

Roberts, D. C. (2007) *Deeper learning in leadership: Helping college students find the potential within*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reviewed by Patrick Grayshaw

Introduction

Deeper Learning in Leadership is more than a second edition of Dennis C. Robert's book in 1981, *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education*. This book is a reconceptualization of how student affairs professionals can work to develop leadership programs that move towards "deeper learning." The focus of the book as articulated by Roberts and demonstrated through the eight chapters, is to understand how to help students. This is done through the two major themes woven into the book: fostering leadership learning and advocating for principled student affairs practice. Roberts does this through a focused narrative, bridging both the theory and practice of leadership development. Through highlighting of relevant leadership theories and a proposed way to integrate those theories into practice, this book is a good resource for understanding how leadership educators can implement, redevelop, or renew their programs.

Theoretical Frame

Roberts work, rather than being grounded in a theoretical framework or understanding, utilizes many different frameworks to guide his thoughts. Some of these theoretical frameworks includes: Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), Transforming Leadership (Burns, 2003), Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2004), Postindustrial Leadership (Rost, 1993), Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996), and Relational Leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). Roberts was a member of the ensemble that developed the Social Change Model. Roberts supports these founded leadership philosophies and frameworks with the concepts of: Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), Connective Leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 1996), Confidence (Moss-Kanter, 2004), Soul Leadership (Hagberg, 2003), Leadership Identity Development (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005), Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, 1994), the Presence Model (Senge, Scharmer, Joaworski, & Flowers, 2004), and Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). At the conclusion of *Deeper Learning in Leadership*, Roberts highlights six leadership models that he finds exceptionally useful.

Elements

Deeper Learning in Leadership is written by Roberts in narrative format. Roberts outlines the book in the beginning, allowing readers to skip chapters as needed. Although many of the chapters build on one another, it is possible for readers to skip to select sections if they have an understanding of the previous mentioned concepts. Through the book, Roberts highlights the history of leadership, current models that are frequently used, some other models that help facilitate the engaged learning that he highlights as part of Esther Lloyd-Jones' (1954) work of *Student Personnel Work as Deeper Teaching*.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Potential of Deeper Learning

Roberts utilizes this chapter to present a historical overview of leadership education. He writes about how these philosophies and frameworks have evolved over time. Further he maps out the history of higher education over this leadership overview, making connections to the development of student affairs as a profession, highlighting and reflecting strongly into Esther Lloyd-Jones' work. Roberts also begins to make the connection between deeper learning and leadership education and how that can be conceptualized.

Chapter 2: Context of Leadership Learning

Following the introduction to leadership, Roberts dives into the concept of leadership education and the development of that specific field of education. From highlighting the study of leadership to the current models and practices used, Roberts puts into context the reason for these models being utilized and continued in practice. He concludes his chapter by looking at the ways in which learning can happen through leadership, emphasizing the natures of collaborations and how those collaborations often occur on campuses.

Chapter 3: Leadership Theory in Use

This chapter highlights the various leadership philosophies and frameworks that are often utilized in student activities and academic courses. This chapter is a crucial aid for understanding the basic principles of these theories that are brought up as examples in future chapters. Additionally, Roberts specifically addresses the basic premise of the theory, core beliefs, and implications for use that are relevant to leadership programs today. These overviews allow the reader to pick and choose what leadership theory would work best in their situations and given context and values.

Chapter 4: Preparing Leadership for the Future

Chapter four highlights how leadership education needs to help students be prepared for the changing world. Utilizing the Making the Match idea and research, Roberts highlights that often leadership programs do not work to develop the skills and capacities that are needed when in the workplace. This chapter provides a brief overview of ideas such as emotional intelligence

and leadership identity development model that supplement leadership programs directly or indirectly. Through these overviews, Roberts highlights examples of how educators can help students learn in more meaningful ways to better prepare them for the future.

Chapter 5: Accessing Purpose and Voice for Deeper Leadership

This chapter focuses on new ways of viewing leadership that connects with the principles of leadership education that has been used previously and is currently used today. Explaining ideas such as presence, flow, and oscillation, Roberts connects complex theories in simple ways. Roberts also analyzes the ideas behind negative leadership and the values that are associated with notorious individuals such as Adolf Hitler. Roberts analyzes how definitions of leadership can provide perspectives of “bad leadership” or “absence of leadership” in these situations. Roberts emphasizes the value of understanding one’s self in this chapter, highlighting ways that students can best learn from their leadership experiences.

Chapter 6: Leadership Program Design and Continuous Improvement

Continuing on the ideas of presence, flow, and oscillation from chapter 5, Roberts highlights various ways that leadership programs can implement new programs or redevelop what they currently offer to students. Highlighting various resources that can be utilized to develop both comprehensive co-curricular and curricular leadership programs, Roberts takes into account campus climate, organizations, and student attitudes that affect the implementation of these programs. This chapter provides suggestions and tips to best design of leadership programs, and emphasis on the assessment needs of these programs including ways to improve and develop these assessment techniques and utilize large national surveys and tools.

Chapter 7: Innovations to Deepen Leadership

Roberts continues highlights how programs can continue to improve their practice and reinvent themselves. Utilizing the presence, flow, and oscillation frameworks, Roberts continues the discussion of how to work with students in a variety of settings. Much like chapter six, suggestions of how to develop a comprehensive program are discussed, but expanded to include how to redevelop current programs. Further, the ideas of presence, flow, and oscillation are much more complexly dissected to fully understand their implications to effective practice.

Chapter 8: Challenges and Opportunities in Deeper Learning

To conclude this book, Chapter Eight takes a realistic approach to leadership education and works to integrate the previous chapters. Being realistic in this chapter means taking into account aspects of the environment such as campus culture, student’s culture, and adapting to ongoing change. Roberts completes the chapter by highlighting six leadership models that he utilizes heavily and would suggest as useful when working with student leadership development.

Best Target Audience

The target audience of this book is leadership educators, specifically in higher education or student affairs fields. A strong emphasis is placed on current student leadership philosophies and ways to further students' learning from an outside perspective. This would not be a text book to be used by students or student leaders. Further, this book analyzes programs and program development rather than individual leadership development. By providing brief overviews of leadership theories and other supplemental theories, Roberts is able to identify ways student affairs professionals can advance leadership education

Using this Book

This book is not geared for classroom use of students or student leaders, instead its best use is among student affairs practitioners and others in higher education that are implementing student leadership programs. The practicality of this book is perfect for a wide variety of practitioners, from those who run complex leadership development programs to those who may integrate leadership into a portion of their offerings. With explanations for basic leadership philosophies and theories, it is not necessary for individuals to be leadership experts before reading this book.

Additionally, this book provides a certain level of self-reflective work and usage for an individuals' leadership development. Because it works to address how to work with individual students in their own leadership development, this book promotes self-reflection when read. Further, when applying this to working with students, it is helpful for understanding where students may come from. While not meant to be a self-directed leadership guide, it allows the reader to be thinking about his or her own experiences.

The types of leadership experiences that it is best applied to are those leadership programs that have the flexibility and dynamics to change, incorporate new theories, and are not single theory driven. Throughout the entire text, Roberts highlights many various theories that blend to attain deeper learning. Leadership programs that are not flexible will have difficulty applying the knowledge that Roberts shares about best promoting learning in leadership.

Critique

Roberts' *Deeper Learning in Leadership* does an outstanding job highlighting a new way of thinking about leadership programs. Through this book, the reader begins to think differently about how leadership programs are designed, and the values that are latent in those programs. Further, Roberts spends numerous chapters highlighting various leadership models that are common in leadership development programs and outlines the basic premise of those programs.

Through these explanations, Robert's clearly highlights new ways of viewing both classic and contemporary forms of leadership development programs.

While Roberts' explanations of theories are clear and concise, the book becomes very dense at certain points while trying to interweave the ideas of presence, flow, and oscillation over common leadership development programs in a new context. With these additional ideas probably not as familiar to most leadership educators, it can become difficult to keep up with the influx of ideas and comprehend how these can be woven together.

Furthermore, Roberts highlights how these theoretical models, institutional types, and individual students are not stand-alone variables, and make the development of leadership programs complex. However, because of this complexity, the reading is very dense and difficult to manage as Roberts explores various topics. Especially in later chapters, Roberts begins to get more in depth and the reading becomes denser.

Deeper Learning in Leadership is a thought-provoking book that propels the thought of leadership development forward with the changing nature of students' experiences. Taking into account many variables, Roberts highlights new ways to examine leadership development using grounded and widely accepted theories. With his definition of leadership: Conviction in Action, Roberts has re-conceptualized readers' views of leadership.

References

- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. New York, NY: Paulist Press.
- Higher Education Research Institute. (1996). *Guidebook for a social change model of leadership development*. Los Angeles, CA: Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California.
- Komives, S. R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. R. (2007). *Exploring leadership: For college students who want to make a difference* (2nd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2004). *The leadership challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in organizations* (4th ed). San Francisco, CA: JosseyBass.
- Rost, J. (1991). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. New York, NY: Praeger.

Reviewer

Patrick Grayshaw is a master's graduate of the College Student Personnel program at the University of Maryland – College Park. He currently works with volunteer programs at Missouri State University.

Grayshaw, P. (2011). Adding deeper learning to leadership. [Review of the book *Deeper learning in leadership: Helping college students find the potential within*, D. C. Roberts]. National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs. Retrieved from <http://www.nclp.umd.edu>