

Handbook of Research on Human Resources Strategies for the New Millennial Workforce

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Chapter 11

i-Leadership: Leadership Learning in the Millennial Generation

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ABSTRACT

The United States' workforce is going through an enormous generational shift as Baby Boomers exit the workforce and Millennials launch their careers. The awareness of generational differences in learning styles and attitudes has been particularly acute in colleges and universities as Millennials make their way through higher education. In this regard, institutions of higher education are in a unique position to begin shaping the leadership values, identities, and experiences of the future leaders of our society. This chapter seeks to fill some of the gaps in the literature about the design of education programs to increase leadership expertise in Millennials through observation of a leadership program designed and taught by undergraduate students at a large university in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Findings include insights into how Millennial students define and value leadership, self-organized to create systems of peer learning and mentorship, and how these digital natives did (and did not) use technology.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in America stands at a crossroads. In the coming years, one of the greatest challenges for organizations will be the retirement of more than 75 million older workers, and their replacement by a comparable number of young people entering the workforce (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Recognition of this challenge is not new. As early as 2001, the U.S. government's General Accounting Office (GAO) placed this human capital issue on its high-risk priority list and considered it one of the government's greatest management challenges (Ballard, 2001). Now, as the first wave of

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the Baby Boom Generation begins to retire, the challenge of preparing a new generation of leaders has emerged in full.

Research focused on understanding generational characteristics in the United States (e.g. of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X) has found many differences between these demographic groups in terms of typical or dominant personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors. These factors impact the way that these generations interact in the workplace (e.g. Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; Twenge, Zhang, & Im, 2004; Wells & Twenge, 2005), and also manifest in the kinds of leadership preferences held by each group. In Arsenault's (2004) research on intergenerational leadership differences, 790 respondents (covering 4 generations) identified their favorite leaders and ranked ten admired leadership traits. While members from all generations consistently ranked honesty as the most admired leadership trait, reported rankings for leadership characteristics and leadership figures (ranging from Winston Churchill to Tiger Woods) support the idea that each generation has its own key attitudes, values, and beliefs when it comes to leadership (Arsenault, 2004). If these generational differences are not understood and addressed, then leadership development programs may not adequately serve the various learning styles and perspectives of younger generations that are now preparing to enter the workforce (Katherine, 2011).

Higher Education Can Shape a New Generation of Leaders

The awareness of generational differences in learning styles and attitudes has been particularly acute in colleges and universities as Millennials makes their way through higher education in preparation to enter the workforce (Katherine, 2011). In this regard, institutions of higher education are in a unique position to begin shaping the leadership values, identities, and experiences of the future leaders in our society. Despite the extensive research on leadership in the social sciences over the years, higher education leaders have a difficult time applying this literature to develop leadership education programs to meet the needs of this new generation. While the literature offers some techniques for effectively developing leaders, from classroom instruction (Fiedler, 1996) to real-world experience (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994), relatively little is known about how to design organizational systems for leadership development (Conger, 1998). Indeed, in the areas of professional and leadership development in organizations there remains a significant gap in the understanding of expertise development in the areas of leading and managing people. Chipman (2009) writes:

Most studies of expertise focus on some form of technical expertise in an individual. It is rare to study expertise that involves a complex social context and interaction with many other people...The current research base on expertise in the management of people is minimal. (p.470)

This chapter seeks to fill some of the gaps in the literature about the design of education programs that can increase leadership expertise in Millennial undergraduate students. In particular, this study provides insights into ways of developing leadership education programs for Millennials in institutions of higher education. The aim of this research is not only theoretical, but also to serve as the basis for a set of guiding principles that higher education educators and administrators can use to design leadership education programs.

As institutions of higher education explore ways to effectively develop this new generation of leaders, a key component will be to design educational programs around a common understanding of who this new generation is and how they best learn (Black, 2010). This study examines a novel context for exploring

how members of the Millennial and post-Millennial generational groups develop their leadership skills and capacities through the design of their own learning program. Herein, the researchers ask: What kinds of leadership programs would Millennials create if they were unconstrained by the prevailing curricular and instructional assumptions of the institution (colleges and universities) where they are enrolled?

In this new space, we might imagine that Millennial students are most likely to enact – or at least attempt to enact—ways of learning that respond most directly to their image of their learning needs and goals. This study uses observations gathered from one such context to fill the broader gaps in the leadership literature by providing educators, program designers, and administrators in higher education with principles that accommodate the specific learning needs of Millennial learners.

Leadership Learning in Higher Education

The university-affiliated program at the center of this research is known as the U-Lead program. (All names, titles, and institutions have been given pseudonyms to protect participants.) This student-created and student-run leadership development program was developed by a group of students (including one of researchers himself, as an undergraduate) in 1999 at a major research university in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. This large university has a total student population of over 35,000 and includes many classes, groups, and associations where students are actively engaged in leadership activities that can be studied (Beyer, Gillmore, Fisher & Ewell, 2007). While a university of this size offers many formal and informal courses to learn about leadership, and many organizations where leadership is learned and practiced, this study focuses on a student group directly involved in the practice of leadership development education as its core mission.

Since the program's inception 15 years ago, U-Lead has had profound influences on its participants and leaders, especially when it provided undergraduate leaders with opportunities to explore their own approaches to learning about leadership in authentic contexts and share their stories of leadership with others. Jeremy, an undergraduate leader of Filipino-American background, told one such story to our focus group. As he worked his way through university, Jeremy had spent four long years at a minimum-wage job to save the money to buy his first car. As the snows thawed and graduation neared, Jeremy picked up the keys from the dealer. As he got in the car for the first time, he could not help but imagine all the places he would go with his new Bachelor's degree and his new set of wheels.

However, as he became more involved with leadership opportunities in his final year of school, Jeremy found that he was highly motivated to join the university's month-long study-abroad trip to Ghana that summer. With graduation approaching, Jeremy decided that he could not let this opportunity pass him by; he would go to Ghana and see what life is like in Africa. With only \$300 left in his savings, Jeremy fell far short of the money necessary to go on the trip. As he looked around his studio apartment for things to sell, his eyes finally rested on the keys to his car. In retelling the story later, Jeremy noted: "I saw potential in what could happen [if he went]. So the next day I sold my car for \$2,000."

During his journey in Africa, Jeremy had the opportunity to lead several student excursions. He learned about the people of Ghana, and about himself. He noted, "I came back very changed...I learned a lot about myself and a lot about my identity." By the time of his return that summer, several members of the university's faculty and administration had heard of Jeremy's sacrifice of his car to attend the study abroad program. They began inviting Jeremy to tell his story to others, and Jeremy became a fixture in the university's ongoing leadership development work. He has given talks to undergraduates to persuade them to engage with the opportunities available at the large university, and more importantly, to find

their own pathway into leadership. In recounting his lessons learned from the experience of selling his car, Jeremy summarized his understanding of leadership: “I think 80 percent of it is taking a risk.”

No program issued this definition to Jeremy, or give him a worksheet or an article about risk-taking to read. Didactic materials are the tools of conventional leadership programs, and they can only bring the new generation of Millennial leaders so far in their development. The programs that will truly transform the identities and practices of leaders in the new century will focus on growing each young person’s capacity to engage with difficult choices and to solve them on their own terms. This study, in examining one such program, will provide other researchers with a rich case of how these young leaders connect with institutions, each other, and themselves.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The goal of this research is to inform the design of college-level leadership development programs by gaining an in-depth understanding of the undergraduate student populations that these programs intend to serve and of their preferred modes of learning about leadership. In order to attain this understanding of these students, the research seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What kinds of skills and competencies do Millennial undergraduate learners identify as important to their long term growth and development?
2. What types of formal and informal instructional strategies do Millennial undergraduates use to learn about leadership?
3. In what ways did these “digital natives” use technological tools to facilitate their leadership?

This qualitative study will answer these questions by describing observations conducted at the student-created and student-operated U-Lead leadership development program. By studying how Millennial undergraduate students in this group develop their own curriculum and activities to serve their own leadership development needs, this research can identify approaches to leadership development that are as responsive as possible to what these students want to learn and how they learn best. In applying this approach, educators at colleges and universities can ensure that their important leadership development initiatives are designed in alignment with the perspectives, motivation, and learning needs of this generation of emerging leaders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

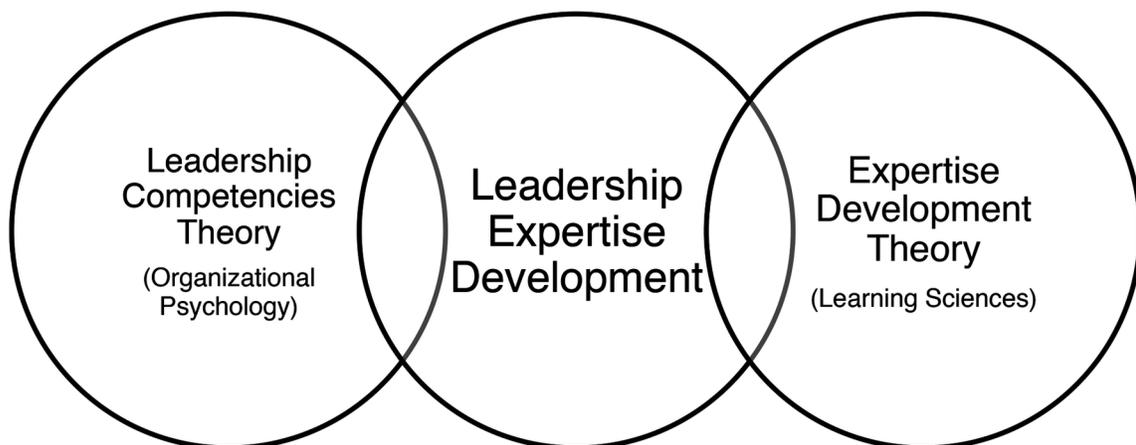
The contemporary research on human resource management has come to consensus that 21st century careers demand that workers become lifelong learners to maintain their skills and to continue to add value to their organizations (Mathis, Jackson, & Valentine, 2013). As such, Millennials will need to continue to develop and build their skills over decades of exposure to work environments, especially in the area of leadership skills. This study builds from this current theme in human resource management to identify the kinds of adult learning that are likely to lead to success as managers begin to work with Millennials to plan their learning and careers (Storey, 2014).

From a theoretical perspective, this study is grounded in two primary literatures that serve to expand the field of human resource management using research from Learning Theory. The first concerns organizational behavior related to leadership competencies; the second draws from the field of the Learning Sciences, and its focus on socio-cultural approaches to expertise. The leadership literature provides an important framework for defining the thematic values, capacities, and skills involved in leadership development. The learning sciences literature provides useful approaches to designing educational curricula and programs based on an understanding of the most effective methods to help individuals develop professional competencies. These fields, illustrated in Figure 1, will help to provide a theoretical framework for thinking about the systematic development of leadership expertise for Millennial students in institutions of higher education.

Leadership Competencies Theory

In the last century, the study of leader effectiveness has been extensive in the social sciences (Bass, 2008). Despite the array of studies, there are clear gaps in the literature about the design of leadership development systems (Conger, 1998; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), as well as gaps in leadership development in higher education (Katherine, 2011). On the latter of these two literatures, compared to the general leadership literature, the majority of leadership studies in higher education focus on executive leadership competencies (Birnbaum, 1992) with little attention paid to staff and students (Katherine, 2011). Despite the shortcomings of the literature, the theory of Leadership Competencies in the literature offers some useful frameworks for defining and categorizing the specific skills involved under the broad umbrella of leadership. Over the years, several scholars have conducted studies focused on identifying specific competencies that are correlated with the successful exercise of leadership. Leadership Competency Theory, as this collection of research is now known, seeks to identify trends, patterns, and themes within the area of leadership by examining the broad and specific aspects of skilled leadership in order to shape modern day leadership development (Katherine, 2011). This theory will help inform how to conceptualize and categorize the leadership skills, knowledge, behaviors, and decisions emphasized by the Millennial program participants.

Figure 1. Theoretical framework for leadership development



The research on defining and categorizing leadership is expansive, with over 65 different classifications that have been developed over the years (Northouse, 2007; Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2012). However, this study will apply one leadership competency framework that attempts to integrate the vast leadership literature (Crossan & Mazutis, 2008). The theory of Transcendent Leadership (Crossan, Vera & Nanjad, 2008) is a framework to look at the competencies of leading in three areas: leadership of the self (making decision, values, self-awareness), leadership of others (motivating, negotiating, facilitating), and leadership of organizations (strategy, change management). Unlike other leadership models that only focus on one or two areas, the transcendent model defines leadership competencies as being required at three different levels and often “transcending” various levels at once (Crossan, Vera & Nanjad, 2008). Researchers will apply this leadership model in the analysis phase to categorize the leadership development activities practiced by Millennial students into one of these three areas of leadership of the Transcendent Leadership Model. However, the conceptual model of Transcendent Leadership presented by Crossan, et al., required some adjustment in order to serve as a tool for understanding the learning needs of the students in the U-Lead program. The resultant model, the Leadership Sphere model, will be useful for understanding the areas of competency and the skills that Millennial college students focus on in their leadership development activities.

In addition to the literature on the Transcendent Leadership model, this study bases some of its assumptions on recent work that explores leadership competency development in higher education. Other researchers have used instruments the Higher Education Leadership Competencies (HELC) survey as an instrument (McDaniel, 2002 and Smith 2007) for assessing the competencies. As part of this research, other scholars have used the HELC survey (Smith, 2007) to ask 1,512 student affairs professionals, representing 3 generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial), to rank the competencies that they felt were most important to being an effective leader (Katherine, 2011). This study found statistically significant differences in the leadership competency preferences of student affairs professionals, which was correlated with their age and generational grouping. In particular, the study found that although all generations viewed honesty as the most important leadership competency. In general, these studies found that younger generations favored individual competencies like self-awareness and communication more heavily than older generations, which placed a greater emphasis on team-work and strategic decision-making (Katherine, 2011). This study will present a deeper dive into these values through an analysis of the student-generated lists of competencies developed through the U-Lead program.

Development of Expertise

In addition to leadership theory from the field of organizational behavior, researchers also applied a theoretical lens from learning sciences concerning the development of professional expertise. Scholars in the Learning Sciences have made significant contributions to leadership research by applying cognitive science to gain an understanding for how people learn in informal and formal environments. This work has revealed a variety of instructional strategies and learning environments that can be designed into educational experiences for helping individuals learn subjects and skills more effectively (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking 2000). Within this field, a subset of researchers has conducted significant research on the development of professional expertise. This field focuses on understanding the instructional strategies and systems required to help adult learners develop high levels of proficiency in a professional field (such as medicine, the arts, and the military). These researchers in the domain of expertise have pushed away from the early, stage-dependent expertise development theories of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1985),

and towards a broader, socio-cultural approach to expertise that examines the phenomenon within the complex conditions of the world of professional services (as in Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Researchers' recognition of the social-situation of expertise also gave rise to new theories of expert development that accounted for the complex communities of practice that form to develop and enculturate new professionals (Wenger, 1999). In this research, expertise is understood as resulting from the long-term engagement of an individual with a community as they learn the ways, languages, and processes of their domain. In recognizing that expertise is not a linear growth pathway but a description of how an individual operates in their environment, researchers like Ericsson (2006; 2009) have focused on examining the differences between novices and experts in a given domain, and then seeking to understand the type, frequency, and methods of "deliberate practice" that develop high levels of performance in the practice context. Consonant with Ericsson's work, Chris Argyris and Donald Schon (1974; 1997) also focused on the reflective dimensions of expert development, and how reflective activities actually build capacity between learning opportunities. As a consequence of the adoption of these perspectives in this study, leadership activity can be understood as a set of skills and competencies that a learner develops in the context of socially-situated activity, and built over repeated engagements through reflective and deliberate practice on specific skills. Beyond theory, these definitions of expert development provide a key mode of understanding the most effective techniques (curriculum, pedagogy, modes of practice) for developing leadership expertise in the Millennial workforce.

SETTINGS AND PARTICIPANTS

The U-Lead program operates from the University Student Center on the Campus from September through June. The program is run by the University's offices of student government, and is coordinated by two part time (paid) students, an assistant director, and a director. The program relies on a cadre of undergraduate volunteers (usually students in their 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of college) who are given the title of "Mentor." These mentors are responsible for developing and facilitating leadership education workshops and providing mentorships for new student to the program. A paid staff member from the office of student activities, which oversees all student government entities, advises the U-Lead program directors.

Each fall, through a competitive application process, a committee made up of U-Lead directors and Mentors, selects a new cohort of 40-50 students (from approximately 200 applications of students in their freshman or sophomore year) to participate in the U-Lead program. These incoming program participants are referred to from day one as "Leaders." The U-Lead program is made up of three leadership development components: 1) Leadership workshops, 2) peer-to-peer mentorship and 3) creation of a leadership project. From January through June the cohort of "Leaders" and "Mentors" meet weekly for two hours to partake in a series of workshops (14 in total) covering a wide range of topics including communications, teamwork and leadership styles. In addition to the program's formal weekly leadership development workshops there are many opportunities for participants to take part in informal social and service activities as well. Participation in the program is strictly voluntary and students do not receive any formal academic credit or certification for their involvement.

The research was carried out on-site at the university campus during a 16-week period in 2012. All observations, focus groups, site visits, and interviews (except for one phone interview) were carried out in person. This direct interaction by the researcher with subjects over 16 weeks was important for developing trust with the study participants and for witnessing their leadership development activities

over a period of time. These factors helped the researchers to analyze and draw conclusions by observing participants in a variety of leadership development activities over time and therefore minimize the risk of overgeneralizing their activities on just one type of observation or data (Merriam, 2009).

Researchers chose to study this single program for two primary reasons. First this group of students offers a “critical case” (Yin, 2003) for understanding the ways in which undergraduate students engage in leadership development work. This critical case provides data on a population that permits logical generalization of the findings to other such populations (i.e., other undergraduates at large universities) in similar settings (Patton, 2002). The second reason for selecting this context is that this particular group of students conducts leadership development activities on a daily and/or weekly basis, providing an information-rich environment that manifests the phenomenon of leadership development more intensely than other student organizations (Patton, 2002). As a student-run organization, U-Lead provides an excellent site for observing how the definitions of leadership from Millennial students ultimately impact the leadership development curricula and practices of this group. Finally, researchers made a deliberate sampling choice to avoid researching leadership perceptions and learning in “the average Millennial student.” Instead, researchers chose to identify students who were considered leadership development “experts,” and who have a much more sophisticated level of understanding and experience on this topic than the programs’ novices. This choice is grounded in Learning Sciences research on differences in how novice and experts engage in a task or analyze features a problem. Research also indicates that the study of experts helps to reveal the type of knowledge and ways of thinking that novices must acquire to gain mastery of a skill or subject domain (Bransford, et al, 2000). In addition to helping understand what expertise in leadership development looks like in these college students, researching these “lead users” (Von Hippel, 2009) can help to inform innovative ways of designing leadership programs that can benefit all students.

DATA COLLECTION

Researchers gathered several types of qualitative data, including interviews, observation, and organizational documents to provide a broad evidence base for the findings. This approach was selected to ensure that different types of data sources provided adequate triangulation, and to gain a deep understanding of this leadership development group. Researchers employed the following data collection and analysis strategies:

Document Analysis

For the first phase of my study researchers gathered a variety of documents from the director (also an undergraduate student) of the U-Lead program. The documents collected included: 1) an orientation binder for U-Lead Mentors (these are students returning for the second year of the program to advise and teach leadership workshops to new students admitted to the program), which includes the history and mission of the organization, leadership activities, and workshop schedules and protocols for effectively helping to develop the leadership skills of other students; 2) Leadership workshop brainstorming notes — poster paper notes that record how students brainstormed and voted on which leadership workshops would be taught during the 2011–2012 academic year; 3) program application and selection criteria documents; and 4) program mission and objective brainstorm session documents for 2011–2012, which

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were put together by the committee of students who oversee the program (5–7 students). The collection of documents provided crucial information to help answer the key questions of this study. In particular, the orientation binder and the program application provided a way to understand how this student group communicates the approach to leadership to program applicants and participants. In addition to these external communication documents, researchers also used collaborative brainstorming processes on poster paper to explore how student leaders made decisions about which leadership competencies they considered most important in their program.

Individual Interviews

Following on the document analysis phase, the researchers proceeded to conduct one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the two co-directors of the UL program, as well as two additional interviews with students developing and facilitating leadership development workshops for the first year students in the program. The flexibility of this interviewing methodology allowed the researchers to ask subjects open-ended questions, such as “Do you consider yourself a leader?” and ask follow-up questions to explore the emergent themes and ideas in their answers (Merriam, 1998). This type of interview methodology is well suited for uncovering the concepts of leadership development in college student, which have not been widely studied (Katherine, 2011). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and all but one was conducted in person. With participants’ consent, all interviews were recorded on a digital device and transcribed for later analysis.

Focus Group Interviews

In addition to individual interviews, researchers facilitated two focus group sessions (one with 4 students and one with 7 students). The objective of these sessions was to uncover both individual and group definitions of leadership and to explore commonalities and differences in the ways individuals developed their leadership capacities. The focus group method worked effectively in allowing participants to provide answers to interview questions, but also to discuss and clarify those answers with fellow participants of the focus group (Barbour, 2008; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). The discussion of the focus group centered on an activity called “leadership show and tell.” Participants in the focus groups were selected to bring a variety of personal backgrounds and perspectives, and were asked to bring an artifact that symbolized leadership in their own lives. The first group involved 2 male and 2 female students, while the second focus group had 2 male and 5 female student participants.

In the first focus group, each participant presented a two-minute “show and tell” about their leadership artifact. Since the second focus group had almost twice as many participants, due to time constraints, each participant was restricted to sharing only one leadership artifact with the group and discussing the significance of this item as it relates to leadership. In order to effectively serve the role of focus group facilitator and engage participants in the discussion, one researcher chose to create a video recording of both focus groups, with the consent of the participants. The use of video allowed the researchers to review the session afterwards to analyze both the verbal and nonverbal communication of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Observations

To supplement the individual and focus group interviews, researchers conducted observations of two separate leadership development workshops and events created by students in the U-Lead group. One researcher first participated in a workshop on developing effective resume and job interview skills. Since one of the program student mentors was absent for this large session on resume and interviewing skills, the researcher was asked to volunteer to read over and provide feedback on student resumes. In this first observation, the researcher was engaged in assisting with the leadership development training as a participant observer, and his activities as researcher were subordinate to my participation in the leadership workshop (Merriam, 2009). Later, the researcher observed a second leadership workshop, entitled “Learning through Failure,” from the back of the room without participating in the activities in any way. During both of these observations, the researcher took notes following an observation protocol that focused on observing the curriculum and instructional practices used by students in delivering the leadership workshops.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data gathered from all interviews, focus groups, and documents has undergone two primary levels of analysis. The first of these involves “open coding,” where researchers focused on listening for concepts that naturally emerged from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, Strauss, & Struztel, 1968; Komives, Own, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). The axial level of analysis involved going back over the initial open codes to group them into particular themes related to the initial questions of the study (Merriam, 2009, 126) with each of the themes labeled with a separate analytic code. This process of “axial coding” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) allowed the researchers to group the data into three themes related to the three central topics of this research: 1) leadership definitions, 2) leadership competency priorities, and 3) leadership instructional strategies.

Once each of the three theme areas was broken down further into the various categories, the researchers developed a set of preliminary findings for each of the research questions. Researchers focused on selecting a central finding for each of the study’s central questions. In developing these findings, researchers focused on presenting the study findings that were present among multiple data sources and types (interviews, focus groups, documents, and observations). This method of triangulation helps to ensure that there were multiple sources of data supporting each of the study findings (Patton, 2002). In addition, a first draft of preliminary findings was shared this with colleagues, alongside the data gathered to encourage feedback on the analysis and conclusions from the data. This peer debriefing process was used to minimize potential research bias prior to arriving at the findings presented in this chapter (Xu, 2006).

LIMITATIONS

One key limitation of this study data is the relatively small number of students interviewed as part of this study. While the U-Lead contains over 60 participants in a cohort, researchers only secured interviews (one-one-one and focus group) with 11 individuals (three coordinators of the program participated in both individual interviews and as part of the focus group). In addition to the expert leaders, researchers

were only able to interview a few individual students who were in their first years of the program. For this reason, the sample in this study does not necessarily represent “average students” on college campuses. As such, this study focused on the continuum of expert and novice student leaders.

FINDINGS

Three key findings emerged from this research. In brief, they are:

Finding 1: Students focused the majority of their leadership development activities on competencies geared toward “leading themselves.”

Finding 2: Peer-to-peer instruction and mentoring were core strategies for learning leadership skills dispositions, and attitudes.

Finding 3: While the use of social media and communication technologies was prevalent in all aspects of running the leadership program, its use was noticeably absent from all leadership curriculum and the instructional strategies.

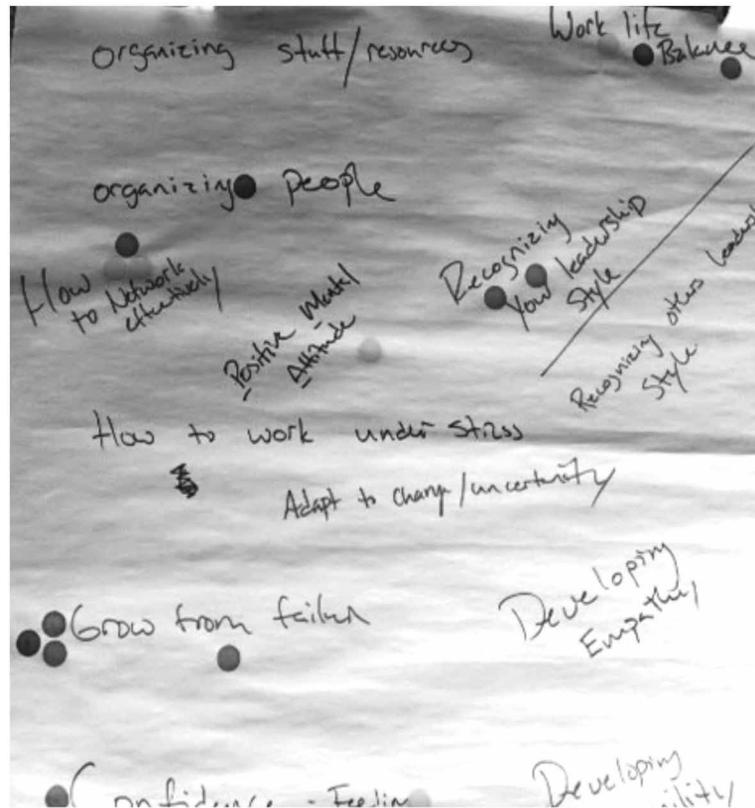
The following section describes each of the findings in detail through evidence, followed by a discussion of the implications of each finding for researchers and program designers in the field. This chapter will also conclude with broader implications for the future of program design for Millennials and leader-learners in the 21st Century.

Finding 1: Students Focus the Majority of Their Leadership Development Activities on Competencies Geared toward “Leading Themselves”

The first finding of the study is that the majority of leadership development workshops in the student leadership program focused on improving students’ ability to lead themselves rather than their abilities to lead others or organizations. In interview transcripts, the emphasis on “understanding yourself” or “self-improvement” was a common theme that applies to Leadership of the Self in the Transcendent Leadership model. In one interview, the interviewee focused on personal and individual awareness as a key component of the leadership development program. This person also discussed the importance of working in groups (leadership of others), and emphasized that “having awareness” of themselves was necessary to work effectively in a group.

This finding also emerged from the coding performed on documents in other data sources. Some of the documents collected for this study included notes of the brainstorming session the student group conducted to decide which leadership development workshops they would organize during the 2011-2012 academic year. These notes included a large list of possible leadership development topics that the group would vote on to eventually select as final topics for its list of workshops. Figure 2 is an image of student generated topics from the Leadership Workshop Brainstorm Session, and overwhelmingly focuses on personal leadership topics such as “Grow from failure,” “Developing Empathy,” “Developing Humility,” “Confidence,” and “Recognizing Your Leadership Style.”

Figure 2. Workshop brainstorming



Following the workshop brainstorm, the group voted on all the suggestion to develop the final list of leadership development workshops for the 2011-2012 school year. The workshops ultimately voted on and selected for development by students were the following.

1. Knowing Yourself.
2. Leadership Style.
3. Planning and Goal Setting.
4. Interviewing Skills 1.
5. Interviewing Skills 2.
6. Mentoring.
7. Making Decisions.
8. Dealing with Failure.
9. Communications 1.
10. Communications 2.
11. Working with Others.
12. Conflict Resolution.
13. Organizational Change.
14. Networking and Professional Image.

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As researchers reviewed these documents, applying our coding from the Transformative Leadership Framework, out of a total of 30 leadership topics suggested, 19 focused on leadership of the self, 7 on leading others, and 2 on leading organizations, while the remaining 2 did not fit into any of the three categories of the coding scheme. Of the 14 leadership workshops offered for the 2011-2012 school year that were developed, 8 were focused on Leading the Self, 4 on Leading Others, 1 on Leading Organizations, while the remaining workshop did not fit into the coding scheme.

The finding — that undergraduate students seem to focus leadership development activities on building skills for Leading the Self — is consistent with other literature that has found that young entry-level professionals of the Millennial population who emphasize personal development and self-discovery in leadership development, while the older generations (such as Generation X and Baby Boomers) place greater value on large scale, organizational, and team-based behaviors (Katherine, 2011).

Discussion and Implications of Finding #1: Leadership Education Beginning with Leadership of Self

When it comes to understanding the capacities that students believe are most important to develop their leadership skill, Finding 1 indicates that Millennial undergraduate students value skill sets necessary for self-leadership over other leadership competencies. In the U-Lead program, the largest number of leadership workshops and activities focused on themes and skill sets to help individuals understand their personalities, develop a sense of awareness about their own thinking, and improve their communication skills. Indeed, this finding may seem perplexing to some, as much of the literature on the subject of leadership described this as an act involving the mobilization of groups and organizations, or the idea that without followers there is no leader. Students in the program did not all subscribe to this point of view, and saw no contradiction in the idea that the person can lead themselves individually without the need for followers.

Self-leadership is also visible in contemporary research. The idea that awareness and management of one's self has a significant influence on an individual's ability to lead a group or organization (Crossan, Vera & Nanjad, 2008). The transcendent leadership framework identifies leadership of the self as one of the three areas — alongside leading groups and leading organizations — that leaders need to develop competencies in order to lead others effectively. Other scholars in recent years have focused on the idea of leadership as identity work and use this approach to study the different ways in which women, men, and underrepresented minorities identify themselves with positions or traits of leadership (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). The transcendent leadership framework used to develop the analytical categories for assessing the content of workshops of the U-Lead program reflects this body of research, and makes it possible to select key examples of transcendent leadership in action.

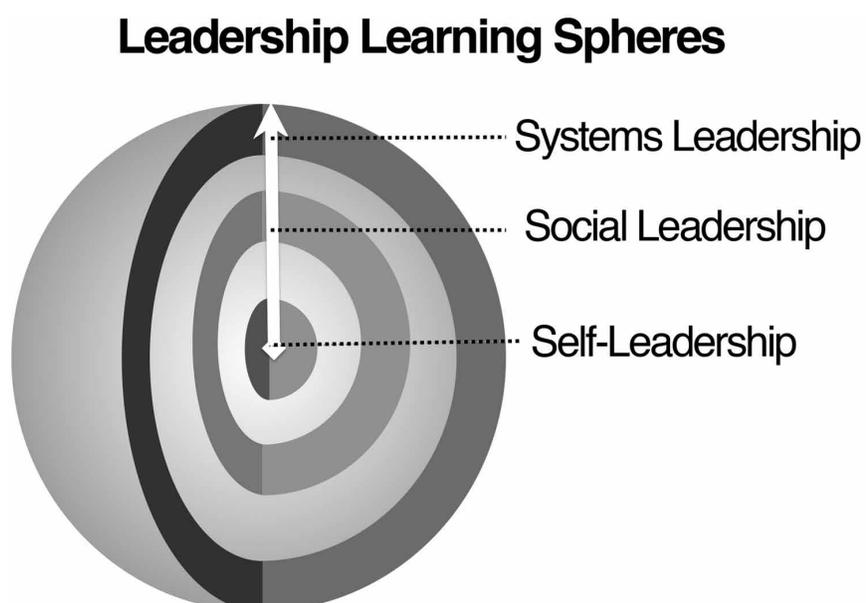
The finding on the importance of leading the self in the transcendent leadership framework is also seen in the literature that examines the leadership competency preferences of college-age students. In a study by Katherine (2011), looking at leadership competency preferences by generation, research indicated that college-age students prioritize self-development and self-awareness skills as most important in developing their leadership capacity. In this study, the author draws from the literature on developmental stages of youth to explain that it is the student's age — and developmental stage — that makes him or her much more interested in self-understanding and developing their own identity than in topics related to managing people and organizations. In addition, she goes on to explain that many of these young people have not had much work experience and therefore see less relevance in topics related to

managing large groups of people and organizations than members of Generation X and Baby Boomers who have jobs that have allowed them to acquire these skills on a day-to-day basis.

The literature helps explain the importance students place on understanding and managing themselves. It also suggests a possible natural sequence, initiated at any age, for learning one's way into a leadership role, beginning with leadership of self. This is a critical point that may help leadership development educators find a better sequence for teaching leadership development competencies. "Self-Leadership," illustrated in the Leadership Learning Spheres Framework (Figure 3) may serve as an entry point to begin learning about leadership for those who are new to the subject. This central core of the Leadership Learning Spheres Framework can provide younger leaders with a scaffold for learning competencies for leading groups, and over time, build broader capacities for leading systems of interconnected organizations. The nested "Leadership Spheres" model provides an easy-to-follow organizing framework for educators to create curricula in a manner that presents a theoretically grounded leadership competency model (i.e. Transcendent Leadership) with subject areas that young people are developmentally motivated to learn.

In addition to helping educators sequence leadership development topics, the Leadership Learning Sphere framework helps to categorize the skill sets, allowing leadership programs to deliberately build learning programs that cover the breadth of leadership learning needed by their young leaders. This knowledge is important to ensure that the program is in fact aligned correctly with the objectives it is trying to accomplish. For example, while a college-level user-training program may have a heavy emphasis on the self-leadership sphere, a corporate training program for executives will want to ensure that the majority focuses on leadership competencies geared toward the group leadership sphere or the organizational leadership sphere. And as medical doctors proceed from leading hospitals to leading professional or government systems, their training would focus on building from their social leadership knowledge towards such goals as governance, stewardship, and innovation. However, the process of building the layers of these Spheres from Self-Leadership to Systems Leadership is a lifelong one, and

Figure 3. The leadership learning spheres framework



higher education may play a key role creating these growth pathways for Millennial learners. However, the participant-generated topics of interest indicated a clear interest in personal development ahead of other, broader social leadership skills.

The Leadership Learning Spheres Framework, based on theories of Transcendent Leadership, is an idea that requires further research to establish the generalizability and suitability of the framework for the systematic design and evaluation of leadership development programs. The authors of this study invite educators and leadership program administrators to apply this tool and share their findings with the higher education leadership education community. Such discussions will promote design practices in higher education institutions as they engage in the important work of scaffolding students' lifelong leadership learning activities.

Finding 2: Peer-to-Peer Instruction and Mentoring Were Core Strategies for Learning Leadership Skills Dispositions, and Attitudes

The leadership development program's structure was described by one of the interviewees as having three components: Community activities, workshops, and peer-to-peer mentoring. All three of these components serve the purpose of teaching and contributing to the leadership development of program participants. As part of this research, in addition to a review of the leadership curriculum used by the leadership development program, researchers attended two of the leadership development workshops to see what instructional strategies Mentors employed to deliver the curriculum.

U-Lead participants spent a significant amount of time devoted to informal program activities that were adjacent to the goals of the program. These activities included a fundraiser for cancer research, a variety of awareness and advocacy events put on by program participants, and socializing evenings and weekends for participants. Though these events were mundane in nature, participants were able to exercise a variety of leadership skills in pursuit of a shared goal in their social reality, taking charge of different aspects of the informal event. Further, these activities fostered mentoring relationships amongst the program participants. Such personal relationships promoted long-term engagement and value for the students personally and the program generally.

While the leadership development program has a large alumni base, budget, and access to a multitude of faculty and staff with an expertise in leadership development, the group actively chose to utilize peer-to-peer mentoring in facilitation as a core method of instruction for all leadership development content. As a result, program facilitators were only one or two years ahead of the students taking the workshops. This approach contrasts with much of the students' formal learning experiences, as older instructors usually provide access to the most advanced knowledge available on the particular field that is under study. In the case of this leadership program, students specifically chose to receive expertise on leadership from their peers, and the leaders served as guides to the components of the leadership program.

Upon further discussion of this program feature with the program's director and its staff advisor, researchers learned that in previous years the program had brought in "outside experts" to teach the workshops. However, the student participants reportedly did not enjoy the content or relate well to the presenter. Thereafter, the group opted to have its own second and third year Mentors in the program provide the training content and deliver all of the leadership workshops. The opportunity for the upperclassmen to organize and facilitate the workshops is also recognized within the program as a key leadership development activity. The interview excerpt below demonstrates the student's perspective on how workshop facilitators (mentors) learn from their experience:

S3: *But it is also the mentors that are learning because they are getting together and they are working together to put on two-hour workshops and a two-hour curriculum to teach a group of sixty students who are all so different and come from different walks of life. I think that it is really the mentors who are learning a lot, too...*

With respect to the workshops and other program components, interviewees highlighted peer-to-peer mentorship as a strong part of the leadership development program. Mentors play a central role in the program participants' leadership development not only through coaching but also by exposing participants to other activities and opportunities on campus where they can continue developing leadership skills (Cramer & Prentice-Dunn, 2007). In addition, mentors also provide the opportunity for socialization into the program's various activities, which is attractive to participants who are not only looking to learn about leadership through workshops, but also to get involved on campus in leadership activities (Budge, 2006). The interview excerpt below demonstrates the value of a mentoring relationship in influencing campus leadership involvement.

S3 (Interview 3): *Literally learning it from another mentor, another leader, you learn how to navigate that and how to communicate with people, including people who maybe you don't necessarily mesh with that well. I think U-Lead has been the most effective way to learn leadership, because ... it was kind of what introduced me to everything that I've been involved in at the university.*

As S3 notes, the peer-to-peer mentoring relationships provides benefits in leadership development experiences for participants. As other interviewees reported, peer-to-peer mentorship allows for a relaxed, but compelling, fun, and involved experience that engages the learner on a number of levels. Instead of learning in a classroom through workshops, a mentoring relationship allows for learning through practice and action, and the formation of a strong social bond amongst the participants.

S2 (Interview 1): *When I was in that program last year and they provided the upperclassman mentor, who was [name], I learned an incredible amount through [mentor's name] as well. So I just think being around her and seeing how she conducted herself and how she presented herself, especially in the university community...this is how I was kind of a key player and I wanted to see how she did, and just being able to rely on her for advice was incredibly helpful for leadership development. If I had not had [mentor's name] as my mentor, I would not be in the same place, you know.*

S3 (Interview 2): *I think I have also learned a lot as a mentor... you know, working with a group and having that dynamic between different people, including people who have different leadership styles... being a mentor...and working with a mentor, I think you are really exposed to all those different styles of leadership and different styles of personalities...*

In Interview 3, the researchers directly asked students about the most valuable aspects of the program:

R: *Which piece of the program — let's say you can only pick one piece — would be the most valuable thing that you think every student could benefit from?*

S4: *Coming from this program, the mentors completely. I, as a leader myself, I have felt I enjoyed the program, but I don't feel it meant something to me until I met my mentor, my personal mentor... we meet every two to three weeks to get coffee and he helps me. He asks me, "What are you going to do?" and "How are you going to get there?" I feel like having a mentor there to help you figure out where to go and how are you going to get there is just good, and when you have mentors that are good it's just really good. You can see it in their leaders.*

Participant S4 provides with a concluding theme for the evidence collected for this finding. When young leaders are engaged as primary agents in the work of learning about leadership through realistic and socially embedded means, "You can see it in their leaders." As seen in the programs concerted efforts to help students engage in informal leadership learning activities, peer-to-peer learning, and peer mentorships, these features can provide students with meaningful and lasting learning opportunities.

Discussion and Implications of Finding 2: The Importance of Peer-to-Peer Learning

For students in the U-Lead program, almost all activities and workshops were organized and run by other students one or two academic years ahead of the program participants. In addition to this peer-to-peer learning structure, the majority of the classwork was delivered in the form of activities or group exercises in lieu of traditional lecture and discussion formats used in most college classrooms. This method was completely different from that found in most leadership development programs in academia or the professional world. This style of teaching and learning has implications for educators designing leadership development programs for leaders in the Millennial generation.

On the plus side, the peer-to-peer teaching has the benefit of creating close bonds between students and also helps students relate better to the individuals teaching the content. Interviews revealed that new program participants would often look to their peer leaders for guidance rather than to faculty, staff, or other adult figures. However, a major drawback of the peer-to-peer structure is that it may, in some circumstances, limit the learning opportunities and information for new program participants. Since the "teachers" of this program are also students with only one or two years of leadership development expertise, the knowledge they can provide is limited compared to leadership development experts or professionals with significantly more expertise in the subject matter. The difference in knowledge and skills between novice and experts has been documented in the Learning Sciences literature, and research findings suggest that the level of a teacher's expertise in a given expert domain can make a substantive difference in the ability of students to develop a competency. A leading scholar in expertise development summarized this conundrum with the assertion that "It takes expertise to make expertise" (Bransford, 2009).

Since this study did not compare a group taught by peer-to-peer methods with a group taught by individuals with more expertise and leadership development, it is difficult to gauge the precise impact of these forms of instruction on the development of leadership expertise. However, it is worth noting that in focus groups, students consistently said that they enjoyed learning from their peers more than they did from outside "experts." Additional research is necessary to better understand the implications and best applications of peer-to-peer instructional strategies.

Finding 3: The Use of Technologies and Social Media Communication Was Prevalent in all Aspects of the Leadership Program; Their Use Was Absent from the Leadership Curriculum and Instructional Strategies

During the course of the study, researchers hypothesized that this generation of students' exposure to information technology would introduce technology into every aspect of the learning and leadership development work. While observing participants, we found that this was only partially true. On the one hand, social media tools like Facebook and blogs were routinely used to organize activities, post opportunities, and engage in social interactions between participants. On the other hand, almost all types of technology were noticeably absent from leadership development workshops and most formally organized leadership development activities. This is striking, as students were already deeply comfortable with the technologies, as described by Hershatter & Epstein (2010) in their study of Millennials' technology use habits. Participants and mentors could have easily incorporated blogging, Tweeting, or other media to conduct work and share information with others about the workshops; yet, they chose not to incorporate these tools into their learning environments.

Though the students use social media tools and technologies constantly in their daily lives, when it came to the leadership workshops, interviews revealed that they did not allow the use of these technologies in the classroom. A researcher asked some of the participants to comment on this point. One participant responded by saying that they did this deliberately to make sure that everybody was '100% focused' on the work that was going on in the room. In addition, this person highlighted that it would be hard to keep students attentive and on task at the leadership workshops if they were texting and using computers in the process of learning. This points to the idea that students recognize the role that information technology plays in aiding communication, but also that it can detract from engagement in educational activities.

Researchers did not find examples of innovative uses of technology by the students, or even the inclusion of information technology skills among the best practices noted in the leadership development curriculum. A researcher asked participants in the U-Lead program to specify why they did not include technology-based workshops even though they evidently used technology on a consistent basis. They seemed surprised by this question, and highlighted that they never thought to include technology as a key skill, though it was an important part of being an effective leader in today's environment. They also felt students in the program could benefit from learning how to communicate effectively using information technology tools.

Even though technology use was restricted in certain parts of the U-Lead program, Millennial leaders had strong folk-theories of the role of technologies in leadership practice. Below are excerpts from two interviews that demonstrate the students' perspectives on the value and importance of the use of technology and its relevance to leadership development. S1 notes that technology gives leaders a strong capacity to influence opinions remotely:

S1 (Interview 1): *Now people don't even talk on the phone anymore, they just send a text message and they go about their business. ...it is new technology, which creates new cultures, which creates new leadership and a new way to lead. You know, I know leaders who I've never seen in person, but I still follow them...*

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Interviewee S2 also had strong feelings about how one might use these tools in “appropriate” ways:

S2 (Interview 2): *I think there is a social culture of appropriate Facebook use ... you have to know what is appropriate...what is annoying...and how to professionally conduct yourself on Facebook... even with texting; there are... these unspoken social codes that we develop...*

How do Millennials learn to follow leaders that they have never met? How do they learn about the propriety of a professional online presence? With so much emphasis placed on traditional communication skills (public speaking, interviewing skills, etc.), students in similar leadership programs may find that they need focused support in their technology communication skills. This is an occasion where students have the opportunity to bring new leadership tools into the program’s structure as they used these skills on a day-to-day basis to organize events and conduct program activity.

Discussion and Implications of Finding 3: The Role of Social Media and Information Technology

The lack of information technology use inside the workshop stands in stark contrast to the degree to which texting, blogging, and social media are used in every facet of the program development and planning. Several participants and focus groups revealed that smartphones were one of the most important technologies used by effective leaders. These devices are used for communicating with program participants, keeping track of schedules, locating resources, and mobilizing people as needed. Indeed, program directors are very skilled in the use of information technology tools to mobilize individuals and to exercise leadership to accomplish program goals. The finding that leaders increasingly rely on technology as a tool to influence others or attain their objectives is discussed in the literature as “e-Leadership” (Avolio and Kahai, 2003).

Despite the prominence of these technologies and leadership tools as documented in the professional and academic literature, students in the U-Lead program received no training in this skill set. When asked about this in several interviews, program coordinators acknowledged that technological proficiency is an important skill that people should learn; however, they currently offer no skills development in this area. Another participant described this as something that nobody teaches, but that “students just know how to do.” Many of these digital natives do not think or talk much about technology; it is just something that is a common part of their lives. However, it was evident to researchers from interviews that some students understood that these technologies can operate to mobilize others in powerful and persuasive ways. These social media and multimedia technologies may serve an important role in shaping the growth of these leaders in the future, and should thus be integrated into the design and leadership programs in thoughtful and deliberate ways.

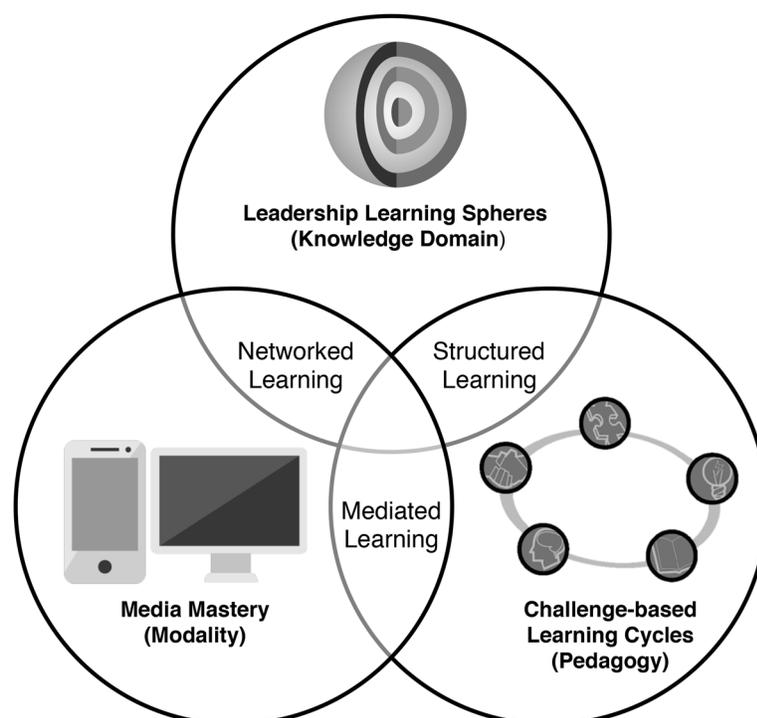
Unfortunately, these valuable communication skills were not being taught to program participants in the leadership development curriculum. Instead, the formal learning events outside of the workshops focused on more traditional communication skills such as public speaking. It is possible that, in the 21st Century, the ability to communicate persuasively through social media and information technology will form an important competence in Millennials’ leadership styles. As participants noted, leaders have a broad range of tools for influencing people and mobilizing groups. Unlike their Enlightenment forebears, who had only the printing press and the ability to stand in the town square and deliver a speech to passersby, Millennial leaders must possess and deploy skills across an enormous number of platforms

and media. Therefore, as it relates to communication skills, leadership development educators would do well to critically think through the communication skills that will have the greatest impact on the development of potential future leaders.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, researchers reported on three key findings related to the development of leadership expertise in an undergraduate leadership program at a large university in the Pacific Northwest. These findings indicated that: 1) Millennial undergraduates had a strong orientation towards learning competencies associated with self-leadership; 2) Peer-to-peer instruction and mentoring were the preferred learning strategies (pedagogies) for developing leadership skills, dispositions, and attitudes; and 3) the prevalence of informal technology use to achieve leadership goals contrasts with the lack of formal awareness of students about the use of technology as a tool to lead others. In response to each of these findings, this section will outline three new directions for research in Millennial and undergraduate leadership education. These ideas, illustrated in Figure 4, extend the findings of the study to include areas of future work in undergraduate leadership learning and expertise development. The three areas of design, include the Leadership Learning Spheres approach to the domain knowledge of Leadership, a model of teaching and learning that might be used to achieve that growth in similar Millennial learning programs, and the formal roles of technology in facilitating social and intellectual growth.

Figure 4. Design parameters for leadership learning environments



In viewing their program's goals and core competencies from this perspective, these administrators and students. In applying the findings from this research towards the design of leadership program, educators might consider three important parameters for the design of Leadership Learning Environments (LLEs): Domain Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Modality. Each of these components has the potential to significantly impact the teaching and learning outcomes of a leadership development program and therefore deliberate choices have to be made in these areas during the curriculum design stages of a program.

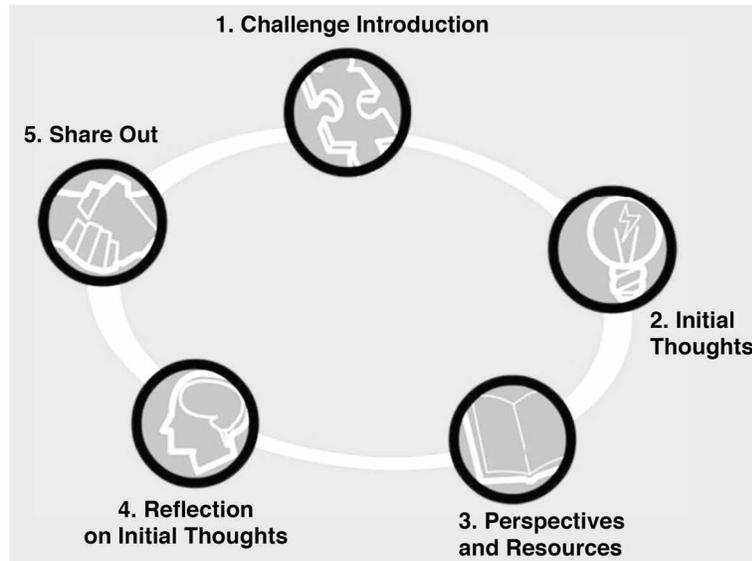
First, based on our finding that students are focused on competencies related to leading themselves during college, educators may consider a sequential approach to introducing leadership domain knowledge, using the Leadership Learning Spheres framework to guide the systematic development of their undergraduate leadership programs. This framework proposes a design curriculum beginning with training on competencies of leading the self (e.g., decision-making, efficient planning, personal values) and gradually moving to competencies to lead groups (e.g. public speaking, negotiations), and finally building the skills to influence entire systems (e.g. through technology and social media, public policy, and stewardship). In using this model to structure their programs, leadership program designers can ensure that their programs' formal learning events and workshops are developing the right mix of skills and knowledge for their particular Millennial leaders. This deliberate mapping of the domain for students may also help program designers customize the learning opportunities for each of their Millennial leaders, or to select domain knowledge and skills that will cultivate the kinds of leaders that are valued by their institution or program. In either case, the deliberate mapping of the leadership domain may help young leaders to engage in metacognitive understandings of their own leadership skills and knowledge, and to help them chart their course to becoming an expert in the knowledge and practices of leadership.

In applying the research on the second finding on the U-Lead program's use of peer mentors, leadership program designers may consider deliberately incorporating pedagogical tools to aid in the learning of leadership content knowledge during the peer interactions. In this study, students preferred peer-to-peer and mentorship approaches to aid in their leadership development; however, there was some variability in the way these methods of teaching and learning were implemented. One promising strategy identified by the researchers to reduce this variability in the way peer to peer instruction and mentoring are implemented involves incorporating a structured-exploration approach to scaffolding the development of leadership skills through inquiry.

One such model of instruction comes in the form of Challenge-based Learning (Schwartz, Lin, Brophy, & Bransford, 1999), a metacognitively-oriented approach to helping learners explore and make meaning from a given set of resources. This empirically tested model of instructional design (Figure 5) can help ensure that peer-to-peer and mentorship interactions will have a structured process that maximizes learning potential without reducing the learners' sense of autonomy and ownership of their knowledge. It is also suitable for individuals or teams, such as the mentor-mentee dyads found in the U-Lead program.

Since the codification of this model in the 1990s, researchers have also employed it in professional development contexts such as a major aerospace engineering company (O'Mahony, Vye, Bransford, Sanders, Stevens, Richey, Stephens, Lin, & Soleiman, 2012). One of the principal benefits of the use of this model is its capacity for creating generative and open-ended questions for mentees and mentors to answer together through the learning process. The collaborative problem-solving nature of the model also makes use of the teaching opportunities inherent in the Mentors' role as a peer who is also a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Given the exploratory nature of this model, Challenge-based Learning may serve as a strong basis for Mentor/Mentee collaboration in the learning of key leadership competencies.

Figure 5. The challenge-based learning cycle
(Schwartz, et al., 1999)



In brief, the Challenge-based Learning Cycle (CBLC) pictured in Figure 5 guides learners through a process of metacognitive knowledge constructions that centers on an authentic problem of practice (or a central “Big Question”). Then, learners use provided knowledge resources to identify possible solutions, and reflect on what they have learned before sharing it with a group. In some program contexts, program mentors and mentees could also be encouraged to extend the process further and create their own CBLC lessons using questions generated during the Share Out process. When combined with learning management systems or blogging technologies, these user-generated CBLCs could serve future generations of leadership program participants, creating a durable record of thought for post-Millennial generations.

Finally, in applying the research from the third finding related to the deliberate use of technology, program designers may want to make conscious choices about the modality (communication and media pathways) that are used to deliver the content knowledge and pedagogy of leadership development curriculum. The leadership program designed by students in this study involved formal social interactions and activities to deliver the leadership development objectives of the program. There was a deliberate choice made by students not to apply modalities involving reading, writing, lecturing, and expert panels and other traditional modes of formal education. In this study’s analysis, the pivot away from these modal choices highlights some of the learning preferences of Millennials. This generation is choosing to move away from more traditional forms of leadership learning media in favor of socially connected and shareable experiences.

Another key modality observed in this study was the heavy use of technology to coordinate and implement this leadership program. This was not an active choice made by students, but rather one they were not even aware that they had made. The use of social media to orchestrate work is “just the way we do things now.” Just as the fish does not see the water in their fishbowl, digital natives are immersed in technology. Only when these students were questioned about their informal use of technology for coordinating most aspects of the program did they see it as a distinct mode of communicating and exer-

cising leadership with others. Therefore, leadership education designers must make active choices about the modality that will be used formally and informally in the design and delivery of leadership learning experiences. The active use of new social media and learning management systems can offer learning opportunities for program participants to develop technological competencies in important tools (e.g. blogs, wikis, video storytelling, online marketing). The mastery of these tools could grow alongside the Millennial leader-learner's ability to mobilize and influence others in the 21st century.

In concluding this discussion of the applicability of the study's findings to the broader field, the researchers believe that leadership development designers must make critical design choices in the areas of content, pedagogy, and modality to create effective programs that truly resonate with Millennial learners. Each of these choices is important individually, but also in their interaction with one another. The deliberate weaving of these three pillars of learning design allow for the creation of a rich learning ecology for leadership development that maximizes teaching and learning opportunities for all.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, the researchers have sought to provide new understanding about leadership development from the perspective of college undergraduates striving to build their capacities and expertise as leaders. This research sought to present findings that fill gaps in the literature about the design of leadership development programs to meet the needs of Millennial students currently making their way to college before entering the workforce and replacing millions of Baby Boomers. In discovering the way that one group of undergraduates creates its own leadership development curriculum, other leadership trainers and educators have an opportunity to incorporate the knowledge from these findings into the design of innovative leadership development programs that address the specific needs and learning preferences of this next generation of emerging leaders. It is important to note that while the findings provide some important insight about student of the Millennial generation, this research was conducted on only a single program at a large university. It is focused on a group of students considered experts and lead users of leadership education, a condition that is not representative of an average college student. Therefore scholars and educators should note the limitations of this research sample, as they do not apply to every Millennial student at every college or university in the United States.

In blending the observations in this chapter with the theoretical literatures of leadership competencies and expertise development, the researchers identified the Leadership Learning Spheres framework to help guide the systematic development of leadership expertise. While this framework remains to be tested in future studies, its aim is to provide leadership educators and academics with a lodestar for a clearer definition of leadership competencies and their sequence of development. As institutions of higher education explore how to effectively develop the Millennial and post-Millennial generation of leaders, a key component will be to develop educational programs around a central understanding of who this new generation is and how they best learn. By applying the various findings in this study, higher education institutions can ensure that leadership development program are designed in alignment with the perspectives, motivation, and learning needs of the Millennial generation.

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