

Sharing the Leadership Role

SUBMITTED BY: WGYP Summer Instructor

SUBJECT(S): Communication, Management

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students think about how groups like trauma units have dynamic team leadership cultures. They will think about how these organizations incorporate new people, bring them up to speed quickly, and at the same time, maintain reliability and never commit an error. In this lesson, they will read about this kind of culture and analyze how this could work for their own organizations/clubs. They will think about how to imagine leadership and team organization as a system and not as a hierarchy.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Management, III. Business Organization
- Communication, III. Workplace Communication
- Management, VI. Human Resource Management

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Ten Ways to Judge a President: Leadership Lessons from History”](#)
- [“Teamwork with a Marshmallow on Top”](#)
- [“Mountain Guides Teach Us About Leadership”](#)
- [“MLK Day Tribute: Student Lessons in Leadership”](#)
- [“Leadership Lessons from the Thailand Cave Rescue”](#)
- [“Embracing Leadership in an Era of Activism”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Leadership and Resilience”](#)

- “CEO David Pottruck on How to Be a Great Leader”
- “Career Insight: The First Woman to Coach in the NFL on Teamwork and the Power of Relationships”
- “Career Insight: Sachin Rekhi on Why You Shouldn’t Fear Rejection”

Common Core Standard(s):

Reading Informational Text–RI.9-10.1.; RI.9-10.2.

Speaking and Listening–SL.9-10.1.

Purpose:

- After this lesson, students will understand the difference between a hierarchical model in organizations and a more dynamic, fluid model.
- They will think about what it means for leadership to not be concentrated in one person but a rotating model of leadership.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: [“Teamwork in a Shock Trauma Unit: New Lessons in Leadership”](#)

Activity:*Introduction (5 min)*

Ask students what is the difference between a structured hierarchy for team organization and a more dynamic, fluid model where leadership can change depending on the task. Why would you want to have a dynamic model? What kinds of groups do they think would be better served by such a model? What kinds of organizations should have a more structured system?

Reading (5 min)

Ask students to read the first two parts of the Knowledge@Wharton article: Intro and Emergency Room Observations.

Class Discussion (5 min)

As a class, summarize what they have understood so far. Questions to answer:

- Why did the researchers observe the ER?
- What did they learn about leadership?
- Did the person's position, title or seniority determine leadership?

Reading (5-7 min)

Ask students to read the rest of the article.

Group Discussion (10 min)

In groups of four-five students, ask students to answer the following four questions. When they are done, ask them to share answers with the class.

- What does it mean to pass the baton?
- Why would sharing the leadership role be an effective strategy in teams?
- What does it mean to say that the relationship between the leader and the team is reciprocal in terms of building the organizational culture?
- Can you think of other organizations where leadership is shared? (Example: American government between the three branches, etc.)

Analysis and Application of Concepts (10 min)

- In a group, ask students to write down a few of the reasons (at least four) why the trauma teams had such unique leadership systems and how they maintained this model.
- Ask them to think about how they could incorporate this in their own school clubs and teams. Have they competed in the WGYP Investment Competition? Would these strategies help? Why or why not?

Tying It All Together:

In the last few minutes of class, ask students to share some of what they found in their groups with the rest of the class. This lesson is important for helping students recognize leadership in a different light and to challenge some of their preconceived notions. Leadership is not always "command and control" by one individual, but instead a much more shared approach.