One thing is certain... the nation’s ability to respond and prosper will depend on the quality of leadership demonstrated at all levels of society” (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). The importance of leadership and the opportunity our institutions of higher education have to provide an environment for leadership education has added to the dramatic increase in the number of leadership programs offered throughout universities and colleges over the past two decades (Brungardt, Greenleaf, Brungardt, & Arensdorf, 2006).

The emergence of an academic discipline, like leadership studies, is only the first step in a discipline taking hold within higher education. Academic disciplines are defined by both substantive content and social behaviors (Becher, 1989). Other important defining characteristics of a discipline are that leading academic institutions recognize the discipline and, that there is a free standing international community which consists of both professional associations and specialist journals that support the area of study (Becher, 1989).

The ability for a discipline to then be sustainable within higher education depends on a number of factors. The first of these factors is legitimacy within the institution from the viewpoint of other established disciplines (Becher, 1989). This legitimacy facilitates the development of power and status within the institution in order for the discipline to persuade key stakeholders within the institution to provide necessary resources – such as money and faculty lines – for the discipline’s survival. An additional factor influencing sustainability is the presence of substantial student demand (Becher, 1989; Davies & Guppy, 1997). The final factor in the sustainability of a discipline is the ability to train the next generation of scholars within the field (Becher, 1989).

The goal of this article is to broadly examine the theme, “The Next Phase of Leadership Education,” by discussing some of the findings from research conducted on the emergence and sustainability of degree granting undergraduate leadership studies majors. Specifically, the research examined six degree granting leadership studies programs – Marietta College’s McDonough Center for Leadership and Business, The University of Richmond’s Jepson School of Leadership Studies, Fort Hays State University, University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Peace College, and the University of Southern Maine. A cross-case analysis was completed on the programs utilizing the International Leadership Association’s Guiding Questions: Guidelines for Leadership

“The emergence of an academic discipline, like leadership studies, is only the first step in a discipline taking hold within higher education.”

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Connections from the Director

We are at the nexus of over three decades of experimenting with the teaching and learning process of leadership. There have been significant milestones in our work during this time – such as an evolving body of empirical research and numerous texts that serve as the pinnacle forms of knowledge dissemination. This is evident both in the classroom and in the co-curricular setting.

The exploration of teaching methods to advance students’ complex understanding of leadership has mirrored the comfortable tension one might experience going down a slick windy mountain road. At different moments, there is a sense of exhilaration when your masterfully-choreographed lesson plan ignites the connection between scholarship and your prescriptive learning outcomes. This is the moment when students move from intuitive thinking to logic, reason, critical reflection, and meaning making. The other side of your wild ride down the mountain can resemble a horrifying sensation of looking out over the classroom seeing fingertips flying across the keyboards of smart phones and laptops – a disconnection of students from the content that is seemingly not relevant in their world, having no real life application to their chaotic lives and future aspirations.

We exist in the paradoxical abyss of leadership studies and leadership practice as an outcome of our work. Is our educational work to focus on student understanding of the study of leadership? Do we then encourage them to find their own context to practice this learning in? Or do we provide the practice settings and focus our education on context and skills? The questions are endless and the answers are difficult to uncover.

This edition of Concepts & Connections explores new directions in academic leadership. Matthew Sowcik, Assistant Professor in Leadership Studies at Wilkes University, will explore his research into the emergence of an academic discipline of leadership studies. Linette Werner, Coordinator of the Leadership Minor at the University of Minnesota, shares application-to-practice insights of case-in-point teaching. Laura Osteen, Director of the Center for Leadership and Civic Education at Florida State University, illuminates the relationship between theory and practice through an integrated approach to leadership education. Tony Middlebrooks, Associate Professor Organizational and Community Leadership in the School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware, and Matt Binsted, a former student at the University of Delaware, share a critical review of their academic focus into leadership as an innovative process that is guided by psychological competencies that allow for leaders to negotiate the whitewater of leadership through a multi level and multi-faceted global context.

On behalf of the leadership team of the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, we hope you find meaning and application with this edition of Concepts & Connections.

Craig Slack
Director of NCLP
Education Programs as a framework for assessment. The ILA’s Guiding Questions categories utilized to structure the research included the program’s conceptual framework, context, content, areas of teaching/learning within the program, and the programs’ outcomes/assessment (Ritch & Mengel, 2009). While the focus of the research was limited to six undergraduate leadership studies majors, the results may inform the development, delivery, and assessment of future degree granting leadership studies programs. Finally, the purpose of the research, article, is to build upon past research in leadership studies and to continue to establish the legitimacy of leadership studies as an academic discipline within higher education.

Common Patterns in the Field of Leadership Studies

With the growing number of leadership studies programs surfacing within higher education institutions and the increase of research into these programs, patterns are beginning to emerge that are defining common practices in the field of leadership studies. The following addresses some of the common patterns which emerged from the cross case analysis:

**Conceptual Framework**
- In each of the leadership studies programs, the faculty discussed an extended period of time spent developing the conceptual framework prior to developing the program’s curriculum.
- Patterns emerged in the analysis of the programs’ mission statements. The mission of each program focused on both leadership knowledge and the practical application of leadership in each of the programs. An additional theme, found throughout the comparison, concerned the reach and impact of the program. In the six cases, the program was intended to have an impact at the local and the national level. In three of the cases, the mission statement extended its impact beyond the national level to a broader international focus.
- In each of the leadership studies programs’ key competencies were identified as important student learning outcomes.

The competencies, which were similar in at least four of the six programs, included:
- (a) an understanding of leadership;
- (b) communication (both written and oral);
- (c) critical thinking;
- (d) problem solving;
- (e) appreciation of diversity and differences (which includes cross cultural understanding);
- (f) an understanding of ethics;
- (g) social/civic responsibility;
- (h) self-awareness;
- (i) interpersonal skills;
- (j) group dynamics/teamwork.

**Context**
- Each of the six programs are located in very different areas within the institution including a School of Leadership Studies, a Center for Leadership and Business, a College of Arts and Sciences, and a Division of Organizational Studies.
- Prior to the creation of the individual programs, a major change was introduced into the institution causing instability within the system. The change which was introduced was a result of a large gift from an external donor (ranging from 5 million or 20 million dollars), the result of external and/or internal forces establishing or redefining the college, or was the direct influence of the institution’s key administrators such as a president or provost.
- In five of the six programs, there was a strong initial resistance from other academic areas within the institution. The resistance was due to the threat to institutional resources and questions concerning academic legitimacy of leadership studies. In each of the programs, one critical strategy employed was to actively pursue collaborative relationships with other academic areas. A direct result of the increase in collaborative efforts with other academic areas was an increased perception of academic credibility for the leadership studies program within the institution. Finally, after a number of collaborative relationships were formed, other academic areas actively pursued the leadership studies program to create new academic opportunities and programs.

**Teaching and Learning**
- The leadership studies founding faculty play an integral role in defining the type of leadership studies programs offered at the institution.
- The most common teaching style utilized to teach leadership studies includes a discussion based format, which is facilitated by the faculty member who often uses student reflection to guide discussion.
- In certain programs, it is required to pair the leadership studies program with another major. However, even in those programs which do not require leadership studies as a double major, a majority of the students in the programs actively chose to double major. This choice to pursue an additional major was due to the perceived lack of career opportunities by students in the program.
- Interestingly, a dichotomy surfaced between inclusive and exclusive leadership studies programs. The two exclusive programs, with a highly competitive admissions process, had a greater number of students in their programs, as compared to the other four programs with open admission.

**Assessment**
- The assessments emerging from the study were identified at four levels which included student, program, institutional, and external.
- At the student level, the assessments are both frequent and of small scale. These assessments came in two forms,
leader to help structure the conceptual in a particular context. This definition can the interaction between leaders and followers study that focuses on and applied field of studies. Leadership been widely accept- of leadership has not all purpose, definition Although, a single, multidisciplinary study has had a positive impact field due to the multidisciplinary nature of leadership studies. However, as a field moves toward academic legitimacy, it is necessary for leadership studies to provide an overview at the undergraduate level and add both breadth and depth to the educational and research oriented experiences of scholars pursuing a post-graduate degree in the field of leadership studies.

Conclusion

“All of this follows from the fundamental premise: we are coping with sys- tems that are complex and adaptive, not simple or static. In the short run, we are not likely to have a direct approach that gets it completely right” (Axelrod & Cohen, 2000, p. 138). Due to the nature and complexity of leadership, the field will continue to have multiple strategies to develop and deliver leadership studies programs. Past and current research on leadership studies adds to both the legitimacy of leadership development within higher education and to the formation of common practices within the field. However, this research only begins to scratch the surface of the complexity involved with leadership studies. Further exploration and research will be needed “if the leadership major is to ever become accepted as an academic discipline in higher education” (Brungardt et al., 2006, p. 20).

References


Dr. Matthew Sowcik is an Assistant Professor in Leadership Studies and the Director of Leadership Education in the Department of Entrepreneurship and Leadership Studies at Wilkes University where he has worked professionally for the past 9 years. Matthew received a B.A. degree in Psychology from Wilkes University, a M.A. degree in Organizational Leadership from Columbia University, and his Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Gonzaga University. Matthew’s research specialization is in the emergence and sustainability of leadership studies programs.
Adapting *Leadership Can be Taught* to the Undergraduate Context: The Creative Challenges and the Promise

Dr. Linette Werner

In the 1990’s, “preparing leaders” became dominant in undergraduate mission statements and the idea of having curricular undergraduate leadership programs trickled through higher education. The initial question we faced as a field was what to teach that would prove that the study of leadership was worthy of a place among more established offerings. Meanwhile, the world has changed a great deal. As Margaret Wheatly has observed: “The territory [we] began mapping…in 1992 has now revealed many more of its features. It is…a world of uncertainty, sudden shifts, and webs of relationships extending around the world” (2006, p.ix).

Sharon Daloz Parks calls these “hinge times” that require not only a great deal of courage, but a way of educating undergraduates that heretofore may not have existed in mainstream higher education (Daloz Parks, 2009). The pressing question we now face as field is not only what to teach, but how?

We embarked on the journey to answer this question at the University of Minnesota in 2006. The Undergraduate Leadership program had been in place for seven years and our instructors noticed perennial issues that could not be fully addressed by our traditional methods of teaching – which included case studies, simulations, discussions, small group work, and other experience-based approaches. Some of these perennial issues included undergraduate students with vastly different levels of leadership experiences entering the same classroom, leadership case studies that were too far outside the realm of the undergraduate experience for students to deeply absorb, a tendency for undergraduate critical reflective writing to remain at surface level, and a lack of in-depth integration of leadership theory into undergraduate’s lived experiences of leadership.

As we searched for ways to teach that more practically reflected the complexities of an ever-adapting world, we discovered Sharon Daloz Parks’ book *Leadership Can be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* (2005). For us, reading about the case-in-point teaching of adaptive leadership developed by Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues at Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership seemed both promising and simultaneously impossible. Heifetz was working with mid-career, powerful, highly-motivated graduate students within the Harvard context with all the resources that implies. Our context was vastly different: a public, research-one, land grant institution wherein the undergraduate minor in Leadership Studies, although seven years old at that point, was still securing its place among other academic programs. We had several questions: Can anyone other than “a Heifetz” teach in this way? Can it be done with 18-year olds? How can we use case-in-point teaching with students who have such varied life experiences (from no positional leadership roles to many)? What are the risks in turning up this kind of heat within our context? What are the potential gains?

We now know that at the same time and since, many others within undergraduate contexts – and in schools teaching young, emerging professionals – were asking similar questions; however, with neither published research in the field nor a way to find others doing this translation, we began the process of adapting Heifetz’s approach with the faith that it would be worth the risk. We adopted core components from *Leadership Can Be Taught* (LCBT) and translated them into what we thought was most appropriate for our undergraduates in our specific context as outlined below. We offer our discoveries thus far as a work in progress rather than a recipe – our confirmation that the translation is not only possible, but worth the work and risk that comes with moving into new curricular territory.

First, we changed the classroom into a container that could hold the heat of transformative learning...

- By implementing ritual and routines into the classroom which increased the productive tension and decreased non-productive tension
- By holding students publicly accountable to knowing and using each other’s names by the fourth week of class

Then, we created a classroom environment that enabled students to experience the true complexities of leadership...

- By replacing many of the standard-deliver lectures with in-the-moment, mini-lectures to point out how a theoretical concept was being played out within the classroom context at that moment
- By stopping the action and naming events and subtexts the moment they happened such as work avoidance, stereotypes, assassination of authority, and consumerism vs. co-production of environment

We replaced traditional case studies with immediate lived experiences (called tasks) which...

- Leveled the disparity in prior leadership roles among class members
- Created more case-in-point moments within each class that directly connected leadership theory to students’ immediate lives
- Supported a new level of complexity within undergraduate critical reflective writing (because through the oral debriefs of the tasks, we were able to model how one analyzes the complexities of leader-
ship and students were able to replicate this in their written analyses)

We packaged disparate leadership theories and topics - such as conflict, vision/mission/goals, and values - into larger groupings which...

- Used the LCBT idea of memes to make the concepts “sticky” so students found themselves applying the memes to their real-world experiences
- Better held together the scope and sequence of the readings and topics covered over the duration of the course so students could see the unity and integration of each topic within the next

Finally, we implemented higher-stakes simulations for situations that did not have adequate simulations before such as...

- The singing activity from LCBT to simulate courage and presence
- A leadership draft for high-stakes group projects to better address how and why we choose group members for work teams
- An attendance policy/incentive that simulates the process for creating community out of strangers

In the end, we have found answers to our original questions and they point to the success of this approach to teaching undergraduate leadership. However, the greater lesson we have learned thus far, is that we cannot do this work alone. We must each find our community of peers – partners and allies – who help us to generate and refine our work simultaneously because adaptive work is long-term and requires the support of many along the way. In 2011, leadership educators came together at conferences and symposiums all over the world, such as the new Leadership Can be Taught Symposium (www.LCBTsymposium.com) we hosted at the University of Minnesota, to see how we can better prepare undergraduates for these “hinge times.” We encourage you – whether you are mildly curious or deeply committed - to use these events to find allies and create adaptive communities with whom you can question current approaches and build the future of leadership education even as its needs shift endlessly under our feet.

References

Dr. Linette Werner has been an instructor in the Leadership Minor at the University of Minnesota since 2001 and has been the coordinator of the program since 2006. She is currently pursuing a research agenda on Intentional Emergent Context as an effective means of teaching leadership to undergraduates and is one of the co-founders of the Leadership Can Be Taught Symposium, which will convene again June 26-28, 2013 (www.LCBTsymposium.com).
Learning by Design: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Creating a Leadership Certificate Program

Dr. Laura Osteen

Through assessment and design, Florida State University’s Center for Leadership and Civic Education (the Center) aligns our leadership beliefs with the structure and outcomes of our programs. Rooted in post-industrial theories of leadership, we seek to develop all students’ capacity to create positive sustainable change in their respective communities. Through integrated leadership learning programs, such as the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies, we educate students for responsible citizenship and effective leadership.

The Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies was intentionally designed through a theory to curriculum model. Playing off the idea of theory to practice, each of the Certificate’s six three-credit courses were developed specifically from the knowledge, skills, and values outlined in the Center’s leadership learning model. Through reflection on our design experience, four intentional choices stand out as lessons to us as we design and redesign future curricular and co-curricular programs. The Certificate’s focus on student learning is a result of these strategic decisions: collaboration; philosophy-based curriculum; TED+E; and relevance.

Collaboration

The first choice is the collaborative nature with which the Undergraduate Leadership Certificate was created and continues to exist. In the fall of 2004, Dr. Jon Dalton from the College of Education contacted the Center with interest in jointly creating an academic leadership certificate program. Recognizing the opportunity to create a powerful partnership, the Center worked with faculty from the college to jointly design the Certificate in Leadership Studies.

Building from this foundation, the program ran for two years dependent on Center staff for teaching and advising. In 2008, the Center proposed the creation and hiring of a tenure-track leadership studies faculty member. The proposal and funding were approved and we approached the College of Education with the resources to enhance our partnership and the Certificate program. The position was approved and a national search began. In the fall of 2008, Dr. Kathy Guthrie started as the Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies in the College of Education’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and the Coordinator of the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies. In these roles, Dr. Guthrie has led the continued growth of the Certificate program and the collaborative spirit of its initial design.

Philosophy-Based Curriculum

Parallel to the concept of applying theory to practice, the Certificate was designed theory to curriculum. The theory in this case is the Center’s leadership philosophy and model. Rooted in theories of leadership, student learning and civic engagement, the Center’s philosophy is an integrated model and approach to student leadership learning. This integrated model is the foundation for the learning outcomes of each Certificate course. Taken together, the six courses are a direct representation of the Center’s philosophy.

This alignment is a direct result of the collaborative nature of the program. As an esteemed faculty member, Dr. Dalton brought campus and political resources. As a Center, we offered a campus-wide model of leadership developed. Together we designed a program integrating academic and student affairs approaches to leadership learning. Through placing the model into practice through the courses, the Certificate in Leadership Studies is an example of direct alignment of theory and practice both inside and outside of the classroom.

TED+E

The Center’s leadership learning model includes 16 knowledge, skills and values grouped within four contexts that individuals learn and practice leadership. However, how we teach these outcomes what makes the model come alive. Using the TED model of leadership development, the Center adds an additional E for engagement and creates a comprehensive leadership learning model.

The model presents four educational strategies to teach the 16 knowledge, skills, and values: education, training, development, and engagement. As the home of Florida State’s service learning program, it is our belief that the learning process is inherently and beneficially an experiential learning process. Therefore, our emphasis on leadership learning as training, education, development, and engagement is mission driven. Examples of this in practice include: core learning outcomes based on student knowledge of leadership theories; significant oral, written, and multimedia reflection projects; one on one student advising and limited class size to ensure individualized attention; experiential learning course tied directly to a student’s academic discipline; and synthesis capstone course experience.

Relevance

Finally, the Certificate’s success is its alignment with the Florida State student, academic, and student affairs culture. From its original design to include a course within each student’s major to seeking out advisors within the diverse colleges to discuss possible barriers to program completion, the program is constantly re-evaluating its structural relevance for students. In addition to structure, the curriculum is reviewed annually...
possible for all students, I jumped at the chance to work with him.

In addition to the Undergraduate Certificate in Leadership Studies, the Center is home to a diverse set of programs to educate, train, develop, and engage students in leadership learning. As may be true for you, within this myriad of offerings each program has a unique history of development and implementation. From administrative initiatives and staff projects to student brainstorms and adopted programs, we have not always had control of a program’s original design. Although we don’t always have the opportunity to design from idea to implementation, we have found these four strategies of collaboration, philosophy based curriculum, TEDE, and relevance help us identify leverage points to impact the design or redesign of any program.

Laura Osteen is Director of Florida State University’s Center for Leadership & Civic Education; a campus-wide endeavor to develop responsible citizens and effective leaders. Laura teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in the higher education department and the Undergraduate Leadership Studies Program. She received her doctorate of philosophy degree from the University of Maryland in the field of College Student Personnel with an emphasis in leadership development and organizational change. Laura holds a master’s degree in Student Affairs and Higher Education from Colorado State University and bachelor’s degree in speech communication from Indiana University.

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Program Spotlight: Organizational and Community Leadership at the University of Delaware: Innovation and CORE

Matthew Binsted and Dr. Anthony Middlebrooks

Someday you will be in a leadership position. I cannot tell you what it will look like...or when...or why...or anything about the context or the players or the goal. I just know that you will be asked, or maybe expected, to influence others toward a common vision. Good luck.

The dynamic nature of leadership in practice makes teaching the field an exciting endeavor, but like many dynamic, contextual, and individualized endeavors, there are considerable limitations on curriculum. Leadership educators have utilized case studies, classroom activities and simulations, and experiential activities of various sorts in an effort to recreate and illustrate leadership theories and practices. These approaches, if executed well, have the power to teach the cognitive lesson as well as the social and emotional dimensions that really underlie the power of effective leadership. Yet they still lack the real-life “crucible” that Warren Bennis notes as essential to leadership development.

At the same time we look to leaders to ‘make a difference’ – for answers to “wicked problems” such as the energy crisis, global warming, hunger, and poverty, for which there are no single solutions but only opportunities for improvement. Even making a difference in business is harder than ever as consumers, now able to choose between dozens of comparable product offerings in every category, have become increasingly empowered and demanding. Acknowledging these difficulties does not mean there is no such thing as a sustainable business model or that we are doomed to make incremental improvements to complex problems in lieu of significant progress. Somehow leadership happens.

Any quality leadership program requires a theoretical base as both guiding framework and fundamental focus. For many, this base is simply a list of objectives of what an effective leader knows, does, and is like. Some extend this beyond the leader to focus on forging collaborative relationships, influencing others, and/or crafting a transformational or service-oriented vision.

Yet is this enough to ef-
fectively address both of the fundamental realities – the dynamic and unpredictable moment of leadership and the ambiguous, multifaceted, multilevel challenges facing leaders?

The University of Delaware (UD) bachelor of science (and minor) in Organizational and Community Leadership (OCL), in an effort to recognize these realities, offers two programmatic solutions: an emphasis on innovation, particularly the mental disposition of seeing and processing problems in a creative manner; and an emphasis on building core psychological competencies, often in the context of global literacy.

Building Capacity for Innovative Thinking

One of the most unique aspects of UD’s OCL program is its focus on innovation. The OCL major at UD emphasizes creativity and innovation throughout all of its course offerings, starting with the introductory courses. Leadership, Integrity, and Change (Lead100) guides students through a semester-long campus change project emphasizing the creative problem solving process. The Leadership Challenge (Lead200) imparts leadership theory by putting students through a variety of experiential challenges, culminating in a ‘Make a Difference’ project, all while emphasizing divergent thinking through the processes. This emphasis on innovation and creativity continues through the Leadership Capstone course (Lead490) where students are required to design a full-day leadership conference for state high school students.

Innovation and design process are the entire emphasis of Leadership, Creativity, and Innovation (Lead300). In this course, students learn to apply leadership and creativity to a problem solving framework called design thinking in order to create innovations that are technically feasible, economically viable, and deeply human centered. Such innovations are not limited to physical products; students also learn to design spaces, experiences, interactions, and many other less tangible but hugely relevant aspects of modern life. With this knowledge, students are prepared to innovate in any sector and address problems previously considered unfixable.

Building Capacity for Ambiguity and Uncertain Contexts

The OCL program places special emphasis on building both capability and comfort with ambiguity by helping its students develop strong CORE competencies. As students engage in various course activities, particularly the experimental ones, emphasis is placed in building what might be referred to as CORE: Confidence – self-efficacy to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; Optimism – making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future; Resilience – when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success (these first three based on the notion of psychological capital developed by Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007); and Engagement – reflective and mindful, critically and carefully integrating new information into one’s understanding. By promoting students’ Confidence in their own abilities and efforts, Optimism about the future, Resilience and flexibility, and reflective and mindful Engagement, the OCL program builds the psychological capital of its students and prepares them to lead in a wide variety of contexts, both familiar and novel. Given the constant change characteristic of today’s world, having the proper mindset to adapt to any situation is crucial to success as a leader.

Clearly, how students learn is part of what they learn. The OCL program at UD delivers a set of broadly applicable processes which are reinforced through experiential and problem-based learning. For many challenges, students are given a card with prompting reflection questions that serve as both catalyst for activity and guide for the critical debrief discussion:

1. Confidence – self-efficacy and effort
   Did I put in my best effort?
   Did fear influence my effort?
   Did I take initiative?
   Did I focus & dedicate my attention to the effort?

2. Optimism – positive about success
   Did I feel I would succeed?
   Was my success due to my effort and skill?
   Did I need to redirect my efforts?
   Did problems make me question my ability?

3. Resilience – perseverance and flexibility, using setbacks as setforwards
   Did I encounter setbacks or significant challenges?
   Did setbacks discourage my efforts?
   Did I confront problems directly?
   Did problems make me question my ability?

4. Engagement – reflective and mindful
   Did I reflect and learn from the experience?
   Did I integrate this new knowledge into prior?

Another example of this approach is the campus change project in Leadership, Integrity and Change (Lead100) requires that the entire class work collaboratively in a single project, thus providing many opportunities to engage the difficulties of leadership and consequently build CORE capacities. In Leadership in Organizations (Lead400), students engage real-world organizations across public, private, and non-profit sectors to create a detailed plan for organizational improvement. In this way, leadership content and practice is communicated in a manner that simultaneously builds capacity. This framework of process and application persists throughout the leader-

“The dynamic nature of leadership in practice makes teaching the field an exciting endeavor, but like many dynamic, contextual, and individualized endeavors, there are considerable limitations on curriculum.”
ship courses. Building off this pedagogical approach, some leadership courses have adopted an experiential approach termed ‘design-based learning’ (Bruck & Middlebrooks, 2010) in which students engage problems emphasizing core tenets of design thinking, thus enhancing their creative and innovative tendencies.

Another way in which critical CORE competencies and other important skills are developed is through the OCL program’s excellent study abroad programs. OCL study abroad trips have emphasized both innovation and global literacy in the context of leadership. Unlike many study abroad experiences, OCL trips teach primarily through experiential challenges that push students to engage the people and more extensively observe the culture. For example, a recent trip to Sweden and Barcelona in January 2010 examined design process and thinking, and then applied those lessons to leadership. Students explored design through interaction with experts in various fields of design -including an interior designer from IKEA, visits to famous architectural or design landmarks - such as Antoni Gaudi’s La Sagrada Familia, single day activities to practice various skills like data collection and inspiration finding, and, most importantly, extended design challenges that required synthesis of concepts and application of process. The OCL program’s emphasis on application outside the normal classroom setting is demonstrated by its six credit Discovery Learning Experience requirement – a typically three credit University requirement that can be fulfilled through study abroad, service learning, internship, independent study, or select courses.

Beyond the required Leadership and Discovery Learning courses, UD’s leadership department provides a number of other outlets for learning by doing, including LEAD Council, a registered student organization closely affiliated with the major. LEAD Council’s stated goal is to help students develop and exercise their leadership capabilities outside the classroom by allowing them to develop and implement community service or other projects, assume leadership positions, and interact with leaders from a variety of sectors. Additionally, each academic year the leadership faculty select a group of “Exemplary Leaders” who are afforded rare opportunities to get a unique look at real world leadership contexts and issues. Past activities hosted for the Exemplary Leaders Circle on behalf of the LEAD faculty include a trip to Dover, Delaware, to visit the state legislature and meet Governor Jack Markell, as well as a trip to nearby Wilmington, Delaware, to talk with an urban designer trying to revitalize an important part of the city.

Fittingly, the Organizational and Community Leadership program culminates in a senior capstone dedicated to the synthesis and application of all learning throughout the course of the major. In a unique partnership with the Jefferson Awards Students in Action (SIA) program, senior leadership majors in the fall semester capstone class are asked to organize and hold a leadership conference for over two hundred Delaware high school students who participate in SIA, as well as serving as leadership coaches for the teams in a number of schools. This is the final and most challenging example of problem based learning in the OCL curriculum, as the project requires the collaboration of a class of 25 students over the course of an entire semester. It is also a great way to measure the CORE competencies of the leadership students, as the scale and stakes of this challenge is unparalleled by any other course in the major.

At a state university with over 15,000 undergraduates, it’s often easy to feel lost in the crowd. Many students at the University of Delaware choose to major in Organizational and Community Leadership (OCL) because it is a “boutique program;” class sizes are relatively small and students are better able to get individual attention from their professors and advisors. Majors are provided the flexibility to choose (or create) a 12-credit “area of interest” (Environmental Sustainability, Intercultural Dynamics, Public Policy, or Global Perspectives) or minor that fits their personal and career aspirations.

Someday you will be in a leadership position. If you are confident, optimistic, resilient, engaged, and innovative, you will be effective. By focusing on the development of unique skills for leading in an unpredictable and ever-changing world (ability to innovate, CORE competencies) and the application of such skills and processes within the framework of experiential and problem-based learning, the Organizational and Community Leadership major at the University of Delaware is preparing the next generation of leaders with the requisite skill, experience, and mindset to meet difficult challenges – present and future – head on.

References

Tony Middlebrooks, Ph.D. is Associate Professor in the Organizational and Community Leadership Program in the School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware. He helped develop the doctoral program in leadership as a professor at Cardinal Stritch University, and spent ten years prior in non-profit leadership positions culminating in writing, consulting, and presenting on a variety of leadership topics. Dr. Middlebrooks teaches courses in leadership theory and practice, decision-making, creativity and innovation in leadership, and research methodology. His current research interests focus on methods of leadership education and the integration of leadership, creativity, and design thinking. Dr. Middlebrooks has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.
Matt Binsted graduated from the University of Delaware in May 2011 with a B.S. in Organizational and Community Leadership and minors in Philosophy and Sociology. He held many leadership positions throughout his college career, including serving as Vice-President of a registered student organization (LEAD Council) and Teaching Assistant for a Leadership study abroad trip. Matt’s research involvement includes his position as a Teaching & Research Assistant for a Marketing professor in the Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics, participation in the Disaster Research Center’s Research Experience for Undergraduates, and work with the Delaware Design Institute. Matt now works as a Business Development Associate at Sparks, a global event marketing agency headquartered in Philadelphia, PA.

The Leadership Bookshelf:

Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World

Sharon Daloz Parks

Reviewed by: Peter Decrescenzo, University of Maryland – College Park

Introduction

Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World provides readers with a leadership theory that can be practiced within a post-industrial society. Harvard lecturer Ronald Heifitz (1998) argues that many problems currently in existence cannot be solved with current leadership practices. Current practices may be able to solve “technical” or routine problems, but the new century needs practices that can adapt to new problems in which solutions do not already exist. Leading in the 21st century must adapt to complex processes in which leaders must be self-aware and attuned to the relationships she or he becomes immersed. The knowledge accumulated in this new heightened sense of awareness must be transformed into the creation of innovative leadership practices. Current practices may be able to solve “technical” or routine problems, but the new century needs practices that can adapt to new problems in which solutions do not already exist. Leading in the 21st century must adapt to complex processes in which leaders must be self-aware and attuned to the relationships she or he becomes immersed. The knowledge accumulated in this new heightened sense of awareness must be transformed into the creation of innovative leadership practices. Current practices may be able to solve “technical” or routine problems, but the new century needs practices that can adapt to new problems in which solutions do not already exist. Leading in the 21st century must adapt to complex processes in which leaders must be self-aware and attuned to the relationships she or he becomes immersed. The knowledge accumulated in this new heightened sense of awareness must be transformed into the creation of innovative leadership practices.

Theoretical Frame

Adaptive leadership, as taught by Ronald Heifitz, provides leaders with the opportunity to question authority within leadership roles, understand the difference between technical and adaptive challenges, value progress, and recognize that leadership is a learning process. In examining authority and power in leadership, students develop the skills needed to lead at different levels of an organization. Adaptive leadership confronts conventional leadership styles and equips leaders with a readiness to new learning and new behaviors, which is needed to respond to adaptive challenges. Adaptive challenges are problems that can only be solved by changes in habits and assumptions that have been ingrained in society for generations. By overcoming old habits and assumptions, leaders will then be able to focus on progress over power. Results will then become more important than who has power and how it is exercised. Leaders will be able to identify that by being fully present within an issue, understanding the events taking place, trusting in their confidence, and making difficult choices of when to intervene within an organization, one will learn to be a successful leader of change in the 21st century. Adaptive leadership is a difficult learning process, but Heifitz and other leaders have developed a methodology to produce modern leaders called the case-in-point.

Case-in-point teaching is a methodology that uses the classroom as a laboratory for experimentation. Its purpose is to create an environment where the long arduous task of teaching leadership can be accessible. Embedded in this methodology is the belief that, in a structured environment, leadership can be learned through good coaching. Inside the classroom, Heifitz develops a structure in which students use their own personal failures and successes to understand what other choices could have been examined prior to implementation in hope that they are at a level of readiness to learn how to develop innovative strategies when similar issues arise. The set-up of the

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Sharon Daloz Parks

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Introduction

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class was a 90-100-student lecture hall, but students had the task to meet outside of the classroom for two hours each week to work on self-examining exercises. Outside of both the classroom and small breakout sessions, students were provided questionnaires that examined the hidden issues within each group. The questionnaires provided a venue for students to self-reflect on class and small group discussions throughout the week. Also, students were provided with opportunities to schedule a meeting with the professor or teaching assistants. The variety of settings provides multiple learning opportunities for diverse students with different learning styles. These differences among students become apparent throughout the book and were recognized as strengths in the leadership development process.

Elements of the Book

The book is divided into three themes: theory, practice, and the experiences of both students and teachers exposed to adaptive leadership through case-in-point teaching. To break theory down for the students in the class, Heifitz uses a variety of metaphors. These metaphors play a pivotal role throughout the book as they breakdown complex theoretical terms into a simpler language. Practices of adaptive leadership are expressed by the author through the experiences of students in and out of the classroom. Students connect theories learned in class to future practice. This is followed by a qualitative research experiment. Up to ten years after taking the course a limited number of students were interviewed to understand how the course has shaped their past and present leadership experiences. This is followed by the strengths and limitations of adaptive leadership through case-in-point teaching.

Chapter 2 begins on the first day of a leadership course at Harvard University. Students enter the room with many assumptions of what to expect on the first day of class and who to look to as an authority figure. Their main priority is to be granted enrollment into the course. To the frustration of many, instead of receiving quick answers the students are being taught to develop their own solutions to questions typical on the first day of class. Throughout the chapter the students are gradually introduced to concepts of leadership such as valuing diverse perspectives and taking into account one’s readiness to learn. Students were being taught to recognize the differences among peers and how these differences lead to a difference in needs. Questions being asked by the students provided the opportunity to divide the class into coalitions based on the answers provided by the professor, which is common when leading a team.

In chapter 3, Parks looks back at the case-in-point in the previous chapter to identify student assumptions of leadership. The students are depicted as entering the course with the belief that most tasks within leadership can be easily solved from lessons learned in the past. In reality, the students have yet to become aware of the importance in collaboration and progress. Students have yet to conceptualize and understand that each individual within a group enters a given scenario with a variety of needs, which at times may compete with the goals of the team. Parks quickly points out that leadership comes from those who can create progress within increasing ambiguity. A leadership relationship with ambiguity is seen as contradictory within American culture. Students have been raised to feel in control of their lives through such structures as meritocracy, but leaders must be aware of the importance of context. Successful leaders will not be able to control the outcomes of situation only the process in which it is handled. This will be the lesson that is most transferrable to a student’s future work within organizations on and off campus. Within this mind frame students will gradually understand how to see leadership at the ground and system level.

Chapter 4 looks through the eyes of those working in the small groups. The purpose of the chapter is to show the development of the students within a case-in-point environment. In small groups, students are asked to reexamine past failures. Students are provided the opportunity to move from the dance floor of an experience to the balcony to understand what patterns and relationships impacted outcomes. By exposing students to their peers’ leadership experiences they were able to recognize familiarity in mistakes and offer valid insight for future consideration. Typical to group work, some students felt victim to work avoidance mechanisms. Students focused on arguments or topics not related to the required work, which left many frustrated. When students reflected back on small group struggles they were able to understand that they were not using the time wisely and connecting it back to the larger discussion. Instead students complained to Teaching Assistants or family and friends, as opposed to confronting the group and building trust. The author shows the reader the importance of a small group structure in creating a comfortable environment that will begin the development of trust with the larger group. There is valid consideration for feelings being hurt in this process, but students are told to quit taking comments personally. Through the development of trust, students began to develop as a team. Students who were invisible on the first day of class were beginning to feel free and open to change. With a majority of students open to the process they were able to begin understanding the value in the different perspectives each student brought to the lecture hall.

In chapter 5, Parks examines the act of presence that occurs within the practice of adaptive leadership. Presence is typically known as the ability to hold the attention of a group and becomes increasingly important when working within complex systems. The trust and cred-
that affected their work routinely due to the course. More importantly the students used key words such as work avoidance activity and getting on the balcony when describing their experiences. Parks (2005) comes to the conclusion that this finding is important because students were able to speak of the “linkage between the consciousness that the language evokes and the competence it yields…” (p. 128). Students were able to look back years later and discuss specific techniques used when leading a group.

Chapter 7, Parks seeks to understand case-in-point teaching from the standpoint of the teacher and/or coach. The author interviews Ronald Heifitz to get a grasp on how case-in-point teaching developed as his primary teaching method. As Heifitz reflects back, he determines that the ability to teach adaptive leadership through a case-in-point is laborious and time-consuming work. It involves the teacher constantly modeling the techniques she or he is asking of the students. Teachers must be proactive self-aware and willing to put hours into self-reflecting on patterns that existed throughout the class. One who teaches through case-in-point must be comfortable and honest when wrongfully interpreting feelings in the class. The teacher must be fast to recover and create strategies to get the class back on topic. Teachers must also be comfortable with ambiguity. A course plan must be in place with a strong structure, which is seen in Heifitz’s course through the variety of learning environments in and out of the classroom. But, many times the class discussion can lead to areas that are unanticipated for better or worse. One must be able to improvise and find patterns in the “fog” that connect back to leadership. The most important aspect of the chapter is the understanding of the development of trust and credibility between the teacher and the class. Once developed the teacher can stretch students pass their comfort zones and into areas of leadership that involve juggling decision-making and keeping one’s credibility within a team.

Chapter 8 looks to determine if the case-in-point teaching method is transferable to teachers who are not Ronald Heifitz and within different disciplines. Through the experiences of five individuals who vary from teachers to consultants to coaches, Parks shows that this methodology is transferable and can be enhanced by the experiences of different individuals. Though each person added her or his own “spice” to its usage they did have three commonalities, which were:

(1) a curiosity about how to practice a quality of leadership education that can more adequately address systematic change on behalf of the common good, (2) an informed respect for the process of human growth and development, and (3) a willingness to take on a mode of working that challenges both their own and others’ assumptions about how teaching and learning take place. (Parks, 2005, p. 170).

Each participant who used the methodology was able to expand on these foundations and modify its use to her or his needs. Parks ends the chapter by asking Heifitz about transferability of the methodology and he states that by taking small steps and inserting adaptive practices within the curriculum anyone can be successful in its practice.

In chapter 9, Parks examines leadership as an art rather than an act of heroism. Parks seeks to remove the myth that leaders are a type of hero, especially in a complex society where there is an increasing need for leaders to learn the art of leadership. The chapter begins by confronting the power in myths. Parks (2005) states that myths “seed the assumptions by which we understand who we are, what is true and untrue, right and wrong” (p. 202). Myths cannot be easily removed and are an adaptive challenge in the 21st century. Parks looks to understand the historical roots of leadership and determine why they continue to exist in a vastly different environment. It is important to clearly understand these myths of leadership, as a main feature of adaptive leadership is to question cultural norms such as who should hold power. Parks believes that the practice of adaptive leadership can create new theories that are more appropriate for a post-industrial society. Parks (2005) defines it eloquently in that:

adaptive leadership mobilizes people to address the toughest problems that address new learning; such learning is driven by a potent mix of constraint and curiosity, and it spawns
new capacities, competencies, strategies, a clarified set of values, and new organizational and institutional forms within the context of the particular adaptive challenge being engaged (p. 208).

Adaptive leadership guides leaders to think strategically when solving modern problems. Parks sees leadership as an art because leaders must be able to be comfortable with ambiguity, question authority, and improvise similar to artists who paint on an easel or perform on stage.

In the concluding chapter, Parks confronts the strengths and weaknesses of teaching adaptive leadership in the classroom. Parks (2005) identifies the core competencies of adaptive leadership as: analyze; intervene; communicate; pause, reflect, pace; and take the heat and hold steady. The development of one’s skill to analyze a situation provides students with the confidence to recognize patterns that either hinder or progress the work within a group. By recognizing key patterns students are then able to intervene and help advance the group’s common purpose. Within intervention, communication becomes increasingly important, as the leader must understand the feelings and values of the group before moving forward. While the leader is quite active in this scenario she or he must step back and reflect to understand the effectiveness of both intervention and communication.

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comfortable with ambiguity.

A key strength to the practice of adaptive leadership is its ability to confront current leadership styles that are failing within the complex systems of the post-industrial society. By using the classroom as a laboratory, Professor Heifitz is able to unmask assumptions embedded in the students’ belief of power and leadership. Since the professor is seen as the person with total authority in the classroom, he is able to share this power to ensure that the students actively participate in their own learning process. The classroom begins taking the form of society and students become increasingly comfortable with challenging long-lived assumptions of who holds power that are entrenched in the subconscious. Other assumptions challenged by adaptive leadership within a case-in-point are: all students learn identical skills within a short period of time and that repetition equates to failure.

As adaptive leadership is a theory that is continuously being developed, it has many limitations. As Parks (2005) clearly notes, adaptive leadership is one theory and cannot cover every aspect of leadership. Adaptive leadership theory must be accompanied with discussions of the politics behind an organization. Adaptive leadership does not look into the importance of negotiating and how this may play out within coalition building. When one teaches adaptive leadership she or he must consider how it is being presented. Using the case-in-point method can become a taxing process on teachers and students. Students are pushed out of their comfort zone and become susceptible to complaining. The professor must consider if she or he can be resilient to the point in the course where students begin seeing the development of their learning process. Another weakness of this method is that it is built on trust. Students must trust that the professor is prepared with a lesson plan and not just letting the students lead the course off topic. Also, a small number of students may not be at a level of readiness to learn the material. The students put their trust in the professor’s hands that she or he will not leave behind a large percentage of the students to advance the few students with advanced leadership skills.

Professors must trust that the students have come prepared to class through meeting in small groups, submitting questionnaires, completing the required readings, and self-reflecting. The relationship between professors and students plays a large role in the success and failure of the course. Lastly, it is difficult to measure the success of case-in-point teaching qualitatively. Through quantitative measures, surveys have shown that students enjoy the class and feel that they have learned, but a qualitative study as seen within chapter 6 shows that it takes time, effort, and funding to understand its long-term effects.

Best Target Audience(s)

Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World is an informative read for those who want to consider challenging societal norms placed on leadership. It is an appropriate read for leadership researchers, faculty, higher education administrators, and students who are developing their leadership skills. Adaptive leadership is a leadership style that cuts across multiple sectors in society. It can be used in a classroom dedicated to the general learning of different leadership styles to leadership courses in the business or public policy department. The book can be used as a learning tool in both academic and student affairs when developing tomorrow’s leaders. Through Parks’ work, readers will gain an innova-
tive perspective on leadership and learn of a teaching methodology that can be practiced in a variety of environments.

Sharon Daloz Parks successfully provides the reader with great balance between classroom experiences and an understanding of adaptive leadership theory throughout the book. She is able to breakdown terms and metaphors used by Ronald Heifitz and leave the reader with a comprehension of how adaptive challenges can be expected and overcome at one’s job or in their personal life. Also, Parks provides the reader with both the strengths and weaknesses of adaptive leadership in the concluding chapter admitting that it is not the only leadership theory to be used at all times. This honesty reminds the reader that it is not important whose leadership theory is being used, but that progress is being implemented. This is a book that will be used over the next decade, as leaders continue to work with change.

References


Peter DeCrescenzo is a master’s degree student in the Higher Education Administration program at the University of Maryland - College Park working as Program Manager for the College of William & Mary’s Washington, DC office. He looks forward to being a liaison between college students and local community members throughout his career within student affairs and higher education.