TEACHING AND LEARNING SERVANT-LEADERSHIP IN THE OUTDOORS
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In the field of outdoor education a great deal of emphasis has been placed on evaluating instructional processes as they are used to develop leadership competencies (Berman & Berman, 2009; Buell, 1981; Gabriel, 2015; Green, 1981; Holladay & Sklar, 2012; Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, & Breunig, 2006; Priest, 1984, 1986; Raiola & Sugerman, 1999). A limited body of outdoor leadership research has evaluated particular leadership frameworks, such as situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981; Gabriel, 2015), to determine if leadership practices align with a particular leadership model in question. To advance professional knowledge of outdoor leadership theory and practice, the outdoor education field needs additional research documenting the application and effectiveness of available leadership models. This research introduces principles of servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 2002) as a basis for an outdoor leadership training curriculum. Specifically, this project sought to explicate student experiences of training in servant-leadership and their ability to apply a servant-leadership model in an outdoor leadership context. As this model has been primarily used to examine leadership in a business realm, its application has not been documented within an outdoor education setting. This study

examines the effectiveness of a servant-leadership model as applied to outdoor leadership training (Paris & Peachey, 2013; Russell & Stone, 2002).

Best practices in outdoor leadership education is a growing body of literature, though it has been slow to take off. Sugerman (1999) documented that there was no clear consensus on outdoor leadership training in higher education settings. According to Berman and Berman (2009), "…The field of outdoor education lacks an empirically-based method for organizing curriculum" (p. 3). Most studies on curricular development were conducted in the 1980s and were focused on professional competencies (Buell, 1981; Green, 1981; Priest, 1984, 1986; Swiderski, 1981). Since that time, additional competencies and outcomes have been addressed (Berman & Berman, 2009; Gabriel, 2015; Holladay & Sklar, 2012; Martin et al., 2006; Raiola & Sugerman, 1999).

OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

The earliest research on competencies in outdoor leadership sought to define the most accepted traits as either included by training, or identified by the profession (Buell, 1981; Green, 1981; Priest, 1984, 1986; Raiola, 1986; Swiderski, 1981). The most comprehensive of these early studies was that of Priest in 1987 whose meta-analysis of previous work led to the definition of twelve core competencies. These competencies included: technical skills, safety skills, environmental skills, organizational skills, instructional skills, facilitation skills, flexible leadership style, communication, professional ethics, decision making, problem solving, and sound judgement. Research continued to attempt to establish a universally accepted list of competencies, however the broad scope in which outdoor leadership competencies may be defined presents a difficult dilemma for research seeking to define the most valuable traits. In

fact, more recent research has often done the opposite. For example, Shooter, Sibthorp, and Paisley (2009), determined that no universal set of competencies could be established due to the variance in the leadership needed in unique environments. Despite this finding, Shooter et al. (2009) and other various researchers have begun to examine the abilities of outdoor leaders not as individual competencies, but as a broad range of skill categories where an assessment of those competencies can begin. Initial research identified three main skill areas including technical skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills (Priest, 1987; Priest & Gass, 2018; Shooter et al., 2009; Swiderski, 1987).

The term technical skills is typically utilized to describe abilities possessed by an individual that aid in physical achievement, performance, or knowledge of a particular activity (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007; Fullerton, 1998; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Shooter et al., 2009; Swiderski, 1987). This differs from the definition of interpersonal skills, which seeks to guide interaction between individuals, enhance communication, leading to improved job and group performance (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007; Fullerton, 1998; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Shooter et al., 2009; Swiderski, 1987). Conceptual skills encompass the ability of a leader to use judgement and creativity, in such a way that he or she is able to construct the most appropriate outcome for a given situation (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007; Fullerton, 1998; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Shooter et al., 2009; Swiderski, 1987).

Conceptual frameworks surrounding skill sets for outdoor leadership development have continued to evolve. Priest and Gass (2018) organized competencies into a tiered skill framework, which includes foundational knowledge (e.g., history, philosophy, and understanding of trends) on which hard skills (e.g., technical activity skills, safety skills, and environmental skills) were built. Once hard

skills are established, competency development should then move to soft skills such as facilitation, organization, and instructional skills. Finally, the entire skill system is supported through the development of metaskills including ethics, problem solving, and communication (Priest & Gass, 2018). Other authors such as Martin, Breunig, Wagstaff, and Goldenberg (2017) returned to a competency based approach to frame the development of the outdoor leader, however the identified competencies are broader than Priest's (1987) earlier identified ones and are closer in definition to the expansive skill categories defined by Priest and Gass (2018). This model focuses on eight core competencies in outdoor leadership including foundational knowledge, self-awareness and professional conduct, decision making and judgement, teaching and facilitation, environmental stewardship, program management, safety and risk management, and technical ability (Martin et al., 2017). This more contemporary competency model takes into account more recent research on the growing need for an outdoor leader to have a broader understanding of more difficult topics such as moral character, moral courage, ethical behavior, cultural diversity and social justice (Hobbs & Ewert, 2008; Jongmin, 2013; Lange, 2011; Smith & Penney, 2010). As with the Priest and Gass (2018) model that depicts individual skills as built upon one another and interconnected, the Martin et al. (2017) model identifies their competencies not as individual requirements of a leader, but as all interrelated practices of the multifaceted concept of outdoor leadership.

While identifying and defining outdoor leadership competencies and skill models is necessary to develop successful outdoor leaders, training models vary widely across the field.

A servant-leadership model has yet to be introduced within the outdoor leadership literature and evaluated for its effectiveness in

developing outdoor leaders. Servant-leadership competencies might offer a unifying conceptual framework for soft-skills development in those seeking experience in the outdoor education profession.

OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The outdoor leadership development process can vary significantly in its delivery methods, though there are certain aspects common to methods producing successful outcomes (Cain & McAvoy, 1990; Priest & Gass, 2018; Propst & Koesler, 1998). Effective methods have included leadership mentoring, goal setting, technical skill training, reflection, feedback, and assessment (Priest & Gass, 2018; Saxman & Stuessy, 2012). Specific components of a given program are based on the needs of the students, difficulty of the skill being taught, and the desired outcomes of the program.

Of these established methods, reflection, an assessment approach core to the developmental process, has been abundantly examined in recent research (Martin et al., 2017; Pelchat & Karp, 2012b; Saxman & Stuessey, 2012). Reflection as a key element in outdoor leadership development yields a number of important results. First, the use of reflection allows the leader the opportunity to more deeply develop tracks of thought related to the given topic, which can be used to connect that topic to other situations (Pelchat & Karp, 2012b). For instance, a leader may spend time in written reflection on the impact of her choices in a group development scenario creating a deeper understanding of the impact of those choices. Then when an interpersonal situation arises later, she may spend additional time considering the impact of her approach due to her reflection on the previous, though potentially unrelated, group experience. The ability to engage in and apply reflection is an important tool for an outdoor leader to be able to grow through one's experiences. Without active training in the reflection process, an outdoor leader may struggle

with the ability to reflect on her own leadership situations. By actively using simple reflection techniques such as the *What? So what? Now What?* method in leadership development, allows such techniques to become integrated into an outdoor leader's skill set (Martin et al., 2017). This simple process encourages reflection on the activity itself (*what*), the impact of the activity (*so what*), and how it can be applied in the future (*now what*).

While these methods provide insights into the structures available in outdoor leadership development, as Pelchat and Karp (2012a) suggested, little research has been conducted on how competencies are integrated into curricular, instructional, and assessment design, as well as application. Specifically, the literature lacks research on best practices to foster leadership competencies through curricula. Research connecting servant-leadership to outdoor leadership training is virtually non-existent.

OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

The competencies necessary for successful outdoor leadership vary, but many commonalities can be found within documented lists identified through research (Priest, 1987; Priest & Green, 1981; Shooter et. al., 2009; Swiderski, 1987). There are, however, very few commonalities between curricula designed to teach such competencies (Pelchat & Karp, 2012a). For instance, one might presume there would be a number of similarities across outdoor leadership training programs as graduates earn degrees that prepare them for similar careers; however, research found this assumption to be untrue. Sugerman (1999) assessed 14 four-year academic programs and found programs that varied from 46 to 86 credits, with outdoor courses accounting for 22.2% to 86.8% of coursework. Even topics such as leadership, interpersonal development, technical skills, and administration varied widely from school to school, leaving no

consensus for what an outdoor leadership degree should look like (Sugerman, 1999).

Similar results were found when examining the leadership curriculum of individual college courses. Through the work of Mitchell (1998), courses were examined to determine if the individual curricular components were contained and common across courses. To do so, Mitchell sought to determine if particular leadership styles were taught, and if so how. Most courses focused on technical/hard skill development, as well as the process and procedures necessary for running an outdoor experience, but often left out conceptual or judgement based skills (Mitchell, 1998).

While some research has sought, and failed, to establish strong commonalities across curricula, other research has examined individual curricula to determine if they have established desired competency outcomes. One such study, conducted by Raiola (1986, 1996) sought to make this determination by examining the feedback from evaluation forms of a course designed with particular competencies in mind. These competencies were established from a list of 30 objectives, which were reviewed by a panel of 12 individuals consisting of outdoor professionals and students enrolled in the outdoor recreation program. Raiola (1996) determined, after a longitudinal study lasting ten years, that the course's leadership competencies were successfully integrated into the curriculum and that the outcomes were in-line with the desired learning from the curriculum. Pelchat and Karp (2012b) argued that such a study, though only conducted on a single course, provided the first effort in determining the effectiveness of an outdoor leadership curriculum. For the scope of this study the researchers examined a curriculum based on a servant-leadership model and its base competencies.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

The current study explores how students responded to leadership competency training during an outdoor leadership course. The curriculum utilized a servant-leadership conceptual framework (Greenleaf, 2002; Page & Wong, 2000). Specifically, this curricular framework aligns with many of the conceptual outdoor skills detailed by previous researchers, though it does not focus on the individual development of these skills. Rather the curriculum includes skill sets as broad foundational principles similar to models developed in more recent outdoor leadership textbooks (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007; Fullerton, 1998; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Martin et al., 2017; Priest & Gass, 2018; Shooter et al, 2009; Swiderski, 1987). In fact, servant-leadership has been identified in some models as a core component of various competencies including ethical approaches to leadership and the transformational leadership model (Martin et al., 2017). Servant-leadership was chosen because it values qualities such as empathy, listening, stewardship, commitment to growth of others, and community building, all of which are attributes suited to an outdoor leadership curriculum.

Servant-leadership principles, as conceptualized by Greenleaf (2002), may be particularly appropriate to include in a curriculum used to train future leaders of outdoor education experiences. Greenleaf's development of servant-leadership concepts began with his reflection on the book *Journey to the East,* by Herman Hesse. In this story, a group of men was supported on a long journey by the main character, Leo, who performed chores for the group and whose spirit and song sustained them throughout their journey. At one point Leo left and the group became disarrayed with the journey and abandoned it. After a number of years, a member of the original group found Leo and realized he was the head of the order who had

sponsored the original journey. Leo, the servant who had held the group together, was actually a great leader (Greenleaf, 2002). Lessons drawn from this story inspired Greenleaf to simply define a servant-leader as servant first (Greenleaf, 2002) and provide a portrayal of what a leader in the outdoors, who often leads those on a journey, may ascribe to become.

Servant-leadership examines leadership from a very different perspective than many mainstream leadership theories. In this structure, leadership that one puts forth places others above oneself. This approach is intended to be holistic in nature, applying to all aspects of a leader's actions in order to create a sense of community among the organization, and to allow a sharing of power between the members for decision making (Spears, 2005). This approach to leadership focuses on the complex relationships between the leader and those being led, while lessening the importance of specific skills or competencies (Reinke, 2004). The use of this framework as the basis for an outdoor leadership curriculum is supported by the fact that recent research indicates the importance of well-rounded training, based on much broader categories or competencies than specific technical or hard skills (Martin et al., 2017; Priest & Gass, 2018). The development of interpersonal relationships through servant-leadership allows the leader to not only reach established goals within a group, but to create a sense of community among its members. Community building has been well established as a core component of effective group development (Gabriel, 2015; Sibthorp, Paisley, & Gookin, 2007; Tuckman, 1965; Weber & Karman, 1991) and outdoor leadership (Lehmann, 1991; Mitten, 1995, 1999). This relationship establishes servant-leadership as an applicable model for investigation in outdoor leadership training.

A challenge with using servant-leadership as a training framework is that no specific model was developed by Greenleaf to

define the servant-leader. In fact, he writes that it will be challenging to apply and measure (Greenleaf, 2002). Since no initial model had been developed, researchers have attempted to quantify Greenleaf's work into a measureable framework. The framework utilized to develop the curriculum of the course in this study was that of Page and Wong (2000) and can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. *Page and Wong's (2000) Conceptual Framework for Measuring Servant-leadership*

I. Character – Orientation (Being – What kind of person is the leader?)
Concerned with cultivating a servant's attitude, focusing on the leader's values, credibility, and motive. (Integrity, Humility, Servanthood)
II. People – Orientation (Relating – How does the leader relate to others?)
Concerned with developing human resources, focusing on the leader's relationship with people and his/her commitment to develop others. (Caring for others, Empowering others, developing others)
III. Task – Orientation (Doing – What does the leader do?)
Concerned with achieving productivity and success, focusing on the leader's tasks and skills necessary for success. (Visioning, Goal setting, Leading)
IV. Process – Orientation (Organizing – How does the leader impact organizational processes?)
Concerned with increasing efficiency of the organization, focusing on the leader's ability to model and develop a flexible, efficient, and open system. (Modeling, Team building, Shared decision-making)

Page and Wong's conceptual framework provides a structured approach to examining the effects of a servant-leadership style in a particular context. This framework summarizes the previous work of

researchers such as Spears (2005) and Batten (1998) to create a simplified approach that can be compared to specific qualitative themes that emerge from research. Important for the scope of this research was this model offered a framework easily adaptable to an outdoor education program setting, addressing servant-leadership learning objectives.

Although servant-leadership has been a popular concept in business as it relates to repertoire of leadership style, limited evidence-based support from empirical research exists (Paris & Peachey, 2013; Russell & Stone, 2002). More research has been conducted recently that has shown statistically significant results from the use of servant-leadership. Linuesa-Langreo, Ruis-Palomino, and Elche (2016) found that when high levels of servant-leadership are found within supervisor positions, higher levels of empowerment and creativity were present among hospitality staff. Specifically, in a restaurant setting the use of servant-leadership behaviors by managers was positively correlated to restaurant performance, employee job performance, creativity, and positive customer service (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Finally, the use of servant-leadership by the administration in a large US healthcare organization had a statistically significant influence on follower job satisfaction, follower organizational commitment, follower person-organization fit, and follower perception of leadership effectiveness (Irving & Berndt, 2017). These studies are examples that have examined the use of servant-leadership in the business or management fields, but few studies, if any, have examined curricula by which servant-leadership was taught or the framework used by the leaders. Furthermore, the servant-leadership model has not been addressed in the outdoor leadership literature beyond mention as a leadership style in outdoor texts (Martin et al., 2017).

This study seeks to address two main issues in the literature: first

that research on outdoor leadership curricula has not established consistent models for leadership development and second that the examination of servant-leadership principles as a potential framework for outdoor leadership training is absent from the literature. Thus, the primary purpose of the research is to describe how students construct knowledge and meaning through the development of outdoor leadership competencies from an outdoor leadership course, as taught within a servant-leadership framework.

METHODS

This was an exploratory study utilizing an interpretive paradigm, a case study method of naturalistic inquiry to analyze the experiences of seven students enrolled in an outdoor leadership course. To answer a call for research that integrates outdoor leadership curricular development (Pelchat & Karp, 2012a), the researchers found naturalistic inquiry (Fay, Boyd, & Salkind, 2010; Henderson, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to be best suited to construct meaning surrounding the concept of servant-leadership, before, during and upon conclusion of the course. The method was further used to examine how instructors might adapt the experience to address students' needs, and how the student learning experience surrounding servant-leadership education in the outdoors might be improved.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants of this study involved seven traditional college students and two instructor-researchers. Both instructors had received training from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and had a combined 34 years (20 years and 14 years) of leading groups on wilderness expeditions. Participants were enrolled in an outdoor leadership course within a small (less than 1,700

students) private Midwestern University, in which a four pronged servant-leadership model (Page & Wong, 2000) was taught, and reinforced by the instructors throughout the course.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The course upon which this case study is based utilized Spears (2005) model of servant-leadership in addition to Page and Wong's (2000) four-pronged model. Starting with the intentions of the instructors, the course was developed to be implemented horizontally versus hierarchically, demonstrating integrity, humility, and servanthood. A second prong of the course focused on building connections/relationships between the students. A third prong included achieving productivity through performing tasks by visioning success, developing goals, and seeing them through. Lastly, the fourth prong overarched the first three prongs by instructors modeling the above characteristics and encouraging students do the same, while sharing decision making among the class.

The course was designed in three phases: pre-trip; field; and post-trip. The pre-trip phase involved twenty-one hours of curricular classroom education over a 6-week timeframe, experiential team-building, and trip preparation activities. The curriculum included instruction on expedition behavior, goal setting, group development, and reflections on nature and servant-leadership. Furthermore, students were taught principles of servant-leadership (Spears, 2005) and Page and Wong's (2000) servant-leadership model (see Table 1), which in-turn, was used as a framework for shaping student's educational experience throughout the course. For example, during the pre-trip phase, students were assigned to read Page and Wong (2000) and Spears (2005), and write a reflection paper (Table 2).

Table 2. *Summary of Journal Questions*

Pre-Trip Questions
1) Explain the meaning of servant-leadership and its characteristics in your own words.
2) Give a real-life example of servant-leadership you have observed from your own experience. Explain how this example relates to Spears' model of servant-leadership. What did you learn from this experience?
3) Discuss the characteristics of servant-leadership you personally aspire to. How might you practice these characteristics during the course?

Field Journal
1) What elements of servant-leadership have you seen in practice?
2) Who am I as a leader?
3) Who do I want to be as a leader?
4) How do I get there?

Post-Trip
1) What servant-leadership principles were applied during the service project and throughout the course; and how were these principles applied?
2) What aspects of the service project experience were most meaningful to you and why?

Further, the learning environment was reinforced by building a sense of community (Gabriel, 2015; Sibthorp et al., 2007; Tuckman, 1965; Weber & Karman, 1991), which is well established as a core component of effective group development (Gabriel, 2015; Sibthorp et al., 2007; Tuckman, 1965; Weber & Karman, 1991) and outdoor leadership (Lehmann, 1991; Mitten, 1995, 1999). Specifically, community building was fostered through a variety of experiential team development and cooperative play activities.

The field phase was an eight-day backcountry canoe trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Northern Minnesota.

During this phase, students were asked to practice and reflect upon the four prongs of Page and Wong's (2000) model through discussions and daily journal entries (Table 2).

The curriculum also included practice and discussion surrounding Leave No Trace principles of environmental stewardship, good expedition behavior, day-to-day leadership tasks (e.g., navigating, organizing meals, planning for the day, etc.), delivering field lessons (e.g., flora, fauna, or natural history of area), and conducting a trail maintenance service project. As this phase progressed, the instructors eased off from a task orientation as the students developed their own leadership skills and progressively immersed themselves in a process orientation to develop a flexible, effective, and open system. Finally, during the post-trip phase, the students engaged in reflective writing. Students were required to submit a post-trip reflection paper online, within one week of the completion of the field phase. As a component of the reflection paper, students were asked to identify servant-leadership principles observed throughout the course and how they were applied both during a service project, and throughout the course in general. Additionally, students were asked to reflect upon their strengths as servant-leaders and to discuss their opportunities for development (Table 2).

DATA COLLECTION/PROCEDURES

Data (formative and summative) sources were collected throughout all three phases of the course. Data consisted of pre-trip reflection, field journal entries, and post-trip reflection papers. Through pre-trip reflection, students were asked to write in response to several questions about the meaning of servant-leadership. Through field journal entries, students were provided daily question prompts they were to journal on. Those journals were then turned in at the end of the trip. In post-trip reflection paper, students wrote a four-part

reflection reporting on their progress toward their goals, their relationship to the natural environment, their experience of a service project and its application to servant-leadership principles, and how their experiences might transfer to other areas of life (Table 2).
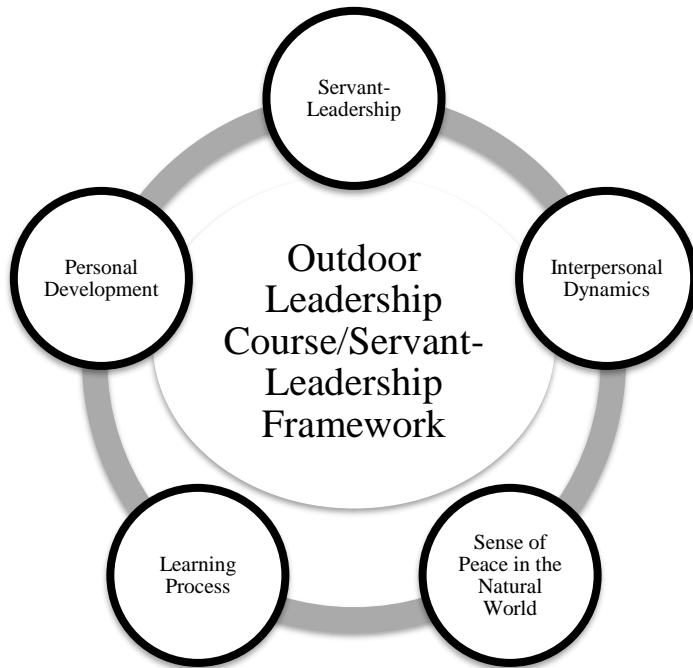
DATA ANALYSIS

Multiple attempts were made to strengthen the validity of the data collection procedures and ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Data triangulation was achieved by gathering multiple documents from each participant (N=7) throughout the course; pre-trip servant-leadership reflection, nine journal entries (2 pre-trip and 7 field), and post trip reflection. Identifiers were eliminated from all documents, and pseudonyms were used to further protect identity. The data were entered into NVivo 11, at which point a third researcher, who was unfamiliar with the course and/or students, was brought in to participate in the data analysis and achieve investigator triangulation. Investigators used direct interpretation of all documents, followed by a within case analysis, looking for patterns within their interpretations (Creswell, Hanson, Clark, & Morales, 2007). Investigators conducted regular data analysis check-ins and comparison of results with existing literature throughout the data analysis process—following the constant comparative approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) until saturation was achieved.

RESULTS

After analyzing the experiences of seven-students within all three phases of an outdoor leadership course, data saturation was met resulting in five major themes – interpersonal dynamics, personal development, sense of peace in the natural world, learning process, and servant-leadership (Figure 1).

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Figure 1. *Five Main Themes*

Servant-Leadership

Personal Development

Outdoor Leadership Course/Servant-Leadership Framework

Interpersonal Dynamics

Learning Process

Sense of Peace in the Natural World

Interpersonal dynamics emerged from student reflections on empathy, trust, compassion, patience, communication, conflict resolution and sense of community. This was seen as students gained an internal drive to help others, whether it impacted just one or the whole group. This was observed when students were listening to others' complaints and offered support, whether it be physically helping with a task or personally being excited once they achieved something they had been striving for.

> Another aspect that I like a lot was when everyone came together and had a big group hug. That just made it seem like we were building real team chemistry and everyone was not in this trip by themselves. (Felix)

During the brushing, we talked as a group about a variety of different topics but we also learned about each other more and realize how much of a community we really had become. We were our own community our own group and we had become even closer and dedicated to helping out each other throughout the entire experience and I think during the service project I realized that. (Cooper)

I had another opportunity to co-lead later in the week . . . I had taken more time to think through what needed to be done during the day, collaborated with my co-leader for a longer period of time, and as a result was better prepared to deliver the day's plan to the group. I also noticed that as I was delivering the plan for the day that the group seemed more supportive of the decisions being made and felt comfortable asking questions regarding the goals for the day. Since more time had been taken to prepare, I felt that my means of communication was clearer. After having an opportunity to practice my planning, organization, and communication, I did not feel pressured to give answers immediately. Rather, I took my time, analyzed the situation, and thoroughly thought through my answers before giving them. (Irene)

It was surprising to see that as the trip went on, we were all in a completely different time in our lives. Some people were struggling being away from their families, some were having a hard time adjusting to the different environment, and others were having relationship issues with significant others. As the days passed, we spent more and more time together, and continued to get to know one another, we started to depend on each other for emotional support. We learned to trust each other. We confided in each other regarding our struggles and

fears, and were met with a smile and words of advice and encouragement. (Abbey)

The theme ***personal development*** focused mainly on the individual. This theme began with students taking a step back to observe others, and reflecting on themselves as they became more aware of their strengths, limitations, goals, and aspirations, and their individual sense of place/roles within the larger group. Personal development is an important component in servant-leadership, for no one individual is perfect and there is always room for improvement, therefore keeping an open mind and willing to adapt will help build servant-leaders.

Some things I may have already known, but had sold myself short in what I could actually accomplish. Not just surviving, but succeeding in this atmosphere is empowering, enlightening, and strengthens your whole being. It is an incredible feeling to feel in control of your accomplishments and achievements. (Sofia)

My most proud moment from a physical standpoint was when I carried two backpacks for about three quarters of a mile. Not only did I feel accomplished, but I also felt good about helping one of my teammates carry her pack in a time when she was not able too. Three quarters of a mile with two packs felt like an eternity, but the sense of accomplishment was extremely satisfying. (Rebecca)

Portaging is much like our lives. Everyone faces challenges. Sometimes life is an uphill battle and when we get to the top the view and feeling of success was all worth it. The climb may present challenges through but perseverance was able to get us through. (Noah)

I learned a lot about working towards this goal because I slowly made progress. I worked with the people on the trip that I have not always gotten along with but I made progress and slowly became accustomed to the idea of getting to know the people who I have no always agreed with. Everyone is different and has different experiences and I even more aware of that now than I was before. (Irene)

Sense of peace in the natural world focused on the environment, and included elements such as appreciation of nature, separation from technology, and connection to the natural world. With our society being so busy and fast paced, many of these students have not truly experienced nature in its fullest. Given the removal of their technology, being placed in an unfamiliar outdoor environment, and learning to do new tasks outdoors, many of the students mentioned experiencing nature, enjoying the simplicity, enjoying the peacefulness, and appreciating the experience. Through peace of mind, they were able to focus on each other and truly listen, communicate, and help each other with their needs.

I see the trees around me and across the water. I see the sunset going on in front of me. All so peaceful and calming. All happening as I sit here. I wonder what else is going on in this wonderful land that I don't see or hear or smell. What are the fish doing? Where are the wolves, birds, moose, etc.? They are all doing something. Constantly something is going on in the wilderness and it is something that brings me great joy and lets me refresh from everyday life. (Abbey)

First I just want to remind myself of how simple life can be and how complicated we make it in our daily lives. As I look out at this sunset, everything is calm. Everything is all right. I don't

think I've ever really felt more at peace with myself. (Irene)

I choose to climb up to a big rock, sit on top of it, and watch the sunset as I was writing in my journal. It was that moment that I just stopped in the middle of writing to just sit and watch the beauty of the land around me. It was breathtaking and so beautiful. It is something that I cherish because I felt like I truly was being respectful of the land. I was taking in what it had to offer and its beauty it was showing. It helped me better understand who I was and that sometimes you just need to take a step back from things. And look at the beauty of it because if you do not just take a deep breath and a step back you may miss something that is truly amazing. (Felix)

This experience made me also appreciate what untouched land we do have within the United States. So much of our land is covered with concrete and other unnatural materials that we tend to forget what natural beauty looks like. (Sofia)

Learning process was a theme that emerged from students' desire to learn, as well as observing others' skill development, reflecting on one's experience, learning from mistakes, and applying new hard skills and soft skills. Students with a curious mind were open for new adventures, new opportunities, and working with new individuals. They were up for a challenge, and wanted to succeed. This is important to servant-leadership, by having a curious mind individuals will be willing to work with new individuals, listen to their stories, find the proper way to communicate/interact, and determine how to succeed.

In order to be a better leader I need to take on more leadership roles. I am so eager to learn as much as I can because I truly think this may be what I'm supposed to do! I think that the

wilderness is not only a place where I can find my center but is a source of knowledge for me. (Rebecca)

There is so much more out there to see. It is just so exciting and fun to explore. You never know what creatures you may see and it is constantly growing and changing. (Noah)

What would help me going forward is to continue to test my capabilities. (Cooper)

I feel so accomplished, so proud. I have learned so much on this trip about myself, others, the land, canoeing, animals and much, much more. (Irene)

The theme *servant-leadership* was evident as students took opportunities to perform and reflect on servant-leadership practices such as listening, empathy, awareness, foresight, stewardship, and building community. Instructor facilitated reflections on the servant-leadership model indicated students were able to articulate the model's components, apply its principles to their leadership practice in the field, evaluate their own performance, and transfer the learning to future practice.

I want to be known as the person who is always helping others for the sake of it. I think if I do this, people will have more trust and confidence in me. If I gain trust, I will have the pleasure of helping people through rough situations with advice or comfort, or just being a set of ears to listen…I truly enjoy helping others and putting their needs before my own in order to help them become a better person. (Sofia)

Each day there were two leaders of the day and they made the basic decisions for the group and led the group on the day's adventure . . .The leaders . . . talked with us and persuaded us

that we should make our lunch in the morning before we left camp for the day so that we did not have to go digging through the food bags to make lunch while we were on a portage. At first we did not all want to but when they explained their reasoning as to why they wanted us to do that it all made sense to me. (Rebecca)

It is important to build caring relationships with others as they promote the construction of stronger and deeper bonds with others. (Cooper)

The idea of leading seemed like it would be a piece of cake, but in reality it was nerve wracking and I immediately realized the importance of clear, concise, and consistent communication. As I was delivering instructions for what needed to be done in the morning before we left camp, I realized that although in theory my plan seemed good, it was disorganized. (Felix)

We had to communicate as a group to find our way back to the outfitters without assistance from the professors. We had to maintain awareness of our location so that we did not end up in the wrong body of water but also awareness of ourselves so that we traveled as a group and did not leave anyone behind. (Abbey)

The major themes of interpersonal dynamics, sense of peace in the natural world, learning process, personal development, and servant-leadership were interconnected and surrounded within the delivery of the course (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

Best practices research on leadership curricula, instruction, and competency development is lacking in the outdoor education literature (Pelchat & Karp, 2012a). The absence of common

leadership competency instructional practices, across a survey of training programs, suggests a need for leadership training models, which can be applied and implemented across curricula. Such models are needed to provide structure to curricula and offer best practice approaches to instruction.

In the current study, a servant-leadership model was used as a framework for outdoor leadership instruction. The results indicated an outdoor leadership course curriculum delivered within a servant-leadership framework, effectively produced a meaningful educational experience while developing servant-leadership competencies. These competencies, as observed among the data, included empathy, foresight, persuasion, building community, stewardship, and serving others (Spears, 2005).

Elements of these themes are congruent with servant-leadership characteristics identified by Greenleaf (2002). For example, within the theme of learning process, student leaders initiated, offered structure, and assumed risk of failure along with the chance of success (Greenleaf, 2002). The idea that "everything begins with the initiative of the individual" (p. 32) was evident in the students' reflections on learning process in which their curiosity and eagerness to grow through new leadership experience emerged.

According to Greenleaf (2002), "…only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first" (p. 31). This leadership characteristic emerged among the theme of interpersonal dynamics in which students were able to listen to one another, even in moments of disagreement, and move forward by seeking to understand the other. Furthermore, with this theme, students demonstrated empathy and acceptance of one another as they built community within the group.

Another characteristic of the servant-leader is foresight, in which

the leader "needs to have a sense for the unknowable" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 35). The theme of personal development may be intertwined with foresight as students developed both outdoor and leadership competencies, became empowered by their newfound skills, and anticipated future considerations pertaining the success of the expedition.

The concept of a leader as "servant first" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27) was further evident in the theme of servant-leadership as student reflections indicated a sense of intrinsic personal reward derived from serving and supporting others in the group. This theme was further interconnected with other emergent subthemes such as listening, patience, trust, and efforts to build community (Spears, 2005).

Given the apparent ties between the findings of this study and an existing model of key servant-leadership characteristics, a servant-leadership model could be adopted and tested among various outdoor leadership training program contexts and settings.

Students applied servant-leadership principles throughout the course. They practiced these principles within personal and group development and their overall educational experiences. Additionally, the pristine environment supported student learning and personal reflection. For the program under investigation, the five themes of interpersonal dynamics, sense of peace in the natural world, learning process, personal development, and servant-leadership can be used as a framework for developing leadership content in the future, and instructors might emphasize learning opportunities surrounding these concepts. While themes emerging from the course framework (aside from servant-leadership) may not be especially unique to the course under investigation, their emergence suggests that a course delivered using a servant-leadership framework can produce them with the added benefit of developing servant-leadership competencies.

Among the most recognized leadership approaches commonly taught among outdoor leadership training is Hersey and Blanchard's *Situational Leadership Model* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981). This model was originally developed based on business leadership research, training and assessment, and later adopted among outdoor leadership educators (Gabriel, 2015). Although the model offers structure regarding leadership dynamics, it lacks holistic elements geared toward developing interpersonal skills. Furthermore, a search of the outdoor leadership education literature yielded no other tangible models studied for leadership competency development.

Servant-leadership practice, also previously studied within business, offers a holistic approach to leading others. A servant-leadership model (Spears, 2005) offers a good fit for outdoor leadership education given its incorporation of interpersonal elements of empathy, listening, persuasion, healing, and community building, among others. As a structured approach to developing leadership competencies, a servant-leadership model offers a practical option for incorporation into curriculum design.

Several limitations of this research should be noted. This study was conducted at a small private university which has a historical emphasis on service and leadership. It is possible that students may have already been primed to understand and apply the principles of servant-leadership. In addition, this study was limited to an examination of students' understanding and application of servant-leadership principles within the context of a specific course. A longitudinal look at the students was not conducted, therefore it cannot be assumed that the principles learned in the course continued to be a part of the students' leadership repertoire beyond the period of data collection. Finally, given the case study nature of this research, readers should be cautioned not to generalize these findings.

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The effectiveness of research lies not only in what is gained by the greater body but also what can be applied by those practicing in the field. The researchers noted that the outcomes of this study may impact how practitioners choose to approach leadership. First, as a servant-leadership curriculum was shown to be an effective way of developing outdoor leadership competencies, greater emphasis might be placed on the development of widely available curricular materials. The current materials were generated as part of this study for a particular course. Generalizable materials, such as textbooks with wider application, would provide for greater dissemination of knowledge surrounding the subject of outdoor servant-leadership. Second, this study has shown the power of reflection as a tool for students to achieve particular competencies through this model. Trainers of emerging outdoor leaders should consider the inclusion of regular and structured reflection, through journaling or other means, to allow for self-reflection, the coalescing of information, and personal growth.

This study has also exposed a lack of current research in the field of servant-leadership as it pertains to outdoor recreation and leadership. For future researchers, utilizing an established instrument, such as Page and Wong's Self-Assessment of Servant-leadership Profile (2000), to measure servant-leadership characteristics of outdoor leaders could further illuminate the relationship of servant-leadership principles to outdoor recreation and education. Finally, this study has shown that servant-leadership principles can be effectively taught and applied through an outdoor leadership training curriculum. Currently, research on servant-leadership is found predominantly in the business, education, and healthcare literature. Such applicable studies could be replicated in outdoor education and recreation settings to further examine

transferability of servant-leadership principles to leadership in the outdoors.

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