

Istanbul University
Faculty of Business Administration
Leadership and Leadership Analysis
Fall 2010-1011

INSTRUCTOR :

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to give the students an introduction to the context of leadership. The course is basically intended to cover the main characteristics of leaders, the distinction between leadership and some similar concepts, different leadership styles and essential leadership theories. Throughout the course, we consider students as prospective leaders and we attempt to help them find out their own tendencies in leading, as well as coaching them in understanding which styles are more appropriate under certain circumstances. This course provides the critical element of analytical and intellectual examination and reflection of certain core issues in the practice of leadership.

The Diversity Pedagogy Seminar has influenced me to question our course objectives for this Leadership and Leadership Analysis course. I have realized that there were several points which needed to be reconstructed and resettled in our course objectives.

First of all when setting our objectives for this course, we had been assuming that the students were potential candidates for a leadership role and ignoring that they also need clues on the way to become leaders. Our course objectives and course design are not comprehensive enough to support the students in the process of gaining the leadership position in a group. The course objectives are narrowly focused on changing the perspectives and behaviors of students only in their future leadership positions. The phase which comes before acquiring the leadership position is almost totally overlooked. I believe we should change the course objectives and the course design in order to help students in their transformation period to become leader-managers.

Moreover, the course objectives are not representing the worries about creating sensitive leaders, at least not as much as they should be. The emphasis is pretty much on creating the leaders who are needed in today's business world for the affectivity and the productivity of the companies. I believe there should be a shift in our approach, putting more emphasis on creating sensitive and socially responsible leaders rather than valuing leaders who are totally efficiency focused.

Finally, another gap in our course objectives is that the diversity phenomenon is not taken into consideration from the perspective of leaders. In all the other courses probably the diversity issue is important in terms of inclusive learning. But when the course is about teaching how to lead, diversity becomes an issue directly related to the objectives and content of the course. This distinctive characteristic of Leadership and Leadership Analysis course became apparent to me only after the diversity pedagogy seminar. The new pedagogy I am considering implementing will address diversity not only as an issue of inclusive learning but also as an important phenomenon of inclusive leading. The nuance is that increasing the consciousness about diversity issues among the leader candidates, in and of itself, should be included as one of the course objectives.

COURSE CONTENT:

In order to be able to fulfill the new course objectives, course content needs to be reformed as well. I believe the problematic side of the current course content is that it is extremely

theoretical. The course content should be switched into a more practice-focused form which may enhance students' behavioral change processes.

The current course content is presented below:

Week 1 - The definition of leadership and the distinction between leaders and similar concepts

Week 2 - Leadership theories 1: trait approaches

Week 3 - Leadership theories 2: behavioral approaches

Week 4 – Leadership theories 3: situational approaches

Week 4 - More on Current Models of Leadership

Week 5 - Sources of power / influence for leaders

Week 6 - Leadership training and development

Week 7 - Measurements of leadership and leadership analysis

Week 8 - Effective time and meeting management

Week 9 - Leadership and teamwork

Week 10 - The characteristics that the effective leaders should possess

Week 11 – Catch up and review

As we can see the course content is in large part leader-oriented. In order to improve inclusive leading tendencies of leader candidates, I think, issues about subordinates should particularly be addressed in the course outline if we are aiming to create sensitive and empathetic leaders. With this aim, I decided to replace “Measurements of leadership and leadership analysis”, “Effective time and meeting management” and “More on Current Models of Leadership” with “Leadership and Motivation”, “Leading through Communications” and “Leadership Values, Ethics and Moral Development”. Within these three weeks, I am planning to take a closer look to the subordinates' side. Within these two weeks, I am aiming to create a discussion atmosphere in the class so that the students can question themselves in terms of diversity, assumptions about others, stereotypes, and their effects on the outputs and results. I hope that students confront the biases and rebuild their perspectives which highly affect their success as leaders in their interactions with their team, with their boss, customers, peers, or themselves.

The new course outline is presented in the following.

Week 1 - Introduction, the Leadership Environment

Week 2 – Power and Politics in Organizations

Week 3 - Trait Approaches to leadership

Week 4 - Behavioral Approaches

Week 5 - Situational Leadership

Week 6 - Leadership and Motivation

Week 7 - Recent Leadership models

Transformational, Servant, Authentic

Week 8 - Leading Change

Week 9 - Leadership in Teams

Week 10 - Leading through Communications

Week 11 – Leadership Values, Ethics and Moral Development

Week 12 - Broad review

People are the key elements in every organization to get things done. Leadership is the ability to motivate and manage people in a way so that they are inspired to use their knowledge and talents for the benefit of their organizations. Research studies and all the theories and methodologies accumulated up to now point out that human nature is too complex to elucidate the behaviors of people and the underlying reasons of these behaviors. What I hope in terms of my new pedagogical approach is that students learn the dynamics of humans in the workplace and are able to build empathetic relationships while correctly choosing the relevant tools and applying these in appropriate circumstances confronting leaders today.

VULNERABILITIES:

When I consider our previous pedagogies, content, and communication activities, I come to a conclusion that we are not sensitive enough to students' and to our own vulnerabilities. The current situation cannot be described as being inconsiderate but it is more like being unaware.

We are not really taking the individual differences into account when we are setting our rules, pedagogies and content in this course. I cannot say that we are dealing with the vulnerability issues with a highly conscious manner.

One of the main reasons for this is the number of the students in the class. Even though the number changes from year to year, approximately 80 students take the class each year. This causes a limitation in building a personal relationship with each student.

In order to overcome the complications caused by the extreme number of class attendants, I decided to collect a more detailed personal information form from each student in the beginning of the semester. Additionally I decided to collect an anonymous paper from each student in which they reflect their past in-class experiences where they were offended by an act of the lecturer or one of the classmates due to not being considerate enough to their vulnerabilities. I believe such a pool of personal experiences of students would give me a clearer idea about what kinds of vulnerabilities I should pay attention to and consider in more detail in order to enhance student learning.

COGNITIVE AUTHORITY:

In terms of cognitive authority, one of the problems we are facing as research and teaching assistants is that we are not giving our own class but we are representing a professor who is actually being perceived by the students as the absolute power figure. Depending on this fact, the distribution of the cognitive authority in my class appears to be an issue related not only to the interactions with students but also to the interactions with the original lecturer of the class. This fact causes several contrasting affects on the distribution of authority in class.

The research and teaching assistants are not accepted as the real authority figures in a class due to their position as an assistant of a faculty member. On the other hand research and teaching assistants have the cognitive capability to teach and they are faculty member candidates for the following years. On the other hand they have a natural power over students due to grading papers. Another issue which affects the balances in the distribution of cognitive authority is that students, even if not always, have the tendency to consider the research and teaching assistants as one unit. They generalize all their assumptions about faculty to research

and teaching assistants as well. This forms a boundary at least in the beginning of the class. Students mostly don't feel eager to express their thoughts or personal experiences since they have negative previous experiences with several faculty members who prefer a self-accumulated cognitive authority.

To overcome students' assumptions about the absolute power of the faculty member or her assistant, I will rearrange my course outline which is provided to every student in the beginning of the course. In the course outline where I am describing the structure of the class, I will add a new paragraph where I highlight my appreciation for high levels of class participation and a relatively informal atmosphere.

Gender is another facet of the cognitive authority. Due to cultural differences, some students have the tendency to use prefixes such as "Maam", "Mrs." or "Miss" when addressing a female research and teaching assistant. I have been observing that the same students are addressing a male research and teaching assistant as "Min Mentor", "Teacher", or even "Professor". This distinction which arises in the expressions of students naturally rather than a conscious bad intention, points out that cognitive authority is naturally attributed to men rather than women. Because of the cultural and organizational facts covered above, I believe, dealing with how cognitive authority is distributed in my class is an issue beyond my personal efforts. I think the faculty members, who are the originally in charge of a class, have a direct influence in the class atmosphere, even if they don't appear in the class not even once. In order to build a better learning atmosphere, I believe we should give a collective effort together with faculty members. Reading and discussion groups would be very helpful in clarifying our perspectives and developing a common approach to the distribution of cognitive authority. Forming such a reading and discussion group with my colleagues will be one of my personal goals for next year.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THEIR LEARNING PROCESS:

Currently the course is being held in a lecture format in which students are almost completely passive. I am planning to implement a change in the course design so that it will be a combination of lectures and individual and group activities. Students will have more responsibility both in in-class activities and out-class projects. Students are being evaluated

based on their performance solely on mid-term exam and final exam. The assessment methods will be completely redesigned.

Activities:

First of all I searched for some group activities suitable for encouraging students to question their assumptions about others and the effects of these assumptions on workplace. I picked 3 activities: Labels, Similarities and Differences and First Impressions each of which are designed to increase the consciousness levels of students about assumptions about themselves and about others. I provided the outline of these activities in the appendix.

Group Assignments:

1. Leadership Diary. This assignment will be a team project. Each student will randomly be assigned to a team. The teams will be asked to actualize a social responsibility project. The teams will be working competitively since this project will be graded depending on their success relative to the other teams. Each week one of the team members will be leading the group. The leader of the week will need to present a written report about the team, its members and the efficiency levels of the team activities. Finally the group will present a written report about the complete project. In this final report the team will be discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their teams and the methods that they used to overcome problems. Each team will introduce their projects in class in the final week with a 20 minute presentation.

2. Leader interview. This will be the second task of the teams. The same teams will select a senior manager and conduct an interview to analyze the leadership philosophy of her/him. The videos of the interviews will be uploaded on a web page together with the assignments so that each student can make comments on each others' assignments.

I believe these two assignments will enhance students' knowledge on leadership as well as enabling them to learn leading by experiencing.

Individual Assignments:

1. Case Studies and Reviews. The students will be asked to analyze 2 cases, 1 movie, 1 autobiography and 1 leader interview throughout the semester. Cases will be provided by me

whereas the movie, the autobiography and the leader interview will be chosen by students.

2. Personal Assessments. Throughout the semester I will provide the students the opportunity to complete several personal assessments. In this type assignment I will not judge the answers of the students and will give full points as long as they completed the assessment tools. The aim of this type of assignment will be to help students analyze themselves, their own personality and styles.

3. Leadership Improvement Plan. The students will work on an individual assignment throughout the year in which they will tell about their own leadership improvement plans. They will be answering where exactly they see themselves in 5 years time and in 20 years time, what their strengths and weaknesses are, which steps they think they need to take in order to reach their goals,.

4. Readings. Since we will not be following a textbook for this class, students will be reading articles (either written in Turkish or translated, due to the different proficiency levels in English) chosen from the literature on leadership. I am not able to provide a list of the readings in this paper since I don't have any Turkish articles with me.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS:

In the end of the semester, I will request the students to write anonymously their comments, positive and negative experiences, and recommendations about the course, course content and my teaching style. I believe such a review will be very enlightening for the next year.

Appendix^a:

Here I am copying the introduction, purpose and the steps of the 3 activities. I also provided the details of the source of the activities. If you would like to know more about the activities, please let me know.

1. LABELS

This is a planning activity in which participants treat each other differently based on written labels they wear on their foreheads. The purpose is that participants learn first-hand how it feels to be treated a certain way because of generalizations or prejudices. They learn how this hampers good communication.

- Divide the group into teams of six.
- Distribute a set of six labels to each team, face down.
- Each team member sticks a label on the forehead of the person next to him or her.
- All participants can read what is on others' labels but not their own. Do not tell anyone what is on his or her own label.
- Give the teams a task to plan (plan a departmental picnic, how they will participate in this year's community fund raiser, etc.). They will have 7 minutes to do this.
- As they discuss, they must respect the label each participant is wearing. React and respond according to what it says.
- After 7 minutes, even if the task is not complete, stop the teams and discuss.

2. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

This is an introductory activity in which participants are challenged to find how they are similar and different from each other. The purpose is that participants learn new and interesting things about each other and connect with each other on a personal level.

- Give each participant an index card and a pen.
- Have them divide their cards into three columns headed by "Name, Similar, and Different."

^a Miller, Brian Cole. **Quick Team-Building Activities for Busy Managers**. Amacom: New York, 2004. Pg: 66, 147, 155.

- Have them mingle and try to fill their card with as many names as possible.
- For each name, they find something that they have in common with the other person and one way they are different.

3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This is an activity in which participants determine their first impressions of people picked at random from magazines. The purpose is that participants see how strong and important others' first impression of them can be.

- Divide the group into teams of four to six.
- Give each group an envelope containing pictures of various people.
- They have 6 minutes to discuss their first impressions of the people based solely on what they see in the picture.
- Have them report back to the larger group on one of the pictures to which their team felt the strongest first impression.