Word of Welcome

This special conference on leadership development has been an idea that has been long in the making and we are excited to finally see it come to fruition. As leadership researchers we are as passionate as our colleagues to help develop a better understanding what makes leaders (in)effective. And while none of us would claim that we fully comprehend leadership, we think it is fair to state that over the past decades we have made good progress in lifting the tip of the veil over what leadership is and how it works.

Decidedly less clear however is our understanding of how to effectively develop leadership. As our understanding on effective leadership continues to expand, the knowledge base on how to develop said leadership lags behind. To use a metaphor: If leadership research is the big brother or sister to leadership development, than the big brother seems to have had a significant growth spurt and is off to college, leaving the little brother behind in elementary school.

There are good reasons for this lag-effect. Research on leadership development is decidedly more difficult methodologically (i.e., intervention research) than much of the descriptive (survey) research that dominates leadership research today. And for those brave researchers who venture off into these more complex designs, well-known challenges with transfer of training reduce the likelihood that they will find significant effects (and thus that they will be able to publish these results).

Despite these challenging odds, we hope and strive towards more research on leadership development. Why? Because getting better at leadership development matters to all of us! For instance, most of us (as educators in our schools/organizations) are in a unique position to have a significant impact on students and/or employees to develop their leadership potential. As primary funnels of society, we receive the brightest, most talented people for an extended period of time, at a time when most are able to be influenced. What we do matters not only for the students/employees their careers and life trajectory, it matters to society as a whole that we are able to deliver leaders who are capable of coping with the challenges of today's increasingly complex world.

But unfortunately the evidence does not seem to suggest that we are living up to the challenge. While billions of euros are invested in leadership development annually, there is surprisingly little in terms of evidence or even justification for these efforts. Furthermore, almost anyone and any type of program can self-claim to be engaged in leadership development. There are little to no guarantees or standards of accreditation for the leadership development industry.

The result is an increasing amount of skepticism or even cynicism towards leadership development. To some leadership development has become a hollowed out term – a collection of nice activities that foster networking, improved communication and teambuilding, and recruitment/retention efforts, … but has little to do with actually developing leaders. Developing leaders is said to happen on the job – or really people were born with leadership capacities, such that there is not much we can do about it.

Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) wants to be a force for positive change in the world, as the school's core educational and societal mission. One of the ways we envision doing this, is by getting more serious about leadership development and by taking our responsibility to produce the evidence that we are indeed delivering the positive change agents of tomorrow. Specifically, the Erasmus Center for Leadership was launched with the aim of living up to this challenge and plays an important role in guaranteeing high-quality leadership research and education within RSM.

However we realize that we can't do this alone. In order to raise the knowledge and standards in terms of leadership development, we need collective effort. In this regard, we hope that RSM is not the only leader who will respond to this call, but that other captains of academia, industry and society, are compelled to rise up to the challenge with us. We want to offer RSM as a home for those like-minded people. A place where we can come together in conversation and collaboration to help each other get better at leadership development. This conference day at RSM and this small booklet is a first step in that direction.

Hannes Leroy and Steffen Giessner

Academic Directors, Erasmus Center for Leadership

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Action Learning

David Day, Claremont McKenna College
david.day@claremontmckenna.edu

Description of the exercise

People are brought together in teams (with no formal hierarchy) to work together on some projects to address a strategic/intractable problem in the organization. This could be organized as part of a formal course in university (for example, in an MBA program) in collaboration with organization, or projects implemented within the companies themselves. In one of the action learning project, the author had collaborated with a big conglomerate in Australia. The various business units with this conglomerate would nominate high potential leaders to participate in action learning projects with the goals of (1) contributing to the development of leadership capacity of these junior leaders, and (2) giving them a stronger perspective on the conglomerate (where they were exposed to people from other business units that they didn't know before—and understanding how these other business units contributes to the broader portfolio of the holding company). The action learning project here was part of the high potential leadership development program that lasted about 7-8 months programs. They would come together in every 4-6 weeks for this program. But in the "white space" of these program events, they would be work on their projects, usually as geographically distributed teams. As a general rule, the teams would either come up with their own problem to study or have a "sponsor" who would assign them the problem to study. The action learning team would then have a budget to tackle their problems (e.g. business trips to different places, interviewing people, learning about best practices from other companies) to come up with business plan to address the problem (in report, and presentation to senior executives).

Why It Works

- Challenging experience: This is a stretch assignment. People in these action learning teams have to engage in several tasks at once—coming up with the business plan, learning about personal and team leadership, whilst also managing their day-today job. Putting people in stress and uncomfortable situations is how development happens.

• Visibility = motivation: action learning projects are usually targeted at high potential managers. Therefore, it represents an elite developmental opportunity for people in these fast -tracked trajectory to potentially be "seen" by senior leaders. This is an opportunity to demonstrate their acumen in terms of problem solving and making good impression with senior leadership. This provides a motivation to learn and perform well in these projects.

• Accountability: the action learning project might differ from the typical team activities that people engage in during an MBA course, for example, in that it hold people accountable for their insights about leadership development as a team and leader development as an individual. In other words, they usually need to demonstrate the lessons about their developments, as not just about getting things done.

Contingencies

• Individual characteristics: how competencies develop from experiences can differ across people. This can be affected by, for example, their past experiences, personality, and motivation.

• Balancing act: There are two components of action leaning project—action and learning. The action part is where the team investigates the different ways and solutions to tackle existing organizational challenge. The learning part is where the team learns about the leadership processes, and learning about themselves as a leader. The difficult part of action learning then is how you can hold those two parts in equal weight. Because what tends to happen is that the former gets more attention than the latter, especially in the corporate environment if it is not emphasized enough. To encourage learning —using an example of the conglomerate that the author worked with, the senior leadership team required as part of the deliverable (business plan/ presentation) for the team members to document and discuss their learning as individuals and as a team (about their collective development). For this company then, the success for their action learning project is less about the performance of the team in terms of its project (i.e. the business plan the team came up with), but more about the demonstrated developmental take away by the team members.

- Coaching support: throughout the project, they can have meeting regularly to talk about team dynamics. Therefore, the team members can understand better about the dynamics that are developing in the team, and how the team leadership are evolving (because there’s no hierarchy in the team). Reflecting on these with the help of a coach can facilitate learning.

Evidence of Effectiveness

At the individual level, we have measures that can track the effect on individual leader development overtime (and more resources on this can be found at actionlearninginstitute.com). However, to what extent that we can measure the effect at the team level is somewhat more difficult because these teams usually disband after the action learning project is completed. The question that is worth exploring further is that how can we sustain this collective leadership (the team leadership capacity), or does that somehow spreads deeper into the organization?

Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge

Jochen Menges, Otto Beisheim School of Management (WHU)
jochen.menges@whu.edu

The “Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge” is a one-week leadership course at the outset of WHU’s MBA program that is designed to teach leadership through experience, to preview topics covered throughout the MBA program, and instill in students a lasting sense for leaders’ social responsibility beyond their organizations. The students work in teams on a different challenge every day. The ideas produced during the week and the funds that the students raise benefit the children’s rights organization Save the Children. Since April 2016, the MBA students have raised more than €170,000 for Save the Children.

Why was the “Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge” developed?

There were several drivers for this teaching innovation. First, we were somewhat dissatisfied with the way that leadership was traditionally taught. We felt that theoretical discussions and hypothetical case studies helped students to analyze and cognitively understand leadership challenges, but that they were removed from the emotional and relational reality of leadership in organizations. We believed that this problem contributes to the knowing-doing gap: business school graduates may *know* how they should act as a leader, and yet when they have to *do* it they often fail. Under pressure they draw on long-standing habitual behavioral responses rather than on the effective leadership behaviors that we teach them in the class room.

Second, we felt that we needed to more strongly motivate our students to invest time and effort into building their leadership skills and take to heart the contents delivered across all courses in the MBA program. We therefore wanted our students to learn early on in the program how difficult leadership really is and what they lack in knowledge with respect to the contents of the MBA program.

Third, given the frequent moral and ethical failures of business leaders in today’s organizations, we wanted to find a more effective and lasting way of imbuing our students with a sense of social responsibility.

Based on these issues and inspired by the Negotiation Challenge that Adam Grant ran at Wharton, we developed the “Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge”.

How does the “Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge” work?

The “Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge” is a 5-day leadership course that takes place at the beginning of the MBA program. The students work in teams of 4-5 students, accompanied by an MBA alumni mentor, and they face a new real-life challenge each day.

For every challenge, one student has to lead, the other 3-4 students work as team members. Thus over the course of the week, each student steps up as a leader once. The students select their leader on the morning of each challenge, and they sit together in the afternoon, once the challenge is over, to first individually reflect on the leadership and team process, and then, moderated by their mentor, to collectively discuss the learnings of the day in order to improve leadership and team dynamics.

The challenges feature core topics of the MBA program: product development, marketing, strategy, negotiations, and logistics/product distribution. All challenges are extremely demanding: students work under enormous time pressure, in fierce competition with the remaining student teams, and with team members that have diverse experiences, strong characters and various cultural backgrounds. The students receive input in the morning of each challenge from a subject matter expert, and they are judged by a panel of experts on their performance in the evening. Each day, one team wins the challenge.

The challenges all serve to support the work of Save the Children, a leading children’s rights organization. As part of their challenges, the students create concepts or raise funds for Save the Children.

What are the results of the "Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge"?

The "Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge" seems to have a profound effect on students. They experience within their first week of the MBA program what it means to be a leader. They realize that leadership is as much about structure and careful analysis, as it is about making relationships work, handling team dynamics, and setting the right emotional tone for the team to succeed. Through experience, guided reflection, and mentoring, the students learn first-hand how to effectively lead a team.

In their reflections, students described how difficult leadership is and that they wish to expand their expertise in core areas taught in the MBA program. These insights give them a motivational boost to build their leadership skills and develop business acumen from the very beginning of the program.

By working for an entire week for a children's rights organization, the students developed an understanding for societal challenges and the responsibility that they bear as business leaders. Through their work on the challenges, they have made a difference in the lives of children around the globe by developing strategic concepts for Save the Children that the organization will implement, and by raising an amazing total amount of more than €170,000 for children.

The "Future Leaders Fundraising Challenge" was so successful that WHU now runs it twice a year. It has been covered in the media, bringing reputational benefits to WHU.

Videos are available on youtube.com:

April 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_Uhbgjf680&t=1s

September 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmLjp2mrR-8&t=80s

March 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXlg3uflmwQ

September 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dotiFz11YD0&t=2s

April 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ud-MWsM-b2Q

“Leadership Essentials” As Foundational Building Blocks for Organizational Leadership Development

Karin Eijgenstein, Akzo Nobel
karin.eijgenstein@akzonobel.com

Objectives:

- To introduce a foundation for leadership development, thatcan be embedded in all the leadership development activities in the organization, and ensure effective and sustainable development.

Program Details

Leadership development is of great value for any organization that cares about sustainable performance and employee effectiveness. The challenge often lies in that it is so broad and widespread and, as a result, many organizations lack a way to organize, streamline, and keep track of leadership development. In this case, I introduce a leadership development program we call “Leadership Essentials” and how it can serve as foundational building blocks that can be integrated with all parts of an employee’s leadership development journey in my organization.

“Leadership Essentials” guides Leaders throughout their first year as leader in our company. It starts with a two-day session where all the participants, usually those who are being groomed for leadership positions, are introduced to the organization’s purpose, values, and ways of conducts and kick off their leadership development. While the first day focuses on the introduction and orientation, we devote the whole second day for leadership development. During the day, we use various frameworks and activities to help the participants to clarify their personal leadership development goals – who they want to become, what leadership skills they seek to master, and how they can best achieve them given their roles, responsibilities, and resources. The output of this day is then documented and serve as their own guide for the future leadership development throughout their experience. As mentioned, key in this process is to ensure consistency – that is – what was started in the two-day sessions can be brought in line with their future work and tasks so that the leadership development is constant and sustainable.

How It Works

We have two practices in place to ensure the consistency. First, when all the participants go back to their own units, the local HR department would organize regular 'Reconnect' meetings where the participants gather together and review their progress towards the leadership goals that they have set. While we recognize that differing contexts in various regions demand distinctive localizations, we request all the branches to ensure that at least one leadership role model (this could come from within the organization or outside, depending on the branch's own circumstances) and one HR business partner to be present. The direct involvement of HR staff as a coordinator in the program ensures the goals and learnings from the initial sessions "Leadership Essentials" can be put to use in the subsequent leadership activities and work tasks.

Beyond the fact that we keep all the practices grounded in the "Leadership Essentials", we also make it an essential part of our team development activities. The High Performing Teams development program usually takes three steps. First, the teams discuss the issues that they have observed in the team that are hindering the team to fulfill its potential and come up with strategies to solve them first. Second, the teams come together to explore and install ways to change the culture in the team to the direction needed to match the high performance culture the company desires. Third, for leadership teams, the team members are then challenged to bring the same process back to the teams they lead so as to this learning and development process could take place at all levels of organizations. Throughout the three steps, it is always critically important to use the skills and knowledge they have learned in the "Leadership Essentials" sessions so that they could speak the same language and also easily take the practice to their own team members who also have participated in the "Leadership Essentials" sessions.

Why It Works

This program works because it connects leadership development at all levels rather than view it as a stand-alone project. Having this system ensures that the learning and development are a result of real organization needs (we need different leadership behaviors because we want to improve the organization) and thus its effectiveness could be tested in the process of solving organization issues.

The second reason is that it gives the participants freedom to design their own leadership development path as opposed to "forcing" a model of leadership. This offers flexibility and autonomy that make the employees take ownership of their leadership development instead of viewing it as another training session provided by the HR department.

Contingencies

Three factors could influence this program: a) the participants' career experience and stage. Those who have had some leadership experiences usually find it more natural to engage in the conversations and discussions and are more willing to develop their leadership; b) The work context. For some organization sectors (such as manufacturing factories) where leadership is not viewed as necessary as in other settings, it may take longer to get the participants on board; c) The local culture. How leadership is perceived and discussed in a specific culture (national level) also influences how the program can be best framed and structured.

Combing “Inside-out” and “Outside-in” Approaches of Leadership Development

Michael Beer, Harvard Business School;
mbeer@hbs.edu

Learning Objective

- To develop leadership by combing two approaches to leadership development: the “inside-out” approach and “outside-in” approach.

Program Details

Leadership development programs usually take two forms: the “inside-out” approach features cultivating leaders’ self-awareness, examining their experiences and history, understanding their traits and strengths and then combine all of them into a collective system that leads to some change in leadership behaviors, whereas the “outside-in” approach usually takes place in the wider organization setting as part of organizational development where leadership development can almost be viewed as a by-product. Some regard these two approaches as independent or even conflicting, I present a leadership development program where these two approaches are integrated developed at the *Center for Higher Ambition Leadership* a not for profit CEO/company membership organization. The CEOs aspire to develop human centric firms whose purpose is to add value to all its stakeholders, not just shareholders.

The Higher Ambition Institute (HALI) is a five-module leadership development program over a year, and each module is roughly three days aimed at senior managers expected to occupy positions in in the C suite or near the C suite of the company in five to seven years. Its overarching purpose is to turn “accidental” leaders by virtue of position into intentional leaders, built around a leadership model the program is designed to help them develop. These leaders are selected by the CEO and the senior HR executive. The selected leaders are what we call “next-generation” leaders, who are likely to lead the organization in five or six years. The modules are delivered by a team consisting of both experts of “inside-out” and “outside-in approach” leadership development approaches.

The inside-out phase of the program focuses on using feedback mechanisms, such as the "360 feedback" and a variety of exercises to sensitize the leaders to their own leadership styles and urge them the ponder about "who am I" and then develop their own leadership model. We do not teach them theories of leadership

In contrast, the "outside-in" phase is aimed at developing their organization. We use cases to teach a systemic view of organizations. The system of organizing, managing and leading has to "fit" or be aligned with goals strategy and leaders espouse values. And we show participants why data collection and diagnosis must be precursors to organizational change, but also that leaders often don't know the truth about their organization's or their and their leadership team's effectiveness. We ask participants to employ the Strategic Fitness Process, a means for an honest, collective and public conversation about the effectiveness and culture of the organization[1]. It provides leadership teams with "unvarnished feedback – the truth – about what lower levels perceive as the organization's strengths and barriers to implementing their espoused strategy and values. Leaders are expected to change their organization (structure, routines and practices etc.), and their organizational leadership role and behavior based on the data.

The end outcome of these intertwined two phases is to help the leaders come up with their own leadership model, instead of teaching them extant leadership or organizational theories. We expose them to various leadership stories and cases but encourage them to construct their own leadership models built on self-awareness and their values aspirations we help them develop in the program. And we help them appreciate the values of honest collective conversations as a means for continuous improvement of their leadership practice and organization's effectiveness. In recent years, we have focused on helping leaders consciously develop leadership practices that reflect their leadership model. For example, we ask them to consider short interactions – or touch points[2] - as a means for projecting their leadership model and achieve what they aspire to do.

[1] Beer, M. & Eisenstat, R. (2004) "How to have an honest conversation about your strategy," Harvard Business Review.

[2] Conant, D. & Norgarrd, M. (2011) Touch Points: Creating Powerful Leadership Connections in the Smallest of Moments, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass

Why Does It Work

In addition to the qualities outlined above, a distinctive feature of this program is the theme of making the participants intentional leaders. Managers are their role as leaders through promotion to run something, not as a result of their desire to become leaders. The key goal of this program is to transform them into intentional leaders on a mission to constantly improve their leadership practice as individual and organizational leaders.

We put them into practice sharing groups of four in the program to begin the process of learning new practices in the program and then ask them meet virtuously between modules and after the program is over to continue that practice. We have also created an annual Alumni Day where participants come together to share experience and maintain their connection with each other and the ideas and ideals of the program. Using the idea that practice not talent differentiates excellence we teach them that practicing leadership like practicing to become an Olympian athlete is the only way to become a great leader.

When Does It Work

Our observations and a preliminary interview study of 14 participants leads to the following conclusions:

- The program is a very powerful experience for almost all participants. Why? It is a rare opportunity to step back from their busy schedule to get to reflect about themselves and their leadership in the context of idea, practice sharing and new relationships with others also there to develop their leadership

- The program power comes in part from our good fortunes to have a successful authentic CEO and teacher (Doug Conant, former CEO of Campbell Soup) chair and teach in the program.

- There are clear differences in the amount of change reported or inferred from our interviews and informal discussions with participants. We separate participants into most impacted, impacted and least impacted based on what they told us about their experience. Here are the factors that moderate the impact of the program:

- The extent of overload from pressures on and in the organization. Mergers, acquisitions, business crises and top down initiatives demanding the time and attention of participants.
- The role of the CEO in selecting and discussing their expectations with participants ahead of time, during and after the program.
- The support of the immediate managers and discussions with participants about the program.
- Active exchanges between current and past participants in the program within the company after the program. Forming and sustaining strong relationships and exchanges inside the company made a difference.
- Overall impact was facilitated by the simple fact that participants were selected and knew had been selected by the company because they were the next generation of leaders.

• Success of the organization development facet of the program we learned was even more dependent on timing. If the participant had reasonable control over the agenda in their organization, the organizational module and the Strategic Fitness Process had a positive impact both on individual and organization. But, if the leader had no control over their organizational unit's agenda or that agenda was overwhelmed by corporate demands or initiatives and participant could not launch the Strategic Fitness Process, they saw little impact on the organization and this influenced their overall assessment of the program's impact.. This had led us to conclude that the organization development module requires a second separate program for leaders whose circumstances allow them to launch an organizational change and development process.

• We found that relative impact of program was contingent on the success of *both* the individual and organization development modules.

Evidence of Effectiveness

See below for relative impact based on data from the interview study.

Descriptions of HALI Participant Groupings

LEAST impacted by program

IMPACTED by program

MOST impacted by program

Average (SD) Impact N=3	Average (SD) Impact N=6	Average (SD) Impact N=5
Individual: 3.33 (.29) Organization: .67 (.76)	Individual: 3.92 (.13) Organization: 1.75 (.87)	Individual: 4.5 (.50) Organization: 4.25 (.66)

Prepared by Dr. Lisa Dragoni, Exxon-Wayne Calloway Faculty Fellow, Associate Professor, School of Business, Wake Forest University

Differences in the Perceived Opportunity to Apply Learnings

Most Impacted

- "Program couldn't have really come at a better time. I mean, it positioned me to be ready for this….there is a lot of challenges I'm facing and I'm able to face them in a more deliberate way that I probably otherwise would have" (1-1-11)
- "Having started this job really kind of the middle or end of the program, totally new team, totally different group of people and a lot of people who are very seasoned employees….I think that's [HALI] been helpful for me because it helped me even come in and just listen and try to even bring in new leaders that complement each other and also to support the team based on where we need to go. So it's helped me build my own leadership team and be thoughtful about it" (1-0-05)

Least Impacted

- "I think this was the biggest merger we did in our 100-year plus year old history…so obviously everybody's attention was diverted and focused elsewhere" (1-1-09)
- It was a challenge I have to admit [to sustain the work he began at HALI]. I had succumb to the fire drills of everyday life and I had a hard time kind of build[ing] the cadence with my team" (2-1-14)

Prepared by Dr. Lisa Dragoni, Exxon-Wayne Calloway Faculty Fellow, Associate Professor, School of Business, Wake Forest University

Differences in their Priority on Learning

Most Impacted

- “I really feel that the accountability of keeping what you’ve learned, we’ll call it alive, is really your own with yourself. So, I think that it’s something that…each person needs to do for themselves. It’s certainly not something that…my boss is reminding me of” (1-0-02)
- “That’s why I try and keep it in front of me and remind [because it is takes a lot of effort to sustain work after program end]—even this follow-up is important too because it made me go back prior to this conversation and just kind of look at some of the things as well and a little bit…deeper” (1-1-10)

Least Impacted

- “It was nice to have some time to unplug and to think about kind of bigger questions. So, it was really something I looked forward to. I believe I missed two sessions and I really regret it. One was because I had just started the new role the week prior and it just was not possible for me to go. The second time, again, it was around the end of the year. Being in the XX business, it was hard for me to get away as well” (2-1-14)

Prepared by Dr. Lisa Dragoni, Exxon-Wayne Calloway Faculty Fellow, Associate Professor, School of Business, Wake Forest University

Action-based Learning: Leadership Development in Supported Team Projects

Patrick Wright, University of South Carolina
patrick.wright@moore.sc.edu

Learning Objectives

- To develop the participants' leadership capacities by involving them in a real project while offering them with the broader view of the organization.
- To allow the participants to test their solutions and strategies by applying them to critical organization issues that matter for the business.
- This exercise also serves as an assessment tool through which the participants gain visibility to the key decision makers (e.g., senior executives).

Program Details

This leadership development program features the experience of learning through real-case by giving the participants the opportunity, support, and resources to tackle a real business issue within the organization. This program starts with a selection of participants, usually from various departments and functions of an organization, who appear to have the potential to take leadership roles. The ensemble is then commissioned to work together to address an issue that is regarded as critical by the senior leaders. This process and teamwork are supervised and supported by a senior executive who would coach and help their teamwork. Often the teams are also supported by a team coach who helps them reflect on their team experiences as well as individual learnings.

While this format of training could be contextualized in different settings and infused with various learning goals, one approach that I have observed is in particular interesting and effective. In contrast to most leadership programs that focus on promoting the elite few "high potential individuals," this approach instead emphasizes promoting the values of egalitarianism among the participants. For instance, some of the organizations would put their leaders to an impoverished area in Africa and give them community tasks such as building houses and schools for the locals. Experiences like this push the leaders to step out of their usual life cycle and comfort zone and to see the world from an angle that is totally foreign to them. As a result of these exercises, the leaders gain the first-hand experience of how it feels like to engage with people and "get their hands dirty." This helps them to be more altruistic, as opposed to becoming self-centered, which is what we often observe when managers move up the ladder.

Why Does It Work

This action-based learning program strengthens several key components of leadership. First, by taking the leaders out of their formal roles and structures and putting them into a new team, it forces them to practice their leadership skills in a way that is independent of their power and position in the organization. In such environment, the participants learn how to influence and lead others even when they do not have authority over the people they seek to manage. Second, because this program is centered around a team project, it helps the participants to learn how to work in a team as opposed to merely ordering people around. Third, the participants also get hands-on experience on problem-solving, a task with which leaders frequently have to deal. They learn how to identify a problem, and implement realistic strategies to address it.

Moreover, the "live" element of this exercise, as in it requires the participants to work with real issues that have an impact, allows the participants to experience leadership learning more realistically and more dynamically. In contrary to neatly printed cases that are usually used in leadership development programs, this exercise encourages the participants to take initiatives, find out who is important, and look at the organization they are familiar with in a different perspective. Since this exercise is also used as a way to assess the participants' leadership potential, it gives them the right amount of pressure so that they take the task at hand seriously while not being afraid that trying novel solutions would hinder their daily work. From an organizational perspective, it helps the organization to identify the right talents with the potential to move forward to leadership roles without having to rely completely on the candidates' performance in their current jobs.

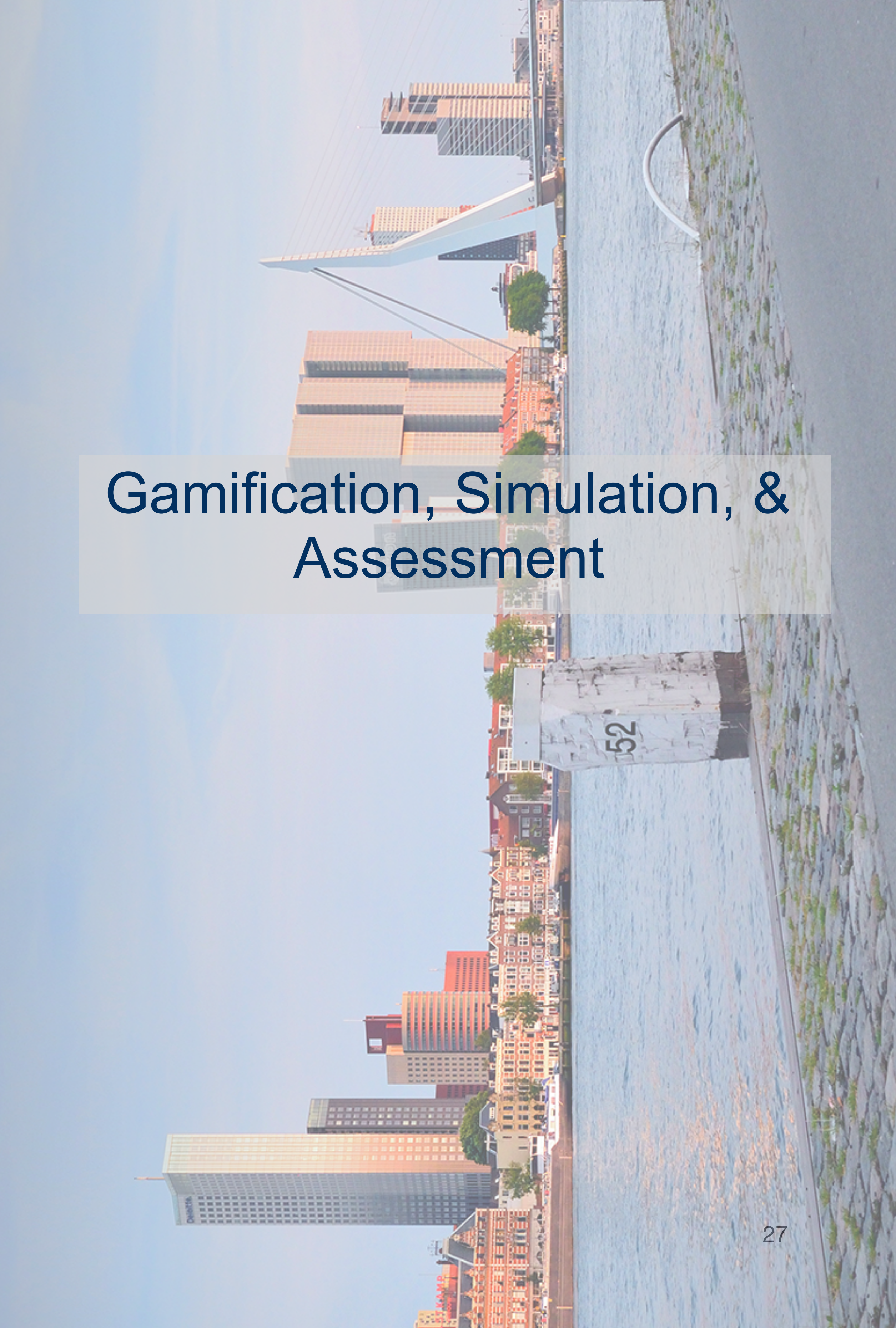
Specifically for the approach where the program highlights the altruistic aspect of the leadership development, it works because it gives an environment where the leaders could have diversified and multiple experiences that stop them from being narcissistic. In contrast to the traditional HR approach where narcissistic behaviors and leadership are only dealt with when they have emerged and become problematic, this exercise works as "vaccination" that prevents it. Throughout this exercise, the leaders are constantly reminded of the values and reasons why the business is successful, and by talking and speaking to people who are on the front-lines of organizations, they gain a quality of humility.

When Does It Work?

I think this structure is generally a useful one although some contingencies that influence any leadership development practice still apply: whether the program is clearly articulated, whether the expectation has been well explained, whether the team has been constructed a way that team members compensate each other, and whether the people who are admitted into this development program are really prepared for this challenge. Some more contingencies would be related to the specific tasks and people who are involved in this practice.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The positive feedback about this exercise is often given by the executives who use this approach in their organizations and find it useful.



Gamification, Simulation, & Assessment

Immersive Large-Scale Simulations for Leadership Training

Björn Atterstam, Rotterdam School of Management
atterstam@rsm.nl

What is it?

Pilots train in flight simulators. Astronauts train in pools. Surgeons prepare in surgical simulators.

What do we have in business? A case study? A PowerPoint presentation? A role play? A visit to another company? Yes, but could there be something for training business leaders that approach how pilots and astronauts train? My suggestion is that the answer to this is what I here call immersive large-scale simulations.

As good real-world example of this concept is a project that was undertaken in my last corporate role where I was globally responsible for leadership development and talent management for a large-financial services firm. We wanted to train all our key successors in how to become more skilled in leading in complex and fast-changing environments. In particular how to be savvier in understanding the dynamics of power, politics and persuasion. This particular ability is an example of something that is critical for business leaders to understand and be able to do. However, improving one's ability to use power, politics and persuasion is very difficult by just reading and talking about it.

As a consequence, what we did was to create a complex immersive simulation that allowed people to "step into" an environment that brought to the forefront some of the most complex situations that business leaders are faced with. As a point of clarification, often in business training contexts when we talk about "simulation" it has to do with sitting in front of computer and adjusting the price of a product to see how profit margins and market share changes. In this case though we wanted to create something much more akin to The Matrix (with a reference to the film), an immersive environment that blends reality with fiction so that the two becomes indistinguishable.

Our recipe for creating this immersive large-scale simulation experience consisted of:

- 130 people who were key talent and successors to the top jobs in the company.
- A 3.5-day duration, with approx. 2.5 day on simulation and 1 day on debrief and sense-making.
- A large designed and custom-built physical space. This could be compared to a set-design for a theatre performance. The physical space mimicked important archetypical component in organizational life, “war rooms”, “corridors of power”, “the battle arena”, “water cooler areas”, etc.
- A custom narrative around a fictitious company in a turnaround situation. The storyline was created by professional creative scriptwriters and was centered around a cast of lead characters and defined “key leadership situations” involving power, politics and persuasion.
- A group of 15+ professional actors who helped enact and carry the storyline with its intrigues forward.
- Custom-created video clips used to support and enable storyline. This included video messages from the CEO, CNN-style newscasts, interviews with key characters used to deepen the plot.
- Miscellaneous specifically created content such as annual reports for the fictitious company, press-releases, news clips, e-mail chains back and forth between key characters.
- A selection of speakers and experts from leading universities and consultancies to give relevant and punchy input as part of the simulation.
- A group of hand-picked professional facilitators who had the role of monitoring the process and providing guidance and feedback.
- A specifically developed pedagogic method used to debrief and reflect on key learning moments.

How does it work

In this particular case, the 130 participants all became “temporary employees” of the fictitious company for a duration of three days. As members of the fictitious company they were divided into teams that worked for specific divisions, all with their unique challenges and opportunities. The teams were tasked with delivering on a set of complex objectives that required them to:

- Either collaborate or compete with other divisions and understand the implications of each approach.
- Choose to act (or not) with incomplete information or figure out where to get more information.
- Balance their own priorities with those of the overall organization.
- Make complex decisions with big ramifications under time-pressure.
- Understand the perspectives of diverse stakeholders and navigate tradeoffs for different constituents.

Why does it work

This approach allowed our current and future leader to experience the essence of many of the most important and common “moments of truth” for leaders. Experience is the key word here, rather than just reading and discussing a situation, the participants were given an “embodied" experience of key leadership situations with many of the real-world dynamics that exist. It is akin to physically stepping into the case study and experiencing it.

Supporting Evidence /Impact

More organizations are experimenting with different forms of embodied learning modalities that go beyond the traditional classroom format. Our case of the Immersive Large-Scale Simulations is one example that is relatively “high-end”. Companies are doing this because many of the things we need to learn is difficult to develop by just reading and talking about it. Instead, giving people a chance to prepare and practice is more powerful. The case study above was identified by Corporate Executive Board as a global emerging best practice, and from an organizational perspective it was a big success. Many of the participants of the event went on to higher levels of responsibility in the company and were successful in these roles and we were able to shift a 70% external / 30% internal placement into key roles to the 70% internal / 30% external, which was a key strategic objective for the firm. The above development event was identified as an important enabler of this greatly improved statistics.

Gamulation™ Play to Accelerate Leadership Development

Bruce Avolio, University of Washington
bavolio@uw.edu

Learning Objectives

- To engage participants by immersing them in the business case challenge vs. just reading and discussing an organization that they have no vested interest in leading or managing.
- To provide a dynamic and engaging (fun!) developmental experience for learning leadership principles, values, styles, etc. and applying them within a competitive context.
- To integrate macro-strategic and micro-leadership/OB challenges, in order to provide a comprehensive way of assessing and developing individual, team, strategic thinking, and generative leadership.
- To provide organizations with a methodology where they can gamify their leadership development interventions by incorporating both realistic and completely far-fetched challenges they've imagined for their leadership development intervention.

Background: Gamulation Description

We have now developed one fully functioning gamulation called Liberty Air. Liberty Air has been deployed over the last year in over 55 Universities around the globe. Liberty Air was built on a qualitative research case study that was done to examine how a large regional airline transformed itself over an 8-year period into the 5th largest and most successful airline year over year in North America. The Liberty Air gamulation incorporates four complex strategic challenges faced by this airline—somewhat gamified for interest and fun, as well as 26 individual leadership challenges/opportunities that participants must address. These more micro leadership challenges, e.g., dealing with a struggling direct report, team conflict, dual career challenges, etc., will frequently compete for time and energy with the 'bigger' strategic challenges incorporated into Liberty Air that participants must also address. We have also integrated into Liberty Air core gaming principles such as leader boards, unexpected challenges and surprises e.g., Easter eggs, rewards and penalties, competition, etc.

Our next gamulation under development focuses on entrepreneurial leadership development in start up enterprises, which is funded by the National Science Foundation. This gamulation is being designed to assess how common dilemmas identified in the entrepreneurial literature contribute to startup failures. The first iteration of the gamulation will involve high-tech startups in the Northwest region of the United States with additional regions being added over time, in that research shows that regional differences impact funding opportunities, networking, labor availability, legal and policy challenges, through to the type of advisors/mentors engaged in supporting start-up enterprises.

Our third gamulation is focused on assessing and developing future retail and care center directors in the 4th largest telecommunications company in the United States. The intent of this gamulation is to incorporate future and imagined challenges that retail and care center leaders will face as this organization continues its rapid growth towards becoming the number one provider.

Example: Engagement Description for Liberty Air

They are a variety of ways to deploy this gamulation in terms of how participants play the role they choose within the gamulation e.g., CEO, COO, CFO, etc. For example, Liberty Air can be deployed across the entire duration of the course where teams of 5 players are first formed in the initial weeks of a class or training intervention, while going through onboarding team development activities, e.g., creating a *Compact of Understanding* of how to work together as a team. In one deployment of the gamulation, the players take on four strategic challenges every other week for 8 weeks. During gamulation play, and at the end of the first quarter of gamulation play, participants receive feedback on how well they have addressed the strategic challenge based on 3 summated evaluations listed on their leader board: *customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and shareholder satisfaction*.

While addressing the strategic challenges, participants must also address specific leadership challenges within the quarter of gamulation play, which based on their responses builds a feedback report on the styles of leadership and decision-making they used to address those challenges. Participants are asked to provide justifications for the decisions being made, so that either the faculty member, TA or in some of our interventions, performance coach, can review and discuss with the respective team members. We also have built in along the way team huddles and debriefs or AARs.

Other instructors/trainers have used the gamulation during a two-day workshop, so that the time is compressed for the learning experience. Depending on the goals one has for gamulation play, there are a variety of ways to deploy the use of the gamulation. We also have observed that participants modify gamulation play either at the start or during play. For example, some teams use Slack or Zoom while in gamulation play, to continuously collaborate with each other as they are diagnosing the challenge, deciding upon a course of action and then taking a decision. Other teams play quite independently of each other while making decisions without a great deal of consultation or consensus seeking. All of this is data for us to examine based on how teams play and how they actually perform.

Why Does it Work?

By gamifying simulations we are able to increase engagement levels of participants, as well as the quality of the immersion experience. Over 90% of players recommend that their instructors use our gamulation in subsequent courses, and 100% of the instructors have opted to use the gamulation again. Using gamification principles, we also find that even the choice of the avatar in the gamulation can impact the identification participants have with the role chosen and also their experience.

With the gamulation design, we can include whatever challenges are deemed relevant to the target leadership development objectives and roles. As noted above, we are currently building a gamulation for high technology startup entrepreneurial leaders forming their companies, as well as a third gamulation for a large enterprise system that wants to use it in assessing and developing retail and care store managers/directors.

To further understand how participants engage with the gamulation, we have also built ways to assess how participants are making their choices. As noted above, participants are asked to input their rationale for key decision points during gamulation play and afterwards during debriefs, which we are codifying so that we can use machine learning in the future to assess their rationales. We also have incorporated indicators to assess their level of collaboration, e.g., the amount of time teams and members invest in making a decision. We use the time proximity between team member decisions as an effective proxy for assessing levels of collaboration. Finally, our gamulations are based on research we have done with the organizations so that the challenges included can mirror what real leaders face, as well as the contextual factors and resources that can impact their success.

Supporting Evidence

We have deployed the gamulation in OB, leadership, strategy and entrepreneurial training and courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. We find that for Masters level, their sophistication may be higher in terms of making strategic decisions requiring financial acumen. However, regardless of their level, the key aspects of the gamulation play in terms of how one identifies challenges, gathers input, makes decisions and follows thru on one's action taken, applies across all of these different levels of education and experience.

We are now in the process of evaluating how what is learned in gamulation play actually applies to how participants operate outside of the gamulation context. For example, with the NSF sponsored project, we will be evaluating how emerging entrepreneurs engage in gamulation play, while also evaluating the quality of their business plans using Linked In networks, as well as investors interested in judging the merits of their business proposals.

Leadership legacies: Exploring leadership lessons from the race to the South Pole

Evan Bruno and Scott Baker, University of Virginia
brunoe18@darden.virginia.edu

The early 20th century quest to become the first person to reach the South Pole is itself a case study in the history of leadership under adversity. We can learn valuable lessons from the leaders of two concurrent and competing expeditions (Roald Amundsen and Robert Falcon Scott) about leadership behaviors, attitudes, and personality, as well as the effects of strategy on the success (or failure) of one's leadership tenure.

This exercise/section of a class examines the habits of thought and practice of two famous leaders to equip the student to lead in an increasingly complex, connected, and diverse world. The exercise consists of nearly equal parts theory and practice, relying on two historical case studies (Roald Amundsen and Robert Falcon Scott) to glean what lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of earlier leaders while maintaining the perspective of our modern context. These lessons are then matched with contemporary leadership theory and practice.

Objectives include discussion and identification of:

1. Best practices in tough leadership environments at the *behavioral level*
2. How to match leadership *style and strategy* choices to the context
3. The prevalence of implicit *theories of leadership* and how to identify them in everyday business circumstances
4. The *impact of cultural/national pride* and leadership narratives on the how various leadership outcomes are conveyed and valued

Discussion centers on excerpts from Roland Huntford's *The Last Place on Earth*. Groups of 8-15 students are well-suited for round-table discussion methods.

Structure

We break the readings up into two parts:

1. **Standards & Accountability**
    - Huntford, *The Last Place on Earth*, pp. xiii-xvi, 3-16, 321-358 (Introduction, Chaps. 1-3, 22-23)

2. Dealing with Friction

○Huntford, *The Last Place on Earth*, pp. 359-410 (Chaps. 25-27)

○Optional for rec-cap: *The Last Place on Earth*, pp. 411-507 (Chaps. 28-31)

Materials

Beyond the readings, we sometimes present a matrix on the board like below, but we don't fill in the headers until after the students have brought up their points from the reading. Both positive and negative actions / aspects of leadership go in the same column. For example, as someone mentions "asks his men for advice", we would put it in the top left portion of a class display. Afterwards, we reveal the categories for further discussion and application to the students' own lives and business leadership experiences. Having pros and cons in the same section will help engage the students since those who side with one or the other will be able to use both in a debate. Though Amundsen "won" the race and Scott is generally considered an "abusive supervisor" today, there are respective negative and positive aspects of both that should be discussed as well.

Explorer	Behavioral	Strategic / Preparation	Implicit Theories	Cultural Pride / Leader Legacy
Amundsen				
Scott				

Why this method

While not the cutting-edge method like an experiential lab or simulation, this method works well for intellectually curious students with a general interest in history or exploration. It works best not as a flagship Leadership Course, but rather as an augmentation to a larger leadership course. There are many opportunities throughout the readings to compare leadership behaviors and styles as well as each explorer's overall leader preparation ethos, all of which are very applicable to modern business leadership. However, to take this exploration beyond a behavioral case study approach, we like to take the opportunity to encourage students to identify embodiments of implicit leadership theories (e.g., Scott's inclination to brashly declare the best path forward in uncertainty rather than seeking advice) and some of the repercussions of that. Moreover, if there's time, there's an excellent corollary between the two explorers and Jim Collins' *Good to Great* that many MBAs may find increases the relevance of studying historical figures for a leadership course.

Our recommendation is to read readings with an eye towards the four objectives above and adapt the discussion to reflect your school's core leadership curriculum. For instance, if your school preaches leadership that considers all stakeholders, then having students identify the stakeholders in each endeavor may be productive.

We're happy to share more details; our contact information is in the NDLR program.

Appendix: Some starter questions for discussion

- Compare and contrast the preparation of Amundsen and Scott for the polar journey during the winter of 1910-1911.
- How much margin for error did Scott plan for? Amundsen? Why the difference?
- How was Scott's naval experience and culture a hindrance to his expedition?
- Why was Scott so delusional about his influence with his men?
- What mental and emotional pressures of their competition affected each man – Amundsen and Scott? Why?
- Why did Amundsen's team not need "coaxing or cajoling" on their route to the Pole? (p. 466)
- Why did Amundsen "win" the race to the South Pole?
- Why did Scott "lose" the race to the South Pole?
- Do you agree with Huntford's assessment on p. 478 that "Scott wanted to be a hero; Amundsen merely wanted to get to the Pole. Scott, with his instinct for self-dramatization, was playing to the gallery; Amundsen thought of the job in hand, not of an audience." Why/why not?

BOLD Expeditions: Vulnerability in the Toughest of Circumstances.

Hannes Leroy, Rotterdam School of Management
leroy@rsm.nl

Learning Objectives

- Participants learn how to *lead without subject-matter-expertise*, many of them have never been in a similar situation but they will nevertheless be asked to lead the expedition. This mirrors an important problem in practice: many beginning leaders focus on being an excellent manager than the human side of leadership.

- Participants develop *self-awareness* of their strengths but especially of their own *limitations as a leader*. The extreme outdoor context (i.e., a physically and emotionally very challenging setting with nowhere to run or hide) puts dysfunctional behavioral patterns under a magnifying glass to study and experiment with new behavior.

- Participants are guided through *active and hands-on mindfulness training* – in contrast to traditional mindfulness trainings, the outdoor setting naturally induces moment of mindfulness (while walking, eating lunch, observing wildlife, …). We use these natural moments of mindfulness to teach students basic principles of mindfulness.

- Finally, the outdoor environment allows many opportunities to talk and really connect with others. Instructors use this as an opportunity for *intense coaching* with students and gradually throughout the course teach students to coach each other.

What is it?

On the cover of many leadership books you will find an example of extreme adventures (e.g., mountaineering). However the contents of those books then go on make little reference to those extreme adventures, instead referring to principles of business leadership. This program builds on the intuition that outdoor settings are an important catalyst for leadership and leadership development and develops that idea into an 8-day trajectory for business schools and executive education. In various places of natural beauty spread across the world (e.g., Patagonia, Norway, Scotland, Iceland, Greenland, …) we take small groups of students (5 maximum) and give them the challenge to navigate through relatively uncharted terrain. While a certified outdoor instructor and leadership coach accompany them on this trip, the idea is that students themselves navigate through the terrain. And yes this may very well mean students walking in the wrong direction for two days, which facilitates learning. It does not however mean endangering the students in anyway as their every move is closely monitored by two capable instructors.

Why Does It Work?

This exercise builds on basic principles of "uncomfortable but learning". Students are put in very difficult circumstances that really "stretch their comfort zone". What is interesting here is that this typically goes way beyond what most would consider a normal stretch. Students often hit rock bottom during this trip, however, this is what trigger the most learning. Knowing how difficult it is to change behavioral patterns, this rock bottom is important to raise awareness of the problem build from the ground up. But this goes beyond just shaking them up, the high quality intense exchange with students during the trip gives more than enough room and support to develop new patterns. In other words, as much as students are broken by the experience there is emotional support. More than that, vulnerability is a key word on these trips. Stripped from modern comforts, students more quickly reveal their authentic selves. So seemingly paradoxical, in the toughest of circumstances, students reveal themselves as most vulnerable, which is a key condition for learning to occur.

When does it work? (supporting evidence and contingencies):

This trajectory has been given perfect course evaluations over the past years which is amazing as this is anything but a walk in the park. These high evaluations are almost contradictory to the physical and emotional strain that students are put through. Part of this can be explained through a "survivor-effect" – coming back to civilization and its comforts will put any student in a good mood. It is also important to highlight that we do these expeditions in beautiful settings so there is partially a "holiday-effect" that positive rubs off on these evaluations.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that these positive evaluations go beyond a positive impact on respondents positive emotions, but more profoundly impact learning. At this stage, the evidence for such learning is anecdotal and future research should investigate whether students come out of the program with different behavioral patterns. One surprising, consistent, and tangible finding from past expeditions however is the following: Having exceeded their own expectations and limitations, participants develop a generalized sense of self-efficacy to rise to various challenges in their lives. In almost all cases, in one way or another, students indicate that the expedition has leveraged something that they were scared to do before: Having that courageous conversation with a friend, family member, or colleague; asking for that promotion or changing one’s job; starting that new project, hobby, or even company, …

Gamified Collective Intelligence Leadership Campus Program

Lina Hamed, IESEG School of Management
lina.hamed@ieseg.fr

Learning Objectives

- Problem solving
- Develop collaboration between CEOs
- Critical thinking
- Develop out the box mindset
- Identify potential synergies and common action between Business Units
- Allow them to get know each other and network

What is it?

This program was launched in 2016 during an international seminar that happened in Frankfurt. During this event 150 executives from all the world's BUs were invited. Each year, it is the opportunity to launch a training program for the group's CEOs.

I designed one part of the program. It was composed of:

1. A pre-rework phase: identifying and analyzing case studies before the D day
2. and a live workshop of 4 hours.

1,5 months before the event, the 19 participants were invited to send the global head of HR case studies that described issues they were facing locally and that was in line with the current orientations of the company.

The Head of Global HR and I selected 5 cases which we thought most relevant to all. We composed then 4 groups. Each was assigned a case that would be of interest for all and related to the initial issue they had communicated.

4 members of each group was to act as "consultants" toward 1 "client", the person who had written the case selected. "Consultants" were asked to get in touch with their "client" before the workshop to start ask questions and do an analysis of the situation.

On the day of the workshop they were split into groups in different tables.

The first part of the workshop was an icebreaking activity. They had to throw a ball to each other and answer different questions that appeared progressively on the screen. Those surprise questions were about their motivations, worst and best work memories as well as some questions on their hobbies.

Second part of the workshop was to define and describe in groups the solution to the case study, with more inputs of the “Client”. The presentation had to be done using lego components. Therefor each group was given a box of Lego Serious Play®.

During the third part of the workshop, each group had to present their idea and Lego creation with argumentations to convince other participants to “buy” their solution. A board member had joined the session at that time. After each speech, they all had to vote using a mobile app “buy”. If not convinced, they were asked to provide “advice” and points of “improvements” they were looking for in the solution. The board member gave his feedback orally was well.

This was an opportunity for all participants to be aware of current main issues, discuss solutions, develop positive critical thinking and share advice.

Why does it work?

- The consultant “Role game and simulation” was relevant to their environment and made them in a good mood. They made even jokes about not charging as much as BCG would
- Playing with the ball in the beginning of the session made (nearly) everyone comfortable as the ball was falling down, so people were laughing and sharing their stories.
- It provided a challenging environment as issues appealed to them and were intriguing to all.
- There was the pressure of competition as at the end they had to vote
- There was as well the pressure of presenting to a board member
- Creativity was encouraged using the Legos

- Working with hands allows different part of the brain to work and therefor discuss issues and solutions in out of the box terms
- Using digital tools was appealing to them and new. They were seduced by the novelty.

When does it work?

The program was launched by the global head of HR during a festive event. I am not sure participants would have reacted like this if it was rolled in other conditions.

It was combination of a quite demanding activity in a nice comfortable different setting than the company or a classic classroom.

The easy-going personality of the Global head of HR made everyone comfortable.

It was very demanding in terms of preparation: timing and type of activities is very important to respect. It is important to maintain attention of this very demanding public. I also worked a lot on anticipating any technical and logistical issue that might have happened, as well as their possible reactions towards what was required.

Power, Politics, & Presence

Power and Politics: Personalized, experience-based, and purposeful learning for influence

Ethan Burris, University of Texas at Austin
ethan.burris@mccombs.utexas.edu

Learning Objectives

- Participants build awareness around lateral and upward influence tactics from an actor, observer, and receiver perspective, as well as learn about the peculiarities of influence once they are in a leadership position.
- Participants learn about their current skill level and effectiveness in influence tactics, casess, "take-home" exercises to apply and practice learnings at home or in the workplace).
- Participants reflect on their long-term goals in life and work and set intentions to use their newly acquired influence tactics to help them achieve these goals.

What is it?

The Power and Politics course that I teach consist of 3 stages in the semester which move from short term influence tactics (e.g., upward and lateral influence tactics) to longer-term influence strategies, and ending with influence tactics for individuals who are in a specifically in a leadership position. Here is an overview of the content and focus of the course.

- <u>Short-term influence tactics</u>: In essence, this stage is about how "to manipulate and dominate in order to get what you want". Participants learn about different influence tactics, get insight into their 360 "Leverage inventory" (i.e., the kind of tactics they tend to use at this point and their effectiveness).
- <u>Longer term influence strategies</u>: Students first experience being on the receiving end of such short term influence tactics (e.g., by means of Milgram experiment case) and begin to recognize that this does not engender sustained influence over time. Students get an in-depth understanding of how powerful these tactics are, how it feels to engage in them and be subject of them, and whether they can and want to opt for more long-term, sustainable strategies for influence. We then

discuss such strategies (e.g., emotional intelligence, networking, balancing advocacy with inquiry).

- Leadership influence: Finally, we end the course with pointed discussions about how the above tactics and strategies can and should differ for people in a leadership position. This involves issues such as how to influence (corporate) culture and how to take charge of the whole organization.

Importantly, students get the opportunity to pull all of their insights and skills together in tackling the final assignment in a reflection paper at the end of the course. In the first part of this assignment, they get to figure out what goals they find personally meaningful (e.g., by means of insights on key questions from alumni). Discussions revolve around the following questions: What do you want to have accomplished on your 10-year reunion after graduating?; What is the legacy you want to leave?; Who are you as a leader? In the second part of the assignment, they set up an action plan to realize their proposed goals, drawing upon the influence tactics they have developed in the course. Taken together, they finish the course with a key vision of how they want to live, work, and lead and how the skills they just learned can help them in this.

Why Does It Work?

Part of the reason why I believe that this course is continuously well-received and effective in achieving the proposed learning goals is that the topic and methods are personally engaging, experience-based, and purposeful. In addition, the exercises and assignments are designed so as to reveal gaps in their knowledge and skills, which in turn motivates them to develop. I apply these general principles both for specific exercises (e.g, case discussions) as well as for the course in general (at a more meta-level).

Here are some ways in which these general principles are present in the course:

- Personal engagement: The topic of power and politics is inevitably something that participants will be confronted with at work and whether they like it or not they will have to try to find a way to relate to politics and engage in it in a manner that is sustainable, effective, and which serves their personal/organizational goals. Thus, given that politics are ubiquitous yet not many leadership courses cover it, this course builds key capabilities and mindsets that tend to be overlooked in more classic leadership courses. Furthermore, the format is also personally engaging in the sense that it is experience-based (cf. below) and it requires participants to apply their newly acquired skills to achieve their personal goals in life and work

- Experience-based: Each session and assignment creates and draws on experiences to expose gaps in knowledge and skills, and reflect and learn in order to become more effective in the long run. I use a combination of classroom simulation (e.g., cases) and real-life experience (e.g., prior experience, experience from carrying out assignments at work/in life, 360 feedback on influence tactics). For example, I carefully select cases that require participants to take actual action and make an actual choice (e.g., decide, fire,…). So in essence participants are set up to *experience* the conflicting logics and issues the protagonist is confronted with (e.g., Merck Sharp & Dohme in Argentina case), articulate these logics, and discuss them. As another example, participants get assignments that require them to apply their newly acquired skills outside of the classroom (e.g., requiring them to persuade a coworker about their own stance on a political issue) which oftentimes exposes gaps in their knowledge and abilities and forms a basis for in-class reflection, discussion, and learning. Taken together, experiences and the direct and indirect feedback that participants receive propel learning.

- Purposeful: We explore what the issues discussed in class mean for participants' learning, career, and their long-term development in general. In other words, learning and development does not stop at the end of the course. Students are required to critically reflect on the use of the course in their real life, how they feel about its components (e.g., whether this is sustainable and how to tweak tactics so they are more helpful), and how they plan to use it.

- Looking back: To reinforce participants' learning I help them notice and realize how they have developed throughout the course. This is important such that participants step into and embody the knowledge and skills they acquired.

Leadership & Politics: Understand the Right Way to Influence Others

Jesse Segers, Sioo, University of Antwerp & Daan Sorgeloos, Antwerp Management School & Vrije Universiteit Brussel
jessesegers@sioo.nl; daan.sorgeloos@ams.ac.be

Learning Objectives

- The participants have an objective understanding of politics in the workplace.
- The participants become aware of their own positions about politics.
- The participants start to develop a (new) political self
- The participants become more social astute in organizations.

What is it?

Politics is a perennial topic in organizations, and there exist many ways to define and look at politics: some regard it is detrimental to the organization's well-being while some see it as a necessary element that supports the operation. Regardless of one's own take on this matter, it is inevitable that at some point of their career, a leader would have to face, deal with, or even initiate politics themselves to achieve personal and organizational goals at the same time. It is therefore crucial for leaders to master the skills of managing politics and using it, when necessary, to their advantages.

The leadership development activity detailed in this case seeks to achieve one dimensions of political skills (Ferris et al, 2007). This exercise begins with an exercise that enables the participants to understand their will to engage in (from responding over predicting to initiating) and how they value politics in organizations (from negative over neutral to positive) (DeLuca, 1999). This balanced view about politics is vital to the success of this exercise because, as in any topics that may have a negative connotation, the word *politics* might not immediately connect to the participants as something they need or want to master. Only after the participants understand and agree with the necessity of developing political skills and how this is different from Machiavellism, they can willingly and openly continue in the activities that this exercise entails.

We do so by inviting the participants to physically stand on a 3 by 3 quadrant which is placed on the ground of the training room onto which each dimension of stance towards politics is mapped. And then we facilitate the exchange between participants standing on different areas to speak with each other. What have led you to decide to stand in this area? Next, we give them the definition and sub dimensions of political skills of Ferris et al. (2007) and the outcomes that are the result of possessing political skills in organization. Next, we ask them to reflect what this all means to them, and give them 5 recurrent question throughout the training and a learning journal in which take can write things down. The ultimate goal of this phase of exercise to get them aboard with the idea that politics is not necessarily a negative thing, laying the motivational foundation for the subsequent activities. From our experiences, this may take a significant amount of time, but is essential if the following activities are to be successful.

This introduction exercise is then followed by an activity that helps the participants to become more social astute (one the dimension of political skills) by learning how to make a customized strategy when facing differing political environments. This activity starts with a stakeholder analysis where the participants are first asked to articulate what they want to achieve and how this aspiration is related to the stakeholders. In this stage, the participants practice how to profile the political standing of each stakeholder on two dimensions: *power* and *interest*. This allows them to see different clusters of stakeholders, upon which they can then develop specific strategies to convince them. We also give them some theory on hard, soft and neutral influencing styles and which style works better in which hierarchical direction. The ultimate output of this phase of the exercise is a map describing how each stakeholder relates to the goal the participants want to achieve, and how to cope with them. This constitutes the central part of the exercise, and we build it in such a way that allows the participants complete multiple learning loops: from experiences to theory and then to experiences.

This program ends with a so-called “fish-bowl exercise.” [1] The essence of this exercise is to allow each participant to receive feedback and have insights from other participants in an open-minded way. The participants would take turns to explain and present their mapping from the last exercise, and other participants could ask questions about the mapping but not commenting on it. This is to avoid the participants from getting into debates, and to help the person to understand his/her case better, instead of the rest of the participants understanding it better. By the end of each participant's time, he or she is invited to circle questions that he/she considers as thought-provoking and interesting, then the group is allowed to give advice for the case, with a special focus on the particular 'warm 'questions. By the end of the session, all the participants would have all shared their mapping and received feedback, in the form of questions and and advise, from other participants. The session ends with a round of appreciation.

Why does it work?

There are several critical elements that would ensure the success of this training. The first is that the session is designed in a way to deliberately ask the participants to reflect and think about their own stance about politics before they actually do the exercises. This guarantees the motivation towards this topic as well as the subsequent activities. Second, this exercise also involves a lot of conversations, physical and cognitive activities on their own business situation, which help the participants to immerse in the activities. Third, because the instructors would make sure that in the opinion-giving period, the perspectives would be given and received in a non-defensive manner, this session could trigger meaningful conversations that benefit the collective learnings.

When does it work? (contingencies):

From our experience, there are two contingencies that instructors need to watch out for while running this program. The first is the context of this exercise (e.g., whether this is a part of an open program or it is placed within a company). This would influence the participants' psychological safety for them to communicate and share their thoughts about politics openly. The second is the career stage of the participants. The exercise seems to work best from middle-management upwards, not only because they are usually to exposed to political situations, but also because they are more motivated to learn how to cope with such situations.

[1]For a brief introduction: https://www.citehr.com/1849-fish-bowl-method-training.html

Evidence of Effectiveness

We have been collecting the longitudinal data about the exercise. While we have not yet finished the study, some preliminary results suggest that this exercise works in terms of improving the participants' mastery of social astuteness and helping them to strengthen the leader-member-exchange relation with their leaders 6 months after the exercise. We also found support for the effectiveness of spending a significant amount time to create the awareness and balanced view of politics before running the actual exercises.

A Framing Approach to Leadership

by Laura M. Giurge, Cornell
lmgiurge@cornell.edu

My research is not directly on leadership but on an underlying element of leadership, namely power. To what end, I'm writing this input for the NDLR conference in line with one of my current research projects that aims to look at the value of responsibility in relation to power. Addressing the ways in which one frames their power (this is mainly meant to be about power as a stable structural element such as a leadership position but it might also extend to power as an experienced state such as subjective feelings of being powerful) might have a strong influence on how leaders develop and behave.

Exercise/tool description

At the moment I have a very broad idea of how an exercise/tool surrounding the framing of one's power/leadership role would play out. One basic approach would be to simply ask individuals before taking a leadership role (this could be a team leader role for instance) to think about what that leadership role means to them, what they want to achieve when being in such a role, what are their tasks and responsibilities associated with such a role. Only when their responsibilities are clear should they move on to focus on what opportunities such a leadership role brings them. Another approach would be to target specific tasks/decisions that leaders have to deal with or their surrounding environment. For example, before making a decision one would be asked to think about the responsibilities implied by that decision. This is relevant to the extent that subjective feelings of power are more likely to emerge from situational fluctuations rather than stable individual differences (Smith & Hofmann, 2016).

Learning objectives

Rarely are leaders asked about how they frame their power/leadership position. To that end, an exercise/tool built to draw individuals' attention to the various underlying elements of power might help shape leadership for the better and encourage more prosocial behaviors among leaders. It's important to note that a one-time exercise will most likely not be sufficient to alter the way individuals shape their view of power/leadership and that perhaps the best approach would be to run such an exercise or employ a tool that is meant to bring leaders attention to the important but often forgotten element of responsibility.

Why does it work? / Supporting evidence

The basic idea is that power is a social interpersonal construct yet when it comes to power the attention is rarely drawn towards this social aspect of thinking about others. Research in social psychology has shown that people find power as opportunity (defined as achieving one's goals via influence) more attractive than power as responsibility (defined as the implications of one's actions resulting from one's influence) (Sassenberg et al., 2012). There is a growing body of research in social psychology that points towards the positive outcomes of framing one's power as responsibility rather than opportunity (De Wit et al., 2017; Zhong et al., 2006; Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Overbeck & Park, 2001; Rus et al., 2012; Tost et al., 2015; Handgraaf et al., 2008; Cislak et al., 2018). For instance, De Wit et al. (2017) showed that power-holders who construe their power as responsibility (vs. opportunity) are more likely to listen to others' advice even when that advice comes from a less powerful individual.

When does it work?

I think this could work for MBA team exercises. The behavior of group leaders could be captured by others at the beginning of the exercise but also during the exercise; the only potential downside of this is that having leaders focus on the responsibilities associated with their role might increase stress (cf. Scholl et al., 2018 who show that power-holders who construe their power as responsibility, rather than opportunity, may be more likely to perceived that their resources are lower than their demands, which triggers threat responses in challenging situations such as budgeting decisions, delivering a speech, performing tests).

Using a Theatre Sports Practice in a Leadership Development Workshop

Mirjam Altena, BDO
Mirjam.altena@bdo.nl

Learning Objectives

- Using body language as a way to interact
- Self esteem
- Talking/ standing in front of a group
- Flexibility/ being able to improvise to the situation

Exercise Description

The group is asked to form couples. Every couple will be asked couple by couple to go to one corner of the room. And without talking to each other they are asked to walk back to the center of the room. But before they start walking, they are asked to decide whether they are coming back in the room acting as a person with a high ranking, or as a person with low ranking. And without saying a word, they need to non-verbally show the group (acting) which position they've chosen. After walking from the corner to the middle of the room, they are asked to take a position in the middle of the room. The rest of the group, who have been observing the walking couple, are being asked, who in their eyes was the leader and who was the follower. Discovering that even though the two people chose the same starting point, still one of them was perceived as the leader of the two.

It is a subtle game of influence, and there is always one who decides what is being done (for example the pace of walking, or who starts to walk). And the power position can be shown in very small gestures, for example using a hand waving gesture to let the other person go first, is already a sign of leading. And if the other person declines the hand gesture, it is also a sign of leading.

After this exercise, couples are asked to do it again, but this time make the gestures as 'big' or 'small' as possible. So as their chosen position, or rank is very obvious and leaves no doubt. Directly after ending their walk, they were given a difficult task to complete individually. What happens now (in most cases) is that the person who made 'small' gestures and walked timid or shy, has a much harder time to complete the task at hand. Also the experience afterwards was described as being experienced as less joyful and fulfilling. While the person who chose to act important, dominant a person from high ranking, with big gestures and a lot of conviction and belief, found the task easier and had more fun to complete it, he or she also didn't give up.

Why Does It Work

The above couples show that acting big and dominant, important (high ranking), or acting small or shy (low ranking) have impact on the way we perceive ourselves and the things we are able to do and the way others perceive us. In most cultures 'high state body language' is related with importance and subservient is seen as a form of 'low state body language'.

When it comes to leadership and power, we can actually use that insight and make us of typical low and high state body language.

So for people who by time become a manager of a team, but have a hard time fulfilling that role, because they are not used to being a leader or taking the lead, can exercise by using body language suited for high ranking. Another option is to examine within yourself and amongst your colleagues or peers, how do you rank yourself? People who rank themselves higher than others, are more likely to speak up, take the lead, tell others how they think.

There are more nonverbal ways of telling where the real power lies in organizations, than just by saying who's the boss. And by using body language as an expressive tool, people can behave according to the expectations people have of their role, in a way also creating congruent leadership.

Supporting Evidence

The research of Peter Aget (the film: *Ape Man)* and research of Amy Cuddy.

And accordingly, my own experiences. Theatre sports is my hobby, and by experimenting with different roles I found out that it works for me too. I am faster with improvising, better in linking different narratives on the spot when I play a person of importance, rather than when I choose to come up as a submissive personage.

Leadership Development as Co-creation with Practitioners: An Example of Non-verbal Skill Development

Steffen R. Giessner, Rotterdam School of Management
sgiessner@rsm.nl

Learning Objectives

- Increase self-awareness of non-verbal behaviors
- Strengthen your non-verbal communication skills
- Engage with environment by understanding and interpreting non-verbal skills

Exercise Description

While leadership education certainly has different dimensions and elements including knowledge and value-based education, I believe that one part is also actually teaching the so called soft skills. I have been teaching non-verbal behaviors for the last 5 years to executives, entrepreneurs, and sales people. The 2-day course named "Power of Presence" is open for everyone and we run it in a team of 3 trainers with a maximum of 20 participants. I run it with two practitioners (who are also executive coaches) – one with a background in professional dancing and one with a background in acting. The value and the quality of the program emerges in this joint collaboration of the scientific knowledge (provided from my side) and the practical experience with exercises and observation from the two practitioners.

The training is delivered across two days. On the first day, we practice first presence with the so-called "Toolbox" – a very simple exercise that has four parts: Grounding, Aligning, Breathing, and Engaging. The elements partly resemble some techniques used in acting classes (e.g., Stansilavsky or Feldenkreis method) or in mindfulness exercises (although our focus is different). With this exercise, our participants learn an easy tool of how to (a) stand in an up-right posture, (2) breath through before acting, and (3) to engage with their environment before acting. Through various small exercises, our participants practice and receive plenty of individual feedback. We also teach them the usage of voice in presenting different emotions.

As an example, one of our exercises is called "The Parliament Exercise". Here, our participants are divided into two groups and each one receives a simple statement. They have argue like in the British Parliament and we set up the debate on the topic of investment into research for life-forever pill. One group receives statements supporting this topic and the other opposes it. The goal is to practice determination in speaking. We run this exercise in different stages starting from individual reading of the statements to a situation where all participants are allowed to stand up and state their case with other participants shouting against it etc. This requests participants to increase the volume of their voice and present the statement with more determination.

On the second day, our participants have to apply their insights from the first day. We have a few exercises that we adjust to each participant (based on some pre-work of the participants and our insights from day 1). Again, each of participant receives a lot of individual feedback. Further, we run a feedforward session in which participants provide ideas for future practice to their fellow participants. Finally, we also ask our participants to write a letter to themselves asking what they want to practice, when they want to do it and how exactly are they planning it in practice (goal-setting). We send this letter to our participants 1 month later.

Throughout the 2 days, I provide some empirical insights into non-verbal behavior, embodiment, and emotion regulation. These inputs are circa 20 minutes and provide some understanding of the value of the exercises we conduct.

Why Does It Work

I think this seminar works really well because we co-created it. More precisely, we developed this workshop together in terms of elements we teach and exercises we provide. A couple of exercises were developed together as well. In this way, we provide a very coherent workshop with evidence-based insights and many exercises that focus on specific elements based on research insights. To be able to do this, one needs both sides to be open to explore and invest time to work out a training program. The advantage is that we can use the competencies for our team of trainers. The practitioners are experts for many of the exercises and are excellent observers of the non-verbal cues. I can contribute with scientific knowledge and indicate what our promises are and why certain exercises are useful. Our participants seem to particularly appreciate this mix of science and practice. This co-creation is thus a key to the success of this workshop.

A further advantage of the co-creation is that we learn from each other, and I can now make use of some more exercises in other classes.

Supporting Evidence

We certainly need more. We have only course evaluations and a few quotes (see below). However, as said above, the workshop is based on scientific insights.

"I discovered that very few people are aware of their non-verbal communication; quite strange as the majority of communication is non-verbal. I certainly became aware of my own preferences, and learned and practised techniques which will help support my spoken messages, help me avoid misunderstandings, and be more effective in stressful situations. RSM's The Power of Presence programme combined academic theory and practical exercises in a surprisingly effective way, and I'm really using what I learned, almost every day." —— Magdalena Zawiasa, general manager, Mundipharma DC B.V.

Working from, with, & across differences

Building Bridges

Jasmien Khattab, University of Virginia
khattabj@darden.virginia.edu

Learning Objective

This purpose of this exercise is to create a working space suitable for people from different cultural backgrounds. Your goal is to draw a bridge together with the engineers.

Role 1: The Zabians

Zabia

You are a proud inhabitant of Zabia. You live in a beautiful village in the mountains, surrounded by other villages. Zabians love to travel to other places. Unfortunately your village is located between two rivers. To leave your village you need to take a detour of two days. If there was a bridge you could just cross the river and avoid walking through the mountains.

The regional government has invited a team of foreign engineers to help you to build a bridge. In this first meeting you will sit together with the engineers to draw a picture of what the bridge should look like.

Zabian culture

Zabians have very strict cultural rules. For example, they always greet each other before going into a conversation. If a person doesn't greet you personally you refuse to speak with him/her even if he/she is part of a group.

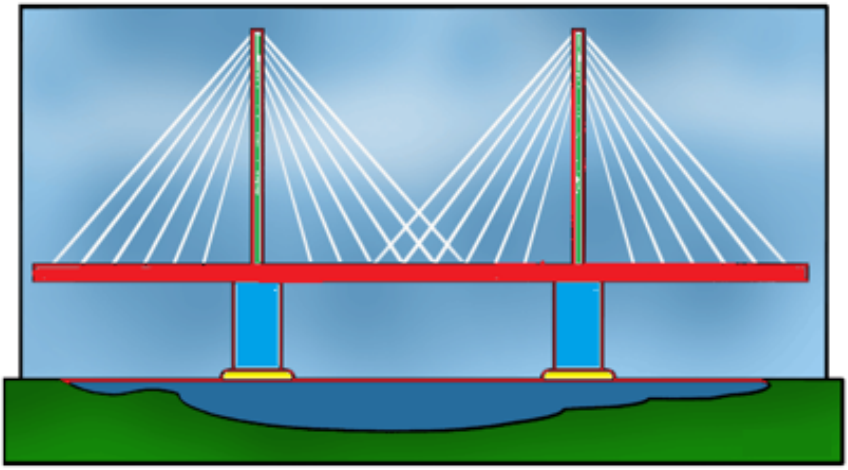
They also have a strong sense of community feeling. Zabians would never show another group their internal disagreements. However if one member of the group disagrees with a proposal, they all need to disagree (i.e. everyone has a veto). They can only agree on something if every person in the group agrees.

Zabians are very afraid of the colors red and yellow. They refuse to touch anything with that color, unless someone gives the object to them. It is the only way they make sure that the object is safe. They love the color blue. If they see an object with this color, they will never share it with non-Zabians.

As they love to travel, Zabians are always eager to meet new people. But they are very proud of their culture and for them, it is evident that other people will adapt their cultural behavior. They have no knowledge whatsoever when it comes to building bridges so they're very happy with the help from outside.

Role 2: Engineers

You are a group of international engineers working together on a project in Zabia. Zabia is a very small country in the south of Asia. Your job is to help the Zabians build their bridge. The Zabian government has provided you with a picture of what the bridge should look like



Note that the colors are very important to the Zabian government. They have great interest in this project and they have invested a lot of money in it. Now they have asked you to sit down with the Zabians and to draw the bridge together. It is very important that you create a good relationship with the Zabians because you will have to work with them for a long time.

You have agreed that the basis for a good relationship should be consensus. That is why you will explain the governments' proposal to the Zabians and you want them to agree with the proposal. Moreover, you don't want to be perceived as a dominant group of people that boss the Zabians around. Therefore, you will really take the time to draw the bridge together and give them the honor of coloring the bridge.

This meeting is very important to you. If you and the Zabians cannot draw the bridge together, you will probably lose the money for this project and you will lose your job.

Contingencies

Generally works with all different kinds of groups as an exercise in intercultural negotiations. Works best when multiple groups do the exercise at the same time, such that groups can learn from each other.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the exercise is contingent upon the debriefing of the facilitator afterwards. I usually guide the discussions using insights from the literature on diversity climates, and let students reflect on what kind of diversity climate was created in the negotiation and why. “Aha”-moments usually arise from groups where the Zabians do not “help” the architects to understand their culture, and where the architects do not see the value of building rapport and instead take a very instrumental approach.

Coaching The Coach

Jingtao Zhu, Rotterdam School of Management
j.zhu@rsm.nl

Learning Objectives

- Participants develop their coaching skills, including the abilities of asking critical questions, facilitating self-reflection, and offering constructive feedback.
- Participants understand the importance of coaching in the leadership development process and grasp the fundamental principles of being a coach.
- Participants learn how to develop others' coaching skills.

Exercise Description

Issues leaders need to address in their organizations are seldom the same, and therefore, it usually takes various skills within a team to accomplish a goal. In this process, the responsibilities of a leader often involve developing each and every member of the team to "let them thine" while they do not necessarily have a comprehensive understanding of the technical details of each team member. Their coaching skill, the ability to facilitate one's reflection and learning, is an essential block of their leadership toolkit. This "coaching the coach" program aims to develop their coaching skills in a way that does not take too many logistics.

The participants are facilitated to engage in several rounds of "coaching talk" simulations where their behaviors and conversations are recorded and then reviewed together with a group of participants. The operation details are available below.

Why Does it Work

This exercise has two advantages. The first is that the simple format allows the participants to easily replicate the learning process within their own teams, and thus there could a "ripple effect" that makes every team member aware of the basics and importance of having good coaching skills. The second is that this experience builds upon the participants' own experiences and therefore the relevance is clear and straightforward. As a result, the participants usually feel free to integrate their learning with their work, regardless of the specific task nature and context.

	Goals	Content/Methods
Step 1	1. Participants feel motivated about the training. 2. Participants understand the session objective.	1. Ask the participants to review a conversation where they have experienced significant change in mindset, perspective, or way of thinking. 2. The participants share their experiences to each other in the same group. 3. The trainer defines "coaching" and makes clear of its essence.
Step 2	1. Delegates have an intuitive understanding of the building blocks of a coaching session.	1. The participants are asked to reflect and distill the effective elements in either in their own or other's conservations.
Step 3	1. Participants know how the coaching conversations they have had could be improved.	1. The participants map out the key changes they would like to make upon their own conversations, based on the coaching principles outlined in the session.
Step 4	1. Participants experience a simulated coaching conversation.	1. The participants start another coaching session with their partner (one-to-one conversation). 2. The participants use questions pre-defined (which are typical coaching questions) in the cards to navigate the conversation.
Step 5	1. Participants make the first step to take what they have learned back to their organization.	1. Participants engage in plenary sharing sessions; 2. Participants book a new coaching talk and record the specific goals and content that are to be picked up in the next training session.

When does it work? (contingencies)

This exercise works best with participants who have had some team management experience, as this exercise heavily draws from their own past experiences. However, it is likely that they have had productive conversations whether they formally label them as coaching sessions or not. This session works best when experienced coaches are with the participants during the simulation to offer constructive feedback and input.

Supporting Evidence

This exercise has been a highly rated session in multiple occasions. While we have not yet connected this exercise with direct performance improvement, we have heard for many times that the participants brought this session (with variation) to their own teams.

Developing Leaders Capable of Managing of Diversity – Small Tweaks with Big Effects

Lisa Nishii, Cornell University
E-mail: lhn5@cornell.edu

Learning Objectives

- The participants develop a better understanding of how shared knowledge of team diversity helps subsequent team activities (e.g., brainstorming, discussion, and group decision-making etc.).
- The participants come to understand and start to see in action some of the four behaviors that are essential for leaders who can successfully manage value diversity in team (i.e., articulating, role modeling, reinforcing, and assessing).
- This intervention also serves as an important reminder to leaders themselves about the value of diversity: a deep-rooted belief that diversity in one's work environment is a beneficial factor rather than a nuisance.

Exercise Description

Cultivating the value of diversity.

Developing leaders who can effectively manage team's perceptions about diversity is a challenging endeavor. It requires that leaders understand not only how diversity influences team dynamics, but also that awareness of the value in diversity among team members is essential for making it possible. I introduce a simple intervention that could be embedded to other activities to achieve this: give the participants time and space to share with each other their unique experiences, perspectives, and differences, particularly as they relate to the focal strategic goal or team project. The key here is to take sufficient time and let the diversity emerge. Open-ended questions and appreciate inquiry can foster the type of environment of "cascading vulnerability" where the narrative of one person triggers others to open up and reveal a little more about themselves. My experiences show that these conversations, however simple they may seem, can lay a firm foundation for participants to understand and collaborate with each other. And through the process, they also recognize how a short conversation about idiosyncratic experiences can raise awareness of the value in diversity, which in turns smoothens team communication and cooperation.

Why does it work

It is pretty simple. Setting the stage with these exploratory questions removes barriers of "evaluation apprehension" by providing participants with a mental map of "where others are coming from." At the individual level, it creates psychological safety that enables further discussions, and at the team level, it helps team members to more easily build on the ideas of others, thereby more effectively mobilizing collective intellectual resources.

The broader framework of inclusive leadership

Behaviors	Exemplary Questions
Articulating what inclusion means, why it is important, and the employee behaviors that are expected of employees to co-produce it	1. Identify the three most important personal and/or business-driven reasons for developing an inclusive climate in your team. 2. What are the behavioral guidelines that employee should apply to the way they approach their work?
Role modeling inclusive behaviors	1. Which of your behaviors (including how you react to situations) align with the expectations for inclusive behaviors you articulated above? 2. Are there conditions under which you are less likely to engage in those behaviors? 3. How consistent are the messages that team members receive from observing your behavior (i.e., about the priority of inclusion)?
Reinforcing inclusive behaviors	1. Identify two examples of behaviors you would like to reinforce right away in your team and how you will do it.

Behaviors	Exemplary Questions
Assessing followers' climate perceptions	1. What evidence do you see about the extent to which team members have developed shared perceptions about the behaviors that are expected of them to co-produce an inclusive climate?

Leadership, Paintings and Communication

Prisca Brosi, Technical University of Munich
brosi@tum.de

The exercise is a painting exercise that I often conduct at the beginning of master courses on leadership to raise students' awareness on the importance of communication between leaders and followers. This description includes an extension of the original exercise to help students understand the difficulties of communication in virtual setting.

Learning Objectives

- Participants develop their communication skills including bidirectional communication, active listening, and providing listeners with a bigger picture
- Participants experience the limitations that means of virtual communication can place on the effective communication between leaders and followers
- Participants learn to select means of communication according to the demands of the task at hand in order to be effective

Exercise Description

<u>The basic task:</u> Students are paired up and assigned to two different roles; the explainer and the painter. The role of the explainer resembles the leader role, whereas the role of the painter constitutes the follower role. The explainer receives a simple picture (black lines for coloring in taken from a children's coloring book) with the task being to explain the picture to the painter without showing it or naming the overall category (e.g., dog, tree). The painter needs to paint the picture, which should resemble the original picture as closely as possible.

<u>Task in virtual settings:</u> In the non-virtual setting, students are sitting next to each other while working for approximately 5-10 minutes on the task. Extending the task to the virtual setting, their communication means can be switched to virtual (or non-face-to-face) communication means such as

telephone, email or videoconference tools. As all students have a smartphone these means of communication can be easily implemented by sending the explainer out of the room to call, email or skype with the painter who is still in the room. The task can be implemented either as a stand-alone task or as a follow-up of the basic task.

<u>Follow-up discussion on the task:</u> After the task, the drawings are pinned to a wall together with the original pictures. Normally, three categories can be identified among the pictures. First, the pictures that hardly resemble the original picture (in this category, students often report that communication failed). Second, the pictures that show a perfect but very small and unfinished part of the original picture (the painters often describe the explainer as micro managers). Third, the pictures that are closest to the original picture (the painters often describe that it was very helpful that the explainer literally provided first a big picture of what would be coming before starting to provide more detailed instructions).

Practical Details

This exercise is a small exercise that serves in highlighting students' awareness and enhance their experiential learning. The task should be followed by a discussion on the theoretical basis, which can be based in classical communication theory for the basic task. Information richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) as well as research on emotion expressions (Van Knippenberg & Van Kleef, 2016), virtual teams (Gibson, Huang, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 2014) and/or electronic communication in leadership (e.g., Hill, Kang, & Seo, 2014) can be chosen for the task in virtual settings.

Why does it work

First, the task is easy to implement, which allows it to serve in raising attention without taking too much time. Second, students can compare their result with the original pictures, which provides direct task feedback on which communication strategies work best. Third, the task is experiential in enabling students to connect their experiences with the theoretical content that follows.

When does it work (contingencies)

Students normally react with some amusement on the task to draw a picture. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some introduction in motivating students to engage in the task. Yet, the fact that the task is funny and drawing a picture does not hurt feelings or egos ultimately facilitates the discussion about communication.

Supporting Evidence

With the task being relatively small, we have not yet collected data on students' attitudinal or behavioral changes. So far, the task reliably served in engendering a lively discussion on communication and how it can be improved with students giving very positive feedback on the task and what they have learned from the discussion.

The Situation – Behavior – Impact Feedback Tool

Sofya Isaakyan, Rotterdam School of Management
isaakyan@rsm.nl

Learning Objectives

- To introduce a tool for giving feedback, which could be embedded in various leadership development programs.
- To facilitate leadership development by emphasizing the importance of giving feedback.

Exercise Description

For leaders it is important to not only focus on self-development but also facilitate the development of their followers. One way of doing so is by providing feedback, which allows followers to realize how their behavior impacts others and identify competencies and skills which need to be further developed. In addition, giving timely feedback enables error prevention, facilitates learning, and continuous improvement. As a result, giving feedback is one of the activities in which managers have to engage on a daily basis. Yet, many managers find giving feedback quite challenging as it often brings to the fore followers' flaws and weaknesses. Moreover, managers often struggle with communicating feedback in such a way that it does not come across as their subjective judgment or criticism but rather as an objective observation. To address these issues, I present the Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) Feedback tool developed by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), which enables managers to deliver relevant and focused feedback.

The SBI tool consists of three steps, taken together they provide a clear model to frame and deliver feedback. During the first step, *Situation*, you need to define a specific situation you are referring to. In particular, you need to identify the *where* and *when* of the situation. For example, you may say, "During the last team meeting, when we were discussing the launch of our new product…" By putting feedback into a specific context, you provide evidence that your feedback is based on a specific situation and, as a result, it reduces the likelihood that the feedback receiver perceives your comments as a generalized statement.

The second step, *Behavior*, involves a description of the behavior of the receiver in that particular setting. This step is quite challenging, as the feedback giver should objectively describe the behavior of the person to whom he/she is giving feedback without incorporating any judgment or evaluation of that behavior. In this regard, it is very important to talk about behaviors which are observable, specific, and preferably measurable. For instance, you may say, "During the meeting, you interrupted me three times…" instead of saying, "During the meeting, you were rude". Sometimes there are cases, in which the feedback receiver displayed certain behaviors unintentionally and, as a result, did not even notice it. Therefore, make sure to clarify such cases and come to an agreement about those behaviors before proceeding to the next step.

The last step, *Impact,* is about using "I" statements to verbalize how the person's behaviors have impacted you. That is, you need to describe how you felt or what you thought as a result of the behaviors you described earlier. For instance, you may say, "I felt offended and uncomfortable continuing the meeting". An important element of this step is that when you describe the impact, you are not talking about the feedback receiver but you are talking about yourself. As a result, for the feedback receiver, it is really hard to argue with what you say because he/she cannot disagree with your own thoughts or feelings. Hence, your feedback and comments come across as more legitimate, fair, and genuine. In this step, the feedback receiver should realize the impact that his/her behaviors have on others. Raising such awareness is a cornerstone for future development and learning.

Why does it work

First of all, the SBI model is very simple. It offers an accessible tool which allows transforming complex and potentially confrontational feedback into clear, relevant, and focused feedback. Furthermore, it is applicable across different settings and situations. Although here we describe how managers can use the tool, in reality everybody can use it when giving feedback. Finally, putting feedback into a specific context makes it more objective and reliable for the feedback receiver.

When does it work

According to my observation, this practice works best when the feedback giver refers to situations, which happened not too long ago. Otherwise, it can be hard to recall the specifics of the relevant situation. Furthermore, to effectively use the SBI model, one needs to practice it.

Supporting Evidence

Multiple interviews with managers who regularly use the SBI model prove its effectiveness in delivering feedback in such a way that it stimulates learning and development.

Sense-making, Sense-giving, & Vision Communication

Help Leaders Overcome the Blurry Vision Bias: An Exercise of Mental Time Travel

Andrew Carton, University of Pennsylvania
carton@wharton.upenn.edu

Learning Objective

- Help participants learn how to inspire others through vision communication via an exercise in which they practice producing a vision of future with image-based rhetoric (words and phrases that are readily envisioned in the mind's eye).

Exercise Description

(adapted from Carton & Lucas, forthcoming in *Academy of Management Journal*)

Evidence suggests that organizational leaders can inspire employees by communicating a vision of future with image-based rhetoric (e.g., "our vision is to make moviegoers laugh"). Yet research has demonstrated that most leaders instead favor abstract language that cannot be easily visualized (e.g., "we strive for excellence"), a phenomenon we label as the "blurry vision bias." This bias largely stems from the reality that people tend to think abstractly as they ponder the distant future. The solution to this bias may appear straightforward: leaders should consciously focus on incorporating image-based rhetoric into their visions. However, this solution implicitly assumes that leaders who are informed of the importance of image-based rhetoric will be capable of incorporating it into their communication. We suggest that this can backfire, because focusing on word selection activates a part of the mind (the meaning-based system) that is responsible for abstract thinking. Thus, even leaders who are told precisely which types of words will create imagery are likely to craft visions that are abstract rather than vivid.

We propose a solution to this problem. This tactic – mental time travel – targets the so-called experience-based cognitive system rather than the meaning-based system. Rather than contemplate the distant future abstractly, this tactic impels leaders to imagine the future vividly. When leaders who engage in mental time travel are prompted to describe their imagery in words, they will reflexively employ image-based rhetoric since it represents the most appropriate type of language for communicating concrete images.

In a typical session, participants are asked to imagine a scenario where they enter a time machine and travel into the future. They then start to look around and examine what they see. To encourage them to activate the experience-based cognitive system, we may also ask questions related to the specific details of the imagined future state, such as “who is sitting with you?” and “what are the expressions of your customers who are using the products that you have created?” This activity often takes about fifteen to thirty seconds, and then the participants are asked to translate what is in their mind into words.

Why does it work?

This tactic is grounded into the research on dual cognitive processing theory, which contends that words that represent the observable world (e.g., “smile”, “jump”, “yellow”), as opposed to words that capture ideas and generalities (e.g., “liberty”, “difference”, “excellence”), cause people to construct mental images by drawing on a cognitive store of prior encounters with external reality. By inviting the participants to actively see the details and specifics of their imagined state of future, we create a condition in which image-laden vision communication naturally flows from the imagination, thus helping them to articulate their vision better.

This tactic complements other forms of rhetoric, including mission and values statements. Being able to craft a clear and motivating picture of the future, a vision, is a critical first step for leaders wishing to galvanize their groups to move towards a different state, which is essential in virtually all leadership practices.

Supporting evidence:

Besides the anecdotal evidence that I had from the previous students sharing how this exercise helps them craft and sharpen their vision communication, we have also run three experiments with participants from different populations and career stages and showed support for the effectiveness of this tactic (Carton & Lucas, forthcoming in Academy of Management Journal).

Reference:

Carton, A. M., & Lucas, B. J. (forthcoming). How can leaders overcome the blurry vision bias? Identifying an antidote to the paradox of vision communication. *Academy of Management Journal*, amj-2015.

Leader Communication in the Context of Change

Claudia Buengeler, Kiel University
buengeler@bwl.uni-kiel.de

Learning Objectives

- Participants are able to analyze and anticipate reactions of employees to ways of communicating in the context of change.
- Participants are able to effectively communicate in the context of change.

Exercise Description

The importance of communication is an often-taught subject in courses on change management. Upper management, line managers as well as HR professionals are typically faced with the task of communicating change and its implications. Several change models describe the role of communication; yet, they oftentimes remain at quite an abstract level. As a result, students typically know that communication is relevant yet find it hard to engage in effective communication as they do not know how to communicate effectively. Therefore, the course includes several instances in which students can practice communication in role play. By practicing communication and experiencing conversational dynamics through role play, students learn to distinguish functional communication and dysfunctional communication patterns, inhibit dysfunctional communicative behavior (in particular autonomy-restrictive communication), and show more functional communicative behavior (e.g., via promoting evocation, collaboration, and autonomy in the sense of motivational interviewing; via promoting active listening; via adhering to elements of procedurally just communication, etc.). We further practice what types of conversations are needed over the course of a change project (e.g., initiative conversations, conversations for understanding, conversations for performance, conversations for closure), and how to set the stage for them. Last, we also practice vision communication and discuss the role and nature of charismatic elements in change communication. Closely aligned with practicing elements of effective communication during change, groups of students identify and interview both a change agent and a change recipient to analyze the role of communication in that particular case. Students deliver a written report and a presentation after which other groups ask questions regarding the nature of communication and the groups can explain and "defend" their conclusions using the knowledge gained in the course.

Why does it work

Through translating abstract models and ideas into practice, students are actively involved in the learning process and engage in experiential learning. Through encountering challenges and difficulties and trying to resolve them, students learn to anticipate and deal with obstacles to change. In addition, they gain first-hand experience of the impact of communicative behavior on reactions and attitudes.

When does it work

Psychological safety, smaller group sizes (up to 20 or 25 students) and sufficient time facilitate in- depth practice and reflections. I typically allow several rounds of role play such that students can build on their insights and experiences.

Supporting evidence

The course is not yet completed. Students so far reacted very positively to the exercises (especially afterwards), as they made them experience how difficult functional communication is and how important engaging in it is. In future courses, I plan to video- and audiotape the role plays to allow for an in-depth analysis of conversational dynamics and tracking learning over time.

I Will Speech – Becoming Positive Agents for Change

Daan Stam, Rotterdam School of Management
E-mail: dstam@rsm.nl

Learning Objectives

- Participants develop clarity around the vision for their own career and/or or for the people that they lead.
- They learn how to communicate this vision effectively, maximizing other's identification with this vision.
- They learn how to translate their vision into concrete goals or objectives that provide a realistic plan for enactment.

Exercise Description

When promoted to a significant position of leadership, resume and past accomplishments don't always speak for themselves. Senior management will typically ask you to address them personally with a clear vision on your leadership vision – answering the deceivingly simple question: Why should we give this position or "why should anyone be led by you"? Because if you can't convincingly communicate this to higher managers, it is unlikely you will be able to live to this vision when actually leading others.

In helping you to answer this question, this workshop aims consolidate the leadership journey you have travelled so far: Where did you come from? What have you learned so far? Who was important in that learning journey? … and how has all of the given rise to the unique leadership style you bring to the table?. Understanding the past and your unique approach, we also orient towards the future: What is your unique vision you have for the future? How will you go about achieving that vision? Why is this your vision – why should others align with this vision? … all these questions lead to you coming up with a unique and compelling purpose or "I WILL" statement that is both motivating for self as well as others.

Overall the I WILL SPEECH workshop helps you consolidate your leadership style. Past participants have boasted that this exercise improves the clarity of their own unique leadership approach but it also gives you the confidence of living up to your vision. In other words, for most participants this is an important first step towards their future.

Additional benefits:

- General feedback on your speech from colleagues.
- Detailed feedback on your speech from professional assessors.
- Professionally edited videos – as a personal reminder or to include in future applications.

Practical Details

Students go through several exercises well-described elsewhere (e.g., life-line, near-death meditation, building your narrative, strengths emergence – all of these exercises are available on demand) to give them the ingredients to build a very personal overview of who they are as a person and what has led them to take on a certain leadership role. The key here is that these exercises make the vision very unique and tied into the person of the leader (no other could deliver this speech). It ties into the authenticity of the person, not in terms of authentic leadership, but in building one's leadership as an extension of one's unique personality, strengths, personal history, …

From these essential ingredients that ground someone into who one is, students use these building blocks to develop their vision for the future. Students are encouraged to write, rewrite and even practice an 5-8 minute speech (depending on practical considerations) that talks about their long-term plans, how these are grounded in who one is, and how they intend to realize their plan with very concrete goals. These are also the criteria on which students will be evaluated by their peers and/or coach professors: (1) clarity & identification (was it clear? and Could others identify with it?), (2) authenticity (was it personal?), and (3) credibility (was the plan feasible?). This is typically followed by the question: Would you invest a 1000 dollar in this idea, knowing that if this plan is successful your triple your investment or alternatively you lose your money? Where participants are typically nice to each other in not offering the really critical feedback, I have found that this question really pushes students to talk about the areas that this person needs to work on.

Why Does It Work?

Because the vision is well-rooted in one's own authenticity, it is more likely to be owned by the participant. This ownership does not only show in terms of clarity of communication and presence towards this vision but in students who ultimately practice what they preach. Making the public commitment of voicing one's ideas out loud to others propels participants forwards through well-known processes of for instance cognitive dissonance reduction.

Evidence when it (does not) work?

Most of the evidence for this at this stage is anecdotal. Participants typically like this exercise because it puts them front and center and gives them a chance to talk about what is important to them. Beyond this ego-boost that often translates into positive evaluations after the course, the real proof is in the fact that students go on to live up to their visions. This is where we see the power of the exercise: Many students have gone no to become positive forces for change as a result of this exercise.

Training Assimilation-focused Sense-giving

Erik Waltré, RSM
waltre@rsm.nl

Key insights

The training provided leaders with a knowledge base that enabled them to start navigating their team members towards more positive (i.e., assimilative) interpretations of relative performance feedback. However, the extent to which the leaders were able to successfully navigate their team members towards such positive interpretations was contingent on the leaders' sharing behaviors. When sharing was done in public, together with all team members, this supported the sentiment of support and community that the leader is giving sense about, and consequently the team members start to perform significantly better. However, if the team leader instead shared performance feedback to each team member in isolation, this undermined the sensegiving of support and team work, which resulted in little to no effect.

Key objectives

The main goal of this training is to increase team leaders ability to facilitate motivation, learning, prosocial behavior and ultimately performance in teams by providing knowledge and tools about assimilation-oriented sensegiving behaviors.

1. Make team leaders excited and knowledgeable about managing follower's social comparison processes towards assimilation via sensegiving.
2. This should be done through their daily interaction with the team (e.g., individual- and group meetings, emails).
3. Buy-in is facilitated by:
    a. Increasing the team leader's knowledge of social comparisons (focus on comparison-styles) and sensegiving (focus on focalization).
    b. Challenging the team leader's view of social comparisons and assimilation in the team (how prevalent it is, what are the benefits and drawbacks of it (i.e., the effects), what are its positive and "negative" antecedents?

c. Providing the leader with tools and guidelines for how to increase assimilation among followers and the team.

Didactic strategy

In the training we have three focus for each learning block: i) Sell it! ii) Tell it! iii) Help them excel in it! We intertwine these foci with a structural logic of the content that best promotes the best possible learning. The key learning points are

1.People compare

a.People compare in different ways

b.These can be positive or negative

c.These have major effects on motivation and team interactions

d.Leaders can manage this.

e.With storytelling, leaders can manage what conclusions a team member draws from the comparisons

f.Before managing conclusions, leaders need to ensure alignment with underlying beliefs

g.There are four underlying convictions that promote a more inclusive comparison

h.When leading your team members to the right conclusion, you often need to prove your story

i.When to manage towards positive comparisons

j.Identifying challenges

k.Learning best practice

l.Identifying and overcoming challenges

Main instructional tools

Pedagogical elements include lectures (including examples, tables and information), cases, group discussions, and role-plays

1. The team leaders learn the dynamics of social comparison (assimilative vs. contrastive), the antecedents and effects of assimilation, as well as the impact of sense-giving, that is – how leaders can manage the social comparison processes in the team.

2. Through group discussions, lectures, role-plays, reading of testimonials and writing exercises, the team leaders develop skills necessary for effective assimilation inducement to bring back to the team and use in their daily interaction.

   a. Promoting the wished for behavior (assimilation-oriented sensegiving)

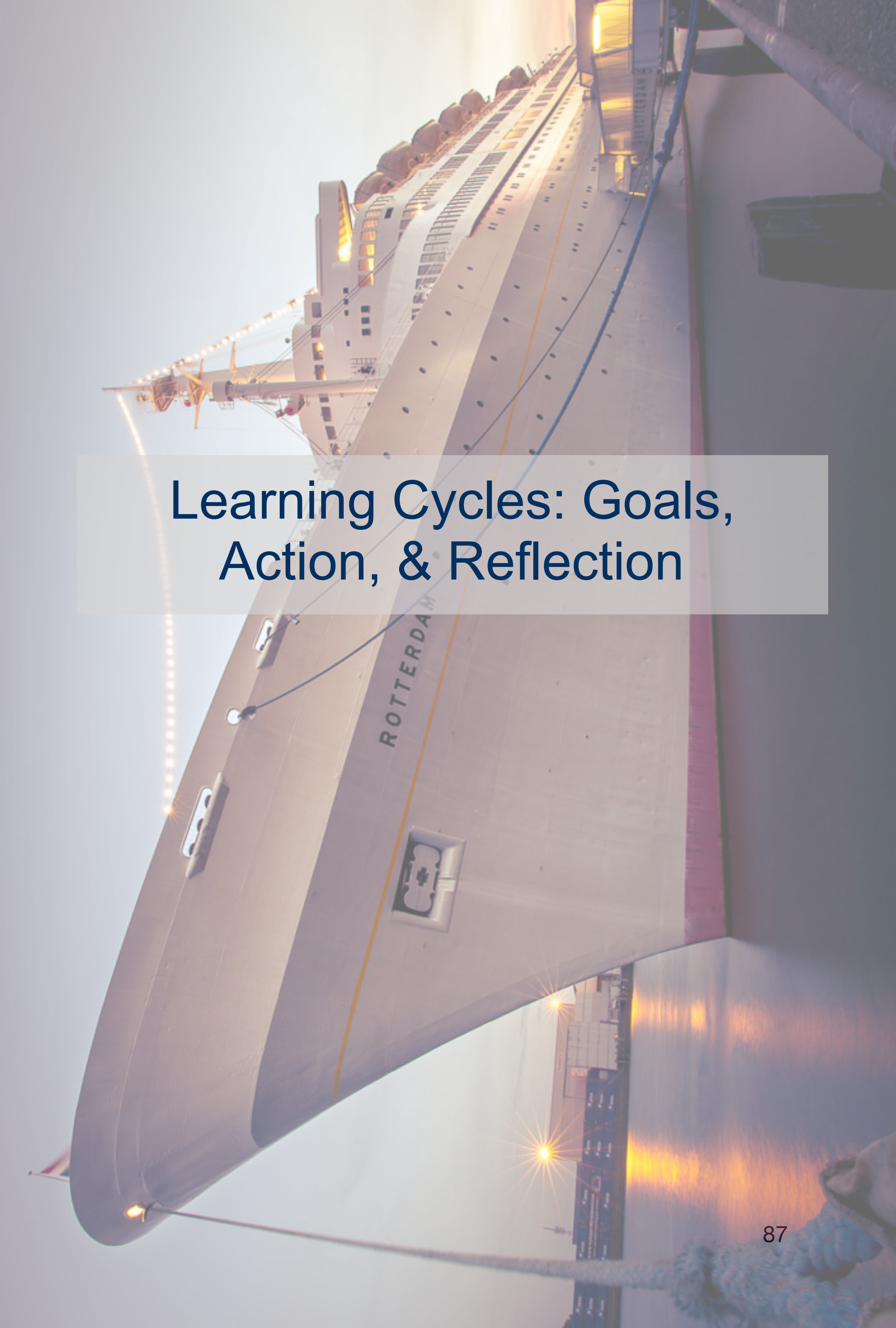
   b. Preventing the lack of wished for, or the opposite of wished for behavior (contrastive or laissez-faire).

   c. Identifying potential obstacles for successful assimilation inducements in the team, and ways to go about them.

3. Each team leader receives an evaluation of his/her own assimilation-oriented sensegiving-profile (as well as the uncertainty-level of the team).

4. Each team leader gets help in developing a personal and team-specific assimilation-focused sensegiving plan.

Concepts to include but simplify for the leader-students	**Concepts to exclude**
Sensemaking interpretation Sensegiving management Social comparison comparison Assimilative comparison style inclusive comparison style Contrastive comparison style exclusive comparison style.	Fabula Focalization Objective reality Text Story Interpretation Complex environments



Learning Cycles: Goals, Action, & Reflection

Humanizing Leadership: A Systems Psychodynamics Approach

Gianpiero Petriglieri, INSEAD
gianpiero.petriglieri@insead.edu

The overarching purpose of humanising leadership informs all of my leadership development work. The courses and workshops I design and teach build on the assumptions that (1) we learn to lead and follow through cycles of experience and reflection; that (2) both our personal history and social context matter in determining if, when, and how we get to lead, and; (3) those influences are seldom fully conscious. Hence learning about, and most importantly learning for leadership, always needs to incorporate experience, make room for reflection, involve the whole person, and take his or her context into account. Furthermore, it needs to surface unspoken, if not unconscious, personal and cultural assumptions to make them available to examination and change.

Whether it is an MBA course with a single instructor, or an executive workshop with a full staff of leadership consultants, this approach endeavors to foster *reflective engagement* among all involved. That is, the ability to reflect in action about the "2 big whys" of leaders' behavior: their personal history and background, and the group and system pressures that usually influence their habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Reflective engagement attempts to overcome the dichotomy of "reflect before you act" that underpins much soul searching-focused programmes, or "act and then reflect" that underpins most experimentation-focused ones. It encourages people to occupy a space between habitual enactment and detached observation: a space where they can be present both to their current circumstances and to their intentions for the future.

Description of the course(s)

To help students uncover and learn to work with (rather than be worked up by) the psychological and social dynamics that sustain or hinder their emergence and effectiveness as leaders, I build my courses around three questions: "What does it mean to lead?" "Why, toward what, and on whose behalf does one lead?" "How does one get to lead?"

Regarding the question of how one gains leadership, I endeavor to balance *personalization* and contextualization. Personalization happens when people come to incorporate their personal identities into their identity as a leader and to familiarize themselves with the discomfort that leading and learning often entail. *Contextualization* is a process through which people examine the needs and aspirations of the groups on whose behalf they lead and acquire. Here are brief illustrations from one MBA and one executive course.

<u>Value-Based Leadership for Cosmopolitans:</u> This core course unfolds over 7 sessions during third of five 2-month periods in an international MBA program. The purpose of this course is to consider what it means, and develop what it takes, to be responsible leaders as we move through different and diverse environments. It aspires to deepen our consciousness about the values that infuse our working lives, refine our capacity to deal with value conflicts, and strengthen our connections to people and ideas that might help us lead and live more wisely as we move around. Rather than working through a functionalist lens—that is, providing evidence for the effectiveness of certain leadership tools and techniques—in this course I work through an interpretive lens, challenging students to understand how leadership is lost and found in social contexts and to question the meanings that underpin their actions.

<u>The Executive Leadership Journey (ELJ)</u> is an 8-day executive education program for executives in a global company. the program design balances contextualization and personalization of the learning process as follows: Contextualization encompasses asking participants to involve their managers in crafting learning goals before the program; using a customized 360-feedback instrument based on those values; inviting top executives in at the start and end of the program; and debriefing activities with a focus not just on individuals' style and skills, but also on how their behavior reflects company norms. Personalization focuses on linking the learning to individual participants' history, experiences, and aspirations. This involves inviting participants to reflect on their life and career trajectories through writing a My Story to are with their coach as a context or centerpiece for individual sessions; receiving personalized feedback from the 360-feedback instrument and from participants in the program; and participating in the Leadership-in- Action workshop. The

program activities make it possible to examine how their organization's culture manifests itself and shapes participants' experience of and in it, as well as to invite them to take responsibility for that culture's maintenance or change.

Evaluation

In the case of the Executive Leadership Journey (ELJ), when we started, this approach was new and unconventional for GlobalCo and the business school that hosted the program. It required leaders from both to make the same commitment as faculty and participants, to not shy away from their experiences but to voice, make sense, and learn from them. This involved honoring participants' confidentiality, giving enough time for learning to manifest itself, and relying on leadership judgment to assess its impact. The purpose of the program itself is purely developmental, and no assessment is conducted during it. Following an employee survey that made a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the program's impact on the company and its executives, we found that participants reported both relational and individual development. Furthermore, the corporate leadership observed changes towards openness and flexibility.

Challenges & Limitations

Can we all (not) get along?: It is easy to say that we need both traditional and experiential pedagogies to equip students with the tools to make predictions about, and the freedom to imagine, the future. It is harder to structure curricula in which both have equal weight, not only in rhetoric but in practice, and in which contradictions are treated as learning opportunities.

Can we live without answers?: Whether business schools would be so popular were we to raise more questions than we answer, and to surface rather than cater to the need for protection, remains an open question. The answer depends on our ability to contain the anxieties that such an approach might stir up, at least temporarily. That is, it depends on our skills and inclinations. Many have noted that few professors have the skills to facilitate reflective and experiential courses, a significant hurdle for institutions seeking to introduce more such courses into their curricula.

Can we make leadership development, really, all about the people?: Scholars trained to value a detached, impersonal stance may have some difficulty checking it at the classroom door. Therefore, what kind of spaces faculty and staff need to humanize their work, and what risks we may run when those spaces are absent or do not hold, is an important question for scholars to explore further.

The above summary builds on my research on leadership and learning, some references:

Petriglieri, G. Petriglieri, J.L. & Wood, J.D. 2018. Fast tracks and inner journeys: Crafting portable selves for contemporary careers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, forthcoming

Petriglieri, G. & Petriglieri, J.L. 2015. Can business schools humanize leadership? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14 (4), 625-647

Petriglieri, G. Wood, J.D. & Petriglieri J.L. 2011. Up close and personal: Building foundations for leaders' development through the personalization of management learning. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, special issue on "Teaching leadership," 10 (3), 430-450

Petriglieri, G. 2011. Identity workspaces for leadership development. In: S. Snook, N. Nohria & R. Khurana (Eds.) The handbook for teaching leadership, 295-312. London: SAGE.

Setting Objectives and Grounding Them in Reality through Feedback

Hans Horstink, Rotterdam School of Management
hhorstink@rsm.nl

Purpose

- Set realistic objectives for your development and managing expectations for the course.

Exercise Description

In several programmes we use combination of tools/exercises to help participants set their learning objectives regarding development of their leadership capabilities:

- A 360° feedback tool to compare participants self-assessment to what their manager, peers, direct-reports and others think about them. The ESCI by Hay/Kornferry works quite well, but sometimes a company has their own instrument.
- A session for participants to process the results of the 360 and derive learning objectives from the process. They are also asked to make a summary flip of the objectives they want to share for the current course and to formulate a coaching question
- A one-on-one coaching session to help the participant with the interpretation of the report and make first steps in their development process
- Peer coaching sessions during the course to monitor your progress in reaching objectives
- We also ask participants to have briefing and debriefing conversations with their managers to share objectives and results and ask support in implementing changed behaviours

Why does it work?

Overestimating your own abilties is a common human trait. Having coached dozens of participants, I know that over 90% of peoplle assess their competencies higher than their respondents do. A few people seem to underestimate themselves (inferiority complex?) almost none are spot on. People need the mirror to get a realistic assessment of their own capabilities. The gaps that are reported help the participant to find focus on what competencies to work on. In practice the verbatim comments from respondents contain veru valuable clues what behaviours to change.

When does it work?

It presumes a willingness to receive feedback. Furthermore, if the gaps are large participants may perceive them as unbridgable and might give up. This happens seldomly in practice.

Because the 360 process starts with the participant asking peers and direct-reports to cooperate, they generaly are well prepared to be open to the feedback.

Supporting Evidence

Personally I only have anekdotal evidence. It would be nice to have participants repeat the 360 process after 3 to 6 months, but until now no client has agreed to this. The "Research Guide and Technical Manual" to the instrument contains an entire chapter about reliability, validity and model fit (https://dsqapj1lakrkc.cloudfront.net/media/sidebar_downloads/ESCI_Technical_Manual_nav_04052017.pdf).

Find Your Uniqueness–Emotion, Emotional Awareness, and Leadership Coaching

Johanna Junholm, Beiersdorf;
johanna.junholm@Beiersdorf.com

Learning Objectives

- The participants become aware of their emotions and how their emotions arise in various contexts and circumstances.
- Through reflection, the participants understand the power of emotions in their leadership activities (leading others as well as leading themselves) and are motivated to see emotions as vehicles for their leadership, not as burdens.
- The participants develop the habit of continually reflecting upon their experiences throughout the leadership development journey and developing a better sense of how to use their emotions to advance their leadership capacities.

Exercise Description

In my recent role in coaching entry-level leaders or leadership role candidates (e.g., management trainees who are groomed to enter a fast-track path to taking more leadership roles), I frequently observed that those candidates, having been selected from stringent selection and assessments, share some common traits. On the positive side, virtually all of them are outstanding problem-solvers. They are excellent in analyzing situations, finding solutions, following a course of action planned, and delivering results as expected. However, they are also hard-pressed in "finding their own voice" in their leadership activities. A lack of individuality and initiative-taking, that is usually evident in more mature leaders.

Concurring with this lack of individuality is their tendency to neglect their emotions. They appear to assume that the best decision has to come from rigid, cold analysis whereas emotions and "gut feelings" are just impulses that need to be suppressed. This approach leads to many problems, and among them is that it hinders their ability to take care of and make use of their emotions. With this observation, I have had many conversations these young leaders, and a pattern of the flow of this conversation has emerged, that I have applied again and again to my coaching sessions with other participants. Through the process, I seek to help the participants to transcend their “thinking” and focus their attention to their “being”. Sometimes I also take them to the outside and encourage some body movement so that they could feel more connected to their presence.

Goal	Development Element	Potential Methods
Build Awareness for Emotions	Emotional Awareness	1.Emphasize the “feeling” as oppose to “thinking”.
Understand the Mechanism of Emotions	The Habit of Reflection	1.Mirror the emotions of the participants and let them feel how their emotions emerge. 2.Facilitate them to “sense” their own emotions.
Utilize Emotions	Understand Emotions are Influencing Them Significantly	1.Reminding them to reflect upon what they really want to achieve. 2.Encourage them to become aware of their intuition.
Continuity and Next Step	Enter into a learning loop about using emotions in leadership activities	1.Offering them the opportunity of feeling “silence” and “mindful” 2.Encourage them to stay in a conscious state of mind in future events.

Why does it work

I see two reasons that this coaching approach would be effective. First, given the one-on-one approach of coaching sessions, a sense of trust could be readily established between the coach and the participants. The trust here is in turn conducive to the conversations about intimate topics such as emotions. Second, because emotions are ubiquitous in today’s workplaces, the participants have plenty of opportunities to exercise, reflect on, and improve their emotion management skills, accelerating their leadership development.

When does it work

As are many leadership development practices, this exercise works best for tasks and roles where a certain degree of autonomy is required (i.e., the participants need to make hard decisions and communicate proactively to other stakeholders).

Another factor that would determine the success of this approach is whether the participant him/herself has the motivation and stamina to engage (again and again) in the reflections and improve themselves.

Supporting evidence:

As a leader myself, I have seen this approach being successful among my team members, who are more proactive, autonomous, and emotionally sensitive in their work. They also become better leaders themselves in that they have the ability to help others become aware of their emotions. I also heard much positive feedback from my previous coachees, sharing their stories about effectively using emotions in their leadership activities.

Writing Your Own Leadership Cases

Johannes Claeys, IESEG School of Management
j.claeys@ieseg.fr

Key objectives

- Participants develop insights around the root causes of their own leadership challenges, moving beyond surface-level analysis.
- Participants develop a mindset of evidence-based thinking (moving beyond intuition) in analyzing their leadership challenges as well as implementing realistic solutions.
- Participants learn to use complex theoretical ideas by integrating them into their cases.
- Participants show true mastery of the subject by ultimately presenting their case for our students to solve.

Exercise Description

Business school students are confronted with a variety of business cases in their curriculum. For each of these business cases, students are asked to think through to a carefully selected set of problems to help them understand and apply relevant theory and academic research findings. A well-written case shows expertise in a certain area: it takes mastery to present students with an interesting problem that is neither too difficult nor too easy. In this exercise, which is the main assignment throughout the year for executive MBA students, we turn the tables on the students. Rather than having them solve a business case, we ask students to develop their own business case with one or more of their own leadership challenges as the subject.

As a test of their case and their proposed solution, at the end of class, I ask students to present their cases for other students to solve. In other words, we put their own case to the test and compare their solution to the solution that the ones others come up with. I also ask other students to make an investment decision: would you invest 1000 dollars in the solution that this person has come up with such that, if this person was successful, you would double your investment, or –

if unsuccessful – you lose your money? This decision forces students to make sure that they have a solid business case for their solution. When less than half of the class is willing to make an investment, I encourage students to go back to the drawing board.

Practical Details

This exercise runs throughout a 1.5 year EMBA trajectory, where students complete one or more of these leadership cases. Often these cases will be tied into the curriculum – so for instance when students go through four weeks of class on power & politics or leadership ethics, they are then asked to write their own power & politics or leadership ethics cases. Students develop several iterations of their cases – starting with just the problem, then the update of the problem, the solution, and the update of the solution. In between those instances, we have professional coaches provide students with feedback to help improve their work. These iterations are necessary to make sure that the problems are thoroughly addressed.

When does it work

This exercise is interesting to students because it allows them to wrestle through their own problems – offering a clear incentive to get this right. At the same time, it is very difficult because it forces them to disconnect from their own problem/situation and look at it from an outsider or meta-perspective. Leadership problems are often wicked in that the leader is intimately connected to the problem he or she is trying to solve. Furthermore, leadership problems are often treated as different than other business problems, relying on gut, instincts, intuition, etc. rather than a good analysis of the problem and a careful work-through of the solution. This exercise forces distance from one's own problem and a careful analysis of the different elements tying into the problem, directed towards a solution.

When does it work? (contingencies)

I have tried this exercise with MBA students as well but noticed that a sufficient level of emotional maturity as well practical leadership experience is necessary for students to be able to do this exercise. This is not to say that it is impossible for MBAs or Masters-level students but then students need to be sufficiently coached on the assignment, especially helping them understand that they indeed have problems to begin with. Participants will experience this exercise as difficult and messy – which it is. I personally see this discomfort as an indication that students are truly developing. Considering this discomfort, it is important that (1) there is a clear structure so students know how the steps lead to a clear end-goal and (2) sufficient encouragement and feedback loops to make sure that they stay on-task. As a result, this exercise is quite time intensive.

Supporting evidence

Absent hard data (under collection), it is my current experience that this case assignment helps students come up with realistic and concrete solutions to their leadership problems. Beyond solving specific problems, students learn a systematic approach to solving leadership challenges in the future, going beyond their gut-instinct or knee-jerk reaction. In other words, this exercises aids students to develop an evidence-based mindset with regards to their leadership challenges.

Added Bonus

With student consent, you now have a large repertoire of leadership cases for use in future classes.

What is The One Thing that Holds You Back?

Meir Shemla, Rotterdam School of Management
shemla@rsm.nl

Exercise Description

This is an action-based exercise intended for people to become more conscious of and tackle in a systematic way their key weaknesses. The process takes about two weeks and consists of the following main activities/milestones:

(1) Mapping: first, the students are asked to think about their ideal self vs who they are right now, and to map the "gap". This triggers them to identify the one thing that is holding them back (whether professionally or personally/it can be about specific behaviors/attitudes), and what they need to do to become that ideal person.

(2) Coaching: this is followed by a one-on-one conversation with the instructor, whose role in this instance is to make sure that the students can pinpoint and have deeper understanding of the critical issue at hand (i.e. their main weakness). As an example, the issues that students have mentioned include fear of public speaking, fear of failure, being too controlling, etc.

(3) Action plan: the students then have to come up with an action plan that entails choosing a "challenge" to address that weakness that they have identified. For example, the person who is afraid of public speaking would then propose a challenge to perform live at a comedy club for at least 15 minute. The action plan contains these main elements:

- BEFORE the challenge: what can help them prepare for the challenge? Students have to come up with specific actions/strategies leading up to the event (an hour by hour plan at least 48 hours before) that make them prepared in terms of their feelings, knowledge and attitudes. For example: surround yourself with positive and inspiring others, meditate, exercise, rehearse, eat and sleep better, etc.DURING/AFTER the challenge: students have to write a "script"—imagine and describe exactly how the "challenge" scenario will play out. It could be as simple as something like what they would wear on that day, how they will enter the room, where they would stand, etc.. But more importantly, the students are asked to think of how they would handle the challenge situation moment-by-moment. For example, a student who doesn't like networking would choose the challenge of attending a networking event. So then they have to think about what they would do if they were just talking someone, and then there enter a new person who wants to join the conversation, etc. They need to come up with elaborate and detailed solutions to each scenario. During the event they simply required to follow the script they had prepared.

(4) Reflection: after they've gone through with the challenge, then they have to reflect on what worked well, what did not work, how would they do it differently next time, and how could this be generalized.

Why does it work

(1) Narrowing it down: one of the important element of this exercise is that the students are required to identify only a single issue that they want to work on. By narrowing down on one specific attitudinal or behavioral issue that they want to work on makes it more manageable for them.

(2) The script: having the script allows them to really think about their weakness, and come up with an idea/solution to address it. But more importantly the script helps to take away the "fear". More often than not, we are afraid of what could happen. With the script, the students can already anticipate what could go wrong, and how they would behave in response…and then they just have to show up and follow the script in real time…just like an actor.

Contingencies

This exercise doesn't seem to work as well for people who are:

-Not reflective/critical: these people cannot identify clearly what is the main weakness that they have.

-Too broad with their issue: some people cannot articulate or identify specific issue. For example, a good narrow issue would be "I'm bad at networking", a too broad one would be "I don't know how to make decision".

-Not brave: rather than coming up with a real challenge, the less courageous one might suggest something that won't get them really out of their comfort zone. Or some are reluctant to go through with the challenge. This reduces what they could learn from the situation.

Another limitation of this exercise is that it's problem-based and weakness-focused. Although having the students thinking about and addressing their weaknesses has its benefits, the exercise seems to be missing the more inspirational aspects. Moreover, developing leadership should be about having people become aware of something that they weren't conscious of before, whereas this exercise starts with an issue that people are have already long since acknowledged.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Students offered good evaluation for this exercise. They reported that they were upset and scared in the beginning and when they had to go through with the challenge. But after the event, they felt very empowered for the fact that they now have the solution to the problem, and are more in control about it. This exercise also has its fun factor as a perk. I usually evaluate the performance of the student in this exercise based on the depth of their reflection (despite whether or not their challenge was a hit or miss), but I admit that the assessment could be made more objective.

Changing Schemas - Pushing through Discomfort

Teaching Managers How to Develop from Leadership Experiences: Toward a More Sustainable View on Leadership Development

Elizabeth W. Morrison, New York University
emorriso@stern.nyu.edu

(Proposed shift in) Learning Objectives

- Participants develop self-awareness about their own leadership capabilities and blind spots, an understanding of their own readiness to learn from their individual leadership experiences (e.g., when do I tend to be in learning mode?; when do I tend to phase out or get defensive?) and how they can sustain a growth mindset on the job.
- Participants develop strategies to optimally learn from challenging leadership experiences and to approach such experiences in a mindful manner (e.g., what is really going on here? how can I maintain relative equanimity in the face of pressure and setbacks?; how do I seek out and forge relationships with individuals who can be partners in learning?).
- Participants develop strategies to seek, process, evaluate, and integrate information that may aid their learning in an ongoing manner (e.g., feedback seeking, perspective taking, reflection, self-assessment, etc.).
- Participants learn to set goals for their own self-development as leaders, and to evaluate on an on-going basis their progress toward meeting those goals.

- Taken together, the focus is less on developing a particular set of leadership skills (e.g., conflict management, decision making) or a leadership style (e.g., transformational leadership), but rather on building the open-mindedness and mindset necessary to maximally develop oneself as a leader over time and through experience.

What is it?

Leadership development research and practice is transitioning from more traditional in-class, case-based leadership development programs toward on-the-job *experiential* learning and leader *self*-development. This shift represents a key opportunity (and obligation) to rethink how educators can contribute to such experience-based and personalized learning journeys. Along with others, I propose that the *development of leaders' self-insight and developmental capabilities* should take center stage. In other words, almost at a more meta-level, it is important that we teach leaders how to foster and sustain the mindset and skills to learn from their day-to-day experience. More specifically, this means that our learning goals may need to expand to include key learning capabilities such as accurate self-assessment, learning goal orientation, metacognitive ability, and growth (vs. entity) mindset. With this note, I intend to engender discussion surrounding this paradigm shift as well as put forward some initial ideas about the building blocks of such leadership development programs. More specifically, the following could serve as potential building blocks or critical reflection points for course design:

- Fostering a growth mindset: by means of creating awareness of the implications of a growth vs. entity mindset and the situations that trigger each of those, by identifying a personal growth mindset mantra (cf. Heslin & Keating, 2017), by rethinking assessment and assignment formats.
- Developing learning skills: how to seek out, sift through, reflect on, and experiment with developmental information on the job. How to set personal leader development goals and assess progress toward those goals.
- Developing mindfulness: helping participants to learn how to focus on the present moment in an accepting and non-judgmental way, in a manner that will enhance their leadership capacity and effectiveness.

Why does it work?

In essence, if we are able to help participants reflect on, learn from, and proactively develop from their on-the-job experiences as leaders, we have effectively recreated some of the benefits of more traditional 360 feedback programs on an ongoing basis. Helping leaders to be ready to learn from their day-to-day work allows development to be more situated, self-implicating, and self-relevant, and we know that such development is powerful and sustainable.

It should help managers not only in the kind of situations that are foreshadowed in management cases, but also beyond that in many of the unpredictable situations that leaders routinely find themselves in. In this sense, the mindset, tactics, and skills developed throughout the proposed leadership development programs may be more adaptive, versatile, and transferable compared to more traditional programs. This should help leaders to benefit from their learning and continue to develop across career stages, industries, organizations, and with different people.

When does it work? (supporting evidence and contingencies)

The above-mentioned paradigm and set-up are quite new and admittedly still await testing and evidence. As described above, I expect that participants should feel more empowered in their learning journey and take their development in their own hands.

In terms of contingencies, I expect that a certain level of leadership experience and maturity are helpful given that more experienced and mature participants (a) will have noted instances in which they were not “in learning mode” and what the consequences were; and (b) will have a better sense of direction in using the newly acquired mindset and skills to carve their own career and lead well throughout it. Furthermore, I expect that a key challenge for educators will be to *not* provide ready-made solutions (i.e., cognitive level), but rather explore learning and development at a more meta-cognitive level and help participants practice associated skills.

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Two Experiential Learning Activities

Kevin M. Kniffin, Cornell University
kmk276@cornell.edu

Rather than describe a program, the workshop organizers invited a description of two Leadership- related activities that I have found to be effective. In order of originality –

1. "How do you keep score for yourself?" (Novel activity; in development)

As part of the "Leadership and Management in Sports" course that I organized and have "coached" annually since 2012, I enjoy challenging students to reflect upon – and quantify – their values into the form of a "stat line" for themselves (playing on the analogy whereby athletes in various sports have traditionally been measured by a small set of sport-specific metrics). In addition to students, I have also enjoyed challenging tens of executive guest-panelists with this same activity – asking them "what are the metrics that matter to you (personally)" or "how do you keep score for yourself?" To the degree that much of leadership training is fundamentally about self-awareness, I have found this to be a successful, complementary way to help people think about their priorities and the degree to which their own activities align (or not) with their priorities.

Illustrative responses (to date) range from very basic metrics (e.g., "my GPA" or "the size of my bank account") to other-oriented ones such as "how much time I spend with my family" or "number of church services I attend each week" to particularly creative measures that include "the number of people I make smile in a day" (from the COO of a North American retail firm) and "the number of former direct-reports who have gained promotions" (from the VP of numerous pharma/tech firms).

Feedback during NDLR will be very welcome as I take steps to write about the activity. I can add that the activity is designed partly to scratch the surface of values so that if someone says that "Happiness" (for example) is an important personal value, the activity challenges them to think about measurable (and, ideally, actionable) variables that influence their happiness.

2. “Please draw an ideal leader [or manager].” (Complementary to Schyns et al., 2011)

Students in the upper-level Organizational Behavior course that I teach are asked to spend approximately 10 minutes of class time to work in groups that are randomly assigned to *draw* an image of what they imagine to be an ideal “leader” or ideal “manager.” The activity is derivative of a more intensive protocol described by Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter, and Tymon in *AMLE* (“Teaching Implicit Leadership Theories and Leadership,” 2011) and I’ve added the wrinkle of asking half of the groups to draw the manager instead of asking everyone to draw the leader. The contrasts that classes have generated through this kind of “projection” test are often insightful.

More specifically, the reflective value of this activity is generated by an in-class review of the student drawings through which we can see – in real-time – the patterns that often emerge. For example, when one group drew a wizard for their ideal leader, it illustrated an *implicit* view that leadership is “magical” with skills that are effectively inaccessible and opaque. Among other contrasts, managers are typically imagined to be much less attractive than leaders; and, there is often a gendering of the drawings whereby leaders are disproportionately visualized as men while there are more women among the manager drawings. Exploring these patterns in class (immediately after the groups produce the drawings) helps to “surface” myriad questions involving the origin, appropriateness, and applicability of implicit views that people hold on leaders and managers – through an activity that is highly interactive and complementary to more traditional classroom time.

Management Acts: A theatrical integration

Olga Epitropaki, Durham University
olga.epitropaki2@durham.ac.uk

Exercise Description

This is the capstone course of the MBA program at ALBA Graduate Business School at the American College of Greece. I developed and first launched this course in 2014 when I was still a faculty member at ALBA. Students need to integrate their knowledge and experiences during their MBA into a final theatrical "performance". We build around the notion of management and leadership as a performance of roles and we attempt to cast light on the inner and outer performance dimensions of leadership. The course lasts about 54 weeks. There are three instructors—one theatre professor, one dance professor, and one management/leadership professor. In the class, we talk about creative leadership, complexity leadership, charisma, authenticity, collaborative tensions, film-making, theatre, the director as a leader and other related concepts. The students also engage in several experiential exercises involving movement, body, dance, improvisation, etc. Every week students have to fill in a reflection sheet—to reflect on the specific class they had completed that week—and think about how it relates to leadership and management. As the weeks progress, they form teams and develop an idea and a script for the final performance. For each team, they assign themselves to specific roles—actors, director (one or two co-directors), stage manager, etc. They perform their plays in front of an audience of approximately 180 people (including their friends and relatives). In the end, they have to write a team reflection about the whole experience, especially focusing on tensions, communication among team members, and the role of director (leader) within the creative context and the connection of the course to leadership.

Why it works

- The power of structured reflection: the course contains a variety of experiences, with multiple instructors. A structured reflection can help people make sense of the experiences. Moreover, the reflection triggers students to not simply learn about specific exercises in the class, but make specific connections to lessons for their leadership and management course.

-Out of comfort zone: this context is unique and novel for the students. Almost all of the students were not exposed to any “acting” experience before. No one is an expert. No one is a leader. So we can observe how leaders emerge in this situation and how people deal with uncertainty. We can also observe collaborative tensions, emotional experiences and the formation of routines within the teams.

Evidence of Effectiveness

So far I’ve mainly collected qualitative data—from the students’ reflection sheets. Based on their feedback, students state that they have found the course to be a transformative experience. Students also reported growing more confident and self-efficacious in the process. I plan to add a quantitative component to measure changes created by the program, such as changes in leadership schemas and leader identities. For example, we could measure ILTs before and after the program. We can test whether creativity and innovation (which are not included in traditional ILTs scales) become parts of their leadership schemas s as well as whether their leader identities become more salient. We can further test whether their perceptions of paradoxical leadership have increased.

Related video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1IKhXkNVp8

Police Training Simulation Program

Pisitta Vongswasdi, Rotterdam School of Management
vongswasdi@rsm.nl

Note: This is based on my own observation of the program by a Dutch training consultancy I'm conducting research with.

Exercise Description

This is a 4-days off-site (training base is in Germany) experiential leadership development program. Each batch accommodates around 12 participants, with two trainers who stay with the group throughout the program. It is a training program that's usually given to police officers. In the first few days participants are given training not only about the technical aspects but also about 'decision-making'—how to cope or managing one's stress/emotion under pressure situation using breathing techniques, how to communicate clearly to others, how to switch behaviors in split second. One key skill that participants had to cultivate is the ability to cope with stress/manage one's emotional reaction—not respond to the situation with anger or frustration but rather with calmness and rational mind. These are taught in the classroom setting first (theory demonstration and practice in the classroom), then on the last day the participants have to go through the real situation—simulated scenarios with actors on specific training sites scattered around the training campus.

For example, in one simulation, the police (participants) have to stop cars in the middle of the road, with the goal of giving the driver (actors) the ticket. This simulation is done in pairs (two police officers stopping one car at a time). The supposed lesson is about how to communicate effectively. The task is complicated by the fact that the drivers will be difficult—for example, one driver gets angry and yells at the police for wanting to give him the ticket, or the driver is emotionally distraught and anxious because she is trying to get to her sick child at home, or the drivers are couple that are in the middle of the argument in the car themselves, or the driver won't stop talking on the phone, or the driver is apparently drunk and refuse to get out of the car, or the drivers make fun of the police (to get them angry), etc.

Why Does It Work

- Out in nature: being outside the traditional setting makes the situation more realistic—if the simulation occurs inside the classroom or the lab, the participants might not find it as “threatening”.
- Immediate feedback: for each simulation/activity participants are given a lot of feedback on their performance. First off from the actors—after each scenario is over—they shared how each actions of the participants made them feel, and what could be done better. Second, participants get constant feedback from the trainers throughout the program.
- Opportunity for practice and experiment: For each scenario, the participants get to play it for multiple times (although the actor might act differently each time). The trainers tell the participants to act on new scenarios based on specific feedback they just received (either from the actors from the trainers) from the previous ones. More importantly, participants are encouraged to experiment with new behaviors. The focus here is not on “performance”, but about the “learning” a new repertoire of behaviors—and getting out of old habitual responses.
- Sense-making & reflection: Participants are asked to reflect on what they learn from specific situations, and most importantly, how the lessons can be applicable to their workplace/or how they lead. At the end of each day the reflections are done in groups (3- hour session)—where all participants talk about how they did in the day, share with each other what went right/wrong, what they or the other team members can improve on.

Supporting evidence:

I am working with the consultancy to verify the effectiveness of this program in a more scientific way (experience-sampling approach). But we already have anecdotal evidence. That is, the feedback that the consultancy received from people whom have completed the program and went back to their organization. Many have mentioned that they've become better at dealing with others (by recognizing one's own thoughts and feelings in response to others' negative behavior—and rather than the usual 'reacting', they are more control of how they respond—with better outcomes). When I was attending the program, the trainer also shared with me that during the first group reflection session, people hesitated to say what the others did wrong. So then they were encouraged to be honest with each other, and talked about why "giving feedback to others" are important and how to listen to others. Afterwards, the participants told the trainer that they found the session very useful and would change their behaviors at work where they would discuss more openly about the mistakes/failures/conflict rather than keeping quiet to preserve the social harmony but missing the opportunities to learn from those experiences.

The Use of Improvisational Theatre for Leadership Development: Improvising Our Way into New Attitudes,

Tina Davidson, Rotterdam School of Management
davidson@rsm.nl

In Brief

In writing up this input for the conference, my key objective is to draw attention to and generate conversations surrounding the value of improvisational theatre in leadership development.

Improvisational theatre generally consists of an ensemble of actors creating a scene onstage without any script, accepting input from other actors and the audience, and bringing props and settings alive on the spot. Thus, improvisational theatre requires actors to truly and wholly welcome and take in the input that comes to them (i.e., from other actors or the audience) and take unscripted action in response to this input. From this perspective, it helps actors develop a set of skills, including being highly attentive and responsive to others "in the moment" and creating trust and an "action space" for collaborative co-creation of ideas, approaches, and methods "inside the box" (i.e., given certain improvisational instructions).

As a leadership development method, improvisational theatre stands out because it is experiential—albeit not in content (i.e., employing a prototypical managerial case or decision making dilemma) but rather in form (i.e., modelling the uncertainty, restrictions, and surprises that come with the managerial job and requiring collaboration and leading/following sequences along the way). Given this peculiar feature, improvisational theatre should be a useful method to help participants develop skills to better to relate to these dynamics (e.g., uncertainty), unconstrained by one's habitual repertoire and preconceived notions in the typical managerial setting in the workplace. In this way, it truly helps individuals to try on and practice new attitudes, behaviors, and identities, which help them grow and develop as a leader.

The Why, What, and When of Improvisational Theatre for Leadership Development

Why? – The Learning Potential (vs. Objectives)

- Participants cultivate awareness of their perceptual shortcuts (i.e., looking at the situation as they believe it to be) and develop their motivation and ability to engage in more accurate information processing (i.e., looking at the situation as it really is).

  ★Such skills may inform decision making, diversity management, and communication in general.

- Participants develop the attitude and skill to respond to a given situation without preset plans or prior judgment.

  ★This general skill informs a number of more specific skills, such as active listening, resilience (i.e., dealing constructively with change and set-backs), and co-creation.

- Participants practice *unlearning* particular habitual responses, overcoming inevitable failure during practice, and expanding their behavioral repertoire.

  ★This general skill informs a number of more specific skills, such as dealing with uncertainty, surprise, and the skill of "learning" as such.

- Participants practice trying on new identities in a collaborative setting.

  ★This practice should help participants to imagine new identities for themselves, relate to others differently, and create new possibilities for growth and contribution in their organization.

- Participants develop the ability to set the improvisation stage for others (e.g., followers, peers, own leaders).

  ★This general skill can help leaders to facilitate co-creation in their workplace.

What is it?

Improvisational theatre provides us with a seemingly bottomless toolbox of techniques, exercises, and principles. As a consequence, there are a myriad of possibilities to include improvisational theatre in existing leadership development programs or setting up designated workshops focusing on a specific subset of skills (e.g., co-creation) or specific outcomes that organizations may be keen on developing (e.g., diversity management). Below, I provide some examples that you may find inspiring or useful:

- *Interventions in ongoing cases or exercises*: Principles of improvisational theatre can be infused in real-life case exercises, business simulation exercises, and role playing exercises. They can be very effective in improving constructive idea generation in teams (e.g., by means of the "yes, and" principle) and in preparing students to think on their feet during end-of-case jury presentations (e.g., by means of shared story telling exercises).
- *Dedicated workshops to develop a specific skill*: One may pull together techniques, exercises, and principles that build skills to deal with uncertainty or to facilitate co-creation (e.g., "Yes, and" principle)
- *Dedicated workshops to aid specific organizational objectives/programs*: As an example, one could pull together techniques, exercises, and principles that require participants to switch roles, take one another's perspective, etc. in order to aid the implementation and roll-out of diversity management practices and assuage power dynamics.

Interestingly, some instructors deliberately integrate techniques, exercises, and principles in existing managerial challenges to aid in learning transfer. For example, one could present students with a challenging leadership event (e.g., having to announce lay-offs, addressing chronic underperformance by a team member), have students play out the scenario, and during the scenario offer interventions and techniques to think of better and new ways to deal with the given situation.

Why does it work?

Improvisational theatre is interesting to students because it allows them to become comfortable with failure and uncertainty and it helps them to more freely experiment with new behaviors. Furthermore, it offers a "different" way of developing the self and therefore complements more traditional approaches and can help the curriculum as a whole to speak more effectively to a diverse set of students. Related to this latter point, improvisation strips students from all acquired status symbols once they enter the "stage". In this sense, improvisational theatre is highly egalitarian: there is no single, formal leader, responsibility for the outcome is wholly shared, and to make things work, participants need to be attentive to and responsive to others' input, regardless of the others' status background or demographic attributes. In this way, improvisational theatre also is a good way to build team spirit and mutual appreciation and may feed back into more constructive knowledge exchange during other courses in the curriculum as well.

When does it work?

Whereas improvisational theatre is beginning to find its entrance in leadership development (incl. at MIT, HBS, Fuqua School of Business), scientific evidence for its effectiveness in this context seems to be limited at this point. There is a clear need to put this method for leadership development to the test and examine its impact by means of scientific methods (see Tawadros, 2015).

Given that I have not been using improvisational theatre in my own classroom but rather plan to explore it in the future, the following pointers are based on my own participation in workshops and accounts from colleagues who are actively employing these techniques on an ongoing basis. More specifically, my sense is that in order to make use of improvisational theatre for leadership development, there are a few points that instructors may want to bear in mind:

- Making a business case: Given that improvisational theatre may have less face validity as a leadership development approach at first glance, it is important to position it within the larger domain of leadership development and show its value, especially in rendering managers more equipped to deal with uncertainty and to build personal and collective resilience and creativity. In addition, it can be helpful to juxtapose the more intuitive approach of improvisational theatre to the largely cognitive approach in management science and leadership development in general.

- Instructor skill: Ideally, the instructor himself/herself needs to well-versed in the art of improvisational theatre and skilled in the associated techniques. This is helpful in conveying enthusiasm, setting the tone, and exemplifying the possibilities of improvisational theatre, as well as in dealing with the unstructured approach of the typical improvisational workshop.

- Time: It takes time to build a safe “action space” for participants to try out new behaviors and deal with challenges (and the inevitable failure that come with those). Although, throwing in techniques and exercises during other approach is accessible and appropriate for a broad audience with a variety of groups. activities (e.g., while solving a real-life case) can be helpful, it is necessary to set apart a considerable amount of time to really help participants make changes and imagine themselves differently.
- Audience: Given that the focus is on skills development and that this oftentimes (intentionally) takes participants out of their work context, this backgrounds and at different educational and managerial levels. As such, it should be possible to use the techniques from the undergraduate level onwards. Importantly, the debrief discussions for transfer to the workplace will inevitable differ in scope and depth.
- Group size: Adequately engaging students and feeding back your observations to them, inevitably means that group size should be relatively small (e.g., up to about 30 students). Some exercises can accommodate larger

Some associated readings

Kulhan, B. (2017). Getting to" yes and": The art of business improv. Stanford University Press.

Gagnon, S., Vough, H. C., & Nickerson, R. (2012). Learning to lead, unscripted: Developing affiliative leadership through improvisational theatre. Human Resource Development Review, 11(3), 299-325.

Tawadros, T. (2015). Developing the theater of leadership: An exploration of practice and the need for research. Advances in Developing Human Resources, 17(3), 337-347.

	Improvisational Theatre for Leadership Development
Approach/Tool/	Improvisational theatre, and more specifically the techniques employed in this arts form.
Why?	Improvisational theatre has the potential to develop a range of (general) skills that can be applied to managerial challenges. Skills include a.o., attentiveness and responsiveness to others, awareness of preconceived notions and ability to process information more accurately, willingness and ability to share control, and ability to create trust and set up a safe space for co-creation.
What?	Improvisational theatre offers a range of techniques, exercises, and principles such as the "story choir" exercise and the "yes, and…" principle, which can be taught (or rather: experienced and practiced) in short workshops or on a more regular basis in a long-term program, depending on the key developmental objectives.
When?	There are a few caveats (e.g., instructor skills, group size, business case and framing) that interested instructors should keep in mind when using this approach. This being said, there is a myriad of techniques available and so one may find ways to circumvent these contingencies.

Principles of Excellence: An Example

Perspective on Leadership Development

Sim Sitkin, Duke University
sim.sitkin@duke.edu

Objectives:

Instead of presenting a specific exercise or program, I wish to share some of my perspectives on leadership development that would be applicable to a wide range of leadership development activities and programs.

Principles

I share my opinions and perspectives on leadership development from three angles: a) how to define *leadership* in leadership development programs; b) how to use theory and framework in the programs; and, c) how to ensure the development and learning in the process. I first elaborate on these three questions and then introduce specific techniques that enact the principles.

First, in leadership development programs, it is critical to distinguish leadership from management, technical expertise and authority – otherwise we do not need to distinct construct and the participants might fail to recognize of the developmental goal. To define Leadership as behavior vs. traits is more powerful because one can improve one's behavioral skills and execution, but true traits are much more difficult to change. This distinction in concept gives the participants a clear direction to orient their learning during the process.

Second, it is helpful to pick a framework and language regarding leadership -- and stick to it. Only once one framework is internalized is it easy for people to grapple with multiple frameworks. If one goes to multiple frameworks, it is important to present a meta-framework that helps individuals to see how the different frameworks relate to each other. This rarely happens or is acknowledged as a matter of intellectual convenience rather than a theoretical absolute.

Third, learning is best supported by practice and feedback. Whatever framework is offered, give participants personal feedback (ideally 360) on how they are doing relative to the leadership behaviors being taught. To do so, the development programs need to actively create opportunities for the participants to practice and receive feedback. It is important to get individuals to understand intellectually what leadership is, what its components are, and what behaviors have what effects. That can also lead to effective leadership mentoring in the organization, which is important but incomplete. Specifically, intellectually understanding leadership does not necessarily lead to enacting leadership, so it is important to provide opportunities to practice behaviors, get them wrong, and try again until one begins to master the nuances and also to tailor general principles to one's own style.

Techniques:

Regarding the use of definition and theories, the use of multiple terms for the same concept and the same term for multiple concepts is not only problematic for scholars, but also make the teaching of leadership very difficult, as it conveys that it is all arbitrary and fluffy. It is important in courses and in organizations to utilize an integrated framework and terminology to help people communicate, focus, and not miss aspects essential to effective leadership. For this to work, however, the framework and terminology cannot arbitrarily exclude leadership theories just for simplicity sake but must integrate them into an overarching and readily understood and implemented approach.

To offer opportunities for leaders to personalize their learning, I suggest four approaches: (a) using personal feedback to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, (b) developing a specific and concrete plan for leadership development, (c) identifying a specific project in which one can deploy improved leadership and planning quite specifically for what to do, and (d) trying out those leadership behaviors as rapid prototyping/learning method in which one does quick AARs (after action reviews) and then tries again and repeats.

Another critical goal for leadership development programs is to facilitate the transformation from learning to action. There are five ways to do so: (a) measure their status against criteria; (b) provide individualized developmental (not evaluative) feedback; (c) offer coaching (peer or executive coaches) on the interpretation of the feedback its translation into development-focused action plans; (d) provide safe opportunities to practice the behaviors, get feedback and try again; and (e) provide opportunities to assess real problems and plans and identify leadership elements of those plans and incorporate leadership specifically into that planning.

Contingencies:

One contingency factor I have noticed is that this seems more helpful the more experience students have had. It is useful to those with little experience (we have used it with groups as young as high school), but those with more experience can use it more readily and see its value more quickly since they see it as quite different from other fluffy approaches they have encountered in the past. Also, to our surprise, this has worked as well or better with those from technical fields (who are usually big skeptics) because they see it as systematic, research-based, and the techniques give them a chance to experiment with it, tailor to their own style, and see it valuable.

Evidence:

Supportive evidence for these ideas is all anecdotal in that current and former students report on the impact in terms of job offers, promotions, etc. There was an explicit acknowledgement of their awareness of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses and ability to articulate what leadership was about in easily understood abstract and concrete terms. The school has also had some entire companies adopt the approach based on how valuable their senior executives found this approach. But it is all anecdotal so should be evaluated cautiously.