Leadership and Management Competencies:
Lessons from the National Occupational Standards

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Abstract
The pros and cons of a competency/standards approach to leadership and management development have been under debate for some time. Whilst many people now question the validity of this approach, organisations in all sectors continue developing their own frameworks and the government encourages and promotes occupational standards.

In the current paper the authors draw upon their experiences of working alongside consultants developing the new National Occupational Standards in Management and Leadership, and a review of competency frameworks employed by leading private and public sector organisations in Europe, to present some theoretical and practical reflections on this approach.

Our experiences have led us to conclude that whilst the development of competencies and standards can be a valuable way of encouraging individuals and organisations to consider their approach to management and leadership development, it is in their application that difficulties can occur. When working with competencies and standards there is frequently a temptation to apply them deductively to assess, select and measure leaders rather than inductively to describe effective leadership practice and stimulate debate.

With an increasing awareness of the emergent and relational nature of leadership we conclude that where these models are reported to be valuable, it is not where they are used to define a comprehensive set of attributes of “leaders”, but rather where they offer a “lexicon” with which individuals, organisations, consultants and other agents can debate the nature of ‘leadership’ and the associated values and relationships within their organisations.

Keywords
Leadership, management, development, competencies, standards, frameworks
Introduction

The notion of management competence\(^1\) owes much of its origin to the work of McBer consultants for the American Management Association in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The aim of this work was “to explain some of the differences in general qualitative distinctions of performance (e.g. poor versus average versus superior managers) which may occur across specific jobs and organisations as a result of certain competencies which managers share” (Boyatzis, 1982, p9), with a job competency being defined as “an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job” (ibid, p21).

This concept was widely adopted as a basis for management education and development in the UK following the Review of Vocational Qualifications report in 1986 (De Ville, 1986) and continues to be widely promoted. Following the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership research (CEML, 2002), for example, the government pledged to address the national management and leadership deficit through a range of initiatives to increase demand and improve supply of management and leadership development (DfES, 2002). As these initiatives are rolled-out across the country the emphasis on evidence-based policy, measurable performance outcomes and consistency of approach encourages increased reliance on government-endorsed models, frameworks and standards\(^2\).

Two of the most influential generic frameworks recently developed in the UK are the Investors in People Leadership and Management Model (IIP, 2003) and the National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Management and Leadership (MSC, 2004). Both of these build upon existing and recognised standards, but where they differ is in the increasing emphasis on ‘leadership’ as well as management. Similar initiatives are underway in other sectors of UK activity, including the National Standards for Headteachers, NHS Leadership Qualities Framework, Defence Leadership Framework, as well as numerous other public and private sector frameworks.

In this paper, the authors will draw on their involvement in the development of the most recent set of NOS in management and leadership, along with a review of leadership competency frameworks, to highlight the methodological, theoretical and pragmatic weaknesses of this approach and explore alternative ways of addressing management and leadership assessment and development within organisations.

Common Critiques of the Standards/Competency Approach

Since its introduction as an approach to management and leadership development and selection, the standards/competency approach, whilst widely adopted in practice has been subject to extensive critique by academics and practitioners\(^3\).

To summarise, the literature identifies at least five major weaknesses of the approach. Firstly it is criticised for being overly reductionist: “it has been extensively criticised for weaknesses in its ability to represent occupations which are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty, unpredictability and discretion, and its arguable tendency – contrary to the aims of the model on which it is based to atomise work roles rather than represent them holistically” (Lester, 1994, p28). Thus, it is argued that standards tend to fragment the management role into constituent elements rather than representing it as an integrated whole. Whilst this simplification and objectification of

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1 Previous authors have sometimes distinguished between the notions of competence, competencies and standards. In this article we will treat these all as part of the same general approach to management and leadership within organisations as they share a large number of common features: namely an attempt to isolate and evaluate the qualities required of effective managers and leaders, use of a functional analysis methodology and a rationalist epistemology.

2 Whilst this may have limited impact within large private sector organisations it does mean that public-sector organisations, and those dependent on public-sector subsidy, are increasingly required to subscribe to the governmental agenda for leadership and management development.

3 Many of these critiques have been aimed at frameworks other than the NOS in Management, however, the authors feel that their relevance is more widely applicable.
management is one of the main attractions of the competency approach, what is represented is far removed from the actual reality of being a manager (Lester, 1994; Grugulis, 1997).

Secondly, standards are criticised for being overly universalistic. A quote from the Management Standards Centre “whatever the size of your organisation, you will find the standards have been written to meet your needs” (MSC website, 2003), implies an assumption that the management standards are equally relevant to managers in small and large organisations, senior or junior positions, different industrial sectors, different situations and facing different challenges. Whilst there may be some evidence to support a set of more generic leadership and management qualities, it would be foolhardy to expect all situations to demand the same type of leadership response.

A third criticism is the manner in which standards may reinforce rather than challenge traditional ways of thinking about management (Lester, 1994). Their focus on current ‘best practice’ means that they may date quickly and, in effect, represent “driving using the rear view mirror” (Cullen, 1992). Thus, standards can hinder rather than encourage a reconsideration of the manner in which management is conceived and applied within organisations, especially with regards to those aspects of the job that are prone to change (e.g. the impact of new technologies and globalisation).

A fourth criticism is the manner in which standards tend to focus on measurable behaviours and outcomes to the exclusion of more subtle qualities, interactions and situational factors. Thus it is argued that the very processes of evidence gathering and assessment demanded by the standards approach may actually inhibit organisational learning and development by promoting a focus on observable behaviours and indicators to the exclusion of less overt aspects such as values, beliefs and relationships (Bell et al., 2002).

And a fifth common criticism of the standards approach is its rather limited and mechanistic approach to education: “In a sense the problem at the heart of the standards was that they avowedly offered training rather than education. Whereas training endeavours to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform job-related tasks and to improve job performance in a direct way, education is a process whose prime purposes are to impart knowledge and develop cognitive abilities” (Brundrett, 2000, p364).

Further criticisms could be cited in addition to those of reductionism, universalism, traditionalism, behaviourism and functionalist development, however the aim of the current article is not to dismiss the approach out-of-hand but rather to reconsider its place within management and leadership development, selection and assessment.

**Development of the New NOS in Management and Leadership**

NOS in Management were first introduced in the UK in 1992 to address the relatively low level of education and training of UK managers in relation to their overseas counterparts, by providing a framework for the evaluation and development of management capability. Much has already been written about the process of their development (e.g. Holmes, 1993) and their effectiveness (e.g. Winterton and Winterton, 1997), as well as numerous critiques of the standards and competency approach more generally (see previous section).

Despite (or perhaps in response to) these criticisms, and following government calls for an inclusion of the skills of leadership, the Management Standards Centre commissioned a revision of the existing NOS in management in 2003. The new standards are intended to represent both a “world class” benchmark of best practice in management and leadership and as the basis for the NVQ and SVQ (National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications) awards in management. It is also anticipated that the standards will form the basis for other professional qualifications in management and leadership, including the Chartered Manager award from the Chartered Institute of Management.

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4 Interestingly, this comment has now been removed from the website, perhaps reflecting renewed consideration of the universalistic model.
In early 2003 the Management Standards Centre completed an occupational mapping exercise and developed a “functional map” of management and leadership (Figure 1) that provided a framework within which the new management and leadership standards could be situated.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

This map supersedes the previous key role model (MSC, 1997) and divides management and leadership into six key functions: providing direction, facilitating change, achieving results, working with people, using resources, and managing self & personal skills. For each of these elements the framework defines outcomes, behaviours, knowledge & understanding and skills.

The mapping exercise is crucial to the whole process of standards development, because it names the activities or functions that will be measured. Other things that leaders do will not be noticed; and other activities that give rise to leadership (for example, things done to leaders rather than by them – such as dependent adulation or envious sabotage). The functional map claims to represent the topography of leadership; but like any map it records some features and obscures others – to exploit the metaphor, this may show us the motorways, but not the contours. It is thus important to consider how the map was constructed (on the basis of careful surveys of the ‘landscape’, one would hope); and what features the MSC were interested in. Unfortunately these were not discussions to which the authors were party and we will not explore these issues much further in this article.

To accelerate the process of standards development, the MSC recruited a different set of consultants to work on standards for each key function of the functional map. The authors of this article were approached by the consultant charged with developing the standards on “providing direction” (which comprised the elements of “developing a vision for the future”, “gaining commitment and providing leadership” and “providing governance”) to provide input on the necessary leadership elements. By way of contribution we compiled a report summarising significant leadership theory, presenting a range of leadership qualities frameworks used across the public and private sector, and highlighting some more emergent approaches to leadership and management development (Bolden et al., 2003). Following this report, the consultant modified and updated the previous standards. A subsequent phase of research involved discussing the draft standards with a selection of interviewees to gain their reactions. It is interesting to note however that, at no point in this process was there a discussion with consultants developing other parts of the standards, nor was there any explicit discussion between the authors and the consultant over how standards could be developed from the review and interview materials provided. This is particularly significant when one considers that one of the primary objectives of the standards approach is to provide a “transparency” of procedures and a holistic overview of the managerial role.

Review of leadership theory and frameworks

Our review of leadership theory covered the main developments in leadership thinking from the trait approach through the behavioural and contingency schools, situational leadership, transactional and transformational leadership and distributed leadership. In addition, we compared nine public sector, nine private sector and eight generic leadership and management frameworks currently in use, as well as a selection of leadership development programmes (Bolden et al., 2003). From this review we concluded that a somewhat moderated version of transformational leadership (e.g. Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994) tends to be promoted in most frameworks. Whilst many go beyond simple definitions of behaviours, to consider the cognitive, affective and inter-personal qualities of leaders, the role of followers is usually only acknowledged in a rather simplistic, unidirectional manner. Leadership, therefore, is conceived as a set of values, qualities and behaviours exhibited by the leader that encourage the participation, development, and commitment of followers. It is remarkable, however, how few of the frameworks we reviewed (only 8 out of 26) referred to the leader’s ability to “listen” and none mentioned the word “follow” (following, followers, etc.). It’s almost as if leaders might exist in splendid isolation, with no need for
meaningful relationship with others, let alone require the belief commitment or acquiescence of others.

The leader (as post holder) is thus promoted as the source of leadership. He/she is seen to act as an energiser, catalyst and visionary equipped with a set of abilities (communication, problem-solving, people management, decision making, etc.) that can be applied across a diverse range of situations and contexts. Whilst contingency and situational leadership factors may be considered, they are not generally viewed as barriers to an individuals’ ability to lead under different circumstances (they simply need to apply a different combination of skills). Fewer than half of the frameworks reviewed referred directly to the leaders’ ability to respond and adapt his/her style to different circumstances.

In addition to “soft” skills, the leader is also expected to display excellent information processing, project management, customer service and delivery skills, along with proven business and political acumen. They build partnerships, walk the talk, show incredible drive and enthusiasm, and get things done. Furthermore, the leader demonstrates innovation, creativity and thinks “outside the box”. They are entrepreneurs who identify opportunities - they like to be challenged and they’re prepared to take risks.

Of interest, too, is the emphasis on the importance of qualities such as honesty, integrity, empathy, trust and valuing diversity. The leader is expected to show a true concern for people that is drawn from a deep level of self-awareness, personal reflection and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998).

This almost iconographic notion of the leader, as a multi-talented individual with diverse skills, personal qualities and a large social conscience, possesses a number of difficulties. Firstly it represents almost a return to the early “great man” or “heroic” notions of leadership, which venerate the individual to the exclusion of the team and organisation. Secondly when you attempt to combine attributes from across a range of frameworks the result is an unwieldy, almost over-powering list of qualities such as that generated during the CEML research (Perren and Burgoyne, 2001), that identified 83 management and leadership attributes, condensed from a list of over 1000. And thirdly there is little evidence in practice that the “transformational” leader is any more effective with regards to improving organisational performance than his/her alternatives (e.g. Gronn, 1995).

To a large extent these difficulties are a direct result of the functional analysis methodology central to the standards approach. This method generates a list of competencies from analysis of numerous managers jobs – the result, therefore, is not a list of activities/behaviours demonstrated by any one individual, rather an averaging out across multiple individuals. Imagine if a similar technique was used to determine the characteristics of the “lovable man”: he’d be caring, strong, gentle, attractive, kind, rich, etc. – in effect an unlikely, if not impossible, combination! In effect, the standards seek the specific but describe the general, and aim to explain social interactions but look only at individual causes.

Whilst personal qualities of the leader are undoubtedly important they are unlikely to be sufficient in themselves for the emergence and exercise of leadership. Furthermore, the manner in which these qualities translate into behaviour and group interaction is likely to be culturally specific and thus depend on a whole host of factors, such as the nature of the leader, followers, task, organisational structure, and culture (national, corporate and group).

Review of the draft standards

Following our review of leadership theory and competency frameworks the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with eight experienced managers from a range of sectors (including manufacturing, education, finance and defence) and organisation types (public and private sector, large and small, national and multi-national, etc.) and two academic specialists in management learning and development to gain their reactions to the draft standards on “providing direction”. These interviews were supplemented by a number of less formal discussions with other managers, academics and policy makers about the standards approach more generally.
Whilst interviewees demonstrated a range of opinions, a number of general reactions to the NOS became evident. On a positive note, the functional map was quite well received (especially by practising managers) as a representation of the management and leadership role. On a less positive note, there was an almost universal resistance to the excessive degree of detail provided within individual units. Whilst it was agreed that this might offer a useful directory or checklist of management activities, it was felt to be unworkable as practical tool. Furthermore, the Providing Direction part of the framework was felt to be too static (fixed) to represent leadership and management in complex and changing environments and failed to highlight the importance of self-awareness (perhaps because this was covered elsewhere in the functional map), reflection and shared leadership. There was also a feeling that the standards did not really say anything new about management and leadership and could not be viewed as motivational or inspirational.

Only one interviewee showed any real interest in using the standards in their organisation and in this case, specific units would be distributed to selected members of the management team to prompt conversations about the jobs people are doing. In this way the standards would be adapted to the help describe the requirements of the organisation rather than used to assess the leadership and management capability of any one individual.

With regards to competency frameworks more generally, the very fact that many organisations will go to great effort and expense to develop their own leadership framework is perhaps evidence in itself that there is no “one size fits all” model, even if there does seem to be a fair degree of similarity between them. Perhaps, in this case, it is not so much the framework in itself that is important, but the process by which it is developed.

For many of the larger organisations with which we spoke, a custom-made leadership competency framework is an integral element of the leadership development process – whereby it is used to define the content and mechanism of programme design and delivery; and is proposed, by the organisation, to help individuals measure and explore their own level of development. It frequently forms the basis of the 360-degree feedback process, by which subjects can monitor their progress and identify personal learning and development needs, and also underlies assessment and appraisals.

A number of organisations expressed the importance of keeping the framework to a manageable number of dimensions (up to seven or eight) so that it remains easier to operationalise. Experience of larger frameworks (such as the previous NOS in management) confirms that longer lists may result in a box-ticking mentality that does little, if anything, to enhance leadership and management capability.

**Discussion**

Our research indicates that the new NOS in Management and Leadership are likely to fall foul of many of the shortcomings of the earlier standards. This is disappointing, as the opportunity of addressing these weaknesses could have led to the development of a tool with far wider applicability and impact. It is true that there have been some valuable improvements including: a functional map that seems more intuitively aligned with the management role, the inclusion of some of the softer skills and qualities of leadership, and a framework that is marginally more flexible than its predecessor. However, accusations of reductionism, universalism and behaviouralism remain equally valid.

Whilst this could be taken as reason to abandon the standards/competency approach, it raises two, perhaps more, interesting questions: (1) why does this remain such an appealing, popular and (occasionally) effective tool for identifying and developing management and leadership capability?

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5 For example, the “Lead People” unit included “take personal responsibility for making things happen” and “present information clearly, concisely and accurately” as behaviours underpinning effective performance. To what extent do these represent management and leadership competencies rather than competencies that would be expected from all members of staff? The revised standards have subsequently removed these behaviours, though they might nevertheless be considered necessary, if not sufficient.
within organisations? and (2) given the popularity and widespread availability of this approach, how could it be adapted to make it more effective? To address these questions we need to explore the underlying assumptions of this approach.

Salaman (2004) identifies four fundamental characteristics of the competency approach. Firstly, by describing the management/leadership role, the competency approach puts into place a framework for measuring, monitoring, comparing and regulating the behaviour of managers. Secondly, competencies require a translation from strategy, to organisation, and to individual manager – frameworks thus disguise or assume key organisational assumptions, objectives and priorities, which may remain hidden and unquestioned. Thirdly, as well as defining qualities of the new manager, competencies also emphasise ongoing improvement, thus “the first management competence is commitment to the competence framework itself and, thereafter, acceptance of responsibility for self-regulation and self-management in terms of these competences” (Salaman, 2004, p71). And fourthly, the competence approach expects much more of managers than before – transferring responsibility for maintaining motivation and development, from HR specialists to the individual manager.

This critique highlights a number of significant organisational effects of a competency approach, including a means for disguising and disseminating organisational control within an apparently impartial, rational framework for management and leadership development and selection. But here lies the problem: does this offer a new and sustainable way of managing and maintaining organisational effectiveness or is it simply misleading? Salaman thinks the latter: “… the problems it promised to resolve are not capable of resolution and its promise consisted largely of a sleight of hand whereby organizational problems were simply restated as management responsibilities” (Salaman, 2004, p75). Watson offers an additional concern “because of the ever-present tendency for unintended consequences to occur, [formally rational means] often turn out not to lead to the goals for which they were intended (thus making them materially irrational). In fact, the means may subvert the very ends for which they were designed” (Watson, 1987, p.49 cited in Grugulis, 1997).

Such views lead one to ask what are the alternatives to the traditional rationalist approach to competencies and standards, especially with regards to management and leadership development? Possible solutions include the interpretivist, post-structural and psychodynamic approaches.

Alternative ways of thinking about management and leadership competencies

Whilst the dominant rationalist approach to leadership and management standards/competencies views the worker and the work as discrete entities (a dualist ontology), an interpretivist approach argues that they are inextricably linked through the persons’ lived experience of the world (Sandberg, 2000). This approach thus utilises methods that explore the social construction of reality (constructivist) rather than a “scientific” analysis of the work and/or the worker (positivist or realist). It encourages a consideration of the qualitative nature of management and leadership rather than a quantitative assessment of levels of competence. In his analysis of research with car assembly workers, Sandberg (2000) concludes that work competencies arise as a result of the worker’s conception of what is the ultimate purpose of his/her work rather than any independently defined set of capabilities. He thus proposes that what is important is to engage the worker in dialogue to reveal and clarify his/her purpose at work rather than presenting him/her with a set of competencies to acquire. By ensuring clarity of purpose, it is argued that, the appropriate competencies will emerge within a given situation. Thus competencies can be considered as socially defined rather than ‘absolute’ things to be acquired.

A similar view arises from a post-structural approach, which sees leadership as “a process of becoming, which only finds exemplification within an actual occasion of experience” (Wood et al., 2004, p14). Here the notion of capturing objective measures of management and leadership capability is alien, as is the notion that any such characteristics could ever be attributable to a given individual. The implication for standards and competencies, to draw upon the earlier metaphor, is that the map is continually changing – different facets will emerge and dissolve depending on the
situational context and the process of interaction between individuals, the organisation and the environment. The challenge here, therefore, for a competency approach would be to capture the processes of leadership and management and to track the ebbs and flows within a given situation.

A psychodynamic approach takes a different point of departure. It focuses on the inner needs of individuals and organisations, arguing that there is a “tension, even conflict, between organisational development (the needs of the enterprise) and professional development of managers (the needs of the individual)” (Lawrence, 1985, p233). It goes on to identify three levels of primary task within organisations:

“The normative primary task is the task that people in an organisation ought to pursue (usually according to the definition of superordinate authority),

The existential primary task that they believe they are carrying out, and

The phenomenal primary task that it is hypothesised that they are engaged in and of which they may not be consciously aware.” (Lawrence and Robinson, 1975).

Lawrence (1985) argues that when applied to management development, the normative primary task is about ensuring a supply of trained and motivated managers to ensure the long-term survival of the enterprise and the existential primary task is to act as a “civilising” influence within the organisation and to represent the enterprise as impartial in selecting and promoting talent. He then hypothesizes that the phenomenal primary tasks of management development are to: act as a buffer between organisational and individual needs (by offering a framework for career progression it offers hope to individuals and control mechanisms for the organisation); and as an “institutional system for defending individuals against the anxiety of death” (ibid, p238) (by offering a means for sustaining both individual and organisational influences beyond the normal span of their career and/or life expectancy).

Overall, Lawrence argues that management (and leadership) development is a means for making organisational development palatable to individuals by hooking into deep-seated concerns about personal development, influence and mortality. He proposes, however, that this can be problematic as it can lead to “unsophisticated dependency in managers that cannot in the long term serve the best interest of any enterprise that has to stay in business in an environment that is increasingly characterised by uncertainty and turbulence” (Lawrence, 1985, p240). He thus proposes that we need to reconsider the nature of management development, to reach a model that best fits the needs of both the organisation and the individual manager.

Reconceptualising the application of standards and competencies

The findings of our review of leadership theory and development frameworks are very similar to those of another recent review of leadership and leadership development literature for the Learning and Skills Research Centre (Rodgers et al., 2003; LSDA, 2003). The authors developed a useful model for the consideration of both leadership and leadership development along two dimensions: individual to collective and prescribed to emergent (see Figure 2).

It is proposed that the vast majority of current leadership initiatives lie within Cell 1 of the grid (prescribed and individual), with most of the remainder in Cell 2 (emergent and individual). Very few initiatives address the right-hand side of the grid and the authors challenge us to consider a more “collective” notion of leadership and leadership development such as that promoted in the distributed leadership literature (e.g. Spillane, 2001).

Despite the apparent incompatibility between competency-based approaches and more emergent and collective concepts of leadership and leadership development, however, it is not uncommon to find emergent and collective methodologies being used within programmes closely associated with a competencies/qualities framework. Various parts of the NHS, for example, have promulgated competency frameworks for management and leadership, the latest of which is the NHS Leadership Qualities Framework (NHS Leadership Centre, 2002). The NHS Leadership Centre commissioned this framework from the Hay Group, and it has for almost 2 years been deployed to guide many of
the Centre’s leadership development initiatives. However this is not to say that all development programmes slavishly abide by the framework – there are many which assume a more open-ended process of development. In fact the NHS has an honourable tradition of imaginative and practical programs which respond directly to the felt need of its managers (e.g. Blackler and Kennedy, 2003) – even if in retrospect they might be justified by reference to the competency framework. Similar trends can be observed at the National College for School Leadership, which is increasingly moving from a leadership competencies approach (Hay McBer, 1999) towards a more fluid leadership development framework that specifies a strategy for developing school leaders and promoting leadership at all levels (NCSL, 2003).

Conclusions
At the heart of the standards/competencies approach is a desire to be both descriptive and normative - this is both a key to its popularity and unpopularity. Whilst there can be great practical benefits from describing effective practice, the manner in which this is done in the current NOS in management and leadership is not relevant to most managers lived experience. Likewise the normative function of the management standards qualifications in terms of specifying the behaviours and characteristics required of managers, whilst useful in principle fails to be very effective in practice (e.g. management NVQs are not widely endorsed in business).

The authors of this article believe that many of the difficulties with standards and competency frameworks lie more in the manner in which they are applied rather than in their content per se. It is obvious that, as a tool, they can offer a powerful means for engaging organisations and the individuals within them in a dialogue about the nature of leadership and management; they can offer guidance and examples of good practice that can prove helpful in the development of managers and leaders; and they can provide a structure that offers a sense of security for both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Our experience and research, however, imply that it is the journey rather than the destination that is most important. If used inductively, as a means for opening a dialogue about management and leadership within organisations, rather than deductively, for prescribing what managers and leaders should do, standards and competencies can offer a way of addressing both individual and organisational needs within a situational context.

The use of different epistemological viewpoints, as lenses through which to approach the discussion, could help the organisation and managers to get beyond a simplistic description of behaviours to a broader appreciation of the cognitive, affective and relational aspects of leadership and management and particularly the collective, moral and emotional dimensions of such processes. Attempts should be made to explicate the underlying assumptions implicit within any framework to enable an open discussion about the purposes and intent of both organisational and individual development.

We also believe that highly generic frameworks, such as the NOS in management and leadership, whilst a useful starting point, will fail to address the organisational context of management and leadership competence in isolation. They need to be developed, adapted and compared to company specific frameworks and used as an initial “lexicon” for discussions. The challenge is to keep the conversation open – as soon as the framework is finalised it loses its adaptability and can begin to establish barriers to innovative and creative management and leadership expression and development; as well as becoming rapidly outdated as a map of the terrain.

Standards and competencies should thus aim be more inclusive. They should be tailored and modified for specific organisations and their staff; should be more accessible (and condensed); and should aim to be inspirational rather than descriptive.

Finally, extensive research is required to explore the links between management and leadership competencies, development and performance. Without this, any investment in a standards/competency approach remains a leap of faith.
References


Figures

Figure 1 - Functional Map of Management and Leadership (Management Standards Centre, 2003)

Figure 2 – LSRC Leadership Framework (Source: LSDA, 2003)