

RETHINKING LEADERSHIP IN A COMPLEX, MULTICULTURAL, AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

New Concepts and Models for Higher Education

Edited by
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FACING ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLEXITY AND CHANGE

A Case-in-Point Approach to Leadership Development

Tricia Bertram Gallant and Cheryl Getz

Higher education organizations are faced with unprecedented challenges in the 21st century: increasing diversity of students and faculty and enhancing environments where that diversity can thrive, responding to federal calls for greater accountability, creating cultures where academic integrity is the norm and academic misconduct is minimized, harnessing the beneficial power of technology while not diminishing the power of interpersonal relationships, and maintaining a strong teaching and learning environment in the face of increasing pressures to do more research and admit more students.

These are all common and quite complex challenges facing higher education organizations in the 21st century, challenges that may not be easily resolved through the application of known technologies, instruments, tools, or schemas. Rather, such challenges often create tensions between the existing practices of the organization and demands for new ways, demands that extend deep within the organization beyond the external barrier of admissions to the interior life of the classroom and faculty member (Altbach, 2001). The tensions created from these demands cannot be ignored, but must be acknowledged and creatively managed in a way that honors core institutional integrity while adapting to new ways (Selznick, 1957; Senge, 1990). A notable example is the tension created between protecting academic freedom while responding to public demands for greater accountability (for

example, see Jaschik, 2005, on the Ward Churchill debate at University of Colorado).

Higher education organizations, like most, cannot ignore changing surrounding environments or the external pressures exerting force on the institution because higher education is an open system and its boundaries are permeable (Birnbaum, 1988). There is a constant exchange between higher education organizations and society—through admissions and graduations, service and outreach, research collaboration, and routine transactional (i.e., economic) processes. Colleges and universities survive and thrive based on these relationships with the public and by upholding the implicit (and sometimes explicit) social and economic contracts under which higher education organizations are expected to serve society's needs and interests (Altbach, 2001). However, society's needs and interests and those of the institution do not always align, creating an ever present necessity for tackling these conflicts.

If creatively managing values conflicts between higher education organizations and the external world is not in itself difficult, which we suggest it is, higher education organizations themselves are complex with multiple coexisting, and sometimes conflicting, goals, aims, values, and purposes (Birnbaum, 1988; Duderstadt, 2000). Take, for example, many institutions' interests in effectively engaging in teaching and research and the delicate balance between the two that most institutions struggle with. Or, for another example, take the difficulty in meeting the interests of the social and the economic good when they more often seem in direct conflict (Longanecker, 2005). These are just two of the numerous examples of the tensions within, and complexity of, the modern higher education organization.

Understanding and appreciating the complexity of organizational dynamics and developing the capacity to deal with prevailing uncertainties in higher education is a great challenge (Gabelnick, 2004). Unfortunately, the majority of faculty and administrators are not provided opportunities to develop such leadership capacity, and if they receive any training, it tends to be in the development of management skills disguised as leadership development. For example, faculty moving into administrative positions may receive training in managing (people and budgets), delegating, and strategic planning. An increasing number of administrators, especially in student affairs, are earning higher education doctorates in which they also typically receive

training in management-type tasks and responsibilities. While not unimportant, of course, the development of management skills in those reaching for positions of formal authority may not be sufficient for responding to the complex problems facing the 21st-century college or university:

There must be institutional change that responds to the changing nature of the broader system of higher education. To achieve this requires a different and more effective leadership, not just at the top but throughout the institution, leadership with the ability to draw the whole organization into the process of change, assessment, and constant and unremitting improvement. (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004, p. 7).

Thus, we propose here that faculty and administrators who hope to creatively respond to organizational tensions and mobilize organizational members to tackle difficult problems desperately require engagement in revolutionary approaches to leadership development. In this chapter, we present one such approach, case-in-point pedagogy (Parks, 2005), that develops in participants the "knowledge and skills to manage the complexity of issues that dominate everyday life" (Getz & Gelb, 2007, p. 1). Before describing case-in-point, however, we review some basic assumptions of leadership, problems, groups, and organizations that inform the pedagogy. Then after case-in-point is illustrated, we offer some common lessons that are learned by participants and end with recommendations for readers who are intrigued by this approach.

Underlying Assumptions

In this section, we discuss the three basic assumptions underlying our argument for a different kind of leadership development: (a) complex organizations present a range of problems to be resolved, from routine (also known as technical) to adaptive (also known as generative); (b) in response to such problems, a range of actions from management to leadership (complementary but not synonymous activities) is required; and (c) leadership is distinct from, but shaped by, authority (Heifetz, 1994).

The Complexity Continuum: Routine to Adaptive Problems

Although higher education organizations are complex, routine problems still arise and require resolution on a daily basis. Routine problems are easily definable, have known remedies, and can be resolved by our knowledge, skills,

or technologies (Heifetz, 1994; Selznick, 1957; Senge, 1990). Routine problems are not unimportant and in fact, their resolution is critical to the successful operation of a college or university. At the same time, however, routine problems do not present significant challenges because their resolution is possible using existing expertise.

For example, a common routine problem in colleges and universities is overenrollment—the miscalculation of the *take ratio* of admissions to enrollment, which subsequently requires the college to increase its capacity. Although an effective resolution is extremely important to ensure that all students feel welcome and receive required services, the problem can be easily handled with known solutions. It may require someone with authority to coordinate efforts, usually through the formation of a committee of experts, but the local experts will know how to respond. For example, the residential life staff will house three students in each double room to ensure that students have a place to live, academic departments will hire adjunct faculty to cover the additional classes that will be needed, and administrators will coordinate class schedules so the increase in classes can be accommodated on campus.

Problems become adaptive when they present challenges that have no known or effective resolutions (Heifetz, 1994). These problems require new ways of thinking and doing as they typically challenge existing or dominant norms, prevailing views, or underlying values and assumptions. Take, for example, the routine problem presented previously. What if the increased enrollment became a pattern? Diagnosed as still a routine problem, residential life experts ask for more residence halls to be built and an increase in funding for community programming, academic departments ask for increased funding to hire additional full-time tenure-track appointments, and facilities request that new classrooms be built. To be sure, if the college decides to permanently increase its student population these are all necessary technical responses to ensure that basic services are provided to enrolled students. But what of the conflicts that emerge out of such growth and corresponding decisions?

For example, suppose the new growth results in larger rather than additional classes and the institution that once prided itself on a low faculty-student ratio and its dedication to teaching now faces a very different future? What if during the 4 years it takes to build residence halls, staff are forced to restrict housing to 1st-year students or keep students in cramped triple or

quad rooms? What if the larger student population ushers in a fundamentally different type of student, one that is more interested in the professional programs and less in the liberal arts education held sacrosanct in the college? The conflicts that emerge all require a different type of action that addresses values conflicts and potential threats to institutional integrity. These types of adaptive challenges require leadership, not management.

A Range of Actions: Management to Leadership

We suggest a range of actions exist from management to leadership and that the appropriate action is connected to the problem presented. In response to a routine problem, such as temporary overenrollment, we suggest the more traditional notion of leadership is required, one that we would call management—responsiveness, organization, coordination, delegation, and responsible decision making. In other words, the skills covered in traditional leadership programs normally followed by faculty and administrators. Effective management is extremely important in successful organizations, so we certainly are not advocating for its abandonment. We are advocating, however, that it is different from the leadership required when facing adaptive problems.¹ Adaptive problems, such as those caused by persistent overenrollment, challenge people's values and normal ways of thinking. They disturb people, organizations, and systems, creating tensions where otherwise there were none. In the face of these adaptive challenges, higher education organizations need leadership—the mobilization of people to tackle difficult issues (Heifetz, 1994). Leadership does not necessarily mean solving problems but does mean creating the environment and facilitating the processes that enable the community to tackle the issues facing it.

Distinguishing Authority and Leadership

The distinction between leadership and authority is critical to mention here as the two are traditionally conflated. Because leadership is a process and not a position, we assume that leadership can be exercised by anyone within the organization, not just by those in positions of power. Although we submit that leadership is not positional, we do acknowledge that it is shaped by the rules of authority—whether informal or formal. Informal authority is

1. It is important here to acknowledge that the same situation can present technical and adaptive problems, and that management and leadership may be required at the same time.

granted to a particular person by others based on implicit promises to fulfill people's expectations, desires, or needs. People grant this authority informally usually based on a perception of referent (e.g., likeability, attractiveness) or expert (e.g., knowledge, intelligence) power. For example, although faculty often have little formal power within higher education organizations, individual faculty or faculty as a group may have tremendous informal authority to be able to sway public opinion and influence those with the formal authority to make changes.

Formal authority, on the other hand, is conferred upon people based on their position or title within the organization and the power they have to reward others or to make changes to the organization's structures or functions. In the college or university setting, the president has much formal authority, whose reach is often moderated by the governing board or faculty senate. The president's ability to exercise leadership, to help people tackle adaptive challenges, then, can be hindered and enhanced by informal or formal authority (Heifetz, 1994). For example, the ability of a president to brainstorm with the community to generate alternative responses to the adaptive problems caused by persistent overenrollment may be hampered by his or her authority; staff may resist the brainstorming experience because of their implicit expectations that it is the president's or leader's job to make the decision for the rest of the organization.

In summary, there is a difference between routine and adaptive problems, the first of which can easily be resolved by management or through the delegation of authority, because the definition of the problem is clear, the solutions are known, and expertise is available. Adaptive problems are more difficult because they are not easily understandable, solutions are unknown, and/or they require people to change norms, values, and assumptions. These types of problems, especially in today's complex educational organizations, require a new understanding of leadership, one that is not tied directly to authority, as referential, expert, positional, or reward power may make such leadership difficult. We suggest then that this new type of leadership requires a different way of learning, learning in *real time* in temporary social systems that reflect those found in colleges and universities across the country.

Case-in-Point Pedagogy for Leadership Development

One pedagogy that has been largely untapped in mainstream leadership development, especially for those employed in higher education, is called

case-in-point (Parks, 2005). When viewing leadership development pedagogies on a continuum from traditional and didactic to learner-centered and interactive, lectures would be situated at one end with case-in-point pedagogy at the other. In between are other strategies such as debates, storytelling, small-group dialogue circles, case studies, simulations, reflection and journaling, role playing, problem-based learning, and internships, to name a few. These experiential methods have been found to greatly enhance the capacity of participants to increase their learning edge and also to improve practice over more traditional pedagogies. Case-in point methodology, however, is distinctive from other experiential methods because of its potential to develop in people the ability to exercise adaptive leadership. It has this potential because it positions participants in an environment where a sense of order and routine, and thus comfort, is replaced by a perception of chaos. The chaos is initially created by simply not meeting participants' expectations of a traditional learning experience in which someone in authority directs every event, movement, and task. When those in formal authority do not take up the roles expected of them or enforce the boundaries that organizational members expect, a sense of chaos is experienced by membership. This creates the space for a very different learning experience from that offered in traditional leadership development programs. In this created space, with expectations unrealized, participants begin to experiment with roles and boundaries and then eventually with their own capacity for exercising leadership and authority. In this environment, the complexity of groups and organizations is heightened and participants have to learn their way through unfamiliar situations and challenges. Faculty assist in the work by drawing participants' attention to the dynamics unfolding in the group and intervening in ways to keep the participants engaged in, rather than avoiding, the complexity and chaos.

While case-in-point pedagogy may not be the only way to develop leadership, we believe its relative obscurity among higher education faculty and staff, and yet its powerful potential for developing adaptive leadership, warrants special consideration in a book on revolutionary leadership development. The case-in-point pedagogy, unlike any other leadership learning experience we know, best harnesses the power of experiential learning, introspection, sophisticated analysis, and group dynamics simultaneously. In the remainder of this section, we describe three main aspects of case-in-point pedagogy that enable such an experience: (a) it asks the participants to study

group and organizational dynamics in the moment as they act and interact in the temporary organization of the class, (b) the study the students are engaged in requires analysis at four levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and system as a whole), and (c) the experience and analysis can develop in people the capacity to exercise leadership in the face of organizational complexity and adaptive challenges.

The Group as Temporary Organization

The key difference of the case-in-point pedagogy is that the class is seen not as a collection of disconnected individuals but as a temporary organization or system that, in its very act of functioning, creates dynamics or data that can be studied in the here and now (see box on p. 101)—a form of learning in action (Gillette, 1995). This is not a simulation but rather a real experience of a system, complete with implicit and explicit boundaries, roles, authority, and tasks. Thus, leadership development programs using the case-in-point method usually involve a large number of participants (anywhere from 50 to 100) so that characteristics similar to most organizations can emerge. The size of the group creates just enough anxiety and complexity for participants to negotiate the confusion that often ensues. The dynamics that emerge provide experiences for learning about authority and leadership, as well as the unconscious forces that are normally ignored or buried for the sake of the task or a sense of everyone “just getting along” (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004, p. 141). These dynamics are manifested in the actions and voices of individuals, which, in fact, represent the group's desires, fears, and needs. The faculty (the formal authority figures of the organization) are there to help participants navigate and learn from these dynamics.

Unlike rote learning situations where the answer is supplied, though paced by the teacher, adaptive learning situations demand that people discover, invent, and take responsibility. “Leadership is a special sort of educating in which the teacher raises problems, questions, options, interpretations, and perspectives, often without answers, gauging all the while when to push through and when to hold steady” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 244).

In effect, case-in-point pedagogy offers participants the opportunity to learn how to do adaptive work because the structure of the conference (the organization) requires participants to function within unfamiliar territory where they have to define the issues, determine the appropriate tasks, and then act. This guided adaptive challenge experience can develop in higher

Here and Now

Often, organizations and leadership are studied in a there-and-then format (such as case studies)—students examine what other people in other organizations have done that led either to successes or failures. The here-and-now format, however, requires participants to look within the group—the temporary organization—for data to learn from. Participants are asked to reflect in the moment, in action, to consider what is going on in the group (here) and in the moment (now). So, for example, illustrations of leadership are drawn not from outside but directly from within the group and the actions of the participants themselves.

education faculty and administrators the capacity to tackle adaptive challenges in their day-to-day, complex organizations.

Engaging the Levels of Analysis

Although the primary levels of analysis in case-in-point pedagogy are the group or organization (system), participants become skilled in two additional levels: intrapersonal and interpersonal (Wells, 1990). The intrapersonal level is the study of one's own actions and behaviors in the context of the group(s) and the organization. Intrapersonal analysis in case-in-point pedagogy moves beyond self-awareness of one's skills, emotional intelligence, beliefs, or values, to the way in which one is pulled and pushed within systems, and develops in participants the capacity to hold steady in the face of anxiety so that adaptive work can continue: "the person can resolve his internal conflicts, mobilize his resources, and take intelligent action only if anxiety does not interfere with his ability to profit from his experience, to analyze, discriminate, and foresee" (Bennis & Shepard, 1956, p. 415).

Although such intrapersonal analysis can be facilitated by many different pedagogical methods, case-in-point invites participants to study their own actions and behaviors within the moment. Participants may, for example, study how they respond to formal authority, informal authority, organizational chaos, and organizational change. To be sure, the intrapersonal analysis can extend long after the course is over, but the in-class experience can

Intrapersonal

Adaptive challenges require one to hold steady with personal anxieties and not rush into problem definition and solution implementation. Many leadership development programs provide participants with opportunities to learn about themselves, but case-in-point pedagogy provides the space and opportunity for the participant to experiment with this in the midst of adaptive challenges. These opportunities replicate those offered in our daily organizations without replicating the consequences that might occur if we were to experiment in professional or personal groups.

offer the participant an opportunity to try different actions within the temporary (yet safe) organization simply for the purposes of learning about self and self in relation to others.

This leads to the last level of analysis—interpersonal or the interaction between and among individuals. This type of interaction is a standard occurrence (in meetings, passing in the hallway, or even through e-mail) that most of us do not think about very much. (Or we think about them and how angry they make us feel.) The value of case-in-point pedagogy is that participants have the opportunity to learn how even the slightest interaction with a colleague can on the surface mean one thing but understood in the context of the other levels of analysis, could mean something very different. To make matters worse, hidden agendas (that are often unconscious) can often derail important work to be accomplished in a group. These often exist and rarely become apparent because most people do not have the awareness or the skill to call attention to them.

In its entirety, case-in-point pedagogy asks participants to engage in all four levels of analysis (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and system as a whole) simultaneously, although developing the ability to conduct such a complex analysis develops slowly over time and with practice. The skill includes understanding that observable actions and behaviors of individuals, dyads, and triads often speak not just for the people performing in those roles but for the larger group or organization and perhaps even the system. The "dances" people are engaged in provide information about the adaptive

Interpersonal

In complex organizations, unknown interpersonal dynamics can hinder or facilitate the tackling of adaptive challenges. In case-in-point pedagogy, participants have the opportunity to learn about the impact these interactions have on the capacity of groups and organizations to tackle adaptive challenges. Dyads and triads form within the class and can hijack the group in one particular direction or another. Faculty and others can call attention to this dynamic for the benefit of the group's learning.

challenges being faced by and within the organization because their behaviors are manifestations of the anxieties and fears being surfaced by the challenge. By developing the ability to analyze at all four levels, higher education faculty and administrators can engage in adaptive learning.

Adaptive Learning

It is imperative in the 21st century that individuals and groups have the ability to tackle adaptive challenges and mobilize organizational transformation. Change and transformation cause anxiety, however, so 21st-century leadership requires in people the capacity to hold steady and work with the anxiety and resistance that often arises (Obholzer, 1999). This type of learning is possible in case-in-point precisely because of its real-time, real-life focus; participants learn that they cannot easily solve the adaptive problems that evolve within the class experience using routine methods or normal levels of analysis. This pedagogy awakens in its participants the awareness necessary to begin to see the intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels of system dynamics, and the interactions between and among them. It is in this way that faculty and administrators can be trained to see and grapple with the complexity of the college and university and its problems; "understanding the group processes may provide [participants] with heightened awareness and the ability to make previously unavailable choices about their roles and functioning in a group setting" (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004, p. 141).

This pedagogy and the awareness (or consciousness) it surfaces challenges peoples' basic assumptions that organizations are naturally and unavoidably fragmented and disconnected, assumptions that are manifested by

the division of colleges and universities into several subsections such as schools, departments, programs, disciplines, part-time faculty, full-time faculty, and tenure status (Long, 2004). This fragmentation is actually counterproductive to the leadership needed in complex organizations because it encourages the blaming (or scapegoating) of individuals for problems and contributes to the tendency to seek technical fixes to adaptive challenges. Case-in-point provides an experience (pedagogical tool) to develop the ability to see inside and outside the system at the same time, in other words developing the skill to see the whole and the parts simultaneously.

A useful metaphor is that of a photo mosaic, which is a picture or photo made up of many (sometimes hundreds) of much smaller pictures or photos. On close inspection, each individual picture becomes visible and each has a story of its own. Stepping back from the photo one sees a whole new picture that conveys one story that is made up of hundreds of smaller pictures that tell different stories. Within each story are the people and the systems and subsystems they live and work in. Each person attempts to negotiate tensions and make sense of the systems they participate in. For example, tensions often arise as a result of unclear boundaries or roles that are not clearly defined or articulated to the group. Boundaries (spatial, psychological, emotional, etc.) around individuals, groups, organizations, and systems can be seen that guide negotiations but also potentially inhibit the resolution of problems and necessary systemic changes. Roles, whether taken on or assigned to individuals within the organization, greatly influence negotiations as they implicitly and explicitly restrict people's actions.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the complexity of the 21st-century higher education organization begets numerous tensions faculty and administrators have to grapple with. Although numerous other leadership development programs may help to develop intrapersonal skills for management of these tensions, case-in-point pedagogy provides participants with the opportunity to develop this capacity in the midst of adaptive challenges arising within a complex (albeit temporary) organization. Beyond intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics many might be at least familiar with, participants become more familiar and comfortable with analyzing situations and organizations from four levels of analysis, and competent at noticing and giving voice to dynamics normally left unarticulated. In the next section, we describe how higher education faculty and administrators can begin to use case-in-point analysis to understand their

own organizations by using the concepts of boundaries and roles. We do this in an attempt to illustrate how, over time, such practice can enhance one's own leadership development and the capacity to function and exercise leadership within complex organizations.

Case-in-Point in Action

The capacity of case-in-point participants to exercise leadership in the face of organizational complexity can be greatly enhanced over time. The ability to use all four levels of analysis while in the midst of the action, for example, does not come easily or early. More novice participants tend to get stuck at the intrapersonal level of analysis because this level is easier to notice and identify; after all, people and their actions are visible. However, because case-in-point pedagogy violates the "normal" roles and boundaries expected in the traditional classroom or learning environment, awareness of these aspects is heightened, and participants are often able to extend their analysis and learning beyond the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. In this section, we describe in further detail the notions of boundaries and roles in order to provide the reader with some concrete illustrations and to strengthen our case for the applicability of case-in-point pedagogy for the leadership development of higher education faculty and administrators.

Boundaries

When thinking about our institutions, the complexity, number, and types of boundaries and their impact on our work can be overwhelming. Boundaries provide the glue that holds the group together, as they encompass the shared values, traditions, and modes of operating (Monroe, 2004). Boundaries are present everywhere; they are physical and spatial or nonspatial (thoughts and perceptions), they can be rigid and impermeable or less impermeable, they can separate or connect us. Physical boundaries are important when deciding where to hold a meeting, how the room will be set up, where people will sit, and so on. Boundaries of time are also an important element in any analysis, because groups can be distracted from their task if boundaries related to time are too rigid or loose depending on the context. Lack of clarity or sudden changes in the way the boundary is managed often sets the system into chaos.

Higher education organizations that are typically fragmented and disconnected into departments, divisions, schools, and so on, are heavily

boundary dependent. Faculty and administrators often define themselves or experience their identity by their place in the organization; we know, for example, that the boundary between faculty and administration is itself often perceived as very divisive in many colleges and universities. Difficult leadership challenges often come into play in higher education organizations when they revolve around or transcend boundaries—establishing new or dismantling old academic programs, developing programs that require academic-student affairs collaboration, creating institution-wide efforts that transcend school or academic department boundaries. Case-in-point pedagogy focuses on developing in people the capacity to recognize and manage the tensions around boundaries and the impact that boundaries can have on organizational change.

Picture yourself in a meeting of a university-wide committee that is dealing with the overenrollment of undergraduates for the upcoming academic year. You notice that the housing people seem resistant to any changes in the residence halls to accommodate the new students, and those in the college of arts and sciences are refusing to offer the large general education courses that will be required. Their resistance seems unreasonable and counterproductive to institutional interests, but no matter how often the admissions director pleads with them to comply, the resistance sticks (and even grows). You, however, pick up on some of their words and actions that reflect a concern about boundaries. Although the housing and college faculty are not included in admissions planning or enrollment management, they are expected to alter their normal course of functioning to deal with what they perceive as the *errors* of the admissions department. They resent the fact that they are asked to be saviors but not contributors. When you call attention to that boundary dynamic, and suggest possible solutions in the future, the tenor of the committee changes. And, because they are no longer caught up in the dynamic, the committee is able to move on with recommending the necessary steps, including housing and college representation on admissions and enrollment committees in the future.

Roles

We each occupy a variety of roles every day in every situation. Just like authority, there are two types of roles: formal and informal. Formal roles are those that we occupy in our professional and personal lives, such as president, provost, director, professor, coach, student, and so on. Essentially these

are roles that have often been designated to us by outside authorities, and thus they give us some formal (albeit positional) authority. All too often it is unclear to many what the responsibilities of a given position actually are (we have all heard the adage, *responsibility with no authority*). In this case it is important to have clarity about the role functions. When there is a discrepancy (gap) between how we see ourselves in a particular role and the perception of others, it is important that this gap be addressed in order for the person with a formal position of authority to be taken seriously.

One of the most important lessons to learn is how to differentiate between *self* and *role*. Anyone who has been in a formal position of authority has experienced the pain and frustration of being challenged, berated or scoffed at, often in a public forum. When this occurs, it is helpful to understand what one represents for the group and the individual members, whose previous experiences with authority shape the ways in which they interact with people in positions of authority. The challenges that come our way have very little to do with who we are, they have much more to do with the roles we are taking up at any given time. The capacity to distinguish role from self is one of the gifts of developing a critical, systemic perspective and can yield a useful analysis of what is really going on (Parks, 2005, p. 87). Thus, holding steady in these situations is easier if we are able to separate our role from who we are as individuals.

Informal roles are those we take up in a group that are not necessarily tied to any formal position. These roles can be explicit, for example, sometimes when we do group work we assign the role of facilitator, time keeper, and so forth, or the roles are implicit. Implicit roles are often invisible, below

Scapegoat

If you often find yourself at the receiving end of dissatisfaction no matter your job performance, you may represent something unwanted by the group. Rather than dealing with the unwanted (feelings, conflict, tension, etc.), the group will undermine or assassinate you as a proxy. Sometimes the scapegoat is attached to a position rather than a specific person, but in either case, the group often loads up their dissatisfaction onto one person.

Optimist

How often in a group do you find yourself saying, "Let's look at the bright side?" Perhaps you make this comment at times when the stress level in the group has risen or when a particular conflict is escalating. You might perceive that it is better to stay positive than to engage in difficult conversations. If this is a pattern, then try to understand why you are the one who seems always to bring this voice to the table, and ask yourself: Is this the best way to move the group forward?

the surface (Stapley, 2006), or unconscious. We can become more aware of getting stuck by examining how the group (as a unit of analysis) is using us in a specific role to represent a hidden issue for the group or a larger system issue (see the boxes on pp. 107–109).

We often take on these roles without being fully aware, and sometimes we find ourselves *stuck* in the same role over and over again. This is because we bring with us to any group predispositions based on our history, factors such as social identity, and previous experiences with authority (this includes relationships with our family, friends, and coworkers). Many of our vulnerabilities are based on these past experiences, and every member of any group brings with him or her a full set of expectations about how the group (or organization) *ought* to be managed. Hence individuals within the organization are often drawn to other members who share similar histories (or stories), and this creates factions in the group that often impede any progress or opportunities for adaptive work. Those in positions of leadership are successful when they are able to manage the many factions and forces at play in any

Peacekeeper

Do you routinely find yourself taking on positions within dysfunctional or conflict-laden groups and then performing in ways that help to regulate or manage the dynamics within a peaceful range? Your valence may be to avoid conflict—groups will tap into that and make peacekeeper your informal role, whether you want it or not.

group or system. This is fundamental to developing the capacity to exercise leadership in a complex system such as higher education.

Picture yourself back in that overenrollment committee meeting, now as the admissions director. You are feeling personally beat up and attacked. You have heard rumors outside the committee, coming from all parts of campus that you are being blamed for the overenrollment and people are questioning your effectiveness as an administrator. Faculty are complaining that they are not provided with sufficient input and decision-making power in the admissions/enrollment process, and other staff are angry at you for causing challenges in their departments as they deal with the fallout of overenrollment. You go home every night, exhausted, emotionally drained, and feeling like a failure. You are beginning to doubt your abilities and wonder if it is not time for a career change.

However, in the middle of all this, you attend your third leadership conference based on the case-in-point pedagogy and you become aware that during your first conference you experienced some of the same reactions that your staff are now exhibiting. You had been angry at the conference authority figures for not being leaders, that is, for not better managing the learning experience and for causing the chaos that had ensued when participants' expectations were not met. During that week-long conference, you began to develop the capacity to manage the anxiety associated with the chaos and employ analysis at the group and organizational levels. With the help of the conference faculty, you experimented by taking up some different roles, from silent observer to instigator, throughout the conference. After attending your

Antagonist

Every group has an antagonist! If you notice that you are always at odds with the majority, consistently accused of impeding the progress of the group, or if you are often angry and dissatisfied after meetings, then you may be the group's stand-in. Unable to cope with their own anxiety, especially around change, the group will often project their fears onto one member. You can choose not to be used in this way by becoming more aware of how the group is putting you in this role: don't accept it.

third conference, you began to better understand how complex organizational dynamics can be and how one has to recognize the adaptive challenges and fight the urge to reduce complexity by applying technical solutions. As you recall your learning experiences, you realize that your current institution is trying to apply technical solutions to what is now an adaptive challenge, and your staff is less frustrated with you than they are anxious in the face of the complexity of the issue and their changing roles and boundaries. In becoming aware of these new organizational dynamics, you are able to readjust your actions and interactions with others and begin to help faculty and staff move forward.

Recommendations for Leadership Development

We end this chapter with some leadership development recommendations for those who are intrigued by the power of the case-in-point pedagogy to develop the adaptive leadership needed in the face of complex and chaotic times. Although the recommendations we provide next are certainly not the only methods or opportunities for revolutionary leadership development, we feel that they are particularly relevant to the topic of this chapter and are important to mention because they are not normally addressed in the mainstream leadership literature.

Attend Training

The foundation of the case-in-point pedagogy can be found in the group relations tradition, and numerous training opportunities are thus available (see the A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems for information, <http://www.akriceinstitute.org/>). We suggest that anyone interested in developing a capacity to exercise leadership in the face of adaptive challenges and within complex higher education organizations consider attending a group relations event. Several universities in the United States sponsor seminars, academic courses, opportunities for research and training, and weekend group relations conferences. Among these are the University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences; Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government; University of Chicago, Department of Psychology and Psychiatry; New York University, Department of Applied Psychology; and Teachers College, Columbia University, Department of Organization and Leadership, to name

a few. The Web site <http://www.grouprelations.com> is a good resource for training and events, as is <http://www.akriceinstitute.org/>

Read Related Resources

An abundance of useful resources can be helpful in beginning one's exploration into this revolutionary model of leadership development. For more information on the way we describe leadership, we highly recommend Heifetz's (1994) *Leadership Without Easy Answers* as well as Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) *Leadership on the Line*. The first text is somewhat denser with theory but full of illustrative examples; the second text is a more practical, easy-to-grasp review of techniques and skills. For specific information about the case-in-point methodology, Parks's (2005) *Leadership Can Be Taught* is an excellent text that describes the method in detail using examples from people who have been transformed by participating in leadership development programs at Harvard. For more information on group relations, the four levels of analysis, boundaries and roles, we recommend Hayden & Molenkamp's (2004) "Tavistock Primer"; various chapters from Gillette and McCollom's (1995) *Groups in Context*, specifically chapters 1-3; Lionel Stapley's (2006) *Individuals, Groups, and Organizations Beneath the Surface*; and *Experiential Learning in Organizations: Applications of the Tavistock Group Relations Approach* by Gould, Stapley, and Stein (2004).

Readers may also consider works that can supplement the case-in-point approach and conceptions of leadership, such as Goleman's (2006) book on social intelligence, which points to our innate drive for connection with others, despite daily challenges that prevent us from engaging in these positive relationships. We concur with many others who believe that understanding ourselves and others in the context of groups and organizations is essential for effective leadership. Initial reactions to the case-in-point method would suggest that it is antithetical to developing positive relations and rapport with others because participants become angry and frustrated, particularly with the faculty and staff who represent *all* the authority figures in their lives to that point. Adaptive learning requires a deeper introspection and reflection about one's social intelligence and the destructive patterns that often emerge preventing us from exercising effective leadership.

Enhance Self-Awareness

A good way to begin developing your capacity for adaptive leadership is to simply pay more attention to yourself and the way you are in relation to

others, specifically in groups and organizations. All of us have particular predispositions (or valences), ways in which we are "used" by others to achieve desired ends. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) refer to these valences as "hungers" or "expressions of our normal human needs . . . [that can] disrupt our capacity to act wisely or purposefully" (p. 164). These hungers can include power/control, affirmation/importance, and intimacy. Others refer to these valences as dependencies within groups, such as the need for identity, involvement, independence, and dependence. If you begin to pay attention to yourself in group situations, you can begin to identify your own valences. For example, notice how you get pulled into situations you do not want to be in. Do you crave affirmation, the power you'll receive, the feeling of being needed? Although it is difficult to do, you should try to avoid attaching value judgments to these inquiries. The point is not to blame yourself for group dynamics but to acknowledge the roles you consistently play in different groups and how the roles you take up (on behalf of the group) may at times hinder or facilitate the movement of the group and leadership toward organizational change.

Apply Theory in Daily Life

In addition to developing a greater awareness of yourself in relation to the group, you can also fairly easily begin to apply this learning to your daily activities and work. For example, begin to notice the most impermeable and protected boundaries on campus. Are the more protected boundaries the virtual ones, like those between faculty and staff, student and academic affairs, faculty senate and upper administration? Or are they the more physical boundaries, such as the street that divides the medical school from the central campus or the separation of the administrative offices from faculty offices? As you encounter difficult challenges or issues where there is organizational paralysis, look at the boundaries being protected for hints on what fears or desires may be impeding organizational progress.

In committee meetings, as described in the earlier scenarios, you can apply your knowledge of boundaries, roles, and authority to understand the dynamics of any group. Notice who speaks the most or to whom other people defer. Is it the high-level administrator, the tenured faculty member, or the longtime employee? At what points or during what topics of discussion do people defer to that authority? Who (i.e., what role) retreats or attacks and during what topic or point in the discussion? Who (i.e., what role) is

consistently silent throughout the committee meetings and what might that person represent (unwanted or wanted) to the group? How are you being pushed or pulled by the group (i.e., notice when you feel angry or overly self-satisfied)?

Heifetz (1994) refers to this *analysis-in-action* (i.e., being in the task at the same time you are observing the group dynamics) as analogous to being simultaneously in the dance and on the balcony. In learning how to dance, a novice dancer may stay on the dance floor in the midst of the action, but then he or she will not be able to see the dance as a whole and understand the dynamics of the entire dance floor. Another novice dancer may choose to stay on the balcony in order to come to understand the dance patterns and dynamics, but that dancer will not be part of the action and thus may become a better dance critic than a dancer. The skill in dancing, that is, exercising leadership in the face of complex, adaptive challenges, is being able to see the larger dynamics, patterns, and challenges while being in the middle of the action, to be able to move between the dance and the balcony in the moment so one is both analyzing and applying the analysis for the benefit of the organization.

One way to practice this difficult movement between the dance and the balcony is to first notice the physical clues of your own heightened anxiety. Does your heart start racing? Do your palms become sweaty? Then find some way to check in with yourself and to understand why you are reacting that way. For beginners, an easy way to do this is in meetings—when you notice your own anxiety, slightly push yourself away from the table. This physical separation from the group (sufficient but not noticeable enough to interfere with the group's task) helps with the mental break out of the chaos of the dance. With time, this movement can be accomplished more organically and with less effort.

Final Thoughts

Our objective in writing this chapter is twofold: first, to help others consider the usefulness of case-in-point pedagogy for leadership development, and second, to respond to the call for more effective and transformational leadership in our institutions of higher education. Given the complexity of this task it is not surprising that many people rely on traditional or known methods instead of exploring other methods and strategies that might (at first)

shake up the status quo. We view this as a journey, and certainly not the final destination, as it is the exploration of the process of getting there that will ultimately transform our institutions.

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