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# In Preparation for Creating a Servant Leadership Curriculum for Young Adults

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IN PREPARATION FOR CREATING A  
SERVANT LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG ADULTS

By

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### **Abstract**

The critical essay seeks to establish a foundation for creating a servant leadership curriculum for high school and college students. The essay is divided into six sections. Section one, A Leadership Disconnect, contains a presentation of how our educational systems operate in support of prevailing leadership behaviors in a culture of global economic and social dysfunction. Section two, The Leadership We Have, contains an explanation of how current leadership constructs find their source in an archetypal transactional paradigm of competition and conflict. Section three, Re-thinking the Leadership Lessons Young People Receive, addresses how leadership lessons, messages and practices, in our schools are formed from an underlying paradigm of market forces, transactional authority, competition, and object based measures of success and failure. Servant leadership is introduced as a modern alternative leadership paradigm. Section Four, Tenets of Servant Leadership Literacy, contains an overview of servant leadership theory, themes and practice's as they have developed in the past 42 years. Section Five, Interdisciplinary Insights for Servant Leadership, provides examples of current servant leadership applications in traditional academic disciplines. Section Six provides a summary of key concepts from the preceding sections. It also provides foundational questions addressing the subject matter of each section from which a servant leadership curriculum can be designed.

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### **A Leadership Disconnect**

Leadership as a distinction in society separate from academic research and played out in the economic, political and social structures of our global culture, is often experienced as a distressed and collapsed notion that fails to reflect the values and aspirations of the majority of people being led. This section seeks to explicate how our current understandings of leadership can be directly correlated with our global social and economic conditions. It seeks to describe also how current educational systems operate in support of prevailing leadership understandings.

Boggs (2010) describes how our educational systems have been set up to supply the next generation of bureaucrats, disguised as leaders, in support of an economy “designed to destroy our communities and rob us of our daily lives”(149). Taylor (2011) in her examination of social theorist Michael Foucault might suggest our historical, archeological assumptions about leadership are for the most part, unconscious and unspoken. Foucault encourages us to test these assumptions:

- Out of what conditions was our current knowledge of leadership created?
- What conditions continue to legitimize these assumptions about leadership knowledge?
- How might we separate out the contingencies that make us think of leadership in these (old) ways and no longer do and think about leadership in these ways in-so-far as they no longer reflect our aspirational values? (Taylor, 2)

Foucault’s approach examines how the social, economic and political assumptions we hold, with regard to leadership, are built on an archeological foundation that systemically perpetuates the cultural results in which we now find ourselves. In the midst of countless global and local examples of political, environmental, economic and social collapse, it has become increasingly

clear that it is our *thinking* about the topic of leadership, in our culture and in our educational systems, that is the problem.

Today, human systems involving food, water, health care, shelter, education and community, are often or always a catastrophe for the majority of the global population. Our culture has often come to view leadership as a function of business management. Leadership, in an economically defined context, becomes *object based*, focused on or having to do with goal attainment. In this prevailing culture of economic competition, goal attainment and leadership, success is defined by designing and implementing systems in order to gain advantage, increase profit and consumption, or manipulate political systems such that one group gains benefit – often to the detriment of other groups.

Heifetz and Linsky, in *Leadership on the Line* (2002), suggest followers, in a leader-follower paradigm, look to authorities for answers to social dilemmas and often receive pre-established, programmed responses in contrast to leadership decisions based in shared values.

When people look to authorities for easy answers to adaptive challenges, they end up with dysfunction. They expect the person in charge to know what to do, and under the weight of that responsibility, those in authority frequently end up faking it .... In fact, there's a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change. The deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be and, thus, the greater the danger to those who lead. For this reason, people often try to avoid the danger, either consciously or subconsciously, by treating an adaptive challenge as if it were a technical one. This is why we see so much more routine management than leadership in our society (14).



Followers, in society, receive misinformation about the distinctions between management and leadership. We have become accustomed to believing that management = leadership. And thus we, our society, have come to believe unconsciously or consciously, that adaptive challenges can be addressed with automated or previously developed technical approaches or business solutions. This kind of reliance on predetermined, codified or automated solutions, in contrast to thoughtful, creative and inclusively value based adaptive responses, points to the source and explanation for many, persistent and negative trends facing our global culture.

Poverty is the experience of most of the world's population. Billions of people are faced with daily challenges around access to clean water, shelter, healthcare and adequate food. Global catastrophes are on the increase. Established "supply chains" have been constructed to benefit a hierarchical model of privilege (with "leadership" on top of the hierarchy). These supply chains are designed to provide wealth to a few people. If these are the results our leaders have led us too, is this not argument enough for educational reform on the topic of leadership?

The economies of industrialized nations seem to rely on the notion that their citizenry is entitled to use more resources than the citizens of other countries and, through established (business) leadership practices, to capitalize and take advantage of these inhabitants of other countries. As long as established leadership practices are followed, evidence of mounting poverty and destroyed communities is often ignored or has secondary importance in the quest for increased affordability and consumption by "developed" nations. Western nations routinely strip impoverished nations of their resources while also using them as waste dumps. "The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the 41 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (567 million people) is less than the wealth of the world's 7 richest people combined" (Shah, 2012). This of kind of economic

disparity can be directly linked to how we (as Westerners) have been traditionally educated and subsequently think about leadership, both as leaders and followers.

University systems, across the globe, work in support of the object-acquisition based leadership modalities that we are experiencing. Business schools teach curricula designed to support an economy based on the perceived imperatives of “grow profit” and “grow consumption”. Economic theory, for millions of students, is only delivered with the assumption of scarce resources and competition based market forces ruled by the combined “laws” of grow supply and grow demand. Our education system is about preparing students to “earn a living” within this competitive paradigm of scarce resources, supply and demand, grow profit/grow consumption, and winners/losers.

Young adults, in our society, enter college as a required step for economic success. Students don’t typically go to college in order to learn about leadership or service. By the time young people have reached college age, they have been drilled relentlessly with the lesson of education as job preparation – and universities continue their education in that context. If a curriculum doesn’t “pay”, or lead to a defined career path, it simply does not receive significant funding or support. Institutions serving young adults are often seen by their students as the place where one learns to define oneself as an economic entity within a society primarily defined using economic terms.

Ronald Heifetz (2002), co-founder of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard talks about how our education system is more likely to prepare students to work in markets and business than in any other situational context. Groups and communities, individuals and families are dissuaded from confronting their toughest problems because prevailing systems

of power and authority allow or provide no market reward or business process by which to address their issues.

People rarely elect or hire anyone to disturb their jobs or their lives. People expect politicians and managers to use their authority to provide them with the right (previously established norms) answers, not to confront them with disturbing questions and difficult choices. That's why the initial challenge, and risk, of exercising leadership is to go beyond your authority – to put your credibility on the line in order to get people to tackle the problems at hand. Without the willingness to challenge peoples expectations of you, there is no way you can escape being dominated by the (current) social system and its inherent limits (20).

All too often, prudent business leaders, skilled in the workings of a culture characterized by assumptions of scarce resources and the need to grow profit/grow consumption in a competitive paradigm, are tasked with making decisions on behalf of the larger community with regard to matters of public policy. Issues involving healthcare, neighborhoods, equitable taxation, foreign policy, etc., all of which contain a distributive justice component, become problems to be solved within pre-existing business procedures. The notion of leadership is often confused and therefore presented in the context of current understandings of business authority and management practice.

In all fairness, with regard to leadership education initiatives, teacher education and teachers in general have been subject to deep hostility in recent years. Pressures around teaching to the test, and a growing political agenda that discounts “non-essential” topics (topics not easily identifiable as business related) has created an often hostile environment to any idea of deep systemic reform. It is ironic, however, that a true measure of a thriving democracy is found in its

ability to support an independent and thriving university system. Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1837 essay, "The American Scholar", contains a discussion of the role of education in a healthy, abundant culture and also of education in its degenerative state:

In this distribution of functions, the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state, he is, Man Thinking. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

Young adults, trained in the virtues of organizational and business process, might according to Emerson, be thinkers, however, as much of the world increasingly suffers the current economic system, our emerging students might also be seen as parrots of pre-established business norms and practices based in un-sustainable economic models of grow profit/ grow consumption. Our education system, and its current explications of leadership theory, has perhaps drifted away from Emerson's *Man Thinking*, thus raising the rhetorical question: How can a thinker, parroting established process, and established business norms, stand as an example of scholarly intellect?

New approaches to teacher formation, outside the mainstream of traditional curriculums, are often subject to a hostile political and social environment. Federal policy and financial support for universities is factored by regional job and employment correlations. Education, in our culture's history, was once focused on the task of creating peoples' minds than creating employees for a given workforce. Educational institutions, in society, must serve as a critical source of vocational and professional training but this is often confused as their primary task. Education's task must also be to develop learners with the values and skills needed for interacting with and shaping the world they want, not just interacting with the choices and norms that have been provided them in the service or interests of a previously established business class.

Most people truly want change. If asked, most people would agree that good and healthy local communities, and a safe and prosperous global society are something's we all prefer. A deficit of unifying forces or shared understandings has effectively blocked this shared vision. Elected officials in wealthy nations have a first obligation to protect the economic interests of their constituents. Piecemeal responses to global catastrophes demonstrate concern by the global community but nowhere is there a unifying vision whereby those in need are adequately and comprehensively cared for, or those with the resources are able to engage in comprehensive participative service.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) detailing the links between equality and strong societies, describe how “three quarters or more of Americans felt that society had lost touch with what really mattered. Consumerism and materialism, they felt, were winning out over more important values to do with friends, family, and community” (241). They describe how progressive politics have no compelling and unifying concept of a better society. “Although politicians recognize a deep-seated malaise, and so campaign for votes, saying that they stand for ‘change’... There is no suggestion that they have any view of how to begin changing daily life into something more joyful and fulfilling” (241). In part, no unifying vision has emerged for addressing these local to global issues, because we are trapped in previously defined, archeological and hierarchical notions of leadership formed in past ages under radically different circumstances. Our thinking and the way we teach young people about leadership do not support this global-local society we now have on our hands. Boggs (2011), in *The Next American Revolution*, points to systemic failures in the education of youth decrying “we understand that our schools are in such a crisis because they were created a hundred years ago in the industrial epoch to prepare children to become cogs in the economic machine” (77). Boggs talks about how, in order to address today's

reality and issues, we must decolonize our imagination and renew our commitment to patient, participatory work – listening to one another and enlarging our vision” (164-165).

Parker Palmer, a modern guru in the field of education, in “Leading From Within” (in Spears, 1998), describes how “we have a long and crippling legacy of believing in the power of the external world much more deeply than we believe in the power of the internal world” (199). Palmer points to how we, as citizens and participants in our communities, trust previously established and external definitions of leadership. It is this misplaced trust that cripples our ability to create a world that reflects our newly shared internal beliefs and values. We dream and speak of a world that raises up leaders who are about putting shape and content to shared community values or equity and care for one another. However, in our attempts to put form to this vision, we find ourselves effectively blocked by the adherence, by many, to popular transactional patterns or definitions of success or accomplishment. Palmer challenges these definitions by asking a series of questions about the reality of change:

How many times have you heard.... ‘those are good ideas, inspiring notions, but the *reality* is’ .... How many times have you heard people try to limit our creativity by treating institutional realities as absolute constraints on what we are able to do? How many times have you worked in systems based in the belief that the only changes that really matter are the ones that you can count or measure or tally up externally?...This is a human problem, at least in our twentieth century technological society (199).

Reynolds (2001) asserts modern leadership must stand in the tension of addressing both the task needs and relationship needs of individuals. Servant leadership offers an inclusive ethical structure affording modern leaders the tools and context to stand in that tension providing the

kind of inclusive and thoughtful guidance required by modern followers.

Madrazo and Senge (2011) further Palmer's discussion of leadership assumptions and discuss the way schools represent the "archetypal embodiment" of social dysfunction. They argue fragmentation, reactivity, and destructive competition are defining characteristics of our educational culture. It is in this formal educational environment that young people are first exposed to dysfunctional leadership archetypes.

Learning about leadership, in the context of formal education, becomes a transactional process of fragmented topics delivered in an atmosphere of a standardized authority whose first accountability is to an educational business process operating within the same transactional paradigm as the prevailing economic model of scarcity assumptions, competition, profit and consumption. Madrazo and Senge describe how, at a very young age, students begin to learn about and fit into a culture of authoritative transactional leadership:

School changes all - as we encounter a system of learning fragmented from daily life. Students suddenly find themselves reacting to an agenda of what needs to be learned given by a teacher. They discover that schoolroom learning is about right and wrong answers not more effective action, and that it pits them against one another in a process mediated by a teacher who is the ultimate arbiter of right answers (5).

Our society is structured to provide people, beginning at an early age, foundational lessons for functioning and succeeding in a paradigm of authoritative rule, competition, transactional values, and productivity based reward systems.

### **The Leadership We Have**

The *idea* of leadership, for this and future generations must be re-imagined and re-defined to meet the needs of our emerging global society. A new organizing premise of leadership, and leadership education, is that every person of this generation can have engaged, healthy lives while not jeopardizing the ability of others or future generations to have the same.

This section will describe how traditional ideas of leadership are based in theories not inclusive of values that support the lives and well being of all people. The section seeks to describe historic leadership modalities that have functioned for most of human history but no longer represent the best interests of the world's population. Servant leadership theory, as an emergent and alternative theory is described and suggested as the leadership model that can systemically contradict the social and cultural dysfunction caused by our current shared understanding of historic and conventional leadership values and behaviors

The social challenges of our times cannot be addressed or include all stakeholders using old leadership styles born in a paradigm of scarce resources and competition based models set up to require winners and losers. Burns in *Leadership* (1978), a watershed book for what was to become the field of Transformational Leadership theory, asserts an *object-based* value system, born of competing and assertive values, is central to all popular leadership theory leading to these times.

Out of the varying motives of persons, out of the combat and competition between groups and between persons, out of the making of countless choices and the sharpening and steeling of purpose, arise the elevating forces of leadership and the achievement of intended change (432).



Burns discusses how this competitive model forms the thinnest and least creative consensus and doesn't really represent the best qualities of leadership – qualities that stand for the more noble human aspirations such as liberty, justice, equality and progress (432).

As a pioneer of the development of Transformational Leadership theory, Burns espouses the virtues of higher ethical values but nevertheless attributes the source of leadership, paradoxically, to a fundamentally transactional paradigm. Burns asserts that leaders in their quest to reflect a *consensus*, necessarily must choose a moderating, transactional path:

Leaders who appeal to followers with simplistic slogans such as Equality, Progress, Liberty, Justice, Order, are neither offering a guide to followers on where leaders really stand nor mobilizing followers...They are not acting as leaders as we've defined leadership. Leaders who act under conditions of conflict within hierarchies of needs and values, however, must act under the necessity of choosing between certain kinds of liberties, equalities, and other end values. They both exploit purpose and are guided by it (432).

By this model, leadership is born of combat and competition, and is guided by exploitive choices made under "conditions of conflict". But what happens after those initial, transactional choices are made by a leader and their "group"? How are these leadership choices and responses applied in everyday circumstance? Often times, leadership choices become codified. Decisions made by leaders in response to a new situation are turned into processes, systems, products or behaviors. People gain experience and expertise in this paradigm of codified transactional processes, behaviors, and rewards. These processes and behaviors are then packaged and refined, and presented as established "norms" to young people in our schools. Colquitt (2011), in *Organizational Behavior*, discusses how programmed decisions allow for easy recognition and

implementation of solutions to problems (267). However, if as Burns describes, these programmed decisions were initially created under “conditions of conflict” by leaders choosing among “winners and losers”, then many programmed solutions are not a reflection of leadership but rather, may just be the reflection of a system designed for the codified benefit of some individuals or groups at the expense of others.

As participants in organizations and communities, we have become accustomed to using established, familiar business or organizational constructs in forming solutions to new problems and challenges as they emerge. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) discuss how our present day social challenges require that we distinguish between administrative or technical responses and the kind of adaptive responses required by persistent, repetitive social challenges. Leadership decisions, in the guise of technical expertise, are often based in past, predetermined processes. Predetermined processes become confused with thoughtful leadership. Heifetz and Linsky discuss how *adaptive responses* to our current social conditions require that new methods be learned and applied by leaders who find themselves involved with unique and emerging social challenges of a new era.

Popular academic research presents multiple theories, interpretations, and descriptions of traditional leadership archetypes most familiar in the majority of our organizational and business environments. Burns (1978) describes, “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena in the world” (2). Burns divides the topic into two general distinctions, *transactional* and *transforming*:

The relations of most leaders and followers are *transactional* – leaders approach followers with an eye for exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the

relationships among leaders and followers. *Transforming* leadership, while more complex, is more potent. The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But beyond that, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower (4).

Burns goes on to describe how moral leadership, in both transactional and transformational contexts, can elevate human conduct and ethical aspirations. However, in the final analysis, Burns asserts leadership is about addressing follower's wants, needs and motivations but as the more proactive agent in the leader-follower relationship, leaders "serve as an independent force in the make-up of a followers' motive base through gratifying their motives" (20).

In recent decades, the apparent "motive base" in our culture, for many, is structured by our economic systems, and social issues presumably are best addressed by tried and true business policy, process and administration. Jason Colquitt (2011), author of multiple popular textbooks on the topic of Organizational Development defines leadership as "the use of power and influence to direct the activities of followers toward goal achievement" (451). Colquitt describes how, in organizations, leadership effectiveness can be "gauged in a number of ways. Leaders can be judged by objective evaluations of unit performance, such as profit margins, market share, sales return on investment, productivity, quality, costs...and so forth" (483). In Colquitt's organizational context, leadership and followership derive their meaning from traditional business definitions. Measurable and repeatable results, in the quest of promoting consumption, for the sake of increasing profit and shareholder wealth, form the foundational context of leader-follower relationships according to this popular and not atypical university textbook on organization and leadership.

Market driven leadership reform is insufficient. This leadership archetype, as it is framed and taught in our academic institutions and textbooks, does not offer a coherent, creative, value-based response as required of our societies new generation. Transaction based, business oriented, competitive norms and subsequent models of leadership have produced a global culture of privilege for the few and catastrophe for the many. Transformational approaches have emerged in recent decades, but as Burns points out, are still based on gratifying the needs of a defined constituency. Transformational leadership is still concerned with exploiting the shared motives and wants of a group. Both Transactional and Transformational approaches to leadership are, in the final analysis, about one person or group gaining and maintaining advantage over another person or group.

Jill Graham's (in Spears, 1998) "Servant-Leadership and Enterprise Strategy" describes a number of different styles of moral reasoning associated with historic and prevailing leadership theory. She suggests how organizational strategies that encourage values inclusive of all enterprise *stakeholders*, are best served by a servant leadership model. Further, as our economic and social global networks grow, organizational stakeholders come from multiple locations and communities:

Organizations are more likely to prefer a balanced stakeholder service enterprise strategy, where no group is used merely as an instrument to serve others and all stakeholders' welfare is recognized as legitimate and important...This definition of organizational purpose is in closest accord with the service-oriented values of servant leaders who recoil at viewing some people merely as means to serve other's needs (150-151).

Graham asserts a leadership archetype has evolved such that today it includes core values of equity and justice as demonstrated in servant leadership styles. Graham describes how leadership, and its associated styles of engaging people have evolved in recent history. Servant leadership, according to Graham, represents the emergent paradigm reflecting an inclusive set of values and moral referents better suited to the global awareness and associated leadership needs of the emerging generation of learners and educators.

The table below illustrates Grahams (1998) analysis of how the moral basis of leadership power has shifted:

Table 1 Grahams Leadership Styles and Levels of Moral Development			
	<u>PRECONVENTIONAL</u>	<u>CONVENTIONAL</u>	<u>POSTCONVENTIONAL</u>
<b>Leadership Style</b>	Transactional or Path-goal leadership Autocrat or coercive leadership	Transformational Leadership Leader-member Exchange Institutional Leadership	Servant-Leadership
<b>Level of Moral Development</b>	Uncritical obedience to external authority Instrumental compliance with exchange agreements	Utilitarian calculus. Meet interpersonal role obligations Fulfill social duties from group membership	Discern and apply universal principles
<b>Moral Referent(s)</b>	Authoritative rules and instructions Enforceable contracts and job descriptions	Personal relationship with supervisor Cultural expectations	Cost and benefits for all stakeholders Principles of Justice

Source: Adapted from Jill W. Graham, "Servant-Leadership and Enterprise Strategy," (Spears, 153).

Graham’s assertion of a new, postconventional servant leadership style speaks directly to the needs of current, traditional age students and young adults. The explosion of social media and its use at a global level provides countless stories and evidence that people, youth in particular around the world, have shared concerns and commitment to inclusive understandings and applications of justice and equity.

Difficulties with a servant leadership model emerge in prevailing cultures whose identities are defined by measures of business, economic or competitive success. Many people profess to understand and embrace this vision of inclusion, justice, participation and care associated with servant leadership attributes. All too often, however, our current cultural and economic systems, built from a scarce resources, competitive paradigm, are better suited to support exclusivity over inclusiveness, privilege over justice, and isolated activity over participation or closeness with our neighbors.

We are, according to Fassel (in Spears, 1998), a culture of workaholics that often finds its citizens and leaders entrenched in the “mechanistic euphemisms of ‘right-sizing and ‘reengineering’ – modern metaphors for sacrificing people in order to squeeze the last cent out of production” (216-217). Archetypal transactional and transformational leadership models are the established norm and seem the more appropriate methods of self-survival and participation in today’s organizations. These leadership models, in support of workaholism, reward results while dismissing or minimizing the importance of meaningful human relationships.

Leadership and organizational structures have created a culture where “Workaholism masquerades as a positive trait in the cultural lore of our nation” (219). Servant leadership cannot emerge as a prevailing mode until we address the underlying myths we have about personal security, competition, winners and losers, and success. Fassel suggests our culture is set up to pit self-care and care for others as antithetical to definitions of organizational commitment and success. “The pervasiveness of workaholism means that any person who attempts to recover from it is a personal, private revolutionary in the very fabric of the nation” (219). The notions of advocating for or learning servant leadership skills, in the face of such cultural mythology, seem naïve and counterproductive. It can particularly challenging for young adults, raised up in a

pervasive, transactional, leadership paradigm which so often defines personal success with purchasing power.

Fassel counters with an argument challenging the perverse notion of sacrificing everything, including one's health and personal beliefs, to the altar of ever-increasing productivity or organizational success. She describes how workaholism makes us little more than "objects to be used and then to be used up in the service of (organizational) activity" (229). In the larger social context, workaholism, as a personality disorder associated with conventional organizational and leadership systems, creates behaviors and a personal identity that requires ever-increasing amounts of work, and production, as the prevailing human value:

Once you assume that someone else's experience is less important than yours, you have taken the step necessary to making them an object, and you have taken the first step to oppress them. Thus, oppression doesn't begin with an action but with an attitude (229).

In this cycle of oppression, preceding the objectification and oppression of another person or group, one must first objectify and oppress themselves in service to the myth of workaholism, a myth born of a learned and reinforced faith in transactional business process and its conventional leadership and organizational understandings and processes.

This notion of workaholism predates Greenleaf's seminal 1970 essay, *The Servant as Leader*. Fassel points out that Greenleaf does not directly address the issue of workaholism but does suggest how Greenleaf offers "a prescription for resolving skewed social relationships. He (Greenleaf) aimed to achieve a new social balance by unbalancing the traditional notion of the hierarchial leader" (229). Greenleaf, in his theory of servant leadership, would "rightly see our enmeshment in workaholism as the tendency to become objects to be used and then to be used up

in the service of activity” (229). Workaholism directs our activity away from both self-awareness and the awareness of the needs of others. Such behaviors represent the antithesis of servant leadership. In Greenleaf’s (2002) Chapter titled “Servant Leadership in Business” his vision seems to contradict any value in workaholism. In fact, beyond workaholism, Greenleaf seems to suggest servant leadership will eventually lead to a decline in the consumerism often associated with workaholism.

But as the economy becomes even more productive and people get more sensible and settle for fewer ‘things,’ in the new ethic, service to those who produce may rise in priority to those who use, and the significance of work will be more the joy of the doing than the goods and services produced. There must of course, be goods and services at some level, but in an era of abundance they need not be the top priority (155).

Greenleaf’s vision of a servant leader led business organization acknowledges the importance of productivity. However, he offers an important contrast to traditional measures of business success. For Greenleaf, and his vision of servant leadership, it is in the joy and significance of *how* productivity is accomplished, that abundance is measured.

### **Re-thinking the Leadership Lessons Young People Receive**

A challenge for today’s educators is to provide young people with leadership tools that address the new issues and challenges of an emerging and changing global society. This section describes in part how young people learn about leadership in educational settings. It also presents servant leadership practice as a necessary component of educational formation in addressing the modern leadership challenges of traditional aged students.



Young adults, parroting learned responses to authoritative rule or simply trying to function in pre-defined business or economic context, are not exhibiting the leadership tools and skills required to adequately address the emerging needs of our communities, cities, regions or world. Boggs (2011) talks about how “at a time when we need to heal the Earth and build durable communities, too many of our schools and universities are stuck in the processes and practices used to industrialize the Earth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”(149). Grahams (in Spears, 1998) re-framing of leadership, and leadership education, within the global moral referent of justice and equity, is a key elemental response to Boggs’ call for us to “heal the earth and build durable communities”.

Peter Senge, a global presence and best-selling author on organizational development, in a 2001 article, *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations* with Fred Kofman, discusses how we have absolved ourselves from developing our moral leadership capacities, in the past, by holding on to old conventional myths of “great leaders”. Kofman and Senge suggest how successful (learning) organizations of the future will be led by servant leaders:

Servant leadership offers a unique mix of idealism and pragmatism. At one level, the concept is an ideal, appealing to deeply held beliefs in the dignity and self-worth of all people and the democratic principle that a leader's power flows from those led. But it is also highly practical. It has been proven again and again in military campaigns that the only leader whom soldiers will reliably follow when their lives are on the line is the leader who is both competent and who soldiers believe is committed to their well-being (18).

Leadership as an expression of justice, equity and shared values, including a concern for the well being of all stakeholders, is an emerging norm among organizational thinkers and academic researchers. Graham (2009), and Kofman and Senge (2001) assert that any attempts at leadership lacking these inclusive principles leads to an unsustainable enterprise. In the long run, it is up to our educational system to prepare leaders committed to the well being of people in contrast to leaders simply committed to the attainment of shared or organizational goals.

Prevailing leadership messages, practices, and theories taught in our schools and universities most often occur in an object-based, business paradigm of scarce resources, competition, grow profit, grow consumption, reward the workaholic, limit one's concern to measures of economic success, ignore the misery of others, *archetypal* assumptions about leadership – assumptions that, in the end are not sustainable and don't make sense to an increasingly self-aware global culture.

In his *Afterword* section of Greenleaf's (2002) 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Servant Leadership*, Senge describes how “we live in an era of massive institutional failure” (343). He describes how difficult it is to identify any institutions truly serving the larger public interest. Senge discusses how most conversations about leadership are often counterproductive because “in everyday use, leader has become a synonym for *boss*” (Greenleaf, 2002, 358). He suggests people “not bother reading any other book about leadership until you first read Robert Greenleaf's book, *Servant-Leadership*.... it is the most singular and useful statement on leadership I've come across” (in Spears, 2005, 5). Speaking on behalf of the Society for Organizational Learning, he makes explicit the link between servant leadership and educational institutions whose purpose is to support “the capacity of a human community to shape its future”

(Greenleaf, 2002, 358). Senge suggests that community building lies at the heart of any definition for effective leadership in the future:

When we aspire to increase servant leadership, I would suggest that does not refer only to servant leadership at the top. We must recognize that the capacity for servant leadership must be distributed throughout an organization; we need to increase the number of servant leaders *everywhere*.... Anything less would deny the profound paradox that sits at the heart of servant leadership: that genuine leadership is deeply personal and inherently collective (359).

Our current and new generation are calling for a leadership ideal inclusive of and based in a more universal understanding of equity and social justice values. This inclusive ideal starkly contrasts to historic and conventional leadership styles that are the result of certain defined groups gaining and then maintaining inequitable advantage over others through codified systems designed to increase the resources of a narrowly defined constituency.

Educational systems that teach a new leadership ideal can dramatically challenge the gross economic and social injustice of our current “winners and losers” leadership system, and its systemic degradation of billions of people. The way we teach young people about leadership has been a key element in shaping human history. How we teach them about leadership now, will provide key defining attributes for the global culture of the future.

Teaching young people about leadership concepts, independent of prevailing business and market force influence, requires new and dynamic ways of thinking about leadership. New and robust leadership archetypes, inclusive of modern, current, deeply held, collective, and personal beliefs must find encouragement in multiple settings and organizational contexts. The task of providing young leaders with the skills to shape a just and equitable future means

educators must develop and implement new lessons, approaches and curricula that account for the restrictions and negative effects of archetypal leadership modalities while focusing on leadership norms that address global/local values of justice, care for people, and the inclusive public good.

Peach (2010) describes education as that place where a relevant and socially responsible curriculum can prepare traditional undergraduates with “academically defensible, practically relevant and socially responsive” learning that is capable of critically addressing the very emergent and unique global issues of our time (449). The idea that previous curricula represent a reproduction of established cultural norms assures the “preservation and transmission of certain privileged groups within a society” (455). The curricula currently in place provide a powerful message about “what we value in the world and the transmission of the dominant cultural values, meanings and practices that serve to recreate the gender, race, and class inequities of society at large” (454).

The emerging generation of undergraduate learners is already well versed on topics of social justice, equity, and fair distribution. As these learners encounter old curricula, with their often unconscious yet prevailing historic notions of authoritarian or traditional group leadership, they become caught up in a stressful web of trying to function in an educational culture they know does not address their needs or values. Marshall (2006) talks about the disconnect between what is taught in schools and what students, as thoughtful human beings, already know, but must fight to retain in the midst of a learning paradigm “rooted in scarcity and deficiency” (8). Marshall, a noted curriculum developer on topics including math, science, and technology, describes how she has met with young people who dream of making a contribution to their communities and the world. Young people, who yearn for thoughtful relevance, connections and

meaningful dialogue, find themselves having little choice but to participate in an outdated educational system teaching old solutions to new problems and characterized by old competitive practices pitting one student against the other:

In story after story, these young people emotionally described how so many of the current expectations, processes, and structures of schooling were silencing their spirit and inhibiting them from authentically engaging in meaningful and relevant learning. They talked about being embarrassed by their obsession with getting good grades.... because they knew this took precedence over real learning (132).

Traditional leadership education norms, which find their roots and conventions in historic archetypal behaviors of uncritical obedience to external authority and fulfilling ones duties to a particular economically defined social group (in Spears,1998), are not suited for and indeed stifle the thoughtful, energetic, and creative engagement required of our emergent young leaders. The type of vocated engagement required to address collapsing communities and the global political and economic systems, currently holding most of the world hostage, cannot be learned within an education system that operates as a reflection of an old and used up paradigm based in the mindless accumulation and consumption of resources. Marshall (2006) describes how “our current story of learning and schooling are rooted in scarcity and deficiency – ‘fixing’ and remediating the learners limitations” (8). Students find themselves as constantly resisting or complying with an educational context where their learning has been organized into processes and structures that seek their cultural compliance through scarcity based measures and reward systems.

Peach (2010) asserts today’s students have a keen understanding of the complex issues involving their own higher education. Economically productive skills and workforce

development will always represent an important educational goal in a “complex, contemporary world,” but Peach seeks to re-define the notion of vocation beyond a limited or “narrowly conceived form of training designed simply to adapt future workers to an existing practice” (449). A person’s training and education, in preparing them to engage life through a vocation, includes “making students informed and critical practitioners... to effect change and to think critically about whether they are doing the right things” (457). It is through the day-to-day interpretation, demonstration and modeling of one’s vocation that the individual engages with his or her community and the world.

### **Tenets of Servant Leadership literacy.**

Servant Leadership, as a modern leadership theory and practice, traces its roots to Greenleaf’s *Servant Leadership, A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness* (1977). This section seeks to provide a brief overview of major tenets of servant leadership theory, as they have developed over the past few decades.

Academic, peer reviewed servant leadership research and associated quantitative analysis has markedly increased in the past ten years. Much of the research has been around developing reliable servant leadership survey instruments in multiple settings. Some of the research challenges are a reflection of the beginnings of this modern theory. In his essay, *The Servant as Leader* (1970), which became the first chapter of his 1977 seminal book, Greenleaf presents an experiential criterion for noticing this dynamic leadership modality within oneself:

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.... The difference manifests itself in the care taken to be the servant – first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those being served grow as

persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants (Greenleaf, 1970, 7).

Distinguishing and researching themes associated with “natural feelings” or with the apparent paradox presented by combining the words servant and leadership presents unique challenges but has never the less been addressed in multiple studies around the world.

In 1998, Larry Spears published an edited edition, *Insights on Leadership*, including the essays of many servant leadership thinkers including Greenleaf, Blanchard, Block, Autry, Jaworski and Greenleaf’s biographer, Donald Frick. In this edition, Spears lists out his compilation of 10 servant leadership characteristics (listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community) which are often referenced in subsequent servant leadership research.

A cursory examination of current research reveals multiple academic studies originating in China, Indonesia, S. Africa, Australia, Canada – the list is globally inclusive. Glenda Lee Black, a professor in North Bay, Ontario, Canada, conducted a mixed-method research study using Laub’s (1998) Organizational Leadership Assessment and Kottkamp’s (1991) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised, administered to a sample population of 231 education professionals in a single Ontario school district. A.A. Pekarti and S. Sendjaya (2010) have recently authored one piece of the GLOBE study of 62 societies, in Australia and Malaysia, which is investigating the emergent servant leadership model across cultures using Implicit Leadership Theory, a theory with the premise that people hold cognitive categories that distinguish prototypical leaders from non-leaders. Taylor and Martin’s study (2007), *The Examination of leadership practices of principals identified as servant leaders*, examines the leadership practices of public school principals identified as servant leaders. Van Dierendonck

and Nuijten (2010) most recent paper, *The Servant Leadership Survey: Development and Validation of a Multidimensional Measure*, is a four-phase study involving data from two countries, four studies, eight samples, and 1571 participants and uses exploratory and factor analysis to establish an eight dimensional measure of 30 questions. Their purpose “is to describe the development and validation of a multi-dimensional instrument to measure servant leadership”(p.1).

As might be expected, the first 35 years of servant leadership research has been about creating common descriptions, or ways to “language” servant leadership in a way that promotes shared understanding of its foundational themes. A representation of research terms and factors from ten recent articles illustrates both the breadth and complexity of perceptions and servant leadership definitions. The Spear’s 10 servant leadership characteristics, representing early servant leadership theory are listed in the left column. The right column is a list of terms and factors tested for and measured in ten separate servant leadership studies. As a random but representative list, the studies draw from servant leadership research conducted in universities, corporations, school districts, government agencies, and small colleges in countries including The Netherlands, Canada, Australia, The West Indies, Kenya, Canada, Singapore, United States, Indonesia, and Great Britain.



Spears 10 Characteristics	Factors and Variables from 10 Recent Studies	
Listening	Listening	Standing back.
Empathy	Valuing and appreciating Forgiveness.	Humility
Healing	Transforming influence.	
Awareness	Authentic self	Honest self-evaluation
Persuasion	Inspiring	Encouraging. Authenticity
Conceptualization	Leadership skills Delegation. Communicating with clarity	Transcendental spirituality. Responsible morality.
Foresight	Modeling Courage	Vision.
Stewardship	Dutiful Competence Covenantal relationship Provide accountability	Supporting and Resourcing Stewardship. Service.
Commitment to the Growth of People	People first Empowerment. Integrity Altruism	Voluntary subordination. Challenging. Devotion. Agapao Love
Building Community	Ethical Behavior Humanity Enabling	Building relationships. Trust. Fostering collaboration

Source: Flowers, D. (2011). Annotated Bibliography: Global Servant Leadership.

A comprehensive or definitive explanation of what servant leadership *is* or how it should be measured is beyond the reach of any single article. Servant leadership represents a broad field of research that includes multiple perspectives. However, several important points have been made that relate directly to the training of servant leadership literate educators. Servant leadership is an emerging paradigm in our communities, businesses, schools and government entities. It is a relationship-based, value-centered understanding of leadership that addresses the emergent equity and social justice issues of our time. It is a connected, moral system of leadership that is

applicable in all situations involving people working together.

The modern idea of servant leadership is proposed by Robert Greenleaf in a published booklet, *The Servant as Leader* (1970). Greenleaf retired as an AT&T executive and founded his Center for Applied Ethics in 1964. He attributes his original inspiration for the idea of servant leadership to the Brother Leo character in Hesse's (1956) *The Journey to the East*. In the story, Leo begins as a servant to a group of young artists. Greenleaf (1970) describes how "All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without their servant Leo" (1).

A defining force in the servant leadership field, Greenleaf continued the development of his theories during the 60's and 70's while operating as a consultant and visiting professor in multiple settings, including Harvard Divinity School, Sloan School of Management, Dartmouth, and Cornell University. His 1977 book *Servant Leadership, A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness*, is a compilation of essays, servant leader profiles containing sections on servant leadership applications regarding business, education, foundation work, and churches previously published during Greenleaf's 20 year consulting career (Fricke, 290).

Greenleaf articulates in the opening paragraphs of this seminal work (1970) what has become an often quoted source of the emerging theory of servant leadership. In talking about Brother Leo, Greenleaf describes a new kind of leader:

But to me, this story clearly says – *the great leader is seen as servant first*, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Leo was actually the leader all the time, but he was servant first because that is what he was, *deep down inside*. Leadership was bestowed upon a man who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was

the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away. He was servant first (2).

Greenleaf's vision requires a servant-first focus. He asserts a servant leader listens to and responds to the needs of their followers in contrast to a leader-first focus, serving out of the "promptings of (personal) conscience or in conformity with normative expectations" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 28). Throughout his writings, he discusses listening as the key observable behavior of a servant leader. He describes a patient and empathetic style of listening: "I have seen enough remarkable transformations in people who have been trained to listen to have some confidence in this approach. It is because true listening builds strength in other people" (Greenleaf, 1977, p.31).

If servant leadership literacy is evidenced by a pre-disposition and ability to model personal servant leader characteristics and qualities, then a servant leaders thinking, problem solving, decision making and actions looks different from traditional leadership modalities. Servant leadership literacy is made evident by a person's mental approach and behaviors in everyday circumstances. It shows up as a willingness to engage intellectually and personally with the tensions and conflicts of everyday life as both servant and leader.

Larry Spears, who served as executive director of the Greenleaf Center from 1990 – 2007, is well regarded for his multiple collaborations and studies on servant leadership. His "Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership" (1998) are a seminal benchmark referenced by multiple subsequent studies. The Spears 10 characteristics are as follows: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (3-6).

As a marking point in the development of servant leadership literacy, the Spears 10 represent a shift from previous leadership standards defined by transactional or transformational leadership theories with their associated norms of external authority, instrumental compliance with exchange agreements, interpersonal role obligations, and social duties within group memberships (Spears, 153). The Spears 10 characteristics, in many ways, represent a broad compendium of anecdotal and qualitative research conducted by Spears as he connected with current theorists, both academic and business. Stephen Covey, in the forward of Spears' *"Insights on Leadership"* describes how the components and aims of servant leadership form a complete understanding and approach to a shared notion of leadership:

You see, everything is an ecosystem. Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic ecological approach to work, promoting a sense of community, of togetherness, of connection. That is what the whole future is going to be. It's interdependency, it's connection, and it's the sharing of power in decision making (xv).

Spears' edited volume on the topic of servant leadership includes essays by Margaret Wheatley, James Kouzes, Parker Palmer, Peter Block, and Ken Blanchard among many others. These works represent a foundation of qualitative research that lead up to current themes and ideas of servant leadership research and literacy.

A number of quantitative research tools have been developed in the last several years to measure and describe servant leadership themes in social and organizational contexts. Laubs Organizational Leadership Assessment tool (OLA) (2012), originally designed as "Servant Organization Leadership Assessment" (Laub, 1999), is used to distinguish servant leadership from non-servant leadership in organizations. Laub demonstrates that the instrument is a

statistically reliable in measuring servant leadership in an organizational context (Cronbach-alpha coefficient of 0.98). The instrument consists of 33 leader assessment items, 27 organization assessment items, and six items that seek to assess job satisfaction. Nowhere in the survey is servant leadership mentioned. Laub's servant leadership model asserts six key components:

Servant Leadership is an understanding and practice that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership and shares leadership. The Servant Organization is an organization in which the characteristics of servant leadership are displayed throughout the organizational culture and are valued and practiced by the leadership and workforce (25).

This quantitative tool, as it is consistent with previous qualitative servant leadership concepts, offers a tested instrument that has been used in multiple settings including school districts (Black, 2010), non-profits (Irving, 2007), and colleges (Joseph, 2005). Van Dierendonck (2011) also incorporated the OLA as part of a larger European study involving business organizations.

Pekarti and Sendjaya (2010) have authored multiple studies on servant leadership developing a Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) which includes a 35 item measure within Six behavioral dimensions: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence. Based in part on previous research by Sendjaya (2003) the SLBS grew from his earlier inductive and deductive models drawn from current literature "(for example, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991; Mayfield, Mayfield, & Kopf, 1995; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990)" (3). The following Table 2 describes their theoretical basis of servant leadership in the development of Sendjaya's empirical instrument (2003). The left column provides a listing of the

dimensions and sub-dimensions his SLBS seeks to measure while the right column provides general descriptions of how dimensions are translated into behaviors.

Table 3 Sendjaya, S. (2003). Servant Leadership Round Table

Dimensions & Sub-dimensions	Examples of Behavioral Attributes
<b>Voluntary Subordination</b> Being a Servant Acts of Service	Considers others' needs and interests above his or her own Demonstrates his or her care through sincere, practical deeds
<b>Authentic Self</b> Humility Security Integrity Vulnerability Accountability	Acts quietly without deliberately seeking public attention/adulation Is ready to step aside for a more qualified successor Maintains consistency between words and deeds Is Willing to say "I was wrong" to other people Gives me the right to question his or her actions and decisions
<b>Covenantal Relationship</b> Acceptance Equality Availability Collaboration	Accepts me for who I am, not as he or she wants me to be Treats people as equal partners in the organization Is willing to spend time to build a professional relationship with me Involves others in planning the actions needed to be taken
<b>Responsible Morality</b> Moral reasoning Moral Actions	Encourages me to engage in moral reasoning Focuses on doing what is right rather than looking good
<b>Transcendent Spirituality</b> Religiousness Sense of Mission Inner Consciousness Holistic Mindset	Is driven by a sense of a higher calling Helps me find clarity of purpose and direction Helps me generate a sense of meaning out of everyday life at work Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success
<b>Transforming Influence</b> Vision Trust Role modeling Empowerment Mentoring	Ensures that people have a clear understanding of the shared vision Allows me to express my talents in different and new ways Leads by personal example Allows me to experiment and be creative without fear Provides me candid feedback about my performance

Sendjaya's explication of servant leadership behaviors as sub-dimensions within broader definitions lends itself to measuring servant leadership nuances and differences among cultures. While all cultures have examples of the larger dimensions, varying degrees or interpretations of the details within each might vary from one region to another.

Mittal and Dorfman's 2012, *Servant leadership across cultures*, reviews and incorporates multiple models, including Laub (1999), Sendjaya (2003), and Van Dierendonck (2010) in identifying empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship as their "best indicators" of servant leadership. In conducting this recent study, Mittal and Dorfman seek to examine the correlations of these perceived attributes as they interact with a person's view's on subjective organizational behaviors (vitality, engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance) and extra-role behaviors (in-role behavior, civic virtue, altruism, taking charge).

The following table describes how both early qualitative and more recent quantitative servant leadership descriptors share some continuity over time. The Spears (1998) Ten Characteristics, a generally accepted and acknowledged qualitative source, is listed to the left. The three columns to the right are intended as a representative listings of more recent quantitative measures. Laub's OLA (2012) originally designed as "Servant Organization Leadership Assessment" (Laub, 1999), Pekarti and Sendjaya's (2010) SLBS six behavioral dimensions, and Mittal and Dorfman's (2012) eight best indicators used in their Servant Leadership Across Cultures instrument.

Table 4 Spears 10 Characteristics and recent Servant leadership instrument measures.

Spears (1998)	Laub (2012)	Pekarti and Sendjaya (2010)	Mittal and Dorfman (2012)
Listening	values people	covenantal relationship responsible morality transforming influence	standing back humility
Empathy	values people	covenantal relationship responsible morality transforming influence	authenticity interpersonal acceptance
Healing	values people develops people	transcendental spirituality transforming influence	empowerment accountability interpersonal acceptance stewardship
Awareness	displays authenticity	authentic self transcendental spirituality	humility stewardship
Persuasion	provides leadership	responsible morality transforming influence	authenticity courage
Conceptualization	displays authenticity	responsible morality transforming influence	accountability stewardship
Foresight	develops people	responsible morality transforming influence	courage stewardship
Stewardship	values people displays authenticity provides leadership	voluntary subordination covenantal relationship responsible morality	courage stewardship
Commitment to the Growth of People	values people develops people shares leadership	voluntary subordination authentic self covenantal relationship transforming influence	empowerment accountability standing back humility

Spears list of 10 servant leadership characteristics is a powerful representation of early qualitative research that built on Greenleaf’s original *servant first* philosophy. Laub, Pekarti and Sendjaya, and Mittal and Dorfman’s themes, which were developed and used in multiple quantitative studies, represent consistent patterns in servant leadership research of factors and attributes in line with Greenleaf’s *servant first* doctrine and Spears’ early explication of ten characteristics.



These and other global studies on servant leadership qualities, attributes and behaviors, in multiple cultural circumstances underscore how servant leadership represents a set of unique and egalitarian leadership styles. It is a leadership understanding that displays some cultural variations but finds a common source in themes that focus on service and the well being of people in organizations and communities.

### **Interdisciplinary Insights for Servant Leadership**

Using the previous lists, constructs and arguments as a point of departure, multiple examples of relevant approaches to servant leadership educational constructs begin to emerge. Leadership as an underlying theme in educating young people can be reframed in coursework involving literature, philosophy, the arts, or civics. This section provides examples of how educators are incorporating servant leadership theory into traditional curricula or academic research. It will demonstrate how servant leadership can be studied in the context of American literature (Staff, 2009) or traditional Chinese philosophy and literature (Yong Han, 2009). The work of Ramona Wis (2002) with regard to servant leadership in teaching and conducting music will be reviewed. Finally, this section will discuss servant leadership in the context of Personalism (Whetstone, 2002) and Feminist theory (Reynolds, 2011) representing two fields of Philosophical inquiry.

Literature as an academic discipline is known to capture and portray stories, themes, and lessons from simple to complex forms and iterations Literature is both culturally and historically bound but also a globally diverse field of study. The literature of different countries, be they Chinese, British, American, or Brazilian, each contains unique and varying historical and current perspectives on servant leadership.

Shane Staff (2009) discusses aspects of American literature in the context of servant leadership with his examination of characters portrayed in three novels by John Steinbeck. His question for each of three novels was the same; How is leadership depicted by the literary creations of John Steinbeck and in what way does it or not does it represent the ten characteristics of a servant leader (Spears, 2001)? Staff's work advocates on the topic of leadership morality and how immoral behaviors by leadership, in particular, leads to great suffering by many. Staff examines how an established author such as Steinbeck can be re-examined with a fresh perspective:

Steinbeck was, throughout his career, an ethical writer, concerned with right and wrong choices and the consequences of those choices- a common assumption. Yet relatively little has been done in understanding the aesthetic nature of ethics in his work (305).

Staffs' work illuminates underlying aesthetics and the *beauty* of ethical values and choices as they may be evoked through the literary characters of Steinbeck. With his work, Staff has established a number of Steinbeck's literary characters that can be offered as "exemplars of how to lead ethically, considering values like humility, courage, honesty, integrity, fairness, justice, and sympathy that define ethical leadership also constitute the foundation of servant leadership" (307).

The power of Steinbeck's creations (in particular Tom, Ma, and Casey in *The Grapes of Wrath*) as exemplars of servant leadership is a primary message, but Staff also notes how other characters in the book (Mac, London, Dakin, the Boss etc.), as formal leaders associated with the *lack* of a service ethic, display personal leadership characteristics that directly result in the suffering of those being led (314). He concludes, "The doctrine for guiding the actions of leaders

must be service and sympathetic compassion. Without those, the historical, current, and literary trend is for those being led to suffer considerably” (303). Staff describes two lessons discerned from Steinbeck literature. First, that leadership guided by service, sympathetic compassion and the Spears 10 characteristics builds healing and productive communities who work together to overcome hardship. The second lesson is that servant leadership is learned and grows in those best inclined to listen to others, engage in self-reflection, and who are compelled to serve.

Studies that discuss servant leadership attributes, in the context of historic cultural norms and philosophies, also provide curriculum development opportunities through culturally traditional literature. Yong Han’s (2009), *Servant leadership in the People’s Republic of China: a case study of the public sector*, draws parallels with Confucianism, modern communist ideology, and Daoism as illustrations of servant leadership themes in Chinese cultural history. Yong Han makes note of the toxic and unethical practices so often demonstrated by business leadership at a global level. He describes how servant leadership represents a best choice for “drawing, keeping, and motivating high performance employees” (266) but is also concerned with the “cultural gap” in servant leadership literature. Yong Han’s research focuses, in part, on suggesting cultural specific examples of servant leadership theory from a modern Chinese perspective:

Daoist leadership with an emphasis on conformity to the “dao” or “the way” has evolved over the past 2,500 years, with its creator, Lao Zi, being a contemporary of Confucius (Cheung and Chan, 2008). The extant literature suggests that in relation to servant leadership, Daoist servant leadership includes the following characters or behaviors: vision, embracing insight and wisdom; serving the community maintaining a low profile (i.e., humility), leading by example, and

empowering people through ownership of the task to do the work (269).

Steinbeck and the Dao are two examples of servant leadership lessons drawn from culture specific literature. As servant leadership theory continues to influence academic research in multiple countries, more examples of servant leadership attributes sourced in diverse historic and popular literature are being made available.

Music education is a unique circumstance for fostering a modern leadership theory. Ramona Wis (2002), in *The Conductor as Servant-Leader*, has identified five key characteristics in her approach to educating and conducting groups of music students:

- Vision. This ability to have vision is one of the most telling differences between a conductor who is a leader and one who is only a manager...the conductors driving question is “what will best serve the students?”.
- Responsiveness. Servant leaders listen carefully to those they serve and take responsibility for the situation.... (servant leader) conductors recognize their responsibility for creating the learning environment and the overall atmosphere.
- Trust. Servant leaders set great standards of excellence by believing in others. They trust others. In dealing with those whom they serve, they must trust: trust that individuals can accomplish the goal, that they possess untapped potential.
- Persuasion. Servant leaders have a healthy perspective on power. They understand their potential influence and use it in persuasive, rather than coercive ways...the essence of authentic power is influence.
- Character. Servant leaders tend to be people whom others enjoy being around – they are attractive not because of charisma but because of *purpose*. Servant leaders bring people to action because their internal compass is set to true North. (20-23)

Wis's servant leader conductor themes are consistent with excellence in musicianship and the growth of "the ensemble". Her focus on listening and visioning in the service of students provides strong correlation to Greenleaf's vision of servant-first leadership. Wis also raises the importance of personal development, as servant leaders work with groups of students and musicians. Servant leaders "master the context"(23), remaining life-long learners in order to both model personal growth and meet the emergent and changing needs of students.

Wis discusses the presumed servant-leader paradox in pointing out a successful approach to leading a group of student musicians:

If the leader always asks, 'what is best for the students?' – he or she is leading by serving the students before considering personal needs and desires. This kind of conductor rejects the notion that leaders must be autocratic and trusts that all musical goals will be reached if the focus is on serving the musicians and the music (20).

Servant leadership asks the question "what is best for those being served." Wis' focus removes the personal interests and yet trusts that appropriate and creative goals will be accomplished

Philosophy educators and scholars have addressed questions of servant leadership as explicated by Greenleaf, Spears, and recent servant leadership contributors. Two ethical frameworks, Personalism and Feminist ethics, are emerging as complimentary constructs in support of servant leadership theory.

The moral philosophy of personalism "views persons and personal relationships as the starting point of social theory and practice" (Whetstone, 2002, 385). As it would relate to leadership, or provide a philosophical basis for leadership education, Whetstone proposes five fundamental personalism themes through which to assess normative leadership behaviors. The

following is an abbreviated description of Whetstones' themes.

*Theme 1: Centrality of the person.*

The dignity and value of the human person is at the center of the personalist philosophy.

It all starts with a firm sense of the existence and vital importance of human dignity.

*Theme 2: Subjectivity and autonomy.*

Personalism understands human nature as a combining of subjectivity and autonomy. A person is characterized by both subjectivity and a sense of autonomy, created with a free will to respond to needs with responsible self-mastery.

*Theme 3: Human dignity.*

The dignity of the human person is displayed in their human capacity to love sacrificially and in their faculties such as intelligence, creativity, language, and freedom of will. The value of a human is not derived from their capacities, functions, social roles or deeds.

Every person is due love, respect, and affirmation.

*Theme 4: The person within community.*

A human person only flourishes in relation with other human persons. Personalism calls for community, not just a collection of individuals, but as a unity of persons who relate consciously and experientially. In contrast, individualism isolates, setting people against each other.

*Theme 5: Participation and solidarity.*

A commitment to personalism requires affirmation of the right of participation by all in society. Alienation in society occurs through the realities of social discrimination, economic deprivation, or the lack of social skills. Personalism works to promote solidarity where all people have full opportunity for participation. (Whetstone, 386).

In seeking a leadership approach aligned with the fundamentals of personalism, Whetstone raises the question of practicality, particularly as personalism and leadership might be played out in the business world. Whetstone discusses and dismisses transformational and postindustrial leadership models as having goals self-referentially designed for the benefit of local majorities or as being reduced to manipulated performance measures of subordinates taken in by charismatic or inspirational leadership rhetoric (377-388).

Whetstone posits servant leadership as the best fit leadership modality in reflecting the five Personalism themes of centrality of the person, subjectivity and autonomy, human dignity, the person within community, and participation and solidarity. In contrast to the instrumentality and object-based focus of transformational leadership, which often raises up the interests of one group over another, Whetstone suggests servant leadership is fundamentally concerned with establishing and encouraging a “community of shared values” (389). Whetstone describes a more global and inclusive servant leadership ethic:

The servant leader focuses on himself as a person and how he can beneficially serve others, whom he values for their dignity as persons, helping them to exercise freely their personal subjectivity and autonomy in a morally responsible manner. He seeks to build true community, one involving full participation and solidarity (390).

Whetstone identifies some potential weaknesses, particularly as servant leadership is framed in a business setting. Servant leadership has an optimistic quality that doesn't always align itself with traditional competitive environments. Some negative connotations for the word “servant” can require thoughtful approaches or re-contextualization in various cultural environments. In the end, however, servant leaders and followers, working together in a community of mutual

consideration, represent the best leadership paradigm whereby an ethical construct of personalism can find support.

Feminist scholarship also offers an established ethical construct that shares some qualities of alignment with servant leadership theory and application. Feminist ethics, with its associations and emphasis on caring and relationship-oriented behaviors, compares well with servant leadership qualities such as listening, empathizing, healing and fostering others' individual growth.

Kae Reynolds (2011) discusses the feminist ethic of care as a unifying theme through which servant leadership and a gender neutral and inclusive ethical structure find unity (158). However, in feminist theory, the terminological paradox presented by the phrase, *servant-leader*, might be interpreted a source of conflict in feminist theory. Traditionally, the word servant is associated with feminine activity, and the word leader is traditionally associated with masculine activity. Reynolds warns the inherent negative connotations of subjugation and domination associated with the terms *servant* and *leader* respectively, create a risk – the ambiguity created by the paradox is more likely to shift the discourse to the male-dominated definition by authority figures motivated to encourage submissive behaviors by subordinates. On the other hand, Reynolds suggests Greenleaf's vision contains an integrative quality whereby a high concern for relationships and for tasks is a desirable model for leadership:

The object is not to reject traditionally typical masculine qualities of leadership (such as decisiveness, assertiveness, and risk-taking). Instead the objective is to integrate rational, care-oriented, and person-centered thinking (Whetstone, 2002). Coleman (2003) and Eisler (1994) asserted that typically masculine gendered activities remain essential elements of the leadership equation and are



fundamental to a gender-holistic approach. As such, in a partnership model of organization and leadership both men and women as well as masculine and feminine traits and behaviors play an equally free, liberated, and powerful role.

The challenge is to manage the tension within a context of conscious discernment and relationality (Reynolds, 163).

Reynolds asserts modern leadership must stand in the tension of addressing both the task needs and relationship needs of individuals. Servant leadership offers an inclusive ethical structure affording modern leaders the tools and context to stand in that tension providing the kind of inclusive and thoughtful guidance required by modern followers.

Feminist theory, as it relates to leadership education, offers a perspective and approach for understanding both the paradox and day-to-day application of servant leadership in teams and groups. It informs and supports the leadership characteristics of healing, empathy, listening, community building and a commitment to the growth of people. As part of new conversation about leadership, feminist theory offers educators a tool for framing and talking about how gender integration contributes to an emergent definition of leadership. As young men and women students learn to embrace new leadership behaviors, inclusive of feminist qualities, servant leadership theory will be enhanced in our schools and communities.

The work of Staff (2009), Yong Han (2009), Wis (2002), Whetstone (2002) and Reynolds (2011) provide examples of servant leadership being mapped or woven into established literature, philosophy, or music/art curricula. Further efforts re-framing a modern concept of leadership that captures emerging postconventional values of justice, participation, equity and service to others, are already underway. Young learners are yearning for an education that provides them the new skills needed to move the world away from the destructive path it seems

to be following under the current leadership paradigm.

These examples in literature, music, and philosophy represent a modest beginning in the development, research and experimentation with servant leadership themes in traditional curricula for young adults and traditional age college students. These represent, however, exactly what is needed from curriculum developers, and scholars in order for educators to develop and model new, robust definitions of principled leadership in our classrooms. If current, archetypal notions of traditional leadership are to be challenged and replaced, moving forward, then educators must be provided the required new tools.

Marshall (2006) describes the nature of knowing as “relational, personal, integrative, communal, transformative – honoring all the ways we come to know” (222). Young people, as they are introduced and supported in their understanding of leadership in the world, need this kind of comprehensive re-framing of the idea of leadership if they are to be prepared to meet the global challenges rushing towards them. Marshall goes on to describe the “nature and quality of the minds”, the formation of which educators are, in part, held responsible. Young minds that possess a sense of self-efficacy and meaning while also integrating new and disparate patterns and connections. Young minds that are deeply connected to the natural, holistic world, while seeing themselves as its co-creators. Young minds that see the wholeness, connectedness, and belonging to global issues that go beyond themselves (225).

Servant leadership is an emergent “quality of the mind” whose time has come. It provides modern and timely leadership qualities necessary today to address the prevailing needs of our planet and all its people.

### **Design Questions For Developing a Servant Leadership Curriculum**

The critical essay seeks to present a foundation for creating a curriculum in servant leadership for high school and college students. Below is a summary of key concepts for each of the five preceding sections for the development of such a curriculum. Beneath each summary is a set of design questions that writers might use to develop a servant leadership curriculum.

Section One, A Leadership Disconnect, contains an explanation of how current leadership activities in the world can be directly correlated with social and economic conditions in global and local settings. In so far as our education systems operate in support of prevailing leadership understandings, the section also describes how the education that young people receive can also be directly correlated to global and local social and economic conditions. Grace Lee Boggs (2010), a Detroit elder voice of social conscience, reminds us that our schools today are producing a new generation of bureaucrats in the same mold as those “created a hundred years ago in the industrial epoch to prepare children to become cogs in the economic machine” (77). Foucault suggests that our assumptions about leadership are built on archeological foundations that systemically perpetuate the current state of cultural dysfunction in which we now find ourselves (Taylor, 2011).

In designing a curriculum addressing topics and issues discussed in Section One, A Leadership Disconnect, the following questions are suggested as a start to the process:

- What emerging global issues/conditions should students know and understand? local issues/conditions?
- How are current leadership paradigms and practices contributing to these global issues? local issues?

- What in the school's current leadership curriculum should be retained, eliminated, or changed? What pedagogy in leadership (e.g. shadowing, coaching, field trips, leadership profiles, facilitated discussions)?

More background information is contained on pages 6-15.

Section Two, *The Leadership We Have*, presents a description of how prevailing constructs of leadership in our culture are learned and conducted as an (often unconscious) archetypal transactional paradigm of conflict and competition. The section further describes how this competitive, transactional leadership model is culturally woven through our understandings of business and organizations, including our educational institutions. In this transactional paradigm, object-based goals of a defined constituency serve as the underlying values used by leaders in guiding decisions or in the formation of shared consensus.

Burns (1978) describes how even the recently evolved Transformational leadership theories, while more complex, are still based in a fundamentally transactional structure. He describes how the transforming leader in the midst of trying to engage or satisfy our "higher needs" first "recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower" (4). Colquitt's (2011) college textbook, *Organizational Behavior*, provides an example of how this transactional paradigm is carried through in education, defining leadership as "the use of power and influence to direct the activities of followers toward goal achievement" (451). Fassel (in Spears, 1998) provides a description of how the object-based leadership focus on goal achievement also creates conditions where people form a culture of workaholics and are entrenched in the "mechanistic euphemisms of 'right-sizing' and 'reengineering' – modern metaphors for sacrificing people in order to squeeze the last cent out of production" (in Spears, 1998, 216-217).

Fassel (in Spears, 1998) discusses how a style of workaholism, for many, seems a logical and appropriate adaptation for self-survival and participation in today's organizations. She describes how people's willingness to objectify their own self worth to an ethic of increased productivity, even at the risk of personal health and well-being, in turn allows them to objectify and minimize the self-worth of others in the attainment of ever-increasing productivity

Graham's (in Spears, 1998) suggests our culture has reached a point of *moral development* where the archetypal moral referents of transactional and transformational leadership styles no longer serve the emergent values of our culture. Graham asserts servant leadership, in contrast to old archetypes of leadership, better reflects the inclusive moral referents associated with our increased and shared global awareness of equity and justice principles.

In designing a curriculum addressing topics and issues discussed in Section Two, The Leadership We Have, the following questions are suggested as a start to the process:

- What leadership values do young people learn from their current experience's in their schools, classrooms and extra-curricular activities?
- How do current educational constructs encourage workaholism in the name of increased productivity?
  - What ethical values about leadership do young people learn from these norms or constructs that encourage workaholism?
- What formal structures and activities, in schools and universities, reinforce the way students come to view leadership and how its meaning operates in society?
  - How do students experience Transactional leadership in schools?
  - How do students experience Transformational leadership in schools?

- Emerson asserts a distinction in education between learning how to parrot established norms and scholarly intellect (Man thinking).
  - How can we develop curricula that assists students in identifying the difference between established norms and leadership.
- How might young people's experience of leadership be re-framed using principles of equity and justice in contrast to authoritative power and competition?

More background information is contained on pages 15-23.

Building on the previous section, Section Three, Re-Thinking the Leadership Lessons Young People Receive, contains a description of how prevailing leadership lessons, messages, and practices in our schools and universities are based in an underlying paradigm of market forces, transactional authority, competition, and object-based measures of success and failure. Servant leadership is introduced as a viable replacement for transactional archetypes no longer representative of modern organizational and educational values of equity and justice.

Boggs (2011) explains how the current educational system is “stuck in processes and practices” of a disappearing industrial era” (149). Kofman and Senge (2001) suggest that our insistence on holding on to old conventional myths of “great leaders” absolves our learning institutions from developing new moral leadership capacities. Peach (2010) describes how today's students, in our era of expanded global communications and networking, already have a keen awareness of the complex issues associated with their own higher education. Even vocational education in this era is required to go beyond preparing students to fit into existing business processes so often typified by ever-shortening cyclical obsolescence. Education must also include “making students informed and critical practitioners... to effect change and to think critically about whether they are doing the right things” (457).

Kofman and Senge (2011) propose learning organizations led by servant leaders are the best models for creating and maintaining sustainable enterprises that represent the shared values of all stakeholders. Their vision of servant leadership distributed throughout organizations, models a new collective leadership myth of shared values, in contrast to an old individualistic hero-leader myth reliant on the transactional moral referents of authoritative exchange agreements.

In designing a curriculum addressing topics and issues discussed in Section Three, Re-Thinking the Leadership Lessons Young People Receive, the following questions are suggested for further discussion:

- What are some examples of, as Boggs describes, “processes and practices of a disappearing industrial era” still being used in our schools and universities?
- How does a focus on measures of economic success contribute to our current concepts of leadership? and the way (i.e. pedagogy) young people learn about leadership?
- What are some current educational practices that “fix or remediate” students in order that they fit into the prevailing leadership paradigm in business?
- What new practices could provide students the required skills to re-create the world they want from shared values of justice and equity?

More background information is contained on pages 23-29.

Section Four, Tenets of Servant Leadership Literacy, presents an overview of some characteristics and themes in servant leadership theory as they have developed since Robert F. Greenleaf’s 1970 groundbreaking essay, *The Servant as Leader*. Greenleaf’s *servant-first* theory is presented as a deeply felt personal experience where a leader comes to reflect the interest of

followers above all other considerations. Greenleaf describes an empathetic and patient style of *listening* as perhaps the foremost skill of a servant leader.

The qualitative work and collaborations of Larry Spears (1998) are described. Spears 10 servant leadership characteristics of listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are reviewed.

The development and further refinement of servant leadership theory in schools and universities around the world is discussed. Samples of associated research and quantitative studies are provided and contrasted with the previous qualitative work of Greenleaf and Spears. Examples of very recent research instruments are briefly examined including Laub's OLA (2012) originally designed as "Servant Organization Leadership Assessment" (Laub, 1999), Pekarti and Sendjaya's (2010) SLBS six behavioral dimensions, and Mittal and Dorfman's (2012) eight best indicators used in their Servant Leadership Across Cultures instrument.

The fourth section provides a discussion of current research and establishes that servant leadership is a dynamic and globally accepted field of study. Servant leadership is seen to display some cultural variations but shares multiple common themes that point to a more distributed vision of leadership service to others and the a primary focus on the well-being of people in organizations and communities, in contrast to profit and productivity.

In designing a curriculum addressing topics and issues discussed in Section Four, Tenets of Servant Leadership Literacy, the following questions are suggested for the process:

- Greenleaf describes "true listening" as the singular key quality of a servant leader.
  - How are students currently taught about "listening"?
  - How might students be taught this empathetic and patient style of listening?



- How might this understanding of listening, framed as a leadership skill, be incorporated into curricula and the daily activity of students?
- If current curricula are seen to be structured in the context of productivity, how might they be re-framed in a context of student well-being?
- Much of the current research involves surveys of servant leadership attributes in modern businesses and organizations. How might students go about researching their own experience of servant leadership as young people?
  - How would they begin their research? Where might they find age appropriate literature? What pit-falls or traps would an educator need to help them with or avoid?

More background information is contained on pages 29-40.

The Fifth section, Interdisciplinary Insights for Servant Leadership, presents examples of how educators from arenas of traditional literature, music, and philosophy are incorporating servant leadership theory into their established disciplines. This section also provides existing points of departure for servant leadership curriculum development. Questions for this section are clustered as a way of unpacking the robust content of each discipline.

Staff (2009), a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater examines servant leadership themes through the lens of characters in three Steinbeck novels. He finds in Steinbeck's literary characters the opportunity to examine servant leadership exemplars of ethical values including honesty, integrity, fairness, justice and sympathy.

Yong Han (2009) describes in "Servant leadership in the People's Republic of China" how Daoism in particular provides multiple illustrations of servant leadership themes in the

historical literature of Lao Zi, i.e. vision, embracing insight and wisdom; serving the community, humility, leading by example, and empowering people.

Ramona Wis (2002) identifies and describes five servant leadership characteristics of vision, responsiveness, trust, persuasion, and character in her approach to educating and conducting groups of music students. Wis discusses how a leadership style emphasizing *listening* to the wants and needs of her ensemble and *visioning* together, in an attitude of service to one another establishes a uniquely supportive and creative environment.

Whetstone (2002) contrasts servant leadership with the philosophical construct of Personalism. He posits servant leadership as the best fit leadership modality in reflecting the five Personalism themes of centrality of the person, subjectivity and autonomy, human dignity, the person within community, and participation and solidarity.

Kae Reynolds (2011) discusses how the feminist ethic of care and servant leadership contain unifying themes through which a gender neutral and inclusive ethical structure find unity (158). Reynolds suggests that together they offer an inclusive ethical structure affording modern leaders the tools and context to stand in a gender-neutral tension and provide the kind of inclusive and thoughtful guidance required by modern followers.

The fifth section concludes with Marshall's (2006) discussion of how it is exactly this kind of re-framing of leadership understandings that is needed from educators. Young minds are in need of new, complex, integrating patterns and connections around an emergent servant leadership ideal that they may develop the new leadership skills required for the just and equitable future they envision.

In designing a curriculum addressing topics and issues discussed in Section Five, *Interdisciplinary Insights for Servant Leadership*, the following questions are suggested as a start to the process:

- Shane Staff's (2009) provides an in-depth examination of literary characters in John Steinbeck novels from a servant leadership ethical perspective. Yong Han describes how the tenets of servant leadership align with Daoist culture and philosophy
  - What are some examples of classical literature being used to teach students about traditional and transactional leadership?
    - What in the curriculum should be retained, eliminated or changed?
  - What are some examples of classical literature that contain Staffs leadership examples of honesty, integrity, fairness, justice and sympathy?
  - Where are there curriculum opportunities for re-examining specific cultural histories in light of servant leadership tenets?
- Ramona Wis teaches music and conducts musical ensembles using servant leadership methods that stress supportive listening and visioning in service to the larger group.
  - Describe how traditional education settings and activities could be re-framed in the context of a servant leader approach.
  - How might athletics, student government, or club organizations, where student work together using a leadership framework, be envisioned as servant leadership led organizations?
- Whetstone and Reynolds examine substantive links between servant leadership and Personalism and Feminist ethical frameworks, respectively. Both conclude servant leadership is the best-fit leadership approach for demonstrating these ethical approaches,

in contrast to traditional transactional or transformational approaches.

- If rational argument is the key attribute of philosophical discipline, how is leadership being rationally presented to students?
- How are students receiving, or not receiving a rational understanding of leadership?
- Where, in current curricula, might philosophies like Personalism and Feminist ethics be added or included in support of an emerging servant leadership paradigm.
- How might philosophy pedagogies include a servant leadership focus?
- Marshall describes how young minds need a true sense of self-efficacy and meaning while also integrating new and disparate patterns and connections.
  - What servant leadership attributes support a student's formation of self-efficacy, integration, and connection?
  - How can we assure servant leadership lessons become integral to all aspects of the complex learning environment?

More background information is contained on pages 40-49.

The preparations for creating a servant leadership curriculum for young adults require integrity in how we talk about the principles of servant leadership, teach servant leadership within and among courses, facilitate extra-curricular activities, and assess student's growth as servant leaders. Educators in high schools and colleges can create a servant leadership curriculum effectively if they model the tenets of servant leadership during their professional development, curriculum writing workshops, retreats, peer coaching, and within their other professional roles related to servant leadership.

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