Guiding Students As They Learn to Lead

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Abstract
Much has been written about the need for effective leaders; however, less has been advanced
about a systematic process for developing them. This paper presents a six-stage model of
leadership development, grounded in research that can be utilized as a framework for leadership
educators charged with creating effective learning programs. The role of the instructor evolves from
one which initially is very directive to one who becomes more facilitative and collaborative. This
framework mirrors a process similar to ones utilized in other professional arenas.

Introduction
Complex professions rely on researchers to develop bodies of knowledge necessary for
practitioners to be effective. In concert, educators must develop sound methods that
facilitate knowledge acquisition as well as skill development for those interested in
entering the profession. In fields such as medicine and education, aspiring professionals
engage in traditional coursework and then must apply their knowledge in sequenced and
increasingly difficult practical applications of that knowledge.

The field of leadership can be considered as a similarly challenging endeavor. This paper
presents a useful framework for leadership education that moves from knowledge
acquisition to application and practice via a progression of student experiences of
increasing complexity. The paper begins with a brief review of leadership development
research, concentrating on the six-stage model developed by Komives and colleagues.
An instructional framework is then presented that suggests appropriate roles for the
instructor and teaching methodologies for each stage as students learn to lead.

Research Review
Many scholars including Fisher, Merron, and Torbert (1987); Avolio and Vogelgesang
(2011); and Murphy and Johnson (2011) have demonstrated that leaders advance
through stages of growth. Fisher, Merron, and Torbert apply theories of human
development set forth by Kohlberg, Loevinger, Selman, and Kegan to elucidate four
ordered stages of changing worldviews: opportunistic, social, goal-oriented, and self-
defining. Fisher, Merron, and Torbert continue through the history of leadership
scholarship noting Bradford and Cohen's manager-as-developer and Bass's
transformational leadership as examples of the changing worldviews as leaders develop
through stages. The authors of this study address the matter of how leadership educators
can structure experiences to develop students as leaders; they praise one MBA program
because it includes project groups in which students hold leadership roles, receive
feedback from more advanced students, and participate in team field study projects with

live clients. Avolio and Vogelgesang advocate that leadership development must occur early in life for maximum benefit. Murphy and Johnson agree that early experiences impact a leader's development throughout life.

Komives has led a research effort to develop a six-stage model that centers on leadership development for students. (See Komives, Lucas, and McMahon, 1998; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen, 2005; and Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, and Osteen, 2006). Komives' Leadership Identity Development Model (LID) indicates that the progression of an individual's development as a leader is a somewhat sequential process involving movement from one level of knowledge, skill, and awareness to the next, as the individual first focuses inwardly on development of self, then extends to an awareness of enhancement of the collective. Teaching about leadership is a crucial component, but does not in itself create leaders. Development must occur over time in an iterative manner, be grounded in experience, and foster reflection not only individually but collectively (Kayes, 2002, et. al.; Connaughton, 2003; Doh, 2003; Conger, 2004; McCall, 2004; Roberts, 2009). Reflection on experience (McCall; Mintzberg, 2004) is a key component to learning which proceeds imperfectly with moments of insight followed by questioning and confusion. This process is repeated over time, as development advances (McCall; Roberts). Komives, et.al. (2006) noted that the stages of development are cyclical with experiences being cumulative, resulting in deeper understandings of leadership. Learning about leadership, mentoring, and strong group membership facilitate the process of transitioning from one stage to the next. Students who have opportunities to practice leadership may reach Stage Three (see below) by the end of high school; during the university experience students may develop through all the stages, those with strong high school leadership experiences advancing through the first stages more rapidly. As adults encounter new groups and new environments, they may revert to lower stages, resulting in the need to advance through the stages again.

The Framework for Guiding Students As They Learn to Lead
This growing body of knowledge about leadership development is valuable for educators who must teach and guide their students to become leaders. Using Komives' model, the following sections define each stage of leadership development and discuss the role of the instructor as well as effective approaches to teaching for that stage. Between each stage is a transition section with suggestions for the instructor to help students move to the next level.

Stage One: Awareness
Komives, et. al. (2006) noted that LID Stage One: Awareness "involved a beginning recognition that leadership was happening 'out there somewhere'" (p. 406). In this stage, the instructor should assume the role of director of learning activities, providing information and examples and eliciting responses from students. Teaching methods should be didactic with readings, videos, case studies, stories of leaders, and discussions of why they are leaders. The stories may be about national and historic leaders or leaders from students' personal lives; examples will likely come from the instructor first, but then broaden to include student examples. The approach to teaching concentrates on creating a collection of varied leadership examples, far richer than those any one student previously possessed.

Transitioning to the next stage: At the awareness level, the student will likely not be able to define leadership or identify how leaders lead. The instructor in the roles of lecturer and discussion facilitator should begin the transition to Stage Two with comparisons and contrasts of the leaders identified. The instructor may encourage critical thinking by asking hypothetical questions: "What if the leader in this story took a different role?" "What if the leader in this story was not present?" "What if the leaders in these two stories switched places?" Students should be encouraged to think about themselves as leaders

in the present or their hopes in the future, as they transition from thinking of leading as something others do to thinking of themselves as leaders.

Stage Two: Exploration

In LID Stage Two: Exploration, students should be encouraged to get involved in groups and interact with peers (Komives, et. al., 2006), taking on responsibilities as contributing members of the group as good followers, even though few will be ready to perform as leaders. The instructor's role at this stage should be to create group experiences in the safe environment of the classroom and to encourage out-of-class group membership. Continuing to direct learning, the instructor guides students as they learn the language of leadership, teamwork skills, conflict resolution methods, and other skills, all grounded in their own group experiences. The instructor should provide specific parameters for the in-class group activities, embellishing and re-teaching leadership concepts as they appear as issues and conduct discussions about the out-of-class group activities. The emphasis is on helping students to become good group members, i.e. good followers, while observing the behaviors of adults or older peers, who are the leaders of their groups. In Stage One, students may have only "talked about" leadership; now they are seeing it in effect and learning to "be led."

Transitioning: The instructor should help students recognize their potential as leaders and encourage them to assume greater roles. Reflective questions can be posed to urge students to begin imagining how they might better contribute to their group or how they might make a difference if they assumed leadership roles.

Stage Three: Leader Identified

In LID Stage Three: Leader Identified, students view leadership as a position (Komives, et. al., 2006). Group members participate as either followers or leaders. They see groups as hierarchies with roles, structures, and processes. Students identify new skills of relating to other group members and the leader, learn from models, try on different leadership styles, and search for mentors or coaches to recognize their successes and help them to learn from their mistakes.

The instructor should continue as director of learning when needed and guider of activities, organizing opportunities for students to gain experiences as leaders. Students should engage in group discussion and spend time privately reflecting through journal entries or papers as they take on leadership roles and begin to clarify their own leadership identity. In-class group activities provide a protected environment to experiment with shifting roles and approaches to leading but the instructor should also encourage students to seek leadership roles outside the classroom. The importance of this stage is to help individuals become cognizant of their own values, develop greater self-awareness and an ability to continuously learn, think, and act creatively and strategically (Day, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004; Roberts, 2009). Van Velsor and McCauley recommend that the emerging leaders assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify needs for changing and enhancing behaviors. In addition, building relationships and strengthening the social network become important to students.

Transitioning: Komives, et. al. (2006) label this the most important transition of the LID stages. As students spend time in roles as positional leaders and take on more difficult leadership tasks, they begin to see that a positional leader, even an effective one, is not enough for organizational success. Students benefit from reflective discussions and writings and are ready to learn or re-learn the language of leadership. Incorporating leader into his or her identity and gaining in self-confidence, the student is encouraged to try new behaviors for further development. Thus, an upward spiral begins with added confidence resulting in more growth (Lord & Hall, 2005). Initially novice leaders use their own implicit theories of leadership, oriented primarily to self. As experience expands, and

a student realizes that he or she alone will not make the group successful, the focus shifts from self to others and new relational skills are acquired. The student has begun to make the transition from individual leader to the process of leadership, as described by Burns (1978, 2003). In the words of Komives and colleagues, "they left behind beliefs that 'only leaders do leadership' and embraced a new consciousness that people in groups work interdependently in the process of leadership" (2006).

Stage Four: Leadership Differentiated

In LID Stage Four: Leadership Differentiated, students begin to see leadership as a process and as a behavior of group members, not just the positional leader (Komives, et. al., 2006). Participation by all and building a sense of community matter. Having to abandon their notion of "leadership is a position," students struggle to identify just what leadership is. They hunger for mentors and advisors who can "make meaning" out of their new enlightenments. They seek new teamwork skills, wanting to build trust and develop each group member, because contributions from all are needed. Critical reflection on multiple levels helps students challenge their prior mental models and facilitate more systematic ways of thinking (Argyris & Schon, 1978; McCall, 2004).

The instructor continues as needed in prior roles of director of learning and guider of activities but the roles of coach and mentor escalate in importance. Didactic instruction should include more emphasis on teamwork, motivation, group dynamics, and social and psychological elements of leading. The approach to teaching should emphasize facilitating, augmenting, and encouraging, with sensitivity to perceiving the "teachable moments" when students have put new skills into practice but need assistance in going forward. Through discussions and personal reflections, the students explore their different experiences within and among themselves.

Dialogue allows students to reflect on their experiences and shift from a singular perspective as the leader to one that is more collective or "leaderful" (Raelin, 2004). These conversations construct new meanings and transform collective experiences into self-and-organizational knowledge. Students become more willing to relinquish control and subscribe to influencing others as a leadership aim.

Transitioning: Passion for the success of their groups surfaces as students look to larger purposes and the importance of continuity for the group. Students begin to serve as coaches to develop younger peers into leaders.

Stage Five: Generativity

In LID Stage Five: Generativity, students exhibit passion for their group's welfare and a desire to aid younger members to preserve and advance the group's goals (Komives, et. al., 2006). Their personal philosophies of leadership emerge as they identify beliefs and values upon which they base their actions. They seek skills to teach, coach, and counsel others. Order and a more complete understanding of the process of leadership materialize (Reason, 1999).

The instructor continues in previous roles as needed but becomes increasingly a mentor, encouraging and empowering students to reach beyond their current understandings and attainments. Didactic instruction may include social responsibility, ethical decision-making, philosophical frameworks, and servant leadership. Further, the instructor should teach students how to mentor and coach their protégés. The teaching approach is listening, commenting, assessing, and suggesting as students are now engaged in leading outside the classroom, beyond the instructor's direct observation. Students may play a role in classroom activities with students at lower developmental stages, as the leaders of groups and coaches for their less experienced peers.

Transitioning: There is an old saying: "If you want to learn something, teach it to others." When Stage Five students began to teach and coach their younger peers, they internalize their own personal leadership identities. The instructor, having experienced the same enlightening discovery, should assume the role of experienced mentor championing and nurturing the novice practitioner.

Stage Six: Integration / Synthesis
In LID Stage Six: Integration / Synthesis, students can work effectively with others in a variety of contexts (Komives, et. al., 2006). They are committed to life-long development as leaders because they recognize the complexity of organizations in various environments and the interdependence of groups in a system.

The instructor's role at this stage, if any, is a mutually beneficial one of collegial collaboration. Students converse with their own inner selves, among their peers, with outside constituents, and perhaps with the instructor on the broader issues of responsibilities in leading. They trust their own abilities and willingly share them with others. They trust themselves to "make things better" because they know whom, how, when, where, and why to lead.

Timing of Development: Youth and Adult
More recent research has continued to support the notion of systematically delivering a variety methods although they might not be as sequenced and detailed as the Komives model. For example, Yaeger and Callahan (2016) studied young adults who had leadership roles in high school. They identified four central themes influencing development of their identities as leaders: developing relationships with others (authority figures, peers/fellow officers, and organization members), leading by example (having models and being a model), developing leader authenticity (actions match words to create trust), and being motivated to lead (achievement, power, and sociability).

Teaching leadership skills during adolescence and college is ideal, especially with so many opportunities in student co-curricular organizations, school sports, curricular projects, and community programs. However, not all studies attest to early development experiences as requirements for leadership. Rooke and Torbert (2005) identified seven ordered stages of leader development – opportunist, diplomat, expert, achiever, individualist, strategist, and alchemist. This study concentrates on leaders who have finished their formal education and are already established in leadership roles in organizations. Another example is Fernandez, Noble, Jensen, Martin, and Stewart (2016) who measured significant improvement in 20 leaderships skills after a two-year leadership seminar which included "a combination of onsite intensives, robust and customizable distance-based components, a combination of peer-based and executive coaching, and project-focused learning" (p. 166). Participants were "highly accomplished and terminal-degree holding leaders" (p. 163) averaging 55 years of age.

Conclusion
Although many leadership educators have discovered and implemented elements of this framework intuitively or through their own research, applying the growing body of knowledge associated with leadership development in a thoughtful and sequenced manner will improve the effectiveness of leadership development programs. Educators must be cognizant that as students learn about leadership and learn to be effective leaders, they must change their approach from one that is initially directive to one that encourages reflection and facilitates dialogue and collaboration. Those who facilitate leadership development should consider the process to be similar to other professional development processes in fields such as medicine or education in which knowledge acquired is subsequently put into practice through a series of planned experiences. In a reflection in 2016 and after her retirement, Komives reminded us of the worth of those early experiences: "I again invite you to remember the early experiences that shaped the

professional you have become. . . . What principles guide your work that you can trace back to early beliefs and profound early experiences?" (p. 11).

Endnote: This article updates an earlier publication in Academic Exchange Quarterly (Summer 2009, Guiding Students as They Learn to Lead, Carolyn Roper, Ph.D.)

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