educational Development. She directs the Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo and has an adjunct appointment in Waterloo's Management Sciences department. Her scholarly interests include change management practices and organizational culture, administration, and strategy within the higher education context.

Bob Bayles is a CFO and CHRO in education with HR credentials in the United States and Canada. His scholarly interest includes human resources, leadership, educational finance, and risk management, topics he enjoys as an adjunct graduate professor and frequent guest lecturer. Prior to his current role, he was a Director of Human Resources at the University of Saskatchewan, where he is currently a PhD candidate in Educational Administration at the College of Education.

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