Leading From the Center or Leading from the Side?

*Distinctions in Collaborative Leadership*

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Disclaimer

I have no conflicts of interest to declare.
Objectives

• Assess qualities of leadership in terms of how they facilitate collaborative leadership
• Apply a framework of collaborative leadership to educational initiatives and experiences
Defining some terms

• Collaboration
  1. *To work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor*
  2. *To cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one’s country and especially an occupying force*
  3. *To cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected*

• Team structures
• Collaborative leadership

www.miriam-webster.com/dictionary/collaborate
Ideas about team structures

• We structure our teams by intention
  – That may be merely based on familiarity
• Not all team structures perform the same
  – Some structures fit a given situation better than others
Advantages of Hierarchy

• Efficient transfer of information
• Especially useful to organize groups (not teams) in the forming stage
“Hierarchy is useful for passing on information, giving directions, establishing chains of command, developing armies, developing work-forces, organizing data, programming computer software, and mass-producing goods. Yet it lacks a holistic understanding of networked systems and biological interdependence and connectivity.”

Challenges of Hierarchy

- Compliance driven
- Not representative of closed-loop communication
- Fluidity of leadership threatens the structure
Characteristics of other structures

• Homoarchy
  – Rigid structure, much like hierarchy, but without top-down characteristics
  – Fragile. Compliance driven.

• Self-organizing or autopoietic structures
  – Organic in nature, each element “finds its own way” based on other elements
Heterarchy as a model

• Leadership is flexible and responsive
• Leadership model is fluid (i.e. short-term hierarchies may emerge.)
  – The model itself is fluid
• Dynamic communication flow
• Corrects mismatched strategies/strengths
Predisposition to fluid organization

“When individuals are assigned roles that are inconsistent with their capabilities (the “incongruent” condition), however, members do spontaneously collaborate on their performance strategies.” “In incongruent teams, all the requisite expertise is present for these groups, but members have to figure out how to bring it to bear on the task.”

“... a collaboration’s structure and communication processes are the leadership media that are as instrumental in leading to a collaboration’s outcomes as is the behavior of the participants associated with it.”

Collaborative Activity

• Break into small groups to work together
• Introduce yourselves
• Find the two “Column Header” tabs
• Split the remaining tabs into two columns based on the correct heading
  – (Hint: the columns are ideally the same length)
Collaborative Leadership Practices

#1: Focus on the process

“The purpose of collaborative leadership is to help the collaborative process work, rather than to lead the people involved toward something—to a particular decision, for instance, or in a particular direction.”

Collaborative Leadership Practices

#2: Codifying values
– Commitment, enthusiasm and drive
– Effectiveness and satisfaction

“Shared values are the internal compasses that enable people to act both independently and interdependently.”

Collaborative Leadership Practices

#3: Change navigation

“In an environment of change, people fear losing their identity, their intellectual mastery and their individualism. “

How we teach

• Assumption: it is teachable, not entirely inherent

• Didactic teaching isn’t suited for IPE
  – “…traditional didactic lecture styles are not suited to interprofessional education as they limit opportunities for interaction.”

Caution about teaching “interprofessionalism”

Dr. Catherine Gierman-Riblon recently completed her research that is suggesting that “teaching interprofessionalism” may be misdirected. We may need to teach straightforwardly the skills of communication, collaboration, team work, etc.
Tools in the toolbox

• Learning to acquire communication
  – What is most important is not what is said, but rather what is understood.

“If we want the system to have the best chance of “understanding” the user, it is better to conceive of design the other way around; begin with the user’s words, and find system interpretations.”

Tools in the Toolbox

• Re-thinking power flow and interdependency

“...in order to be competent, team members must understand how to share power according to the requirements of specific clinical situations.”

Tools in the Toolbox

• Fluid models demand increased accountability

• Success measurements (Lorelei Lingard)
  – We may need to move to a model of accountability that focuses on team rather than individual assessment of success.
In the end...

• We know that there are alternatives to leadership models and team structures
• We know that some leaders help create the environment of collaboration, while some practices tend to block it
  – Some models demand better practice, as well
• We know that what we teach and how we teach our future health care providers will affect patient outcomes
We can change those outcomes

• By *how we form* our teams
• By *what we expect* of all of the leaders on our teams
• By *what we teach* our students about leading and leadership
• By *challenging false assumptions* of the past about where power should rest, and how power should flow
References

Thank you

• Your time spent here today
• The ideas you brought and shared
• Your willingness to engage
• Your commitment to asking the tough questions, seeking the complex answers, and changing
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