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Leadership: An Annotated Bibliography

Chris Foley

The importance of quality leadership in institutions of higher education cannot be understated. Unfortunately, the time constraints in the curricula of preparation programs do not always allow for in-depth study of this area. This annotated bibliography introduces eight leadership texts, providing the reader with an opportunity for thought and reflection on current practice. The texts include a mix of popular titles and higher education-specific works that can be applied for use in the higher education setting.

The 1980s and 1990s were filled with criticism of and concern for higher education in the United States. Pelikan (1992) suggested that higher education was in a crisis, and he responded to the crisis by writing *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination*. Over a decade later, one could reasonably argue that a crisis remains in the academy, though the particulars are somewhat different today. Among the more current concerns are attacks on affirmative action, increasing competition for financial resources, swelling enrollments, and changes in educational delivery methods.

The preparation of those who will lead our institutions of higher education continues to be of significant importance. The curriculum in graduate preparation programs typically includes coursework regarding the history of higher education, curricular development, student development theory, and governance or management. In addition, students may spend time learning about strategic planning, campus judicial systems, and the economics of higher education. Many programs provide internships that serve as important learning labs for students to practice and observe the theories they are studying in class. The study of leadership is often not an area of emphasis. Furthermore, after leaving a graduate program, practitioners may experience difficulty approaching the topic in any structured manner. This annotated bibliography contains texts that will assist with one's examination of leadership topics.

This bibliography is based on a portion of the author's doctoral work conducted at the University of Virginia's Center for the Study of Higher Education. As part of this curriculum, the author engaged in course work at the Darden School of Business. Dr. Alec Horniman, an expert on leadership and leading strategic change, deserves credit for directing the author to much of the reading list that follows.

The texts included in this bibliography are not specific to higher education. These works examine concepts of leadership from the same perspective of some of higher education's most important and influential constituents and critics including business leaders, board members, and alumni/ae. I invite the reader to use the following texts to expand his or her thinking about leadership, and find connections and uses for these private sector concepts in the higher education setting.

Collins, J. C. & Porras, J. I. (1994). *Built to last: Successful habits of visionary companies*. New York: HarperCollins.

Collins and Porras (1994), through a review of selected companies with significant records of achievement, presented how they cope with progress in a constantly changing environment. In particular, they examined the tension between maintaining their core values and stimulating necessarily continuous innovation. The authors also identified successful characteristics of visionary companies and obstacles that impeded the development of those characteristics.

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DePree, M. (1989). *Leadership is an art*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.

The role of a leader, according to DePree (1989), was captured in the following quote: “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The second is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor” (p. 11). DePree also encouraged leaders to “begin to think about being abandoned to the strength of others” (p. 9). An advocate of servant and participatory leadership, DePree offered a non-technical perspective on leadership that can be read quickly by busy leaders.

Glasser, W. A. (1998). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York: HarperCollins.

Glasser’s (1998) *Choice Theory* is not a traditional leadership text. However, it is an important text for practitioners because it introduced important observations about relationships, the cornerstone of quality leadership. Glasser argued that a new approach to relationships is warranted. To understand this need, he charted technological progress and relational progress over time. The resulting graph contained troubling data: technology (e.g. medical care, informational and industrial revolution) improved tremendously while human relationships (e.g. divorce, crime, and stress rates) did not, save some watershed moments such as the civil rights movement. He asserted that much of the stagnation in the improvement of human relationships was due to a prevalent psychology based on control, and he offered choice theory as a more effective alternative.

The central tenets of Choice Theory are: (1) we receive stimuli from our environment, and how we react to that stimuli is our choice; (2) we behave according to what we value; and (3) only individuals can direct their own behavior. Glasser also provided a unique framework for examining relationships, offering strategies for working with others toward improvement. Many of Glasser’s foundational concepts are repeated in the other texts included in this bibliography.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (1995). *The leadership challenge: How to keep getting extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) offered five practices a leader can employ that will improve her or his leadership effectiveness. The five practices were: “challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart” (p. 18). The text was organized using these five practices as a framework. Each portion of the framework was examined; also included were thorough examples and questions for the reader to consider.

O’Toole, J. (1995). *Leading change: The argument for values-based leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O’Toole’s (1995) text was offered as a response to the growing popularity of contingency-based management theory and practice. He argued that leadership was best when guided by moral principles rather than pragmatism. O’Toole also examined the role of followers in the change process, and he reviewed common reasons why change was resisted and alternate theories of leadership were rejected.

O’Toole, J. (1999). *Leadership a to z: A guide for the appropriately ambitious*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O’Toole (1999), also the author of *Values Based Leadership*, offered a desk-reference for those in positions of leadership and would-be leaders. These short entries regarding various aspects of leadership contained brief anecdotes, short self-assessments, and thought pieces encouraging the reader to reflect on leadership. For example, in the entry for intelligence, O’Toole challenged the notion that extraordinary mental capacity is a prerequisite for strong leadership ability. Instead of one’s IQ, he focused on one’s “Leadership Quotient” and

offered a “mini-test” for the readers to use as a self-assessment tool (p. 151).

Pascale, R. T., Millemann, M. & Gioja, L. (2000). *Surfing on the edge of chaos: The laws of nature and the new laws of business*. New York: Crown Publishers.

The authors, basing their theories on complexity science and the behavior of organizations found in nature, argued that a new perspective on leadership is necessary for future success. They cautioned that organizations at an equilibrium state were actually close to dying, and that moving an organization toward the edge of chaos resulted in higher levels of generative thought, self-organization, and an increased range of abilities within the organization. Finally, the authors indicated that living systems, organizations being one of these systems, “cannot be directed along a linear path” but should be carefully “disturbed” to achieve a desired outcome (Pascale, Millemann, & Gioja, 2000, p. 6).

Ultimately, Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja (2000) identified seven “disciplines” with which one may help an organization “thrive in near-chaos conditions” (p. 229): “infuse an intricate understanding of what drives business success” (p. 233), “insist on uncompromising straight talk” (p. 237), “manage from the future” (p. 240), “reward inventive accountability” (p. 247), “harness adversity by learning from prior mistakes” (p. 250), “foster relentless discomfort” (p. 257), and “cultivate reciprocity between the organization and the individual” (p. 229).

Pfeffer, J. & Sutton, R. I. (1999). *The knowing-doing gap: How smart companies turn knowledge into action*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Pfeffer and Sutton (1999) offered insights into how organizations find themselves knowing, but not doing. Examples of this inconsistency include when: (1) talk substitutes for action, (2) memory substitutes for thinking, (3) fear prevents acting on knowledge, (4) measurement obstructs good judgment, and (5) internal competition turns friends into enemies. The authors suggested that leaders attempt to eliminate these inconsistencies by inhabiting the knowing-doing gap. They concluded with examples of organizations that have overcome these ineffective behaviors.

Since this is not an exhaustive list, the author offers additional titles for consideration:

- Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burns, J. M. (1979). *Leadership*. New York: HarperCollins.
- DePree, M. (1997). *Leading without power: Finding hope in serving community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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