



EDDE 804  
**LEADERSHIP  
CAPSTONE  
PROJECT**

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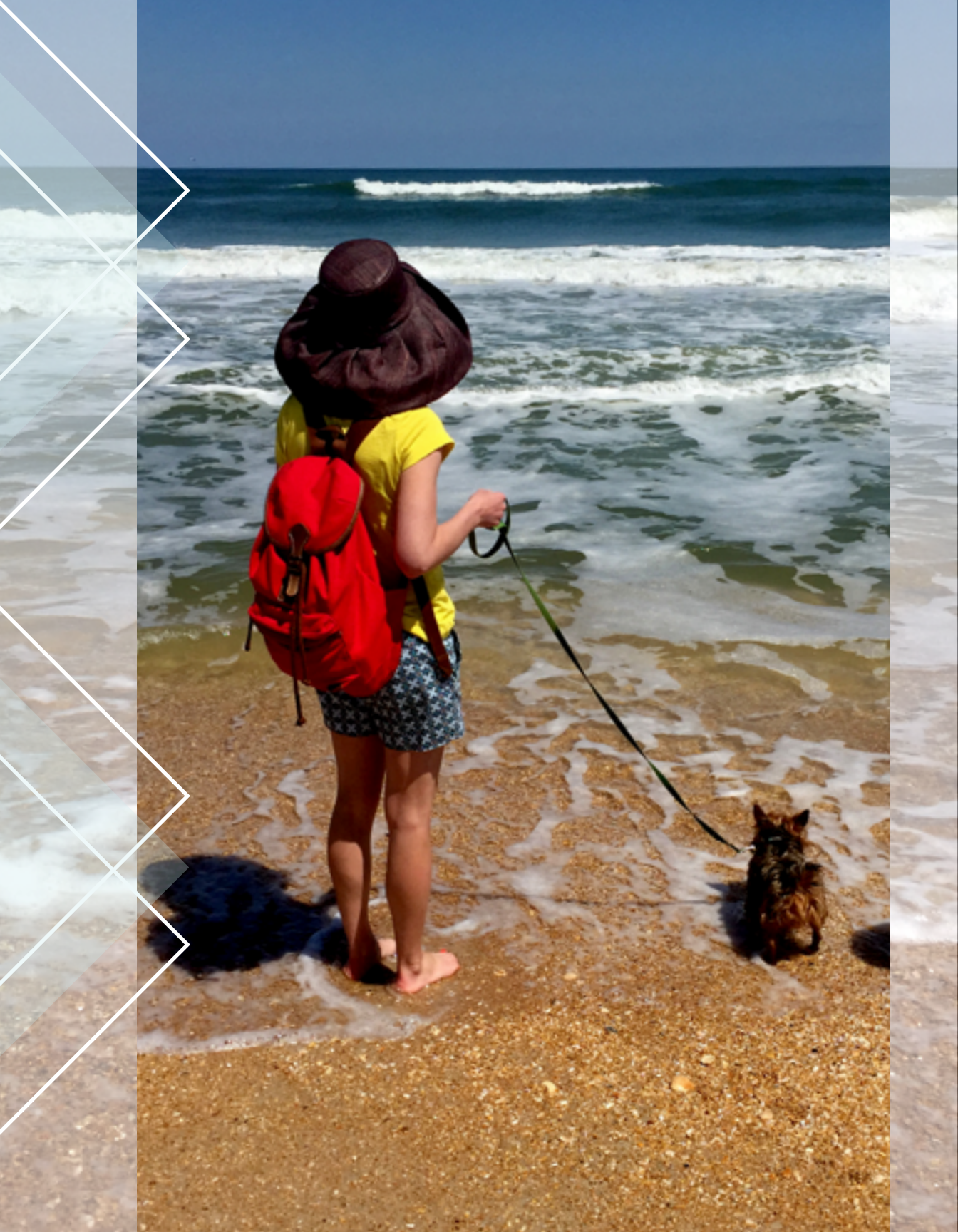
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## INTRODUCTION

David Foster Wallace in his 2009 book *This is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, about Living a Compassionate Life* writes, “the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are the hardest to see and talk about” (p. 8). Wallace tells a story of two young fish swimming along largely unaware of the existence of water because they have lived within its confines their whole lives. Only when another fish comes along and asks them, “How’s the water?” do they suddenly consider the larger system in which they are placed and the very atmosphere in which they conduct their lives.

For me, Wallace’s story is an apt metaphor for my experience of EDDE804: Leadership and Project Management in Distance Education. On a daily basis I swim deep in educational leadership as I both lead others in my role as department head and am led by my institution’s senior leadership team. To me leadership itself is like water to a fish—ever present and largely unconsidered. These past four months in the engaging atmosphere of 804 have served as a time of both questioning and discovery as I have become exposed to the larger world of leadership theory and have been challenged to define my own perspective in its midst.

This capstone project represents a culmination of my own learning up to this point. In the following pages I take a fairly granular approach to exposing my own learning process, both in micro and macro ways. I begin by defining what leadership meant to me when the course began and a survey of what I learned in the opening weeks. I then synthesize the two main assignments of the course, highlighting how theory and practice came together for me. I conclude by discussing how, through the leadership theory presented over the course of the class, my own definition has evolved and what this evolution means for me moving into the future.

Wallace ends his book with a challenge to pursue a life of simple awareness even in the mundane daily circumstances, constantly remembering, “This is water. This is water.” For me, going below the surface and aggregating what I have learned in this capstone is that catalyst, sustaining me in my future educational leadership endeavors and reminding me to be aware of the power and responsibility that comes from leadership in all situations.

*\* As a disclaimer, I have tried to construct a linear narrative of my own learning process by compiling blog posts, reading reflections, and formal assignments. Each category has been given a different text and layout treatment for clarity of navigation. That said, as learning is rarely tidy please forgive the visual disconnect that inevitably occurs.*



# PROLOGUE

# BLOG POST 1

## 2015 and back to it january 6, 2015

804 begins next week (I think....since the 803 disaster I've become a little less cognizant of actual start dates and have taken a more "it will begin when it begins" approach) and as a way to start things off our professor asked us to take a short survey reflecting on what we want out of the class (or our goals/ what will be a "win" for us), our experiences in leadership (or what sort of baggage we're bringing to the class), and anything we think that she should know about the cohort that will make all of our lives easier in the next term.

I think it's a fabulous idea to do the whole reflection thing before anything gets started. Our prof this term is the head of the department so I suppose it only follows that she's got more vested into the program thus might make a better showing than a certain previous prof who shall remain nameless. She also gave us the first two weeks readings so we could all be prepped up for the first day, whenever that might be. I've never done pre-reading for a class but given that I had time and needed to replenish my word bucket, I read it all and....it's been great so far. Even if the class nosedives from here, I've taken enough good stuff from the readings to set me on a good path. Overall verdict is thus far...all the good feels for 804.

So, since I did make a whispered resolution to actually write regularly as opposed to the manic episodes I get into periodically, I thought writing my own reflections in a formalized way would be a good start to things. If nothing else, I can look back come spring and either say "right on!!!" and feel a pat on the back kinship with my January self or say "wow...clueless!!!" and feel quite wise knowing what I know now that I didn't when I was my January self.

Hopefully it'll be the former but either way...here's to the journey, 804-style!

### **Please describe below the objectives you hope to realize in EDDE 804**

For this stage in my doctoral studies, my objectives are to continue learning and growing as I've been doing the past 18 months but also move into a place where many of the things that I've learned so far can become more of a foundation on which I can begin narrowing and focusing my thesis idea for the future. My objectives for 804 specifically are to gain a better understanding of leadership theory, the different types of leadership that are enacted, and particularly how leadership works in distance-mediated environments and with somewhat non-traditional structures (ie much more collaborative and constructive than top-down authoritative.) Though I know this isn't a "how to lead" course, I am secretly hoping knowledge gained here will directly translate into the leading I do on a daily basis which is both distance-mediated and rather non-traditional.

**Have you had experience as a leader in some capacity? This could involve formal or informal, personal or professional leadership. If you feel you haven't had any leadership experiences, please skip to the next question. If yes, then in the space below please give me a brief outline of these experiences.**

In my current role I am the dean of the college of graphic arts with the online division of Independence University. I've been in this position for almost a year and it's the first time I've ever been in a leadership/management role. Over the past year, I have gained lots of practical experience leading at a distance and have formed many ideas about the importance of presence, communication, and developing trust at a distance but as I assumed this role quite quickly with very little preparation, I feel like I've learned leadership in a somewhat down and dirty manner. I am hopeful that what I'll learn in this class will help validate some of what I've experienced as a leader or enlighten me as to why things haven't worked.

**You are part of a cohort, and it is likely that an established group dynamic has emerged that supports the work of this group. What rules of operation help keep this working group, well, working? For example, is there clear respect for time and participation? Or is this an 'anything goes' group? Are opinions shared and respected? In the space below, please let me know of any group norms or rules that are of importance to you and, as you identify them, in your cohort.**

We're a fairly open and easy going group but we do like a pretty high level of communication and interaction. Because we are all bonded so cohesively way back in orientation it feels a bit like we all live in the same small town where everyone knows everything about everyone's business. Granted, we are spread out over several thousand miles but still...it somehow seems to work. On the positive side we will gladly welcome newcomers (as every town needs some new people occasionally!) On the negative side, we are a bit territorial and protective of one another thus one person's battle can become everyone's war.

**What questions or concerns come to mind, if any? Please ask or share, if you are willing, anything on your mind about 804, in the space below.**

Nothing that I can think of right now though I am very much looking forward to the course!

# BLOG POST 2

**and so it begins once more...**  
january 13, 2015

...then the first day of the new term comes and all the bravado I had about getting pre-reading done for the first two weeks and thinking all this will come easily since I already am in a position of leadership fades quickly into a churning sea of deep uncertainty and...if I'm totally honest...deep insecurity. It turns out day dreaming about something that's surrounded by the safe buffer of "future" is one thing but jumping headlong into it when it becomes "present" is something entirely different.

804 has officially begun. 804. Which means 801, 802, and 803 are all in the books, complete. Which means I'm so fully a second year, have committed so much of myself to this both mentally and financially and...there's pretty much no going back. On the positive side, 804 means I've had enough classes in my experience that I am a bit more mentally prepared. I know that the feels of being an impostor and nearly reflex reaction of wanting to curl up into the fetal position until summer won't kill me (and indeed it is possibly to type while in a posture that almost approximates the fetal position.) In addition I know that the truth is I do have what it takes and over the past 18 months there have been some pretty hefty deposits from much more sage academics into the bank of my own budding self-image as an academic.

So, off I go once more...into the unknown of 804 with my own little metaphorical knapsack of encouraging notes, ideas in tiny sprout form, and brimming flask of whiskey. And so to my sisters and my brother in the Cohort 6 community this term: May the road be scenic. May our fellow travelers be friendly. May the places along the way be hospitable. May the words be ever in our favor.

# BLOG POST 3

**first seminar day of 804!**  
january 15, 2015



What's a first day of school without a first day of school picture, eh?

Thus, here is mine complete with fur scarf to reflect my pseudo-Canadianism, iPhone headset to reflect my graphic design heritage, and no makeup to reflect my new-found commitment to letting my inner beauty and the light of my intellect be what shines through. To quote the great work of cinema that is *Clueless*, "...as if!" More like today was filled with lots of administrative busy work and trying to tie up loose ends thus in the grand scheme of time usage...something had to give. Luckily we're a webcam off kind of class!

Verdict on day 1: awesome.

I am pretty sure I want Dr. Marti to adopt Ruby and I so we can just be around her. With other instructors I've said that they have parts of them that I hope I can emulate in my academic practice—their student engagement, their curiosity, their absolute passion for detail and precision. For Dr. M. I pretty much want to be just like her when I grow up. She's amazingly grounded and humble and yet she's literally written the books on so many of the most prevalent ideas in distance education. When she listens, she really listens and then responds with something drawn from her past explorations that make you think she's not just listened for a pause in your speech so she could interject but that she's listened to you because you're a human who she can learn from and she's totally eager to build connections with you. And it all happens in a distance mediated format! Which is awesome.

I know this week I've been sheepish at best about this course as I've felt totally beyond my league and yet after this week I'm thinking my main goal is to soak up as much as possible of this privilege that is this course from this genius of distance ed. The content will be good I'm sure as will the assignments but I think what might be the best part is learning from Dr. Marti a bit more.



# 1 LEADERSHIP DEFINED

*After decades of dissonance, leadership scholars agree on one thing: They can't come up with a common definition for leadership; Because of such factors as growing global influences and generational differences, leadership will continue to have different meanings for different people. The bottom line is a complex concept for which a determined definition may long be in flux.*

**PETER NORTHOUSE**

*Leadership: Theory & Practice, p. 5*



Leadership is a word inherently hard to define. Deeply embedded in the unique sensibilities of both specific cultures and specific eras, (Lord et al, 2001; Northouse, 2015) leaders are the ultimate keepers of strategic vision, are cultural role models, and are organizational cheerleaders (Lachtem & Hanna, 2001). Leadership is about change and influence. Leadership is also about embracing risk and complexity to find the best solution. In addition, leadership touches everyone and everyone in turn has the potential to lead (Cleveland-Innes, 2012).

The first discussion in 804 asked us all to engage in a guided reflection of what we believe leadership to be. This reflection, as seen below, was a beginning benchmark and the starting point of my own leadership investigation.

Because the word seems to be used so frequently, is in so many catch phrases/slogans, etc. even after reading for this week, leadership for me feels very hard to define. I know I lead and am led on a daily basis, I know I can "feel" when a good leader is in charge and also when a not-so-good leader is in charge, and yet...the experience still feels a bit mystical when I try to put it into words.

From our Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber text, I resonated with their definition pulled from Luthans & Avolio (p. 243) of "...authentic leadership as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development." For me this speaks to the complex organism that is leadership as it is never just about the leader but rather is the complete set of leader, follower, context, etc. I also like the positive self development that this definition speaks of as I believe effective leadership is about building to a positive end for all involved.

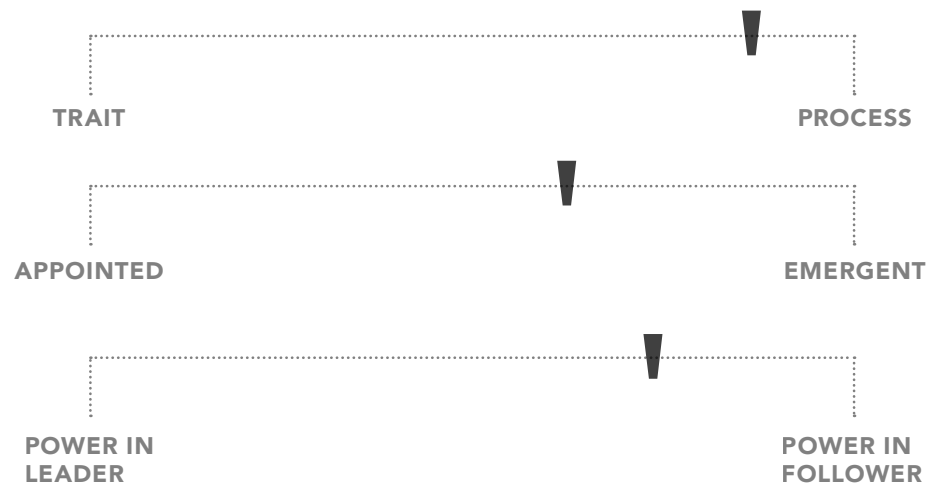
In addition, I like this quote about leadership by James Burns who was instrumental in transactional and transformational leadership theory. Burns says in his 1978 book entitled *Leadership* that "...leadership is a special form of power" (p. 12). To me, this resonates as I believe that leadership is a relational activity and that when you lead or when you consent to be led, the outcome of your actions impacts the large scope of people's lives and their larger personal narratives. The "special form of power" feels like an apt way to describe the long-reaching impact that can occur in leadership.

## FACTORS IN LEADERSHIP

Peter Northouse in his 2015 book, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* states that it is imperative to not only define leadership but also consider several other questions pertaining to the construct and atmosphere of leadership. These questions are: is leadership a trait or a process? Are leaders appointed or emergent? What role does and should power play in the leader/follower transaction? Where is the demarcation between leader and manager?

My own response reflects a sense of uncertainty and echoes the vagueness that seems to pervade the literature when one is asked to define just what leadership concretely is or is not. That said, key points do come through in my reflection, which are telling in guiding me more toward one school of thought than another. Though unaware of either Northouse or his work when I first wrote my first discussion response, looking back I am able to tease out ideas along these lines as visualized in the sliding scale diagram below.

### LEADERSHIP DEFINITION SLIDING SCALE



For me leadership is about a process that can be learned and groomed. Leaders are both appointed and emergent but the emergent leaders with their close connection to followers and situation have the most potential to bring about organizational change. Leaders have power of a different sort than non-leaders and as such they must exercise their power in ethical, moral ways that bring about a greater good. These thoughts represent my own beginning leadership lens.

## LEADERSHIP AS HOLISTIC + RELATIONAL PRACTICE

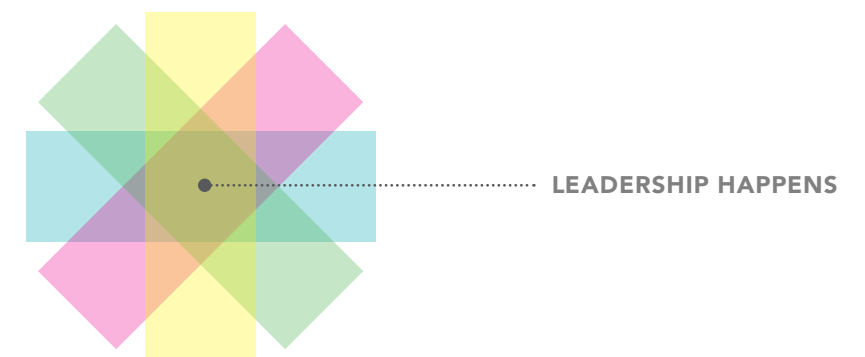
Though definitive agreement about a consistent definition of leadership is unlikely, Roger Gill in his 2011 book chapter, *Redefining Leadership: A New Model* endeavors to establish an “integrated conceptual framework for leadership” (p. 63) arising out of what Gill found to be significant overlap occurring in major themes of leadership research. A review of the literature revealed enough bleed amongst theories so that it is possible to redefine leadership in such a way as to “integrate the different tracks of research and thinking” (p. 64).

For Gill, the underlying structures of leadership can be distilled into four main dimensions or in his words, intelligences. These are: the intellectual/cognitive, the emotional, the spiritual, and the behavioral. A complete overview of Gill’s four intelligences can be seen on the following page.

These intelligences are in direct support of the five major themes that Gill also distilled from the literature which are: visioning, creating a culture of shared values, strategy forming and implementation, empowerment of people, and influence, motivation and inspiration (Gill, 2011).

Gill’s ideas and framework resonate with me because in them I am able to piece together a holistic model of what it means to lead. In my personal life I am a strong believer that no part of me occurs in a vacuum rather, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual parts of me all blend together to drive my behavior. Being mindful of the impact a leader’s holistic situation has on their behavior seems like a natural outcome and reading Gill’s piece encouraged me to once more view leadership and being a leader as something holistic rather than as a fragmentary role assumed during work hours with no blend back into everyday lived life.

### GILL’S DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP INTERPRETED



## GILL'S FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

### INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE

#### OVERVIEW:

Effective leadership requires the abilities to perceive and understand information, reason with it, imagine possibilities, use intuition, make judgements, solve problems and make decisions (p. 65)

#### KEY ATTRIBUTES:

- Helicopter View (p. 66)
- Conceptual Thinking (p. 67)
- Adversarial Empathy (p. 67)
- Intuition (p. 69)
- Imagination (p. 71)

#### IF IGNORED WHAT HAPPENS?

- Embrace simplistic management (p. 68)
- Resort to leadership fads (p. 68)

### SPIRITUAL

The foundation for spiritual leadership is morality, stewardship and community. Spiritual leadership is about identifying and affirming shared core values, beliefs and ethics, a shared vision and a shared purpose that have meaning for everybody, empowering people, and stewardship – holding the community's, and indeed the world's, resources in trust (p. 85).

#### KEY ATTRIBUTES:

- Meaning-making (p. 82)
- Calling/Membership (p. 82)
- Transcend personal needs for greater good (p. 87)

#### IF IGNORED WHAT HAPPENS?

- Superficial teamwork (p. 84)
- Lack of meaning & security in workplace (p. 83)

### EMOTIONAL

#### OVERVIEW:

Feelings are manifestation of both motivation and the frustration and satisfaction of needs. Emotion is a powerful moderator of intellectual understanding, reasoning and behaviour, in both leader and follower understanding and reasoning and behaviour, in both leader and follower (p. 80).

#### KEY ATTRIBUTES:

- Emotional Intelligence (p. 73)
  - Self-awareness (p. 73)
  - Self-control (p. 77)
  - Awareness of others (p. 78)

#### IF IGNORED WHAT HAPPENS?

- Toxic atmosphere (p. 72)
- Bullying (p. 73)

### BEHAVIOURAL

The behavioural skills that are necessary in leadership include using and responding to emotion, for example through body language. But they also comprise communicating in other ways through writing, talking and listening –using personal power–and physical activity (p. 88).

#### KEY ATTRIBUTES:

- Linguistic Intelligence (p. 88)
- Intrapersonal Intelligence (p. 88)
- Interpersonal Intelligence (p. 88)
- Kinaesthetic Intelligence (p. 88)

#### IF IGNORED WHAT HAPPENS?

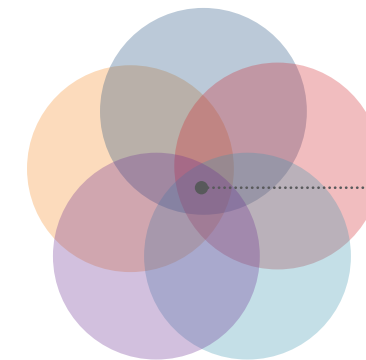
- Confused messaging (p. 68)
- Compromised organizational effectiveness (p. 68)

## GILL'S FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP INTERPRETED

Gill's five themes of leadership also resonated with me as a common set of practices that all successful leadership endeavors held in common. Like Gill's four dimensions of leadership, these themes too were distilled from an extensive review of leadership literature, best practices, and case study findings. A specific overview of each theme can be found on the following page. Each of the themes is meant to further reinforce the idea that a new leadership paradigm must emerge that breaks with more traditional hierarchical patterns. As evidence of the need for this shift, Gill quotes Kreitner and Kinicki who in their 1998 work write:

Traditional organizations and the associated organizational behaviors they created have outlived their usefulness. Management must seriously question and challenge the ways of thinking that worked in the past if they want to create a learning organization. For example, the old management paradigm of planning, organizing and control might be replaced with one of vision, values, and empowerment.

Though all of Gill's functions resonated with me, the function that held the most appeal was "empowerment of people" and specifically the call that an effective leader empowers people to be able to do what needs to be done. I believe empowerment is key to any successful leadership endeavor because it creates a sense of shared membership amongst all participants, which in turn creates deep intrinsic motivation to work for the good of others, ultimately ending in a culture of shared values.



LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS  
BEST IN THE OVERLAP

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Gill's leadership function of empowerment serves as a good connection point to transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is a theory that encourages leadership behavior that inspires followers to act beyond their perceived capabilities for the good of the organization (Northouse, 2015). In transformational leadership, followers are both empowered and equipped by the leader for future tasks. Inspiration runs high as participants come together in a synergistic union.

## GILL'S FIVE FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

1

### VISION & MISSION

Effective leaders define and communicate a meaningful and attractive vision of the future and a mission or purpose through which the organization will pursue it (p. 91).

2

### SHARED VALUES

Effective leaders identify, display and reinforce values that support the vision and mission and that followers share (p. 91).

3

### STRATEGY

Effective leaders develop, get commitment to, and ensure the implementation of rational strategies that enable people to pursue the vision and mission and that reflect the values they share (p. 91).

4

### EMPOWERMENT

Effective leaders empower people to be able to do what needs to be done (p. 92).

5

### INFLUENCE / MOTIVATION / INSPIRATION

Effective leaders influence, motivate and inspire people to want to do what needs to be done (p. 91)

Transformational leadership was first deemed important in 1978 by James Burns. For Burns, leadership and followership were intractably joined and the needs and goals of both could not be realized without a conjoined effort (Burns, 1978). The connection created between leaders and followers is one that exponentially increases motivation and transformational leadership often involves high levels of charisma and vision on the part of the leader. To me, Gill with his emphasis on vision, values, empowerment, and influence/inspiration seems to be a natural fit to favor a transformational leadership style. Making this connection early in the course was a signpost that because I so strongly resonated with Gill, I too might have strong leanings toward transformational leadership theory and theories that share elements of its relational ethos.

## LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE

Another leadership theory that shares commonalities with transformational leadership and also Gill's relational theme of empowerment is leader-member exchange (LMX).

LMX is rooted in social psychology that, "...treats leadership as a group process that pivots on psychological group membership..." (Hogg et al, 2005, p. 1002). Successful leadership occurs within the scaffold of a high quality relationship between a leader and follower. In this dyadic interaction, the follower gains specific trust in the leader and the leader in turn has a highly personalized conception of the follower, often resulting in the leader bestowing greater responsibility, financial rewards, etc. Leaders must exhibit a high level of emotional intelligence in relationship building with followers and also be nimble navigating multiple follower relational pathways. In LMX, followers engaged in high quality relationship tend to have a higher level of empowerment from the leader.

As a leadership theory, LMX has its downfalls as it fails to recognize the benefit that may come when groups represent a community of practice and being part of the group rather than having a relationship with the leader becomes the empowering identifier. That said, whether it is the leader engaged in a one to one high quality relationship or a group engaged in a community of practice synergy, both constructs lead to empowerment of people, which ultimately, according to Gill supports leadership.

From these readings, I take away the idea that leadership can be a holistic practice where each part of what it means to be human integrates into what it means to be a leader. In addition, leadership is relational, whether between one to one, one to many, or many to many. A savvy leader must capitalize on this framework if they are to pursue a methodology that leads to positive outcomes for all.

## SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Like Leader-Member Exchange, Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) also emphasizes a nimble hand and high levels of emotional intelligence when navigating leader-follower relations. Situational leadership presupposes that, “different situations demand different kinds of leadership. From this perspective, to be an effective leader requires that a person adapt his or her style to the demands of different situations” (Northouse, 2015, p. 93). That said, while LMX focuses on relationship building so that both leaders and followers become co-constructors of organizational culture, SLT focuses only on the leader’s perspective tasking the leader to first assess the competence and commitment of a follower and next match their own leadership style accordingly. Leadership styles follow both a directive and supportive scale, depending on whether leaders must exhibit a style favoring delegation, support, coaching, or direction. Followers too are placed somewhere along a spectrum depending on their own efficacy, self-direction, and overall commitment level.

While I see the benefit in the orderly progression of Situational Leadership and agree with its emphasis on leadership as a process, overall its more one-dimensional leader driven approach does not resonate with me. It seems in SLT that followers are treated in a more quantitative manner rather than the more qualitative, relational manner of LMX. Followers shape the leadership transaction in SLT but because the transaction is not couched in relationship and the more holistic view of the person, I question whether the changes that occur are ultimately more about human capital rather than social capital. Lachtem and Hanna reiterate that, “Perspectives on leadership are coloured by many factors...most especially by assumptions deriving from the cultural lens through which we view the world” (Lachtem & Hanna, 2001, p.240). My own questioning comes directly out of the cultural lens through which I view the world, namely one that is relationally driven above all.

## THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS IN LEADERSHIP

Building on the aforementioned idea of leadership as a holistic practice, the role of relationships, and Leader-Member Exchange theory, Uhl-Bien, in her 2003 chapter, *Relationship Development as a Key Ingredient for Leadership Development* calls for greater attention focused on the relational structure that underlies every organization. For Uhl-Bien, an organization has a deep well of both human capital and social capital. Human capital is born from the skills, expertise, and ability to produce that lie within an organization. Social capital is born within the social and relational structure of an organization and through network connections builds in an organic and emergent manner (p. 166). Too often the focus on leadership has been developing the human capital, leading to the exclusion of social capital.

Though human capital is a necessary part of an organization, ultimately it is the social capital built on the network of high quality relationships within an organization that will lead to higher performance, higher workplace satisfaction, and beneficial synergy for all (Uhl-Bien, 2003).

In this relationally driven framework, leadership again is about a process as leadership occurs, “...at the dyadic level as a two-way influence between dyad members” (Uhl-Bien, 2003, p. 177). In addition, followers play a key role in the leadership process, as their ability to reciprocate relationship building is equally important to a leadership transaction.

Avolio too, in his 2007 article, *Promoting More Integrative Strategies for Leadership Theory-Building*, brings up the key element that not only relationships within an organization but also an organization’s context brings to the leadership transaction. He writes, “...leadership is a function of both the leader and the led and the complexity of the context” (p. 31). Avolio posits that in favor of studying the leader himself, context has long been overlooked in leadership discussions. This oversight has led to leadership being viewed in a highly reductionist manner (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

In addition, Avolio recommends that leadership theory extend the role of relationships to also include an investigation of leadership and social network theory (Avolio, 2007). Social network theory, as outlined by Balkundi and Kilduff, is defined by four elements: relationships, embeddedness, social capital, and social structure (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2005). Leaders who use social network theory to their advantage view each individual in their organization as an actor whose relational web has significant potential to give them significant influence regardless of their official title. Being aware of these existing formal and informal relational networks is key for a leader and indeed smart leveraging of these networks has the potential to, “...produce a large harvest of social capital and influence” (p. 435).

From these readings I am again reminded of the importance of assessing relationships at both a personal and an organizational level. Though it is convenient to frame a leadership transaction in a one-way hierarchical manner, I am becoming increasingly convinced that successful leadership in any organization must be cognizant of context, participants, and underlying relational networks. In addition, successful leadership, for me, has a strong transformational leadership theory influence.

To close this first section, the following pages outline eight leadership theories that proved the most impactful for me over the course of the first several weeks of the course. These summary charts provided a good quick reference moving forward and a good reminder in the power of diversity, flexibility, and an open mind in leadership.

# LEADERSHIP CATEGORIES

## **LEADER-FOCUSED**

Leader-focused theories state that leaders are the prime drivers in the leadership interaction. The actions of the leader are what shape leadership rather than the response of the followers.

- Trait Theory
- Skills Theory
- Servant Leadership

## **FOLLOWER-FOCUSED**

Follower-focused theories state that followers are the prime drivers in the leadership interaction. The actions of the leader are shaped by and responsive to the needs and actions of the follower.

- Situational Leadership

## **RELATIONAL-FOCUSED**

Relational-focused theories state that the leadership interaction is intimately tied to the relationship between both leaders and followers. Leadership happens in the relational exchange and cannot be separated into either leader or follower role.

- Leader-Member Exchange
- Distributed Leadership
- Complexity Leadership
- Transformational Leadership

# TRAIT THEORY

A leadership theory emphasizing specific traits unique to leaders. For example, some people are born with leadership traits and only certain people possess them, thus only certain people can be leaders. Followers play no significant role in the leadership transaction.

## **Argument For:**

Trait theory has been researched extensively. This research has generated an extensive list of potential key leadership traits for success and people with defined traits do tend to be or become leaders.

## **Argument Against:**

Trait theory overlooks situational element of leadership as well as impact of followers. An individual does not become a leader solely because that individual possesses certain traits. Rather, the traits that leaders possess must be relevant to situations in which the leader is functioning.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Stogdill (1948; 1974)
- Mann (1959)
- Lord, DeVader & Alliger (1986)
- Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader (2004)

# LEADER FOCUSED

# SKILLS THEORY

A leadership theory emphasizing specific skills that leaders must have if they are to be successful. These skills can be developed or learned by those who seek or hold leadership roles.

## **Argument For:**

A leader's key role is to problem solve complex organizational issues. This problem solving requires them to develop a robust set of skills to address whatever situation might arise. As long as a leader has the correct capabilities, they will be successful.

## **Argument Against:**

Though Skills Theory identifies key skills required it but gives no indication as to how these skills might be developed. In addition, many of the skills identified from research resemble traits, contradicting basic assumption of skills theory.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Katz (1955)
- Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly & Marks (2000)

# LEADER FOCUSED

# SERVANT LEADERSHIP

A leadership theory that emphasizes care and advises that leaders should first aspire to serve others. This serving results in followers who are healthier, more autonomous, and in turn inspired to serve others. For a servant leader, communication and consensus building is used to build a cohesive team.

## **Argument For:**

Servant leadership with its altruistic emphasis cuts down on competition in workplaces. It promotes equality and ultimately can create a culture where everyone serves each other. In addition, servant leadership has a strong social justice looking to how both individuals and organizations as a whole can bring good.

## **Argument Against:**

Servant leadership cannot work if followers are not ready to exchange a directive approach for a servant approach. In addition, servant leadership can assume a highly moralistic tone and conflict with individual autonomy.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Greenleaf (1970, 1972, 1977)
- Spears (2002)
- Russell & Stone (2002)
- Patterson (2003)

# LEADER FOCUSED

# SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

A leadership theory advising that leaders first assess the motivation and competence levels of their followers and then, based on a scale of supportive to directive, adjust their leadership style accordingly. Situation is a key element to be aware of as is notion that followers are constantly changing and shifting in competence.

## **Argument For:**

Situational leadership fits the dynamic atmosphere of organizations as it reiterates that leaders must be flexible in their approach toward followers. It is also prescriptive meaning it gives leaders a clear vision of how to interact with followers of all levels.

## **Argument Against:**

Though situational leadership creates specific categories for followers, the leader must use their own judgment thus followers can be misjudged or misplaced. In addition, it does not take into account cultural or gender issues that often impact leader/follower relations.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Hershey & Blanchard (1969, 1977, 1988)
- Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi (1985)
- Blanchard, Zigarmi & Nelson (1993)

# FOLLOWER FOCUSED



# LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE

A leadership theory where leadership is a process and emphasizes the interactions between leaders and followers. The dyadic relationship that emerges has the potential to support a trust-filled, collaborative environment for an organization.

## **Argument For:**

Leader member exchange gives leaders a clear plan surrounding how to nurture their followers and in turn be supported by them. It has the potential to build an empowered, relationally-focused organizational atmosphere.

## **Argument Against:**

Leader member exchange defines both in-groups and out-groups based on relationships with the leader. As the in-group experiences more benefits than the out-group, these groups can be seen as discriminatory or unfair ultimately leading to relational animosity.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Dansereau, Graen & Haga (1975)
- Graen & Cashman (1975)
- Graen & Uhl-Bien (1991, 1995)

# RELATIONAL FOCUSED

# DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

A leadership theory that emphasizes leadership as distributed amongst many stakeholders this creates interdependencies amongst teams and individuals thus distributed leadership is a highly social and a highly human-focused pursuit—a collective rather than solo endeavor.

## **Argument For:**

Because distributed leadership spreads leadership out it enables people who are passionate and knowledgeable about a certain subject to lead when they desire. This parceling out of tasks leads to an organizational atmosphere of greater trust and empowerment.

## **Argument Against:**

At times a single position-appointed leader must make a significant choice for the institution, thus lateral leadership is not an option. In addition, distributed leadership can be easily confused with delegation and transaction rather than leading by choice.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Gronn (2000)
- Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2001)
- Spillane (2006)
- Harris (2005, 2013)

# RELATIONAL FOCUSED

# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

A leadership theory where leadership is a process that uses leadership to inspire followers to literally transform themselves to accomplish tasks often beyond their original conception of what is possible. Transformational leadership pays close attention to follower emotions, motivations, and needs and leaders and followers are both closely aligned in a synergistic relationship.

## **Argument For:**

Transformational leadership has been widely researched and has been shown to be an effective leadership form with its ability to move people to higher standards of responsibility and acting in ways that promote the betterment of the community and ultimately the betterment of each person. It also has been shown to be successful in a wide variety of settings.

## **Argument Against:**

Transformational leadership can become overly trait-based and heroic as some people are seen as having special qualities that help them transform others. In addition, it has much potential for abuse if one leader's vision is the only voice driving change.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Burns (1978)
- Bass (1985)
- Bass & Avolio (1994)
- Avolio (1999)

# RELATIONAL FOCUSED

# COMPLEXITY LEADERSHIP

A leadership theory where leadership is seen as a dynamic, emergent construct created between all organizational elements. Through feedback networks and active engagement of member needs, complexity leadership is a nimble, organic leadership theory where everyone has the potential to contribute and lead.

## **Argument For:**

Complexity leadership with its emergent focus enabling all participants to lead where they are best suited fits well with many organizations in today's knowledge driven culture. In addition, because complexity leadership is not rooted in hierarchy it is much more able to respond to an organizational need as it presents itself.

## **Argument Against:**

Complexity leadership is a very new leadership theory. It is based on research from the physical science world and while it is gaining wider interest, it as yet has not been extensively tested in other disciplines.

## **Key Researchers:**

- Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey (2007)
- Uhl-Bien & Marion (2008)
- Hazy (2007)

# RELATIONAL FOCUSED



**2** LEADING IN  
DISTANCE ED

*Every time change happens, or is close to happening, we are invaded with insecurity due to the uncertainty it generates.*

**MARTHA CLEVELAND-INNES & ALBERT SANGRA**  
*Leadership in a New Era of Higher Distance Education, p. 78*

Educational leadership looks at how the structures of leadership theory can be applied in service to the educational sector. Defining education, like defining leadership, is a challenging endeavor thus it would seem that defining educational leadership would be an almost monumental challenge. That said, Cleveland-Innes provides a good benchmark definition for educational leadership writing, “When we speak of leadership in education, we are speaking of leadership in public institutions that are designed to serve the greater good” (Cleveland-Innes, 2012). Beaudoin further elaborates and refines the educational leadership definition to also embrace distance education by writing, “...leadership in distance education...is defined as a set of attitudes and behaviors that create conditions for innovative change, that enable individuals and organizations to share a vision and move in its direction, and that contribute to the management and operationalization of ideas” (Beaudoin, 2003).

Because we are living in an era of deep societal change catalyzed by profound changes in technology, economics, global connections, and social awareness, higher education must ask its own tough questions and evaluate its own place in the midst of so much shifting (Cleveland-Innes & Sangra, 2010). The traditional models of transmission education are no longer relevant and instead a focus on developing networked competencies, digital literacies and, curating knowledge in an atmosphere of complex abundance must be cultivated. The traditional academy which has remained static for so many years and indeed was itself based on a monastic tradition (Cleveland-Innes, 2012) is now rapidly embracing a distributed model rather than a single campus centric model of education (Beaudoin, 2003). Bates in 2000 stated that, “information technology has led to the growth of many knowledge-based and service industries that have a very different structure than the Fordist or agrarian models. These newer forms of organizations have been labeled post-Fordist (or post-industrial) in structure” (p. 40). Post-Fordism favors “flexible specialization” (p. 73) and just in time learning as workers are increasingly producing products in response to market demands rather than driving market demands. As society and education move into a post-Fordist sphere, education too strives to take on a more just-in-time flexibility to meet learner demands. Distance education with its innate flexibility of access is a good fit for post-Fordism, however debate now emerges surrounding how to balance learner flexibility, learner experience, and ultimately program cost (Kanuka & Brooks, 2010). Though ideally all three elements could be present in equal measure, Kanuka and Brooks have determined research shows “... in this post-Fordist era, open and constructivist distance education can achieve any two of the following: flexible access, quality learning experience, and cost effectiveness—but not all three at once” (p. 84).

# BLOG POST 5

## distance education and Ford...

february 3, 2015

Or rather Fordism, which though based somewhat on Henry Ford who we all know and love doesn't actually mean that it's education you can do in your car (though legit, who doing an online program hasn't "been in school" while in the car? Indeed when I was homeschooling I completed a lot of my work while in transit on trips and outings or in the words of my mom the "real stuff of an education" but anyways...)

Fordism is a system based on industrialized/standardized mass production. In layman's terms, it's factory precision and predictability. It's also proven reliability at a reasonable price, able to equip the masses with consumer goods and not bankrupt them in the process. The beauty of Fordism is that whole swathes of people who were previously out of the loop now have purchasing power and provision.

Post-Fordism is, as the name suggests, what happens after Fordism and is the era that we may of may not be living in now. In post-Fordism, the production aspect doesn't go away instead a world of specialties and specialists emerge. Rather than the factory notion of workers popping out products in rigid lockstep, there is a focus on distribution, separation, and pleasing the individual. In Fordism, it seems it was enough to just get stuff. In post-Fordism...there's attention to the unique human element of individualism and personal choice. I think this distinction makes post-Fordism pretty amazing but also adds in all sorts of temperamental complexity.

Education—as is often the case—has followed these themes as well. Where once the "Fordist" values of getting it done prevailed, now we're a bit more into the post-Fordist space where we must not only get it done but allow people to be changeable and specialize and do all the quirky things people tend to do. I again think post-Fordism a good thing in theory but it's a rough thing for education, particularly education that is distance distributed.

Kanuka and Brooks in their chapter, Distance education in a post-fordist time: Negotiating difference (from the book [An introduction to distance education: Understanding teaching and learning in a new era](#)) discuss these things extensively paying particular attention to distance education and its desire to be "both-and" when it comes to the Fordist debate. Distance education has the potential to be pretty much sponsored by Ford in that it can be a factory churning out content for consumers who never before had educational access.

Distance education also has the potential to be the poster child for post-Fordism because with the anytime, anywhere, 24/7 availability, it can be as specialized as you need it to be.

But here's the tension...it can't be both. In fact there is this great somewhat zen-like proverb that says distance education can achieve two of the following three:

1. flexible access
2. a quality learning experience
3. cost effectiveness

but...it can never achieve all three. [insert sobbing here]

I honestly don't know where to go from here. (Well, that's a lie, I do know where I hope to go but don't know how feasible it is...yet.) This chapter was a great one for me as I felt like had it been possible to highlight all the things, I would have. I think that we're stuck now in distance education on this wheel of trying to get all the pieces together...achieve that magical trinity of parts...and it's not working and apparently it never will work. This revelation feels like both a downer and a total liberation.

Professionally I honestly have no idea what this means but, my instinct is to do what I've always done in the face of Fordism, namely retreat into the small batch world of local community and wish that too could be a reality for education. I read a great blog post by [Lisa Lane](#) on the idea of "artisan courses" in distance education which are the educational equivalent to small batch whiskey and no surprises, I was smitten. Lisa says, "These [artisan courses] are pedagogically and philosophically the opposite of the canned, instant-feedback, publisher-created "packages" and team-built classes and MOOCs that are now pervasive. Like artisan breads and hand-made cabinetry, these courses require more work to make and are individual in design. Their quality cannot be determined by a list of "best practices", but by the love and attention that goes into their creation, and the passion and dedication of the teachers who are teaching within their own design."

I want to make a school like this. Or at least, I want to make a program like this. Would it work? Anyone's guess but it would be pretty amazing to try... time to add another page to my thesis ideas....

## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Educational leadership is needed in order to ensure that institutions are able to make the adjustments necessary to deliver a relevant experience in an era marked by a greater distributed and digital education model. For most institutions the question is no longer if they will change in light of the larger societal changes but how they can most effectively define their place and purpose. If educational leaders overlook this institutional reflection it could, as Beaudoin writes, "...well make the difference between success or failure" (Beaudoin, 2003).

Effective educational leadership is challenging as it occurs within a context that is deeply tied to a historical model (Bates, 2000; Beaudoin, 2003) thus requires the leader to enact significant change and, as Lachtem and Hanna write, "...change is not something that comes easily to this sector" (Lachtem & Hanna, 2001, p. XV). Navigating such widespread change places the leader at the uncomfortable apex of a challenging pyramid as she must both rally for change and ensure that the change that does come is not at the expense of institutional history, brand, or culture.

Lachtem and Hanna write that, "The leader is essential for conceiving the vision, creating the environment for success, providing the resources, and setting the standards" (p. 43). Setting the strategic vision is key as from this place all other elements flow. It is not enough to simply plan initiatives if they do not strategically align to an institutions larger mission (Bates, 2009).

In this educational era, leadership must also shift taking on a role that is much more proactive rather than reactive, with an explicit focus on strategic planning, anticipating what new services might best serve students and organizations (Beaudoin, 2003; Cleveland-Innes, 2012). In addition, leaders must be capable of deep reflection both on a personal level (reflecting on questions of their own capacity to lead) and an institutional level (reflecting on questions of their own organizational future focus) so that they can best navigate a relevant path into the future (Beaudoin, 2003).

The challenge in leadership lies in how one will navigate what seem to be endlessly changing pathways of potential implementation in an effort to ultimately lead to sustainable institutional functioning. Sir John Daniel, Vice-Chancellor of the UK Open University, has stated that sometimes leaders must set the example by engaging in what might be seen as high risk initiatives to bring the institution up to where they predict it must be, while other times leaders must intentionally put brakes on whatever the new fad of the day might be in educational technology implementation so that the institution can stay true to their intended mission and vision (Lachtem & Hanna, 2001). Above all, when considering any new leadership strategy, Daniel advises "...don't experiment with live students" (p. 143).

Daniel calls for institutions to clarify intentionally an institutional vision of what you want to be known for, what your strengths are as an institution, and where you may be weak or what might be outside of the scope of your own influence. Though this reflection is never easy, particularly when there is so much pressure to perform, expand, etc. in the end it will ensure that all participants have a clear focus and unified vision of the future (Lachtem & Hanna, 2001).

A key element of managing these changes is for a leader to navigate the delicate balance of just how far "outside the box" they can be in their own leading so that the change they are advocating for does not come at the expense of losing the alliances of colleagues who are comfortably situated within more traditional institutional enclaves (Beaudoin, 2003). Beaudoin writes, "Perhaps expanding boundaries within the "box" is a more viable strategy, as it offers a more palatable option for those who are reluctant to leave its familiar confines. It may be easier to convince followers to move closer to the outer edges of the existing box (which is then incrementally enlarged) than to step outside it where the reformer would eventually like to take them" (p. 92).

In this scenario, leaders once more must be intimately acquainted with all people involved so that they can shepherd them accordingly and in a manner that is not dictatorial or coercive but ultimately sustainable and transformative. Trust building and a clearly communicated sense of listening and valuing are key so that followers not only buy into the change process but become active proponents themselves of its value. With these elements in place, institutional culture has the chance to become much more collaborative. Sister Joel Read, President of Alverno College an institution with an internationally recognized flexible learning and ability-based curriculum, writes that "...one needs to listen to what people are saying, hear what they are not saying, and try to understand what they are feeling. If it is necessary to change something, it will affect people" and also, "There must be trust and respect that can be only built up through constant listening and hearing..." (Lachtem & Hanna, p. 85).

Though it is a challenging endeavor, when leaders step up and embrace these new realities, being both "courageous and collaborative" (Cleveland-Innes & Sangra, 2010, p. 89) the door is opened for much positive change as distance education does its part to make good on the overarching premise that "Education is fundamentally characterized by a quest for improving the human condition. It is to overcome social and economic challenges, resolve inequities, promote societal power and prowess, and allow for individual development" (Cleveland-Innes, 2012).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL BY TONY BATES

<b>MISSION</b>	What does the institution or department do, for whom, and how?
<b>ENVIRO SCAN</b>	What is happening in the world around you and what is its likely impact on your activities?
<b>VISION</b>	What would it look like if you fully achieved what you would really like to do?
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	What are you trying to achieve, in observable terms, over the next 3 to 5 years that will move you closer to the state described in the vision?
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	What actions need to be taken to achieve these goals?
<b>MONITORING</b>	How will achievements be measured/strategies adjusted during to ensure plan is on track?

## DEVELOPING A DIGITAL LEARNING STRATEGY EXAMPLE

### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA LEARNING STRATEGY OUTLINE

(clicking on image will open your browser)

## STRATEGIC PLANNING IN EDUCATION

In distance education, strategic vision often entails creating a plan for technology integration, curriculum development, and overall organization. This vision acts as an institutional compass, against which future innovations can be measured. Vision generating, and particularly who is allowed to speak into it, reveals much about the institution culture particularly regarding formal versus informal leadership roles. Institutions who have a vision statement crafted by a few senior team members who then mandate it to the rest of the organization tend to also rely on a leadership style that is more hierarchical and delegated. Institutions who have embraced a more distributed role in leadership (meaning that there is not one heroic leader who sets the tone with all others follow) often rely on a larger set of voices and inputs when planning so that there is greater buy-in amongst all participants (Bates, 2009).

Though neither style is inherently better than the other in strategic planning, I gravitate more toward the latter and believe like Cleveland-Innes that leaders must move to a collaborative model both within their own organizations and with leaders of other institutions because, if they are to remain viable, all leaders must learn to operate in a networked environment (Cleveland-Innes, 2012). In addition, in distance education a leader must be quite clear on her own view regarding technology integration within the larger organization, particularly regarding what is and is not appropriate for the learner audience. Without intentional reflection on audience and final goal, it is easy to get carried away by the latest ideas, pedagogies and philosophies which may or may not be the best fit for not only learners but also the institutional culture as a whole.

From these readings I am reminded that as a leader, my own epistemology, ontology, and views of technology usage can and most likely will impact the lens through which I view what is best for the students and faculty my institution serves. The challenge in leadership is not so much developing an institutional vision for the future but rather is in ensuring that the institutional vision generated is one that strives for equity, and a general lens of humanity applied to all elements. It is easy in leadership to mandate and craft a vision consistent with your own dreams for the future. What is harder is remembering that you are only one part of a much greater and much more complex organization. To me, leaders who acknowledge this reality seem to be the ones who ultimately succeed because they are the ones whose legacy consists of more than personal vision and charisma and ultimately rests in empowerment.



# BLOG POST 4

## you are not your computer... january 25, 2015

This past week my supervisor posted (and clearly expressed his disdain of) a link on twitter to an article that said something along the lines of... "if computers replaced teachers in online learning, the world would be a better place." (Admittedly, this is a bit of simplification on the article but the overall gist was: teachers cost money, need benefits, have all sorts of emotions/personalities/quirks and generally are a major drain on institutional finances but magical computers work endlessly, need no benefits and only have the feelings one programs into them thus are an institutional win.) I responded off the cuff about how my Mac was probably going to replace him in the near future since as the article said, who needs humans if computers can teach everything? He responded back in a sage, supervisory way by saying that the focus is never teaching but rather learning and that computers can't actually "teach" rather they aggregate. Then he continued on by saying that as I already spend way more time working on my thesis with my Mac than working on my thesis with him...maybe we are already at the point where my Mac had replaced him....As I spend about 18 hours a day with my Mac...yeah, I'd say he makes a valid point!

It was a fun short twitter exchange to begin my day and yet it did make me think a lot about this very odd distance mediated world of teaching and learning that I'm living in and that has become my own default framework and just how I personally view technology integration in education.

For example in my day to day job...

- 100% of the interactions I have with my own team of direct reports are mediated by a computer or a phone.
- 100% of the interactions I have with the students enrolled in my program are mediated by a computer or a phone.
- 100% of the assignments created, books read, lectures attended, etc. in the program I head are mediated by a computer.

And then in my doctoral studies...

- 100% of the interactions I have with my cohort (whom I consider to be almost family) are mediated by a computer
- 100% of the content of my doctoral program is mediated by a computer

and regarding the supervisor mentioned above, thus far...

- 95% of all communication over the past 18 months has been mediated by not just a computer but primarily using the 140 character microblog format of Twitter.

I am an educator working to teach students the skill of graphic design—something that has always been taught via close proximity studio methodology—and 100% of what I do is geographically distributed and technology mediated. I am a human, my students are humans, my staff are humans, my cohort and supervisor are humans and yet as we've never "seen" or even been in the same timezone...it all could actually be a gigantic sophisticated Turing test.

It feels so mundane when I live it day to day and yet to see all these facts written out...so so so crazy that the system is even allowed to exist, let alone thrive.

There is no part of me that ever thinks that my computer could replace my supervisor just as there is no part of me that ever thinks that my computer could replace any of the instructors on my team because I believe so strongly in the power of the human behind all of this new fangled technology.

And yet, how does one get to this place of seeing the human even as it's fully interpreted by blind code and then transported via cables and satellites and flat screen projections? How do people become real in such a different, non-human atmosphere? I'm beginning to think I'm not the norm...I'm beginning to think I'm the anomaly in all of this and yet if I could understand myself better perhaps I could help untangle these ideas for others.

For me it feels so natural because I've lived in this place for so long and been learning in this distanced mediated system for almost 10 years, beginning with my MFA. That said, if I were strategic planning for my position from the outside looking in, I would easily say that the only logical option would be to replace a significant portion of my staff with computers because computers already figure so prominently what would be the harm, in the name of cost effectiveness, to just give them all the responsibility and move my position to managing computers who are managing students? Scary indeed. And even more it's making me realize that I need to do all I can to ensure something crazy like this does not happen because I think the repercussions would be universally terrible.



ASSIGNMENT ONE  
**3** DISTRIBUTED  
LEADERSHIP

*Leadership (not “leaders”) is  
the key to the new revolution.*

**MICHAEL FULLAN**

*Leadership & Sustainability: System Thinkers in  
Action, p.x*

## Assignment 1 Overview

Find a general text or a credible web-site on leadership and review the basics of at least one of the following leadership theories:

- Trait-based leadership
- Emergent leadership
- Contingency theory and leadership
- Complexity leadership
- Transactional leadership
- Transformational leadership
- Distributed leadership

Create a description of your chosen theory and an argument in favor of this leadership theory in terms of validity, practicality and usefulness, particularly in education. Why is this better than other theories? What are the shortcomings of the other theories?

Write a short paper and present a brief (2–3 minutes) argument of your theory in our seminar.

## ASSIGNMENT 1 PERSONAL LEARNING REFLECTION

For the first assignment of 804, we were asked to choose one common leadership theory and both write a short paper and present a short argument in its favor. The idea was that because each class member would be presenting on a different theory, everyone would benefit from a general leadership theory survey. For me the presentations especially served as a great 30,000 foot introduction to many ideas I was encountering formally for the first time.

After browsing suggested choices, I chose to profile distributed leadership theory because I resonated with its ideas that leadership is collaborative and works best when it is not the realm of one great mind but rather spread around or “distributed” to many different key stakeholders.

What follows on the next pages are slides from my presentation as well as an edited version of my final paper. One unexpected outcome was that this assignment introduced not only the words “collaborative” and “distributed” into my academic leadership vocabulary but also the words “re-write” and “re-submit” into my academic writing vocabulary. Though it was disheartening that my initial submission was deemed to have missed the mark on content, scope, and quality, through the resubmission process I learned much about the importance of digging deep into the bedrock that is seminal research and know that my second submission is much stronger as a result.

Finally, whenever I am in the process of learning about a new idea it seems the lens through which I navigate the world shifts ever so slightly so that I become keenly aware of connections I never knew existed before to the idea I am studying. Depending on my mindset, this heightened awareness is either excellent (as I see connections where none previously existed) or tiresome (as it takes concerted effort to turn off my own racing mind and thoughts.) True to this pattern, while studying distributed leadership I encountered a significant work related impasse that allowed me to personally define my own thoughts on how I as an appointed team leader should relate to and interact with those on my team. The blog post that closes this section tells a brief story and reflects on what I learned in that process.

## ASSIGNMENT 1 PRESENTATION VISUALS



**DISTRIBUTED  
LEADERSHIP**  
LISA HAMMERSHAIME // EDDE804  
ASSIGNMENT 1 PRESENTATION

The slide features a background pattern of small, grey human silhouettes. The title 'DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below the title, the author's name and course information are listed in smaller orange text.

- highly social
- highly human-focused
- multiple "leaders" present in any organization worthy of contributing to future progress.
- Leadership is more than an individual—it actually consists in the interactions between individuals.



That's interesting,  
**HOW CAN OUR  
STRUCTURE  
SUPPORT THAT  
PROCESS?**

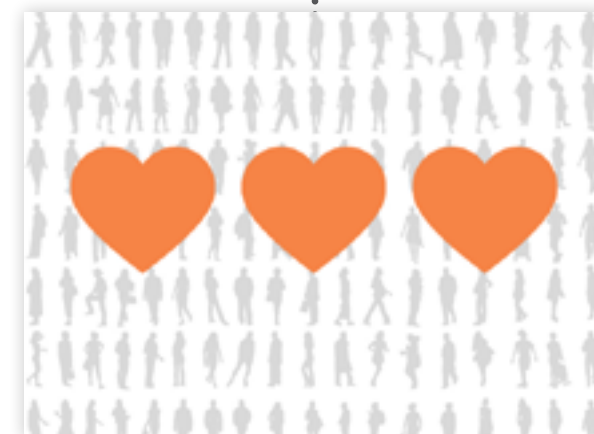
The slide shows a dark grey silhouette of a person's head and shoulders on the left. To the right, the text is arranged in a question format, with 'That's interesting,' in a smaller font and the rest in large, bold, orange letters.

“Leadership is more than an individual—it actually consists in the interactions between individuals. Leadership is not a role that one embodies, rather it is a practice and an enactment.

—Dr. Alma Harris

“Leadership is primarily concerned with the co-performance of leadership and the reciprocal interdependencies that shape that leadership practice. This co-leadership can involve both formal and informal leaders, it is not an 'either/or' proposition.

—Dr. James Spillane



The slide features a background pattern of small, grey human silhouettes. In the center, three large, solid orange hearts are arranged horizontally.

## CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The twenty-first century educational landscape is marked by a move of restructuring. Long-held assumptions about structural hierarchies and an institution under the command of a single heroic leader are being questioned as principals and headmasters are tasked with maintaining increasingly stringent accreditation standards, teachers are tasked with increasing student-learning objectives, and students themselves are tasked with greater assessment skills, reflection, and overall academic performance (Harris, 2009). In addition, quick advances in technology have brought a whole new digital force to the educational sphere forcing educational leaders to not only consider which technological advances to support in their academic budgets but also what role such advances will play in the pedagogy and culture of their institution (Bedouin, 2004). In the era of “convergence of educational modes of delivery, and the emergence of new organizations and combinations that transcend traditional boundaries” (Hall, 1998, p. 14), what is needed when contemplating educational leadership is not a panacea delivered by a single great personality rather through collaboration, the fostering of intentional community, and an emphasis on shared and collaborative leadership—a holistic and sustainable solution for change can emerge where all stakeholders are engaged.

## DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP DEFINED

Though distributed leadership as a theory is relatively new, its roots can be traced back to Gibb, an Australian social psychologist who stated in his 1954 *Handbook of Social Psychology* that “unequivocal unipersonal leadership rarely, if ever, occurs” (Gibb, 1954, p.103). Distributed leadership is—as the name suggests—a theory where leadership practice is distributed amongst many stakeholders (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). This distribution amongst stakeholders, or “articulation of work” (Gronn, 2000, p. 27) creates interdependencies amongst teams and individuals thus distributed leadership is a highly social and a highly human-focused pursuit—a collective rather than solo endeavor. In the distributed leadership model, there are multiple leaders present in any organization who are worthy of being empowered and given a voice and input to future organizational policy and direction. Indeed, the collective leadership as all units of an organization come together is much more important than the actions of any individual leader (Yukl, 1999). Though distributed leadership recognizes the importance of a core focal point leader that leader’s job is not to tightly control the ebb and flow of the organization, rather that leader’s job is to make sure an overall culture of trust and openness is built and maintained so that everyone is supported (Elmore, 2000). In this atmosphere, those who want to lead are nurtured and supported. Those who are not yet in a place to lead or lack the desire are identified as important followers who also have a key role to play in the leadership process (Harris, 2005).

## DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

In the education sector, distributed leadership recognizes that, though the principal or headmaster may be the leader of the school by virtue of their positional authority, they are not the only leaders present. Gronn writes that distributed leadership calls for an intentional move away from viewing the leader at the center of a group (Gronn, 2002).

Spillane, in his seminal book, *Distributed Leadership* concurs, stating that leadership practice is distributed over leaders, followers, and the school situation or context (Spillane, 2006). In both Gronn and Spillane's conceptualization, each element has a unique role to play and leadership itself is not something that flows in a one-way channel. Rather, each influences and is influenced by the others in a dynamic, ever-changing rhythm. "Leadership is the product of debate, dialogue and discussion that results in action rather than a set of leadership tasks, responsibilities or functions that someone has to undertake or is given" (Harris, 2005, p.7).

## BENEFIT OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Rather than having one person manage the organizational decision making and accompanying stress, daily demands, tasks and problems that are inherent in any organization, distributed leadership parcels out issues over a wider support network (Angelle, 2010). This is a benefit to an educational institution because it ensures that no one person handles undue amounts of stress, leading to burnout. In addition, distributed leadership has been shown to create greater opportunities for "sharing decision making responsibilities by drawing on expertise wherever it exists in the organization" (Wright, p.28). This sharing of responsibility directly translates back into a stronger sense of workplace community, increased work satisfaction, and ultimately an increased sense of self-efficacy (Elmore, 2000, p.16).

Schools that implement distributed leadership have teams of teacher-leaders who are responsible for key initiatives vital to the progress of the school itself. Unlike delegated leadership where teachers are tasked with a job and then monitored along the way, distributed leadership encourages teachers to lead from a place of personal passion lending not only their technical experience to the task but also engaging their emotional investment in the work. Teachers more often than not rise to the occasion and feel a deep sense of accomplishment when they are able to participate as is shown by the quote from a teacher involved in a distributed leadership project from the Arden School in London: "If you've been in the process of getting there, rather than someone just telling you, then... it's a far better way round it. Everybody gets behind it because everybody feels part of the decision making process' (Harris, 2005, p.16).

## LIMITATIONS OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Though distributed leadership offers much promise in its ability to spread out leadership and allow teachers and students to rise up and contribute, it must be exercised with caution. Timperley cautions "Distributing leadership over more people is a risky business and may result in the greater distribution of incompetence" (Timperley, p. 417). Because distributed leadership requires a conscious relinquishing of power and formal control, often the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure of an institution itself is an impediment to distributed leadership (Harris, 2002). Teachers must be the ones to proactively select what leadership roles they would like to pursue. If institutional culture is not such that trust, support and openness to change are encouraged, "micro-politics within a school" (Timperley, p. 418) can bog down the process and often inertia is too great for distributed leadership to be implemented. Finally, a strong relationship amongst teacher-leaders does not always trickle down to greater student achievement.

## DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP CONTRASTED WITH TRAIT-BASED LEADERSHIP

Distributed leadership with its emphasis on the integral collaboration and co-performance of all agents (both those with traditional positional leadership roles and those with more informal leadership roles) within an organization stands in direct opposition to traditional trait-based leadership model. Trait-based leadership draws its inspiration from Thomas Carlyle's "great man" theory first formally propagated in the late nineteenth century (Zaccaro, 2007). In this leadership model individuals possess unique inherited traits allowing them through charm, charisma, and superior intelligence to use their power for a "history-altering" outcome. In trait-based leadership, certain individuals have been endowed with extraordinary transformational influences. This transformational prowess is situation and context agnostic, thus leadership is indisputable (Zaccaro, 2007).

In education, trait based leadership has been shown to provide history-altering outcomes to many schools who find themselves in dire situations when charismatic leaders have come in and set new expectations for teachers, dramatically change curriculum, or change school culture by altering student services. That said, a large shortcoming of trait-based leadership is that it has been shown that when only one person owns the vision for a school it leaves the school as a whole very vulnerable because if and when the single leader transitions to a new position, the vision and resources go with them (Yukl, 1999). "In such circumstances not only is the improvement gained quickly lost but the development work also dissipates simply because of an over-reliance on the leadership capability of one person" (Harris, 2005, p.3).

Another shortcoming of trait-based leadership is that it maintains a very limited locus of control leading trait-based leaders to ignore the vital element of community and co-construction in organizational growth. By replacing the suggestions of the many with the ideas and expertise of the one, trait based leadership fails to create a “critical mass of leaders at all levels of the system, particularly leaders who are working on developing leaders beyond themselves” (Harris, 2005, p.4). If education has indeed entered into a more network-driven era as defined by Bedouin where “the academy is shifting from a campus-centric to a distributed education model” (p.74) then the trait based leadership model is fatally flawed in addressing sustainable growth, development, and continuity of operations in education

In conclusion, the current convergence climate and greater networked models of education call for a leadership to move from a trait-based heroic model to a distributed model so that there are adequate leaders in place to promote sustainable operations and overall improvement in educational experience. Distributed leadership, with its ethos of leadership practice distributed amongst many stakeholders (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001), shared decision making (Wright, 2008), and emphasis on leading from a place of personal passion (Harris, 2005), invites all stakeholders into a community culture of trust (Angelle, 2010). This leads to better management of human resources, better development of existing leadership capital, and ultimately a solution for engaging teacher-leaders who become a positive force in navigating sustainable operations and overall improvement in the educational experience for all.

## ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL RESOURCES

(clicking on each image will open your browser)

**EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE**  
A CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR ALMA HARRIS

**POWER TO THE PEOPLE:  
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AS A PATHWAY TO CHANGE**  
EDUCAUSE 2015: SESSION 3

**UNDERSTANDING LEARNING LEADERSHIP:  
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**  
A PRESENTATION BY JAMES SPILLANE



# BLOG POST 6

## on leadership and letting go... january 30, 2015

Today I am so glad it's almost the weekend, almost the time when I can be safely ensconced in two non-working days and not have a Pavlovian reaction to my email alert tone. It's been one of "those" weeks where work and school managed to combine in an unnerving Venn Diagram and much of what I've been learning in theory about Distributed Leadership was played out in practice in real life. Turns out, keeping ideas in your head is way easier and way less uncomfortable than actually living them!

In an effort to model good reflective practice I'll embrace objective academic and just list and annotate what I've observed in this week's ethnography of Lisa and leadership...hopefully writing will bring distance, will bring perspective will bring—eventually—learning.

**1. being completely vulnerable and transparent with those you lead is hard....but always the best way.** This past week I messed up, made some bad choices, and now I am dealing with the aftermath. When this situation happened I was very open about my struggles and what was going on with my closest team members. It literally felt like I was about 12, I was going to vomit, and they were finally going to see me for the sham that the darker voices in my head talk about on a daily basis. Yet after I'd gotten it out, totally cliché but, it was freedom because they saw new parts of me and even more were allowed to speak into me rather than the usual me-to-them transaction that happens based on me being appointed in leadership "above" them.

**2. the hardest thing about being a leader is opening your own grabby little fists and trusting your team.** (indeed, the hardest part of being a person might be opening up your grabby little fists and trusting others, time, and process.) when I accepted this job almost a year ago, I was so concerned that I wouldn't be able to give presentations because I was such a poor public speaker...I was petrified that I wouldn't know how to balance my time and I'd burn out...I was convinced that no one would follow my lead and all my ideas were too crazy or bizarre to ever inspire others. Turns out, presentations (or at least distance-mediated ones) are cake. Balancing time is tricky but luckily I do have a pretty good "stop or I will stop for you" balance on my body itself. Ideas? Position and passion pretty much ensure that people will jump on the bandwagon...keeping them is anyone's guess but getting them isn't so hard.

But yeah...letting go is something so completely different. For whatever reason (and I'm taking the Leadership Theory course right now so you'd think if anyone knew the answer it would be me) it feels natural for me to say that I'd be willing to sacrifice myself for my team as I am their leader but to give them stuff to do...to actually put into practice what it means to distribute leadership which on paper sounds like the best idea ever?? Eek! First gut reaction is....I'm not weak! I'm not needy!! I'm all powerful and in charge!!! I MUST DO ALL THE THINGS because I am leader!

In truth, I am strong and courageous but so is every person on my team. By virtue of timing and choosing and who knows what...I ended up as the "leader" but with that title I didn't suddenly also get superpowers.

I'm beginning to realize that when things like this week happen and you end up messy and human and anything but a superhero in front of your team it turns out...just where you end is the perfect place for all of them to begin. It turns out that you've been feeling noble as you shelter them but really they're more than willing for the relationship to be reciprocal...more than capable of holding you when you need it, if you will only let them. There is much to this whole distributed notion but the one caveat is you as the leader...must first be on board. You must first set the tone and show the trust and that's the easiest thing in the world to say and the hardest thing in the world to actually do.

I didn't have many proud moments this week but I did have a proud moment realizing that the culture I've been hoping for, for oh the last year is actually a reality. We can be open. We can be real people with each other. We can do hard things. We can support each other in an authentic, genuine manner. As the leader, I can (and have) opened my hands to them because it is safe and in a act of grace and beauty...they've opened theirs in return.

Ahh life...What a fun and frustrating challenge you often turn into.



ASSIGNMENT TWO  
**4** CONFERENCE  
OPENCAST

*One of the most important dimensions of the participatory view of communication is that it moves meaning away from the intentions of individual subjects and moves it to the social practices which are constituted by cooperative and coordinate action.*

**Raf Vanderstraete & Gert Biesta**

*How is education possible? Pragmatism, communication and social organization of education, p. 166*

## Assignment 2 Overview

This assignment is meant to be a group assignment.

Each group will be asked to identify a complex situation that involves

- 1) a social or economic problem
- 2) an education intervention
- 3) a distance/innovative education solution
- 4) necessary leadership strategies

The product from this assignment is a presentation in AdobeConnect, a short paper to submit to the instructor, and a facilitated discussion in Moodle. The presentation and paper must include a detailed description of the case, the context and nature of the social problem, the way education might solve the problem, how distance and innovative education might be employed and what leadership strategy would make it happen.

## ASSIGNMENT 2 PERSONAL LEARNING REFLECTION

For the second assignment of 804, we were tasked to work in groups to extend our theoretical leadership knowledge into practical case study format. Through both a short paper and longer presentation, we were to describe how leadership could be instrumental in addressing a complex social situation. Through this process we both practiced collaborative learning and leadership integration as we considered the importance of matching appropriate leadership theory to the situation and long term impact of leadership on a social issue. Presenting our project to our peers, provided practice speaking about our ideas, as one would need to do if presenting a project for implementation in a larger organization.

After thinking about assignment requirements, I chose to contact, Lorne Upton, a new member of our cohort, to see if he would like to partner. He agreed and together we spent six weeks first getting to know each other, then brainstorming potential ideas, and finally getting down to the hard work of fleshing out how leadership could be used to bring good to a social issue.

Because he and I are both interested in networks/social learning process and both favor leadership theory that is more emergent than appointed and organic than hierarchical, we worked together well.

For our case study, we decided to tackle the social issue of digital literacy/building knowledge in an information abundant environment, looking specifically at how we can create a situated learning experience for students so they can gain first hand experience in curating, managing, and creating knowledge in complex networked learning spaces. We proposed the creation of "The AU Conference OpenCast" a space on the Athabasca Landing social network site where international conferences could be streamed so that students could attend virtually. Through this community not only would students learn from experts who are presenting, they would also learn from other students who are attending and reflecting on their own experience. In this way, students could build peer to peer social capital and valuable connections with experts. We chose complexity leadership theory as being an appropriate match for this initiative as we envisioned each person with an interest as exercising leadership through suggesting speakers, sharing artifacts, etc.

Through this assignment I learned about the benefits and pitfalls of social learning theory. I also learned about the give and take that must occur when working at a distance on a collaborative project. This latter learning especially reinforced the importance of open communication when working at a distance which is foundational not only in collaborative projects but also to any form of leadership in distance education.

Though our project received an enthusiastic reaction from our peers and we have continued our conversation about how we can make this idea a reality, we did receive several cautionary comments outlining potential pitfalls and gaps in our proposal. These comments, can be seen in the chart on the following page.

Our main gaps were surrounding the area of what education is lacking that our intervention would provide. In particular we were not as thorough as we could have been outlining the social problem and setting the stage for how our proposal would be a positive step forward as opposed to just another proposed option that an institution could try. This lack of clarity reinforces the discussion of the importance of vision, mission, and objectives that was discussed in section two of this capstone.

Though it was not our intention to be vague, because Lorne and I had privately discussed these issues for many weeks, and created many possible iterations on the design before presenting our finalized version we lost touch with where our audience was in the process and made the incorrect assumption that everyone listening to our presentation shared our background knowledge and project passion. In addition, because we both became very familiar with our shared ideas and captivated with our shared vision, we lost critical perspective.

This realization reinforced the importance of not only researching widely to ensure an idea fits within the larger cultural landscape but also at some point in the process reaching out to others so that their critical perspectives can speak into any areas that may have been previously overlooked. In leadership, interaction of this kind manifests itself in a leader's choice as to who is or is not part of the planning process. Though too much dissension can become counterproductive, voices that express differing views and contributors with differing backgrounds can prove an asset as they ensure that there is a balance in contributions and outcomes. In this situation, the leader must be the one to ensure that voices can be heard, ideas can be shared, and ultimately the vision is clear enough so that the best possible solution is reached.

On a personal level, this realization reinforces my own preference that leadership is best when it is distributed or shared. Moving forward, we will continue to work on making our initiative a reality for the Athabasca Landing community however we will also invite other voices to speak into the development process and begin an iterative testing cycle so that we ensure the best possible outcome.

## FUTURE FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR OPENCAST INITIATIVE

- How will leadership support the inception of this initiative?
- What assumptions are we making about how learning takes place?
- How can the description of the problem transcend merely arguments for enhancement?
- For what purpose, and through what mechanism, will participants be encouraged to join?
- Though the environment is social, the learning may not be. How will we deal with this dichotomy?
- There is a vast research literature on the importance of leaders (instructors and teachers) in complex learning environments. What do the critics say regarding these ideas?
- There are problems in education that distributed, interactive media can resolve. What are these and what needs to be present in this still new and different environment to ensure learning is possible, sound, and verifiable?
- Who will lead? Are we expecting students will step forward and lead others? This is emergent leadership?



## Content and Navigation Note:

Based on experiential, proces-oriented learning, the next segment of my capstone is a multi-part reflection on how Assignment 2 unfolded from my perspective as traced through emails, blog posts, and tweets. Integrated into this are our final presentation slides as well as a link to our final paper. Through these many disparate parts woven together it is possible to see how Lorne and I both collaborated and learned together and how our final process emerged.

# 804ASSIGNMENT2

LEARNING PROCESS  
LISA HAMMERSHAIMB

## Conference Opencast: Designing Learner-Centered Social Learning Spaces

### Introduction

**Lisa Hammershaimb** January 30, 2015 10:00 AM  
To: Lorne Upton [Hide Details](#)  
Assignment 2 [All Mail - Google](#)

Hi Lorne,

It's Lisa, who you may or may not remember in the sea of "L" names that seem to represent cohort 6! I'm the person who gave the distributed leadership presentation last night (which you might have missed since I went first and was exceptionally short in duration!). I'm also the person who is from the States, rather than Canada...or Brazil.

But anyways, I've been thinking this morning about Assignment 2 and wondered if you wanted to partner with me. I am quite open on ideas to explore/social issues to address through education + leadership.

Let me know if you'd be interested. If so, that would be amazing! If not, I totally understand so no worries.

thanks,  
lisa

**Lorne Upton** January 30, 2015 11:59 AM  
To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
Re: Assignment 2 [Inbox - Google](#)

Hello Lisa,

Thank you very much for the invitation. I haven't thought too much about assignment two. If you wish, we can meet sometime in the next week or so to discuss how we might proceed. Let me know what works best for you.

Thank you,  
Lorne

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 1, 2015 10:47 AM  
To: Lorne Upton [Hide Details](#)  
Re: Assignment 2 [All Mail - Google](#)

Perfect!

# BLOG POST 7

## assignment 2 begins... february 16, 2015

This long weekend I am deep in my 804 Assignment 2 which is a 45 minute (yeah, that's right...45 minute) presentation grappling with a social/economic issue and showing how education in general and educational leadership in particular could bring positive change. It's all speculative (meaning we don't have to actually do what we're investigating) and the overall thrust of the assignment is for us to test drive leadership ideas.

The good news is that it's meant to be a partner assignment and I've got an amazingly capable partner. We've chosen to grapple with persistence in distance education and look particularly at how The Landing, Athabasca's social site, could play a more proactive role in building community thus increasing persistence.

The even better news is that The Landing also happens to be the focus of my partner's thesis project. But, lest it sound like I've been savvy in partner choice and topic (which admittedly I have) and am now coasting for the next month, I have been pulling my weight as much as possible and though I'm not the main force finding articles (since he's basically got the library already) I'm enough of a control freak that I can confidently say my fingerprints will be on the final product to present a convincing argument that we are a team. In addition because he's been living in these ideas for awhile, I think my fresh outlook is a good reality check. I know for me the longer I live in ideas the more I'm unable to see how things could be any other way...then someone peers in and it's the emperors new clothes all over again as I realize what I thought was set in stone was really only written in sidewalk chalk.

As a bit of Landing background...based on the idea that learning is inherently social The Landing is a space where students can share work, initiate discussions, and generally share their lives in any way they would like. The Landing builds on Connectivist pedagogy saying that students are able to not only learn whenever/wherever they happen to be, but also learn cooperatively through personal learning networks and the nodes/new adjacent possibilities that come through chance encounters and spontaneous connections.

In theory, The Landing is a wonderful unique venue for all students at Athabasca because it is at once the campus quad, the local pub, and a worldwide MOOC. You can have conversations with people you know face to face just as easily as you can have conversations with people who are on the opposite side of the world from you. As in a great MOOC, in The Landing the hope is that the high level of student to student interaction balances the potentially lowered level of student-instructor interaction and even more the old hierarchies of knowledge flowing one way from teacher to student are replaced with an organic, bubbling sea of awesome collaborative learning. I've been in great MOOCs to see this sort of thing happen and it's pretty amazing and not unlike spontaneous combustion meets evolution meets the birth of a star. You can know about it all in theory but then once you're a part of the experience...totally dazzling.

Dron and Anderson, the pioneers behind The Landing and also the main researchers on its impact, have done lots of work identifying different ways people collaborate/learn in online spaces. Groups, nets, sets, and collectives are the main lingo that gets tossed around. Groups represent the smallest, most "closed" communities of the four and it seems with each step up the circle widens and gets more inclusive until topping out at collectives which are algorithmically combined together and can literally find commonalities amongst millions of users. The Landing, with its various levels of privacy settings, sharing, etc. manages to live in many of these circles concurrently.

It's an interesting taxonomy of online learning and the more I read the more I am convinced that there is something to the scheme. That said, the more I read the more I'm also convinced that naming something is not the same as completely understanding it and when it comes to learning and humans... the complexity element tends to throw a delightful wrench in everything.

So, what will emerge as our Assignment 2 educational leadership positive change regarding these things? Ideas are fermenting and it'll be interesting to see how they distill down. And even more it'll be interesting to see how they are discussed on the campus quad, or at the local pub or even, on the worldwide MOOC.

**Lorne Upton** February 11, 2015 1:32 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
 Access to Google Doc [Inbox - Google](#) 1

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Hello Lisa,

I have created a Google Doc and sent you an invitation. Did you get it?

best,  
 Lorne

**Lorne Upton** February 14, 2015 12:58 AM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
 Re: Google Doc Updates [Inbox - Google](#) 1


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Agreed. One of the main problems of the Landing—as I see it—is school-wide adoption and engagement. I also believe there are numerous reasons for this.

1. Competing social software environments—Facebook, Twitter
2. Failure to reach a “critical mass”.
3. Limited adoption by AU staff
4. Design issues: too many tools, fragmentation of discourse, privacy
5. Managing online interactions: wild and prolonged debates over trivial matters (again my opinion) and draining the energy of others.
6. Transparency—I am not too sure I agree with Paulsen. I wonder if people feel a little intimidated and over exposed.
7. Limited number of student-centred activities.
8. Lack of ethos and purpose. It can't be “about everything and about nothing in particular”.

Anyway, I think the outline you have worked on is great, and I will be contributing to it over the weekend.

best,  
 Lorne

 **Lisa Hammershaimb** @merryspaniel · Feb 17  
 @mgoldst 21st c. performance art: watch someone on the other side of the world edit your Google Doc...using neon text

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 18, 2015 12:25 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton [Hide Details](#)  
 Re: paper [All Mail - Google](#)

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Thanks for the chat last night and all the continued great ideas. It is a bit like spelunking especially with so much complexity but it's fun too as we're going places I've never been and hopefully this is adding another element to your thesis.

Here's my assignment 1. Not that we're using distributed leadership but still, it'll help you learn how I write and think. Actually, what am I doing sharing it via email? I should put this on the Landing! :)

  
 Hammershaimb\_Assignm ent1.pdf

**Lorne Upton** February 18, 2015 4:36 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
 Re: paper [Inbox - Google](#) 2


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Hello Lisa,

Thank you for sending this. You are right. It would be nice if students were to share their work. I have attached my final copy which includes references.

best,  
 Lorne

[See More from Lisa Hammershaimb](#)

  
 Assignment 1 EDDE 804.odt

## Social Learning Process Explored

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 20, 2015 12:54 AM  
 To: Lorne Upton [Hide Details](#)  
 Social/Educational Problem [All Mail - Google](#)

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Hi Lorne,

After hearing Dr. Bates, I was thinking about our Assignment 2 and what do you think if instead of having persistence as our big problem we have knowledge management/personal knowledge curation in the atmosphere of so much abundance? Then we could have the assignment you proposed as a sort of test run for students to practice both creating and curating content?

Complexity leadership would be a good fit for this idea because of its emphasis on individual empowerment, collective energy, etc. In addition, as you mentioned in your paper it's important to have the building of learning objects and connections. If we went in this direction, persistence would be a good outcome from the engagement.

So, let me know your thoughts. If it feels crazy to you...totally fine but I think it could work.



# BLOG POST 8

## in praise of nets february 19, 2015

In *The Distant Crowd: Transactional Distance and New Social Media Literacies*, Dron and Anderson discuss the many different circles of interaction that compose social media/internet communication and how each of these circles may or may not impact a learner's experience of Moore's ideas on transactional distance. For those not in the know (no shame...this was me about 4 months ago) transactional distance refers to the cognitive span between learners and teachers in an educational setting. Though in distance education "cognitive span" often means physical things like time zones and geography, transactional distance can occur even when all participants are present in the same room yet because of any one of a number of elements just aren't connecting fully. Large amounts of transactional distance tends to be bad because they mean learner isolation and all the negative baggage that isolated learners tend to bring. The three magic keys of reducing transactional distance are: dialogue between learner and teachers, structure/instructional design of the program itself, and learner autonomy.

Dron and Anderson identify four main enclaves that define social interaction. These are: groups, nets, sets, and collectives. Though it's a bit awkward, you can think of each of these four constructs as concentric circles with groups being the most closed/exclusive (think of the internet version of the "no boys allowed" club you formed in grade 2) and collectives being literally the Amazon.com community where your algorithm just happens to match someone else (think this is where you may totally impulse buy the rhinestone encrusted small dog dress that was recommended to you...I speak hypothetically of course.)

For me (and I think for them but...don't quote me), the most interesting enclave isn't what lives on either extreme but rather what's almost right in the middle...the "net" or more appropriately the "network." Dron and Anderson say that nets are the social form that, "most characterize tools and environments such as blogs, shared bookmarks, media sharing, and social networking systems is the network." In addition, "Networks are, at least in principle, unbounded, and we only ever have a partial view of them, connecting with

other nodes that are, in network terms, "nearby." Nets with their very blurry boundaries and macro views have some pretty awesome potential, particularly when you add in the whole adjacent possible proposed by Siemens and Downes.

Because these ideas are so critical to my 804 presentation, for the past few days I've been subconsciously tagging every piece of social interaction I have with one of these four labels. Turns out, my own personal taxonomy has been very net heavy. In my day to day busy life, groups seem to require too much cognitive/emotional load on me because I am so vested in them that I have to really think about contributions I make, words I write, etc. thus I don't contribute regularly...more I contribute on an every few days basis. Collectives I could care less about because they're just too big and feel too impersonal. Sets...maybe but again they still skew a bit large for my taste.

Nets are like Goldilocks and her porridge...not too big, not too personal...just. right. In nets I don't need to give large portions of myself rather I can get in and get out and still manage a good level of interaction, challenge, and general stretch so I feel something worthwhile has occurred. It seems the keyword in nets is "fuzzy" and the key traits required are both courage to jump into murky waters and spontaneity to see where the tide will take you—sometimes nowhere, sometimes so far along at such a rapid rate all you can do is keep your head above the water. Either way as long as you're in the right frame of mind....it's pretty dazzling.

Is it selfish that I am skewing toward these low commitment, loose tie relationships rather than giving myself to the hardcore groups where I also belong? Perhaps, and yet I think that by virtue of the very construct of nets it's almost expected that there's a level of transiency and that's okay, in fact that's what makes nets the excellent place that they are.

You can find the Dron & Anderson article referenced above [here](#). Also, long live creative commons and open publication.

## Paper + Presentation Construction

**Lorne Upton** February 22, 2015 11:08 AM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 Re: Assignment #2 timeline  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Inbox - Google](#) 2

I think the main thing is we agree on a process and then break the task up into pieces.

1. outline
2. draft
3. editing
4. final draft

1. Introduction–stated thesis
2. description of intervention
3. ?
4. ?
5. conclusion

I will move this to a google doc

best  
Lorne

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 22, 2015 12:29 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Re: Assignment #2 timeline  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)

Haha...I like the parts where we don't use words and just go with graphic symbols. I'll gladly take the portion 4. ? and continue on with " " ( " ) " ( " ) " ( " ) " ( " ) " ( " ) "

But for real, looks good. I'm working on the following slides today:

1. Clean up opening w/ slightly different visuals
2. Create Landing History
3. Create Sets/Nets/Groups Overview

I think most important is that we need to define our main issue and intervention.

So, are we going with knowledge construction and curation in a social learning space? and then intervention is using: the Landing as a place to promote/encourage curated knowledge contributions using complexity leadership theory because CLT and its emphasis on complex interactive dynamics and complex adaptive systems is a good reflection of the distributed nature of the Landing.

This is all played out via an proposed case of either the curated interview assignment or the conference streaming initiative (because the more I think about that one the more I wish it could happen...but, I think many cases have potential).


**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 23, 2015 9:29 AM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Re: Assignment #2 timeline  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)


Hi Lorne,


Attached is a PDF of the slides I worked on yesterday. Let me know your thoughts. Groups are hard to represent visually because they're so big and kind of cover everything! I don't think I'm there yet, but it's okay. Also, text on the slides isn't final, rather is placeholder layout. There's so much good stuff in all the crowd learning chapters you sent me! I got a little bogged down in it yesterday.

I'm not totally sure about the discussion posting but will think about it today. Maybe as a way to build interest and drama, we just post a provocative picture of social learning representation and ask the class to describe what they think it represents and then a in couple do a big reveal?

At that time we could give a short overview of what we will be presenting with maybe some provocative questions such as: how do you personally curate knowledge? what are the significant networks in your life? Etc.

 **Terry Anderson** @terguy · Feb 26  
 @merryspaniel @jondron Thanks Lisa - great diagram - will make it into my slide shows. Much appreciated.

 **Lisa Hammershaimb** @merryspaniel  
 @terguy @jondron thanks! Credit also goes to Lorne who did lots of verbal explanation on this stuff. So fascinating.

 **Jon Dron** @jondron · Feb 27  
 @merryspaniel @terguy love the groups rendition in particular - an inspired way of representing the idea.

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 27, 2015 9:01 AM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Presentation Progress  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)

Hi Lorne,

I'm sorry....I've done pretty much nothing on the presentation slides over the last few days because I had a couple things come up unexpectedly and hijack my timeline. So, I don't need to meet tonight (more like I need to work!) but let me know if you still want to check in or where you are with anything.

I think I can still get things completed by March 1.

thanks,  
 lisa

EDDE 804 Presentation 2

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**Ideas to think about:**

Here are few points of tension I have found:

1. the tension between emergence, openness, creativity, self-organization--complexity reduction, design, efficiency

Is it possible to develop a focused or guided emergence--ethos--and still have set-like behavior and creativity?

2. How do we adjust to student perceptions of learning and the learning strategies they may be inclined to adopt. For example, there may be some learners who blossom when design structures are removed and who respond instinctively to open designs that permit varied expressions and creativity as student embrace self-organization, but what about those who need and are looking for structure--perhaps for the sake of efficiency? "I am not interested in playing around on the Landing. I am a very busy person. I just want to learn and get back to my work. The Landing is too confusing. I am not sure what to do. Where do I jump in? Is this a connectivist Mooc?"

"I think I have destroyed another Google Doc. Thank you for trying to keep things organized.

Haha! No worries, what are Google Docs for if not ultimate creative destruction?

## Revisions

**Lisa Hammershaimb** February 28, 2015 1:21 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 a couple ideas...  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)

Hi Lorne,

I feel like I may be getting into the danger zone of tweaking stuff rather than going with the plan, so let me know if this doesn't sound good but I have a couple new thoughts about what we're doing after looking all morning at the assignment requirements.

So, for the assignment we need:

1. social problem
2. education intervention
3. education solution
4. leadership strategy

I worked backwards with our Conference LiveStream idea and now think we should shift our social problem from knowledge management/curation to knowledge creation/curation.

Then our ed intervention will be to create a place within the general student experience where students can practice creating learning artifacts in a relatively open space, sharing what they've made, and curating what other stuff is out there.

Our solution will be to use the existing Landing infrastructure and make a common focus point for all these acts to take place with the new "Conference LiveStream" initiative.

This could lead to the following things happening:

1. New form of knowledge access created via Livestream
2. New "leaders" emerge as different people facilitate conference connects and oversee organization
3. Students are more likely to create and share artifacts about their learning (from simply participating in chats and leaving that trace to writing longer blogs and making other reflective artifacts)
4. Students are more likely to connect to one another from exposure to shared artifacts

In the end, learners will have larger networks, feel greater connectivity, have access to a larger pool of knowledge, be more likely to persist because of their social ties, build networks with other people professionally as they gain exposure to conference info, be comfortable creating and sharing learning artifacts with others and be confident handling networked, life-long social learning.

I'm concerned that our previous ideas were just a little too vague and because we need to get in and out with this presentation, we needed a bit more of a focus. So, let me know what you think about this somewhat new shift.

thanks,  
 lisa

☆ **Lorne Upton** February 28, 2015 1:38 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 Re: a couple ideas...  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Inbox - Google](#)

Hello Lisa,

This is excellent and not at all inconsistent with my original intention when designing the concept of Conference LiveStream. I don't think we should abandon the idea of knowledge management so quickly. How about we incorporate the notion of knowledge capture and dissemination as an associated benefit of the process. We can use the shared google doc from the conference as an exemplar. I also think it is a great way for students to create contacts with thought leaders and experts in the field. By developing the Conference LiveStream idea I may have enhanced my connection with Dr. Siemens (perhaps not, but likely so) and I have made new connections with other experts--Dr. Winne and others--who might have heard about what I was doing.


I think there is great value to students participating in this learner-centred activity.

[See More from Lisa Hammershaimb](#)

**Lorne Upton** March 2, 2015 4:45 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
 Fwd: Introducing the Livestream Broadcaster mini [Inbox - Google](#)

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fyi  
 Forwarded message  
 From: Livestream <[notifications@livestream.com](mailto:notifications@livestream.com)>  
 Date: Mon, Mar 2, 2015 at 10:34 AM  
 Subject: Introducing the Livestream Broadcaster mini  
 To: [lorne.upton@gmail.com](mailto:lorne.upton@gmail.com)



Hey there,

We're excited to announce the launch of the [Broadcaster mini](#). It's a brand new product from Livestream that's designed to turn any HDMI



**Lisa Hammershaimb**  
 @merryspaniel

Apparently a "bottom up" leadership model and a "bottoms up" leadership model aren't the same thing.... [#timetoedit](#)


**Lorne Upton** March 11, 2015 11:42 AM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb [Hide Details](#)  
 you were warned [Inbox - Google](#)

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In our presentation we are going to be using Dron & Anderson's conceptual model developed for understanding ways that social media can support learning. This model consists of three basic forms: groups, networks, and sets.

As we know this model is a bit different than other interaction models, we created a short interactive PDF as an overview. After reflecting and as one final discussion prep, please share your thoughts on how (or if) you think groups, networks, and sets are present in your own learning as well as how you tend to personally think about social learning.

[Reply](#) | [Print Post](#) | [Print Topic](#) |

 **Re: Social Forms for Learning**  
 by [maric](#) - Wednesday, 11 March 2015, 03:08 AM MDT  
 (13 words)

Sounds good, Lisa! And what issue are you resolving with new education forms? 1.

**Lisa Hammershaimb** March 11, 2015 9:07 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton [Hide Details](#)  
 one more thing.... [All Mail - Google](#)

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I know it's a little late for this, but I think our social issue isn't knowledge abundance rather it's developing digital literacies in spaces of knowledge abundance.

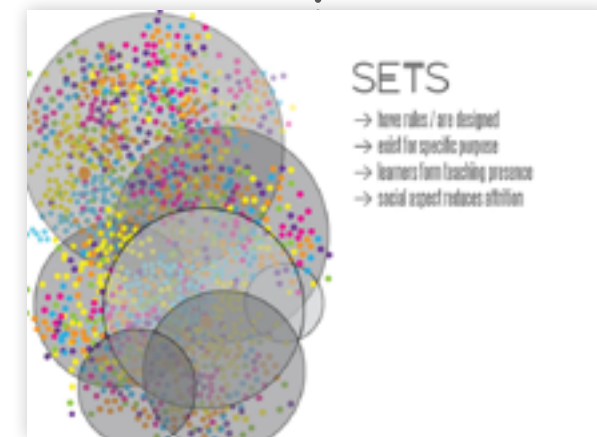
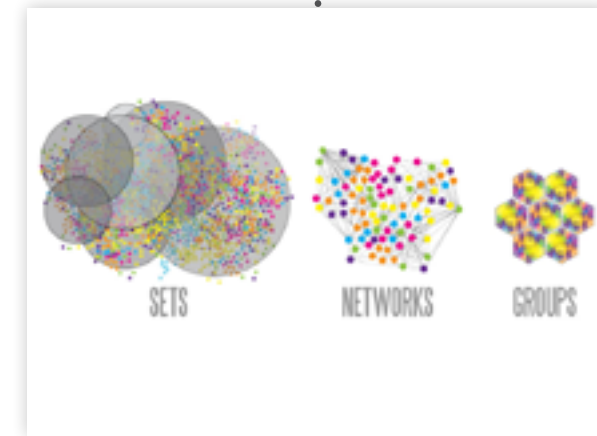
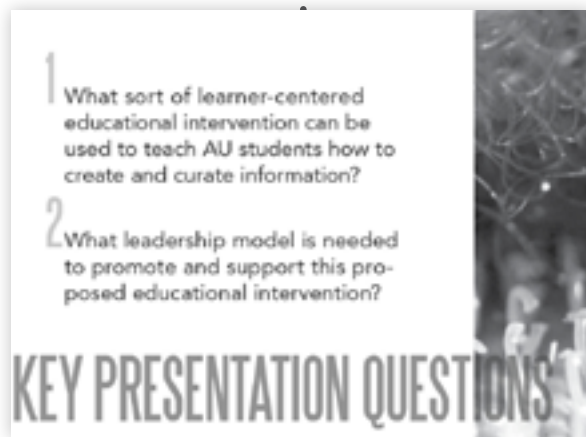
Here's a passage from this article (which I'm also attaching):  
 Stewart, B. (2013). Massiveness+ openness+ new literacies of participation. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 228-238.


New literacies are not merely the doing of the same old things with new technologies. In a world in which mobile, digital technologies permeate daily life on a seemingly ever-increasing basis, educators may mistake the usage of technologies within learning environments for digital literacies practice. New digital literacies, however, have an ethos component as well as a technological one: "new literacies are more 'participatory,' 'collaborative,' and 'distributed'" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007, p. 9). The new literacies ethos "celebrates inclusion (everyone in), mass participation, distributed expertise, valid and rewardable roles for all who pitch in" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007, p. 18).

So yeah, with it's ethos business and participatory culture, I think it leads into what we're doing and is a concrete thing. Let me know your thoughts. And....I can handle this slide which would be #2.

## Presentation Night

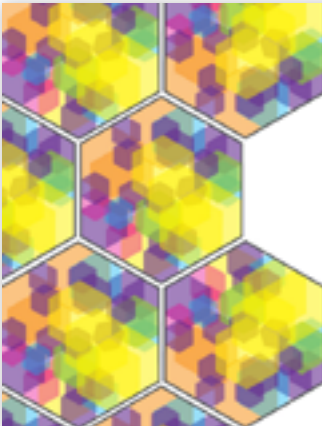






## NETWORKS

- have roles / are designed
- exist for specific purpose
- learners learn teaching presence
- social aspect reduces attrition



## GROUPS

- have roles / are designed
- exist for specific purpose
- learners learn teaching presence
- social aspect reduces attrition

## LANDING STATS

2008	LANDING DEPLOYS
7,009	ACTIVE USERS
462	ESTABLISHED GROUPS
2,808	DISCUSSION TOPICS
48,000	AVERAGE # OF VISITS PER MONTH



It's **social Velcro**, not tied to the course contracts, defined functions, or fixed communities. It's a place where both serendipitous & intentional learning happens. It's a **toolset for making social learning spaces**.

- J. DRON



## EDU. INTERVENTION: CONNECTING



ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY  
**CONFERENCE**  
**LIVESTREAM**  
 HOSTED ON THE LANDING



- 1 Situated learning
  - 2 Peer to peer and peer to professional connections
  - 3 "Sandbox" for knowledge creation and curation
  - 4 Modeling open and situated learning activities
- OPPORTUNITIES CREATED**

- 1 New form of knowledge access created via Livestream
  - 2 New "leaders" emerge as different people facilitate conference connects and oversee organization
  - 3 Students are more likely to create and share traceable artifacts about their learning (from simply participating in chats to writing longer blogs and making other reflective artifacts)
  - 4 Students are more likely to connect to one another from exposure to shared artifacts
- INTERVENTION: OUTCOMES**





- EMERGENT
- DYNAMIC
- COMPLEX
- SELF-ORGANIZING
- COLLABORATIVE

COMPLEXITY  
LEADERSHIP  
MODEL



PHYSICAL/NATURAL SCIENCE  
↓  
SOCIAL SCIENCES/LEADERSHIP

~~FORMAL ROLE~~

*By thinking of leadership as a behavior, not a formal role, it [complexity leadership] extends the capability for leadership behaviors to all organized members and calls for change in how we approach leadership development, which then should focus beyond managers or future managers to include all organizational members.*

COMPLEX  
ADAMPTIVE  
SYSTEM  
(CAS) } unit or network of independent agents "bonded in a cooperative dynamic"



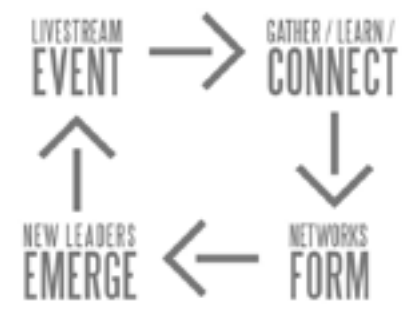
*...emergent, interactive dynamic—a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges when heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behavior or new modes of operating.*

- Collective Agency
- Increase Personal Network
- Social Capital amongst Students
- Social Capital within larger Community
- Access to Information/Information Trace

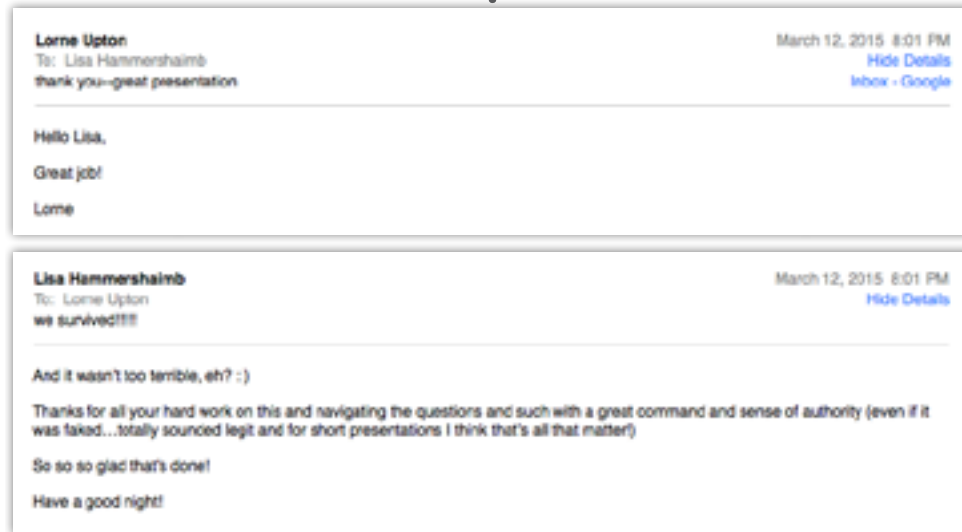
POTENTIAL WITHIN INITIATIVE



- + "Seed and enliven" the Landing
- + Provide impetus for congregating
- + Provide catalyst for curation/creation
- + Guided by common ethos



QUESTIONS?



# BLOG POST 9

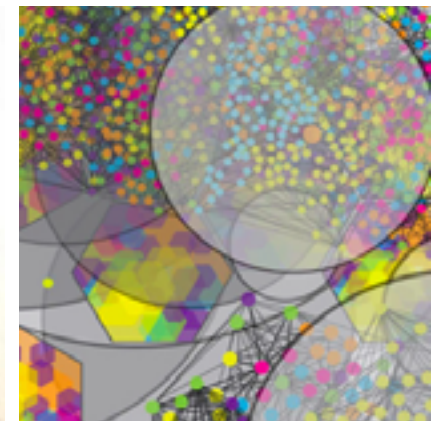
## survival... february 19, 2015

...of an EDDE804 Assignment 2 presentation style.

I'm much too close to giving the presentation (and still too hyped up on post-presentation everything is awesome adrenaline) to be capable of any logical reflections on how it actually went but, I'm going to tentatively say that it was a good one. My partner and I didn't talk over each other, didn't have awkward pauses, and best of all seemed to channel a good synergy from point to point. I thought it would be a stretch for us to hit 30 minutes but we cruised past 40 and could have easily hit the hour mark had there not been another group. In addition everyone seemed to love the slide designs and visual metaphors. As I had such fun designing these and could (if ever asked) go into a very long winded deconstruction on each element...this feedback especially made my own little designer heart very very happy.

Overall verdict: thankful.

And now, to the co-authored paper we go carrying this happy energy with us.....



## Paper Finalization + Revisions

**Lisa Hammershaimb** March 18, 2015 8:15 AM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Streaming Keynotes for LAK2015  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)

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Hi Lorne,

Just watching the keynote livestream for LAK2015. Pretty amazing that there can be a livestream of a conference. I think there may be something to this idea, eh?? :)

<http://lak15.solaresearch.org/streaming>

lisa

**Lorne Upton** March 18, 2015 11:18 AM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 OpenCast  
[Hide Details](#)  
 1

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Hello Lisa,

I think we witnessing a point of convergence. Here is a interesting site:

<http://opencast.org/>

Lorne

**Lorne Upton** March 18, 2015 12:05 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 Re: OpenCast  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Inbox - Google](#) 3

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Let's change the name to Conference Opencast

[See More from Lorne Upton](#)

**Lisa Hammershaimb** March 18, 2015 5:26 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Re: Paper  
[Hide Details](#)  
[All Mail - Google](#)

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Thanks Lorne!

I'm totally available tonight and can help with this in any way you need me to.

**Lorne Upton** March 18, 2015 6:06 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 Re: Paper  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Inbox - Google](#) 4

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Thanks--that sounds good. I know I am overlooking errors. I will be working on the google doc this evening. Are you okay with sharing the third iteration with others on the Moodle? We don't have to.

best,  
 Lorne

**Lisa Hammershaimb** March 18, 2015 6:32 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 Re: Paper  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Sent - Google](#)

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Hi Lorne,

Yes, I think it would be great to post the iteration to Moodle as well so we can continue to model a sort of openness in how this is all coming together.

Not sure if anyone is keeping track of it (besides us) but I think it's a fabulous way to see "learning" that has happened.

thanks,  
 lisa

**Lisa Hammershaimb** March 18, 2015 10:07 PM  
 To: Lorne Upton  
 here's some concluding thoughts....  
[Hide Details](#)  
[Sent - Google](#)

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which you don't have to use but at least it gets you started on what seem to be the high points of what has been written thus far:

In conclusion, the act of learning is a complex and, often, non-linear process. That said, there are identifiable, recursive processes and organizational structures that work to counteract chaos and ambiguity, establishing order and form through a process of instructional design or technology choices. The Conference Opencast intervention—a social learning space for individual students to build digital literacy skills through a process of exploring, sharing, creating and curating artifacts and new knowledge—is a new initiative with potential to model student interactions and demonstrate the process of creating, leveraging, and extending social networks, as well as, the value of building of social capital as both as an active member of the group. From a political perspective, the Conference Opencast is an intervention consistent with the general movement in distance education toward greater accessibility and openness (Velezianco & Kimmons, 2012). From a technological perspective, the Conference Opencast is an intervention will aid learners in acquiring digital literacy skills, thus opening up educational opportunities for individual learners. By leveraging Complexity Leadership Theory, the Conference Opencast intervention will create a student-centered, learning experience. This will lead to greater engagement in the dynamic process of knowledge management, and provide concrete ways distance education students can build collective agency and leadership.

**Lorne Upton** March 18, 2015 12:39 PM  
 To: Lisa Hammershaimb  
 Re: Final Final Paper  
[Hide Details](#)  
 1

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Hello Lisa,

Thanks for finishing this off. I have submitted the assignment for marking.

It has been great and we learned a little bit along the way!

best,  
 Lorne



**5** FUTURE  
DIRECTION

*“Learning to think” really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience.*

**DAVID FOSTER WALLACE**

*This is Water, p. 54*

## FUTURE PERSONAL LEARNING REFLECTION

I came into 804 as I came into all previous courses, namely very low on formal background on the topics to be addressed but high on enthusiasm for what I would learn. If I were to plot myself on the Situational Leadership follower development flow, I would be squarely in the low competence / high commitment box—giddy for the future, blissfully unaware of the challenges that I would encounter ahead, and ready to do whatever it takes to make it through.

Though in theory I should have a background in leadership as I stepped into an academic leadership role one year ago, because the transition happened very suddenly and the culture of my institution (strongly trait-based, in fact when I was promoted I was told I “had the perfect personality to be a leader and that with my background made me the ideal candidate”) I have subsequently received almost no formal training on what it means to lead. Before this course my leadership style involved lots of trial and error, lots of intuition, and a hearty dose of luck. Though this sort of assemblage makes for an exciting experience because you never quite know what might happen, I came to 804 hoping that though the course specifically said it wasn’t a “this is how to be a leader” course, I might slyly pick up a better idea of just how to be a leader because I knew there had to be a better way than what I was doing and even more I knew that leading by the strength of my personality alone wasn’t going to hold out much longer.

For me what has changed the most in these past thirteen weeks is my own awareness of the vastness of the leadership world. In addition, though I am still a novice in these studies, this course has brought out a newfound confidence in me around identifying what leadership styles are at play in a given situation and what leadership styles might be better in a given situation. Finally, I have a better grasp of where I naturally tend to situate myself on the leadership spectrum. For example, when I began digging into distributed leadership for Assignment 1, I instantly felt a kinship with it and the way it spreads leadership out amongst all who want to lead rather than reserves leadership for a single voice. I experienced a similar sense of kinship with complexity leadership with its organic, emergent nature when Lorne and I collaborated on Assignment 2. Both of these experiences made me realize that I gravitate much more to the idea that leadership is an emergent process and followers are not only integral to the leadership transaction but often through their input hold more power than the leader.

I now better understand the larger picture of a leadership transaction in general and an educational leadership transition in particular. When proposing or enacting a change no matter how big or small, the leader must be cognizant of the larger picture that includes environment, culture, impact to followers, and impact to the future of the organization. Reading each of the case studies in Lachtem and Hanna was especially



meaningful to me as it brought each approach to life. Nothing happens in a vacuum and leadership especially must be mindful of this. Good leadership has tremendous potential to bring positive social change but to do so it must be firmly grounded on more than good intentions or the leader's own desire to force it to happen.

When I began this course, I defined leadership vaguely as something like a dance involving people, context, situation, etc. For me leadership was more process than static, more organic than rigid, and more relational than solo. Now standing at the other side of the course, my definition would not formally change much though I now have terminology like "distributed" and "emergent" to officially give name to these leanings and a much deeper knowledge of others who share my views.

Though my own definition may not have shifted, my own awareness and even more my own sense of empathy and perspective has shifted drastically. As with almost everything in life, there are no clear black and white decisions as to which leadership style is always right or always best. Though I am clear on my preference and default, I also have realized through encounters in research and case studies that in some situations, the best leadership will be something that I do not naturally embrace, namely leadership that is static, rigid, solo, etc. Though these descriptors feel out of character for me, I hope if the structure and situation did call for me to lead in this manner, I would willingly do so.

To be the best leader it seems has very little to do with choosing a camp and sticking with it, and very much to do with having the emotional intelligence and situational awareness to assess what pathway is best for all participants moving into the future.

Moving forward, I know these ideas are going to continue to be valuable to me and continue to distill in my own mind with both the team that I lead and the directions I move into with my thesis research project. For my thesis, I am planning on studying how students learn fine/applied arts disciplines in a fully distance education setting. These disciplines are traditionally taught in small face to face studios and "learning under" a master via a shared geographic space is the cultural norm. Distance learning is rare and I hope that my research nudges the divergent spheres of arts education and distance education a bit closer together. That said, because this nudge would require such a large cultural shift, leadership will be key in vision casting, gaining institutional support, and building follower support. Before this course, I was aware of what a daunting wicked problem this issue would be but wasn't so aware of how it might be managed. Now, I still think it is quite large but also feel empowered that with mindful leadership, it is indeed possible and look forward to the future.

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