The Innovation Challenge: Transformational Leadership in Technological University Libraries

Charles Townley
New Mexico State University
Successful Library Leaders Use 3 Methods to Address Change

• Revise values
  – From valuing artifacts to valuing content
  – From passive to active services

• Develop organizations that respond proactively to change

• Provide transformational leadership
Goals of This Paper on Transformational Leadership

• Describe the 5 practices of transformational leadership
• Tell stories about how library leaders use these 5 practices to achieve needed change
• Argue that by mastering transformational practices library leaders can: (1) change values and (2) develop more responsive library organizations
Leadership – Mobilizing People to Get Things Done

• Reciprocal process that:
  – Is voluntary and reciprocal (leaders and followers)
  – Can be shared or change with situation

• Involves motivating people – a subtle interplay among;
  – Personal and organizational values
  – Personal and organizational goals
  – Individual and group working preferences

• Includes explicit and tacit factors
• Requires resource management
• Takes place in an organizational context
Four Leadership Styles

- **Structural** – creating structures that support goals (most common in libraries)
- **Human Relations** – supporting and empowering staff to achieve goals
- **Political** – using power to build coalitions and negotiate relationships that will achieve goals
- **Transformational** – mobilizing people to achieve goals
5 Practices of Transformational Leadership

- Modeling the way
- Inspiring a shared vision
- Challenging the process
- Enabling others to act
- Encouraging the heart
Modeling the Way

• Earning the right and respect to lead through individual involvement and action
  – Develop clear guiding values
  – Articulate your guiding values
  – People follow first the leader, then the plan
Jerry Campbell - USC

• Develops a new guiding principle – bring together information resources in a new set of relationships: an information commons

• Uses dialog to gain staff and environmental support

• Encourages staff to develop and articulate the new principle
How to Model the Way

• Engage in personal values clarification
  – Determine your personal values and working preferences
  – Relate them to the environment

• Affirm your values through action
  – Spend your time doing things related to your values
  – Create opportunities to discuss values
Inspiring a Shared Vision

- Providing a sense of meaning and purpose by developing an exciting vision
  - Based on personal values
  - Within an organizational context
- Vision provides a focus for human energy in the organization
- Inspiring a vision is an iterative process that must be repeated constantly
Carla Stoffle – University of Arizona

- Library vision is based on personal commitment to meet user needs – she imagines exciting and ennobling opportunities
- Communicates her vision clearly and frequently – in house and nationally
- Enlists others through intensive and multi-layered interactions with followers – she involves everyone
How to Enlist Others

• Identify and publicly recognize the ties that bind the library together
• Motivate staff to change, modify and adopt a common vision
• Listen deeply to understand the relationships in the organization
• Communicate the vision
Challenging the Process

• Taking the initiative by supporting good ideas
• Encouraging change
• Taking risks
• Learning from failures
Jim Duderstadt – University of Michigan

• As President - challenged information services throughout University

• Sought new ideas to create meaningful change in scholarship – e.g. Information Commons

• Seized the initiative by creating challenges for others – e.g. Dan Atkins and School of Information

• After being President was Director of the Millennium Project – applying new technologies
How to challenge the process - I

• Search for opportunities
  – Look for ways for staff to grow and get extraordinary things done
  – Treat your job as an adventure
  – Accept suggestions and criticism
  – Show how followers contribute to achieving shared goals
How to Challenge the Process - II

• Experiment
  – Create incremental steps and small victories
    • Makes impossible challenges possible
    • Guided autonomy emerges
  – Learn from mistakes
    • More to learn from mistakes than from success
  – Promote psychological hardiness
    • Manage stress at productive levels
Enabling Others to Act

• Making it possible for others to do good work through teamwork, organization development and trust
• Encouraging people to work together in learning communities
• Empowering individuals to collaborate and succeed
University of Maryland Team

- Lowry and Baughman use Senge’s learning community model to develop cross-functional teams
- Use team dynamics to develop more consistent library services
- Foster confidence and accountability on each team
- Reward teams for performance
How to Enable Others

• Encourage collaboration
  – use and reward teams
  – Encouraging shared or revolving leadership
  – Trust others – listen and act on what you hear

• Strengthen others
  – Give away your power to get power
  – Empowered staff control make good choices
  – Compel action and demand accountability
Encourage the Heart

• Supporting individuals and teams to achieve shared values and goals
• Acknowledge contributions of others
• Celebrate the victories
Bonnie Juergens - AMIGOS

- Leads a multi-type library cooperative with more than 200 members
- Develops a strong spirit of community – helps disparate organizations understand their common vision
- Celebrates individual and common victories – ceremonies and recognitions
How to Encourage the Heart

• Recognize contributions
  – Assure everyone’s contributions are noticed
  – Expect the best – use positive images
  – Catch people doing the right thing right
  – Personalize recognition

• Celebrate values and victories
  – Maintain team spirit
  – Renew sense of community
  – Tell inspirational stories with a human face
  – Cheer others on
Transformational Leadership: The IATUL Role

• IATUL has a role in developing transformational leaders in technological libraries
• Sharing experiences – a bulletin board?
• Collaborative training – workshops? Organization development services or referrals?
Thank You!