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Dilemmas: Leadership in Public Services: Bridging the Management Gap

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Aim and Context

• Exploring theories and methods for transformational leadership
• Long term research – more than a decade – in three library organisations (North America)
• Information Technology developments as catalyst for needed organisational changes, including roles and relationships, and as a means
Guiding theories

- **Systems Thinking**
  - soft systems design; inclusive and participatory; iterative evaluation;

- **Information Management**
  - Informed Learning theory; intentional use of information to learn, collective reflection on information practices

- **Enabling structures and processes**
  - information exchange, reflective dialogue, knowledge creation, and action
Processes for Organisational Meaning model

information exchange, reflective dialogue, knowledge creation, and action
Inclusive methods – Soft Systems Methodology

- Rich Picture renderings of
  - present situation(s)
  - visions for the future
  - relationships, processes, structures

... to enable dialogue, reflection … and decision on action
Examples – the library as a work place
Example – modes of communication
Benefits

• multi-level exploration of unstructured real-world problematical situations through seeing the system as a whole
• continuing inquiry and ongoing evaluation
• evidence-based decision making and action taking
• collaborative culture of inter-professional dialogue and reflection
Results so far –

*Informed Systems Methodology*

- Systems Thinking
- Using information to learn
- Design for information and knowledge exchange
- Information Technology as enabler for new ways of acting and providing services
- Transferable - enables an agile ‘informed’ environment for continuous co-design of organizational futures
However, dilemmas (some)

- Organizational dilemmas due to developments in information technology and in its use
  - traditional roles irreversibly altered due to new expectations
  - leadership decentralized and transformational

  How to balance !?

- not everyone comfortable in shared leadership, i.e., decision making roles and responsibilities
- still need for centralized leadership and separable by formal position
Thank you for your attention!

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Selected References


