**From Authoritative to Shared Leadership: Learning Through Videos of Conductors**

**Abstract**

This video case serves as a springboard for discussion on how a team (orchestra) can function effectively without an obvious leader (conductor).These videos show varying styles and ranges of orchestral conducting and are used to evoke in students’ minds various forms of leadership (authoritative to transformational to shared). By contrasting the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, with other orchestras that do have conductors, students can learn about leaderless teams through shared leadership. In particular, students can reflect on how the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra can work without a conductor and still successfully function as an orchestra.

Keywords: leadership, shared leadership, video cases

**Introduction**

Leadership is a popular topic that is taught in management classes. There are many theories of leadership covered in leadership modules, ranging from Blake-Mouton (1964) managerial grid model, to transactional leadership (Bass, 1985) to transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) to shared leadership (Conger and Pearce, 2003).

This curated series of videos affords students a specific space and context to understand at a more intuitive level what these leadership theories (authoritative versus transformational versus shared leadership) mean in concrete terms. Atik (1994) argues that most leadership paradigms can be successfully applied to the orchestral settings. Thus, watching different conductors conduct allows students the same context to envision the different theories of leadership come to life.

The videos provide fresh and explicit demonstration of the dynamics of interaction between leader (conductor) and followers (music players). At the same time, the use of the videos makes the relational process between leader and followers visible because response to the leader’s action is immediate, unlike in many other organizations where this dynamic is more hidden, rendering the use of these series of videos and effective tool for teaching leadership concepts. The last video to be shown is an orchestra playing with no conductor. This video will be used to spur discussion on leaderless teams, and how they function in reality.

This series of video case is suitable for early undergraduate students in leadership module.

**Theoretical Foundation / Teaching Implications**

*Conductor as Metaphor for Leadership*

The figure of the conductor is a popular metaphor for good leadership (Bennis and Nanus, 1982; Drucker, 2992; Mintzberg, 1975). In a more traditional approach of leadership as an individual phenomenon, Pollack (1991) has identified communication skills and personality as critical components of effective conducting. Allmendinger and Hackman (1990) noted that the interaction between conductor and orchestra as is important in effective orchestral performance. They further stress the significance of leadership process in orchestra in generating a successful musical performance. In fact, during a concert, the conductor becomes a mediator between the ensemble, the work and the public. Given the importance of a conductor’s leadership on quality of musical performance and audiences’ experience, the use of conductor as a metaphor for leadership is an apt one. Allowing students to learn about leadership styles and behaviors through watching conductors conduct with varying styles will be an engaging and enriching learning experience.

*Active Learning using Videos in Classrooms*

The use of videos in management education has been pervasive in recent years. Given the Covid-19 crisis, whereby many face-to-face sessions have moved online, videos remain one of the critical and effective means to engage students in their learning. The use of videos in management education affords multichannel learning (Liedtka, 2001), helping students see management concepts in action (Bumpus, 2005; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2004; Roth, 2001), and enhances student engagement (Marx & Frost, 1998). According to Mitra et al (2010), the mixes of sights and sounds in videos appeal to varying learning styles and preferences (Liedtka, 2001) and are valuable in helping students acquire mental imagery crucial for conceptual understanding (Miller, 2009).

**Learning Objectives**

* Distinguish between different leadership styles (authoritarian versus transformational versus shared leadership)
* Critically evaluate the role of a leader in a team
* Envision a highly functioning leaderless team
* Apply the concept of shared leadership in work settings

**Exercise Overview**

The table below depicts what will happen in the classroom. Instructors will have students watch the videos, and guide them through several questions after watching each video.

| Learning Objective / Key concepts to cover | Details | Key points and lessons to be drawn out from the discussion |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Conducting Style 1***  Authority-com­pliance style of leadership under Blake and Mou­ton’s managerial grid  (15 minutes) | * Instructor to show the first 2 videos of conducting style 1   <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8RJvzOj7PM>  watch first 30 seconds  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JQvyg3kJ54>  watch video for first 3 minutes   * Instructor to have students discuss the following discussion questions:   1a) What kind of leadership do you think the conductors are exhibiting in the 2 videos that you have just watched?  1b) What do you think is the role of the conductor in these two videos?  1c) How do you think the musicians feel playing under such these conductors?  1d) Do you think other conducting styles are possible? | This style of leadership places heavy emphasis on task and job requirements and less emphasis on people, except to the extent that people are tools for getting the job done. Communicating to subordinates is not emphasized except for the purpose of giving instruc­tions about the task. This style is result driven, and people are regarded as tools to that end. A leader practicing this style of leadership is often seen as con­trolling, demanding, hard driving, and overpowering |
| ***Conducting Style 2***  Transformational leadership (Burns, 1978)  Charismatic leadership (House, 1977)  (15 minutes) | * Instructor to show the video of conducting style 2   <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swbepETL-lw>  Watch first 3 minutes  Instructor to have students discuss the following discussion questions:  2a) What kind of leadership do you think the conductor is demonstrating in this video you have just watched?  2b) What do you think is the role of the conductor in this video?  2c) How do you think the musicians feel playing under such a conductor?  2d) Do you think the conductor can lead the orchestra in other ways such as via gestures, eye contact, and body language? | Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to hep followers reach their fullest potential.  Under charismatic leadership (House, 1976), the leader shows competence, articulates goals, communicates high expectations, expresses confidence, and arouses motives.  Followers generally feel inspired by, identify with, and follow the leader. There is affection and emotional involvement between followers and the leader. |
| ***Conducting Style 3***  Minimal conducting / leadership  (15 minutes) | * Instructor to show the video of conducting style 3   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7\_6Z33eCaY  watch full video   * Instructor to have students discuss the following discussion questions:   3a) What kind of leadership do you think the conductor is demonstrating in the video you have just watched?  3b) What do you think is the role of the conductor in this video?  3c) How do you think the musicians feel playing under such a conductor?  3d) Do you think a conductor is necessary for an orchestra to function? | While the conductor does not engage in fancy hand gestures (in fact, he does not move his hands at all), he expresses his presence, support, and enjoyment of the music using his eyes, face, and lips. |
| No conductor / leader  (10 minutes) | * Instructor to show video below   <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmL8zyH32gs>  Watch for first 3 minutes   * Instructor to have students discus the following discussion questions   4a) Do you think any form of leadership is present in the video you have just watched?  4b) How do you think it is possible for an orchestra to successfully perform without a conductor?  4c) What are some of the implications we can draw from conductorless orchestras and apply to organizations? | Having seen the prior videos where the orchestra was led and/or influenced by the presence, gestures, and movements of the conductor; students may be surprised to see an orchestra playing so well without a conductor. Even though there is no conductor in this orchestra, the orchestra members are well-coordinated, in-tune, and playing well. |
| Understanding Leaderless Teams | * Instructors to have students watch the video below:   <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lR1M7HBC2Qg> |  |

Suggested Answers to Discussion Questions:

1. **After watching videos for conducting style 1**
2. ***Based on the different leadership theories you have learned, what kind of leadership do you think the conductors are exhibiting in the two videos that you have just watched?***
   * A more authoritarian, formal leadership was practiced.
   * Musicians have to follow the direction and beat of the conductor quite closely.
   * Musicians have to follow the conductor’s interpretation of the music.
3. ***What do you think is the role of the conductor in these two videos?***
   * Setting the beat.
   * Setting the tone and interpretation of the music.
   * Enforcing strict directives and tight control for musicians to play correctly and accurately.

## How do you think the musicians feel playing under such a conductor?

* + Possibly fear.
  + Possibly feel more restrained under such a conductor, especially when making music

## Do you think the conductor can lead the orchestra in other ways such as via gestures, eye contact, and body language?

* + Yes, perhaps a more transformational/charismatic form of conducting style is possible.

# After watching video for conducting style 2

## What kind of leadership do you think the conductor is demonstrating in the video you have just watched?

* + A more transformational/charismatic form of leadership.

## What do you think is the role of the conductor in this video?

* + A successful orchestra can be said to be normally led by charismatic leaders who empowers members. Unlike the previous authoritative approach, the visionary approach develops an inspirational vision and passes on that vision to its members. Through this process, members develop deep in- sights, gain confidence, and work with imagination, thereby building a common purpose amongst the followers. There is not a lot of control, allowing team leaders to lead, while cajoling members and giving them emotional support and positive feedback. The transformational and charismatic leader sees leadership as an art rather than a science. In the world of conducting, Leonard Bernstein can be considered one such leader. Bernstein understood that the secret to leadership was to listen to his followers, and to engage with his members. There was control, but it was not overwhelming to the members.

## How do you think the musicians feel playing under such a conductor?

* + Potentially more inspired.

## Do you think the conductor can lead the orchestra in other ways such as gestures, eye contact, and body language?

* + Students may have different answers to this depending on their exposure to music.

# After watching video for conducting style 3

## What do you think is the role of the conductor in this video?

* + - To support the musicians via his presence and encouragement.
    - To inspire via his body language and facial expression.
    - To empower musicians.

## How do you think the musicians feel playing under such a conductor?

* + - More freedom of expression.
    - More empowered.

## Do you think a conductor is necessary for an orchestra to function?

Students may differ in their answers depending on their exposure to music and ideas about teamwork and leadership. Students may reference music ensembles that have no need for orchestra. Such examples could be quartets, chamber orchestras and a cappella groups.

# After watching video for no conductor

## Do you think any form of leadership is present in the video you have just watched?

* + It is hard to tell who is keeping the pulse and beat in this ensemble.

## How do you think it is possible for an orchestra to successfully perform without a conductor?

* + A lot of pre-teamwork and preparation is needed.

The orchestra in the video is the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Here are the key principles behind how the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra operates:

* + The orchestra puts power into the hands of the people doing the work.
  + They encourage individual responsibility for product and quality.
  + They share and rotate leadership during practice and when interpretation of music is needed right at the beginning.
  + The musicians seek consensus of the interpretation, pace, and mood of the music before they prac- tice so that everyone is on the same page.
  + They foster horizontal teamwork.
  + They respect each other and work well together as a team.

## What are some of the implications we can draw from conductorless orchestras and apply to organizations?

* + It is possible for collaborative leadership to be practiced when influence is shared.
  + Shared leadership is built upon mutual trust, empowerment, and the individual commitment of the orchestra.

**Session Description**

In this 1 hour conference session, participants will be viewing each video and answering the discussion questions just as students will. The presenter will facilitate the discussions.

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