

Increasing the Capacity of Leadership Educators to Teach Followership

Introduction

While leader-centric literature dominates our field, research into followership has recently gained momentum across various contexts including healthcare (e.g., Leung et al., 2018), higher education (e.g., Jenkins & Spranger, 2020), and international contexts (Hurwitz, 2021). Although some leader-centric scholars still contest followership as a genuine field of inquiry (Ford & Harding, 2018; Schedlitzki et al., 2018), many leadership scholars are now embracing followership. For those who have accepted the legitimacy of followership, it is no longer a question of whether followership is real, but rather a question of how to learn and/or teach it (Alegbeleye & Kaufman, 2019).

Followership Education is situated within the greater Leadership Education scholarship (e.g., Hurwitz, 2017; Raffo, 2013; Murji, 2015), and there are many areas yet to be explored. A key area ripe for further exploration is effective pedagogical practices for Followership Education. And, while some studies have provided exemplary practices (e.g., Chaleff, 2016; Hoption, 2014) or lists of resources (e.g., Jenkins & Spranger, 2020), there is a need for workshops that provide resources and develop capacities for leadership educators to also be effective followership educators. This workshop aims to address this gap.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

Followership Education

There is scant Followership Education literature aside from a hodgepodge of application-based peer-reviewed articles (e.g., Murji, 2015; Raffo, 2013) and a recent special issue on Followership Education in *New Directions in Student Leadership* (Hurwitz & Thompson, 2020). This literature offers pedagogical strategies for teaching followership as well as current trends and distinctions between leadership and Followership Education. Accordingly, the following pedagogical strategies may be the most effective: (a) case studies (e.g., Koonce et al., 2016); (b) discussion (e.g., Raffo, 2013); (c) self-assessments & instruments (Northouse, 2021); (d) reflection (Morris & Corlett, 2017; Raffo, 2013); (e) role-play (e.g., Chaleff, 2016); and (f) student peer assessment & feedback (e.g., Hoption, 2014). Building upon this work, Jenkins and Spranger (2020) provide a list of resources and teaching activities aligned with the abovementioned instructional strategies, and Guthrie et al. (2020) include instructor's guides for activities designed to teach followership using a variety of instructional strategies including case studies, reflection, role-play, team-based learning, self-assessments, and art, among others. Correspondingly, the facilitators in this workshop will showcase three learning activities

designed for Followership Education using (a) reflection; (b) arts-based learning; and (c) role-play.

Reflection

Reflection is a learning process whereby learners make meaning of past experiences, draw conclusions, and think about how to use this new knowledge in the future (Ash & Clayton, 2009). As pedagogy, reflection comes in many forms including journaling, stream-of-conscious writing, and debriefing (Fink, 2013; Kolb, 1984). Arguably, leadership education and reflection are inextricably linked, providing opportunities for learners to build upon their experiences as leaders *and* followers in various contexts (Densten & Gray, 2001; Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018; Volpe White et al., 2019). In doing so, learners are empowered to consider what they thought, did, and felt; construct meaning (e.g., knowledge, skill, value) from that experience; and then experiment with the behaviors or skills gained from the process (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). Furthermore, reflection-based leadership learning promotes the growth of students' identity, awareness, and individual, cognitive, and moral development (Jones & Abes, 2013; Strain, 2005; Wang & Rodgers, 2006), and provides meaningful ways for leaders and followers to gain a genuine understanding of themselves and their perceptions of experiences and events, relationships, feelings, needs, expectations, and values, and self-care and balance in their leadership roles (Eich, 2008; White, 2012).

Arts-based Learning

Arts-based learning refers to any instructional strategy that uses art as a medium to support knowledge development in subjects other than art (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013). This approach promotes active learning by partaking in or reflectively investigating art (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013) and fosters the development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and emotional intelligence (Casey, 2009; Jack, 2012; MacDonnell & MacDonald, 2011; McGarry & Aubeeluck, 2013; Price et al., 2007). When students engage in arts-based learning, they gain the ability to express and understand human experiences through symbolic language (Blomqvist et al., 2007). In leadership education, art manifests through a transformation of experience, i.e., "skills transfer," where participants reveal inner thoughts and feelings that may not be accessible through more conventional developmental modes (Kolb, 1984; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009) and may be applied using music (Emiliani & Emiliani, 2012), literature (Loughman & Finley, 2010), theater (Soumerai & Mazer, 2006), or other art forms (see Katz-Buonincontro, 2015).

Role-play

Role-play—where learners act out or improvise assigned roles (based on their conceptions) in case scenarios or unstructured situations (McKeachie, 1986)—is an effective active learning strategy that enhances students' motivation to learn, promotes retention of material, and encourages working in groups (Beidatsch & Broomhall 2010; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Frederick 2000). In leadership education, there is substantial support for the use of role-playing as pedagogy (e.g., Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018; Sogurno, 2003) since role-play offers learners experiences along cognitive, social, emotional, and intellectual dimensions (Guthrie et al., 2011), and provides opportunities to engage in a variety of leadership situations and take on roles they are unlikely to encounter elsewhere. Additionally, role-play can be adapted by assigning learners to play the roles of any important content knowledge, theory, model, behavior, trait, approach, historical figure, or leader/follower—to allow for deeper learning and engagement (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018).

Foreseeable Implications

The workshop has many implications for participants. First, we hope that participants will leave the session with a better understanding of followership and Followership Education. Second, since this is a train-the-trainer type of workshop, we hope that at the end of the session, participants will experientially learn how to design and facilitate effective followership learning activities. Third, we hope participants will understand how experimenting with dynamic leader-follower roles and identities can be used as a pedagogical strategy. Lastly, we hope that participants will implement followership activities in their classes, which has implications for the fields of followership and Followership Education.

Learning Objectives

Participants who attend this workshop have opportunities to:

- Gain an understanding of Followership Education.
- Learn how to design and facilitate effective followership learning activities.
- Understand how experimenting with dynamic leader-follower roles and identities can be used as a pedagogical strategy.

Exercise Overview and Description

Introduction and Outline of the Session

1. Welcome & Introductions (5-mins)
 - a. Why Followership Education?

2. Introductory Activity: “Raise Your Hand “ (5-mins)
 - a. Facilitators ask participants to raise their hand if they are the leader in their organization that makes all of the decisions and to whom everyone else reports to.
 - b. Facilitators ask participants to raise their hand if instead, they share decision-making processes and report to at least one other individual in their organization. The latter always generates more hands to the question: Why all the fuss about leadership education over Followership Education? (Hurwitz et al., 2017.)
2. Overview of Followership Education (5-7-mins)
 - a. Facilitators provide an overview of key differences between leadership and Followership Education, major themes in Followership Education, and recommend instructional strategies to teach followership (Jenkins & Spranger, 2020).
3. Activity Demonstration #1 - “Experience in a Leader or Follower Role” (20-mins)
 - a. Facilitators provide an overview of Guthrie and Jenkins’s (2018) “Model of Leader and Follower Experiences as a Source of Transformational Learning” to emphasize that leader and follower roles are of equal importance in reflection-based leadership education.
 - b. Facilitators ask participants to:
 - i. Think about a time where they either received or provided feedback and what they learned from that experience.
 - ii. Jot down some of their thoughts.
 - iii. Now, share the following with a partner:
 1. Name the experience and choose a leader or follower role.
 2. Describe what you wrote in your one-minute paper.
 3. What assumptions or perceptions based on your life experiences did you have during the feedback exchange?
 4. What did you learn and what growth opportunities were presented?
 - c. Facilitators make the connection between the model and the feedback exchange as an exemplar for teaching followership.
4. Activity Demonstration #2: Mobius Strip (15-mins)
 - a. Facilitators provide background information on the Mobius Strip (unique for its one-sidedness), describe how it can be utilized as a pedagogical tool for demonstrating the complementary nature of leadership and followership, and how individuals switch between leader and follower roles (Kaufman et al., 2021).
 - b. Facilitators provide instructions on how to make the Mobius Strip (see Appendix A).

- c. Participants make their own Mobius Strips:
 - i. Participants are provided with paper strips that only require taping.
 - ii. Note: Mobius Strip is used to illustrate the dynamic nature of leader-follower identity in the context of mentoring (Komives et al., 2009), where students move between follower and leader identities, depending on the situation.
 - iii. Participants are asked to write the words 'Follower — Mentoring — Leader' on the paper strip, with 'Follower — Mentoring' on one side, and '— Leader' on the other side.
 - iv. Participants are asked to make the Mobius Strip by following instruction steps #2 & #3 in Appendix A.
 - v. Participants are asked to scroll through the Mobius strip with their thumb and index fingers while facilitators discuss the process of mentoring.
 - d. Discussion questions
 - i. What lessons have you learned from using the Mobius Strip as a pedagogical tool?
 - ii. In what other ways (i.e., besides mentoring) can we utilize the Mobius Strip in Followership Education?
 - iii. How does the Mobius Strip apply to your teaching context?
5. Activity Demonstration #3: Courageous Followership Typology Role-Play (25-mins)
- a. Facilitators explain to participants that they will experiment with leader and follower roles and identities through a brief exchange in pairs.
 - i. Note: This role-play activity has three variations for teaching followership through Chaleff's (2009; 2017) Styles of Followership typology that reflect how well an individual balances supportiveness with questioning/challenging behaviors (see Appendix B for all variations).
 - b. Facilitators then:
 - i. Assign one participant to the Leader role and the other(s) to Follower roles based on the three variations in Appendix B.
 - ii. Ask participants to read through the script provided. Leaders should read the script (see Figure 2 in Appendix B) verbatim and Followers may take any position they choose.
 - iii. Debrief by examining which of the four styles of followership—Resource, Individualist, Implementer, and/or Partner (see Chaleff, 2017)--were observed.
 Note: Definitions of Chaleff's four styles of followership will be provided to workshop participants. Additionally, groups of workshop participants will be randomly selected to participate in one of the three variations.
 - c. Discussion Questions:

- i. How did each partner interpret their roles?
- ii. What are the pros and cons of each role-play model variation?
- iii. What would work in your teaching context?

6. Debrief (5-7-mins)

- a. Which of the activities demonstrated do you feel comfortable facilitating?
- b. What else do you want to know about?

7. Q&A (5-mins)

Appendices

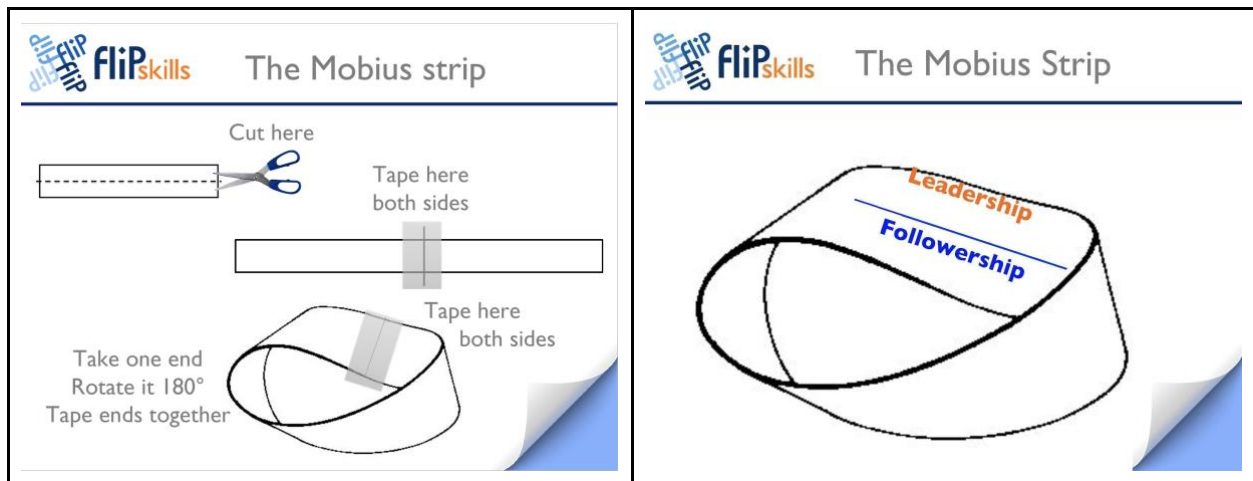
Appendix A: Mobius Strip

Instructions - Make the Mobius Strip:

1. Cut a strip of paper.
2. Take one end and rotate it 180°.
3. Tape both ends together.

Figure 1

Mobius Strip Instructions



Note. Images produced by FliPskills. Reprinted from Cayman Islands Institute of Professional Accountants

(https://www.ciipa.ky/resources/Pictures/2016%20Professional%20Development%20Week%20training%20materials/leadership%20is%20half%20the%20story%20CAYMAN%20_HURWITZ.pdf). CC BY-SA 2.6.

Appendix B: **Variations Two & Three of Courageous Follower Typology Role-Play**

Variations Two & Three

1. Variation Two:
 - a. Assign one participant to the Leader role and four others to roles of Resource, Individualist, Implementer, & Partner.
 - b. Leaders read the script verbatim and Followers take on the role of the assigned Style and position on the idea proposed. This is done as a group.

2. Variation Three:
 - a. Same as Variation Two.
 - b. Participants read the script provided in four separate rounds, one with each follower Style exclusively. In each round, Leaders read the script verbatim and Followers take on the role assigned.

Note: All variations may include an additional “Observer” role.

Figure 2

Activity Script: Changing the Association of Leadership Educators to the Association of Followership Educators

Activity Script: **Changing the Association of Leadership Educators to the** **Association of Followership Educators**

Leader: Thanks for meeting with me today. I recently attended this amazing workshop on Followership Education that Drs. Jenkins and Alegbeleye facilitated and I've been forever changed. I have an idea for the evolution of our association in response to this surge in followership scholarship in the field. I'd like to change the name of our association from the Association of Leadership Educators to the Association of Followership Educators and I'd like your support for doing this.

Follower: (response based on assigned role/position)

Leader: Interesting. Perhaps a hybrid model is more appropriate? What about the Association of Leadership & Followership Educators (ALFE)? That seems more inclusive, doesn't it?

Follower: (response based on assigned role/position)

I don't think these two groups would get along. Do you? We need a revolution! Let's divide our association along this important line in the sand. I'm going to lead the effort to start the AFE, leaving these silly leadership educators to continue to develop leaders (laughs maniacally). Are you with me?

Follower: (response based on assigned role/position)

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