

Chapter Four

Leading Learnership

The Transformation of Leadership via Convergence with Learning

Greg Laudeman

Leadership, as is often pointed out, has many meanings. Simply put, I define leadership as achieving through others, the ability or quality to cause people to pursue some valued outcome, and the class of persons who can do this. Note that *leadership* is commonly used as a noun. It is a *thing* or a *state of being*. My purpose in this chapter is to argue that leadership is evolving into a highly cooperative and distributed form, which I refer to as *leading learnership*. To adapt to the increasing complexity of society, leadership is increasingly about effectively developing and mobilizing human capabilities. I review the grand narrative of leadership and the parallel evolution of learning, each with a discussion of how leadership and learning are converging. Then I provide examples of leading learnership and discuss its practical and theoretical implications.

Talking About Leadership: Grand Narrative of Leadership

There are many stories about leadership, what it means, and how it functions. The substance of these narratives has changed, from classical prototypical leadership, through modern official leadership, to postmodern social leadership. We see evidence of the changing nature of leadership around the globe, most notably in

citizen revolutions from the fall of the Berlin Wall and Tiananmen Square to the “Arab Spring,” but also in profound changes in the way goods are produced and problems solved.

Classical, Prototypical Leadership

The classical, prototypical version of leadership integrates the man—it was almost invariably men whom history remembers as leaders—and the function. Alexander the Great epitomized classical leadership, as did Henry the Eighth, Julius Caesar, Xerxes, and most all notable leaders from history. Their leadership inevitably involved coercion and exploitation, armies and weapons. Even the most positively beneficial classical leader led via force and violence. Generally, for these leaders, someone had to lose for them and their followers to win. Classical leadership was seen as conferred by heritage—directly or via some supernaturally conferred trait—or by sheer cunning and strength. *The Art of War* (Sun Tzu, 1910/2003) and *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 1961/2004) speak to prototypical leaders. Great minds and many backs supported them, but the leaders rose above and separate from their advisors and followers. Followers of prototypical leaders are little more than pawns or tools. Prototypical leadership is a single “fated” individual using coercion and force, leveraging identity, to exploit others for his personal glory and self-aggrandizement. The classical form of leadership can be seen in modern autocratic regimes, dictators, and presidents-for-life.

Modern, Official Leadership

Aristotle laid the foundation for the modern, official version of leadership that emerged in the nineteenth century in the guise of the self-made man—the capitalist, the politician, the scholar, and the visionary operating via the bureaucracy, the marketplace, the press, and the pulpit. Where classical leaders are largely products of their fated nature, heritage, cunning, ruthlessness,

and strength, modern leaders are products of personal traits that make others want to follow them; followership is voluntary rather than coerced or forced. Official, modern leaders are self-consciously identified as such, and leadership becomes a widely discussed phenomenon attributed to contemporary people. Modern leadership consists of a few individuals with “leadership traits” using ideas and persuasion, again leveraging identity, to mobilize people for the greater good as they define it. This is the “great man” model of leadership.

The modern, official version of leadership arose coincidentally in literature about classical leaders, about modern leaders as powerful individuals who change others by force of will (rather than coercion or deception), and about rugged individualists who achieve and overcome by sheer determination and intelligence, with honor and integrity. Mason Lockes Weems’s *Life of George Washington*, published in 1800, exemplifies such literature (Ellis, 2004) as do Frederick Douglass’s *Self-Made Men* from 1859 (1992), and the works of Horatio Alger, Jules Verne, and Sherlock Holmes, which was first published in 1892 (Doyle, 1906/1930). Victor Hugo’s *Napoleon le Petit* (1852/1909) simultaneously champions modern leadership, derides autocratic classical leadership, and hints at the possibility of postmodern leadership. Although any man could hypothetically become an official leader, in practice, only a few have what it takes to fill the leader role.

The Transition to Postleadership

Leadership studies prior to the late twentieth century focused on what Rost (1993) calls the periphery and content of leadership. The characteristics and traits of a leader that make up the periphery and content of leadership is what they must know to be effective. The content and periphery were distilled and then commoditized for sale in books and workshops. The social consciousness of the mid-twentieth century ushered in new thinking

about leadership, such as Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership (1977) and Burns's transformational leadership (1978), which focused on what Rost (1993) saw as essential but ignored: leadership as a process and a dynamic relationship. Bennis and Nanus (1985) presented the "new theory" of leadership, which posits that leaders "*empower others to translate intention into reality and sustain it*" (p. 80, emphasis in original). Deming (1986) suggested that the key to organizational efficacy is to transform supervisors into leaders: "The aim of leadership should be to improve the performance of man and machine, to improve quality, to increase output and simultaneously to bring pride of workmanship to people. Put in a negative way, the aim of leadership is not to find and record failures of men, but to remove the causes of failure: to help people do a better job with less effort" (p. 248).

Bennis (1989) promoted an even more accommodating and collaborative model of leadership that encourages dissent, embraces error, and manages the dream, along with more traditional leadership behaviors. Luke (1998) presented a similar model focused on bringing together groups of diverse persons to solve complex problems. Leadership is still about being in charge, but it is more collaborative, personable, and more of an activity or function than a thing: helping others to be successful. Northouse (2007) reviewed approaches to the practice and theories of leadership, all of which implicitly involve the "great man" in a one-to-many influence: only a few can be leaders. From a synthesis of the literature, Northouse (2007) argues that "leadership is a process whereby *an individual influences a group* of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3, emphasis added).

The modern is implicit in official definitions of leadership: rational action can achieve any objective. Postmodernists maintain that objectivity and rationality are social constructions arbitrarily created by some to dominate and exploit others. Heidegger (1927/1996) rejected objectivity; Kuhn (1962/1996) laid bare the process by which scientific paradigms are constructed

and supplanted. Derrida (1967/1998) and Foucault (1972) maintained that language is a tool for oppression. Lyotard (1979/1984) pointed out the impossibility of generalization, which provides the foundation for science and, by extension, the official model of leadership, and questioned the validity of universal “metanarratives.” Habermas (1984) and Giddens (1986) argued that rationality and social structure are continually redefined as people communicate with each other. Similarly, scientists themselves were discovering how ambiguous reality could be. Einstein’s theory of relativity (1920), Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle (1930), Gödel’s incompleteness theorem (1931/2000), and Arrow’s impossibility theorem (1970) are examples. These theories blossomed into recognition of inherent limits to expertise-oriented approaches to problem solving (Rittel & Webber, 1973) and offered a totally new way of thinking about complex phenomena (Waldrop, 1992).

Postmodern, Social Leadership

A new generation of leadership thinkers has combined the postmodern perspective with complexity theory to suggest an approach to leadership in which *everyone* is a leader (Barker, 2002; Hock, 1999; Hurley & Brown, 2009; Nielsen, 2004; Wheatley, 1994). Others have documented the technology-enabled emergence of postmodern leadership in new approaches to production: social production of knowledge goods (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006; Gladwell, 2002, 2009; Godin, 2008; Shirky, 2008; Surowiecki, 2004; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Of special importance is the concept of *openness*, sharing and using information without bias or restraint and allowing individuals to make decisions at their own discretion, in conjunction with others, based on openly available information (Chesbrough, 2006; Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Openness applies to technology—as in open source software—and is facilitated by technology. Li (2010) applies openness to leadership to

show how technology can enable leaders who are collaborative, curious, humble, and optimistic, starting with the realization that “the fundamental rules that have governed how *relationships* work are being rewritten, because of easy, no-cost information sharing” (p. xiv, emphasis in the original). Open leadership means ceding control to others via technologies that reduce transaction costs and enable collective action.

There are three salient characteristics of this new, “postleadership” perspective on leadership. First, everyone, not just a few lucky or special individuals, can be a leader; indeed, as many people as possible *must* be leaders for society to be effective, efficient, and equitable. Second, leadership is an activity—*leading*—engaged in collectively or in turn by multiple individuals rather than an existential state of an individual, a generalized identity for the powerful, or a one-to-many phenomenon. Third, “postleaders” are constantly learning, particularly *from* and *with* their followers, engaging in critical reflection and continuous improvement, and helping others learn. Generally, postleadership can be summed up in Hurley and Brown’s (2009) catch phrase for what they call conversational leadership: “thinking together for a change” (p. 3). Compared to the leadership definitions previously discussed, there is no “other” and no concern with influence. In the postmodern world, leading is about contributing to collective cognition and enabling shared sensemaking.

Thinking About Learning: The Sociocognitive Evolution of Learnership

Learning, with some variation in meaning, can be defined as the act or process of acquiring capabilities, knowledge, or skills. More generally, learning is the process of changing one’s own behavior. Where leadership is focused outward, toward others, learning focuses inward on the self. Where leadership is a characteristic of exclusive individual entities—even when it refers

to a group, such as “the leadership team”—learning can occur at various levels of aggregation: individuals learn, but so do communities and economies, groups, organizations, regions, and whole societies. Where leadership is a thing—characteristics or a phenomenon—learning is an action and a process.

Classical, Prototypical Learning

Prehistorically, learning was natural and social. Education was “one of the prominent features of primitive life; although apparently unconscious process” (Woody, 1949, p. 3). As people became more civilized, this natural, social learning evolved into formal and specialized education for priests, scribes, and soldiers. Relatively few were needed for these roles, whereas many craft workers, farmers, and laborers were needed to support them; education, therefore, became a means of exclusion, of selecting and sorting. There were academies of some sort in most all cultures (Woody, 1949) but education was the domain of the elites—even in Greek and Roman societies where it was reserved for “citizens.” Education was a way to enhance the elites’ capabilities to control and exploit others in support of aristocratic, military, and religious hierarchy. Students were privileged and the teacher was as often exploited as revered. Prototypical learning was a means of filtering and qualifying persons to join the elite, to serve their leaders, to enable coercion, force, and exploitation.

Modern, Official Learning

Thomas Aquinas planted the seeds for modern, official learning when, during the late Medieval period, he insisted that because all truths come from God, and God gave mankind the power of reason, it is our responsibility to use reason to resolve truths and solve intellectual problems (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981). Taking this proposition further, some teachers began recruiting students to *studium generale*, “places of study open to all without

restriction” (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 60), where there were no teaching qualifications or diplomas. Eventually, students formed *universitas* styled after craft guilds and established residential colleges for their mutual benefit and protection (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981). As colleges and universities evolved, some became bastions of humanism, realism, and scientism, whereas others developed as extensions of churches, new and old. Although prominent thinkers of the age—including Martin Luther—encouraged people to get educated, education required significant leisure time and privilege, so it remained the domain of the elite through the eighteenth century (Cubberley, 1922).

Standardized, universal education was justified first by the Protestant imperative for all people to read the Bible, then by democratization and industrialization (Bagley, 1937). But the earliest systems of compulsory education, in nineteenth-century Prussia, taught submission to authority first and foremost (Bagley, 1937; Cubberley, 1922). The common school movement, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, was intended to mitigate the cultural pluralism that resulted from US immigration as a way to mold children into “the perfect political citizen, the perfect moral person, the perfect worker” (Spring, 1997, p. 28). Universal education was essentially developed as ideological management—the control of ideas and cultures as a source of power” (Spring, 1997, p. 406)—a natural extension of colonialism, imperialism, and the belief in cultural superiority. Modern learning, treating students as objects to be indoctrinated and manipulated, and making teachers into rote disciplinarians, is a process of ideological management and social integration supporting the elites and their definition of the greater good.

Concurrent with school becoming compulsory for children, higher education was undergoing two profoundly modern transformations that led to the current, official version of learning. First was the rise of the research university during the late nineteenth century (Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Kronman, 2007). Second was the emergence of standardized testing early in the

twentieth century (Smith, 1998). The latter was a product of the former, particularly of the scholarly drive to quantify human behavior (that is, behaviorism) and the drive for college admissions to be based on intellectual merit rather than social standing (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Behaviorism exemplifies modernism in its glorification of objectivity and devaluation of beliefs and values. The educational application of behaviorism promoted rigid, standardized programs over those based on student interests and needs (Spring, 1997). The behaviorist model of education developed with standardized testing, which developed from the military's efforts to assess recruits' capabilities during the world wars and was adopted by education and other enterprises for assessing the intelligence of applicants as soldiers returned to the classroom and workforce (Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Smith, 1998). The modern approach makes education an artificial and even painful undertaking based on the concept of command-and-control and on nonsensical (literally) methods of measuring learning, according to Smith (1998), and it divorces learning from experience and interests.

Postmodern, Social Learning

In contrast to the modern, official form of learning, technological change is facilitating a participative view of cognition that can be summed up as “we participate, therefore we are” (Brown & Adler, 2008, p. 18). (Note how this view complements Hurley and Brown's [2009] definition of leading.) Brown and Adler shift the focus from the content to the learning activities and human interactions necessary for learning. Kohn (1993) provides a comprehensive review of empirical research and scientific knowledge that effectively debunks behaviorism with its mechanistic view of learning as simply a function of stimulus and response, positive and negative reinforcement, punishments and rewards. In its place, Kohn suggests the combination of collaboration and choice, with content, which he applies to managing people and

raising children as well as running schools. Unfortunately, note these authors, the failures of the official approach to education are blamed on the least empowered: students and teachers.

Based on an extensive and thorough empirical review, the editors of *How People Learn* recommend educational approaches that “recognize the importance of building on the conceptual and cultural knowledge that students bring with them to the classroom” (National Research Council, 2000, p. 122) and are based on “what each student knows, cares about, is able to do, and wants to do” (p. 124). Scholars further recommend a post-modern approach to education: “When students who are motivated to improve have opportunities to assess their own and others’ learning, they become more capable of managing their own educational progress, and there is transfer of power from the teacher to learner. On the other hand, when formative feedback . . . back is ‘owned’ entirely by the teacher, the power of the learner in the classroom is diminished, and the development of active and independent learning is inhibited” (National Research Council, 2001, pp. 237, 240).

Essentially, the National Research Council (2001) holds that all people are predisposed to learning and there are multiple paths that individuals follow to learning. Learning builds on prior knowledge via observation, practice, and feedback and is transferred from one topic to another via similar means. Learners must have responsive and supportive social contexts and must be able to assess their own thinking for learning and transfer to occur. These points are extended and supported by research into applications of cognitive science to education (such as Mayberry, Crocker, & Knoeferle, 2009; Richland, Bjork, Finley, & Linn, 2005; and Tytler & Prain, 2010).

Postmodern education is based on empirical knowledge of how people learn. “Postlearning,” like “postleadership,” has several significant qualities. As discussed previously, we learn actively and socially. Learners are not passive objects to be taught; rather, they are individuals actively and continually producing

their knowledge. Learning is a state of being—*learnership*—that is simultaneously collective and individual. The individual learns most effectively when he or she is helping others learn, when enabling the success of others, acting as a leader. As with post-modern, social leadership, such learning uses new information and communications technologies to enable what Thomas and Brown (2011) call *collective indwelling*: “[Students] turn diversity into strength and build their own networked communities based on interest and shared passion and perspective. . . . Until now, we have lacked the ability, resources, and connections to make this kind of learning scaleable and powerful. . . . [T]oday, however, learning that is driven by passion and play is poised to significantly alter and extend our ability to think, innovate, and discover in ways that have not previously been possible” (p. 89).

Talking and Thinking Together: Leading Learnership

New, integrated models of leadership and learning are being created—and are needed—in our postmodern world. Information and communications technologies act as megaphone and mirror, facilitating human social tendencies. These technologies were developed via interactive learning driven by power relationships but increasingly require more of the former and restructuring of the latter so innovators can collaborate as peers. Leadership and learning are, more than ever, one and the same in an ever tighter self-reinforcing loop with technology, ultimately increasing human capabilities and meaning. Leadership is losing its exploitive qualities as it becomes more active, distributed, and engaged. Learning no longer allows students to be treated as passive vessels to be filled and shaped, as it becomes a persistent characteristic, quality, or state of being.

So, talking and thinking together become *leading learnership*. Learnership—the state of constantly acquiring knowledge, continually improving capabilities, reflecting, and learning to learn—is necessary to leading. Leading—making it easy for others to

develop and use their knowledge and capabilities—is evidenced in learnership of others. Leading learnership can occur at any and across all levels, from individual through organizational to societal. The integration of postleadership and postlearning into a single practice multiplies power and value as it enables others, in direct contrast to classical and official versions of leadership and learning: leadership restricted to a few extraordinary and lucky individuals and learning limited to standardization via the classroom.

Classical and modern leadership and learning have a fundamental moral shortcoming because others are treated as means rather than ends, as objects rather than beings. Because previous versions of leadership are inherently self-centered, they naturally resist empowering others. Because previous versions of learning are constrained to certain places and times, they miss much of the serendipitous learning that occurs when people connect. Both fall short of realizing individuals' full potential because they disallow autonomy. Collective potential can only be maximized by giving individuals control over and responsibility for their actions and their minds. In contrast, leading learnership is active and reflective, contextual and social, and integrated yet distributed. It resolves the moral issues with prototypical and official learning and leadership and eliminates their practical limitations.

Evidence and Examples of Leading Learnership

Leading learnership is evident in much of the literature from the late twentieth century (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Becker, 1964, 1996; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burt, 1997; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973, 1985; Papert, 1980; Papert & Harel, 1991; Piaget, 1970, 1954/1999; Sen, 1988, 1999; Weick, 1995). A theory synthesized from the literature predicts that human capabilities will increase when connected via social networks due to lower transaction costs and better collective choice, sense-

making, and social construction for active, constructive, social learning; that is, *maximum value is created when each person works to increase the capabilities of others*. Humanity seems to be reinventing its primordial collaborative tendencies via technology, which is itself socially constructed. Leading learnership is not new but it is a transformation of fundamental human tendencies. We see evidence of it in various domains, as an increase in interactive knowledge acquisition, creation, search, transfer, and use that increases others' capabilities as well as one's own capabilities.

Active, Social Learning. The profound movement in education from the “sage on the stage” to the “guide on the side” (King, 1993) is still in progress. As discussed previously, the National Research Council (2000, 2001) has urged the practice to move beyond modernistic approaches. Postmodern learning has emerged in diverse forms, including active learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991), constructivist-constructionist learning (Papert, 1980, Papert & Harel, 1991; Piaget, 1970, 1999), learner-centered curriculum and teaching (Dolence, 2003; Weimer, 2002), student-centered learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Farnes, 1975), and self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1986).

The paradigm shift is from education and instruction to learning and facilitation, based on the realization that learning is a natural, social process (Brown & Adler, 2008; Smith, 1998). The role of the educator and the educational enterprise is threefold: to make this process as easy as possible, to facilitate it particularly by structuring educational content, and to provide feedback. The role of the learner is to learn, which necessarily involves contemplating the “ways in which they can transform their personal and social worlds” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 47). This does not mean allowing the student to abdicate responsibility for her or his learning—quite the opposite: a primary role for educator as facilitator is to *make it easy for learners to take full ownership of their learning*.

Leaderless Organizations. Hock (1999) describes the creation of a “leaderless organization” as much more than rejecting the modern views of leadership and learning, and connects it to a fundamental rejection of rationalism and scientism. Wheatley (1994) and Barker (2002) echo these themes but they provide few practical examples; neither does Nielsen (2004), even as he presents a blueprint for leaderless organizations. Rather, it falls to Gladwell (2002, 2009), Brafman and Beckstrom (2006), Tapscott (Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003; Tapscott & Williams, 2006), Godin (2008), Shirky (2008), and Surowiecki (2004) to tell us tales of leaderless organizations. They provide numerous examples of achieving valued outcomes by connecting and leveraging diverse capabilities and knowledge without centralized, hierarchical, command-and-control leadership structures. Not coincidentally, these authors are generally trying to discover what makes enterprises and individuals successful in the postmodern world. Their answers involve unprecedented levels of openness and technology use, but also something more fundamental and profound: a culture of continual learning dedicated to enabling others—leading learnership.

Participative Management. The traditional model of production management is simple: “don’t think, just do what you are told.” Some time after World War II management thinkers began to realize the deficiencies of this approach. Drucker (1945/1993) began questioning command-and-control management and continued throughout his career, emphasizing the importance of being entrepreneurial and innovative (1985/2007), developing talent (2002), and using information technologies (1999). Crosby, Deming, and Juran (Martínez-Lorente, Dewhurst, & Dale, 1998) all focused more narrowly on production quality, but came to many of the same conclusions: employees must be actively engaged in production, valued for their ideas, and developed as assets (Hartman, 2002). These concepts have come to be called participative (or participatory) management (Participa-

tive Management, n.d.) and post-Fordism (Amin, 1994). The former emphasizes the participation of employees in making business decisions; the latter emphasizes the broader processes, means, and results, particularly flexible specialization, knowledge content and work, small-batch production, and extensive use of information technologies. More generally, participatory management involves nested, reiterated, and self-referential loops of collective learning that allow fundamental changes in organizational structure rather than just adaptive, incremental adjustments to particular functions (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 2006). These practices have enabled numerous organizations to become market leaders through greater productivity, higher quality, and more innovation (Dimancecu, Hines, & Rich, 1997; Hartman, 2002; Liker, 2004; Womack & Jones, 2003). Liker notes that continuous improvement and critical reflection that undergirds the quality revolution requires support from executives but depends on active buy-in by frontline employees; the role of middle management is to facilitate change.

Dialogical Planning. Unintended consequences are a perennial challenge for learning and leadership: “solving” one problem can create other problems, often worse and more intractable than the original. Such “wicked problems” (Rittel & Webber, 1973) can be impossible for professional experts to solve because they simply have no definitive, single-best solution, and so must be repeatedly solved or re-solved. Resolution must be systemic, Rittel and Webber maintain, and, because different people “own” different pieces, resolutions must be inclusive. Each wicked problem is essentially unique but interrelated with other such problems. The nature of wicked problems requires loosely coupled systems in which each participant’s work enables others so that all can attack their aspects in a coordinated but independent manner.

Sustainability, or sustainable development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 1, “Tokyo Declaration”), is a general, large-scale wicked problem. It requires simultaneous optimization of environmental, economic, and social factors—the “triple bottom line” of sustainability—to achieve development that is bearable, equitable, and viable (Elkington, 1998). The fundamental challenge is to develop all the three factors in a complementary manner rather than as mutually exclusive trade-offs (Adams, 2006). As with continuous improvement (Liker, 2004), sustainability simply is not possible without active buy-in of grassroots citizens; each person owns a piece of sustainability and sustainability requires citizens of diverse backgrounds to learn together.

Harper and Stein (2006) present dialogical planning as an approach to resolving wicked problems. Planning should “focus on the *free, equal, and autonomous individual person* as the basic unit of society, the ultimate object of moral concern, and the ultimate source of value” (p. 7, emphasis in original). In the dialogical approach, the planner’s job is to empower others—citizens—to plan collaboratively rather than planning for the citizens and to approach implementation as a learning process. Harper and Stein advocate decision making via true consensus during which ends and means coevolve, beliefs are modified based on practice, and change occurs via trial and error. In practice, dialogical planning means fair principles, collaborative leadership, consensus building, and, ultimately, peace making; it means promoting awareness of power and trust. The elements of dialogical planning, how it resolves wicked problems and avoids unintended consequences, is evident in planning methods used for sustainable development.

Scenario Planning. Dialogical planning first allows participants to reflect critically on current concepts and practices (Harper & Stein, 2006). Scenario planning (Schwartz, 1996) taps the collective intelligence of a group in ways that get par-

ticipants to reconsider their assumptions and think differently about possibilities (Niles, 2009). Although scenario planning was developed for corporate strategic planning, it has been adapted to effectively plan conservation (Peterson, Cumming, & Carpenter, 2003), landscape (Tress & Tress, 2003), and transportation planning (Arampatzis, Kiranoudis, Scaloubacas, & Assimacopoulos, 2004).

Appreciative Inquiry and Community Visioning. Dialogical planning also generates alternative concepts and practices or at least allows participants to become familiar with those proposed by others. Appreciative inquiry and community visioning generate alternative concepts and practices by engaging participants in large-scale dialogues about ideal outcomes. Appreciative inquiry is based on the presumption that “as made and imagined, organizations are products of imagination and social constructions rather than some anonymous expression of an underlying natural order” (Cooperrider, Barrett, & Srivastva, 1995, p. 157). Rather than focusing on problems, appreciative inquiry seeks to develop new generative metaphors (Barrett & Cooperrider, 2001). Community visioning provides a means to engage citizens in creating action plans for their “leaders” to deal with complex and unique issues, particularly related to economic revitalization (Walzer & Deller, 1996). Both tap the intelligence of “regular” people to create new, more sustainable possibilities and essentially reverse the roles of followers and leaders: the followers set the direction and the leaders follow it.

World Café. World Café is a simple method for tapping collective knowledge to accomplish the third element of dialogical planning: evaluating new theories, vocabularies, or language games (Harper & Stein, 2006). The method involves convening a large group, seating them in multiple small groups, having each small group explore a few compelling questions, then sharing the insights of each small group with the large group (Hurley &

Brown, 2009; World Café, n.d.). World Café combines all of the elements of dialogical planning, as do the other examples and many other methods used in planning, but it is particularly powerful for vetting new concepts and practices, such as sustainable development.

Summary: Thinking, Talking, and Acting Together

Dialogical planning allows “owners” of the components of wicked problems to participate in the conversation with planners and others in traditional leadership roles and to act together as catalysts for shared problem resolution. Participants all lead at various points and in unique ways, constantly learning and creating new knowledge in the process, which is also true of active social learning, leaderless organizations, and participative management. Such approaches to learning, managing, organizing, and planning were undoubtedly possible, and have almost surely been used in the past. Today, though, the techniques are clearly more developed and widely used than ever before. They are critical to our collective future for dealing with wicked problems of unprecedented scale and scope. Yet, as educators, managers, planners, and other practitioners have begun to exploit the social technologies discussed by Tapscott and Williams (2006), Surowiecki (2004), Brafman and Beckstrom (2006), Li (2010), Thomas and Brown (2011), and others, we are left with a question: how might leading learnership progress as these technologies continue to develop and are diffused more widely, enabling more people to think, talk, and act together?

Conclusion

In the last few decades, leadership has been redefined as an enabling collective action, and learning has been reconceived as a state of continual improvement and critical reflection. The changes in leadership and learning are more inclusive and better

for all, as the increasing prevalence of women as leaders and learners during the last century exemplifies. Everyone can lead others to higher levels of development, fulfillment, and success by practicing learnership, based on the recognition that each of us holds valid knowledge but none of us is perfect in our knowing. This understanding overcomes the moral and practical failings of modern, official models of learning and leadership by not treating people as means or objects. When leaders deployed education in the past to advance their personal agendas, the focus of leading is to enable others rather than to control and dominate. When hierarchical bureaucracies promoted leadership as “I win, you lose,” learnership involves succeeding by helping others succeed.

It is no longer meaningful to conceptualize leadership without including learning. Nor can we practice or theorize about learning without incorporating leadership. The complexity of today’s world demands the integration and transformation of leadership and learning. Leading *enhances* learnership and learnership *enables* leading.

Leading learnership is not a normative supposition; it is a positive proposition and metanarrative about the natural movement of humanity toward greater individual contributions, fulfillment, and meaning. The progression from classical leadership and learning, through modern versions, to leading learnership is sociocognitive evolution. Leading learnership posits that we are evolving from coercion and force as means to success, through reason and persuasion to collaborative sensemaking. The definition of success, of human meaning and what it means to be human, is evolving from heroic conqueror through magnanimous elites to interdependent yet unique equals, potentially achieving a social denouement in which economic imperatives align with moral imperatives.

Leading learnership is a “postpositive” theory that can generate practical and testable hypotheses while recognizing the inherent limits of the scientific approach to knowledge creation. It translates esoteric concepts of the postmodern into meaningful,

useful ideas. Hypothetically, leading learnership creates greater aggregate value creation and is the result of socioeconomic evolution, emerging in conjunction with information and communications technologies. Hypothetically, with leading and learnership feeding into and mutually reinforcing each other, leading learnership will propagate at increasing rates. Recent developments in education, organization, planning, and production support these contentions but the theory needs further development and testing in each of these contexts. Thus, leading learnership provides abundant opportunities for academic research. Leading learnership also provides practical hypotheses about how to reorganize, empower employees, engage customers, and improve processes by making them more equitable and open. So it should be useful to entrepreneurs, executives, and others who seek to create successful organizations.

As much as there is evidence of the emergence of leading learnership, however, there is ample evidence that official, modern learning and leadership persists. The same appears to be true of classical, prototypical leadership and learning. They have self-perpetuating power based on desire to belong, control, dominate, and exclude. The hypothetical question becomes whether leading learnership will continue to grow, eventually crowding out earlier forms of learning and leadership or whether learning and leadership will live on. The drives that undergird classical and modern approaches to leadership and learning will undoubtedly remain, but I argue that those drives will be diverted into norms of success through the success of others rather than by using others as means to success.

Practically, there is the challenge of fostering leading learnership in a world that takes official leadership and learning as givens, as the natural order. The answer to this challenge may simply be to practice leading learnership. Those who do practice leading learnership, I argue, will be collectively and individually more successful and prosperous than those who do not. Natural selection will cull those who cannot get beyond disintegrated

leadership and learning and promote those who practice leading learnership. Thus, the grand narrative of leadership and the sociocognitive evolution of learning will converge and continue as leading learnership, as thinking, talking, and acting together for the betterment of all.

References

- Adams, W. M. (2006). *The future of sustainability: Re-thinking environment and development in the twenty-first century. Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, January 29–31*. The World Conservation Union. Retrieved from cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_future_of_sustainability.pdf
- Amin, A. (1994). *Post-Fordism: A reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Arampatzis, G., Kiranoudis, C. T., Scaloubacas, P., & Assimacopoulos, D. (2004). A GIS-based decision support system for planning urban transportation policies. *European Journal of Operational Research*, *152*, 465–475.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Arrow, K. J. (1970). *Social choice and individual values* (3rd ed.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Bagley, W. C. (1937). *A century of the universal school*. New York: Macmillan.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Barker, R. A. (2002). *On the nature of leadership*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Barr, R. B., & Tagg, J. (1995). From teaching to learning: A new paradigm for undergraduate education. *Change*, *27*(6), 12–25.
- Barrett, F. J., & Cooperrider, D. L. (2001). Generative metaphor intervention: A new approach for working with systems divided by conflict and caught in defensive perception. In D. L. Cooperrider, P. F. Sorensen Jr., T. F. Yaeger, & D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative inquiry: An emerging direction for organization development*. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing. Retrieved from www.stipes.com/aichap7.htm
- Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Becker, G. S. (1996). *Accounting for tastes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bennis, W. (1989). *On becoming a leader*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. Retrieved from www.oid.ucla.edu/about/units/tatp/old/lounge/pedagogy/downloads/active-learning-eric.pdf
- Brafman, O., & Beckstrom, R. A. (2006). *The starfish and the spider: The unstoppable power of leaderless organizations*. New York: Penguin Portfolio.
- Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, J. S., & Adler, R. P. (2008). Minds on fire: Open education, the long tail, and learning 2.0. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 43(1), 16–32.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Burt, R. S. (1997). The contingent value of social capital. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 339–365.
- Chesbrough, H. (2006). *Open innovation: The new imperative for creating and profiting from technology*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Christensen, C. M., & Eyring, H. J. (2011). *The innovative university: Changing the DNA of higher education from the inside out*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(Supplement), S95–S120.
- Cooperrider, D. L., Barrett, F., & Srivastva, S. (1995). Social construction and appreciative inquiry: A journey in organizational theory. In D. Hosking, P. Dachler, & K. Gergen (Eds.), *Management and organization: Relational alternatives to individualism* (pp. 157–200). Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- Cubberley, E. A. (1922). *A brief history of education: A history of the practice and progress and organization of education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Derrida, J. (1998). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (Original work published 1967)
- Dimancescu, D., Hines, P., & Rich, N. (1997). *The lean enterprise: Designing and managing strategic processes for customer-winning performance*. Saranac Lake, NY: AMACOM.
- Dolence, M. G. (2003). The learner-centered curriculum model: A structured framework for technology planning. *ECAR Research Bulletin* (Vol. 17). Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE.

- Douglass, F. (1992). Self-made men. In J. Blassingame & J. McKivigan (Eds.), *The Frederick Douglass papers* (Series 1, Vol. 4, pp. 545–575). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1859)
- Doyle, A. C. (1930). *The complete Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Doubleday. (Original work published 1906)
- Drucker, P. F. (1993). *Concept of the corporation*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers. (Originally published 1945)
- Drucker, P. F. (1999). *Management challenges for the 21st century*. New York: HarperBusiness.
- Drucker, P. F. (2002). They're not employees, they're people. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(2), 70–77.
- Drucker, P. F. (2007). *Innovation and entrepreneurship: Practice and principles*. Oxford, UK: Butterworth Heinemann. (Originally published 1985)
- Einstein, A. (1920). *Relativity: The special and general theory* (R. W. Lawson, Trans.). London: Methuen and Company.
- Elkington, J. (1998). *Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Ellis, J. J. (2004). *His excellency George Washington*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Farnes, N. (1975, May). Student-centered learning. *Teaching at a Distance*, 3, 2–6.
- Foucault, M. (1972). The discourse on language (A.M.S. Smith, Trans.). *Archeology of knowledge* (pp. 215–237). New York: Pantheon.
- Giddens, A. (1986). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. New York: Little, Brown.
- Gladwell, M. (2009). *Outliers: The story of success*. New York: Little, Brown.
- Gödel, K. (2000). *On formally undecidable propositions of Principia Mathematica and related systems* (M. Hirzel, Trans.). (Original work published 1931) Retrieved from www.research.ibm.com/people/h/hirzel/papers/canon00-goedel.pdf
- Godin, S. (2008). *Tribes: We need you to lead us*. New York: Portfolio.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360–1380.
- Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 481–510.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Gwynne-Thomas, E. H. (1981). *A concise history of education to 1900 A.D.* Washington, DC: University Press of America.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action. Vol. 1: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.

- Harper, T. L., & Stein, S.M. (2006). *Dialogical planning in a fragmented society: Critically liberal, pragmatic and incremental*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University.
- Hartman, M. G. (2002). *Fundamental concepts of quality improvement*. Milwaukee: American Society for Quality.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany: State University of New York Press. (Original work published 1927)
- Heisenberg, W. (1930). *The physical principles of quantum theory* (M. Hirzel, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hock, D. (1999). *Birth of the chaordic age*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Hugo, V. (1909). *Napoleon the little*. The works of Victor Hugo. New York: Little, Brown. (Original work published 1852) Retrieved from www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1520924
- Hurley, T. J., & Brown, J. (2009). Conversational leadership: Thinking together for a change. *The Systems Thinker*, 10(9), 2–7. Retrieved from www.theworldcafe.com/articles/Conversational-Leadership.pdf
- King, A. (1993). From sage on the stage to guide on the side. *College Teaching*, 41(1), 30–35.
- Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*. Bridgewater, NJ: Replica Books.
- Kronman, A. T. (2007). *Education's end: Why our colleges and universities have given up on the meaning of life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1962)
- Li, C. (2010). *Open leadership: How social technology can transform the way you lead*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Liker, J. K. (2004). *The Toyota way: 14 management principles from the world's greatest manufacturer*. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional.
- Luke, J. S. (1998). *Catalytic leadership: Strategies for an interconnected world*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (Vol. 10: Theory and history of literature; G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1979)
- Machiavelli, N. (2004). *The prince* (G. Bull, Trans.). London: Penguin. (Original work published 1961)
- Martínez-Lorente, A. R., Dewhurst, F., & Dale, B. G. (1998). Total quality management: Origins and evolution of the term. *The TQM Magazine*, 10, 378–386.
- Mayberry, M., Crocker, M. W., & Knoeferle, P. (2009). Learning to attend: A connectionist model of the coordinated interplay of utterance, visual context, and world knowledge. *Cognitive Science*, 33, 449–496.

- National Research Council. (2000). *How people learn: Mind, brain, experience and school* (Expanded ed.). J. D. Bransford, A. L. Brown, & R. R. Cocking (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- National Research Council. (2001). *Knowing what students know*. J. W. Pellegrino, N. Chudowsky, & R. Glaser (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Nielsen, J. S. (2004). *The myth of leadership: Creating leaderless organizations*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Niles, D. (2009, August 3). *Leadership: The secret of successful scenario planning*. Forbes.com. Retrieved from www.forbes.com/2009/08/03/scenario-planning-advice-leadership-managing-planning.html
- Northouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Papert, S. (1980). *Mindstorms: Children, computers, and powerful ideas*. New York: Basic Books.
- Papert, S., & Harel, I. (1991). *Constructionism*. New York: Ablex.
- Participative Management. (n.d.). *Encyclopedia of management*. Retrieved from www.enotes.com/management-encyclopedia/participative-management
- Peterson, G. D., Cumming, G. S., & Carpenter, S. R. (2003). Scenario planning: A tool for conservation in an uncertain world. *Conservation Biology*, 17(2), 358–366.
- Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's theory. In P. Mussen (Ed.), *Manual of child psychology* (pp. 703–732). New York: Wiley.
- Piaget, J. (1999). The construction of reality in the child. *International library of psychology* (Vol. 20: Developmental psychology). Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge. (Original work published 1954)
- Richland, L. E., Bjork, R. A., Finley, J. R., & Linn, M. C. (2005). Linking cognitive science to education: Generation and interleaving effects. In B. G. Bara, L. Barsalou, & M. Bucciarelli (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rittel, H.W.J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4(2), 155–169.
- Rost, J. C. (1993). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.
- Schwartz, P. (1996). *The art of the long view: Planning for the future in an uncertain world* (2nd ed.). New York: Currency Doubleday.
- Sen, A. K. (1988). The concept of development. In H. Chenery & T.N. Srinivasan (Eds.), *Handbook of development economics* (Vol. 1, pp. 9–26). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Sen, A. K. (1999). *Freedom as development*. New York: Knopf.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline* (2nd ed.). New York: Currency Doubleday.

- Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Smith, F. (1998). *The book of learning and forgetting*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spring, J. (1997). *The American school: 1642–1996* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sun Tzu. (2003). *The art of war* (L. Giles, Trans.; D. Galvin, Ed.). New York: Barnes & Noble Classics. (Original work published 1910)
- Surowiecki, J. (2004). *The wisdom of crowds: Why the many are smarter than the few and how collective wisdom shapes business, economies, societies and nations*. New York: Little, Brown.
- Tapscott, D., & Ticoll, D. (2003). *The naked corporation: How the age of openness will revolutionize business*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Tapscott, D., & Williams, A. D. (2006). *Wikinomics: How mass collaboration changes everything*. London: Penguin Group.
- Thomas, D., & Brown, J. S. (2011). *A new culture of learning: Cultivating the imagination for a world of constant change*. Charleston, SC: CreateSpace.
- Tress, B., & Tress, G. (2003). Scenario visualisation for participatory landscape planning, a study from Denmark. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 64(3), 161–178. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204602002190
- Tytler, R., & Prain, V. (2010). A framework for re-thinking learning in science from recent cognitive science perspectives. *International Journal of Science Education*, 32(15), 2055–2078.
- Waldrop, M. M. (1992). *Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Walzer, N., & Deller, S. (1996). Rural issues and trends: The role of strategic visioning. In N. Walzer (Ed.), *Community strategic visioning programs* (pp. 1–20). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wheatley, M. (1994). *Leadership and the new science: Learning about organization from an orderly universe*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Womack, J. P., & Jones, D. T. (2003). *Lean thinking: Banish waste and create wealth in your corporation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Woody, T. (1949). *Life and education in early societies*. New York: Macmillan.
- World Café. (n.d.). *World Café design principles*. Retrieved from www.theworldcafe.com/principles.html
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future*. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm