Inside This Issue:

4 Profiles of Inclusive Leadership: How to Identify and Nurture the Leadership the World Needs
by Allan W. Bird, Ph.D, Chris T. Cartwright, Ed.D, Mark E. Mendenhall, Ph.D

10 Learning by Design: Connective Leadership - A Model for Learning Inclusive Leadership
by Chris T. Cartwright, Ed.D, Maura Harrington, Ph.D, Jill Robinson, Ph.D, Kevin Walsh, PsyD

15 Program Spotlight: Distinguished Gentleman’s Club
by Tammie Preston-Cunningham, Ph.D, Tonya Driver, Ph.D

18 Program Spotlight: Modus Vivendi Society
by Carrie Grogan, M. Ed

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Introduction to Theme
by Kelsey Bowen, M. Ed
Connections and Concepts Editor

As leadership educators it is our responsibility to create environments where students are learning how to lead responsibly in our global society. This publication reminds me how greatly we need inclusive leaders in our world today. The question that kept bubbling up for me when reading authors’ research and thought work is “how are we both developing inclusive leaders, and modeling inclusive leadership?”

I hope you enjoy the wisdom and scholarship from contributors as they discuss research, programs and best practices for cultivating inclusive leadership in our students. May this issue inspire and encourage you to continue developing inclusive leaders and modeling inclusive leadership.

Kelsey P. Bowen
Profiles of Inclusive Leadership - How to Identify and Nurture the Leadership the World Needs

by Allan Bird, Ph.D, Chris Cartwright, Ed.D, and Mark E. Mendenhall, Ph.D

The challenges and opportunities that the global context provides leaders are complex and require unique mindsets, skillsets, and heart-sets in order to effectively navigate them. When a leader aspires to span cultural boundaries, this ability to accomplish goals with and for globally diverse populations becomes complex. Identifying and nurturing global leaders who have the essential competencies for inclusive leadership is the focus of this article.

Accreditation is often a driver of change in higher education program initiatives that have the goal of teaching global competencies to secondary school and university students, and the number of accrediting bodies (both general education and discipline-specific) that are requesting evidence of intercultural competence in students has increased tremendously over the past five years. For example, the US Department of Education recently issued a report, “Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness” (US DOE, 2017). There are many aspects of this framework that are of value to readers of this article; most germane to this article is the goal that graduates be able to demonstrate “advanced socio-emotional and leadership skills, [and the] ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with people in cross-cultural settings.” (2017)

As leadership educators, our students might ask us, ‘Why does inclusion matter?’ We then need to guide them to understand that in organizational life it is necessary to both work with – and through – people. Inclusive leadership gives people a purpose and environment around which they can “wrap their hearts, minds, and souls” (Stevens, 2016).

“Inclusive leadership is about bridge building. It involves careful listening, outreach to people with different perspectives, and persistent, stubborn efforts to find common ground. It is founded on mutual respect — a conscious display of trustworthy behaviors is key, as trust is the currency of inclusion.”

(Gundling, 2017)

We recognize that building trust to enable inclusion is a principle that takes practice-practice in connecting with and motivating culturally-diverse followers. To make this point more concrete, please consider the following questions that our colleague, Michael J. Stevens, likes to ask managers:

True/false quiz:
(A) People are our most important and valuable resource!
(B) People are the main source of our headaches and hassles!

The answer to both questions is obviously true. To leverage the value that employees can offer while reducing the hassles that employees can create, leaders must motivate followers. Leaders need to learn how to cultivate their followers’ emotions to accomplish the organization’s goals. Enthusiastic, passionate, highly engaged responses from people will depend on whether they feel honored, respected, and treated with fairness. What leaders do and how they behave will determine whether their followers feel this way or not. Leaders’ actions are driven by their character and competence (including their intercultural competencies) to effectively lead others in a global and diverse work environment.
Identifying Inclusive Leadership Competencies

Identifying the competencies that are essential for intercultural competence and that support inclusive leadership in a global context is the start of this process (Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010). A second perspective is added by identifying the culturally-bounded values and behavioral preferences that students have embraced throughout their lives (Gundling, Hogan, & Cvitkovich, 2011). We present these models together so readers can acquire insights that will aid them in helping people in their leadership when encountering cultural differences in a global context.

At the core of much leadership development and even personal development work is the concept of “self-to-other.” By learning about ourselves, we are in a better place to engage effectively with others (Gundling, et al., 2011). The definition of intercultural competence is “a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts” (Bennett, 2008, p. 97). Understanding what is effective and appropriate in different cultural contexts is the fulcrum leaders use to leverage differences and create value. So, it is important to begin by guiding leaders to better understand their own perspectives, which in turn helps them understand the ways they currently engage, the tools they have to grow requisite intercultural competencies, and the unique sightlines they are accustomed to employ when interacting with and leading others. Further, as leadership educators, it is necessary to teach leaders how to recognize and then adapt to the cultural differences present in the situational context (human, organizational, and global), and ultimately, use new tools to gain a better perspective.

Identifying the Dimensions of Intercultural Competence for Global Leadership

There have been exhaustive studies of the dimensions of intercultural competence (Bird, 2012). Some scholars list as many as 160 different dimensions (Bird, 2012), but most can agree on the categories of perception management, relationship management, and self-management (Mendenhall, et. al., 2008). These factors are defined below with a select list of dimensions for each;

**Perception Management** consists of the cognitive processes by which new situations and events are perceived and judged, and influences one’s ability to effectively deal with ambiguous situations. Competencies associated with Perception Management include: Non-judgmentalness, Tolerance of Ambiguity, Inquisitiveness, Cosmopolitanism, and Interest Flexibility (for an in-depth analysis of each of these competencies, please see Bird, et. al., 2010).

**Relationship Management** consists of competencies associated with having an attentive disposition to build and maintain positive relationships with others who are culturally different from one’s self, and an awareness of how one’s behavior impacts others in intercultural interactions. It includes the competencies of Relationship Interest, Interpersonal Engagement, Self-Awareness, Emotional Sensitivity, and Social Flexibility (Bird, et. al., 2010).

“Further, as leadership educators, it is necessary to teach leaders how to recognize and then adapt to the cultural differences present in the situational context (human, organizational, and global), and ultimately, use new tools to gain a better perspective.”
Self-Management is the capacity to cope with adversity – to adapt and change in positive ways while retaining a stable self-identity and to care for oneself in a mentally and emotionally healthy way while operating in global or cross-cultural contexts. Competencies associated with Self-Management include: Optimism, Self-Confidence, Self-Identity, Non-stress Tendency, Emotional Resilience, and Stress Management (see Bird, et. al., 2010).

This model of intercultural adaptability, first researched by Oddou and Mendenhall (1985) and then refined into a psychometric inventory (Stevens, et. al., 2014), provides leadership educators with valid and reliable data on the competencies their learners hold and where they need to grow in order to enact inclusive leadership in situations where there is significant cultural difference.

Identifying Culturally-Bound Dimensions of Mindsets and Behaviors:

Equally germane to the cultivation of intercultural competencies associated with inclusive leadership in a global context is the understanding of students’ culturally-bounded preferred mindsets and behaviors. The research on these types of cultural differences has been carried out for many years (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016). The model Figure 1, to the left, created by Gundling, Hogan, and Cvitkovich (2011) with the aim of providing more cultural-specific knowledge to assist leadership educators in guiding their learners to adapt to cultural differences. The cultural dimensions employed in this model are described in Figure 1.

Leadership educators can nurture the development of inclusive leadership by helping learners identify their cultural derived patterns of values and behaviors. Specific to this model are the continuums associated with identity derivation (Independent-to-Interdependent); preferences in terms of the holding of power (Egalitarian-to-Status); decision making preferences (Risk-to-Certainty); communication style (Direct-to-Indirect); and workflow and orientation (Tasks-to-Relationship). As a result of utilizing this model, learners come not only to understand that they have culturally-bounded values and behavioral preferences (often a new insight for students), but that they may hold unconscious biases based on these preferences which may inhibit their ability engage effectively across cultural differences.

Nurturing Inclusive Leadership

The art and science of this form of leadership education lie in providing the dual perspectives of intercultural competencies and culturally-bounded preferences together. Then, leadership educators must carefully construct the developmental path for

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“We must first facilitate self-awareness in students in relation to their existing level of intercultural competencies and individual cultural preferences, and then we must carefully craft pedagogy that facilitates personal intercultural competency development.”

students to embrace their new-found self-knowledge and set attainable goals to grow the needed competencies.

Developmental paths can be constructed in a variety of ways – there is no royal road from the self-awareness of intercultural competencies and cultural preferences to the development of weaker competencies into strong competencies. Some educators have had success applying cognitive-behavior therapy principles in university courses to aid students in developing intercultural competencies (Mendenhall, et al., 2013), while others have seen success using service-learning assignments, internships, skill-portfolio processes, and other approaches with university students (Oddou & Mendenhall, 2017; Van Cleave & Cartwright, 2017). Whichever path is chosen, it must be individualized in nature; that is, a student must work on strengthening a competency that applies to that student’s personal areas of growth. For example, creating a class-wide developmental assignment around the competency of say, tolerance of ambiguity, may be useful for 50% of the class who are currently low in that competency, but is redundant for the other 50% who are either currently high or medium in their proficiency levels for that competency (Mendenhall, et al., 2013).

Understanding the need for an individualized approach to learning, a thought-provoking question then arises: do we care enough about creating global leadership competencies in our students that we are willing to transform our pedagogical methods in a way that promotes inclusive leadership across cultural difference? Simply giving students information through passive approaches such as lectures, textbooks, videos, and case studies is necessary, but not sufficient for intercultural competency development. We must first facilitate self-awareness in students in relation to their existing level of intercultural competencies and individual cultural preferences, and then we must carefully craft pedagogy that facilitates personal intercultural competency development. This approach requires educators to care enough about inclusive leadership to model it to students by shifting their preferred educational methods and adopt approaches that will help students grow competencies instead of just learning about competencies.

References


for the Portland State University, International Studies Department and MBA Programs, as well as Pepperdine University’s new Ph.D. in Global Leadership.

Mark E. Mendenhall (Ph.D., Brigham Young University) holds the J. Burton Frierson Chair of Excellence in Business Leadership at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. In 1998, he held the Ludwig Erhard Stiftungsprofessur endowed chair at the University of Bayreuth (Germany), and has been a visiting professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (Austria), University of Saarland (Germany), and Reykjavik University (Iceland). Dr. Mendenhall is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of global leadership and international human resource management.

New Directions for Student Leadership

Issue editor Corey Seemiller and series editors Susan R. Komives and Kathy L. Guthrie are excited to release the Winter 2017 announcement for New Directions for Student Leadership, No. 156, A Competency-Based Approach for Student Leadership Development. The New Directions for Student Leadership series explores leadership conceptual and pedagogical topics of interest to high school and college leadership educators. To view sample chapters, sign up for free content e-alerts, view free editor notes for all issues, and to learn more, visit wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/ndsl or follow us on Twitter at @NDStuLead.
Achieving Styles Inventory (L-BL ASI) that focused on gender equity (Lipman-Blumen, Handley-Isaksen, & Leavitt, 1983; Lipman-Blumen, 1992). Lipman-Blumen continued to refine and broaden the model and the instrument to be inclusive of leadership styles beyond the initial gender perspectives to include national origin, educational levels, roles and responsibilities, and others (Lipman-Blumen, 1996; Lipman-Blumen, 1997; Lipman-Blumen, 2010).

In this article, we offer an explanation of the Connective Leadership Model as well as the instructional design that supports the development of inclusive leadership as both a process and outcome of our work as Leadership Educators. The diagram on the following page offers a gestalt of the overall model and the nine behavioral styles encompassed within three domains.

“The instructional design of a leadership curriculum is difficult work; there are so many aspects of leadership to address, that when you add the construct of inclusion, it seems the infrastructure might collapse from the sheer complexity. As leadership scholar and mentor to this team of authors, Jean Lipman-Blumen points out:

“Around the globe, two antithetical forces—interdependence and diversity—are generating tension that will fundamentally change the conditions under which leaders must lead. To succeed in this dramatically altered environment, where inclusion is critical and connection is inevitable—that is, in the Connective Era—we need a new kind of leadership.” (Lipman-Blumen, 1996, pg. xiii)

As advances in technology and globalization bring the world closer together, we are increasingly brought into connection with diverse people from around the world. Interdependence requires us to work together for shared goals, whereas diversity requires us to respect our differences. The balance point between these two forces is where inclusive leadership develops agency and where the Connective Leadership Model (Lipman-Blumen, 1996) becomes an ideal teaching and learning foundation (Robinson, Cartwright, Harrington, Walsh, 2017). Within the Connective Leadership Model (1996), we posit that Lipman-Blumen and her partner Leavitt discovered the Holy Grail of inclusive leadership (Lipman-Blumen & Leavitt, 1976; Leavitt & Lipman-Blumen, 1980; Lipman-Blumen, 1992). We believe they deftly brushed away layers of data that were often ignored or distrusted to find ways to achieve (lead) that previously were not recognized as legitimate forms of leadership. They went on to develop the psychometric inventory called the L-BL

“Interdependence requires us to work together for shared goals, whereas diversity requires us to respect our differences. The balance point between these two forces is where inclusive leadership develops agency and where the Connective Leadership Model becomes an ideal teaching and learning foundation.”
Direct Styles

The Direct Styles encompass three behavioral choices that focus on mastering one's own tasks. For these behaviors to be effective, the individual must have direct access to the skills, knowledge, and expertise to accomplish the task. For the inclusive leader, access to the Direct Leadership Styles are most relevant when the followers require or prefer leaders who can clearly envision, articulate, and manage the goals. Despite what could be construed as “old school” command and control type leadership behaviors, there are instances when this style is both effective and appropriate (for example, economic, social, and environmental disasters or in cultures where hierarchy is expected and appreciated).

Intrinsic behaviors require setting an internal standard of excellence and striving to meet and exceed that standard. This is seen in athletes who are driven more by beating their own best time than winning. This style works best in situations where the individual holds the keys to success without needing assistance. To practice this skill, students can solve puzzles, mazes, or other activities which can be completed multiple times and previous performances can be compared. Reflecting and debriefing are keys to recognizing when this style should be used.

Competitive behaviors shift the focus away from an internal standard to the external standard of relevant others. For this style to be successful, the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities must be self-contained in the individual or group involved. If any resources or information must be shared or if there is cooperation required, this style will quickly backfire. Sports are a familiar example. Virtually all students have had practice with this style and it is easy to create in the

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1 Across cultures, individuals tend to score high on the Intrinsic style indicating the importance of self-reliance across cultural and social boundaries.
classroom. Pitting teams of students against each other on quizzes of relevant material on inclusive leadership (using a game show format) provides practice as well as engaging the students.

The last Direct style, Power, relates to behaviors, often of delegation, while maintaining control over the means as well as the end results. The skills and expertise for the task must be within direct control of the leader. One of the challenges of this style is knowing when and how to delegate effectively to others without micro-managing. An effective way to practice this skill is to use an in-basket exercise where students must decide when and to whom to delegate.

**Instrumental Styles**

The Instrumental Styles encompass three behavioral choices for completing tasks related to one’s own goals via means of assistance or working through others, either as supporters or conduits of getting the task completed. While the focus is on one’s goals, the individual involves or enlists others through strategies related to engagement, inspiration, connection, and empowerment. Instrumental achievers are adept at observing others, networking and understanding political aspects of situations. For the inclusive leader, these achieving styles are most appropriate when the leader is expected to draw followers into the process of achievement and possibly empower people to take the lead on key tasks. In the Connective Leadership school, we call this ‘Denatured Machiavellianism’ because we are recognizing and encouraging leadership behaviors that show-up, engage, and empower for the good of the whole.

**Personal behaviors** use personal characteristics (degrees, leadership positions or family associations) or achievements to engender interest and support in one’s goal often involving passion, humor, dramatic behavior or charisma that serves to influence another to join the cause and participate in the task. Students are encouraged to consider how they might sell an idea or a project by connecting to another person – through trust, passion or pedigree, perhaps using their personal successes or attributes to facilitate the interest and the ask. Instruction in persuasive language which seeks common ground among diverse groups is also helpful to master this style.

**Social behaviors** involve successful socializing and networking, supported by an understanding of group dynamics. Networking or getting to know others is focused, with the intent or interest in putting them to work on a project, referring them to others or simply keeping them in their contact list, or back pocket. An exercise helps students consider various ways of connecting to, networking with, and following up with others. One exercise, framed as a swap meet, has each student showcase and sell their personal skills or assets; all participants roam the area to see what they can buy and sell emphasizing their connections and recognizing other's unique skills.

The last style, Entrusting, is characterized by a reliance on others, to complete tasks related to one’s own goal. Entrusting is empowering another to assume ownership and much of the responsibility for a task. What differentiates it from delegation, or Power Direct, is that the power of how the work gets done is also given to the other person. Students can practice this often unfamiliar and challenging style, through a case study and role play how they would 1) empower or 2) delegate and then debrief on the differences between the two strategies.

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2 In-basket (or in-tray) exercises are designed to give students practice in management. Students are given the contents of the in-basket of a manager. This includes emails, letters, notes, and projects. In this case, the exercise can be modified to illustrate the challenges of a Diversity and Inclusion Manager and the challenges associated with such positions. (see AssessmentDay: Practice Test Experts at https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/in-tray-exercise.htm%20for%20sample%20exercise).
Relational Styles

The Relational Styles encompass three behavioral choices for completing tasks while focusing on the goals of others. The three styles are based on genuine concern for people and a desire to build and maintain trusting relationships. For inclusive leaders, these styles are most appropriate in contexts where being a guide on the side, a partner, or team player is required. This style excels in cultures where hierarchy is less valued or in situations where the act of sharing power is respected.

Collaborative behaviors require working with others to achieve mutually agreed-upon goals. These behaviors are exhibited by those who value partnering with people and operating with a “two heads are better than one” mentality. This style works well in environments where cooperation is recognized as a practice that enhances organizational effectiveness. Leaders who practice team continuous-improvement techniques tend to rely on collaborative behaviors to solve problems. To practice this skill, students can align their goals with the goals of others to create a plan to accomplish tasks that will benefit the team as a whole. Opportunities to collaborate with others in our globalized society are endless and can transcend borders to achieve optimal success, worldwide.

Contributory behaviors occur when individuals assist in accomplishing the goals of others. The person operating under this style experiences a true sense of joy and fulfillment by helping another person succeed. They also relish in the recognition of performance going directly to the person that they helped. Many teachers, coaches, and consultants have a propensity toward contributory behaviors. Practicing this skill may involve students offering personal resources (e.g., time, skills, labor) to others. It is important to note that no reciprocity is expected when using contributory behaviors.

Vicarious behaviors may be displayed by people who experience satisfaction when those around them excel. They get excited when others experience success in business, family or life in general. They may offer consultation, encouragement or even empathy that can push a person to go beyond what they imagined for themselves. Mentors typically use vicarious behaviors to engage their mentees. Students can practice this skill by mentoring others toward career growth or personal goals. It can be as simple as offering advice or serving as a role model to people others to help them prosper or showing enthusiasm to another who shares a triumph.

Conclusion

The need for inclusive leadership is undeniable and in most of our programs, considered of high value, but the frame and tools needed to build it can seem daunting. With the Connective Leadership Model, leadership educators are given reliable and valid psychometric tools to determine the strengths and level of flexibility that our learners possess to rise to the challenge of inclusive leadership. We, and they, will clearly see their ability to draw on the appropriate constellation of leadership behaviors to meet the needs of diverse followers and ways to pull others into the process. By emphasizing the need and value of negotiating shared goals and resources, we, and they, see their ability to embrace the complexity of interdependence. Whether the leadership program focuses on public, private, school, or some other context of leadership development, the Connective Leadership Model offers a replicable framework with which to design and deliver a curriculum assured of inclusive leadership processes and outcomes.

References


Jill Robinson is a Professor of Management at the University of Redlands where she teaches courses in Human Resource Management, Leadership, and Business Strategy and is a certified Practitioner for the Connective Leadership Institute. She holds a Ph.D. and MA in Organizational Behavior from Claremont Graduate University, an MBA from California State University along with a BS in Psychology from Texas A&M University.

Kevin Walsh, PsyD, PCC is an accomplished leadership development trainer and corporate coach. Kevin has trained over 10,000 employees from the front line to the C-suite, across the globe. He has successfully worked with numerous Fortune 100 Corporations, International NGOs, Universities and Government Agencies in the Healthcare, Finance, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Higher Education, and Entertainment industries. Kevin is a member of the faculty at Phillips Graduate University, Loyola Marymount University, College of the Canyons, and Rollins College.

Maura Harrington, Ph.D, is the COO and Vice President, Consulting Services of the center for Nonprofit Management of Southern California. She has served as a coach and consultant to nonprofits and public agencies for over 24 years. Maura earned her Ph.D in Organizational Behavior (Department of Psychology) from the Claremont Graduate School and holds an MBA from the Peter Drucker Graduate Management Center. She currently serves as a member of the Advisory Board for Connective Leadership Institute and teaches courses on Organizational Psychology, Strategic Business Relations/Partnerships, and Research and Evaluation Methods.

Concepts and Connections Archives

Since 1993, Concepts & Connections has provided leadership educators with engaging theory to practice articles from researchers and practitioners in the field. Spanning numerous topics, Concepts & Connections serves as a seminal resource for forwarding and connecting the field. In anticipation of the 25th year of the publication, a complete listing of past issues is now accessible online at: http://nclp.umd.edu/publications/concepts_and_connections
When considering our target population, we know Millennials and members of Generation Z are collaborative, team-oriented, civic-minded, embrace diversity, and have a social change mindset (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). A program designed to help students work together through difference should be an easy sell, but these students are also known to be impatient and over-committed. So we needed to find a way to have a high impact in a short period of time.

Our Framework

Using the Social Change Model, we designed the Modus Vivendi Society curriculum to encourage students to engage in meaningful conversations and practice civil discourse. Modus Vivendi, a Latin phrase meaning a way of life allowing conflicting parties to coexist peacefully, asks each student to reflect on their core values and how they interact with people with differing views. Through a series of three overnight programs participants learn from one another, grow in their ability to work effectively with others, and develop an action plan for the future. This leadership development program strives to allow students the time to think about how they can impact social change, particularly while collaborating despite conflicting views.

Participation is open to all University of Chicago students and current members of the Society include first-year undergraduate students through doctoral candidates. We look for participants who show a willingness to explore their personal values, an openness to engage in difficult conversations, and who express a desire to make positive change. A key outreach strategy has been recruiting small group facilitators from departments throughout the institution, ensuring outreach to populations who may not have had a touch

You may have noticed lately people seem to have stopped listening to one another. Or perhaps we’ve never been that good at it. Years ago Stephen Covey (2004) reminded us, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply” (p. 239).

So how do we help our students become inclusive leaders if they cannot truly listen to one another? At the University of Chicago, a campus committed to freedom of expression and open discourse, we needed to help students understand how to engage in our culture of debate while still learning to listen and work effectively with others.

Getting Started

An opinion piece in the campus newspaper (Singerman, 2014) described the student body at the University of Chicago as one of students “…who feel generally uncomfortable, not so much with [social justice] issues, but with the lack of reasoned dialogue.” As such, when considering the design of this program, we would need to consider concepts such as intergroup dialogue, imaginative empathy, and restorative justice to gain an understanding of one another.

The Social Change Model of Leadership defines the concept of disagreement with mutual respect as Controversy with Civility (Komives and Wagner, 2009). The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) emphasizes this tenant by encouraging socio-cultural conversations. But as we know, it is difficult to attempt to understand others without first understanding yourself. So we found our framework: gaining self-understanding to hold meaningful conversations, which can result in a common ground to work together.

Program Spotlight: Working Across Difference - UChicago’s Modus Vivendi Society

By Carrie Grogan, M. Ed
As suggested in MSL research (Dugan, Kodama, Correia, & Associates, 2013), the curriculum was designed to have students progress sequentially through the model by first attending the winter Expedition, then the spring Retreat, and finishing with the autumn Conclave. While the program is designed in this progression, it is not required to participate in this order or participate in more than one program. We encourage all students to attend in whichever quarter they are able.

Recognizing that participants may not all enter in sequential order, each overnight program features activities and discussions surrounding each of the values; however the time spent on each value changes depending on the intended focus of the program. To address the group values at each program, activities vary in time and focus. At the Expedition participants attempt to come to consensus on a variety of topics and then identify the values behind perspectives in controversial topics. At the Retreat students listen to a TED Talk about effective conversations and hear a podcast describing a difficult dialogue played out in real life. At the Conclave students play a card game unknowingly using different rules and discuss different perspectives of the same fictional story.

Although the themes of Modus Vivendi remain steady in every overnight program, every activity is different, the location of the overnight changes, and the facilitation team introduces new faces. The intention is to ensure students have a completely new experience with each program so that every student begins on an equal playing field.

What We’ve Learned

Unsurprisingly, the biggest takeaway for our students is the value of connection- an ability to relate to one another, understand others, communicate values, and build community. Assessment shows that students value the time to just talk about who they are and do so in a space where they feel comfortable and valued.
Based on feedback from participants we make an effort to mix undergraduates and graduate students in the same groups. Although our assumption was that developmental readiness may differ greatly and impact the experiences of others in the room, our students express a greater appreciation for the differing backgrounds and perspectives in the room.

There is an opportunity and a need to share campus resources for follow up. In small group discussions participants share some heavy experiences – it is our responsibility to make sure they are aware of counseling services, Title IX resources, and areas of support throughout the university. A segment on self-care is also being added to the curriculum moving forward.

As more participants matriculate through all three programs, an opportunity to bring them on as peer facilitators has presented itself. Any participant who has attended all three can attend future programs first in a logistical, behind the scenes capacity. They help with check in, facilitate icebreakers and energizers, and ensure physical spaces are welcoming and comfortable. After successfully understanding the program from this perspective, they are invited to the next overnight as a small group co-facilitator with a professional staff member.

Since the need for inclusivity and community building doesn’t go away once you’ve earned a degree, there are opportunities to explore with wider audiences. The recent “Where Respect Happens” (ACPA, 2017) campaign launched by member associations of the Student Affairs in Higher Education Consortium calls for student affairs professionals to create these environments of mutual respect regarding civility, inclusion, and diversity. Aspects of Modus Vivendi have already been adapted to a successful half-day workshop with new material specifically curated for working student affairs professionals. These workshops will continue to be offered and adapted as the needs of colleagues and students evolve.

When a three-time participant was asked why he believed such a wide variety of students participated in Modus Vivendi he replied: “Everyone starts on the same page – it’s a clean slate for everyone to learn about one another at the same pace and everyone feels included.”

References


Carrie Grogan is Assistant Director for Student Leadership Development at the University of Chicago. She also serves as a lead facilitator for ACUI’s I-LEAD program and is trained in mental health first aid, Gallup Strengths-Based Education, and restorative justice facilitation.
International Leadership Association Presents

Breaking the Zero-Sum Game: Transforming Societies Through Inclusive Leadership
Edited by Aldo Boitano, Raúl Lagomarsino Dutra, and H. Eric Schockman
Foreword by Edwin Hollander
Available for purchase from Emerald Publishers.

Globally and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership: New Dimensions and Challenges for Business, Education and Society
Edited by Jean Lau Chin, Joseph E. Trimble, and Joseph E. Garcia
Available for purchase from Emerald Publishers.
Program Spotlight: African American Male Leadership - Texas A&M’s Distinguished Gentlemen’s Club
by Tammie Preston-Cunningham, Ph.D. and Tonya Driver, Ph.D.

Leadership Educators are often called upon to be innovative when ensuring students understand and embrace leadership theory and reach their full potential to become leaders and lifelong learners. Much of the research on African American college males and leadership has examined the impact of one or two variables, but has seldom accounted for the intersectionality of race, masculinity, student involvement, and leadership (Brown, 2006).

Research pertaining to African American undergraduate males in education has been approached from a deficit-oriented narrative and primarily focused on academic achievement or lack of involvement, with minimal attention paid to African American males demonstrating leadership as a counter narrative and method to address persistence (Harper & Harris, 2010). In 2009, African American males comprised only 5.7% of the students enrolled in institutions of higher education. Only 17.8% of African American males age 25 and over were awarded a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2009, compared to 30.6% of White males (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010). Meanwhile, enrollment and matriculation rates of African American male students in Texas has shown a slow increase of about 5% since 2003 (Texas Trends, 2014). When considering a Predominately White Institution (PWI) in the south, a review of Texas A&M University College Metrics, indicates the six-year graduation rates of African American males to be nearly 10% lower than the overall six-year graduation rate for males and roughly 11% lower than the rates of White males (Undergraduate Student Retention & Graduation, n.d.).

While graduation rates are an indicator of student success, they only report one dimension of a student and do not explore the intricacies of the college experience for African American males as they matriculate.

Program Justification and Significance

Several researchers have noted the influence of student involvement and integration in African American student matriculation and retention (Cuyjet, 2006; Guiffrida, 2003; Haber, 2011). Student affairs professionals must address the growing concern of African American males as they persist in higher education by engaging in multiple identity layers of students in this population (Harper, 2014). Students who were involved in leadership activities where race was a focus experienced positive development in leadership or activism and in personal identity (Renn & Ozaki, 2010). The study by Sutton and Terrell (1997) indicated African American males were more willing to perceive themselves as leaders among African American students on campus, but the majority did not consider themselves leaders in campus-wide groups. It is important to explore African American undergraduate male leadership as a viable method to engage and influence graduation and attendance. There has been an observed link between African American males’ self-perception as leaders and their self-concept, which may positively influence persistence (Harper, 2004).

The needed partnership of both student affairs professionals and faculty in engaging African American male students cannot be overlooked in developing solutions to address concerns about matriculation of African American male college students (Frazier, 2009). Many minority students stated they encountered microagressions in
the classroom and in student organizations, which led to feelings of hopelessness, exhaustion, discouragement, disengagement from the university, and a decrease in academic performance. The microaggressions ranged from behaviors such as peers not selecting them for study groups and organizations based on race to comments such as, “I don’t want to work with you because you’re Black.” Student affairs professionals, as well as faculty, play intricate roles in creating environments that aid in engagement by African American male college students. Student affairs professionals and faculty should attempt to create counter spaces for learning, as well as model appropriate methods to address these microaggressions (Solórzano et al., 2010).

As other researchers have addressed the influence of involvement and leadership on African American male college students, the need has emerged to evaluate the impact of multiple layers of identity and how students become prepared to lead (Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones, & Allen, 2010; Hammond & Mattis; 2005; Majors & Billson, 1992). In order to identify the tools needed to empower future African American male leaders, there is a need to evaluate the collegiate experience of African American males as it relates to the intertwined impact of race, gender, and leader capacity while using the classroom as the venue for identity exploration and improvement of self-concept.

According to Butler (2005), apart from churches, fraternal (historically Black Greek Lettered-Organizations) and benevolent societies have long been the largest and most durable organizations in Black communities. The founders and leaders of these organizations were in the vanguard of social change and made significant contributions to the widespread liberation, political, moral, temperance, and social reform movements that characterized the nineteenth century United States (p. 67).

In response to this research, the fraternities of the National Pan-Hellenic Council at Texas A&M developed a leadership and social support opportunity, the Distinguished Gentlemen’s Club (DGC). The aim of the course/program is to introduce freshmen and sophomore African American men to the complex nuances associated with Black identity, male identity, and leadership approaches while integrating theoretical frameworks to aid in their efficient navigation of the social and academic integration at a PWI. The program attempts to address the growing decline in academic achievement, issues of community and identity, and overall cultural incongruence viewed by African American males, as it relates to the university. The interwoven academic course and practical application has served over 250 men within the last nine years and a graduation rate exceeding 88%.

The development of DGC as both an academic course and leadership training program is grounded in African American student integration, experiential learning, servant leadership, and student development theoretical frameworks. DGC focuses on integrating, transitioning, and coping with multiple identities, all while assuming leadership roles in and out of the classroom.

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Program overview

DGC curriculum focuses on practical application of learned theory and research. The leadership development program is offered as a three-hour leadership course through a partnership with the Department of Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication. The course/program is recognized as a high impact practice incorporating transformative student learning and infusing the practical application of leadership, identity, and gender.

DGC is a twelve-week program, which focuses on six of eight variables identified by the Non-cognitive Questionnaire developed by White and Sedlacek (1986). The program addresses positive self-concept/confidence, realistic self-appraisal, community service, development of a support system, positive leadership experience, and various methods of dealing with and processing racism and microaggressions. The young men are recruited from the entering freshmen class through social media, personal contact, and recommendation by former members to enroll in the course/program. The young men meet weekly for three-hour lectures led by former Texas A&M students and faculty, guest expert scholars, and also attend weekly academic study sessions. The weekly sessions discuss a myriad of subjects such as Black identity, leadership theory and approaches, social responsibility, civic engagement, coping skills, and methods for navigating the university student leadership process. DGC members are encouraged to practice inclusive leadership during and after the program through involvement with non-cultural and major-affiliated organizations.

The students are divided into sub-groups and charged with implementing a capstone research project, which utilizes information they gather from a three-day leadership excursion. The leadership excursion sites include Memphis, Tennessee’s National Civil Rights Museum and Little Rock, Arkansas’ Central High School Museum. Excursion participants maintain written and photo journals during the excursion to support their capstone research presentation to the university community during the Black Male Think Tank. The Black Male Think Tank, also planned and organized by DGC, serves to educate the Texas A&M community about the nuisances and intricacies of matriculating at the university as an African American male. The students who participate in the DGC program/course are taught leadership skills (i.e. time-management, meeting and project management, effective written and oral communication, etc.) which are transferable to other organizations and increase their sense of self-confidence in their leadership skills, thus increasing their desire to engage in non-culture based organizations.

Program Outcomes

Harper (2014) recommended several intervention programs for African American male college students; however, most have focused on persistence, mentors, integration, or academic success with leadership being ancillary. This project indicates the need for development and implementation of programs for African American college males, which include leadership development and training as the focus. From this focus, academic success, persistence, and effective mentoring can occur organically alongside other desired outcomes. Students who participate in the DGC program/course have shown positive development in self-concept, peer support systems, and a responsibility to improve self and others through inclusive leadership. Numerous studies (Becker & Becker, 2003; Brookover & Erickson, 1969; Maxwell, 2004; Morrow & Torres, 1995) have identified the influence of positive self-concept on long-term persistence in college. Students who have a positive self-concept perform better than their counterparts in classrooms, in academic aspirations, and in degree attainment (Haber & Komives, 2009). Based on the outcomes of this project, development and incorporation of identity-specific leadership development programs on college campuses are critical to the development of African American undergraduate males’ leader identity.
References


Dr. Preston-Cunningham currently serves as Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication at Texas A&M University. She previously worked in the area of student affairs for over fifteen years before transitioning to Assistant Lecturer. Her focus area is the interconnectedness of leadership and socially constructed identities and team learning. She has taught numerous courses focused on leadership, socially constructed identities, masculinity, interpersonal relations, and global competency.

Dr. Tonya Driver is Director of the Department of Multicultural Services at Texas A&M University - College Station, where she oversees a comprehensive student affairs department, which offers student retention and success programs, diversity and inclusion education, and student leadership experiences to positively impact student persistence, campus climate, and global competency. Dr. Driver has worked with countless students, student organizations, programs and courses with focus on student retention and success, racial and cultural identity, identity development, leadership development, diversity consciousness, inclusion, pre-college experiences, and campus climate.

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