

Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/program/leadership-institute-academic-librarians>

July 31-August 5, 2016

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I was privileged to attend the 2016 Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians (LIAL) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education July 31-August 5 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Started in 1999 at the suggestion of Maureen Sullivan, then president of the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), this Institute is geared for those who want to learn more about leadership in general and, more specifically, their own aptitude and skills for leading at any level of an organization.

Most of the learning occurred during large group sessions, where, using the Discussion Teaching Method (1), Joe Zolner, Joan Gallos, James Honan, Chris Dede, Maureen Sullivan, and Lisa Lahey skillfully managed our group of approximately 85, never truly lecturing, always encouraging discussion and guiding us to our “learning edge” – the place where we experience so much cognitive dissonance that we have no choice but to learn. As an educator, watching the Institute faculty manage adult learners in a large group setting was a treat that often seemed like a master class in teaching.

At least once a day, we met in a small group, selected to represent librarians with varying levels of leadership experience from a wide variety of institutions, library types, and locations. Operating within the overall LIAL cone of silence (“what happens at LIAL, stays at LIAL”), our group shared personal and sensitive experiences, prompted by the discussions in the large group sessions. We quickly developed a sense of trust and I looked forward to our daily meetings.

Why I wanted to attend

I have always believed in the power of leading in place or leading from the middle. You don’t have to be in a high level ‘official’ leadership role to provide leadership. Throughout my career I have worked to identify areas where I can influence the library’s direction and partnerships with the greater campus community. Seeking areas where the library can build new partnerships, all while maintaining our high level of service is a challenge. To do so, we often need to look at ‘sacred cows’, questioning what we are doing that no longer truly holds value for the library and our stakeholders. The Harvard LIAL offered me the time and community to explore these ideas, in a setting where my own ‘sacred cows’ could be challenged.

In my 30-something years as a librarian, I have learned a lot, by trial and error, sometimes even intentionally, about leadership. Some of that knowledge has been more in the what-not-to-do arena, much has been by openly observing excellent leaders in action and trying to emulate

their successes. The Leadership Institute offered the opportunity to explore leadership issues and theories in a more deliberate and focused manner.

The best things I learned

So much of the learning is still sinking in, even several weeks later. I find myself reflecting on three learning highlights.

1. In our small group, we discussed that the constant change we all are experiencing really isn't happening any more or less often than ever. Our reaction to change is what is, well, for lack of a better word, changing! What we really need is to embrace tools and techniques for helping ourselves and others adjust to and, even, welcome change.
2. We spent a lot of time learning about and discussion the four frames (Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic), a conceptual framework developed by Lee Bolman and Joan Gallos in 1984 and detailed for the academic setting in their book, *Reframing Academic Leadership* (2). We learned about our primary frame view and how to look at situations from the perspective of the other frames. This technique is helpful in trying to gain perspective. The best leaders try to develop the ability to slow down and view an opportunity or problem from all four frames using frame mapping – sorting through the complexities of an organizational situation by identifying what issues fit into which frame.
3. Many of the discussions involve the step of slowing down and/or gaining a broader perspective on a problem, difficult relationship, or opportunity to create change or propose a new path. Taking the time to stop and observe, trying to really see all aspects of a situation can provide the necessary focus needed to plan a more successfully approach. When approaching an important proposal or problem, I should be asking several questions: What am I missing? Who are the people who should be involved? How am I stuck? How will this affect the library and the larger organization?

How I will use the info I gained

In addition to writing this report, I'm sharing my experience with my library and individual colleagues through a staff development session and individual coaching sessions. I created a reading list of all the books and other publications mentioned by the faculty during the week, included at the end. I've started reading some of those texts, the first was Edgar Schein's book on *Humble Inquiry*, a harder than it seems premise of asking questions about what you don't know, rather than always telling what you (and often your listener) already know.

Finally, I plan to work hard to embrace the naysayers, those who are eager to tell you why an idea won't work. As difficult as it may be to hear how my brilliant idea won't work, these honest discussions can help me polish and improve the project proposal.

The Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians was a transformative experience. I encourage anyone interested in building their leadership skills to attend.

References:

1. Christensen, C. Roland. "Every Student Teaches And Every Teacher Learns: The Reciprocal Gift of Discussion Teaching." In Christensen, C. R., Garvin, D. A., & Sweet, A. (1991). *Education for judgement: The artistry of discussion leadership*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.
2. Bolman, L. G., & Gallos, J. V. (2011). *Reframing academic leadership* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Books and other readings used or referenced during the 2016 Harvard LIAL:

1. Reframing Academic Leadership. Lee Bolman and Joan Gallos. 2011. ISBN 9780787988067.
2. Power: Why some people have it and others don't. Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 2010. ISBN-10: 0061789089
3. The Power of a Positive No: How to say no and still get to yes. William Ury. 2007. ISBN-10: 0553804987
4. Sood, Amit and issuing body Mayo Clinic. *The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-free Living*. First Da Capo Press edition. 2013. ISBN-13: 978-0738217123
5. The creative habit: Learn it and use it for life. Twyla Tharp. 2003. ISBN-10: 0743235266
6. Grit: The power of passion and perseverance. Angela Duckworth. 2016. ISBN-10: 1501111108
7. Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling. Edgar H. Schein. 2013. ISBN-10: 1609949811
8. Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior. 2d ed. Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler. 2013. ISBN-10: 0071829318
9. Leading Change. John P. Kotter. 2013. ISBN-10: 1422186431
10. The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations. John P. Kotter. 2012. ISBN-10: 1422187330
11. Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization. [Robert Kegan](#) and [Lisa Laskow Lahey](#). ISBN 9781422117361
12. An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization. [Robert Kegan](#) and [Lisa Laskow Lahey](#) /ISBN 9781625278623
13. Strategy Bites Back: It Is Far More, and Less, than You Ever Imagined. Henry Mintzberg, Bruce Ahlstrand, Joseph Lampel. 2005. ISBN-10: 0131857770
14. Our Iceberg Is Melting. John Kotter, Holger Rathgeber. 2006. ISBN-10: 031236198X
15. That's Not How We Do It Here!: A Story about How Organizations Rise and Fall--and Can Rise Again. John Kotter, Holger Rathgeber. 2016. ISBN-10: 0399563946.
16. Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder. David Weinberger. 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0805088113
17. Leading Change. John P. Kotter. 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1422186435
18. Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World. John P. Kotter. 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1625271747.

19. Engagement: Transforming Difficult Relationships at Work. Lee G. Bolman and Joan V. Gallos/ ISBN 9781119150831
20. Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion. Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee. 2005. ISBN 9781591395638
21. Feedforward. Marshall Goldsmith. 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1939418005
22. Reimagining the Academic Library. David W. Lewis. 2016 ISBN-13: 978-1-4422-3857-2
23. Crucibles of Leadership: How to Learn from Experience to Become a Great Leader. Robert J. Thomas. 2008. ISBN-13: 978-1591391371
24. The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World. Heifetz , et al/ ISBN 9781422105764
25. Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. 1st Back Bay pbk. ed. Boston: Back Bay Books, 2002. Print.
26. Rosabeth Moss Kanter –
 - a. <https://www.amazon.com/Rosabeth-Moss-Kanter/e/B000APOA8S>
 - b. Kanter’s Law: Everything looks like a failure in the middle. Everyone loves inspiring beginnings and happy endings; it is just the middles that involve hard work. From <https://hbr.org/2009/08/change-is-hardest-in-the-middl>
 - c. http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/r/rosabeth_moss_kanter.html