

Andrews University

School of Education

REFLECTING ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP THROUGH  
TECHNOLOGY FACILITATION AND COLLABORATION

In Partial Fulfillment

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LEAD 638: Issues in Leadership Theory

by

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## INTRODUCTION

“I don’t really think of myself as a leader.” With this attitude, I began the Andrews University Leadership program. Yet my classmates and regional group members have repeatedly affirmed me. “You are always a resource person and ready to help. You are a real servant leader,” (Wu, 2008, September 6). Another classmate said,

A leader by the simplest of definitions is one who influences at least one other (follower). From the flood of affirmations I trust you now realize that you have many more followers than you imagined even in the Leadership programme, not to mention your church, workplace and professional circles. What is even more important than the number of followers and/or people served is that you are clearly (by acclamation) a servant leader - with the hallmark of humility. I have been the personal recipient of your servant leadership on several occasions since we first met in Summer 07” (Kostka, 2008, September 8)

As I studied leadership theory in the fall of 2008, I learned that my view of leadership was too narrow. I believed leadership could only happen in traditional positions of power. But then I learned about referent and expert power. I discovered that I learn with referent power through my relationships with others and with expert power, through my knowledge and expertise (French & Raven, 1959). I do not have formal authority or legitimate power over others, so I cannot use reward or coercive power. But these forms of power are distasteful to me. Through my study of leadership theory, I have found that the concept of servant leadership best fits my beliefs and leadership situation.

In this paper, I reflect on my work using technology to facilitate learning and group process, and collaborating with others via technology tools to provide training, workshops, and learning community spaces. This work is undergirded with the attitude and stance of servant leadership. In this paper I make connections between servant

leadership and collaboration theory, and between servant leadership and facilitation theory. Finally I end with new practices inspired and directions for future study.

## COLLABORATION THEORY AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

What is servant leadership? Does a general theory of collaboration actually exist? Can connections be made between servant leadership and collaboration? In this section I attempt to answer these questions, describe two collaborative situations where I share leadership, and then make connections between collaboration theory and servant leadership.

### **Servant Leadership**

The great leader is seen as the servant first, and then as a leader (Greenleaf, 1995). Spears, in an introduction to Greenleaf's essays, identifies ten characteristics of the servant leader that he views as "of critical importance, central to the development of servant-leaders" (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 5). They are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. In reading about these characteristics, I hear echoes of situational leadership – caring for the growth of followers and adapting to their needs to bring them to the next level (Hersey & Blanchard, 1995). I hear echoes of transformational and charismatic leadership – casting a challenging, purposeful, meaningful vision and using persuasion instead of coercion to bring followers along the path (Avolio & Bass, 1999). I hear echoes of innovative management – the future of management - in building community, listening, and caring for people (Hamel & Breen, 2007).

Greenleaf asserts that “leadership is initiating – going out ahead to show the way” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 32). Servant leadership entails leading from a sense of personal significance, meaning, and entheos (Greenleaf, 1998), from an authentic self. The principles of servant leadership challenge me to consider my soul, my purpose, my meaning. To lead from an awareness of those around me, the needs, the opportunities to serve. To have a strong self that is capable of serving. To see myself as a steward of my work, my coworkers, my followers, my ideas which all belong to God (Psalm 24:1). The concept of stewardship encourages humility when considering work, success, and leadership. Greenleaf’s writings challenge those who have power to choose to be a servant. It seems this would be a lifelong struggle for a leader. Something that could not be once achieved and then "rested in". While this may be the most difficult part of servant leadership, it seems to be the most important. Greenleaf believed even making small strides in this area is worth the effort.

Laub (1999) attempted to operationalize a definition of servant leadership and create a tool to measure servant leadership in organizations. He organized the concepts of servant leadership into six areas: valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership and sharing leadership. Servant leaders value people by believing in them, putting them first, and by listening receptively. Servant leaders develop people by providing for their learning and growth, by leading by example, and by encouraging them. Servant leadership means building community by enhancing relationships, working collaboratively, and valuing the differences of others. Servant leaders are authentic by being transparent, by being learners, and by maintaining integrity. They provide leadership by envisioning the future, taking the initiative, and

clarifying goals. Finally, servant leaders share leadership by sharing both power and status. They lead from personal influence rather than positional authority (pp. 46-48).

### **Collaboration Theory**

Many authors have studied collaboration, yet the work to define collaboration is just beginning. John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis (1998) attempted to define collaboration, describe the challenges of studying it, and call for development of collaboration theory. Wood and Gray (1991) suggest the following definition of collaboration:

Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain (p. 146).

In developing their theory of collaboration, they emphasize the role of the convener of the collaboration, as well as the preconditions necessary for collaboration. The convener may possess formal authority and be perceived as fair. Or the formal collaboration may be convened by a mandate from a powerful convener. With informal collaboration, the convener may be trusted and begin work through facilitation. Or the convener may be credible and begins collaborative work through persuasion. Wood and Gray (1991) show the importance of how collaboration fits into an organization or individual's goals to provide access to resources, to efficiently use resources, and to create collective rules around using resources. They also address the need to understand control and complexity in what makes an organization or individual increase complexity in collaboration and relinquish control. Finally, collaboration raises questions about how people and organizations negotiate self-interests and collective interests. While these concepts are difficult, it may be that servant leadership adds some understanding to why people and organizations may collaborate.

More recently, Elliott (2007) studied global, technology-facilitated collaborations such as the open source movement and Wikipedia to understand and create a theoretical framework for mass collaborations. Elliott's work is complex and detailed, and was created in collaboration with a global audience. The work continues online at MetaCollab with an open research and metacollaboration to understand collaboration (MetaCollab, 2009).

Elliott (2007) defines collaboration as “the process of two or more people collectively creating emergent, shared representations of a process and or outcome that reflects the input of the total body of contributors (p. 31). Elliott makes a distinction between collaboration, cooperation and coordination. Cooperation includes coordination, and collaboration includes both of them. The uniqueness of collaboration, in Elliott's view, is that something is actually created together.

More specifically, Elliott is interested in mass collaboration, where many people collaborate to create something, such as an online encyclopedia (Wikipedia), or software such as open source Apache web server software. He uses the biological concept of stigmergy to explain mass collaboration.

Stigmergy is a class of behavior in which collective activity is coordinated through the individuals' response to and modification of their local environment – one agent's modification becomes another's cue (p. 8).

This concept has also been referred to as swarm intelligence. For example, stigmergic collaboration happens on Wikipedia when one person edits a page (modification) and a notification is automatically sent to another person who is watching that page (cue). The second person then responds and also modifies the page. In this way, collective activity is being coordinated through the wiki environment.

Elliott's theory of collaboration includes a focus on the participants, and their personality and relationships. Communication and the technology tools necessary for mass communication and collaboration are also an important part of his theory. Communication happens through social, technical, and biological networks, and communication includes negotiating turn-taking, indirect communication, and negotiation. He also focuses on human agency, or the faculty of an agent or acting and its varying role in differing contexts. The complexity of agency varies based on the complexity of the task.

Finally, Glaser (2005) writes about leading through collaboration. He sees a leader not as a head of an organization, but anyone who wants to help bring solutions to problems. His book is written to give leaders the tools to develop attitudes and skills to "align the organization around learning" (p. ix). In part 1 Glaser emphasizes attitudes. While some may be tempted to skip to the part 2 skills section, his writing on attitudes about coherence, the self, shared meaning, and groupthink lay an important foundation. From there, the skills section teaches the fundamentals of aligning the team, focusing on the vision, finding solutions, and agreeing to the solution.

Glaser (2005) begins with a definition of collaboration: "to work together to solve a problem or create something new" (p. 3). Unlike Elliott (2007), his definition includes problem solving in addition to creation. In addition, Glaser defines coherence as "the condition that exists when individuals are aligned on a given subject or task, and are ready to harness their collective energy to move forward on a common ground solution" (p. 3). Glaser suggests that effective teams have a "joint commitment to shared goals, trust of all members to understand their roles and get the job done, shifting leadership based on task and circumstances, excellent communications, understanding each other's

needs and perspectives, a sense of humor, and willingness to set aside differences and to work together for the greater good” (p. 4). Towards the end of the book, Glaser shifts to calling this “leading by consensus.” He suggests that to lead by consensus, leaders must “demonstrate leadership commitment, develop a vision and keep it in focus, attend to relationships, maintain open and collaborative communications and problem-solving mechanisms, structure the organization to deliver what is promised, and remain mindful of the learning” (p. 175).

The work of these authors on collaboration provides interesting theoretical frameworks from which to examine my own collaborative practice. In the next two sections, I describe two of the largest collaborative activities in my work and leadership.

### **The “Jazz Workshop”**

In this section, I describe the history of the workshop entitled *123 VC, Jazzing Up Your Curriculum with Videoconferencing* and how the workshop happens. In addition, connections to leadership and collaboration theory are shared.

The workshop’s official title is “123 VC: Jazzing Up Your Curriculum with Videoconferencing” but we often shorten it to “Jazz.” The workshop is co-facilitated over videoconferencing with eight to twelve sites participating throughout the week. The leadership consists of lead facilitators, and local facilitators. Each facilitate leads their site in collaboration with the other facilitators. Each lead facilitator has their own team of three or four sites. All the facilitators take turns leading different parts of the workshop. For part of the workshop, work is done locally. For another part of the workshop, learning happens in groups of three to four sites each. For the guest speakers, we connect all eight to twelve sites together. For the small group portion of the workshop, participants meet in small groups with 7 or 8 people at two sites. Figure 1 shows the

different connections graphically. The participants benefit from hearing multiple perspectives and videoconferencing with teachers in their grade level subject area who live in different states, or even another country.

*Jazz Handbook 08, Page 8*

## 123VC: JAZZ Connections (July 2008)

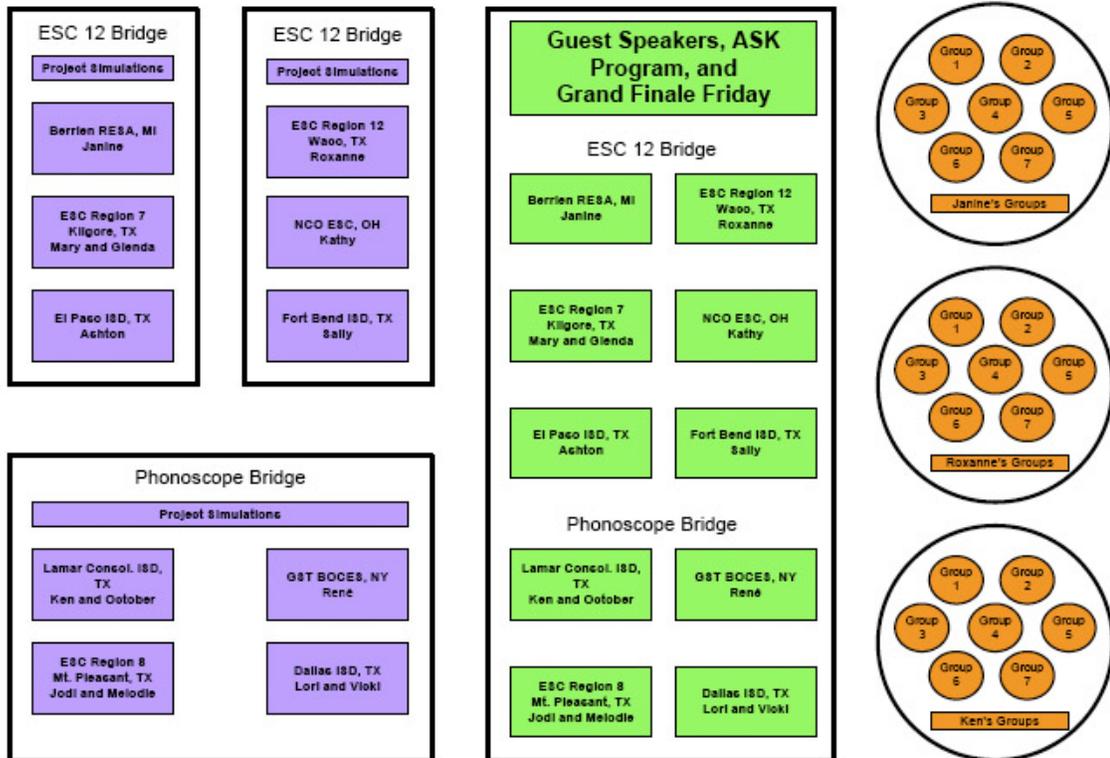
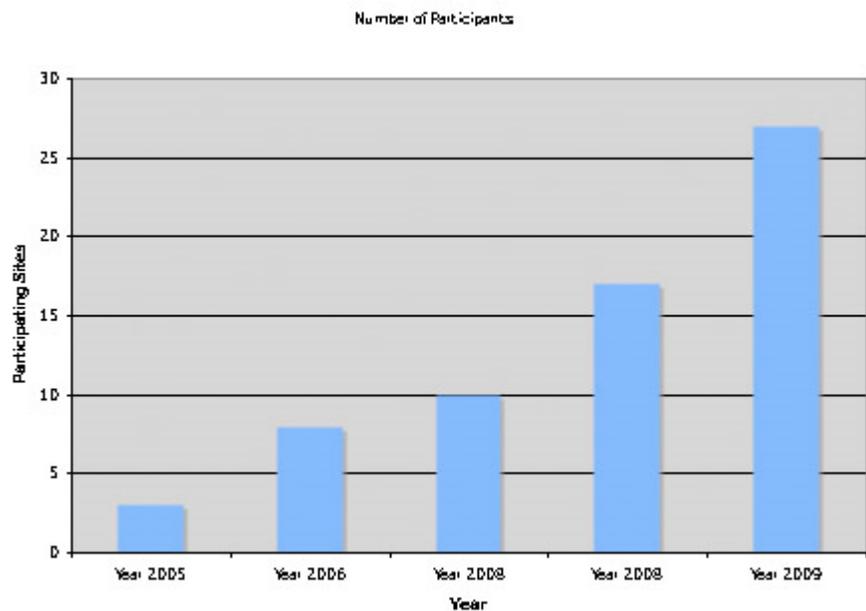


Figure 1. Jazz Connections

In 2004, two educators from Texas took my online course, *Planning Interactive Curriculum Connections* and later met at the Texas Distance Learning Association Conference. In the summer of 2005, they invited me first as a guest speaker to their workshop, and then as discussions continued we decided to connect our three sites together for the workshop using the format described above. In 2006 we grew to eight sites with two lead facilitators, and a new participant, Roxanne Glaser, helped us organize the materials into one participant handbook. In 2007 we added a session in June as well as July, grew to ten sites, and started using an online photo site to build

community. In 2008, I mentored a new lead facilitator, Roxanne Glaser, and we grew to 17 international sites with the addition of Wales. It was our first year with three simultaneous groups as shown in Figure 1. This summer, for 2009, I am mentoring two more lead facilitators, Lori Colwill and Angela Conrad. In addition, we've added the Pacific Standard Timezone with California and British Columbia. This summer we have an estimated 25 participating sites. The explosive growth of the Jazz workshop is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Growth of Jazz**

Interestingly, the first time all five lead facilitators were at the same location was at the Texas Distance Learning Conference in April 2009. This workshop is not only an incredible collaboration, it is a virtual team requiring virtual leadership. Hambley (2005) conducted a mixed methods study on virtual team leadership in face to face meetings, videoconference and chat. Hambley defines a virtual team as a group with specific tasks, shared outcomes, and interdependency. It is not a learning network, community of practice, or web-based interest group. The Jazz workshop has specific tasks and shared

outcomes because together we put on a workshop for over 200 participants each session. The interdependency is built into the design of the workshop as we rely on each other to accomplish the various tasks and instruction throughout the week.

An experimental study on geographically dispersed teams (Baker, 2000) found that the quality of the strategy decision had a significant effect on task performance, and that task performance had an effect on group cohesiveness. Video added a significant impact on the strategy decision, but not on cohesiveness. The text based communication allowed for greater concurrency because many people could talk at the same time. Media synchronicity theory suggests that asynchronous communication is better for less complex tasks which require reflection and minimal collaboration. Synchronous is better for tasks that are more complex and require interdependence and feedback (Dennis & Valacich, 1999). This seems to affirm our methods of working in the Jazz workshop. All tools are used: collaborative document sharing, Twitter, Skype, chat rooms, discussion boards, wikis, and audio conferencing, and both desktop and room based videoconferencing. We pick and choose the tools based on what is needed. For the early planning meetings with 20+ facilitators attending, we use the phone conference supported by a text chat in Skype. The text chat allows for the “side conversation” or supporting conversation to what is covered in the audio review of the content. This way everyone can be involved but it’s more efficient. When we get down to the planning the week before Jazz and the evening debrief sessions with facilitators, we meet with 3-4 facilitators in a 4x4 screen layout via video. Here the video is critical as we plan, debrief, mentor, and problem solve the issues that arose in the workshop that day.

The Jazz workshop is a unique collaboration in that it crosses organizations and was built up from grassroots. It provides a wonderful situation for learning and applying servant leadership and collaboration theory, as will be shown in further discussion.

### **E-Ministry of Pioneer Memorial Church**

In 1997, when we moved to Berrien Springs, I offered to start a web site ministry for Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC). At first we just shared information about the church and its activities. In 1998 we started sharing audio files of the senior pastor's sermons. In 2004, we redesigned the site using a content management system that allowed many people to edit their portion of the website and subsequently won the North American Division eChurch award. During this time, the "collaboration" for the website was closer to cooperation as defined by Elliott (2007). That is, we were working together towards the same end, but without truly co-creating together.

In 2008, the media ministry director at PMC initiated a new site redesign. This change was the beginning of a painful process of relinquishing control to the collective as necessary for collaboration (Elliott, 2007) and true servant leadership which includes sharing leadership (Laub, 1999). Before this time, even though I shared labor with others, I was responsible for the website and a sole leader. I used the term webservant (AWA, 2009), and I served by providing support and web resources to the church, but I was not truly a servant leader. It meant changing from my own little web kingdom to shared leadership with the media ministry director and the pastors. Sharing leadership is another critical component of servant leadership (Laub, 1999). My role changed from being responsible for most of the website, to sharing leadership. I relinquished many weekly nitty gritty tasks, and became involved in more planning and visioning meetings. Now

the collaboration is truly creating a shared representation (Elliott, 2007), the PMC website, with contributions on each page by multiple authors and contributors.

This change of my role occurred over a year, and early in 2009, I began reading about e-ministry for my work in this competency. I learned about the principles behind using the Internet for ministry from the theology of change proposed by Malphurs and Malphurs (2003). Some of the church's functions which are mandated by the Bible include: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer (Acts 2:42); community (Acts 2:44-45); worship and evangelism (v 47). Examples of forms include meeting in house churches (Act 2:46, 8:3, 12:12), meeting in the temple (Acts 2:46). Forms can be understood as the method of ministry. Paul set an example of "becoming all things to all people" and adapting to the needs of those he meant to reach (1 Cor 9:22). Forms may fit along a continuum of legalism to liberty to license. Legalism puts restrictions on the church that aren't found in Scripture (i.e. what time to meet). Liberty is freedom within God's law/Word. License removes any Biblical restrictions. These principles and ideas form the basis of a theology of change and therefore reasoning on why to use the Internet in ministry. Careaga (2001) calls the "global hive of interconnected computers known as the Internet" the "'Roman Road' network of our day" (p. 15). Maybe the Internet is also a main method that God will reach this generation as He did when Jesus came to earth:

When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son. Providence had directed the movements of nations, and the tide of human impulse and influence, until the world was ripe for the coming of the Deliverer. The nations were united under one government. One language was widely spoken, and was everywhere recognized as the language of literature. From all lands the Jews of the dispersion gathered to Jerusalem to the annual feasts. As these returned to the places of their sojourn, they could spread throughout the world the tidings of the Messiah's coming (White, 1898, p. 32).

Malphurs and Malphurs (2003) challenged me to review the ways we are using the Internet for ministry, and the ways that we could be using it. We already use the

Internet to encourage visitors to attend our church, post mission statements, sermons, text concerning faith, provide schedules, meeting times, communications, share photos of events, post youth group material, seek volunteers for congregational work, space for prayer requests, provide a sign-up feature for classes/programs, and webcast worship services.

As I read, I became convicted that we are not currently using online communities and we should be. Malphurs (2003) suggests the use of discussion spaces for study or prayer groups. We have over 3000 people receiving the podcasts. Is there a way we could connect them in to online small groups? We have some other seminars that would make great little online group studies. Careaga (2001) describes a conversation on faith between a boomer, an Xer, and an N-Gener and asks “Could such a discussion happen anywhere besides cyberspace?” (p. 64). How often do these generations even worship together, let alone have a discussion? How can generations be brought together online? Later in the book (p. 92), the author mentions a chat room is staffed by a retired chaplain. This model is working well for the prayer requests from the PMC website, and could be used for online communities/small groups/seminars online as well.

Careaga (2001) describes the online Christian gatherings as being much more like the “primitive church’s house meetings than to the regimented weekly services of most Protestant denominations” (p. 123). These gatherings are focused on experiential faith. Conversation and fellowship can happen with believers online, but can online groups/faith communities challenge people to service in their daily life to those immediately around them? Careaga quotes Jimmy Long that postmoderns have a two step conversion: they are first “converted” to a community - small group or larger community; and then they commit to Christ (p. 154). Careaga suggests that we should first invest time

in a community online. What would/could that look like? He suggests that online evangelists should do the same as any missionary: planting by cultivating relationships, sowing the seed of the gospel, and then reaping the fruit.

When considering the online community challenge, many questions are raised. Is a physical gathering critical for an *ekklesia*? Is an online church “the congregation of the disembodied” (Careaga, 2001, p. 19)? How important is physical presence? Does watching a streaming service constitute “assembly”? What does it mean to “meet together” (Hebrews 10:25)? It seems that whether in physical presence or online, merely “listening or watching” is not enough. We must interact with each other. Interactivity is the medium online, not just passivity (p. 37). How can we incorporate interactivity both in face to face church and online? Small groups are a potential starting place. A young person told Careaga, “the Internet is the way to reach my generation. It is a way for cowards like me to grow in faith privately until we get the strength to say our beliefs out loud” (Careaga, 2001, p. 30).

As a result of this thinking, the web committee is beginning to plan for a fall roll-out of online communities. A full detailed plan is included in the artifacts for this competency. Shared leadership with the media team and pastors is critical (Laub, 1999). In addition to building community, another servant leadership component, we aim to develop people: both the participants in the community and the young adults at Andrews University who will be mentored in ministry and who will mentor the older elders in how to interact online. This will build capacity both of the students and the church leaders who participate in the online community. This plan is moving much closer to collaboration as defined by (Elliott, 2007). The group will be sharing a process and outcome of evangelism, and working together with all participants contributing. This

situation also provides unique opportunities for reflecting on the connections between servant leadership and collaboration.

### **Combining Servant Leadership and Collaboration Theory**

Considering servant leadership and collaboration theory, some interesting connections between the two concepts emerged. In this section, I will use the framework of leader, followers, and situation (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2006) to compare and make connections between servant leadership and theories of collaboration.

Servant leadership, by its definition focuses more on the leader, while collaboration theory focuses more on the “followers”, otherwise known as the collaborators or participants, and the situation in which they collaborate. However, there are some common threads throughout the concepts. The servant leader provides leadership by envisioning the future, by taking initiative and by clarifying goals (Laub, 1999, p. 83). Wood and Gray (1991) emphasize the role of the convener, who establishes, legitimizes and guides the collaborative alliance. The convener must have certain characteristics, including convening power, legitimacy among the stakeholders, an unbiased, even-handed approach to the problem. The convener must also appreciate the value of collaboration and have good visioning and process skills. In addition, Elliott (2007) adds that procedures must be agreed upon and the process and purpose need redefining on a regular basis. Clearly a leader is important to start the collaboration and keep the process continuing. The roles of the servant leader and collaborative convener overlap in the importance of vision, initiative, and clarifying goals. These roles are shared by the lead facilitators in the Jazz workshop and also by the media ministry director and myself at Pioneer Memorial Church.

Servant leadership also includes sharing leadership which intersects beautifully with collaboration theory. The servant shares leadership by facilitating a shared vision, by sharing power and releasing control, and by sharing status and promoting others (Laub, 1999, p. 83). Elliott (2007) emphasizes the important of the individual “relinquishing some control to the collective, including sole authorship” (p. 49). The collaboration requires a commitment to shared resources, power, and talent. “Authority for decisions and actions resides in the group (John-Steiner et al., 1998, p. 776). Clearly the servant leader within a collaboration must share power with each other collaborator.

The followers are much more loosely defined in a collaboration, because everyone is following each other to some extent. In addition, servant leadership addresses the leaders attitude towards the followers instead of the followers themselves. Although in a servant organization, each person is a servant leader (Laub, 1999), so these principles can be applied to each person in a collaboration as well. The servant leader values people by believing in people, by serving other’s needs before his her own, and by receptive, non-judgmental listening (Laub, 1999, p. 83). Collaboration theory emphasizes the valuing of uniqueness and complementary differences between the participants (Elliott, 2007; Wood & Gray, 1991). Elliott describes an ideal prospective collaborator as someone who

is enthusiastic about the subject of our collaboration, is open-minded and curious, speaks their mind even if it’s an unpopular viewpoint, gets back to me and others in a timely way, is willing to enter into difficult conversations, and is a perceptive listener (2007, p. 54).

The communication, believing in others, and careful listening is critical to collaboration and servant leadership. In integrated collaborations, “an emphasis on process, dialogue, and empowerment results in more flexible roles and division of labor”

(John-Steiner et al., 1998, p. 777). Woods and Gray emphasize the importance of different, shared, and opposing interests in a collaboration (1991).

The servant leader develops people by providing opportunities for learning and growth, by modeling appropriate behavior, and by building up others through encouragement and affirmation (Laub, 1999, p. 83). This development of other people happens as the collaboration continues. Senge (1995) argues that leadership includes answering “How do you build the capacity of a group of people to move toward their visions?” He suggests that people should be in dialogue, not discussion, and to be thinking together. (John-Steiner et al., 1998) agree that collaboration includes thinking together, and Elliott (2007) calls this discursive collaboration that is process oriented and has an immaterial output. To illustrate thinking together, Senge references the movie, *Dances with Wolves*, in particular, the section where the tribal council meets. There is deep listening, multiple strong perspectives, and no action or decision made. Yet later in the movie, there is a scene where the tribe acts fluidly together on a buffalo hunt. Senge suggests that “the capacity for the council to sit and think together is inseparable from their capacity to act together” (p. 233). In the Jazz workshop, the facilitators think together through several online tools. Many of the facilitators blog about their experiences in videoconferencing throughout the year. We use Skype to chat with other other, ask questions, get assistance and share resources. In 2009 we started using Twitter, a microblogging tool, which has become a daily stream-of-Jazz-lead-facilitator-consciousness. Sometimes it’s relationship building, and other times it is explicit Jazz brainstorming and planning. All of these tools help us learn together, share together, *think* together throughout the year. So when we come to plan Jazz for the summer, we have a collective shared knowledge and growth from the year.

Finally, the situation is an important part of leadership theory. The community of collaborators or servant leaders seems the most appropriate description of the leadership situation. The servant leader builds community by building strong personal relationships, by working collaboratively with others, and by valuing the differences of others (Laub, 1999, p. 83). Much of this overlaps with the followers section above. However, collaboration theory adds additional perspectives on the environment necessary for collaboration. Digital collaboration requires various technologies to media the community. Elliott (2007) suggests that communication can be indirect using one-to-many or many-to-many electronic communication. Communication can be mediated turn-taking using communication networks such as email, snail mail, videoconferencing, telephone, or it can be mediated turn-taking using social networks and may have the capacity for one-to-one or one-to-few. Negotiation can happen with the use of media or the local environment. Negotiation includes cultural negotiation (language, norms and beliefs) and social negotiation (personal histories, personalities, and reputation). Wide varieties of communication and collaborative document creation tools are used in the Jazz workshop.

Wood and Gray (1991) add a list of potential preconditions for collaboration, though not all of them are required in every collaboration. This includes high stakes and high interdependence, confluence of macrosocial conditions, degree of organization of problem domain and motivation to collaborate, need to maximize efficiency and reduce transaction costs, need to achieve a shared understanding of and response to a problem, shared purpose, and the need to protect interests (p. 144). In addition, they remind us of organizational theory's component of environmental complexity and control. They suggest that people and people and organizations "collaborate to reduce and control

environmental uncertainty and turbulence” (p. 155). The preconditions for collaboration in Jazz include a shared purpose, an understanding of the mutual benefit. However, we are not collaborating to solve a problem, but instead to bring a more valuable experience to our constituents or workshop participants.

While servant leadership focuses on the leader, and collaboration theory focuses on the process of creating and collaborating together, the overlap between the two concepts is satisfying. As each person in a collaboration embraces servant leadership, the power of the collaboration grows.

## TECHNOLOGY FACILITATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

When I designed this competency work, I was thinking of the ways that I use technology to facilitate work and learning. In this section I review facilitation theory, how it applies to two situations, and again combine and compare servant leadership and facilitation theory.

### **Facilitation Theory**

I was not able to find the wealth of theory in technology facilitation as I was with collaboration theory. Dunn (2000) describes facilitation theory as a learning theory where the educator acts as a facilitator and establishes an atmosphere where learners are comfortable to try new ideas without threat from external factors. Another angle for technology facilitation is the International Society for Technology in Education Technology Facilitation Standards. Technology facilitators “exhibit knowledge, skills, and dispositions equipping them to teach technology applications; demonstrate effective use of technology to support student learning of content; and provide professional development, mentoring, and basic technical assistance for other teachers” (ISTE, 2009,

p. 1). This includes designing and planning effective learning environments and experiences supported by technology. In this age of rapid technological change, the skills necessary to use technology to facilitate learning, communication, collaboration, and work are essential.

### **Supporting a Virtual Leadership and Learning Group**

When I joined the Leadership program in 2007, I knew I wanted to be part of an international group. My mission experience drives a passion to connect and learn from and with people from different cultures and countries. As the orientation week wore on, it was clear that technology tools would be critical to the support of an international regional group, and several people needed to be supported by such a group. During Roundtable 2007, we decided on the use of Moodle as a course management system that we could use for asynchronous communication and learning. Moodle was the tool of choice because a couple of us had access to a Moodle server that we could use to configure the space as we desired. In addition, we decided on Skype as our synchronous communication tool. Our first meetings during Roundtable were frantic and rushed efforts to get everyone logged in and comfortable with the technologies before we travelled home to the ends of the earth. During this process, a few of us with technology skills took on the servant leadership role of providing leadership by taking the initiative and clarifying goals (Laub, 1999).

Our regional group is actually two groups under the overarching name Quantum Leap, inspired by the required Margaret Wheatley reading (2001). The North American group took the name “The Sun Never Sets” and the international group took the name “Lands of the Risen Son.” Soon after leaving Andrews, we started meeting via Skype. The North American group members were already familiar with Skype, but it took a few

meetings to work out the issues with using Skype internationally. In the first year of meetings, I met regularly with the International group in addition to my own North American group. Sometimes I transcribed the audio in the text chat for the participants who couldn't receive audio. Other times I just listened or shared learning and plans from the North American group. In the summer of 2008 with the addition of new members to the International group and the change of meeting time, I was no longer able to meet with the International group. A couple of emails and questions later, and Ivan and James were well able to continue the technology support and servant leadership of the International group.

As the groups have grown and each member has become more comfortable with technology, I have shared the administrative power (Laub, 1999) in Moodle with more participants and taught them how to edit and design our space as well. Technology facilitation has included providing tools and resources for learning and meeting, and then implementing servant leadership to share the responsibilities with others.

### **Designing and Creating Videoconference Resources**

In my early understanding of servant leadership, I thought that giving and sharing resources with the world as service was included in servant leadership. While this concept isn't included in Laub's definition of servant leadership, it could be inferred. Greenleaf asserts that "leadership is initiating – going out ahead to show the way" (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 32). Taking initiative to develop resources that are necessary for the implementation of videoconferencing could be included in that definition.

Since 1999 I have worked to effectively use videoconferencing in the curriculum. Resources created for the purpose of serving the schools in my area I shared online so that others could also use them. This started with a database of videoconference programs

correlated to the Michigan Curriculum Framework, sponsored by Polycom, and now correlated to the national curriculum standards as well. It is now the most exhaustive comprehensive directly of videoconference content on the Internet. In 2006 I started publishing a little booklet of templates for collaborative projects. In the 3rd revision, this booklet is very popular and used by many people for their videoconferencing workshops. It is posted on the Internet for free educational use in Word format so it can be easily printed in booklet form. Finally, the "two page selected list" of videoconference programs has been wildly popular from its inception in 2000. People email me if I don't get it out soon enough in the fall. It is also used by many people for their videoconference workshops. These resources have had the effect of "developing people" (Laub, 1999) as they learned to use the resources to effectively implement videoconferencing in their area.

### **Combining Servant Leadership and Facilitation Theory**

Connections can be made between servant leadership and facilitation theory. Again I use the framework of leader, follower, and situation to integrate these concepts (Hughes et al., 2006).

We have already noted that servant leadership includes providing leadership and also sharing leadership. Dunn (2000) describes facilitative teachers as less protective of their constructs and beliefs, and more able to listen to the learners, particularly to their feelings. Facilitative teachers pay attention to the relationship in addition to the content of the course. In addition, facilitative teachers accept feedback and use it to improve. In providing servant leadership and facilitation for my regional group and the K12 videoconference community, I have worked hard to listen to others and adapt resources and technology environments to better meet their needs.

Servant leadership, as described early, includes valuing people and developing people. Dunn (2000) describes learners under facilitative teachers. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, and to provide input for learning based on their insights and experiences. They are encouraged to self-evaluate and make connections between learning and significant problems or results. While providing resources and a technology environment doesn't directly impact the shape of learning, these principles form the core of my own teaching.

Finally, servant leadership builds a community as the situation for leadership. This includes an atmosphere conducive for learning (Dunn, 2000). The atmosphere should be comfortable for new learning and free of threatening external factors. By sharing freely, I have modeled a learning community and ways to share and collaborate. Sharing has provided opportunities building relationships with others in the K12 videoconferencing community.

The connection between servant leadership and technology facilitation isn't as strong as with collaboration, yet all three concepts are intertwined. Starting a collaboration as a servant leader-convener sets the stage for a learning community collaborating to create something new such as the Jazz workshop, or to develop new learning and understanding such as within our Leadership and Learning Groups.

#### NEW PRACTICES INSPIRED

Reading and reflecting always inspires new practices. My thinking has expanded and grown through my study in this competency. In particular, my understanding of the importance of the relationship in collaboration and servant leadership has expanded. I share here three examples of my learning applied to new practice.

As a read about virtual team leadership (Hambley, 2005), I reflected on how we work within the Jazz workshop. I wrote on my blog:

Semi-virtual teams may have a local subgroup as well as remote team members. These groups can have the increased challenge of in-group and out-group issues. *I wonder if some Jazz facilitators sometimes are an in-group as we've all seen each other face to face, whereas others may feel more out-group because they haven't been with us as long or we've never seen them face to face?* (Lim, April 14, 2009).

The Jazz facilitators read my blog, and it so happens that two days later we met to begin summer planning. We discussed and planned out the guest speakers for each day. After we had planned them, we asked ourselves if we should invite them, or wait to get approval from the rest of the facilitators on April 29. One lead facilitator suggested that we do both: start inviting the guest speakers and also ask the facilitators for their approval. Yet this plan would not allow room for change. It would only be the appearance of sharing power with them. Another lead facilitator reminded the group of my blog about in-group and out-group issues. We decided that we really must include all the facilitators in the decision, that group decision making is a core of our collaboration beliefs (John-Steiner et al., 1998). Through my studies, my reading has been applied to the Jazz workshop repeatedly, with the benefit of growth of learning and leadership by each of us.

Glaser's (2005) book on leading through collaboration was inspiring and challenging for me. The first and main lesson was **listening**. Not just listening to understand, but listening to detect coherence. Glaser told a story of hearing a group discussing who thought they had disagreement, and he asked permission to summarize what he heard, and everyone agreed (p. 9). I want to fine tune my ear to hear like that! In addition, Glaser describes a teacher listening "openly and attentively" to a complaining parent, even when the complaint is presented emotionally (p. 114). I want to be able to

listen openly and attentively instead of getting “riled up” along with the other person! “A power leader and problem solver should cultivate an ability to inquire deeply into the nature of what motivates people” (p. 118). This means being able to understand an issue as others see it. Again, later in the book, Glaser (2005) emphasizes listening for the common ground... listening carefully and constructively. “A powerful, consensus oriented leader will develop an ear for how different perspectives fit together, focusing on areas of agreement versus separateness” (p. 143). Glaser also recommends picking up the phone and calling “each other before small organizational rubs become huge conflicts” (p. 16). It’s too easy to write an email or Skype message when a phone or face-to-face videoconference would resolve the issue and maintain the relationship. Glaser emphasizes defining the problem which is corroborated in Elliott’s work (2007). Information needs to be shared so that all understand the ramifications and have shared their perspectives. The work needs to be addressed against the problem, not against each other. Glaser stresses that leaders should be firm and flexible at the same time. I need to learn to be firm in “articulating and identifying the nature of our interests, while remaining flexible about how those needs get met” (p. 112). This is an important key to true collaboration - meeting the needs/interests of everyone in a creative way. The book has several suggestions for clearly communicating interests, as it is so important to understand the “why” behind the person’s position. Glaser describes several techniques and tools for bringing a group to a solution and/or closure on an issue. These helpful tips include asking each person to articulate that they can support the solution. Implementing these new practices will continue through my lifetime.

Finally, the biggest contribution towards new practice is my study of e-ministry and the plans for the new online community to be developed in the fall. These plans

include much of my learning during this competency, including the collaboration theories and servant leadership. I look forward to the continued learning and leadership growth in this area.

#### CONNECTIONS TO MULTIPLE COMPETENCIES AND FURTHER STUDY

Finally, is a competency ever really complete? Each competency provides pointers to further learning and connections in the other competencies.

The first connection is to the communication competency. The servant leadership aspects that convict me of the need for improvement in practice include listening. Building relationships is still challenging for me, especially when working with those at a distance. In my upcoming work on the communication competency, I plan to work on the listening aspect and continue to deliberately listen to others. In addition, the collaboration theories are rooted in good communication concepts.

The second connection is with the mentoring competency. Servant leadership includes developing people by providing opportunities for learning and growth, modeling and building others up through affirmation and mentoring. I look forward to making further connections with servant leadership and mentoring. The Jazz workshop continues to be a fertile ground for learning about leadership. The situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 2005) fits the Jazz experience and provides further growth in the area of learning theory and mentoring.

The third connection is with the learning competency. Much of my work in this competency occurs within learning communities, online learning, and learning with others via technology tools such as videoconferencing. The collaboration theory involves learning from each other; situated learning is not only mentoring, but learning!

A fourth connection is with the spirituality and ethics competency. Servant leadership is grounded in my Christian worldview. Jesus modeled servant leadership in many ways, including washing the disciples' feet and commanding us to do the same.

Finally, the fifth connection is with the change competency. I am still learning about the change process, but clearly collaborating with others requires changing and accommodating our plans to integrate with others' visions. The growth of the Jazz workshop includes constant change year after year; and implementing the new learning community for Pioneer Memorial Church will provide additional fodder for applying change theories to my work.

The connections between competencies and within leadership theories is becoming clearer and more integrated in my view. And so, the learning circle continues.

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