

Collaborative leadership: A field theory for architectural practice

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ABSTRACT: The transformation to integrated practice will depend on professionals with both technical and inter-personal facility. Much has been researched and written on the technology, techniques and tools of integrated practice. Despite the many resources available on the technique of integrated practice from professional associations, trade organizations, and research institutions, and software vendors, there is remarkably little information available to train and educate professional architects in the social aspects of integrated practice of collaborative process, teams, effective communication and leadership. But before tools and techniques for leading collaborative teams are developed, the profession needs a discipline specific theory on the subject. This paper outlines a field theory on collaborative leadership competencies for architects in order to provide a framework by which the profession can subsequently develop tools for leadership development.

Despite rhetoric surrounding naturally intuitive leadership, the theory outlined in this paper proposes that interpersonal leadership skills are learned, much the way any other technical knowledge is learned. This theory encompasses six knowledge domains based on Beinecke's "Leadership and Management Skills"[ii] and Pete DeLisle's "Leadership Effectiveness"[iii] and peer reviewed by the Center for Integrated Practice of the AIA, by which if continuously developed, architects can lead and manage teams effectively. The six domains include:

1. Design Knowledge: personal or resource knowledge of design principles, material technique, and digital computing capability - this is essential technical knowledge of the building design, or intrinsic knowledge of the discipline.
2. Context Knowledge: policy, program knowledge of stakeholders, policies, codes, contracts, economics, environment, politics, etc. - this might be called extrinsic knowledge of the discipline.
3. Systems Knowledge: transformational, visionary, holistic and systems perspective knowledge of the practice of architecture - its contingencies, capabilities and culpabilities in society.
4. Management Knowledge: transactional, management, reporting, budgeting, and allocation of effort - this is a very tactical knowledge in architecture that makes for effective, efficient project managers.
5. Emotional Knowledge: leader awareness, emotional, interpersonal, communication, and conflict resolution knowledge - this might be called "people" knowledge.
6. Ethical Knowledge: commitment, ethics, self-less, character, hard decisions, servant leadership - this type of knowledge is difficult to teach and tends to be more about upbringing or personal commitment.

After outlining the theory and its justification, the presentation will offer a personal evaluation tool for architects to determine their competencies across the six knowledge domains in order to become more effective leaders of collaborative teams.

[ii] Beineke, Richard H. "Leadership for Wicked Problems". *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, Volume 14(1), 2009, article 1.

[iii] DeLisle, Pete. "Architect as Leader". *AIA Handbook of Professional Practice*. Wiley, 2014.