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Leadership in action: student leadership development in an event management course

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the leadership practice scores and leadership behaviors of students before and after participation in an event management course.

Design/methodology/approach – A mixed methods approach was utilized. The Student-Leadership Practice Inventory (S-LPI) was administered to a sample of 184 students in three semesters of an event management course. Students completed the S-LPI at the beginning and at the end of the course. The students also wrote reflections of their leadership behaviors and understandings.

Findings – Results of the study showed that students' mean leadership scores increased significantly for all practice areas between pre and post. Also, all correlations between pre and post scores were statistically significant, indicating that responses at pre and post followed similar patterns, with students who scored higher on the pre-test also tending to score higher on the post-test. Reflections from students demonstrated significant understanding of effective leadership behaviors and learning.

Research limitations/implications – The sample was college students enrolled in an event management course at one university; therefore results may not be generalized to all students.

Practical implications – Results of this study suggest that involvement in an event management course in which students were engaged and responsible for the outcomes of their learning may have positively impacted these students' leadership behaviors.

Originality/value – This paper furthers the knowledge base and understanding of students' leadership growth through involvement in a university course as measured by the S-LPI.

Keywords Individual behaviour, Leadership, Development, Students

Paper type Research paper

Search the term "leadership" in any database and thousands of related titles will likely emerge. Articles range from topics such as characteristics of leaders (e.g., see Goleman, 1998) to leadership styles or personality traits (e.g., see Rudman, 2008; Strang and Kuhnert, 2009). Although the writings about leadership are numerous and the term may carry slightly different connotations to the reader, there appears to be consensus that leadership is important in all context areas of one's life – work, home, school, and community (Love, 2005).

The importance of leadership education for today's undergraduate students cannot be underestimated. In their future careers, students will experience the unpredictable and chaotic work environments of today's global marketplace (Kunz and Garner, 2007). To succeed, students will need the ability to find and synthesize diverse sources of

information, to manage self, and to empower others, all hallmarks of effective leadership (Komives *et al.*, 1998). Within the field of higher education, Astin and Astin (2000) declared universities and colleges pivotal in shaping the quality of leadership in contemporary American society. Similar to management techniques, many researchers contend that college students can learn leadership through experience and education (Arendt and Gregoire, 2005a; Cress *et al.*, 2001; Tuleja and Greenhalgh, 2008). Research also suggests that students benefit from exposure to leadership opportunities and that leadership development is a learning process (Brown and Posner, 2001; Komives *et al.*, 1998; Mezirow and Associates, 2000).

Existing literature outlines the importance of leadership skills and behaviors in the workplace. When reviewing the impact of leadership on the overall work organization, the need for leadership and the positive impact on organizational factors are noted. In times of economic difficulty, Berke *et al.* (2009) stressed the need for effective leadership in organizations. Researchers have explored the outcomes related to leadership. The benefits of leadership in the workplace are touted as lowering employee turnover (Lim, 2008) and bettering long-term financial success (Roi, 2006). Additionally, the relationship between the leader and employee appears to impact employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Cogliser *et al.*, 2009). Further, "Regardless of the specific [. . .] responsibilities, the job announcement always call[s] for strong leadership skills" (Schuchardt, 2006, p. 12).

Despite the importance of leadership, there is deep concern among US employers that young people are not adequately prepared with the skills to compete and thrive in the global economy (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). An overwhelming 81 percent of employers polled indicated that leadership was "very important" for new entrants with a four-year college diploma. For both two-year and four-year college graduates, lack of leadership was the second-most frequently reported applied skill "deficiency" (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). Although many undergraduate students will become leaders in their professions, there are limited opportunities within the higher education setting for leadership development and education (Walker, 2006). The purpose of this study, therefore, was to assess through both qualitative and quantitative means the leadership development of students enrolled in a course designed, in part, to enhance the leadership behaviors of student class members.

Literature review
Leadership theories, models, and studies
Proposed leadership theories and models are plentiful; one of the first theories was the Great Man Theory, and other trait-type theories followed (Borgata *et al.*, 1954). The underlying premise with these early trait theories was that a person was born with certain traits and therefore "leaders were born, not made." More recent theories and models have moved beyond earlier theorized work and acknowledged that leadership is not something individuals are born with but rather a set of skills or behaviors that defines an individual as a certain type of leader or having a certain style of leadership, such as transformational, servant, and charismatic (Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Greenleaf, 1977). Reciprocation between leader and follower is another distinguishing aspect of more recent theories and models. As reported by Tseng *et al.* (2010), after performing searches in two leadership journals, the prevalent

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research focus from 1997-2006 was the study of leadership style effectiveness. Generally these studies have classified individuals into a certain typology of leadership based on specific behaviors, attitudes, and/or beliefs.

One recent leadership model is that developed by Kouzes and Posner (1987, 2002). Their qualitative findings, obtained by interviewing and analyzing data from over 2,500 leaders, supported development of the leadership challenge model with five foundation leadership practice areas (modeling, inspiring, encouraging, challenging, and enabling). In comparison to most other leadership theories and models, theirs has been repeatedly tested and thus used extensively and applied to college students as compared to sole application with leaders already in the workforce (Kouzes and Posner, 2006).

Student learning
University and college mission statements reflect the value placed on developing future leaders who can contribute to lifelong, productive participation in society (Eich, 2008). Faculty within higher education settings strive to prepare students for their chosen professions so that upon graduation these students are ready to enter the workforce. In their study of hospitality management students, Zhong and Couch (2007, p. 371) found that female students perceived "that education should prepare women for leadership roles in industry". Furthermore, it seems that student learning through participation in higher education assists with leadership development. Marques (2006, p. 926) reexamined the important link between student learning in higher education and leadership with a notable section entitled: "Most great learners become great leaders". Shertzer *et al.* (2005) focused on the need for students to learn to distinguish among the requirements for and implications of positional leadership, authoritarian leadership, democratic leadership, shared leadership, and civic responsibility. They addressed four dimensions of student leadership:

(1) the importance of leadership to the student;

(2) self-perception as a leader;

(3) importance of leadership after college; and

(4) the need for leaders to be able to work in teams and groups.

Learning, therefore, appears to be an essential component to leadership development. Heifetz (1994) referred to this leadership philosophy as "learning leadership," whereby the leadership concept is a learning strategy applicable to all people, not just leaders with assigned authority. In her book, *Leadership Can Be Taught*, Parks (2005, p. 39) illustrated these distinctions as follows:

> You might exercise leadership from a position of authority, but you might not – a lot of dominant people don't exercise any leadership [. . .] a lot of people in positions of authority don't exercise any leadership.

Komives *et al.* (2005) presented learning stages students must go through for leadership development. In the first stage, students believed that others, not them, "do" leadership. In the next stage, students viewed leadership as positional (only those identified formally as leaders demonstrate leadership behaviors). In the final stage, students adopted the notion of "leadership as a daily process – as a part of self identity" (Komives *et al.*, 2005, p. 607). It is important to note that not all students in the

study reached this final stage of leadership identity. To further this area of study, Posner (2009b) studied graduate students to assess their learning tactics and leadership behaviors. Learning scores were higher for students engaged in leadership behaviors, with leadership scores lower for students not as frequently engaged in leadership behaviors. Students reported using thinking as a learning tactic more frequently than the other learning tactics identified (action learning, learning through feelings, and learning thorough accessing).

Student leadership development
College classroom strategies have been suggested for developing and learning leadership. In the Kellogg Foundation Project, Leadership in the Making, the researchers concluded that leadership potential exists in every student and universities can develop this potential through leadership programs and activities (Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt, 1999). Eich (2008, p. 186) commented:

Students learn about leadership in the process of understanding themselves, others, and the world around them.

Hay and Hodgkinson (2005) proposed a focus on teaching the skills of negotiation, networking, conflict resolution, and communication as helpful leadership skills for management students. The value of teamwork as a way to develop student leadership skills/behaviors has been presented (Arendt and Gregoire, 2006). Reflective activities have been suggested for classroom use (Arendt and Gregoire, 2008; Kouzes and Posner, 2006) and have been utilized in the workplace (Densten and Gray, 2001; Loo and Thorpe, 2002; Winch and Ingram, 2004).

In general, experiential learning, which engages students at the emotional, physical, and cognitive levels, helps students make connections between their learning and their personal lives, thereby forming deeper, longer-lasting learning (Hawley, 2005; Kolb, 1984). Astin and Astin (2000) contend that leadership development focused on instilling empowering beliefs into college students – activities that allow students to believe that he or she can make a difference – encourages students to become involved as leaders in their home, work, and school communities. An overriding theme in developing student leadership behaviors and skill is the aspect of "doing" leadership. Posner (2009a, p. 5) summarized the idea as follows:

We should assign students projects that require them to go out and lead and then come back and reflect on that experience.

Method
Instrument
The current study assessed the leadership practice areas of students enrolled in three semesters of an event management course at a land-grant university in the Midwestern USA through the Student-Leadership Practices Inventory (S-LPI). The tool was originally developed based on more than 2,500 manager case studies (Kouzes and Posner, 1987, 2002) and later validated as a good predictor of leadership behavior and effectiveness (Posner and Kouzes, 1988). The S-LPI, targeted towards students, paralleled the development of the Leadership Practices Inventory, with the exception of students' personal best stories and follow-up interviews (Kouzes and Posner, 2006).

The 30-item S-LPI includes five leadership practice areas: Modeling the way, Inspiring a shared vision, Encouraging the heart, Challenging the process, and Enabling others to act (Kouzes and Posner, 2008). A description of each is provided:

(1) *Modeling the way*: behaving in a way that you want others to copy.

(2) *Inspiring a shared vision*: spreading enthusiasm and gaining support for the vision.

(3) *Encouraging the heart*: celebrating accomplishments and giving support when others are exhausted or frustrated.

(4) *Challenging the process*: willingness to seek out and conquer challenges.

(5) *Enabling others to act*: fostering teamwork and building trust.

Researchers continue to utilize the LPI and S-LPI with valid and reliable results. Internal reliability scores for the five practice areas range from 0.66 for Challenging the process to 0.80 for Encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2006). Demographic differences do not seem to impact scores on the S-LPI. However, there is evidence to suggest that leadership coursework and leadership experiences positively impact S-LPI scores. Previous research suggests that students' self-perceived leadership behaviors improved with participation in a leadership development course or serving in a formal leadership role, as measured by the S-LPI (Arendt and Gregoire 2005a, b; Pugh, 2000).

Procedure
Hunter *et al.* (2007) presented several problems with typical leadership studies noting the lack of contextual understanding within the study itself as well as potential overuse of leadership surveys without regard for whether the study participants performed the leadership activity or not. To help remedy this, variables were measured related to the context where the leadership behaviors were taking place (in the classroom) and descriptions of leadership behaviors were used to support the students' understandings of the leadership assessment tool.

Therefore, this research study employed a mixed methods approach using both a quantitative method of data collection (S-LPI) and a qualitative method of data collection (open-ended, reflective questions). The combination of quantitative and qualitative data imparted greater knowledge and understanding of participants' perspectives, thus providing a more complete picture of students' leadership learnings (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Using a scheme presented by Bryman (2004), this study is classified as expansion and complementary, where responses from the open-ended questions were used to give depth and expand on the findings from the S-LPI. The study received institutional review board approval. All students in the three semesters of the course were invited to participate in the survey, with no extra credit or other compensation provided.

The researchers distributed the S-LPI as a pre-test and a post-test to students over three semesters of an event management course; the pre-test was conducted during the first class meeting and the post-test during the last week of the semester. The survey included Likert-type items in which students were asked how frequently they engaged in the leadership behaviors and actions, with responses ranging from 1 = rarely to 5 = frequently. For example, students were asked to rate how they "Actively listen to

diverse points of view." Following each semester, the researchers received student demographic data from the Registrar's Office, including semester grade point average, credits taken during the semester, ACT scores, age, and year. Descriptive statistics were used to measure frequencies, means, and standard deviations of response items. Paired *t*-tests measured differences between pre-and post-test scores, and repeated measures analysis of variance was employed to examine other patterns among student variables.

As a final, end-of-course assignment, students were instructed to complete a typed reflective report that detailed their constructive, yet realistic assessment of themselves as a member of the event management course. Students were prompted to describe a situation in which they learned something about their leadership behaviors. The authors first independently analyzed these statements according to the five practice areas established by Kouzes and Posner (2006). Next, the researchers worked together to compare, discuss, and finalize the placement of these themes into the five practice areas utilizing a back-and-forth process of interpretation (Spiggle, 1994). The researchers achieved 100 percent agreement through this process.

Event management course
Event management is a growing field and covers a wide variety of events and festivals (e.g., sports, fundraisers, conferences, meetings, and weddings). The event management course, used in this study, was developed to enhance the leadership skills of student class members; the majority of which enrolled in the Department of Apparel, Educational Studies, and Hospitality Management. The capstone experience of the class was an annual fashion show, which regularly filled a 2,200-seat university auditorium. Students enrolled in the elective course for three credits, repeatable for one credit. Between 65 and 75 students enrolled each spring semester and were placed based on student interest and class needs into committees of design, fundraising, hospitality and alumni relations, modeling, publicity/public relations, and set design. Student directors (positional leaders) for these committees were interviewed and selected by the producers of the show. Committee members enrolled at the 200-level, and directors enrolled at the 400-level, thus providing recognition to those students assuming a greater leadership role.

The class met for two hours each Wednesday evening, with additional one-hour weekly director meetings. Committee members were expected to devote an additional 1.5 to 5 hours each week outside of class on the tasks of their committee; for example, the fundraising committee was expected to find sponsors for the 25-plus awards. Committees worked collaboratively to ensure that the many tasks of show planning were completed. For example, the set-tech and design committees needed to work together to approve a final stage and lighting design that would not detract from the theme of the show or the garments on display.

The instructor for the course provided a sounding board for the students, but generally allowed all decisions to be made through the process of committee or classroom consensus. During the first week of each semester, students were guided in a discussion of the hallmarks of effective teamwork. Other than this formal lesson, throughout the semester, the instructor would informally highlight exemplary illustrations of teamwork and leadership and/or discuss problems committees were

enduring. According to the department's 2007 review, students took great pride in the university classification of the class as a "student-run organization."

Results

The sample consisted of traditional college-aged students. Participants in the study ranged from 18-32 years with 94 percent between the ages of 19 and 23. The majority of the students were female, representative of the greater student body of the apparel program. The number of credits taken in the spring semester of enrollment in the event management course ranged from 3 to 21 credits. The average number of credits taken was 14.9, typical of students in the department. Spring semester grade point averages (collected from the Registrar's Office following the semester) ranged from 1.6 to 4.0, with an average student GPA of 3.28.

Quantitative results

Internal reliability scores for the five practice areas were acceptable, ranging from 0.66 for the pre-test of Enabling others to act to 0.84 for the post-test of Encouraging the heart (Table I). Paired *t*-tests were used to provide initial evidence regarding whether observed differences between pre and post scores were statistically significant. The major result was that mean scores increased significantly for all practice areas between pre and post, with the largest increase for Enabling others to act (EA). Also, all correlations between pre and post scores were statistically significant, indicating that responses at pre- and post-test followed similar patterns, with students who scored higher on the pre-test also tending to score higher on the post-test. The correlation was strongest for Encouraging the heart (EH) and weakest for Enabling others to act (EA).

A purely within-subjects repeated measures analysis of variance model was estimated to ascertain whether:

- there were statistically significant differences across practice areas;
- there was a statistically significant difference over time between pretest and posttest results across practice areas; and
- there was a statistically significant interaction between time and practice area.

A significant interaction is of particular interest, because it would suggest that improvement over time is stronger in some practice areas than in others. Mean values and standard deviations for the five practice area post scores and the five practice area pre scores are summarized in Table II.

Multivariate tests (Wilks' lambda) showed that there were statistically significant within-subjects effects for practice area (lambda $= 0.636$, $p < 0.001$), time (lambda $= 0.868$, $p < 0.001$), and interaction between practice area and time (lambda $= 0.583$, $p < 0.001$). Clearly, mean scores varied significantly across practice areas, have changed significantly over time, and have changed at significantly different rates across areas. These findings are robust with respect to other multivariate measures ($p < 0.001$ for Pillai's trace, Hotelling's trace, and Roy's largest root) and with respect to sphericity ($p < 0.001$ for all four conditions of sphericity assumed, Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment, Huynh-Feldt adjustment, and lower bound adjustment).

Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise multiple comparisons of estimated marginal means among practice areas provided essential information regarding the differential rates of

S-LPI practice areas	No. of items	M	SD	Standardized Cronbach alpha values
Modeling the way				
Premodel	6	23.6793	3.04796	0.731
Postmodel	6	24.8207	2.96895	0.772
Example: I set a personal example of what I expect from other people				
Inspiring a shared vision				
Preinspire	6	23.6630	3.49481	0.774
Postinspire	6	25.1957	3.19405	0.806
Example: I look ahead and communicate about what I believe will affect us in the future				
Challenging the process				
Prechallenge	6	23.0054	3.37217	0.750
Postchallenge	6	25.0652	3.21133	0.795
Example: I look around for ways to develop and challenge my skills and abilities				
Enabling others to act				
PreEA	6	25.1304	2.55526	0.657
PostEA	6	26.1467	2.58731	0.756
Example: I foster cooperative rather than competitive relationships among people I work with				
Encouraging the heart				
PreEH	6	24.5870	3.40893	0.813
PostEH	6	25.8859	3.15934	0.843
Example: I praise people for a job well done				

Note: Means reported in this table are for scores summed across each set of six items. Dividing the means reported here by six yields means equivalent to those reported in subsequent tables

Table I.
S-LPI practice areas and standardized Cronbach alpha values

change over time comparing among practice areas (Table III). Estimated marginal means were computed controlling for the effects that were estimated in the model, which here included the main effect of practice area, the main effect of time, and the interaction between practice area and time; these mean scores were therefore different from those reported earlier, which did not adjust for these model components. Mean improvement was significantly lower for practice area 1 (Model) than for practice area 2 (Inspire), and significantly higher for practice area 1 than for practice area 4 (EA). Mean improvement for practice area 2 was significantly higher than for each of the other practice areas. Practice area 3 (Challenge) had a significantly lower mean change than for practice area 2 and a significantly higher mean change than for practice area 4. Mean change over time for practice area 4 was significantly lower than for each of the other practice areas. Practice area 5 (EH) had a significantly lower mean change than did practice area 2 and a significantly higher mean change compared to practice area 4. These interaction effects are summarized visually in Figure 1.

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Table II.
Descriptive statistics
(means and standard
deviations) for practice
area pre and post scores

Pre and post practice area	Mean	Standard deviation
Premodel	3.9466	0.50799
Preinspire	3.9438	0.58247
Prechallenge	3.8342	0.56203
PreEA	4.1884	0.42588
PreEH	4.0978	0.56816
Postmodel	4.1368	0.49482
Postinspire	4.1993	0.53234
Postchallenge	4.1775	0.53522
PostEA	4.3578	0.43122
PostEH	4.3143	0.52656

Note: $n = 184$

Table III.
Pairwise comparisons of
estimated marginal
means among practice
areas

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean difference $(I - J)$	Standard error	p	95 percent confidence interval for difference	
					Upper bound	Lower bound
Model	Inspire	-0.100^*	0.022	0.000	-0.162	-0.037
	Challenge	0.038	0.026	10.000	-0.037	0.112
	EA	0.279^*	0.040	0.000	0.165	0.393
	EH	0.025	0.037	10.000	-0.079	0.129
Inspire	Model	0.100^*	0.022	0.000	0.037	0.162
	Challenge	0.137^*	0.025	0.000	0.067	0.207
	EA	0.379^*	0.039	0.000	0.267	0.491
	EH	0.125^*	0.032	0.001	0.034	0.216
Challenge	Model	-0.038	0.026	10.000	-0.112	0.037
	Inspire	-0.137^*	0.025	0.000	-0.207	-0.067
	EA	0.241^*	0.030	0.000	0.157	0.326
	EH	-0.013	0.023	10.000	-0.079	0.054
EA	Model	-0.279^*	0.040	0.000	-0.393	-0.165
	Inspire	-0.379^*	0.039	0.000	-0.491	-0.267
	Challenge	-0.241^*	0.030	0.000	-0.326	-0.157
	EH	-0.254^*	0.031	0.000	-0.343	-0.165
EH	Model	-0.025	0.037	10.000	-0.129	0.079
	Inspire	-0.125^*	0.032	0.001	-0.216	-0.034
	Challenge	0.013	0.023	10.000	-0.054	0.079
	EA	0.254^*	0.031	0.000	0.165	0.343

Notes: [*] The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level; results are based on estimated marginal means; adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni

Repeated measures analysis of variance also was employed to estimate a combined within-subjects and between-subjects model for the pre and post practice area measures, with the within-subjects factors consisting of the five pre and post practice area variables and time, and the between-subjects main effect factor consisting of the three years that data were collected. In addition, covariates were included to adjust for students' spring semester grade point average, number of credits taken in the spring
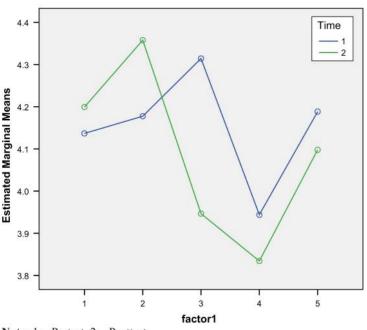
Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1

Note: 1 = Pretest, 2 = Posttest

Figure 1.
Interaction between
practice area (factor1) and
time

semester, ACT test scores, and age. Thus, controlling simultaneously for all these
model components, the model allowed testing of whether there was:

- a difference among the means of the five post practice area variables;
- a difference over time in scores on the five post practice area variables;
- an interaction between year and practice area (that is, whether the trend over the
  three years differed for the five post practice area variables); and
- any effect of the covariates.

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), with number of nonmissing
observations (n) for the five pre and the five post practice area variables, for each year
(2007, 2008, and 2009) are summarized in Table IV.

Multivariate statistical tests (Wilks' lambda) showed that, controlling for all model
effects concurrently, there was not a significant difference among the means of the five
practice area scores ($p = 0.655$), nor over time ($p = 0.457$), controlling for spring
semester grade point average ($p = 0.651$), credits taken in spring semester ($p = 0.945$),
ACT scores ($p = 0.205$), SAT math scores ($p = 0.087$), or age ($p = 0.655$). However,
there was a statistically significant ($p = 0.027$) quadratic effect of year on the five
practice area scores, with higher levels of pre and post-test scores in 2008 (the middle
year) and lower scores in 2007 and 2009. There was no significant difference in mean
area scores over time ($p = 0.457$), nor controlling for spring semester grade point

	Year	Mean	SD	n
Postmodel	2007	4.0327	0.43043	56
	2008	4.2000	0.49270	60
	2009	4.1667	0.53795	68
	Total	*4.1368*	*0.49482*	*184*
Postinspire	2007	4.0685	0.48698	56
	2008	4.2972	0.51993	60
	2009	4.2206	0.56387	68
	Total	*4.1993*	*0.53234*	*184*
Postchallenge	2007	4.0655	0.45580	56
	2008	4.2139	0.55072	60
	2009	4.2377	0.57398	68
	Total	*4.1775*	*0.53522*	*184*
PostEA	2007	4.3571	0.41001	56
	2008	4.3167	0.42375	60
	2009	4.3946	0.45703	68
	Total	*4.3578*	*0.43122*	*184*
PostEH	2007	4.2560	0.57293	56
	2008	4.3639	0.48079	60
	2009	4.3186	0.52841	68
	Total	*4.3143*	*0.52656*	*184*
Premodel	2007	3.8571	0.45994	56
	2008	4.1194	0.52174	60
	2009	3.8676	0.50170	68
	Total	*3.9466*	*0.50799*	*184*
Preinspire	2007	3.8542	0.54593	56
	2008	4.1417	0.50031	60
	2009	3.8431	0.63994	68
	Total	*3.9438*	*0.58247*	*184*
Prechallenge	2007	3.7173	0.51925	56
	2008	4.0250	0.49842	60
	2009	3.7623	0.61106	68
	Total	*3.8342*	*0.56203*	*184*
PreEA	2007	4.1458	0.41324	56
	2008	4.2278	0.39888	60
	2009	4.1887	0.46064	68
	Total	*4.1884*	*0.42588*	*184*
PreEH	2007	4.0298	0.59298	56
	2008	4.2389	0.51564	60
	2009	4.0294	0.57659	68
	Total	*4.0978*	*0.56816*	*184*

Table IV.
Descriptive statistics for
practice area variables,
by pre/post and year

average over time ($p = 0.920$), credits taken in the spring semester over time ($p = 0.384$), ACT scores over time ($p = 0.787$), SAT math scores over time ($p = 0.741$), age over time ($p = 0.678$), or year over time ($p = 0.114$). In addition, there was no significant difference in area scores over time ($p = 0.629$), nor controlling for spring grade point average across areas and over time ($p = 0.426$), ACT scores across areas and over time ($p = 0.554$), SAT math scores across areas and over time ($p = 0.988$), age across areas and over time ($p = 0.771$), and score areas over time and across years ($p = 0.123$) However, there was a marginally significant difference in credits taken in

the spring semester across areas over time ($p = 0.050$). Although the statistically significant result for Mauchly's test of sphericity ($W = 0.668$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that the correlations among the five pre and five post scores were not equal, further evaluation using standard adjustments for lack of sphericity (Greenhouse-Geisser, Huynh-Feldt, and lower-bound) showed that the conclusions above were robust and valid even in the absence of constant correlations among the outcome measures. Tests of between-subjects effects, summarized in Table V, indicated that the average of the five pre and five post activity areas was predicted significantly by only year, although that effect was marginal ($p = 0.049$).

Qualitative results
To provide support and evidence for students' demonstration of leadership skills and to expand on findings from the S-LPI, the authors included a qualitative method of data collection (open-ended, reflective questions). The reflective comments provided concrete examples of the ways in which students learned and practiced leadership behaviors (Table VI).

Students mentioned the importance of modeling positive behavior and keeping focused on key priorities to their classmates and to others outside of the classroom setting. Amanda, a co-producer, commented:

> I tried to stay positive even if I wasn't feeling it so that the class would stay motivated to complete the show goals. I also tried to stay motivated when talking to people about the show outside of the class, I did not want to give anybody the impression that it would be anything but the best.

In this statement, Amanda expressed her commitment to maintaining a personal enthusiasm and optimistic outlook, realizing that her behaviors and actions impacted multiple constituents – the directors who led their own small committees, the class as a whole, and everyone outside of the class experience, including other students, faculty, administrators, and guests. The need to model the way during particularly difficult situations was mentioned by Kayla, a design committee member. In reflecting on the class rejection of a high-profile guest judge because he did not "fit" the theme of the show, Kayla commented:

> I knew that if I got bent out of shape about it, then the committee would follow my lead and become bitter and unresponsive. The best way to handle it was to stay in a positive mindset and remind our group that our decisions were to be made in the best interest of our show. As

Source	F	p	Partial eta squared	Observed power(a)
Intercept	57.528	0.000	0.246	1.000
SPRINGGPA	0.706	0.402	0.004	0.133
CREDITS	1.242	0.267	0.007	0.198
ACT	0.705	0.402	0.004	0.133
SATMATH	0.013	0.908	0.000	0.052
AGE	0.027	0.870	0.000	0.053
YEAR	3.059	0.049	0.034	0.585

Note: Computed using alpha $= 0.05$

Table V.
Tests of between-subjects effects

Leadership action statements[a]	Illustrative student comments
Modeling the way	Within my committee, I was a leader by example. I was always among the first people to volunteer my ideas and participate in group discussions. I hope I inspired my fellow members to brainstorm new ideas and added to the group dynamic (Tanner)
	There were numerous modeling practice days when I would be tired, but I knew not showing up would only hurt my committee. When you are a part of a group you have to put in the time and the energy to be a valuable group member. I definitely learned that skill […] everyone's actions and decisions impacted the entire group (Elizabeth)
Inspiring a shared vision	The show's theme was about being classy and elegant. So, it was my duty to make sure that, when posting [show] fliers, where I placed them and how I placed them represented how we wanted our show to look to outsiders. And if I saw a flier on the ground, torn up, or placed in an inappropriate place, I would pick it up or fix it. Just because looks and placement are very vital to how others see our show (Kristin)
	When people came through the doors to watch the show, I greeted everyone as a guest, welcomed and thanked them for coming. This way when the show rolls around next year, they remember positive aspects even while entering (Anne)
Encouraging the heart	If we ever seemed to be sitting around or not doing a whole lot, I would try to get the other members excited about participating. It was important to always keep a very positive attitude no matter how long the day was running (Cassandra)
	My committee members allowed me to excel in my style of leadership. My co-director and I planned the best we could, but our committee would also come up with suggestions for improvement and a lot of other great ideas. We all worked well together (Angela)
Challenging the process	When visiting the business I realized the different ways people respond to how you present the information. I found that the more relaxed, outgoing, and fun we were, the more likely the businesses were to donate (Lynn)
	As public relations co-director, I have been able to extinguish my fear of public speaking by giving weekly updates to the class but also by interacting with potential sponsors in a professional way (Emily)
Enabling others to act	As producer, I was able to let the directors and committee members first figure out how to do tasks themselves while always being available for help and questions (Kate)
	In class I felt like people felt comfortable coming up to me without getting shut down or criticized […] after all, it is a class effort when producing the fashion show. Keeping my mind open and having a positive outlook on situations even when I felt like time was being wasted was a leadership skill I brought to the table (Michaela)

Table VI.
Student comments regarding their leadership practices

the time passed, I think they all kept their heads up and continued to work hard the make the show the best it could be.

Kayla set a personal example of what she expected from her fellow committee members by setting the example by aligning her actions with those of the show. In this way, Kayla was able to ensure that her committee remained focused on the greater goals and purpose of the show, rather than personal disappointment.

Inspiring a shared vision described the leadership behaviors of spreading enthusiasm and gaining support for the vision. Melissa, a fundraising director, inspired a shared vision, when she helped establish a committee mission statement. In explaining her reasoning for the creation of this group-created document, Melissa stated:

Many companies have a mission statement so that everyone knows what to expect out of the experience, and what type of behavior and goals should be met.

Several members of the fundraising committee mentioned the establishment of this shared vision as contributing to group cohesive and their success - this committee was the first in fashion show history to receive external sponsors for each of the show's awards. Inspiring a shared vision later, rather than earlier in show planning process, Dania, a modeling committee member, expressed the ways in which her group crafted a more unified vision. She mentioned the implementation of an e-mail group list containing committee members and models, weekly e-mail updates sent by the directors to the committee, and the decision that committee members would arrive 30 minutes earlier for modeling practices to decide upon goals for that practice. According to Dani:

This extra communication and extra meeting time paid off. We were much more involved in the modeling training process and felt more comfortable giving tips and displaying leadership qualities at the practices.

Students mentioned demonstrations of encouraging the heart, or celebrating accomplishments and giving support to others in subtle, rather than blatant, ways. Naomi, a set-tech director, reflected on the conscious decision that she and her co-director made to include elements of each of the committee members' ideas into the final set design. While it was difficult "to incorporate so many different ideas and work with a lot of different individuals," Naomi stated satisfaction that each committee member was tangibly involved in the process and final outcome of the show. Interestingly, she also commented that her only regret as a leader were the few times that personal frustration prevented her from giving more encouragement to others. One director commented the way in which her committee members supported one another was:

By treating each other with the utmost respect and by constantly encouraging each other, we were able to work successfully together.

This recognition and appreciation for individuals in the group helped create a spirit of community.

Challenging the process described a willingness to seek out and conquer challenges often in innovative or experimental ways. Demonstration of this leadership practice

area was eloquently described by Hannah in her dealing with a disorganized and chaotic backstage area:

> It was a mess! I took about five to six hours creating little information cards for each model that had their name, their garment description, and the order of their garments in the show. The models said it helped them. This situation showed me that I can take my own initiative to solving a problem, even though I am not a director. I saw a problem, found a solution, and developed it myself.

Leslie, a co-director for the hospitality and alumni relations committee, discussed the personal growth that she experienced from a difficult experience related to show planning. When a faculty member not associated with the show asked Leslie to create "fancy nameplates" for portfolios the day before the event, Leslie reflected:

> That is where I put my foot down. I spoke to the person about their ideas and told them there was no extra time to implement it and they could take the idea on themselves and keep me informed. That said; nothing else was included. I try to be a people-pleaser all the time and this experience gave me an opportunity to recognize how to say no and that it was okay to say no.

This experience would have been very difficult for any student, let alone a self-professed "people-pleaser" like Leslie. In her decision not to make last-minute changes that did not fit within her committee's timeline, Leslie tackled her own "natural" inclinations and the typical faculty-student power relationship and confronted rather than backed away from a challenge.

Enabling others to act described the fostering of teamwork and the building of trust. It is the fostering of collaboration by the promotion of collaborative goals. Nicole, a member of the publicity and public relations committee, stated that she demonstrated this dimension of leadership:

> [...] by keeping quiet so that others can learn, showing up to class on time, and thinking of ways that I could help members of my committee brainstorm ideas.

Jennifer, treasurer for the class, enabled her classmates to act by proficiently completing her tasks. She reflected:

> Whenever someone would submit money or receipts to me to deposit, I would make sure to take care of that the same day or at the latest the next day. I didn't want to negatively affect others by being careless and irresponsible; therefore, I made it a priority to be organized and efficient.

Both of these students stated ways that they allowed others to act for the betterment of the show.

Discussion

This study assessed the leadership development of students enrolled in three semesters of an event management course. Reliability results indicated a high level of internal consistency in measurement of the practice areas, which implied the S-LPI performed its intended role very well and that the results of statistical hypothesis tests were solid. Results from this study suggested that leadership development as measured by the S-LPI increased as a result of participation in the event management course. According to the quantitative results, student scores from the pre- to the post-test increased on

every measure of the S-LPI, encompassing the dimensions of modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, encouraging the heart, challenging the process, and enabling others to act. The mean scores for the practice areas changed significantly over time and changed at different rates across areas. The means of the five practice area scores were not impacted by semester grade point average, credits taken in spring semester, ACT scores, SAT math scores, or age. These results were encouraging, informing the authors' that participation in the event management course could contribute to increased student leadership practice scores regardless of student demographics.

In their qualitative comments, students provided examples of leadership behaviors that they exhibited during their participation in the event management class. Many of these reflective statements indicated a conscious decision to "do" leadership. Similar to Eich's (2008) findings, students in this study seemed to discover and learn about their leadership identities by interacting with others within the event management class. The opportunities provided to them in the class allowed the students the opportunity to experiment with their leadership and then to reflect on their experiences, a hallmark of leadership development (Posner, 2009a). Similar to the findings of Hay and Hodgkinson (2005), many of the students in the present study, discussed leadership behaviors emerging from difficult situations that involved the skills of negotiation, conflict resolution, and communication. In their reflective statements, students wrote about modeling positive behaviors "even when they did not feel like it" and making decisions that would inspire a shared vision even when these decisions went against their individual preferences and personalities. Students also realized, often by enduring negative circumstances, the importance of encouraging and enabling one another to work effectively as a team.

The learning leadership model (Heifetz, 1994), in which the leadership concept is applicable to all people, not just leaders with positional authority, was utilized in the event management class. Each student was given the responsibility and duty to work effectively as an individual and as part of a team to complete their committee's goals for the fashion show event. These opportunities facilitated students to learn and to demonstrate leadership, an important skill for present and future personal and professional career paths.

Limitations
The sample included college students enrolled in an event management course at one university, thus results may not be generalized to all students. While student responses to the S-LPI were anonymous, student reflective comments were not. Thus, students may have completed written statements that reflected positively on themselves, rather than an objective analysis of their learning and actual behaviors. The S-LPI is one tool to assess student leadership practices and behaviors. Other evaluative tools may be utilized to assess students' leadership. A longitudinal assessment of students' leadership behaviors, as measured by the S-LPI following completion of the event management course, would provide additional information regarding the lasting impact of leadership training. Likewise, an experimental design whereby students are randomly assigned to a treatment group (partaking in the Event Management course that planned the fashion show) or control group (textbook learning only), would provide additional data for evaluation of student leadership development.

Implications for practice

Results of this study suggest that involvement in an event management course in which students were engaged and responsible for the outcomes of their learning may have positively impacted these students' leadership behaviors. Providing a variety of experiences focused on building leadership skills may provide students with the opportunities and experiences necessary to thrive in the global world. In the words of May, an alumni relations and hospitality director:

> Balancing my daily priorities on top of fashion show priorities was challenging at times. Having said that, these [event management] experiences I have taken away will help me to be better prepared for the future. These experiences are priceless.

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