

*Provide what you believe are the key points made by the authors of chapter 12. Do you agree or disagree? Share your own personal experiences and recommendations for working together as a team.*

In chapter 12 of the Reiser and Dempsey text, Brenda Litchfield writes that there are three areas “especially important for successful project management . . . leadership skills, learning to communicate with your team, and developing effective teams.” I can’t say that I have had a lot of experience as a project manager; I have had a little bit. However, as I read through the chapter I thought to myself that being a project manager is a lot like being a teacher; motivating and helping people to reach a common objective within a specified time frame. Litchfield also goes on to state that “[s]trong interpersonal skills are paramount.” I would certainly agree with that, if you don’t know how to deal with people, how to coax them, how to deal with egos and attitudes, then you most certainly are not going to get the expected performance out of your team. Hershey et al. (2001) say that “leadership involves three interrelated competencies . . . cognitive, behavioral, and process skills” – sounds a lot like learning theories to me.

I think one of the crucial points made is that you need to be both a manager and a leader. You need to manage “goals, timelines, and budget,” while at the same time you need to be “leading and motivating your team with your energy, insight, and encouragement” (Litchfield). I thought the results of the workshop surveys were insightful with regards to the traits people desired in a manager; good listener, team builder, providing feedback, having a sense of humor, showing mutual respect, knowing how to delegate, being a good decision maker, challenging the team to do well, and being flexible. I think that task delegation is where I am weakest; I do like the control I get from doing things myself – but I am aware of it and I am trying to actively change the situation. I have never pictured myself as a manager but I have always been very entrepreneurial and interested in starting and operating businesses. For the most part though, those businesses have been very small with few to no employees.

I have read Blanchard’s *One Minute Manager* and am thereby familiar with the “one minute reprimand.” I think that is one of the toughest things for me to do when it comes to managing employees or students. I always try to be creative about how I go about it, I think that comes from having worked and lived with creative personalities most of my life. Good communication with your team (students) is very important, and something I have worked diligently at improving during my years as an employer/teacher. I agree with Litchfield when she makes a point of how important it is to know how to approach different types of individuals and that it is crucial to the success of a good manager/teacher.

One of the things I see in myself is that I am circumstantially in the fortunate position of having been forced to learn how to communicate with individuals at a distance using various technologies for many years. For me, it goes back to a spark that was lit in 1970 by Alvin Toffler’s book *Future Shock*. I can’t say why exactly, but his idea of “electronic cottages” resonated with me and has stuck with me ever since. I have been striving to become the ultimate telecommuter since that day, and as I said, I am very fortunate to

have realized that dream for the most part. I love teaching, I love abstracting systems and building digital processes. The whole digital world is very appealing place for me to live amongst and I think that is why instructional design fits me like a glove.