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The Challenges of Leadership Development in Research Libraries

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Outline

- Context
 - Professional and sectoral concerns, past and present
- Research and Development
 - Library leadership programmes and initiatives
 - Library leadership-related studies and articles
- Evaluation and Reflections
 - Key factors affecting leadership development
 - Individual and organisation development

Library leadership context (1990s-)

- Shortage of candidates for director-level posts
- Gaps in personal and managerial competencies
- Low turnover among mid-career grades
- High age profile of middle and senior staff
- Limited openings for new entrants to profession
- Pressures on staffing and training budgets
- Similar patterns in all sectors on a global scale

The library leadership context today

- Continuing concerns about succession planning
- Identification of particular opportunities for libraries to assert leadership in research arena
 - research skills, data management, bibliometrics
- Recognition that leadership can and should be developed at all levels of library organisations
 - boundary-spanning roles/information gatekeepers

Examples of development programmes

- ACRL Harvard Leadership Institute (US)
- ALA Emerging Leaders Program (US)
- ARL Leadership Institute (North America)
- Aurora Leadership Institute (Australia)
- Frye Leadership Institute (US/International)
- Northern Exposure to Leadership (Canada)
- Snowbird Leadership Institute (US)

Recent/current UK programmes

- **Future Leaders**
 - run by Leadership Foundation, SCONUL, UCISA, BL
 - follows on from initiatives dating back to early 1990s
- **Clore Leadership Programme**
 - sponsored by DCMS, SSCs and many other bodies
- **Leading Modern Public Libraries**
 - sponsored by MLA and Society of Chief Librarians
 - developed in response to ‘Framework for the Future’

Typical features of programmes

- Intensive residentials (one/two-week blocks)
- Theoretical models mixed with practical activities
- Guided reading (articles, books, course packs)
- Diagnostic exercises (MBTI, 360° appraisal)
- Individual help (feedback, coaching, mentoring)
- Challenging assignments (work-based projects)
- Peer support (action learning sets, networking)

Library leadership-related research

National studies

Usherwood, B. et al. (2001) *Recruit, Retain and Lead: Public Library Workforce Study*, University of Sheffield/Resource

Abbott, C. (2003) *Hybrid Information Management: Skills for Senior Staff (HIMSSS): Final Project Report*, University of Birmingham [HEFCE Good Management Practice Project]

Ingles, V.K. et al. (2005) *The Future of Human Resources in Canadian Libraries*, University of Alberta [8Rs Study]

Streatfield, D. et al. (2007) *Evaluation of Leading Modern Public Libraries*, University of Sheffield/MLA

Leading Modern Public Libraries

- National programme for all PLAs in England
- Strategic intervention to deliver DCMS vision
- Contextualised design to meet sector needs
- **Multi-layered initiative for three levels of staff**
 - Service Heads, Senior Managers, Future Leaders
 - January 2004-July 2007, 663 participants in total
- Formal evaluation by CPLIS/IMA (and FPM)

Findings from LMPL evaluation

Strengths

- Development of self-awareness from TLQ
- Exposure to different perspectives and ideas
- Time for reflection
- Collegiality, networking
- Application of learning

Weaknesses

- FL selection criteria
- **Restricted use of TLQ**
- Management focus
- Pace and structure
- Quality of facilitation
- **Workplace and post-course support**

Other recent library leadership articles

Surveys and reflections on leadership programmes

Arnold, J. et al. (2008) - North American library leadership institutes

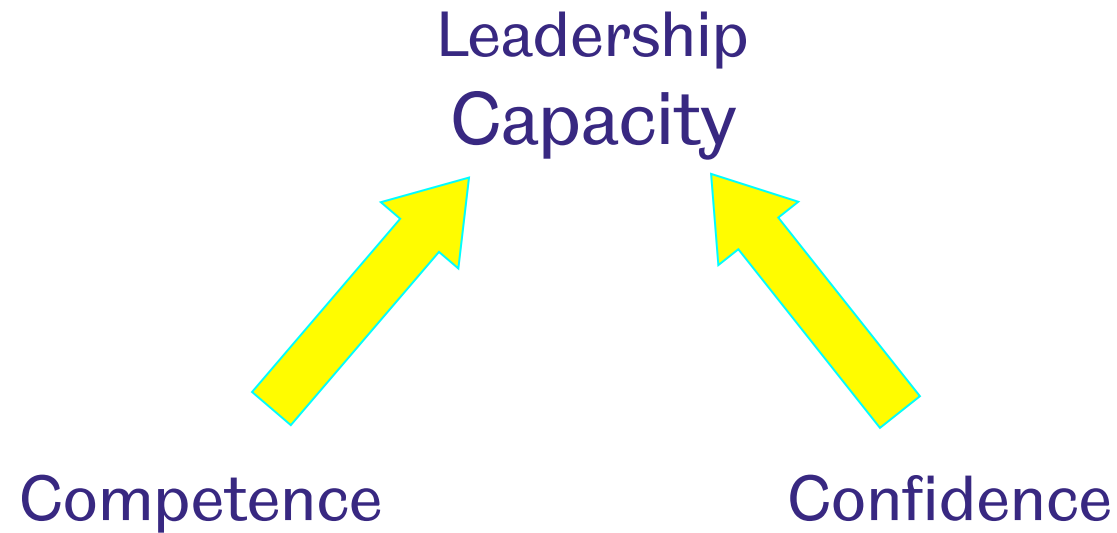
Jolly, L. et al. (2008) - Leadership Foundation (UK) 'Future Leaders'

SCONUL Focus, 32, 35, 37, 38 (2004-2006) Frye (US), Future Leaders

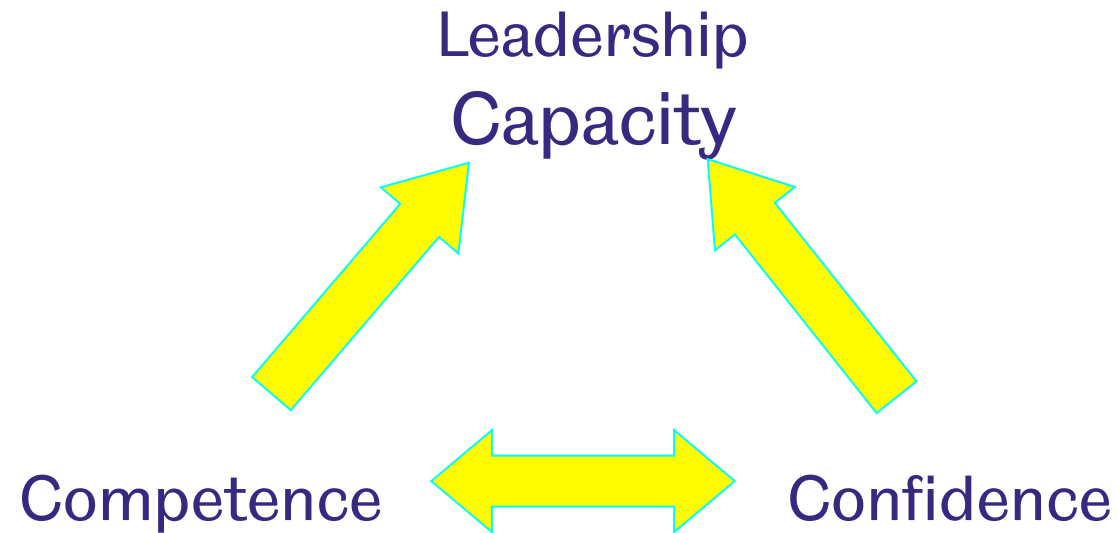
Institutional case studies

Murray, A. (2007) - Cambridge University Library, succession planning:
[mentoring system, personal development plans](#)

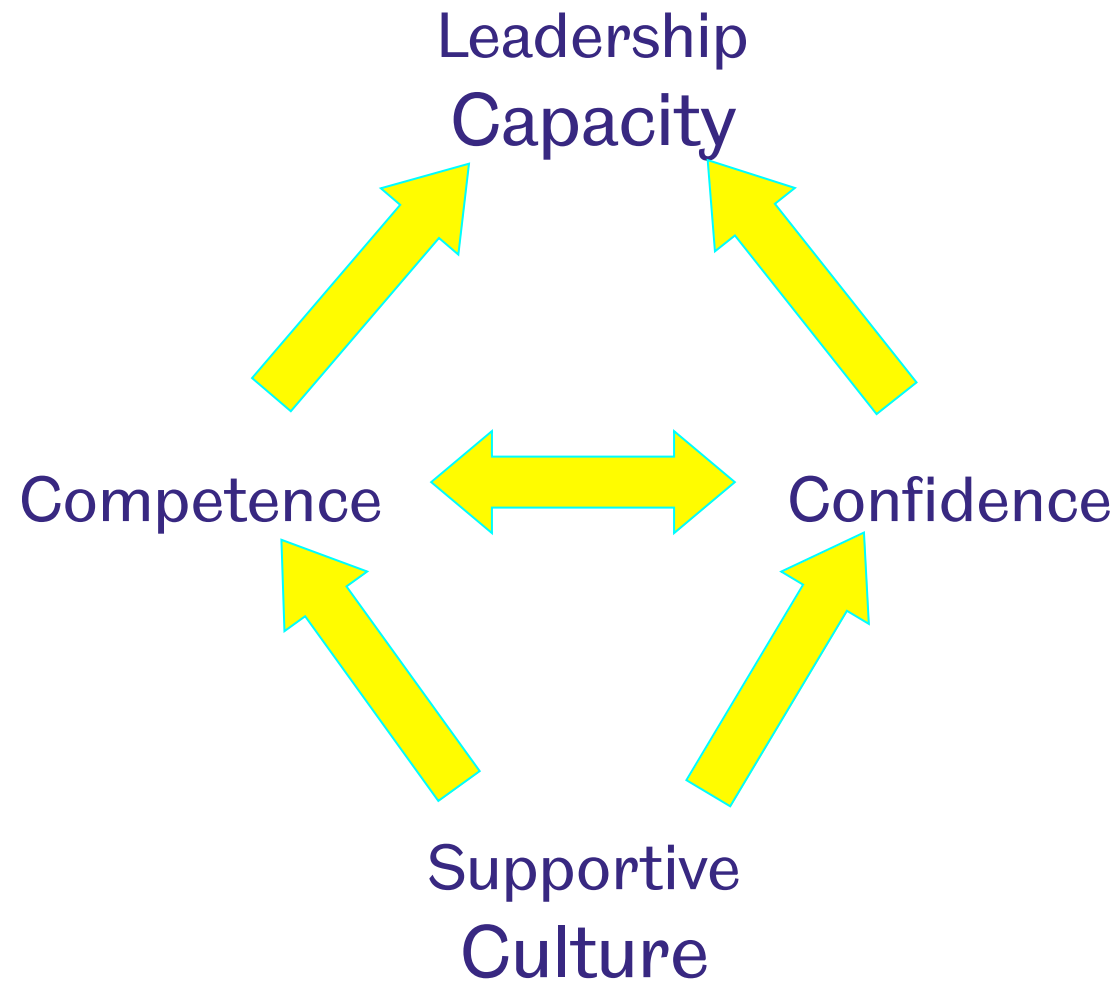
Raubenheimer, J. & Muller, H. (2006) - University of South Africa,
[primary \(job-related\) and secondary \(voluntary\) leadership roles](#)



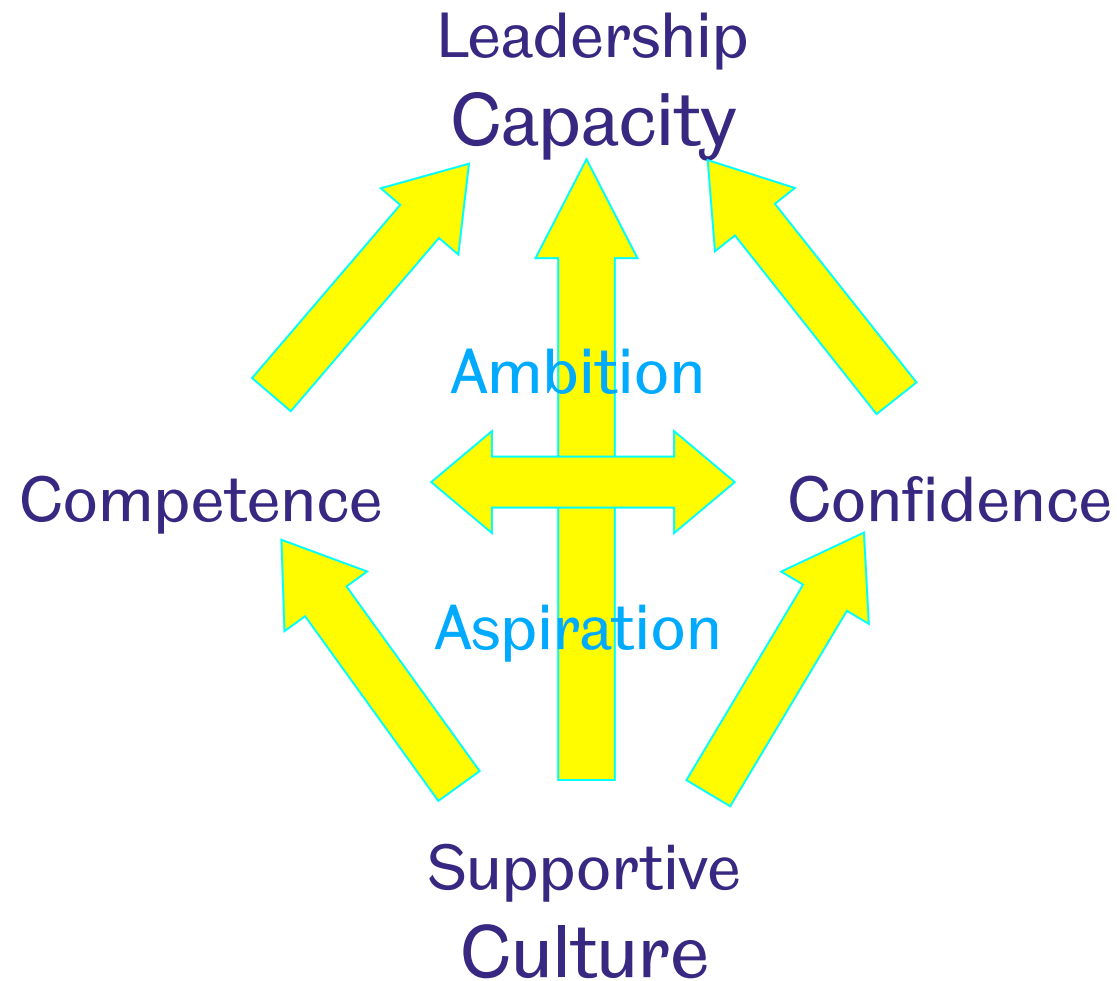
Key factors affecting leadership development in libraries



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Creating a climate for leaders to thrive

How many Research Libraries in the UK can genuinely claim to be ‘**Learning Organisations**’?

A definition of the Learning Organisation

‘Creating an environment where the behaviours and practices involved in continuous development are actively encouraged’

(Peter Honey and Alan Mumford, 1991)

Characteristics of a ‘learning library’

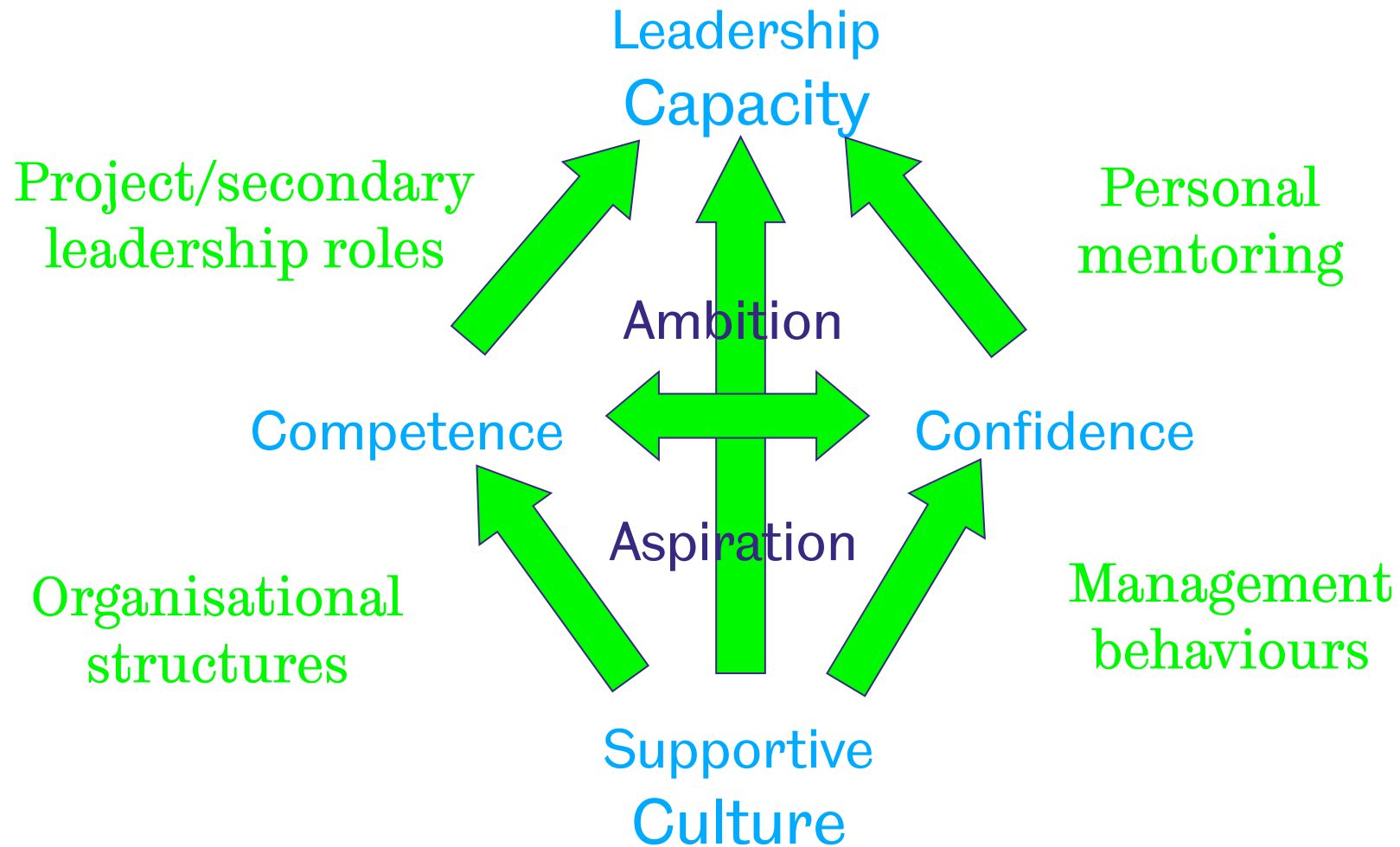
- People view mistakes as opportunities to learn, rather than as occasions for individual blame
- Colleagues use email, blogs and team meetings to exchange information and share new insights
- Line managers allocate tasks in ways that help to stretch staff, enrich jobs and develop skills
- Senior staff often engage in development events

Characteristics of a learning library (2)

- Service development projects are recognised as opportunities for people to take on new roles
- Organisational structures are designed that give staff experience in leading teams and groups
- The management style is open and participative
- People are regularly exposed to new thinking
- Experienced staff are mentors and role models



Conclusion



Leadership Development means Organisation Development