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FOUNDATIONS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: TEACHING PRACTICES THAT INSTILL LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF

Berkana-Wycoff, Palin*; Nincic, Donna J.

California Maritime Academy
USA

Abstract. This paper is the second in a series focused on the development of a pedagogical model and philosophy that integrates the leadership development, academic learning, and practical experience of maritime university cadets into a coherent whole. We focus on three questions relevant to maritime education and training at maritime universities: what can be done in the academic classroom to promote self-leadership development through leader-leader (faculty-student) relationships; how can a cadet-led organization (i.e., Corps of Cadets) be effectively leveraged to support the promotion of self-leadership and leader-leader relationships; what psycho-social development of individual cadets is necessary to support self-leadership development and how might it be best structured? A Leader-Leader relational frames model of leader development is presented and its applications and challenges discussed.

Key words: authentic leadership development, self-leadership, classroom instruction, pedagogy, relational frames

***Corresponding author**

Phone: +1 707 654 1739

+1 707 654 1110

e-mail: pberkana@csum.edu

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper is the second in a series focused on the development of a pedagogical model and philosophy that integrates the leadership development, academic learning, and practical experience of maritime university cadets into a coherent whole. In our initial paper on this topic [1], we discussed the findings of research conducted in two academic classrooms that was focused on the performance of so-called “leader-less” teams. Utilizing several methodologies that are commonly used for the development and support of team leadership competencies (i.e., team social contracting, team performance assessments, team process coaching), our study attempted to demonstrate that the overall quality and effectiveness of academic learning could be significantly improved through the embedding of leadership practices into courses that are not otherwise designed to contain leadership content. Equally, non-positional¹ leadership could be learned and practiced by each student through the act of mastering the course content while working in student groups.

While the study overall proved moderately successful, two problems were identified. First, a single one-semester course offered inadequate time and opportunity to realize sufficient leadership skill development in our students. It was clear that such development must begin early in the student’s tenure and must occur across a longitudinal arc of development over the entirety of the undergraduate career. Second, in order to achieve a truly coherent and integrated arc of development within an academic program, cross-functional co-curricular programming must be developed and coordinated to prepare and support cadets for in-class learning.

In this paper, we intend to address these problems by proposing a theoretically grounded approach to developing foundational leadership competencies in the individual student, both in and out of the academic classroom environment. We focus on three questions relevant to maritime education and training at maritime universities: 1) what can be done in the academic classroom to promote self-leadership development through leader-leader (faculty-student) relationships; 2) how can a cadet-led organization (i.e., Corps of Cadets) be effectively leveraged to support the promotion of self-leadership and leader-leader relationships; and 3) what psycho-social development of individual cadets is necessary to support self-leadership development and how might this best be structured?

¹ Non-positional leadership, in this instance, refers to the ability to demonstrate leadership qualities and competencies in a team context, without being the designated leader of the team.

1.1 Self-leadership and the “leaderful” model

The premise for this work is simple; one cannot lead a team, or participate effectively in a team, without first developing the skills, even rudimentarily, for *leadership of the self* [2, 3]. This premise is, at all times, leading-focused. *Self-awareness* and *self-regulation*, two of the hallmarks of the construct of *Authentic Leadership* [4], are known to be essential to the practice of healthy effective leadership [2, 3, 5]. A logical corollary to our premise is that no higher-order human system (e.g. group, organization, community, society) can maximize its capacity for effective action without developing the self-leadership competencies of each of its members [5]. Since the middle of the last century, the management literature has progressively shifted its construct of leadership from a focus on *leaders* to one focused on *processes* within contextualized relationships. Thus, skill development of the self in relation to others is a necessary extension of self-leadership; authentic leadership has been construed as encompassing both the personal authenticity of the leader and the leader’s relations with followers and associates [4]. Current models of *Authentic Leadership Development* [4, 5] posit that the actions of an authentic leader in relation to a follower – including “positive modeling” – positively foster the development of followers into leaders. We concur, and the model presented in this paper attempts to demonstrate this relational development, however we take exception to the role construct of follower as an antecedent to that of leader.

As in our first paper, we reject the conventional emphasis on first instilling “followership” in our cadets. Equally, we reject the popular assertion that, almost by definition, one is a leader if one has followers. Defining “leading” and “following” in terms of fixed roles (i.e., leader and follower), rather than as the natural actions of any member of a human system, inhibits the capacity development of the individual and system alike. We assert a leader-leader model [6], where everyone understands and executes his or her leadership responsibilities within or without a hierarchical structure of roles. Unlike our first paper, we now abandon the concept of “leaderless” teams, preferring a term more consistent with the above assertion: “leader-full” teams and “leader-full” individuals.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE “LEADERFUL” MODEL

As previously mentioned, self-awareness and self-regulation are central to the constructs of self-leadership and authentic leadership [2-5]. Self-awareness can be defined as an introspective process, rather than an end state, through which one develops clarity around

who one is (personal and social identities), what one values, and how one makes meaning of one's world [5]. Self-regulation is a form of self-control encompassing a three-fold process of setting internal standards, evaluating variances from these, and identifying actions that might resolve the variances [5], and is nicely captured in the maritime metaphor of "minding one's helm." It follows that clarity in self-awareness supports integrated and internalized self-regulation; when one knows who one is and what one values, the source of regulatory motivation is coherent and found within oneself.

Deci and Ryan [7] have described four types of motivation that progressively obtain to higher levels of integration and internalization, and thus, authentic self-regulation: *external regulation*, where behavior is driven by external consequences (rewards and punishments); *introjected regulation*, whereby internal prompts (oughts and shoulds) derive from the introjection of external regulation; *identified regulation*, in which one complies with a particular behavior expectation because one identifies with the value underlying that behavior; and *integrated regulation*, in which one fully integrates into one's sense of self the identified values and regulations [5].

As stated previously, the positive modeling by leaders who themselves possess higher levels of self-awareness and self-regulation (authentic leaders) fosters similar development in their followers. This is particularly true in positive strengths-based organizational climates that are characterized by transparency, a commitment to learning and human development, and ethical conduct [5]. In short, one who would aspire to develop authentic leaders must likewise be one.

3 LEADERFUL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A NEW RELATIONAL FRAME

At its most fundamental level, our model embodies the counsel of Steven Covey [8] that one must "begin with the end in mind." If it is leaders that we intend to develop at our maritime academies, we should engage with our cadets as leaders, however nascent, from the outset. Certainly they will follow a great deal in their first year or so, but they equally will lead (if only as leaders of self) if supported in doing so and, thus, are not served by being role-bound as followers. As stated before, ours is a leader-leader model, which both recognizes the nascent leader in the new cadet, as well as, the clear disparity in identity development, knowledge, and experience between the cadet and her faculty and staff.

The initial stage of the model (Figure 1) shows the faculty member (F) and cadet (C) with just a slight overlap of role boundaries. Underlying the faculty role and intersecting the cadet role is a dotted line, above

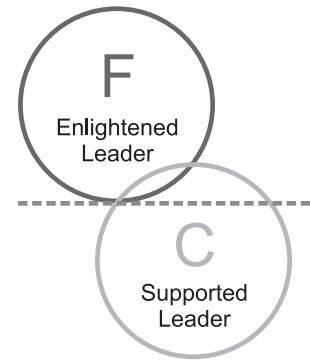


Figure 1

which represents the developed practices of authentic leadership. The model originally envisioned this area as representing the five *Student Leadership Practices* [9]², and this is also appropriate. The premise is that the cadet has some initial level, however slight, of emerging self-identity and values, on the one hand, and some overlap of social identity, values, and interests with the faculty member. It is assumed that each dyadic relationship will differ in levels of development and overlap for each member; it is sufficient to our model that a faculty member should be adequately developed in her own authenticity to be able to "model the way" [9] for her cadet "supported leader".

At the middle stage of the model (Figure 2), the cadet is shown to have risen in leadership and technical development to a point where she can appropriately share in the leadership of the education or training. The faculty member still maintains the primary lead, but the cadet carries more responsibility for the learning.

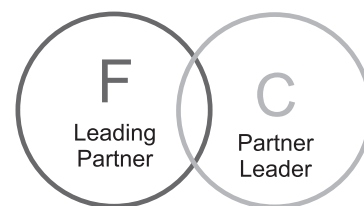


Figure 2

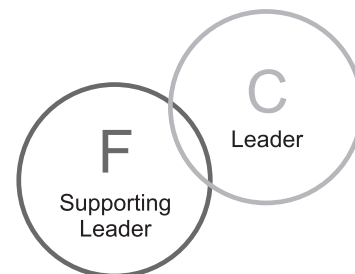


Figure 3

² The five practices are *Model the Way*, *Inspire a Shared Vision*, *Challenge the Process*, *Enable others to Act*, and *Encourage the Heart*.

In the final stage (Figure 3), the cadet takes a leadership role more commensurate with our end goal. The faculty member still maintains a technical and experiential advantage, but the cadet now takes primary ownership for her learning.

At each of the three stages, we prescribe specific developmental practices that support the shift to the next relational stage.

3.1 Leaderful practices in the academic classroom

In the full model (Figure 4) we see the developmental progression begin at the top with the 4th Class cadets (freshmen) and move downward through the 3rd and 2nd Class cadets to the 1st Class cadets. At each relational stage, a primary developmental practice is identified: *Contracting*, *Supported Team Projects/Work*, and *Self-Managed Teams*. A second practice is identified in the third stage in which the 1st Class cadets replicate with underclass cadets the leader-leader relationships they are experiencing with their faculty and staff.

The contracting undertaken in the first stage transpires between the individual cadet and his faculty member. Similar to the team contracting that we discussed in our first paper [1], where the expectations and plans for working together are made explicit by the team stakeholders, this individual contracting fos-

ters in the cadet some initial reflection around his purpose, goals, and support needs in relation to the expectations articulated in a course syllabus. It is an opportunity for the cadet to begin to explicitly take some active ownership of his learning and for the faculty member to partner with the cadet in optimizing the effectiveness of the curriculum; both cadet self-awareness and self-regulation are intentionally and explicitly supported through this process. While the prospect of individually contracting with a class of 40 to 50 cadets might seem daunting, this “front-loaded” approach to advising and coaching has shown in our classes to be effective and efficient in supporting ultimate student success in the classroom. With the benefit of a new level of self-awareness and some experience with self-regulation practices, cadets are ready to move to the practice of the second stage, where group and team assignments are given by the instructor. Individual contracting skills carry over to team contracting, as does an increasing sense of cadet ownership (individual and collective) of the learning undertaken. While the cadet leaders are not yet prepared to take the primary lead on their projects, they are ready to work with their faculty to take on increasing amounts of responsibility.

In the third stage, we see a pedagogical shift towards self-managed cadet teams (e.g., in courses such as Bridge Team Management, senior capstones, Engineering Management, etc.). This is the work that we attempted and documented in our first paper, which later showed the absence of the development of fundamental self-awareness and self-regulation, as well as team contracting skills; the cadets had not been adequately prepared fully to take ownership of their individual and collective learning and team outcomes. At this stage, the faculty member still possesses the greater technical knowledge and experience, but provides that as a resource to the learning activities led by the cadets. Equally, it is at this stage that the upper-class cadets begin teaching and mentoring the underclass in basic skills (e.g., Deck seniors coaching 3rd class cadets in basic seamanship or the fundamentals of celestial navigation; Engine seniors tutoring their 3rd class in diesels or calculus refreshers).

At every stage of the model, faculty and staff are focused both on technical knowledge transfer and on creating positive ethical learning environments, where they model and support the leadership behaviors they seek to develop in their students.

3.2 Self-regulation development in the corps of cadets

A significant advantage with this model that maritime academies and universities possess is the existence of regimented hierarchical cadet-led organizations. These organizations provide both excellent laboratories

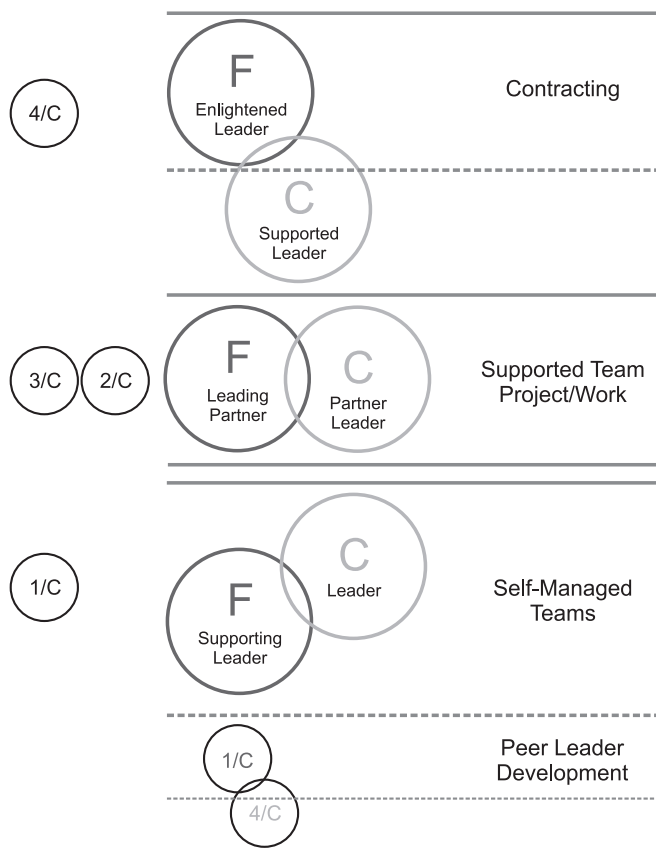


Figure 4

for the development and practice of leadership skills, as well as the critical elements of collective social identity and ethical conduct standards. Cadet-led organizations tend to espouse strong, clear, collective identities (“we” identity) that in turn can draw individual cadets towards internalizing collective values. The conduct system, if it supports clear, worthy, and consistent standards of conduct rather than mere extrinsic punishment/reward schemes, can effectively move underclass cadets through the more primitive motivational levels of external and introjected regulation towards ultimate integrated regulation. To the extent that these organizations can foster environments that provide clear identity and regulatory cues, underpinned by transparency, a commitment to learning and development, and ethical conduct, cadets will be well supported in their development of leader identities and internalized regulation [5].

3.3 Self-awareness development through first-year experience

The use of leader-leader relational frames in the classroom and the promotion of collective identities and values in cadet-led organizations can each and together do much to support the authentic leadership capacities of individual cadets. Nevertheless, neither possesses sufficient time and opportunity to dedicate adequate time to the clarification by cadets of personal identities and values or the development of their self-leadership and leaderful team skills. This was a primary shortcoming identified in our first paper. As the literature clearly demonstrates the need for this personal development [2, 3, 4, 5, 12], additional educational opportunities must be created to support the work and development that occurs in the classroom and in the Corps. One way to achieve this objective is to design and implement a comprehensive First Year Experience program (FYE) that focuses on providing the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary for self-leadership and freshman success. In concert with the efforts made in the classroom and in the Corps, an FYE program can deliver both leadership content and basic skills practice. When this curriculum is explicitly linked bi-directionally with classroom curricula and Corps operations, a coherent and consistent leadership development experience can be achieved for all cadets.

4 THE CHALLENGE OF THE LEADERFUL MODEL

We well understand that implementation of the model presented in this paper is fraught with cultural and developmental obstacles. As was demonstrated in the 1980’s, when private sector enterprises attempted to “empower” their work forces in an effort to become more competitive, shifting leadership expectations from

a relative few positional leaders to whole teams and organizations understandably breeds resistance from many parties. When people who have been designated “followers” have no training or support to take initiative, collaborate, risk making mistakes, or generally assume responsibility for collective outcomes, they will avoid risks and demur [10, 11]. The literature demonstrates that when people possess low levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and tolerance for ambiguity, and high risk aversion and conflict avoidance (arguably a fitting profile of young first-year cadets), they will display greater dependence on positional leaders and fail to aspire to self-regulation [5, 12]. This, it could be argued, is a typical leader-follower dynamic – one that was painfully demonstrated in the USS *Greeneville* collision with the *Ehime Maru*, a Japanese fishery high school training ship, in 2001[6]. Despite numerous people in the control room with knowledge that the school ship was too near them and that an emergency ballast blow surfacing maneuver was contraindicated, no one challenged the Captain’s order; the resulting tragedy was nine Japanese dead, including four high school students.

Faculty and other designated leaders are equally susceptible to supporting a dysfunctional leadership dynamic. In particular, those who hold advanced terminal degrees (MA, MS, PhD) and/or merchant mariner licenses often in our experience fall victim to self-identities that compel them to always “know best” and have all the right answers. Students and the larger culture readily support this perception. It can easily lead to teaching and mentoring relationships that Kets de Vries [13] characterizes as a *folie à deux* (shared madness), where all parties in the dyad or group collude to maintain a “learned helplessness” [14] on the part of “followers”. As with students, when faculty and staff are driven by ego defense motives that cause them to be risk averse and intolerant of ambiguity, self-protection objectives can trump desires for self and student development.

Clearly, the most tenuous stage of our model is the first one, where the expected tendency of cadets would incline towards faculty (leader) dependence and externalized regulation. This tendency of cadets can only be corrected by faculty and staff members’ modeling of self-discovery processes [5], supported by FYE programming that encourages skill development in such processes. The most challenging aspect of the implementation of our model is that we who would use it must sufficiently be (in our authenticity) what we would have our cadets become. We must “go within” ourselves and ensure that we have done our own self-leadership development work [12]. “[Our] function is not to teach students the right answer, but to help them develop the ability to find and work with alternative approaches to a problem, and to apply them in ways that make sense to them”[15].

5 CONCLUSION

As our model and its applications demonstrates, much can be done to better develop our cadets to effectively and authentically lead the maritime industry well into the current century. If we can unbind our cadets from the constraints and limited leadership expectations of "follower" roles, develop their self-leadership skills through FYE programming and Corps behavioral standards, and model these skills and standards in our leadership relationships in the classroom, we can confidently expect to develop our cadets into future senior leaders on whom we can rely and of whom we can be justifiably proud.

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