

# **A BETTER APPROACH TO COLLEGE TEACHING?**

Jack N. Kondrasuk, University of Portland  
Elena (Kiryanova) Bernard, University of Portland

## ***Abstract***

*Servant Leadership has become a popular tool for leaders in recent years though it has been dated back as far as 2000 years ago. Leaders employing Servant Leadership serve their followers/employees in an effort to increase both employee productivity and satisfaction. It has proved successful in numerous businesses and other organizations. The question is, then, does Servant Leadership have a place in the education system? The extension of Servant Leadership to teaching in higher education, “Servant Teaching” as it is being called, is a promising technique for focusing on helping students learn via a professor who serves them to better meet their educational needs.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Events of recent years have proven that prior styles of societal leadership are to a great extent ineffective, especially in the business and political sectors of society. Events such as the warming of the planet, wars in the Middle East and Africa, terrorist attacks, and CEOs judged guilty of defrauding stockholders and lying to society, have forced organizations to pay more attention to who their stakeholders really are and how to treat them. There is a greater emphasis now on organizations, whether public or private, large or small, to be more accountable to stakeholders beyond the typical profits emphasis of shareholders. This new outlook has produced new approaches to leading organizations. For instance, “Servant Leadership” (SL), a leadership approach, which may be about 2000 years old, is now being resurrected as an approach to deal with more than just maximizing profits for the organization. Many innovative and emerging businesses have turned to this ethics-based style of leadership to produce success in their individual markets, with their human resource departments as primary advocates of SL in the workplace. With these developments the following

question arises: what if we applied this apparently successful new leadership approach to teaching? The purpose of this article is to examine the tenets of SL and apply them to teaching in a college or university. This application of SL in the classroom setting will be referred to as “Servant Teaching” (ST) and its implications will be the primary focus of this article.

## **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Servant leadership is simultaneously ancient and cutting edge. The basic concept of SL as the leader serving his/her followers has been discussed as far back as approximately 600 B.C. when the Chinese sage Lao Tzu wrote about the basic SL concepts in *The Tao Te Ching*. In 4th century B.C., an Indian sage by the name of Chanakya wrote about SL in his book *Arthashastra*. However, the present resurrection of the SL theory seems to be attributed mainly to the teachings of Jesus Christ (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, n.d.). In the modern age the term “Servant Leadership” was coined by a vice president of a large corporation, Robert Greenleaf, in his book *Servant as a Leader* in 1970. Greenleaf initiated this idea of SL for organizations on the basis of Herman Hesse’s book *Journey to the East*, in which the servant becomes the leader to people on a spiritual journey (Sendjaya, Santos, & Santora, 2008). Recent textbooks discussing leadership theories are also starting to discuss SL (Kinicki & Fugate, 2012; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Servant leadership is a practical, altruistic philosophy that supports people who choose to serve first and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. Servant leaders may or may not hold formal leadership positions. SL encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, n.d.).

In business, SL has been conceptualized as an orientation to management that eschews traditional hierarchical and autocratic relationships and exhorts those who would be leaders to consider the well-being, flourishing, and empowerment of those in their charge (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, n.d.). Greenleaf’s discussion of SL contends that:

“The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature ... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the

servantfirst to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served." (**Greenleaf** Center for Servant Leadership, n.d.).

Other authors are embellishing Greenleaf's view of SL to relate it to other models of leadership, such as transformational, authentic, and spiritual leadership. Sendaja et al. (2008) have stated that a "holistic model of servant leadership incorporates follower-oriented, service, spiritual, and moral dimensions of leadership" (p. 405). The overarching theme found within these definitions is: SL is about wanting to serve first with leading being an aftereffect. This theme is supported by the ten tenets or qualities, which relate servants and effective leaders.

According to Spears (2004), the ten tenets of SL are:

1. **Listening** (Valuing communication and decision-making skills with a commitment of intently listening to others),
2. **Healing** (Searching to be "complete" and "whole"),
3. **Empathy** (Striving to understand and empathize with others, recognizing one's unique and special personality),
4. **Awareness** (General and self-awareness to help understand issues involving ethics and values),
5. **Persuasion** (Convincing others rather than ordering others, effective at building consensus within groups),
6. **Conceptualization** (Looking at a problem and thinking beyond just the basic facts),
7. **Foresight** (Understanding the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the consequences of future decisions),
8. **Stewardship** (Recognizing that humans play a significant role in holding the community together with trust for the good of society),
9. **Community** (Recognizing much has been lost from the movement of small communities to big institutions, leading to the identification of the means of building a community within an institution), and
10. **Commitment to the Growth of People** (Dedication to the development of every person within the institution).

## **Applications of SL in Business**

Back in 2006 there were 35,000 English-language books offering advice on how to manage a business (Klimoski, 2007); there would presumably be even more today. SL is a small but emerging sub-group within all these management books. What would happen if corporations fully followed SL? Would leaders really serve those “under” them?

Spears (2004) states that in contrast to the time of the Industrial Revolution (when managers viewed people as tools and machines), today workers are viewed as part of the team which makes the decisions. SL in the workplace inspires ethical, caring behavior working to improve and enhance the personal growth of workers putting employees, customers and the community as top priority. Working to serve the community, everyone is equal in the concept of SL, so nobody is “under” another. In reference to the concept of stewardship in SL, everyone contributes and has an equal part in the institution.

Supposedly, the more skills a person has developed, the more valuable she is to the organization and the more she could/should serve others. The more skills she amasses, the more she gets paid and the lower she moves in the inverted hierarchy. Leaders, such as vice presidents (although there may not be any such titles in a true SL organization), could become more like trainers than bosses. For major decisions, such as whether to open a new store in another state, the president’s job may be to provide as much information to others as possible so that the front-line employees could decide whether to make the move. If the managers better serve the front-line employees, the front-line employees better serve the customers. Kaifi (2011) states that servant leaders in businesses pay attention to employees and show that they care about what the employees are doing, how they are feeling, and what they like/dislike. Glen Bounds (1998) feels that SL pays off for the organization. He states that servant leaders listen to, respond to and support employees. They remove barriers and obstacles, which would prevent employees from growing as individuals and performing well in the workplace.

Studies have been conducted on SL in business. In a representative study by Sendjaya et al. (2008), the researchers looked at senior executives in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations who were thought to have qualities of servant leaders. In turn, they were each asked to name fifteen employees under them who were also thought to have qualities of servant leaders, and then those chosen under them were asked to do the same. As each servant leader was chosen, they defined qualities or traits of a servant leader. The researchers found that their

original 6 themes (voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence) and 22 sub-dimensions of SL were heavily reinforced and showed positive results.

Servant leadership has been successfully used in business; many corporations are now focusing their corporate philosophy around the idea of SL (Spears, 2004). Various companies have been applying SL to business management. Some companies successful with SL include: **Medtronic** (Elsprenter, 2006), **Starbucks** (Gergen, 2006), **Herman Miller** (Gergen, 2006), **The Regence Group** where the CEO talked about reducing profitability for shareholders in return for increasing the benefits to other stakeholders like consumers (Ganz, 2007), **The Men's Warehouse** (Thibodeau, 2005), **The Vanguard Investment Group** (Phillips, 2004), **AT&T**, **Southwest Airlines**, and the pioneer of applying SL—**TD Industries** (Bounds, 1998; Gergen, 2006). Bounds (1998) describes Jack Lowe—CEO of TD Industries, which has been recognized as one of the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For in America—as one of the pioneers in practicing SL in business. Lowe states that acting for the right reasons—the desire to help others—pays great dividends. A study of 191 financial services teams in the U.S. and Hong Kong showed that SL explained an additional 10% of team performance over the effect of transformational leadership (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011). These are employers that have been very successful in their sectors. With SL being implemented by various businesses and endorsed by various executives, can SL principles translate to institutions of higher learning, specifically collegiate campuses?

### **Applications of SL in Not-for-Profit Organizations**

Miller, Brown, and Hopson (2011) used a case study approach to compare SL to transformational leadership in two community organizations. The SL style was judged as more effective. In what was stated to be the first empirical research to directly compare SL to transformational leadership, Schneider and George (2011) compared the two styles at eight clubs of a national voluntary service organization. They found that SL was a better predictor of voluntary club members' commitment, intentions to stay, and satisfaction than was transformational leadership. They recommended that leaders in such organizations adopt a SL style.

### **Applications of SL in Higher Education**

A number of higher-education institutions have employed servant leadership/servant teaching in various ways. Viterbo University offers a Master of Arts degree in SL (Viterbo, n.d.). The *SL* concept was applied to Manitoba's educational community with each of the educational stakeholders being identified and then applying SL concepts in each circumstance (Crippen, 2005). Many such SL programs dovetail into expanded emphases on community service and younger generations seeking to work in the non-profit sector. Southern Methodist University's Cox School of Business recently instituted a SL program with the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, which treats children with orthopedic conditions and learning disorders free of charge. The Southern Methodist students also assist and learn from other non-profit employers like Habitat for Humanity and United Way of America (Knight, 2006). Gonzaga University and the Larry Spears Center for Servant-Leadership jointly publish the *International Journal of Servant Leadership*.

The Christian Brothers University in Memphis adopted a conceptual framework in 2001 for the Educational Leadership Program where the leader is a servant. Values and beliefs related to SL state that an educational servant-leader: 1)

Prepares for the challenges of a career both inwardly and outwardly and develops a spirit of responsible service toward the school, teachers, students, the community, and the public. 2) Must be a servant first, a leader second. 3) Values the human dignity of all people and ensures that their needs for education and development in a safe and caring school environment are met. 4) Values and enhances the dignity of all in the school community. 5) Influences the school with wisdom and care to become a just and compassionate community. 6) Develops a learning community and works with colleagues to develop shared leadership. 7) Seeks and implements best practices in leadership, management, and technology in an ethical manner. 8) Advocates for the role of education in achieving justice in human society, better schools, better student learning, and more morally responsible actions by all educators (Christian Brothers University, n.d.).

### **Extension of SL to Servant Teaching (ST)**

We have seen that SL has been applied in business and has been successful in at least some situations. Could we apply SL to teaching courses in colleges and universities? It would seem a natural progression as education literature today states teachers are considered change agents where teaching is a continuous form of leadership within the classroom and beyond (Dury, 2005). Research suggests that professors who develop leadership behaviors such as active listening, continuous encouragement, and support, and actively engage students in

collaborative learning will better meet the learning expectations of present students (Dury, 2005). The movement of SL specifically into the classroom introduces a new phenomenon that we refer to as **Servant Teaching (ST)**.

## **SERVANT TEACHING**

The concept of ST is derived from SL. Servant teaching is committed to creating a student-centered learning environment where students are active co-creators of knowledge rather than passive consumers of information. Servant teaching is more of a mind-set than an actual practice: “Servant teachership is not a formula or a program, it is a human activity that comes from the heart and considers the hearts of others” (Chonko, 2007, p.114).

Servant teachers share certain qualities that make them stand out from their peers. They embrace the ten tenets of SL: listening, healing, empathy, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, community, and commitment to the growth of people. Specifically, servant teachers actively listen to their students in an effort to understand their needs and challenges. They seek to develop a deeper understanding of students’ concerns in order to help them develop a coping strategy. (**Listening**).

Servant teachers are principles-centered and balanced. They do not depend on traditional exchange relationship between leader and follower; instead they operate out of deeply held personal values systems that are not negotiable. According to Ramero (2011), benevolence, integrity, and competency are important characteristics of servant teachers. (**Healing**).

Servant teachers understand that every student has unique talents and abilities that should be nurtured through individualized attention and encouragement. As a result, they take personal interest in every student trying to understand the student’s individual learning style and help him or her develop an effective learning strategy (**Empathy**).

Servant teachers are acutely aware of their personal impact on all stakeholders in their environment. They understand that everything they do and say has positive or negative consequences on someone or something. Therefore, they carefully consider their actions and words and encourage the same awareness in their students. (**Awareness**).

Servant teachers explain their course policies and procedures to help students understand why it is important to uphold the rules. This persuasive approach is in stark contrast to the traditional classroom management tactic of levying penalties on those who fail to obey. (**Persuasion**).

Servant teachers adhere to more of a systems approach when thinking about problems. They recognize that everything in the world is interconnected and therefore, problems should be examined in relation to their causes and consequences. Furthermore, servant teachers pay close attention to the questions rather than the answers they encounter. They offer their peers new ways of looking at old problems to find solutions. (**Conceptualization**).

Servant teachers are reflective. They use past experiences as feedback to steer the direction of their personal and professional growth. In addition, they teach their students that there is no such thing as failure; instead, every experience, whether positive or negative, is an opportunity to learn and grow. (**Foresight**).

Servant teachers recognize their personal responsibility in creating a healthy and prosperous society. They give freely: to their students, their peers, their superiors, and their community at large. (**Stewardship**).

Servant teachers appreciate the value of small communities and spend time building relationships with students, peers, staff, administration, and their local community. They also believe that all students, regardless of their abilities, thrive in an open and non-threatening environment. Hence, they focus their efforts on building a safe and nurturing environment in their classroom. (**Community**).

In addition, servant teachers view teaching holistically and devote themselves to personal and professional growth of their students. They seek to understand their students' goals and ambitions and offer advice and resources to help them succeed (**Commitment to the growth of people**).

Most importantly, servant teachers encourage their students to become servant leaders in their communities. According to Robert K. Greenleaf, the "Father of Servant Leadership," "[Servant] teachers... will be inspired to raise the societybuilding consciousness of the young. And teachers may be anybody who can reach young people who have potential to be servants and prepare them to be servant leaders. Teachers may be members of school faculties, presidents of colleges and universities, those working with young people in churches, etc...

They catch the vision [of servant teaching] and do what they know how to do ...” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 55).

## **Applying Servant Teaching to Teaching in General**

Servant teaching is a distinct teaching philosophy that has a transforming impact on teaching methodology, from course design to classroom dynamic to assessment of learning. Essentially, ST requires a shift in focus from the teacher to the students. This is evident in the approach used to establish learning objectives, in the preferred teaching methods, in the relational dynamic between the teacher and the students, in the choice of assessment tools, and in the increased emphasis on stewardship.

**Learning Objectives.** Servant teachers use a participatory approach to defining the course learning objectives. Working together, the teacher and the students identify students’ needs and goals based on what the students should know and what they would like to know. In addition they establish a baseline by assessing the students’ current level of knowledge on the subject matter. By engaging students in defining the course learning objectives, the teacher does not only demonstrate trust and respect but also establishes an environment of accountability thus strengthening the students’ commitment to the jointly produced learning objectives. The participatory style of goal setting has a strong theoretical foundation and has been empirically shown to produce positive effects on goal acceptance and performance quality in employment settings (Erez & Arad, 1986).

**Teaching Method.** Student-teacher collaboration, however, does not stop with learning objectives. The servant teacher works with the students to create the curriculum and engages them in developing their own pathway to achieve the learning goals. Servant teaching philosophy is best served by andragogy – a teaching method for student-centered education. Andragogical principles include 1) creating a climate and structure for collaborative learning, 2) helping students to: a) identify and deal with obstacles to peer learning, b) experience abstractions through personal involvement, c) learn how to operationalize (i.e., apply) abstractions, and d) generalize knowledge and think critically, 3) responding to diverse learning styles by balancing lecture, discussion, role play, and visual methods, and 4) role modeling professional competence (Gitterman, 2004). In sum, unlike the traditional subject-centered view of teachers as purveyors of knowledge and students as passive receivers of knowledge who are dependent on the teacher for “making all the decisions about what should be learned, how and when it should be learned, and whether it has been learned” (Knowles 1985, p.

8), student-centered ST seeks to empower students to become active contributors to knowledge creation.

**Relational Dynamics.** Humility as a servant could dictate removing all titles. The professor would be “Bill” or “Mary” rather than “Dr. X” or “Professor X.” There is more individual attention and tutoring. Office hours become particularly important in building teacher – student relationships. As Onwuegbuzie et al. (2007) state, in public elementary and high schools, classroom teachers are more accessible on-site for most, if not all, of the school day. In contrast, college instructors are expected to engage actively in research and service activities that must be undertaken outside their teaching time and sometimes location. As such, the amount of time that instructors are available for students (i.e. office hours) varies from department to department, college to college, and university to university. In addition, the requirements imposed by administrators for faculty's office hours vary. Some institutions require no specific number of office hours for professors, whereas others expect a minimum number (e.g. 6) of office hours per week. If the majority of undergraduate and graduate students are actively employed while enrolled in college, many more students would find it difficult to schedule appointments with their professors during posted office hours. Servant teachers, however, do not need a prescribed set of office hours. They are flexible and willing to accommodate their students' demanding schedules. They make every effort to be accessible to students whether in person or via technology (e.g., phone, email, live teleconference through Skype).

**Assessment Tools.** Assessment is an important component of learning. Students need feedback on their progress, teachers want to know about the effectiveness of their teaching methods, administrators need to have tangible evidence of the quality of the education in their institutions, and parents want to know that their tuition checks are producing results. Yet, as the administrators attending the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities admitted, the traditional grading system is not working (Jaschik, 2009). Most common concerns include grade inflation and apparent inconsistencies in professors' grades.

Consistent with the student-centered view of ST, servant teachers are likely to use non-traditional assessment tools such as narrative evaluations and rubrics. Students are likely to participate in a two-way evaluation process that involves a self-evaluation followed by the teacher's assessment of the student's progress. Hence, most assignments would include a self-evaluation component that

requires students to reflect on what they learned and how the assignment helped them (or didn't help). To maintain objectivity, outside evaluators may be involved in developing and implementing assessment measures (Robinson, 2009; Stanzione, 2009). The goal is to use assessment as a motivational tool to focus students on achieving their individual learning goals rather than on outperforming their peers.

These are not entirely revolutionary ideas. A growing number of colleges and universities, from Stanford Law School to smaller non-traditional liberal arts institutions like Fairhaven College are beginning to implement alternative assessment tools.

***Emphasis on Stewardship.*** One of the core principles of ST is stewardship. Servant teachers have a strong sense of purpose, which they also try to instill in their students. They teach students the values of social justice and environmental responsibility. They integrate service learning in their classes through assignments and projects that connect students with their community and give them an opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills, and talents in service to others. Service is a very important part of ST because it develops servant leaders who understand social and environmental issues and who are willing to devote themselves to bringing a positive change to their communities.

### **An Example: Applying ST to Teaching Human Resource Management**

Methods of teaching have vastly changed over the decades. Specifically, teaching Human Resource Management (HRM)/Industrial Relations (IR) in schools has gone through major changes. As Kingsley Kanu states, "The field of human resources is undergoing considerable structural change. A field that had traditionally viewed its role as transactional, mediating between management and the talent it employs, was transforming into the role of a business-consulting partner, working to achieve the organization's objectives" (Kanu, 2008, p. 104). In addition the Society for Human Resource Management is exerting more influence on topics studied in HRM courses (Ednres, 2008).

However, the topic areas covered in HRM are not the only things changing; the process of teaching the topic itself is going through changes. By using ST for Human Resources classes, professors would employ new methods that were discussed earlier to engage and bond with students. Since there is some disagreement regarding what topics should be covered in HRM, teachers are giving the option for students to choose what they study. To teach HRM in a ST manner, professors would ask their students on the first day of class what topic areas they would like covered. Accordingly, the professor then focuses on those topics. It all depends on what the students want to learn. It is important to remember that just like HRM focuses on the employees first, servant teachers need to focus on the students first. Students are more likely to gain knowledge and enjoy their learning experience if they receive information concerning topic areas they are actually interested in.

### **Implications of Applying Servant Teaching**

One main implication of ST is that a positive and trusting relationship is built. These positive relationships benefit everyone involved: students, teachers, administrators, and the community. It starts with the positive relationship formed between the teacher and the student, which instills a positive attitude within the student. The students will go on to help their community and those around them. With all these positive relationships formed, everyone is working toward a common goal. This

goal could be to help others, give back to community, raise money, or provide other opportunities in the area of service (Greenleaf, 1979). Therefore, if ST is implemented and directed toward a common goal, everyone involved will work together to accomplish the tasks.

There are seven main relationships in servant teaching that bare analysis. These include student/teacher relationship, administration/teacher relationship, teacher/teacher relationship, student/parent/family relationship, student/student relationship, student/community relationship, and teacher/community relationship. These relationships are discussed next.

***Student/Teacher Relationships.*** The relationship between students and their teachers should be more of a partnership than a dictatorship. It changes the relationship from one of a teacher who is the direct authority or wielder of power in the classroom to one who serves the students and society. It gives the student a voice and puts the student's welfare over his or her own, serving the interest of learning (Hays, 2008). The teacher should understand how each student learns and include assignment options that will allow the student to learn the information in a way that works best for the student. The students in turn should be vocal with their teachers. If they have questions or problems, they should not feel intimidated by the teacher. Benefits of this dynamic include: "greater engagement, increased autonomy and self-direction, deepened appreciation for change, and developing skills, attitudes, and understandings that transcend the classroom" (Hays, 2008, p.114).

***Administration/Teacher Relationships.*** The relationship between the administration and the teacher in servant teaching is similar to that of a captain of a sports team. The administration serves as a leader who offers direction, support, and advice. Unlike current relationships between these two entities, servant teaching practices a more communicative style. Administrators do not reprimand or keep a watchful eye on teachers. They give them space and allow them to do things in their own style, only offering advice if there is a major problem. As research suggests, such relationship has a positive effect on the overall school climate (Black, 2010) and the teachers' commitment to their school (Cerit, 2010).

***Teacher/Teacher Relationships.*** The relationships between teachers in servant teaching are very close. Teachers see fellow teachers as part of a team working towards building and improving the institution (their common goal). Teachers place a great deal of trust in each other. They cooperate rather than compete. They help each other and offer advice.

***Student/ Parent / Family Relationships.*** Students' families should assist the student's learning by being supportive and available for questions and assistance. They should provide a workspace for the student that is conducive to her learning style.

***Student/Student Relationships.*** The relationship between students is much stronger when servant teaching is practiced. Rather than competing with each other for grades or praise, students will work together to gain more understanding of their topic. The relationship is more collaborative than competitive. This type of relationship allows students to concentrate more on learning and less on the rewards associated with high grades. They understand the uniqueness of themselves and the differences between their motivations, goals, and ways of learning.

**Student/Community Relationships.** In servant teaching, the students are taught to live for others and give back to their community. Teachers encourage their students to participate in service projects.

**Teacher/Community Relationships.** The teachers lead by example, showing that giving service back to the community is important. In their community, they are still seen as teachers by both their students and the community per se.

These relationships that are formed by utilizing servant teaching are vastly different than the relationships formed through standard teaching methods. In many school settings, the main goal is self-progression. That is, students try to excel in classes to receive high grades thus achieving scholarships and other rewards; teachers work solely towards their tenure and advancement in rank; and the community is often used or ignored. Through servant teaching, these relationships are positively affected. When everyone is working towards a common goal, no one feels left behind. Everyone in the servant teaching relationship can feel accomplished. The bottom line is that society's goal will have shifted from self-progression to community progression.

### **Why would Professors NOT Want to Use ST?**

Despite the benefits of ST, there are extensive questions and concerns about this new approach to teaching. People might view ST as too liberal and taxpayers may argue that they aren't seeing where their money is going. If students are creating their own curriculum, goals, and standards, is there a way to ensure their commitment and the fact that they are being challenged? Administrators prefer to have more structure in teaching in order to make it easier to identify the areas for improvement or to note what is successful. Can students truly know what they need rather than have the experts/professors decide? Can professors use the ST approach if the administrators above them do not? Will students be more or less ambitious (e. g. come to class at all) if they are empowered to decide their own needs? How can teachers and students be trained in ST and how much will it cost? How will we evaluate students for grades? Why change from the present approach(es)? What can ST add? These are all important questions and concerns that require further research.

### **Why Would Professors Want to Use ST?**

With the implementation of ST, the entire school system as well as other organizational structures would be deeply transformed. By adopting ST and redirecting our approaches to knowledge transfer, our organizations would work more for others and less for individualistic benefits. Where does serving each individual's needs fit? Servant teaching is essentially the application of SL in the classroom. Servant teaching is used so that the students involved in that sort of relationship are learning as best as they can and all that they can; they are then able to come into the world and attempt to make it better. The students learn and understand the importance of helping and serving others.

One of the main benefits of ST is the instillation of hope into both the teacher and students. There are four different kinds of hope that come from this relationship: hope for liberty, hope for equality, hope for efficiency, and hope for community. Hope for liberty encompasses minimal government, individual independence, laws that protect political and economic liberty, merit-based decision

making, innovation, entrepreneurial excitement, and rugged individualism (Walker, 2008). Hope for equality is then realized both inside and outside the servant teacher-student relationship. The sense of equality gained from ST applies to many different systems: schools, government, healthcare, and even in the business world. People who strive for equality not only try to compensate for a lack of it, but go above and beyond to eliminate the natural inequalities in their lives. Hope for efficiency is an important benefit, especially in the school system. When efficiencies are maximized, the greatest outcomes are possible. This means that wastage of time, talents, and resources are eliminated. The effect on communities is one of the largest benefits of the servant teacher-student relationship.

Community-oriented people believe in the shared good life and are not inclined to see individuals benefit to the detriment of the common good (Walker, 2008).

The community in which the servant teacher and student reside will benefit from their shared unique relationship. The teacher's passion and drive to serve leads to accomplishment of both community goals and to a more fulfilled and whole life (Greenleaf, 1979). From gathered information, we can conclude that ST would be beneficial to not only the students but to the teachers themselves. When teachers are able to give themselves to helping and assisting a student in need of guidance and mentorship, ST calls on these teachers to be better teachers and to put more effort into the care and education of their students. Locander and Luechauer (2006) state that "servant-leadership embraces the paradox that the best way to get power is to give it away" (p. 45). To apply this to servant teaching, the best way for a teacher to gain knowledge and power as a teacher is to give it away to the students who are hungry for knowledge.

It seems, then, that ST is necessary for the proper development of our students. Witcher states, "As educational leaders we must ask ourselves whether we are trying to create a better system or whether we are operating within the one we have out of resignation, fatigue or expedience. Do we expect people to follow us because we are "in charge" or because we are worthy of their 'followership,' because what we are doing is right. Administrators need to understand that it is possible to move beyond the traditional, established, and often ineffective 'business as usual' practices of our institutions, especially in relation to the area of student discipline" (Witcher, 2003, p. 30).

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Considering that ST is in its infancy, there are more questions than answers. One of the pressing areas of research deals with classroom testing of SL tenets that form the foundation of ST. For example, does active listening affect student attitudes toward learning and the actual performance? Does it increase student engagement? Furthermore, there is a need for the development and testing of course methodologies and assessment tools that are explicitly tied to ST.

The concept of ST assumes that students want to be responsible for developing personal knowledge and skills. Yet, there is a question of maturity: Does the age of the students matter in their willingness and ability to take more responsibility for their own learning? Servant teaching also assumes that students are not competitive; yet competition has been engrained in our children from a very early age. Parents are constantly comparing and testing their kids hoping to place them in better childcare, kindergarten, schools, and universities. It will be interesting to see the effects of our culture on the

students' attitude toward ST and their ability to perform in a non-competitive environment that is characteristic of ST.

Finally, we need measures to operationalize the concept of ST and the SL tenets in the context of teaching. Methods are important not only from the standpoint of advancing the theory of ST but also from the assessment of learning perspective. Being able to assess students' performance and relate it back to ST would provide tangible evidence of its effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Servant Leadership theory, a leadership approach where leaders serve those under them, is gaining advocates even in the for-profit sector. By conceptually turning the typical organization hierarchy upside down, SL drastically alters the power structure and the behaviors of the organization's leaders. There are obstacles to applying SL to organizational leadership but there are significant signs of promise also. If we assume that SL is a viable leadership approach and should be employed and taught to future leaders, can we transition to the assumption that it could actually be employed and modeled in teaching? Servant teaching could be a revolutionary approach to teaching college courses such as HRM and being employed in administering universities. Revolutionary... but a giant step forward! Are we ready, willing, bold enough, and paradoxically, humble enough to employ it?

## ENDNOTE

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