Developmental Readiness: Where, When and Why to our leadership program offerings
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In this edition of Concepts and Connections we turn our attention to a theme of Developmental Readiness. The authors explore the questions of where, when and why developmental readiness is critical to examine when designing and implementing leadership programs.

This edition is wonderful because of the variety of programs, theories, and postulations expressed. Just as our students’ developmental readiness is not one size fits all, nor can our programs and approaches be such. We hope you enjoy, reflect, and learn from this edition of Concepts & Connections.

Connections from the Editor
by Michelle L. Kusel

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Transformational learning shapes people. They are different afterwards, in ways both they and others can recognize.” (Clark, 1993, p. 47).

When we think of the goals we have for leadership development, how can we want any less for our students than what this quote suggests? The goal of transformational learning is not simply to add to skills or knowledge but to initiate a complete change in perspective. Students see the world differently, see themselves differently, and behave in new ways. (Mezirow & Associates, 2000).

To that end, Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2013) encourage students to explore leadership development in terms of knowing, being and doing. The knowing and doing are clearly addressed as we teach leadership theories and provide opportunities to practice skills, and it is easy to see and measure development and improvement in these areas.

But is knowledge of these theories and ability to do the skills truly resulting in the kind of transformational learning we are aiming for? Have we made a difference in how students see themselves? Have we addressed the being?

Being is at the heart of transformational learning. What students believe leaders are supposed to be shapes their practice and the way they make meaning of the leadership of others. Are leaders supposed to:

• be controlling and give direction?
• be the visionaries who can get people to do what they want?
• be inclusive of other group members in processes of decision-making and vision setting?
• be inspirational, through re-framing and meaning-making?
• be role models who take responsibility for helping others learn to lead?

At one time, leadership educators may have thought the above differences of being were simply representing a variety of perspectives or opinions. We now understand that these differences are related to growth and human development (Day & Lance, 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella & Osteen, 2005). As the Leadership Identity Development model (Komives, et al.) has made clear, as students develop greater cognitive complexity, more nuanced interpersonal skills, greater self-awareness and self-monitoring skills, and a clearer sense of personal and social identity, their leadership beliefs and practices change. Their beliefs about what leaders are and their own identity as leaders, that sense of being, shifts.

Two important elements to achieving the goal of transformational leadership learning will be explored here.

• Understanding the role of human development and readiness for the transformation, including cognitive development and social identity development.
• Understanding the role of experiential learning pedagogy in that transformation, including the importance of developing reflection on experience as a habit and way of being, and the role of self-efficacy.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Most leadership development scholars are in agreement that until a certain level of cognitive and psycho-social readiness has been reached, students are not capable of practicing leadership in relational, reciprocal, or transformational ways (Avolio & Gibbons, 1989; Komives, et al, 2005). Several scholars have found Kegan’s (1982) constructive-developmental theory of adult development a particularly good example of this limitation (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Mc-
Cauley et al., 2006). The following table demonstrates this connection between human development and leadership practice using three stages from Kegan’s theory.

This theory, from the field of developmental psychology, describes stages of growth that intersect cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal development. At each stage, the person has a more complex way of making meaning of his/her world. At the heart of Kegan’s (1982) theory is that people make meaning through a certain system, which they are unaware of. When the complexity of the world cannot be explained by their current system, their meaning-making system shifts to accommodate. Eventually, through experiences and interactions with others who have different systems, they eventually become aware of having one themselves. The ability to reflect on their own system of meaning-making results in self-authorship, or the ability to consciously create one’s own meaning-making system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kegan’s Constructive-Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Way of Constructing Meaning</th>
<th>Implications for Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Order of Consciousness</td>
<td>Primarily, the pursuit of one’s own interests rather than common interests with others dominates motivations. Actions are determined based on the context of one’s own point of view. How others will react to their actions is of major consideration, but not because of a sense of empathy for others, but because they wish to avoid barriers to their goals.</td>
<td>Leaders at this stage are focused on their own goals. They perceive leadership as getting followers to help achieve the leader’s goal. They will find it difficult to conceptualize leadership roles that are framed in any other way than the traditional, “active leader/passive follower.” Similarly, the concept of a shared goal, or the importance of understanding other’s perceptions and values will be lost on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Order of Consciousness</td>
<td>The need to belong now trumps one’s own needs. They are able to put aside what they want in recognition that another course of action would benefit another person or the common good. The sense of self is constructed by how it aligns and remains loyal to the people and ideas with which it identifies.</td>
<td>Leaders at this stage focus on the needs of others as well as on their own needs. They can connect with those around them, and trust in others. However, they are not yet able to commit to their own values when the group’s behavior conflicts with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Order of Consciousness</td>
<td>The person is able to separate the self from the social environment and create an internal set of criteria for judging situations and making choices. The self develops its own belief system and is able to take a stand, set personal limits, and self-direct. A sense of identity is created that results from internal belief rather than external expectations. Still, one’s agenda may be conscious or unconscious. The person’s goals or plans may have many blind spots that go unexamined.</td>
<td>Leaders at this stage are now cognitively capable of committing to their values and standards while balancing the needs of others. They can be truly inclusive of other perspectives, both in identifying the group’s goals and in setting standards related to the processes for reaching those goals. The continued practice of reflection on experience will help this leader continue to learn and develop as their unexamined goals surface to their conscious attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Stage</td>
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**SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP IDENTITY**

The LID model (Komives, et al, 2006) articulates the stages of developing a leader identity. While this model helpfully illuminates our students’ experiences with leadership, it is even more eye-opening when considered in the context of other identity development theories at our disposal.

A typical struggle in student organizations occurs when the positional leader of a group is operating from stage 4, *Leadership Differentiated* and most members of that group are operating from stage 3, *Leader Identified*. Stage 4 is characterized by a process-oriented approach
to leadership that appreciates a wide variety of interdependent roles played in the group. Stage 3 students see group roles as hierarchical and expect “good” leaders to make decisions and be directive. Rather than being recognized as leading from a place of more understanding and complexity, stage 4 leaders in these cases are seen by their group members as weak and ineffective.

In this example the LID model offers a useful way of helping our students re-frame their experience in ways that recognize their on-going development. However, consider how much more useful the model is when we weave in what we know from other student development theories. What if this particular leader is an Asian-American woman leading a mostly White, male group? From what stage of racial identity and gender identity development is our leader operating? How are these frameworks likely affecting how she interprets her experiences in this group? What about her group members? They are not responding to her stage 4 leadership approaches in an isolated way, but in the context of their assumptions about African-American Women, given their own racial and gender identity development.

Student development and leadership development theory should not be examined or applied in isolation. We cannot unbraid race, gender and leadership identities that students experience at once.

THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The literature on transformative learning emphasizes the critical role that learners themselves play. It is the learners who must construct meaning, and eventually, learn to play a role in creating their own meaning-making systems. This requires becoming critical of their own assumptions, and aware of their frames of reference and meaning-making systems (Mezirow, 2000).

Leadership educators know better than anyone that development is an on-going process that cannot be done TO students. Our role is to create supportive environments in which to challenge students to question their current meaning-making structures and promote growth toward greater complexity. It makes sense then, that the scholarship on the pedagogy of leadership education emphasizes the importance of experiential education, and its tenants of action and reflection in order to facilitate learning (Komives et al. 2005; Day, 2011; Zaccaro & Halpin, 2004; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999).

Parks (2005) saw parallels between the experiential approaches to teaching leadership and those used to teach art, “…in the art studio no one expects a lecture…. Students observe each other’s work, exchange insights, and return to their canvases to try again. Mistakes are not seen as failures; they are encouraged and rewarded as inevitable steps in an ongoing learning process that requires trial and error….Everything in the art studio seems to reinforce the student’s responsibility for learning – and for taking risk.” (p. 48-49).

As we work to create optimal learning environments, holding students responsible for their own learning and development requires us to give them the meaning-making and reflection skills to direct their own growth. An interesting stream of leadership development literature has suggested that the primary work of leadership development is to help the individual become more capable of learning from experience (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Day, Van Velsor & Guthrie, 1998). These authors use the term practical intelligence to describe the characteristic of people who learn quickly and deeply from their experiences. It includes cultivating an attitude that embraces problems as learning opportunities. It also places greater responsibility on the learner to be active and intentional. Since most meaningful developmental experiences occur within the context of the ongoing work rather than in training programs, the most successful learners will be those who seek out their own challenging experiences and draw lessons from them (Day & Halpin, 2004).
SELF-EFFICACY AND ORIENTATION TOWARDS GOALS

An important issue related to the ability to learn from experiences is leadership self-efficacy, or the extent to which a person believes they have leadership ability. Whether a person actually does have that ability is distinct from his or her self-efficacy for it, but we are learning the two concepts are intertwined (Dugan & Komives, 2010). It is natural perhaps, to avoid doing things we do not believe we are good at. So it is critical to consider the connection between level of self-efficacy and the likelihood that students will seek out the kinds of challenging experiences they can learn from. Students with low self-efficacy for leadership are likely turning down opportunities to engage in leadership, therefore limiting the learning experiences they will have. Fortunately, Bandura (1997) has identified ways to enhance self-efficacy. Leadership educators should be sure to provide: direct experiences that enhance skills that are useful in other contexts; opportunities to observe peers successfully performing leadership roles; verbal encouragement; and opportunities to practice reflection and mindfulness in order to recognize and respond proactively to stress and anxiety.

For similar reasons, students’ orientation toward goals has been shown to relate to self-efficacy and developmental readiness (Dweck, 1986; Avolio, 2004). Students who see tasks as opportunities to learn are more likely to take on new challenges and reflect on the experience. Students who see these same tasks as performances, or platforms to demonstrate their abilities, will tend to choose tasks they already know they do well, limiting the opportunity for new learning.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

As leadership educators with student development foundations, we have access to a wealth of scholarship on the intersection of cognitive and interpersonal development on identity development issues. I look forward to the continued conversations about this issue at the NCLP’s National Leadership Symposium, which will feature the country’s leading scholars on this issue.

Years ago, I wrapped up my first experience teaching a graduate level course on leadership development by facilitating a discussion aimed at reviewing and integrating all the topics we had explored through the course. We had explored the literature connecting leadership development to cognitive development, interpersonal, intrapersonal, ethical, spiritual and identity development. We had also explored pedagogy in relation to facilitating leadership development. We had discussed the goals of leadership development programs as being transformational learning goals, rather than simply knowledge of theory. A particularly insightful masters student asked, “What I’m struggling with is, as a practitioner working with student leaders, what is the difference between leadership development and college student development?” How we answer that question for ourselves shines a bright light on how we approach our work.

REFERENCES


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**Dr. Wendy Wagner** is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement at George Mason University.
A popular interview question targeting newer student affairs professionals is, “How have you utilized student development theory in your work?” The question is designed to provide candidates an opportunity to share their expertise in how students grow and development and how these professionals have built a bridge between theory and their own informed practice. Unfortunately, the concept of “meeting students where they are at” has only rarely been applied to leadership education at an organizational level. Almost ten years ago, Susan Komives and colleagues published initial research on student leadership identity development (LID) (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2004), in which they described a six-stage process of change in how students conceptualize leadership and their own leadership-oriented goals and actions. While this seminal research was designed, in part, to create space for leadership educators and researchers to consider the psycho-social state of students entering into leadership programs in college, a general assumption pervades that students who participate are somehow “ready” for the various leadership curricula they encounter. Many experienced trainers know that this is too often not the case.

Most practical educators are familiar with the acronym “KSA,” which stands for Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes, and generally describes a model of education with an explicit focus on developing students’ cognitive understanding, practical competence, and internal state and motivation. Effective programs incorporate aspects of each of these foci into their curriculum. In the context of leadership programs, there is a heavy emphasis on the development of students’ skills (the “S”). In addition, many programs emphasize furthering students’ knowledge of leadership theory and practice (the “K”). However, far fewer programs focus on the “A,” which in a leadership context represents students’ leadership self-efficacy and motivation – essentially, their attitudes surrounding their practice of leadership. While personal attributes such as confidence and motivation are often considered “traits,” (i.e. immutable qualities), recent research nevertheless suggests one’s leadership is only 30 percent heritable, meaning 70 percent can be developed.

“Leadership educators and researchers should be asking the question, “What comes first: the development of leadership capacity or the development of leadership self-efficacy?”
Leadership self-efficacy is defined as students’ confidence in their ability to be successful engaging in a leadership relationship with others (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008). Bandura, a pioneer in the general field of self-efficacy, states that people’s confidence in their abilities provides the foundation necessary to consciously decide to engage in an action (1997). Moreover, leadership self-efficacy has emerged as a key indicator of several leadership-oriented capacities (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Leadership educators and researchers should be asking the question, “What comes first: the development of leadership capacity or the development of leadership self-efficacy?” Countless students pass up both formal and informal opportunities for leadership development and training because they possess a lack of confidence. What should introductory programs focus on? More research is necessary to begin to understand the complex relationship between leadership capacity and leadership self-efficacy.

Students’ motivation to lead represents an additional factor that educators should consider in determining how their programs match the developmental readiness of their participants. Research on the LID model, for example, reveals that students’ early conceptions of leadership situate it as something other people do, not as something they should be engaging in (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, & Mainella, 2006). A student occupying an earlier stage of the LID model presumably would avoid any voluntary or elective leadership development program as a waste of their time. Motivation to lead, moreover, is not simply the desire to engage in a leadership action. Chan and Drasgow (2001), describe a three-pronged model: 1) Affective identity, where students are motivated by their internal vision of themselves as leaders; 2) Social normative, where motivation to lead springs from a sense of responsibility to the group and a desire not to let it down; and 3) Non-calculative, where motivation emerges because students avoid rationally weighing the personal costs and benefits to leading their peers. It logically follows that students more likely to be ready to engage in leadership development are those who feel they are worthy of being considered a leader, and feel a sense of responsibility to the groups to which they belong that outweighs the personal cost-benefit analysis of leading their peers.

A central question for leadership educators and researchers in the coming years is to systemically explore the relationships between leadership self-efficacy, motivation to lead, and leadership capacity. Does one lead to the others, and therefore should be primarily cultivated in introductory programs? How can each be developed, and are there ways for curricula to integrate their advancement? What students are left out as a result of their own self-selection? Students who continue to believe that leadership is something for others to practice should be intentionally cultivated for participation in introductory programs. From a practical standpoint, should these programs seek to develop students’ confidence, motivation, or capacity? How should they be advertised to students?

The answers to these questions hold practical implications for all programs designed to be inclusive of a wide variety of students. “One-size-fits-all” initiatives may admirably seek to recruit from the widest possible population, but may inadvertently turn off students who feel their time is being wasted. Programs designed with introductory and sequentially more advanced opportunities, however, may also unintentionally discourage students through participation in a lock-step process that treats all students the same.

So how can educators seek to intentionally increase the developmental readiness of students to improve their leadership motivation, confidence, and capacity –
to “meet them where they are at?” Hannah and Avolio (2010) suggest that two key competencies for students are their self-awareness and meta-cognitive capacities. Students who can reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, and practice “second-order thinking” (i.e. thinking about how they think and make meaning), should be better able to integrate the leadership lessons they come across into their own learning. Therefore, programs at a variety of developmental levels should liberally incorporate opportunities for reflection and feedback. As professional educators who espouse the views that “leadership can be learned” and “all students can develop leadership skills,” we should intentionally integrate the developmental readiness of our students into our curriculum and marketing campaigns.

REFERENCES


Dave Rosch serves as an Assistant Professor in the College of ACES at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His particular areas of interest include programmatic training in leadership development and the accurate assessment of leadership effectiveness. He has published many articles on leadership theory and pedagogy, currently serves as the co-coordinator of the annual National Leadership Symposium, and has served in leadership positions in the International Leadership Association (ILA). He also facilitates leadership programs throughout the United States in conjunction with LeaderShape, Inc. He earned his doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Syracuse University, a master's in Student Affairs in Higher Education from Colorado State University, and a bachelor’s degree from Binghamton University (NY).

Check out www.socialchangemodel.org for more information on the Social Change Model of Leadership Development. Find the latest details and share resources with colleagues.
Based on the belief that leadership involves a core set of skills that can be learned, the University of the Pacific has developed a common framework and systematic approach to helping students develop their leadership identities and competencies. This process involves learning how to become leaders in both personal and professional contexts. Thus the purpose of the Leadership YOU program is to help students develop independent leadership identities and integrative leadership competencies that prepare them for a lifetime of personal and professional success.

INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

Leadership as an academic goal at the University of the Pacific has been widely vetted and strongly embraced by faculty and staff for many years. Leadership is included in Pacific’s mission statement formulated in 1996: to provide a superior, student-centered learning experience integrating liberal arts and professional education and preparing individuals for lasting achievement and responsible leadership in their careers and communities. Leadership is expressly included in the core values and educational commitments at Pacific. In 2009, Pacific faculty, staff, and administration formally adopted ‘collaboration and leadership’ as one of Pacific’s seven institutional learning objectives.

Following a six-month drafting and dialogue process that included contribution from students through student government, staff through the Staff Advisory Council and other groups, faculty through their School/College, the Council of Deans, Academic Council, and the President’s Cabinet, a definition and guiding statements for leadership development at Pacific were formally adopted to guide educational efforts with students. By having all of this institutional alignment around a shared definition of leadership, our office has been able to cultivate and develop programming that serves students across the institution with a uniform message around leadership at Pacific.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

Implicit in Pacific’s model of responsible leadership is the idea that leadership potential lives within each student, albeit differently based on a unique combination of background, skills, and experiences. It is also believed that by learning and improving on a set of core competencies, one can begin to realize their leadership potential. The five core areas of competence most often associated with the development of an individual’s leadership identity include: 1) Awareness of Self and Others, 2) Connecting to Others, 3) Collaborating with Others, 4) Inspiring Others, 5) Considering Others (Empathy), and 6) Presence of Coaching Relationships (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2002; Komives et al., 2005). The mastery of competencies in these five areas will assist individuals to cultivate what Magolda (2009) refers to as an authentic internal voice. Developing a reliable internal voice will permit one to better understand and align his or her values to future actions. It is here in the cultivation of this internal voice that one’s leadership identity evolves.

The Leadership YOU program is a series of modules that address the core competency areas and are modified to the needs of our campus partners. Each module includes common activities, reading and writ-
ing prompts, links to relevant YouTube videos or TED talks, and a PowerPoint template. The full program includes the following eight modules:

1. Leadership, is it in you? (Leadership theories)
2. Self and social awareness (Leadership Identity Self-Assessment)
3. Intercultural awareness and consideration (Consideration)
4. A capacity to care: The rise of Homo-empathicus (Empathy)
5. Learning to collaborate effectively (Collaboration)
6. Learning to inspire others – My Y (Inspiration and Purpose)
7. Preparing for practice (Next steps)

Regardless of how the program is altered to serve our campus partners, it always includes an overview of leadership theories and the completion of the Leadership Identity Self Assessment (LISA), also referred to the Leadership Journey. Leadership theories are always covered to illustrate why we believe what we do about leadership at Pacific and to acknowledge that there are other schools of thought around leadership. The LISA is one of the main methods used to establish students developmental levels related to leadership. Since this is completed at the beginning of the program, adjustments can be made to ensure that the facilitators are using developmentally appropriate language, examples, and discussion questions. Based on what we know about our student population related to leadership self-efficacy through our participation in the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) and several other research projects, we are mindful that our students often do not view themselves as leaders or identify with the term thus making leadership education a challenging task.

Leadership YOU is built on a concept, practice, feedback loop. The modules provide the concepts and information with some activities for practice. Beyond the activities in the modules, often another group project experience is added to provide a larger opportunity for students to practice leadership, such as a community service project. For structured feedback, a coaching component has been designed for students to experience leadership coaching, specific to the stage or transition of LID they are in, from a trained staff member.

PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS

Leadership YOU is dynamic and unique because its module format allows for it to easily change based on the course needs, time constraints, and student developmental level. Created in 2010, this program serves as an introductory leadership program serving a wide variety of student populations. It has been used in a first year undergraduate leadership academy run through the School of Engineering, in courses for positional student leaders serving across the Division of Student Affairs, and even with first year professional dental students. Leadership YOU has functioned independently as a full course but often lives as a component of other larger courses. For example, a course for Orientation leaders will feature four weeks of Leadership YOU modules as a component of an eleven week course that also serves to teach role specific skills in addition to leadership development.

In order to serve such a broad population of students, we meet with each of our respective campus partners to establish specific learning outcomes to build their individualized program. After establishing the time constraints like a certain number of class sessions and the duration of the time allotted for these experiences, a program is built specifically to meet the needs and learning outcomes of the campus partner and the students. A customized program is built by looking at the full module materials to put together the type of experience our partner desires. If a campus partner would like to facilitate the sessions, we meet with the partner for training and frequently check-in to provide support.

A fully constructed program includes PowerPoint workbooks and a pre- and post-assessment to measure
student learning as a result of the experience. Equipped with these resources, campus partners can opt to facilitate the modules on their own or receive support from our office for facilitation. The Office of Student Leadership Development oversees the processing of all assessment data regardless of who facilitates the experience, including the LISA.

DATA AND IMPACT

Assessment plays a major role in how we adjust the module content to meet students where they are developmentally. Prior to beginning any Leadership YOU sessions, our office facilitates a pre-assessment to gauge students’ attitude and knowledge around leadership. The pre-assessment has both likert and free response questions built around the program’s learning outcomes. The likert responses are often inflated but the qualitative data from the free response questions provide rich data to establish students’ perspectives on leadership, which are often very positional and focused on ‘getting things done.’ The previously mentioned LISA also helps with benchmarking and customizing the experience to the students that are participating.

At the end of each program, we facilitate a post-assessment. Over our three years of assessment on this introductory program an average of over 70% of participants say that this program has changed their understanding of leadership. Our most common take-away from the program is the understanding that ‘leadership is a process, not a position’ and that ‘leadership takes a group.’ Also noteworthy is that students acknowledge that, ‘not only do they feel they still have a great deal to develop related to leadership’, but they feel, ‘they know what they need to do to be successful.’ In relation to the students understanding of social, emotional, and intercultural competencies, the responses alluded to acknowledging the differences people have related to culture, ideas, and norms including empathy as significant to understanding and relating to others.

CONCLUSION

This program is not a silver bullet or “one size fits all” related to leadership development. It has been a step in the right direction towards creating a program that engages all types of learners in an attempt to make leadership accessible for all students. Our overall goal is that this program plants a seed for students to continue wanting to learn and grow to become responsible leader not just in their professions, but in their communities and families.

REFERENCES


Kristina Juarez is the new Director for Student Life and Leadership Programs at the University of Nebraska, Omaha and previously served as the Director for Student Leadership Development and First Year Experience Programs at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. Kristina has earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Pacific. Kristina has designed and implemented high impact leadership development programs ranging from leadership education in student employment to innovative first year experience programs like the One Word Project and the Mountains, Ocean, Valley Experience (MOVE).

Dr. Daniel J. Shipp is the Chief Student Affairs Officer at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in education from both UNL and UNO respectively. Dan went on to earn his doctorate in Higher Education Administration and Leadership from the University of the Pacific. In the field of Student Affairs, Dan is a recognized architect of high impact student involvement facilities, programs, and services including developing a wide variety of nationally recognized student involvement and leadership development programs including Leadership You, My Y, the One Word Project, and MOVE.
Having been fortunate to have spent time at some incredible institutions, I would like to share a brief tale of two centers, on two different campuses, each working towards integrating developmental readiness into their leadership development programs. Perhaps you will resonate with one or both, as I have finding commonalities as we strive towards delivering the best possible programs.

The two centers are the Center for Student Leadership (CSL) at Kennesaw State University (KSU) and the Holden Center for Leadership & Community Engagement at the University of Oregon (UO). Each serves different student populations (geographic location, student geographic origin, retention rates, etc.) yet both work towards delivering the best possible suite of programs and opportunities for students to learn about leadership and begin to develop their own leadership identity. I served as Assistant Director for Curriculum, Assessment & Evaluation in the CSL at KSU for five years and now serve as Director of the Holden Center at the UO. One common thread is that both centers continue to wrestle with integrating developmental readiness into their programming.

### Kennesaw State University
- **Center**: Center for Student Leadership
- **Student Population**: 24,600
- **Founded**: 1963
- **Minority Students**: 31%
- **International Students**: 6%
- **Avg. Age of Undergraduates**: 23
- **Unique Facts**: 50% of student enrollment came from county where school is situated in 2012

### University of Oregon
- **Center**: Holden Center for Leadership & Community Engagement
- **Student Population**: 24,600
- **Founded**: 1872
- **Minority Students**: 19.5%
- **International Students**: 10%
- **Avg. Age of Undergraduates**: 22
- **Unique Facts**: Member of the Association of American Universities since 1969

Both KSU and UO host exceptional leadership centers. KSU’s Center for Student Leadership offers a flagship, three-year, cohort-based program called Leaders in Kennesaw (LINK) that asks students to apply their learning and skills to social challenges in the local, national, and international communities such that each graduate has experience with partnering with community groups and responding to community needs three times on three different scales. Other innovative programs include the President’s Emerging Global Schol-
“A developmental readiness perspective requires that programs and program facilitators be informed by developmental theory, but also, and crucially, that both programs and facilitators are flexible enough to adapt as needed to the moment, the audience and the environment.”

ars – which invites high-achieving incoming freshmen to complete a cohort-based experience that helps to prepare them for pursuing difficult post-Baccalaureate scholarships and awards such as Truman, Rhodes, and Fullbright – and the THRIVE program, which invites incoming first-time, full-time students with a high school GPA of 3.0-3.49 to participate in a program incorporating a first-year seminar, academic coaching and leadership development, with the option of continuing into the LINK program after the first semester.

Alternatively, the Holden Center for Leadership & Community Engagement at the UO currently specializes in offering exceptional episodic opportunities for leadership development including hosting a campus session of the LeaderShape Institute, a volunteer program of over 500 participants called DuckCorps, student-led community engagement grant projects, and a strong tradition of alternative break experiences run year-round. This past academic year the Holden Center facilitated 10 alternative breaks, 4 international and 6 domestic, with more than 150 students involved.

Both centers are evolving and operating under different circumstances. Yet the similarities in vision are remarkable given their different starting positions. KSU’s Center for Student Leadership specializes in facilitating deep and lengthy development programs, typically around a cohort model. This can foster dramatic impact for participants, but also limits the programs’ appeal and potential audience. UO’s Holden Center offers much broader but oftentimes less intensive and shorter opportunities that tend to be easily accessible for many students. While I was at KSU we were interested in complementing our existing cohort programs with short-term experiences to reach more students. I can speak to the UO Holden Center’s ambitions in saying that we are aiming at developing longer-term opportunities for students, including cohort-based, multi-year programs. The desired end point seems to be the same even if the pathways differ.

At KSU’s CSL, efforts are underway to integrate the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model and Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) into the curriculum and content of its programs. This has manifested in a complete curriculum revision for the LINK program over the last two years and intentional use of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI, the tool of the DMIS) in the PEGS and LINK programs, in particular for helping students to prepare for and make sense of experiences abroad. The use of these two models also coincides with an ongoing focus on learning outcome development and effective program and student assessment practices. In some ways, increasing the incorporation of a developmental readiness philosophy is easy in the CSL as most CSL students are engaged with the center over a sustained period of time, sometimes the entirety of their undergraduate career. In that context, a developmental readiness approach is both natural and necessary.

In the Holden Center, we are at an earlier but rich stage of the process, still exploring how developmental readiness can improve the experience and outcomes for students in short-term engagements. This is a slightly trickier question given the restricted timelines and difficulty in assessing at multiple points.

We are talking about a wide range of theorists and models including Mezirow’s transformational learning framework (1997), Komives et al.’s Leadership Identity Development model (2005, 2006), Bennett’s DMIS

The purpose, of course, is not to spur the adoption of each theory, but instead to come to an informed decision, as a staff, as to which theories or which pieces we will employ in intentionally (re)designing our programs.

One of the most practical and immediate outcomes has been the evolution of our alternative break program. This next year we will transform our trip leader training process into a year-long commitment, regardless of the timing of their particular trip. This sustained contact will allow us to provide additional training and development experiences throughout the year and should better prepare the trip leaders to help facilitate experiences for the general participants that are appropriate and are composed of the proper amount of challenge and support. This is just a part of the evolution; it cannot stop with just the trip leaders. We must also help the participants develop the appropriate language and methods to make sense of their experiences. We are wrestling with this now.

The alternative break program is particularly challenging because of its structural design and inherent limitations: approximately 15 students, many of whom do not know any other individual, come together for an intensive 1- or 2-week experience. I helped to facilitate a trip to Jamaica this past spring. The opportunity was ripe for observations about privilege, race, agency, impact and the challenges of service work, yet my fellow staff and I struggled to draw students into such conversations at anything more than a surface level of depth. They were not ready, and we had not prepared them, had not helped them equip themselves adequately, to have these conversations.

By investing heavily in our student staff we hope to craft better experiences for general participants. By paying close attention to developmental readiness, both for our student staff and our participants, we hope to ensure that the experiences and reflective conversations are appropriately guided to meet participants where they are.

One way to frame the question driving this is: How do we craft and facilitate experiences consistent with Mezirow’s (1997) transformative learning theory in which experiences change individuals’ frames of reference? We want to create environments that can advance students’ intercultural competency; to further introduce students to this broad, scary, thrilling, immense and intimate world that we share together. We want to help students in developing a sense of shared responsibility and possibility; to further kindle respect for otherness; to increase recognition of common histories and shared futures.

We do this through providing the right challenge, the right support, the right intellectual frameworks and the right environments for students to experiment, reflect and take stock. A developmental readiness perspective requires that programs and program facilitators be informed by developmental theory, but also, and crucially, that both programs and facilitators are flexible enough to adapt as needed to the moment, the audience and the environment.

I offer this piece of two leadership centers at two campuses as contrasting examples of programming approaches that are both working towards integrating developmental readiness more intentionally into programming. The ultimate goal is to provide the best possible experiences for students such that they will have the chance to learn and reflect in rich, challenging environments. Towards that end, we should use every appropriate tool available to us and hold ourselves accountable to that grand student affairs vision of developing the whole person.

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The concept of developmental readiness in leadership education is hardly a new one, but the attention directed toward it recently seems to be increasing. In the higher education arena this is likely a function of more theoretically and empirically grounded approaches to leadership education as well as intensified pressure to demonstrate the impact of leadership interventions. The purpose of this column is to provide an overview of the theoretical and conceptual factors that comprise developmental readiness and introduce concepts related to developmental sequencing of leadership interventions as a means of translating developmental readiness to practice.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS?

The most significant source of writing on the concept of developmental readiness comes from the collective efforts of various research teams under the direction of Bruce Avolio and Sean Hannah. Their work in this arena addresses the central proposition that we must do more to maximize the efficacy of leadership education programs and ensure an adequate return on the resources invested. Hannah and Avolio (2010) define developmental readiness as “the ability and motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and appropriate new leader KSAAs (knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) into knowledge structures along with concomitant changes to identity to employ those KSAAs” (p. 1182).

Hannah and Avolio (2010) synthesize their research on developmental readiness into a framework comprised of two component parts each with three factors. The first dimension of leader developmental readiness addresses an individual’s motivation to develop and includes the following factors:

- **Interest/Goals** - The degree to which a person exhibits intrinsic motivation to learn particularly as it relates to leadership concepts;
- **Learning Goal Orientation** - Representing a relatively static trait this differentiates between individuals who are performance goal oriented and as such less see their abilities as relatively fixed versus those with a learning goal orientation who see the potential for incremental gains in their abilities;
- **Developmental Efficacy** - Refers to an individual’s beliefs regarding the likelihood of success when engaging in learning experiences and ability to learn and employ KSAAs.

The three motivational factors function in two important ways. First, they serve as gatekeepers to leadership learning experiences often dictating who does and does not self-select into training and education opportunities. Second, the motivational factors point to the differing degrees of psychological safety necessary for individuals within learning experiences to benefit.

The second dimension of leader developmental readiness addresses an individual’s ability to develop and includes the following factors:

- **Self-Awareness/Concept Clarity** - Reflects the ability to accurately define one’s personal attributes with consistency and general stability over time;
- **Self-Complexity** - Defined as a domain-specific (i.e., one may different levels of complexity varying leadership tasks) cognitive skill that “represents how well a leader differentiates as well as integrates various sources and types of information” (p. 1183);
- **Meta-Cognitive Ability** - A higher-order cognitive skill that considers the quality of and degree to which an individual can make meaning of how they are
thinking.

The factors reflecting ability to develop represent largely internal cognitive and identity structures that inform the ways in which individuals experience learning opportunities.

The work of Avolio and Hannah’s research teams using multiple empirical, longitudinal studies of leader developmental readiness demonstrates its critical impact on leadership learning. It also links developmental readiness with effects on both leadership capacity and leadership efficacy (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008; Hannah, Woolfolk, & Lord, 2009). Furthermore, scholars suggest the importance of context in framing developmental readiness and in particular the presence of positive organizational climates that foster psychological safety and cultivate strengths-based approaches (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

**APPLYING THE CONCEPTS OF LEADER DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS**

Avolio and Hannah (2008) situate leader developmental readiness as primarily concerned with “how to best set the conditions to successfully accelerate development before placing leaders through leader development programs or experiences” (p. 331). Their major focus is on pre-assessment and the importance of finding ways to examine the readiness of participants in educational programs prior to delivery. When appropriate they suggest the administration of a battery of surveys associated with the component parts of developmental readiness so that educators can specifically target the intervention (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). However, this is not always viable depending on the nature of the intervention, size and composition of participants, and access to resources. Therefore, they also suggest observational strategies, input from mentors and supervisors, and the use of simulations that aid in the identification of varying developmental motivations and abilities among individuals within groups.

Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009) offer interesting connections to the concept of developmental readiness by positioning adult and identity development as essential elements of leader development. Perhaps most transferable is their discussion of the need to build the necessary “scaffolding” for learners so that interventions are within “developmental reach” or the zone of proximal development (Day et al., 2009, p. 25). In leadership education this involves recognizing that developmentally learners typically must first cultivate leader-related competencies before they can fully understand and develop leadership-related competencies. They further caution against developmental mismatches between interventions and individuals’ levels of readiness as it has the potential to cause harm. Addressing this requires attention toward environmental supports present to leverage learning as well as accurately gauging existing performance levels of participants. The latter involves accurately distinguishing between maximal and typical performance as one assesses developmental readiness. Maximal performance typically reflects high-stakes situations that elicit top performance or situations in which individuals are aware that they are being evaluated. Typical performance reflects the day-to-day standard ability. When the gap between the two is large educators need to 1) find ways to bring them into better alignment as this is associated with readiness for learning, and 2) ensure that intervention content and pedagogy do not target learning at the maximal level as this may be too advanced for the learner.

Emerging research from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership reflects the shared needs for recognizing developmental influences in leadership learning as well as sequencing program content and pedagogy.
based on developmental readiness. Empirical evidence points to the influence of identity and cognitive factors in the leadership development process as critical mediators of leadership learning (Dugan, Bohle, Woelker, & Cooney, in press; Dugan, Kodama, & Gebhardt, 2012). Furthermore, research found that the process of leadership development is largely linear with individual leadership capacities influencing group capacities and group capacities in turn influencing systems capacities. There were no direct relationships between individual and systems capacities as the relationship was fully mediated by group-level leadership capacities (Dugan et al., in press).

This suggests the need to target intervention content in a more developmentally sequenced fashion to best capitalize on developmental readiness. It would also appear to support Day et al.’s (2009) assertion that “individuals must first have the basic kinds of skills to be able to build effective relationships with others before social capital that is embedded in those relationships with others can be realized” (p. 26).

**CONCLUSION**

The concepts associated with developmental readiness provide greater insight and detail in how best to design, target, and deliver leadership interventions with the potential to maximize participant learning. Key to this is recognizing the need to move away from one-size-fits-all program designs, assumptions that quantity of time on task equates to learning, and that exposure to complex topics automatically elevates the sophistication of meaning-making. The reality is that the burden for targeting content and pedagogy falls on the shoulders of leadership educators and requires substantive attention to meeting students where they are at in their developmental journeys.

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