

RETHINKING HIERARCHY: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN THE TRADES

by

JANINE CABRERA-VELDE

(Under the Direction of Aliko Nicolaidis)

ABSTRACT

Informal or distributed leadership roles, where employees are expected to lead with influence and not authority, are becoming more commonplace, yet organizations have not fully mastered how to develop those in these unique leadership situations. The present action research study investigates how a trades organization within a higher education setting implemented Gromm's (2002) distributed leadership framework to empower both informal and formal leaders to improve organizational outcomes. The purpose of this study was explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades. The following research questions were explored:

- (1) What is learned at an individual, group, and system level that advances distributed leadership theory and practice in an action research project within the trades?
- (2) How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?

The present action research will provide a unique insight into what organizational structures and leadership capabilities are required to prepare those who lead with influence in an underexplored context. Overall, the present study found the use of Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) adaptive strategies effective in implementing a distributed leadership structure. Furthermore, a culture of learning, shared expectations, and a clear vision create the conditions for distributed leadership

to be practiced.

Keywords: action research, distributed leadership, adaptive leadership, informal leadership trades, higher education

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by

JANINE CABRERA-VELDE

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JANINE CABRERA-VELDE

Major Professor: Aliko Nicolaides

Committee: Caleb Han
Karen Watkins
Richard Rubinson

Electronic Version Approved:
Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND THE LITERATURE

Introduction to the Focus of the AR Study and its Relevance

Reorganizations, a restructuring of a particular aspect in a company, are often used to ameliorate performance issues. However, such solutions often treat the symptom of a more significant organizational problem. A reorganization of a sizeable custodial department serving a southeastern university created roles where individuals lead teams without positional authority. In the current case, many of these informal leaders were promoted from the frontline workforce and had no previous leadership experience. There can be an assumption, particularly in the trades, that employees with an abundance of technical knowledge will successfully transition into leadership roles. Although technical expertise is advantageous, leadership is multifaceted and requires a specific skill set to be effective.

These informal or distributed leadership roles, where employees are expected to lead with influence and not authority, are becoming more commonplace, yet organizations have not fully mastered how to develop those in these unique leadership situations. Devising interventions or leadership development programs that build the leadership capabilities of neophyte leaders can lead to improved organizational outcomes. Thus, the present action research provided unique insight into what organizational structures and leadership capabilities are required to prepare those who lead with influence in an underexplored context.

The purpose of this action research study was to explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades.

Sequoyah University

The research site was the Campus Services division of Sequoyah University¹, a private research university with approximately 15,000 students. Sequoyah's Campus Services division was the specific context within which the research takes place. Campus Services employed approximately 800 employees who work within the division's five departments. These five departments were as follows: Facilities Management, Public Safety, Finance and Business Operations, Planning, Design, and Construction, and Real Estate. Each of the five departments contributed to the organization's larger strategic goal of being the facilities service provider of choice for the Sequoyah University community.

The current research took place in the Facilities Management department of Campus Services. Within the Facilities Management department, there were 4 sub-departments: Building and Residential Services, Operations and Maintenance, Energy and Utilities, and Exterior and Auxiliary Services. The Building and Residential Services sub-department was the focus of the action research (AR). This part of the organization was comprised of 300 employees, the largest sub-department in Facilities Management. This sub-department provided cleaning services to the university. The distributed leader or informal leader roles, where employees lead without positional authority, were created within this sub-department. The Building and Residential Services sub-department struggled with how to best build the leadership capacity of these new frontline leaders who were struggling with the adjustment to their new role. Furthermore, the frontline workforce complained of their new leaders' ineffectiveness. These issues were the focus of the AR Team.

¹ Pseudonym

The State of Team Leads in Building and Residential Services

The Team Lead role, which is a role expected to lead with influence and no formal authority, was examined in this study. The issue of leadership capacity in Team Leads became a priority when the Campus Services' Human Resources department noted the increased number of employee relations issues surrounding Team Leads and frontline employees. To best determine the present state and desired future state of Building and Residential Services in regards to their Team Leads, dialogue with Team Leads took place. In conversations with Team Leads, challenges they experienced, and the resources they felt they lacked were shared. There were three significant findings that resulted from these conversations: (1) Team Leads felt like they had strong technical knowledge or know-how of the job, (2) their most significant challenge was influencing their team members to follow them without the title (building relationships, group dynamics, difficult conversations, and team-building), and (3) Team Leads wanted training on how to influence others, feedback on current dilemmas in the workplace, and simulated leadership scenarios. Additionally, organizational leaders in both BRS and Facilities Management expressed that Team Leads have struggled in basic managerial tasks, and although they have good intentions, they were unable to lead the frontline employees to complete their necessary tasks. Furthermore, these key leaders have articulated that Team Leads have felt motivated by leadership classes attended but saw no evidence of the learning in practice. This action research project was informed by this data² and building leadership capacity in Team Leads was the focus.

² This data was collected from preliminary focus groups and meetings with Team Leads and key leaders in both BRS and Facilities Management.

Situating the AR Study in the Literature

Every day organizations face complex problems for which there is no clear answer. Because organizations are perfectly designed to perpetuate their current dysfunction (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), leaders must usher innovative change that leads to fresh, sustainable solutions. Organizational change would be simple if leaders were tasked with solving problems for which their pre-existing knowledge and skills were sufficient, defined by Heifetz and Linsky (2002) as technical problems. However, a wide array of issues can only be solved with new experimentation and learning. Adaptive leadership allows organizations to mobilize people to undertake these complex challenges successfully. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky's (2009) adaptive leadership framework encourages leaders to engage in the risky business of managing adaptive challenges, which require members of the organization to evolve their "priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties" (p. 85) with the goal of solving their complex organizational problems.

Heifetz et al.'s (2009) adaptive leadership paradigm drives the manner in which the organizational challenge is identified and should be addressed, while Gronn's (2002) distributed leadership theory defines the current state of the organization. Distributed leadership theory, coined by Gibb (1954), emerges out of the broader literature on adaptive leadership and is predominately applied in K-12 schools. This theory outlines best practices for how to share leadership at varying levels of positional authority within an organization. Entities that have adopted this theory argue that distributed leadership practices can improve group dynamics, workplace productivity, and organizational culture (Gronn, 2002; MacBeath, Oduro & Waterhouse, 2004; Spillane, 2006; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006). However, critics of the emerging distributed leadership theory contend that the current literature

lacks discussions on power and the influence of societal factors (Lumby, 2013). These gaps were addressed throughout this action research project.

Effectively implementing a distributed leadership model was the adaptive challenge that my organization faced. In my higher education context, an outdated hierarchical model was limiting those with formal authority from leading effectively. Thus, my organization implemented a reorganization, where the Team Lead role was established to ease the burdens on those with formal authority while, at the same time, empowering individuals on the frontline to lead informally. Despite the structural change, Team Leads performed poorly, and morale decreased. The leading theorists in distributed leadership explain that such structures fail because distributed leadership is a practice, not a role (Gronn, 2002; MacBeath et al., 2004; Spillane, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2006).

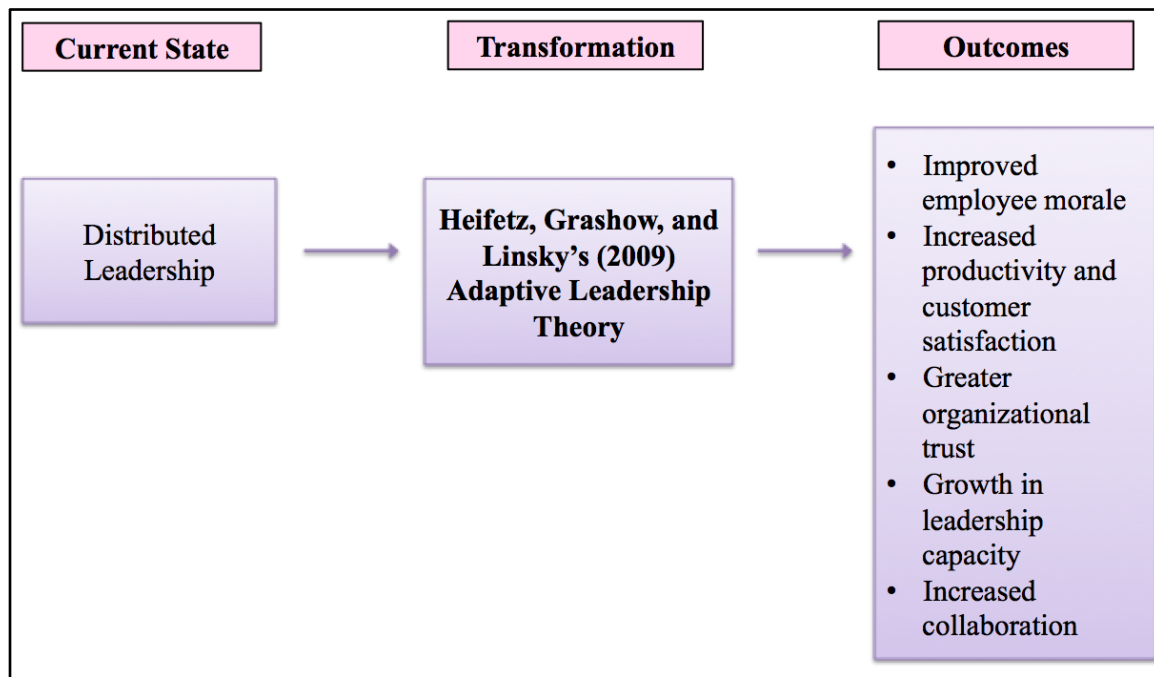


Figure 1. Present Study's Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that undergirded the present AR study can be found in Figure 1. The framework demonstrated the organization's current state, the transformation that occurred

through learning, and the desired outcomes for the organization. In the current state, the organization was attempting to move towards a distributed leadership structure but had been unsuccessful in generating the leadership capacity required of both formal and informal leaders to make such a structure work. To effectively implement the distributed leadership structure, Heifetz et al.'s (2009) adaptive leadership theory was utilized as the primary learning and leadership theory. As a result of implementing this theory, the organization attained the outcomes outlined.

Theoretical Origins & Evolution of Distributed Leadership

“Distributed leadership is primarily concerned with the practice of leadership rather than specific leadership roles or responsibilities. It equates with shared, collective, and extended leadership practice that builds the capacity for change and improvement” (Harris, 2014, para. 2). As Zepke (2007) noted, distributed leadership has its foundational roots in the social psychology leadership literature of the 1950s. The term was first coined by Gibb (1954) to understand the concept of influence in both formal and informal groups. He claimed that distributed leadership is “probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group” (Gibb, 1954, p. 884). Gibb (1954) attempted to measure influence in two contexts, small groups, and team settings. Throughout the study, there was a clear distinction made between “focused” and distributed leadership. Gibb (1954) explained that “focused” leadership references action that primarily resides within one person. On the other hand, distributed leadership meant that leadership was distributed among several individuals. Thus, in this distributed paradigm, influence would shift towards several members of the organization, rather than one key leader (Harris, 2008).

Although the 1950s era is credited with distributed leadership's origins, the literature gained momentum in the late 1990s. The research began to shift from defining leadership as a formal or designated role to acknowledging those "who may have a hand in leadership and management practice" (Bolden, 2011, p. 252). This development in the literature led to the nascent origins of distributed leadership and is credited with its momentum. This new view of distributed leadership shared similar theoretical and conceptual inclinations with emerging topics, such as collective leadership, collaborative leadership, shared leadership, co-leadership, and emergent leadership (Bolden, 2011, p. 252). As Bolden (2011) described, leadership began to be understood as more of a "social process" (p. 252).

To better understand distributed leadership, it is important to note its roots in distributed cognition and activity theory (Zepke, 2007, p. 303). Zepke stated, "distributive cognition proposes that human knowledge and cognition are not confined to the individual, but are distributed in the interactive web of actors, artifacts, and situations" (Zepke, 2007, p. 303). Activity theory delineates the importance of moving from knowing to doing, which emphasizes Spillane et al.'s (2000) perspective on leadership in practice.

Key Conversants

Both cognition and activity theory fueled the contemporary discussion regarding the distributed leadership field. Spillane (2006), Gromm (2000), Leithwood et al. (2006), and MacBeath et al. (2004) are key conversants. Referenced by many authors, Spillane (2006) drew on both cognition and activity theory to further research on leadership and the importance of the "social context and the inter-relationships therein," and recognized it as an "integral part of the leadership activity" (Harris, 2008, p. 175).

Gronn (2000) described distributed leadership “as an emergent property of a group or a network of interacting individuals” (p. 226). In his research, he theorized that distributed leadership results from teams working together, essentially a form of improved collegiality. Furthermore, these teams progress towards a shared goal or vision. Each of these leading scholars in the field has highlighted the importance of the environment and context in which leadership is actively practiced.

An investigation of the literature made it apparent that fundamental conceptual discussions arose out of the school improvement movement. The work of Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) provided evidence of the links between distributed leadership structures in elementary schools and increases in the effectiveness of teaching and learning in various subjects. Although leading conversants in distributed leadership grounded their research in schools, it is essential to note the differences and similarities in their proposed frameworks. In Gronn’s (2002) conceptual framework, three terms were introduced: spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice.

- *Spontaneous collaboration*: bringing people together with different skillsets towards a specific shared goal (e.g., completion of a project/task). Once the shared goal is complete, their interaction ends (Bolden, 2011, p. 258).
- *Intuitive working relations*: a “close working relationship” between two or more people that results in the active practice of leadership (Bolden, 2011, p. 258)
- *Institutionalized practice*: an organization sets the appropriate conditions for mutual collaboration to occur (Bolden, 2011, p. 258)

Each of these elements gradually becomes more nuanced from shorter group interactions to outright organizational change.

Spillane (2006) proposed a different distributed leadership framework, which elaborates on three key concepts:

- *Collaborated distribution*: a group works together to complete the same leadership task
- *Collective distribution*: a group works separately but interdependently to accomplish a goal
- *Coordinated distribution*: two or more people work in sequential order to achieve a goal

In Spillane's framework, the way individuals practice leadership is contingent upon the task at hand (2006).

MacBeath et al.'s (2004) framework employed the following terms regarding how work is completed: formal distribution, pragmatic distribution, strategic distribution, incremental distribution, opportunistic distribution, and cultural distribution. Similar to Gronn (2002), their framework emphasized the importance of distribution that leads to a larger organizational culture shift, where individuals feel free to practice their own leadership amongst one another. Effective distributed leadership structures empower individuals to take on new tasks to employ their leadership willingly. This is in stark contrast to merely seeing distribution as delegation. In this theory, individuals are empowered to make decisions that were primarily reserved for formal leaders.

The final conceptual framework, one proposed by Leithwood et al. (2006), explored distributed leadership in the form of "alignment" and "misalignment." His four key terms are planful alignment, spontaneous alignment, spontaneous misalignment, and anarchic misalignment. The Leithwood et al. (2006) framework encourages organizations to engage in "planful alignment" (p. 38) to distribute tasks to groups and individuals in such a way that considers their strengths and funds of knowledge. Out of the four conceptual ideologies, it is the

only one to acknowledge the downsides of leadership. Anarchic misalignment describes leaders that are effortlessly promoting their agendas and are exerting their influence regardless of what may be best for their “sphere of influence” (Bolden, 2011, p. 258). This acknowledgment noted that failure is inevitable in many organizations that are simply power-driven and heavily influenced by micro-politics.

Each of these key conversants has shaped the distributed leadership landscape, yet Gronn’s (2002) distributed leadership framework was chosen for this study due to the emphasis on collaboration towards a larger organizational goal. Other conversants noted the importance of collective action; however the relationship between informal leaders and distributed leadership practice was elaborated upon in more detail in Gronn’s (2002) research. Gronn explicitly stated that those in formal and informal roles could lead such collaboration (2002). This framework also acknowledged that multiple funds of knowledge exist within organizations and that expertise must be pooled if an organization aspires to create a culture where leadership can be exerted from those with or without positional authority. Thus, the present study applied the distributed leadership principles proposed by Gronn (2002), which drove the narrative of what it is and is not.

Distributed Leadership v. Delegation

Effective distributed leadership is not delegation (MacBeath et al., 2004). Typically, the word distributed is presumed to denote the sharing of tasks that one sole person could not or did not want to complete (Bolden, 2011). This is essentially delegation. On the other hand, distributed leadership aims to empower others who do not have a role or positional authority to lead (Bolden, 2011). Thus, the capacities of informal leaders must be built. The literature does not support an approach that solely emphasizes using the terms teamwork and collaboration; true

team is built around a foundational understanding of how each person practices leadership (Gronn, 2002). For example, one can put individuals together and call them a group, but they could still be working independently rather than interdependently towards a shared purpose and goal (Gronn, 2002). The structures need to be put in place to make these behaviors manifest. Both schools and organizations must emphasize leadership in practice and active learning.

Those who have great positional authority may resist a shift in power (Lumby, 2013). For the distributed paradigm to work, the necessary conditions must be created for people to be able to offer their expertise (Lumby, 2013). It isn't about giving away power. Instead, it is about having others (in non-leadership positional roles) exercise their leadership and engage their whole self (Lumby, 2013). Positional leaders are the ones to give the opportunity for informal leaders to be successful and come forward with their own funds of knowledge (Gronn, 2002). By harnessing these untapped skill sets, organizations can rise to new heights (Gronn, 2002).

From Hero to New Leadership Phenomena

The literature on distributed leadership is met with some resistance due to society's insistence on holding the term "leader" synonymous with individual heroes in history rather than accounting for their successful leadership practices (Bolden, 2011). Although heroic leaders receive the recognition, the leader's success is directly related to the actions they take and the leaders they develop to fulfill their vision (Bolden, 2011). It is apparent that the literature surrounding this humble nature of leadership is growing, especially when considering the various topics that share non-heroic conceptual origins: shared leadership, collective leadership, collaborative leadership, co-leadership, and emergent leadership (Bolden, 2011, p. 254).

Out of all the leadership phenomena, Bolden (2011) found that distributed leadership and shared leadership have emerged to the forefront as it relates to other similar topics (p. 255).

Different leadership terminologies are used interchangeably, which leads to some confusion regarding the true impacts of distributed leadership. Future research will need to find a way to more clearly define each of these related concepts and draw the differences among them.

Distributed Leadership Depicted

Five key distributed leadership qualities emerged and are shown in the figure below. In distributed leadership, the following building blocks must be present: capacity and skill-building of the individuals who will be leading informally, acknowledgment of the social context, leadership as a practice (not a role), rethinking power, and sharing expertise. These components are reflected in the cognition and action theories, the foundation of this contemporary leadership tool.

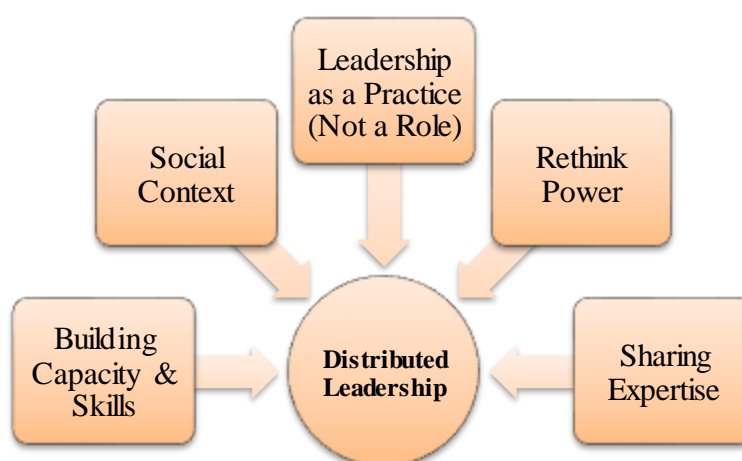


Figure 2. Cabrera-Velde's Key Qualities of Distributed Leadership

Distributed Leadership Research Landscape

The research landscape on distributed leadership is still limited, as this theory is in its nascent stages (Bolden, 2011). Most of the empirical data supporting distributed leadership and its use to improve collaborative practices has been collected in the K-12 setting (Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Macbeath, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006; Spillane, Camburn, and Pareja, 2007).

A research study conducted by Zepke (2007) also demonstrated distributed leadership's applicability in the higher education environment. A table including notable studies, their findings, and its relevance to the current study is included below. Emerging themes include interpersonal dynamics, organizational culture, and organizational productivity (Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Macbeath, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006; Spillane, Camburn, and Pareja, 2007, Zepke, 2007).

Table 1

Fundamental Distributed Leadership (DL) Studies

	Gronn & Hamilton (2004)	MacBeath (2005)	Leithwood et al. (2006)	Spillane et al. (2007)	Zepke (2007)
Context	All Girls Secondary School	11 Elementary Schools	10 Elementary Schools	42 Elementary Schools	Higher Education
Methodology	Qualitative; Collected data from 25 teachers through a questionnaire, work samples, and focus groups	Qualitative: Case Study Approach; Collected data through Questionnaires, Shadowing, Workshops	Multi-method, Two 5-Year Longitudinal Studies	Qualitative; Collected log data from principals	Qualitative: Case Study Approach
Key Findings	Co-principalship was associated with increases in teacher satisfaction, higher teacher expectations for students, and improved student achievement.	DL was linked to positive changes in organizational culture, which included increased ownership and engagement.	DL practices of planful alignment were linked to increases in student achievement across schools over time.	Co-performance of leadership was associated with increases in teacher satisfaction, higher teacher expectations for students, and improved student achievement.	Collegiality between senior leaders and community members increased due to the implementation of DL practices.
Key DL Terminology	Spontaneous Collaboration, Intuitive Working Relations, Institutionalized Practice (Incremental Stage Process)	Formal Distribution, Pragmatic Distribution, Strategic Distribution, Incremental Distribution, Opportunistic Distribution, Cultural Distribution (Incremental Stage Process)	Planful Alignment, Spontaneous Alignment, Anarchic Misalignment, Spontaneous Misalignment (Non-Incremental Stage Process)	Collaborated distribution, Collective Distribution, Coordinated Distribution (Incremental Stage Process)	Formal Distribution, Pragmatic Distribution, Strategic Distribution, Incremental Distribution, Opportunistic Distribution, Cultural Distribution (Incremental Stage Process)
Key Themes	Interpersonal Dynamics	Organizational Culture	Organizational Culture and Productivity	Interpersonal Dynamics	Organizational Culture and Productivity

Implications for my Study	Co-leadership could potentially improve team lead efficacy.	The goal of my AR is to create an organizational culture that promotes an organic, shared leadership.	One of the aims in my AR is to align team leads with larger organizational goals.	Throughout my research, I want to optimize the efficiency of team leads by improving interpersonal dynamics that better allow teams to achieve goals.	Because this study was completed in the higher education space, it demonstrates that DL is applicable to my environment.
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Distributed Leadership and Higher Education

Although research regarding distributed leadership in the higher education context is sparse, the work of Jones et al. (2012) argued for the need for this leadership structure. The authors believed “that for universities to build sustainable leadership a new, more participative and collaborative approach to leadership” should be implemented (p. 68). An individual’s autonomy is valued as it pertains to “creative and innovative thinking” (Jones et al., 2012, p. 68). Their research claimed that a distributed leadership structure will keep all university employees, both faculty and staff, engaged in supporting the larger academic goals of the institution. This leadership approach was implemented in four Australian universities, and was found to increase the amount of collaboration between the academic and professional staff.” (Jones et al., 2012).

As previously mentioned, Zepke (2007) also analyzed the potential use of distributed leadership in the accountability-driven higher education context. He conducted his research in New Zealand and examined the “effectiveness of a community-centered distributive approach” (Zepke, 2007, p. 301). As previously mentioned, three case studies in the same higher education context are presented to see how communities can work collaboratively to achieve a larger goal. In each of the case studies, three action research projects were explored: “one focusing on relationships between members of the community for action; one on relationships between the members of the community and people outside it; and a third on relationships between senior management and members of the community” (Zepke, p. 301). Zepke concluded that higher education could largely benefit from focusing on relationship building and the flow of power (p. 312). This flow of power is what leads to increased levels of trust that allows “senior management to do its job, while also empowering the community to pursue its goals” (Zepke, p. 312). It is argued that by embedding distributed leadership in higher education institutions, there

will be less distinction and separation between the various actors in it. Consequently, universities can move towards a new accountability, one that lets all constituencies working within the system work towards a common goal and larger shared purpose of promoting world-class learning.

Discussion

Although the distributed leadership approach is becoming more popular in the leadership landscape, there are still areas that have not been extensively researched. As Jones et al. (2012) mentioned, there is little research on “how academics, executive professional and administrative staff may be supported to develop more effective distributed leadership approaches to change” (p. 74). Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature regarding individuals working in the trades, the higher education context, and individuals working in the trades within the higher education space. Likewise, there is a lack of research on distributed leadership in higher education within the United States. Thus, my research addressed the aforementioned gaps.

Lumby (2013) mentioned that current research offers distributed leadership as “a heuristic tool, not a type of or prescription for practice” (p. 582). This detachment from the structure gives way for the literature to give recommendations that are not necessarily grounded in the application. To further this claim, researchers have done little to differentiate between leadership phenomena that share similar definitions with distributed leadership. Consequently, outcomes of distributed structures can be confused or used interchangeably with other research theories that share similar ideologies.

Researchers who advocate for this distributed approach fail to acknowledge issues of power. My assertion is supported by Lumby (2013), who stated, “the central issue of power surfaces only superficially, if at all, in much of the literature” (p. 583). Within the trade

population in my higher education context, it is apparent that issues of race, privilege, gender, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment factor into the success of the distributed leadership structure and into power more generally (Lumby, 2013). However, researchers have not entered these discussions. Additionally, organizations change job titles and assume that this follows suit with distributed practices. However, power still often resides with individuals at the top of the hierarchy rather than being shared amongst others (Lumby, 2013).

A future direction could focus on developing a process for how to implement distributed leadership within diverse environments. Given that distributed leadership focuses on K-12 school systems, research needs to provide direction to organizations about how the practice could be implemented. In an organization like Sequoyah's Campus Services, this took the form of coaching, leadership development, and a review of standard operating procedures and the performance management system. Such a process made distributed leadership less abstract and may help individuals in organizations own their work and be more empowered to reach strategic goals. Nevertheless, any solution to the implementation of the distributed leadership structure emerged from individuals within the context.

Throughout this action research (AR) project, I added to the distributed leadership literature in the higher education space. Although some research has been done in such contexts, more work needs to be done — the few studies that have been conducted, whether through cases or vignettes, take place outside of the United States, and thus may not be even fully applicable in our cultural landscape. However, the school improvement movement and links to educational outcomes proved that distributed leadership principles were effective in higher education.

To summarize key concepts regarding distributed leadership, the figure below can be referenced. In the following section, adaptive leadership is explored, as it guided the change process and necessary learning that allowed distributed leadership to thrive.

Conversants	Evolution	Theories	What We Know	What We Don't Know
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gronn (2002) • Spillane (2006) • MacBeath et al. (2004) • Leithwood et al. (2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term was first coined by Gibb (1954) • Grounded in the social psychology leadership literature • Gained momentum in the late 1990s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Cognition Theory • Activity Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement literature • Student educational outcomes linked to effective distributed leadership structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of higher education research • Little discussion on power, societal factors, and democratic processes • How to distinguish distributed leadership from similar leadership phenomena

Figure 3. A Synopsis of Distributed Leadership

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is a theory that “provides a novel approach to the study of leadership” (Dugan, 2017, p. 265). Heifetz et al. (2009) defined the theory as “the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (p.14). Adaptive leadership theory describes leadership as a process that works in alignment with the context or the particular organization’s needs. Thus, the founders of the theory do not view leadership as residing in a particular person or those with specific positionality (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Instead, adaptive leadership emphasizes the concept of thriving, which originated from evolutionary biology and delineates the necessary adaptations that species implemented to be able to survive in new contexts or environments (Heifetz, 1994).

Similarly, organizations must be able to adapt, or they eventually succumb to their own extinction. Many organizations fail to understand that new challenges and environments require different approaches and innovative strategies. Heifetz et al. (2009) claimed that these failed

organizations are not broken because “the reality is that any social system (including an organization or country or a family) is the way it is because the people in the system (at least those individuals and factions with the most leverage) want it that way” (p. 17). Individuals within the organization are benefiting from the status quo and will need to be persuaded to engage in adaptive work that leads to new learning, beliefs, and practices. Thus, Heifetz et al. (2009) stated, “no one who tries to name or address the dysfunction in an organization will be popular” (p. 17). However, an organization can only thrive if leaders can effectively distinguish between technical problems and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009).

Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

The process of differentiating between technical problems and adaptive challenges undergirds adaptive leadership theory. *Technical problems* are defined as issues that can be resolved by “existing knowledge, skills, and organizational structures” (Dugan, 2017, p. 267). In contrast, *adaptive challenges* “necessitate learning as both the problem itself and the resolution is unclear” (Dugan, 2017, p. 267). Heifetz et al. (2009) explained that tackling adaptive challenges requires, “going beyond any authoritative expertise to mobilize discovery, shredding certain entrenched ways, tolerating losses, and generating the new capacity to thrive” (p. 19).

Although technical problems and adaptive challenges necessitate different strategies from leaders, it is essential to note that either can be complicated. Technical problems can be equally significant and nuanced (Dugan, 2017). However, the problem and its potential solutions are more defined and easily implemented (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Also, broader organizational issues, typically, are not solely adaptive or technical in nature (Dugan, 2017). They are not mutually exclusive. Adaptive work, however, refers to

organizational obstacles or challenges that are primarily adaptive and impede the state of thriving (Heifetz et al., 2009). Consequently, an organizational problem could be technical, adaptive, or both (Dugan, 2017). The context will dictate how the problem manifests, the way in which it should be classified and addressed, and who is in the best position to respond.

The Role of Authority

Because adaptive leadership is process-based, those with formal or informal authority can engage in this work. Grounding this theory is the belief that “leadership is a verb, not a job” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 24). This means that an individual with formal authority does not automatically practice leadership. If organizations solely faced technical problems, then those with authority could easily choose to address the problem and do so effectively with existing organizational know-how (Heifetz, 1994). The present theory acknowledges that “authority, power, and influence are critical tools, but they do not define leadership” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 24). Adaptive challenges are far more complex and require the involvement of those with informal and formal authority, and both forms of authority use power in distinct ways. As Dugan (2017) asserted, “formal authority taps into power via legitimacy and the right to direct others because of a positional role, whereas informal authority reflects the ability to direct others using power acquired via trust relationships and perceived expertise” (p. 267).

Those holding formal or informal authority are entering into a “social contract,” as they are entrusted with power “in exchange for services” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 24). This exchange is important and central to this leadership paradigm. Other leadership theories fail to denote the importance of both forms of authority, which essentially limits organizations from fully thriving and succeeding as they rely solely on those who have high positionality. As Dugan (2017) claimed, “adaptive leadership directs attention toward and affords credibility to efforts by

informal authorities or those with no authority to challenge the status quo and question how, why, and who is given formal authority in the first place” (p. 267).

This acknowledgment of informal authority is valuable, as the present study aimed to understand how to best support individuals who possess this nuanced form of power. Thus, adaptive leadership provided techniques for the informal and formal leaders, in my context, to work collaboratively to solve larger organizational issues.

Adaptive Challenge Archetypes

Heifetz et al. (2009) identified “four basic patterns” that are most commonly found in adaptive work (p. 77). Each archetype familiarizes leaders with specific adaptive challenges and how such a challenge likely came about. Heifetz et al. (2009) also asserted that each of these archetypes “overlaps in any setting” (p. 78).

Gap Between Espoused Values and Behavior. This adaptive leadership archetype outlines that organizations are quick to point out what is valued even when the values are not reflected in the behaviors displayed by the individuals that articulate them. As a result, when organizations want their espoused values and actualized values to match, resistance typically ensues (Heifetz et al., 2009). This resistance comes about because “people in the organization have been successful through their patterns of behavior and will want to continue to do what earned them success, especially when they are still recognized and rewarded for doing so” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 79). To reconcile the gap between espoused values and behaviors, organizations will need to engage in new learning and rally people to acknowledge and face the problem headfirst (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009).

Competing Commitments. Another adaptive challenge is that of competing commitments. Organizations usually have multiple priorities that do not necessarily align with each other (Heifetz et al., 2009). For example, small class sizes lessen a teacher's workload and can provide more opportunities for personalized instruction; however, schools are offered more funding per pupil served (Chingo & Whitehurst, 2011). On a regular basis, school districts have to make the choice of whether they will offer smaller class sizes and hire more teachers or offer larger class sizes and allocate money to other purposes, such as teacher pay, facilities, or supplies (Chingo & Whitehurst, 2011). They are faced with competing commitments that may not satisfy all constituencies. Ultimately, many organizations avoid these issues, as any decision will be a perceived loss in someone's eyes (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). In such circumstances, it is recommended to find a win-win solution, but such solutions rarely exist in the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world of organizations (Heifetz et al., 2009). When win-win solutions are not present, organizations are encouraged to think through the groups that may experience the loss and what exactly they will lose (Heifetz et al., 2009). Furthermore, organizations should include those who may experience the loss in dialogue to better understand the impacts of the change.

Speaking the Unspeakable. Employees in an organization must frequently decide what to vocalize in specific contexts and environments. People engage in two discourses as they engage with others in professional settings (Heifetz et al., 2009). One of these discourses is displayed openly and publicly with others, while the other is a discourse that is typically hidden and locked away in one's mind (Heifetz et al., 2009). These thoughts and feelings are concealed out of fear that they may generate discomfort, tension, or conflict. In this adaptive work,

however, these perspectives are the most valuable, as they allow the organization to explore new solutions and address competing commitments in nuanced ways (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Work Avoidance. Engaging in adaptive work is risky because the status quo is being disrupted and, hopefully, replaced with new learning. This type of change generates discomfort in others because they will lose a state that once was – a state that benefited them (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). People impede this adaptive change in “two common pathways” described as “diversion of attention and displacement of responsibility” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 84). Tactics displayed by those who are attempting to divert attention include denying the problem, focusing on the technical aspects of the more significant adaptive issue, or attempting to pacify the discomfort felt by using humor or calling for that “much-needed break” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 85). Displacement of responsibility can be displayed as “scapegoating someone, externalizing the enemy, attacking authority, or delegating the adaptive work to those who can’t do anything about it” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 86). Individuals in the organization must be encouraged to recognize the complexity of the problem and redirect colleagues who are displaying these detrimental behaviors to combat work avoidance (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Tackling the Adaptive Challenges

Each of the adaptive challenge archetypes requires collective learning from the organization, which means that leaders must “mobilize people to tackle the adaptive challenge” (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 125). Heifetz et al. (2009) present six key strategies or series of practices that can be used to implement change or interventions in a productive manner.

Getting on the Balcony. Perhaps the most compelling metaphor presented by the theory’s founders is that of “getting on the balcony,” which involves taking the role of an outsider to see the full picture. To best describe this practice, Heifetz et al. (2009) drew the

comparison to being at a dance stating that, “if you stay moving on the dance floor, all you will see will be the people dancing with you and around you” (p. 7). In contrast, getting on the balcony entails observing the dance from afar (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). This may mean noting who is dancing with who, who isn’t dancing, and the ways groups interact (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Such findings can rarely be noted if one cannot remove oneself for an instant and take in their surroundings (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009).

Identifying the Adaptive Challenge. One of the goals of adaptive work is to align espoused values with actualized values. To identify the adaptive challenge, getting on the balcony is crucial. Observations of the larger organization must ground the way the adaptive challenge is addressed. Furthermore, the data and evidence collected from this outsider perspective can help others see the complexity of the problem faced (Heifetz, 1994).

Regulating Distress. When organizational change occurs, individuals experience a loss and grieve a state that once was. To best mobilize people through their distress, to the degree possible, leaders must manage the level of disequilibrium. As Heifetz (1994) described, “one has to pace the work” (p. 259). Both informal and formal leaders must “strategically frame the issues, orchestrate conflict, develop structures and processes, provide a measure of orientation and protection, and maintain those norms that should endure” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 259). Each organization must consider the culture that permeates throughout their context and note “local symptoms of distress and the local habits of response” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 259). By regulating distress appropriately, the members of an organization can be appropriately challenged to reach the desired future state.

Directing Disciplined Attention to the Issues. Rallying people around adaptive challenges is difficult. When tension or conflict exists, there is a tendency for people to divert attention away from the adaptive challenge and displace responsibility onto others. To best direct attention to the adaptive challenge, leaders should address “ripe issues” (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Ripe issues are organizational problems that are seen as urgent and important by the community (Heifetz, 1994). By doing so, leaders are more likely to maintain the interest of key stakeholders. In contrast, focusing on unripe issues results in resistance to change and a smaller, less captive audience (Heifetz, 1994).

Giving the Work Back to the People. When organizations are encountering struggles, the community looks to formal leaders to problem-solve (Northouse, 2019). This is a natural inclination for people, as it allows them to feel more secure in the midst of change (Northouse, 2019). However, when individuals focus too heavily on having leaders or those with formal authority solve adaptive challenges, the organization limits the potential number of ideas and creative solutions. Hence, it is necessary for leaders to be aware of their influence, power, and positionality (Northouse, 2019).

At the appropriate times, leaders should step back and allow the people to actively engage in adaptive work. As Northouse (2019) stated, “leaders have to provide direction, but they also have to say, ‘This is your work – how do you think you want to handle it?’” (p. 269). By giving the work back to the people, leaders are empowering others to participate in dialogue around competing interests and losses that may be experienced by certain groups (Heifetz, 1994). This form of collaboration and generative dialogue effectively prepares organizations to solve complex issues in the future.

Protect Leadership Voices From Below. When leaders engage in adaptive work, they understand that the work is risky, and they are aware that any change leads to tension and discomfort in others (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). However, it can be particularly tricky to deal with people that are cynical, negative, or in a state of constant dissent regarding the potential change. These “voices of dissent” are of critical importance to adaptive work (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). As Heifetz et al. (2009) pointed out these individuals “have the uncanny capacity for asking the really tough key question that you have been unwilling to face up to yourself or that others have been unwilling to raise” (p. 145). If leaders are not open to the ideas expressed by those who are skeptical, then the marginalization, isolation, and oppression of certain groups ensue (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Therefore, it is most productive to protect these voices by actively listening and trying to find valuable insights into their arguments. If the leader of change can encourage these voices to be respected and heard, then other voices and authentic perspectives will emerge (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Empirical Studies

In my exploration of the adaptive leadership literature, I was encouraged by the use of Heifetz et al. (2009)’s six key strategies in the healthcare space as my university setting has a large focus on healthcare and medical research. Several studies indicated that the adaptive leadership framework allowed for more efficient healthcare processes that were patient-centered (Adams, Bailey, Anderson, & Galanos, 2013; Corazzini et al., 2014; Eubank, Geffken, Orzano, & Ricci, 2012; Thygeson, Morrissey, & Ulstad, 2010). Furthermore, these researchers focused on how this framework can be utilized to encourage healing relationships. Specifically, Adams et al. (2013) found that the adaptive leadership framework permitted families to better handle the

unexpected change regarding options for loved ones in intensive care. In their research, adaptive leadership principles and behaviors helped families face new realities and the loss associated with it. On a larger scale, through their literature review, Thygeson et al. (2010) found that adaptive leadership could primarily benefit and improve the practice of medicine by using the theory's perspectives to analyze the patient's experience of both technical problems and adaptive challenges. It was also found that the adaptive leadership framework is useful to train students in a family medicine residency program (Eubank et al., 2012).

In addition to the studies situated in the healthcare context, a two-part action research study and a separate study that emphasized reflective practice in the higher education space was explored. Hlalele, Manicom, Preece, & Tsotetsi's (2015) case study approach found that the adaptive leadership framework allowed for context-specific learning, which had participants distinguish between technical problems and adaptive challenges. The follow-up action research study referenced the same data and expanded on the previous results by asserting how the principles of the theory encourage the use of community knowledge, while also delineating competing priorities and values (Preece, 2016). Similarly, at an Australian university, Benzie, Pryce, and Smith (2015) found that reflective practice from an adaptive leadership lens permitted faculty to lessen the gap between espoused and actualized values. Because the present research context also took place in higher education, these studies are particularly useful. The following table outlines these studies in greater detail.

Table 2

Adaptive Leadership Empirical Table

Author[s]	Title	Sample	Methodology	Key Findings	Alignment With Study
Adams, Bailey, Anderson, & Galanos, 2013	Adaptive leadership: A novel approach for family decision making	Family members of intensive care unit patients	Interviews conducted as a pilot study of family decision making in the ICU	The adaptive leadership framework allowed families to handle the unexpected change better when regarding options for loved ones. Furthermore, it prepared them to face new realities and the loss associated with it. It also helped families make decisions that were in the patient's best interest.	The present study also aims to use an interview approach to uncover the adaptive challenges facing the organization.
Benzie, Pryce, & Smith, 2017	The wicked problem of embedding academic literacies: Exploring rhizomatic ways of working through an adaptive leadership approach	Business faculty at an Australian university	Reflecting on practice	Reflections of Business faculty illustrated the tensions experienced in regards to embedding academic literacies. There was a gap between the proposed plans and the expectations and understandings of the "disciplinary academics." Adaptive leadership was used to offer solutions to this conflict, and a plan was devised to create change regarding the beliefs and attitudes of students pertaining to academic literacies.	The researchers analyze adaptive leadership in the higher education space, which is the same context that our study is situated.

Corazzini et al., 2014	Implementing culture change in nursing homes: An adaptive leadership framework	Licensed and unlicensed nursing staff	Qualitative observational study; focus group study design	Six key themes: relationships, standards and expectations, motivation and vision, workload, respect of personhood, and physical environment. Participants distinguished which problems, related to the themes, were adaptive challenges and what productive behaviors of adaptive leadership were displayed.	The present AR study will also utilize a qualitative approach and focus groups. The questions asked by these researchers are useful for deciphering the adaptive challenges experienced.
Eubank, Geffken, Orzano, & Ricci, 2012	Teaching adaptive leadership to family medicine residents	Family medicine resident students	Professional development and coaching	The researchers contend that by using the behaviors proposed by the adaptive leadership framework, that physicians can better maintain patient-centered care and healing relationships.	The dynamics between physicians and patients is similar to the relationships between our employees and their university customers. Relationships are critical to meeting the larger vision of our research-centered university.
Hlalele, Manicom, Preece, & Tsotetsi, 2015	Strategies and outcomes of involving university students in community engagement: An adaptive leadership perspective	The first project included two isiZulu-speaking political science students in making a film on poverty and hunger in the wider Pietermaritzburg area. The second involved an NGO and local members of a township working with pre-school age children and their families.	Action research methodology, case study approach	The case studies found that the community engagement relationship with the community at the grass-roots level is not truly seen as a collaborative partnership. It is mentioned that it seems as doing onto others and not with. However, the adaptive leadership framework allows for context-specific learning to occur regarding diagnosing problems as technical or adaptive in nature.	An action research approach will also be used in our study.

<p>Preece, 2016</p>	<p>Negotiating service learning through community engagement: Adaptive leadership, knowledge, dialogue, and power</p>	<p>A partnership between the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State Qwa campus and two schools (Education and Politics) in the College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Pietermaritzburg campus; each case study involved a minimum of two students from two or more disciplines with a community organization or service provider</p>	<p>Comparative case study approach utilized the action research methodology</p>	<p>The case study approach found that the adaptive leadership framework encourages the use of community knowledge. This knowledge is shared, and a larger change is catalyzed by delineating competing priorities and values.</p>	<p>An action research approach will also be used in our study. Since this study is a continuation of the 2015 study done by Hlalele et al., it serves as a great illustration of the action research cycles.</p>
<p>Thygeson, Morrissey, & Ulstad, 2010</p>	<p>Adaptive leadership and the practice of medicine: A complexity-based approach to reframing the doctor-patient relationship</p>	<p>Health professionals</p>	<p>Literature review and theory development</p>	<p>The researchers argue that adaptive leadership can improve the practice of medicine by making it more patient-centered and effective at delivering results. Adaptive leadership also provided a lens by which health professionals could see their patients as experiencing problems that were both technical and adaptive.</p>	<p>The dynamics between health professionals and patients is similar to the relationships between our employees and their university customers. Relationships are critical to meeting the larger vision of our research-centered university.</p>

Conclusion

In summary, adaptive leadership is a vanguard leadership theory that emphasizes the importance of leadership as a practice (Dugan, 2017). The framework acknowledges that organizations and their leaders, both formal and informal, must actively work to differentiate between technical problems and adaptive challenges to best catalyze meaningful change. By engaging in the risky business of adaptive challenges, leaders are embracing adaptive work. This theory provides leaders with a list of productive behaviors (getting on the balcony, identifying adaptive challenges, regulating distress, directing disciplined attention to the issues, giving the work back to the people, and protecting leadership voices from below) that can combat destructive workplace habits. This framework grounded the necessary transformation that took place for the present organization to embrace the adaptive challenge of properly implementing distributed leadership in Campus Services.

In the present, our organization has implemented some components of distributed leadership. Many leading theorists have shown that distributed leadership practices are important to support those who lead informally, such as our Team Leads, and for organizations to achieve a collaborative, shared purpose (Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Macbeath, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006; Spillane, Camburn, and Pareja, 2007, Zepke, 2007). Although distributed leadership describes potential benefits or the larger why behind those leadership practices, adaptive leadership highlights the process by which this change can be successfully implemented, specifically delineating what the organization needs to collectively learn. Thus, a convergence of distributed leadership and adaptive leadership lets us understand the why and the how of achieving a more collaborative, productive workforce.

The gap this study addressed was the lack of research in both distributed and adaptive leadership in the higher education space and with the trades population. Furthermore, no studies existed that combine both distributed leadership and adaptive leadership within the present study's context or with the population of interest. Thus, the research approach is nuanced and added to the landscape of both theories. The study also tested how when these theories are combined in planned interventions they lead to the development of adaptive leadership capacity in informal leaders within the trades population in an institution of higher learning.

Purpose & Research Questions

The purpose of this action research study was to explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades.

The following research question is the primary exploration:

What is learned at an individual, group, and system level that advances distributed leadership theory and practice in an action research project within the trades?

- Sub-Research Question: How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research surrounding the distributed leadership landscape is still emerging. In this landscape, a majority of studies explore distributed leadership practices within the K-12 space. As a result, the literature regarding the implementation of a distributed leadership framework in the higher education context is scarce. As Jones et al. (2012) mentioned, there is little research on “how academics, executive professional and administrative staff may be supported to develop more effective distributed leadership approaches to change” (p. 74). Furthermore, literature regarding individuals working in the trades as well as individuals working in the trades within the higher education space has not been explored. Thus, my research addressed the aforementioned gaps by building on the successes of DL in primary and secondary schools. Specifically, the purpose of this action research study was to explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades.

The following research questions will be explored:

What is learned at individual, group, and system levels that advances theory and practice in an action research project in distributed leadership?

- Sub-Research Question: How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?

Overview of Action Research Methodology

To most effectively address these issues, the action research (AR) methodology, specifically Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) action research model, was chosen due to its focus on creating a collaborative environment for generative learning to occur. Specifically, AR is a cyclical process in which an organization examines complex issues and actively works to create solutions through a four-step process:

- (1) planning for action
- (2) taking action
- (3) evaluating the action
- (4) future planning based on outcomes of action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 6)

In this process, members of the organization actively work alongside the researcher, as equal partners, to frame and solve a specific problem. The people involved have a genuine interest in proactively solving the particular issue and will make up the research team. Principally each member of the research team is involved in "co-generating knowledge" for the benefit of themselves and the organization (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 6). When participants are actively involved, they take ownership of the implementation of the solution and feel a sense of accomplishment. This involvement in the inquiry process is done with the intent of creating sustainable change and leaving the organization in a better place than where it started. Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) action research model is depicted in Figure 4.

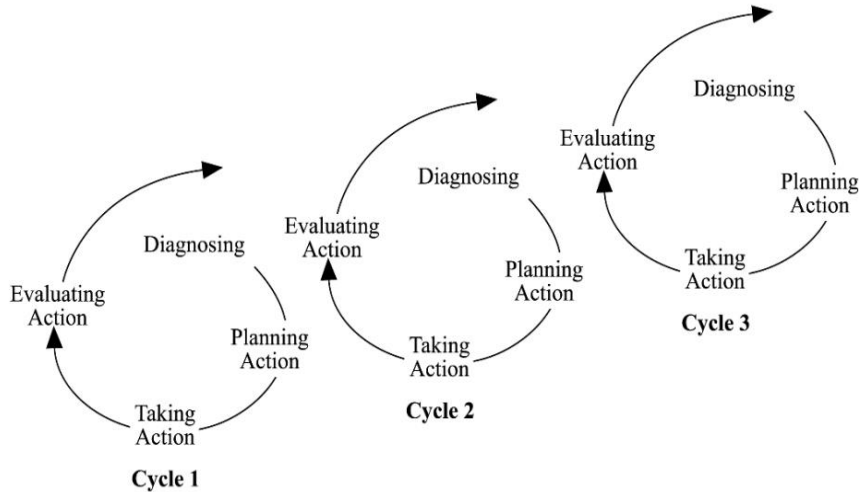


Figure 4. Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) Action Research Model

The AR process is a collaborative effort that involves a research team that has a genuine interest in solving a particular issue in the organization and is willing to commit the time and effort. Although various AR processes exist, this study used Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) action research framework. This pathway to organizational improvement delineates the cyclical nature of problem-solving, acknowledging the reality that change is a lengthy process that may be revisited various times.

The Present Organization and Action Research

The AR methodology was an appropriate fit for the present research study. As a current member of the organization, this process allowed me to use existing relationships and knowledge of the context to catalyze greater learning. Additionally, the duality of my role as both an actor in the organization and a researcher, allowed me to engage in the "swampy lowlands" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014) where I acknowledged the role both myself and organizational members have in the present state of the organization, while solidifying an understanding that our actions determined whether the desired future state can come into fruition. Thus, for the organization to truly learn, the members enacting change operated as equal contributors to the problem at hand.

Moreover, the change initiative, the reorganization, had failed to solve the problems that the BRS department faced. Thus, the problem needed to be reevaluated and reframed. Action research promoted this problem framing process and allowed key constituencies to engage in critical dialogue at various times, so as to thoroughly analyze and dissect the organizational challenge from new innovative stances (Stringer, 2014).

Also, the BRS population primarily consisted of individuals from traditionally oppressed groups, and senior leadership was mostly white and male. The chosen methodology provided the appropriate platform for these voices to be taken into consideration. By doing so, the present research study promoted inclusivity and collective action. Moreover, AR encouraged a fuller narrative through dialogue, which allowed for an appropriate evaluation of any intervention used.

As an insider to the organization, this methodology allowed me to challenge and reflect on my feelings, thoughts, and actions at pivotal points in the change process. I fully invested in 1st person inquiry, where I challenged myself to reflect on my assumptions, beliefs, and biases critically (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). This self-awareness made me a more effective researcher and change agent. Furthermore, Scharmer (2018) suggested that this self-awareness cannot occur without a steadfast commitment to curiosity, compassion, and courage. Thus, this AR methodology held me accountable to a level of reflection that research necessitates.

Benefits of Action Research

Engaging in the AR process provided many benefits to the organization. One of its key benefits was that it created local knowledge, knowledge that could be used by others in the immediate setting and community (Herr, 2015, p. 6). Thus, the AR process enriched the organization by meeting the “needs of the people” (Herr, 2015, p.6). The research team took agency for a problem, and, as a result, felt a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, the

knowledge gained in the process provided generalizable information that could be used for the future benefit of other similar organizations and added to the AR literature. Other leaders in similar contexts may use the project as a case study of the intervention and the collaboration methods employed. Therefore, the team helped others in similar contexts solve their own organizational issues.

Furthermore, the AR process served as a professional development opportunity for staff. It challenged those involved to improve their reflective practice. They learned strategies to reflect in and on action to solve broader organizational issues. By doing so, the organization gained knowledge and skill that allowed staff to create and manage change in the future (Ruona, 2009).

Another benefit was increased collaboration within the organization. Due to the democratic and collaborative nature of the AR process, the research team learned new ways to work together and use effective communication. It gave members in the community the ability to think critically alongside one another.

The required level of engagement from the team helped the organization identify, define, and promote actions that improved the workplace and educated others. The AR process identified structures that needed to be added, removed, or improved upon to move towards the “desired future state” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 81).

In summary, the AR process was critical to the implementation of the adaptive change of distributed leadership. The iterative process allowed participants to engage in three key steps collaboratively: planning, taking and evaluating action. As the researcher and research team worked together as equals, solutions that fulfilled the desired change naturally emerged.

Data Collection Methods and Sample

An action research methodology was employed in this research. To best address the primary research question, multiple methods of data collection were utilized. Additionally, the study “involve[d] both qualitative and quantitative data in response to research questions” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although both forms of data were used, a qualitative approach was utilized for data analysis.

Each of the chosen methods were aligned with the transformative research tradition and followed those theoretical assumptions. This research tradition and the theoretical framework undergirding this study simultaneously stressed the importance of meaningfully including the voices of marginalized groups. For this reason, the primary source of data generation was interviewing, specifically interviews and focus groups. Thus, when engaging with participants in the study, I, as the researcher, “ensure[d] authentic input and access to full participation for participants in multiple aspects of the research process and representation of findings” (Roulston, 2010, p. 89). The participants’ understanding of the larger problem was critical and “what they saw as relevant topics for research, and what was helpful for communities engaged” (Roulston, 2010, p. 89) was considered. The transformative perspective, distributed leadership, and adaptive leadership theory informed the data collection and analysis strategies that will be described in the following sections.

Research Sample

The primary population from whom I gathered my research sample was the BRS department within Campus Services, which provides custodial services to the university. To better understand the organizational problem, participants included BRS employees from various positions, from the frontline to the director level. Twenty acting Team Leads were included in

this sample. Because the current study focused on supporting individuals acting in this role, purposeful sampling, intentionally selecting individuals who will best answer the proposed research questions, was employed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Team Leads met the profile of informal leaders that the present research studied; however, other BRS employees were a part of this collective action.

An initial face-to-face meeting was conducted with a sample of interest in the study to ensure informed consent. Consent forms for the groups of interest can be found in Appendices B, C, and D. Depending on the preference of the employee and due to varying shifts, these meetings took place either in a group or individual setting. In this meeting, the primary purpose of the study was explained by the researcher, and the voluntary nature of their potential participation was emphasized. An icebreaker constructed around the purpose of the project was utilized to build community among the participants. To ensure understanding, the researcher welcomed questions. Each employee that decided to participate in the study was then asked to sign the informed consent form. The same process was used for any subsequent participants.

Methods

Organizational Documents. Each AR team analyzed organizational documents to generate key themes regarding the system. Data was collected from the organization, specifically employee engagement survey data, training feedback survey data from Mentimeter, key performance indicators for each role in BRS, and the Team Lead job description. Furthermore, to understand the culture of the larger organization, the mission, vision, and values (MVV) was examined. Mainly, the teams analyzed whether the current organizational structure was best suited to implement distributed leadership practices.

Collecting organizational documents allowed the researcher to capture the words and language utilized by the organization to understand what is valued and prioritized at the system level. This method gave unique insight into potential interventions that created more substantial systemic change. These documents could also be accessed at a time that worked best for the researcher. Also, pre-existing documents did not require transcription and could be analyzed in its present state (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Limitations of this method included the time required by the researcher. The researcher needed to search for information in various destinations, which required access by certain gatekeepers. Documents of interest were “protected information unavailable to public or private access” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). Documents could also be inaccurate. Furthermore, researcher subjectivity could have resulted in a limited perspective, as the researcher decided what was and was not of importance. However, including other AR team members in the organizational document search combated this potential for bias.

Action Research Team. Data was collected from each AR team. Team meetings involving these individuals was critical, as they set the stage for members to engage in Coghlan and Brannick’s (2014) action research model. In the present research, there were two action research teams. One of the AR teams included critical stakeholders that held positional authority and decision-making power as well as 2 Team Leads (informal authority). Team Leads included in this AR team also participated in a second AR team, which consists of additional Team Lead members. The AR team that is solely comprised of Team Leads served as a pilot group for any intervention implemented at this level. The solicitation letter utilized for recruitment of both AR teams is included in Appendix A. The inclusion of varying perspectives of employees at different levels of positional authority, as well as the various departments, was useful and necessary for

innovation. Conversations during AR team sessions informed what interventions were chosen. At these monthly meetings, the agenda, meeting notes, minutes, and essential takeaways were recorded and reviewed. Also, observations regarding group dynamics and participation were notated by the researcher. As a follow-up to meetings with each AR team, the researcher was also engaged in personal reflections to incorporate 1st person inquiry.

The strengths of this approach included the ability of the researcher to capture the exact language and words used by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both minutes and audio recordings “can be accessed at a time that is convenient for the researcher – an unobtrusive source of information” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). Minutes from the meeting provided a practical summary, which lessened the amount of time and expense required to transcribe the information collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The audio recordings of the meetings were transcribed, which is a limitation of this method. Transcriptions and coding required time from the researcher and there was a monetary expense to use advanced transcription software. Additionally, AR team members could have acted inauthentically since they were being recorded, as they may worry that their words may not be interpreted as intended.

Interviews. The Critical Incident Technique “consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327). This technique is used to generate data, through an interview, to “formulate the critical requirements of an activity” (Ellinger & Watkins, p. 287). By doing so, researchers can infer which behaviors and workplace conditions are critical to be effective in a position (Ellinger & Watkins). Through the CIT, a narrative regarding the experiences of Team

Leads, a role where employees are expected to lead with influence and not authority, was explored. Particularly, instances where Team Leads felt like they were and were not able to influence their teams were captured.

The researcher conducted face-to-face critical incident interviews with Team Leads. These interviews included open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their perspectives regarding the challenges faced in their roles. This method was chosen to serve as pilot data for the study. Responses from participants framed the problem and created a clear narrative.

One of the strengths of this method was that it maintained the anonymity of participants due to a private setting. As a result, participants were more candid and unfiltered. Also, in interviews, each interviewee got a greater quantity of speaking time than they would in a group setting. Because Team Leads work on various shifts, buildings, and campuses, this method allowed for the researcher and participants to meet at agreed-upon times and was less intrusive than direct observations. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described that another advantage of this type of data collection is that it allows participants to “provide historical information” (p. 188). This historical information would be more challenging to acquire in public settings. The method also gave the researcher the ability to “control the line of questioning” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). By using predetermined questions, the responses generated were more easily aligned to the research purpose. Marshall and Rossman (2011) mentioned that another benefit of an interview is the fact that it “yields data in quantity quickly” (p. 145). They elaborated, “when more than one person participates, the process takes in a wider variety of information than if there were fewer participants” (p. 145). In these interview settings, “immediate follow-up and clarification are possible” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145).

Although there are several strengths in using this approach, there were also limitations. Individuals' past experiences and biases shaped the way they make meaning in a given situation, which may have led to inaccurate representations of events and the more significant research problem. This reality is impossible to control, as many of these biases or preconceived notions are unconscious. Additionally, interviews occur in a "designated place rather than the natural field setting," (Creswell & Creswell, 2018 p. 188) which did not allow the researcher to see how the participants engage in their day-to-day environment. Another limitation is that "interviews are often intimate encounters that depend on trust" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145). Building trust is time-consuming, and some participants may be uncomfortable with these one-on-one settings. Unfortunately, there may also be instances where "interview partners may be unwilling or may be uncomfortable sharing all the interviewer hopes to explore" due to their lack of understanding of the larger research problem or they "may have a good reason not to be truthful" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145).

In this research, role duality is also a factor that may be a limitation. I was both a researcher and an actor in the organization that I attempted to change. My position and relationship with each employee could have potentially biased the responses given in these interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Also, some individuals may have been more talkative and reflective than others, which may not have provided enough information to understand the problem that the research aimed to explore.

Focus Groups. Focus groups "have long been used by social activists for pedagogical and political purposes" (Roulston, 2010, p. 37). This method was useful for our research, as the "primary focus is the instigation of critical dialogue and helping people imagine – and ultimately, live in – the world differently" (Roulston, 2010, p. 37). Marshall and Rossman (2011)

explained that the “interviewer creates a supportive environment, asking focused questions to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view” (p. 149).

Focus groups were utilized with the Team Leads to confirm the overall findings of the individual interviews and promoted the “emancipatory agenda” of this larger work (Roulston, 2010, p. 37).

Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended that each focus group contain 6 to 8 interviewees, which was the target number for each focus group in the present study. Similar to the individual interviews, open-ended questions were asked to best gather the viewpoints and beliefs of the group regarding the challenges they face leading informally. This method was used to collect data to inform what interventions were designed and implemented.

The strengths of this approach included the opportunity to note group dynamics. In focus groups, points of agreement and disagreement were more noticeable to the researcher, which is not captured in individual interviews. As this method is “socially-oriented, studying participants in [this] atmosphere [is] more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than a one-on-one interview” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 149). The social nature of focus groups was also “useful for fostering social support networks” as relationships can be built among participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 150). Additionally, because this method can gather the responses of 6-8 participants at one time, it was less time consuming than individual interviews. As a result, this method can “provide quick results, and they can increase the sample size of qualitative studies by permitting more people to be interviewed at one time” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 149). The researcher also controlled the line of questioning, which better produced responses that served the overall purpose of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As meaningful responses are obtained, the researcher gets more “flexibility to explore unanticipated issues as they arise in the discussion” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 149).

There are also limitations to the utilization of focus groups. Due to the group setting, it is hard to maintain the anonymity of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 151). Statements or stories shared in this setting could have been disclosed to other employees who were not directly participating in the study. Although I served as the moderator to ensure more voices were heard, there was the potential for individual interviewees to dominate the conversation more than others. This may have led to shorter speaking times for specific participants. As mentioned in the individual interviews, there was also the potential for bias from the respondents and myself as the researcher.

Table 3

The Research Plan

Collected Data	Sample	Description	Proposed Timeline
Meeting Minutes, Exit Interviews	AR Teams	Two AR Teams (N=5 each); One AR team consists of key stakeholders, and two Team Leads, and the second AR team consists of Team Leads only.	May 2019 - April 2021
Interviews, Focus Groups	Team Leads	Custodial Team Leads within the Building and Residential Services department, N=10-20	October 2019 – April 2020
Problem Framing Pilot Data	Team Leads	Custodial Team Leads within the Building and Residential Services department, N=7-10	November - December 2019
Organizational Data/Quantitative Data	NA	Training feedback survey results, key performance indicators for each role in BRS Team Lead job description, field notes, and Campus Services' Mission, Vision, and Values	December 2019 – April 2021

Data Analysis Procedures

The data generated from the organization, the AR teams, interviews, and focus groups were analyzed through both inductive and deductive approaches. Roulston (2010) asserted that “inductive reasoning is usually associated with qualitative research” (p. 150). This means “qualitative researchers seek to generate interpretations from close examinations of data, rather than through analysis of data that has been reduced to numerical form in order to test prior hypotheses about relationships among variables” (Roulston, 2010, p. 150). The inductive reasoning process allows researchers to “fracture the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96). Also, by applying inductive reasoning, the research

followed the AR process with fidelity, as the data and participants shaped our inferences, conclusions, and broader findings rather than utilizing predetermined themes before data collection (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96).

Thematic analysis, the most commonly used method for qualitative data analysis, was used (Roulston, 2010). Roulston (2010) found the following:

This approach generally entails some form of *data reduction*, through applying codes to the data or elimination of repetitive or irrelevant data in order to define conceptual categories; *categorization of data*, through sorting and classification of the codes or data into thematic groupings or clusters, and then finally, *reorganization of the data into thematic representations* of findings through a series of assertions and interpretations. (p. 150 -151)

In the present research process, each of these themes were supported by “evidence from the data set in the form of excerpts from interviews that link the researcher’s assertions to what was said by speakers in interview contexts” (Roulston, 2010, p. 151).

There was a plethora of data to navigate in order to determine larger thematic findings. To "reduce the data," codes were used (Roulston, 2010, p. 151). In the coding process, “codes are labels that researchers apply to sections of data – whether interview transcripts, documents, or field notes – that represent some aspect of the data” (Roulston, 2010, p. 151). The codes were “derived directly from words and phrases uttered by the participant (known as in-vivo codes), as well as codes relating to the research questions posed” (Roulston, 2010, p. 151). As the codes were determined, I was deliberately committed to “stay close to the data” to ensure that my preconceived notions or assumptions were not dictating the larger themes found (Roulston, 2010, p. 152). Roulston (2010) warned of the dangers of “forcing data to fit codes” as it can bias

findings (p. 152). In this research, preliminary findings (detailed in Chapter 3) helped shape some of the codes selected and how they were defined. By collaboratively forming this “codebook,” those who analyze the data can have a designated process “to analyze further transcriptions in [the] study” (Roulston, 2010, p. 152).

Once codes were created, data was then organized into categories, or “an abstract concept that analysts use to organize the codes that have been generated through examination of a data set” (Roulston, 2010, p. 153). The process of creating categories allowed the researcher to “develop their ideas about the data into assertions that are supported by data excerpts” (Roulston, 2010, p. 153). Coding and categorization typically happen “concurrently, as these processes inform each other” (Roulston, 2010, p. 154). Finally, themes were aligned with the larger research question, so as to give insight into what was happening at the individual, group, and system levels (Roulston, 2010, p. 154). Each subset of data analysis is explained below.

Analyzing Organizational Data

Each AR team and the researcher analyzed the organizational data collected from crucial organizational documents and surveys. Specifically, the team analyzed whether the current organizational structure was best suited to implement distributed leadership practices.

Analyzing AR Team Data

AR Team data was analyzed by the researcher and both key sponsors that head the BRS and Finance and Business Operations (FBO) departments. Each sponsor provided additional insights into the findings shared by the researcher. These AR Team summaries were shared prior to dispersal to ensure that they correctly represented their conclusions.

Analyzing Interview Data

To analyze the interview data, both inductive and deductive techniques were used to ensure that I, as the primary researcher, and my action research teams were engaged in quality sense-making of the data. In this data analysis process, 3 of Yin's (2018) general analytic strategies were chosen: theoretical propositions, case description, and plausible rival explanations. Additionally, pattern matching and explanation building were the two analytic techniques used.

Analytic Strategy 1: Theoretical Propositions. According to Yin (2018), the strategy of relying on theoretical propositions means that “the original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions and a review of the literature” (p. 168). Put simply, the current research is grounded by Gromm's (2002) distributed leadership framework, which has shaped the purpose and the research questions. Furthermore, the theoretical propositions brought forth by distributed leadership theory led to the present action research study. This deductive strategy framed the interpretation of data at three different levels – the individual, group, and system level.

Analytic Strategy 2: Case Description. The second analytic strategy used in this data analysis process was case description. Using this strategy allowed the researcher to “note how the descriptive framework can organize the case study analysis” (Yin, 2018, p. 172). As this is an action research study, the phases of action research shaped this descriptive framework and colored the larger narrative of this data analysis. Thus, various coding strategies, discussed in detail later, were used to unpack meaning that informed the present case and future action research phases.

Analytic Strategy 3: Plausible Rival Explanations. Finally, the last analytic strategy was that of plausible rival explanations. Yin (2018) described that the use of theoretical propositions naturally leads to the exploration of “rival hypotheses,” and the case description strategy “may involve alternative descriptions” (p. 172). Inherently, using the strategies mentioned above naturally guided the researcher to explore “plausible rivals, not all rivals” (Yin, 2018, p. 172). In this data analysis process, “the potency of the other influences” was not ignored and addressed (Yin, 2018, p. 172).

Analytic Technique 1: Pattern Matching. For this data analysis process, pattern matching was chosen as a deductive technique. The distributed leadership framework guided the theoretical propositions made and predictions expected of the data before data analysis. By using this technique, researchers can compare whether their predicted patterns can be pattern matched with actual patterns in the data. This can then explain how “the patterns may be related to the ‘how’s and ‘why’s” of the case study (Yin, 2018, p. 175). In turn, the case study’s internal validity is strengthened (Yin, 2018, p. 175).

Analytic Technique 2: Explanation Building. The second analytic technique “is, in fact, a special type of pattern matching” (Yin, 2018, p. 179). The goal of explanation building “is to analyze case study data by building an explanation about the case” (Yin, 2018, p. 179). As this is an action research case study, which is inherently iterative, this strategy is appropriate as it is also iterative in the sense that “explanatory propositions are revised, and the evidence is examined once again from a new perspective” (Yin, 2018, p. 181). Quality data analysis, as mentioned earlier, is both inductive and deductive, and this technique is both inductive and deductive. It is “partly deductive” as it is “based on the statements or propositions at the outset of

the case study” and “partly inductive” as it is “based on the data from the case study” (Yin, 2018, p. 181).

Data Preparation. The first stage of Ruona’s (2005) data preparation involves the organization and transcription of the data. Each of the selected five interviews was recorded via an audio recording device and were transcribed by Temi, an advanced speech recognition software. This software ensures a higher quality of the transcripts, as compared to manual scribing by the researcher. A summary of each transcript was shared with participants to ensure accuracy. Additionally, pseudonyms were given to each participant to maintain their anonymity.

Familiarization. In familiarizing myself with the data, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used. This technique originated from “an outgrowth of studies in the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Forces in World War II, where it was used to gather specific incidents of effective or ineffective behavior concerning a designated activity” (Ellinger & Watkins, 1998, p. 285). The CIT “consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327). This technique is used to generate data, through an interview, to “formulate the critical requirements of an activity” (Ellinger & Watkins, p. 287). By doing so, researchers can infer which behaviors and workplace conditions are critical to be effective in a position (Ellinger & Watkins).

Through the CIT, a narrative regarding the experiences of Team Leads, a role where employees are expected to lead with influence and not authority, was explored. Particularly, instances where Team Leads felt like they were and were not able to influence their teams, are captured. The interview guide can be found in Appendix J. Once the data was transcribed and

summaries of the transcripts shared, the participants' narratives were reconstructed into a chronological order that uses the respondents' own words. Additionally, pseudonyms were given to each participant to maintain their anonymity. Each of the critical incidents gathered from 5 Team Leads of the Building and Residential Services Department within Campus Services at Sequoyah University, along with the final coding scheme, are included in Appendix K and L.

Coding. This data analysis process utilized a coding process that was both deductive and inductive. Deductive coding involves “developing a provisional ‘start list’ of codes” before delving into the data itself (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81). This list “comes from the conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, or key variables that the researcher brings to the study” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81). On the other hand, inductive coding involves creating codes that “emerge progressively during data collection” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81). The steps taken during both the deductive and inductive coding processes are described.

Deductive Coding. Before engaging in the organic inductive coding process, critical tenets of various distributed leadership models were used to create a start list of codes. Thus, when exploring the data, if Team Leads' experiences aligned with one of these tenets, it was noted. They served as the larger categories or buckets that sub-codes, generated through inductive coding, would be put into. However, if these categories did not manifest themselves in the inductive coding process, they were revised to remain authentic to the ideas presented by the participants themselves. The following distributed leadership tenets were utilized as the larger categories: Building Capacity and Skills, Sharing Expertise, Social Context, Leadership as A Practice (not a role), and Rethink Power. Additionally, as I explored adaptive leadership, this was an additional category utilized.

Inductive Coding. Once each of the participants' narratives were reconstructed, and the preliminary deductive coding process took place, the inductive coding process began. Specifically, the coding process described by Miles et al. (2014) was used, where there is "First Cycle Coding, then Second Cycle or pattern codes and the process of deriving even more general themes through jottings and analytic memoing" (p. 71). Codes are "labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" and are "attached to data chunks of varying size and can take the form of a straightforward, descriptive label or a more evocative and complex one (e.g., a metaphor)" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 71-72). The purpose of creating codes is to "retrieve and categorize similar data chunks so that researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 72).

Miles et al. (2014) asserted that "First Cycle coding methods are codes initially assigned to the data chunks" (p. 73). Following that, "Second Cycle coding methods generally work with the resulting First Cycle codes themselves" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73). However, prior to both coding cycles, each interview question was given a code for organizational purposes. These coding designations can be found in Appendix M. Following that, each interviewee and their respective CITs are illustrated according to the interview question coding designation. This additional breakdown can be found in Appendix N.

First Cycle Coding. The First Cycle coding process is detailed below. To begin the First Cycle coding process, I selected the Descriptive and In Vivo coding approaches. The words of Charmaz (2014) guided me, which were, "while engaged in initial coding, you mine early data for analytic ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis" (p. 114).

Descriptive Coding. Firstly, to commence the coding process, I created descriptive codes, which are codes that “assign labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74). These descriptive codes were used to begin the categorization process and allowed me to see what prevalent ideas were found throughout each of the interviews. The descriptive coding process led to a total of 22 codes.

In Vivo Coding. Following the creation of descriptive codes, In Vivo coding was used. Miles et al. (2014) stated that “In Vivo coding uses words or short phrases from the participant’s own language in the data record as codes” (p. 74). In my study, each interviewee was from an underrepresented group and worked within the margins of the higher education space in the trades and this coding process “honored the participant’s voice” and their experiences (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74). As Miles et al. (2014) recommended, I noted “phrases that were used repeatedly by participants” (p. 74). As a result of this process, 19 codes were generated from these short phrases from the participants’ language.

Second Cycle Coding. After engaging in First Cycle coding, I was able to “initially summarize segments of data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). In my Second Cycle coding, I completed pattern coding, which is “a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs” (Miles et al., 2014, p.86). When engaging in this process, I revisited both the Descriptive and In Vivo codes. This was particularly helpful after coding the first two interviews, as codes continued to evolve or be revised to allow for cross-case analysis, essentially epitomizing the constant comparative method.

In revisiting the In Vivo codes, I noted that most of these key quotes from participants referenced emotion, and primarily negative emotion. For example, some negative emotions

included: cried and cried, horrible, the job was useless, ridiculous, tough, challenged, tough, and upset. The In Vivo codes would allow me to easily pull key quotes that referenced the interpersonal challenges that Team Leads, or informal leaders, faced. Regarding the descriptive codes, I was able to narrow the codes down from 22 to 15 codes. Like codes were put together, and interestingly, they fit into the distributed leadership constructs that served as a start list for coding. However, I found that the interview data led me to merge certain constructs as they informed one another or were highly related. For example, building capacity and skills and sharing expertise were merged since interviewees mentioned the importance of developing their skills while also building the skill of their teams and sharing expertise, both by modeling a task or demonstrating their technical knowledge served to build that skill.

Furthermore, the social context was merged with adaptive leadership as contextual factors in a specific organization directly impact how adaptive leadership is manifested. Thus, there were 15 sub-codes categorized into the 4 larger merged theoretical constructs or codes: Building Capacity and Skills/Sharing Expertise, Social Context/Adaptive Leadership, Leadership as a Practice (not a role), and Rethink Power. In merging these larger constructs and revising my coding, I recognized that I must “conceptualize coding as a decision-making process, where the decisions must be made in the context of a particular piece of research” (Elliot, 2018, p. 2850). An explanation of these codes, sub-codes, and definitions can be found in the tables below.

Table 4

Codes and Definitions

Code #	Codes (Larger Categories)	Definition	Sub-Codes
1000	Building Capacity and Skills/ Sharing Expertise	The importance of building capacity, demonstrating technical skill, and knowledge-sharing.	Technical Knowledge/Show Don't Tell, Employee Development
2000	Social Context/ Adaptive Leadership	The organization's social context (including inequity) is emphasized. The larger context's values, vision, or mission are noted (fundamental to adaptive leadership).	Adaptability, disparity, vision, purpose
3000	Leadership as a Practice (not a role)	The actions required of effective leaders are highlighted.	Trust, feedback, receptiveness, specificity of tasks
4000	Rethink Power	Issues surrounding power and hierarchy are addressed.	Corrective action, managing up, positional authority=respect, power struggles, resistance

Table 5

Sub-Codes and Definitions

Sub-Code #	Sub-Codes	Definition
1001	Technical Knowledge/Show Don't Tell	Denotes moments where the importance of technical knowledge is noted. Also, this sub-code references how trust is built when this technical knowledge can be shown to employees.
1002	Employee Development	Training or professional development to help advancement in direct reports
2001	Adaptability	The importance of remaining flexible and open to change
2002	Disparity	Difference or unfairness
2003	Vision	Organizational vision or guiding principles
2004	Purpose	The "why" or reasoning behind the work or the lack thereof is mentioned.
3001	Trust	The display of confidence in a leader
3002	Feedback	Reactions to a given task or suggestions for improvement
3003	Receptiveness	Open and responsive to ideas, opinions, and suggestions
3004	Specificity of Tasks	When tasks are clearly delineated or instructions given
4001	Corrective Action	The ability to manage the performance of others
4002	Managing Up	Instances where informal leaders must manage those on the higher rungs of the hierarchy
4003	Positional Authority=Respect	Those with positional authority are respected by employees.
4004	Power Struggles	Competition for control of an outcome (typically from frontline employees)

4005	Resistance	Instances where employees push back on the leader
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Generating Meaning. As a starting point, I began to explore the occurrences of various codes and sub-codes in the data in the process of generating meaning. Out of each of the codes and sub-codes, I found that each of the five interviews demonstrated that the concept of rethinking power according to the various distributed leadership models emerged to the forefront. Remarkably, the power struggles sub-code was the most prevalent with 32 distinct occurrences. However, although codes and sub-codes are helpful, they do not fully capture the full story that the data tells.

To aid in my reflection, challenge my biases, and engage in this fuller story, I engaged in analytic memoing. According to Miles et al. (2014), “an analytic memo is a brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher’s reflections and thinking processes about the data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 95). By doing so, I could synthesize data into “higher level analytic meanings” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 95). An excerpt from one of my memos can be found below:

March 16, 2021

POWER STRUGGLES, CORRECTIVE ACTION, AND POSITIONAL AUTHORITY=RESPECT

I found it particularly interesting to see the number of times informal leaders seemed to express frustration with their inability to take corrective action. It seems as though the inability to do so creates power struggles, as a given Team Lead’s team may simply take concerns to a leader with positional authority instead of their informal leader. Staff frequently bypasses Team Leads, and a leader may overturn their judgment with positional authority, which diminishes their reputation in the eyes of the frontline. All in all, when specific Team Leads have

transitioned into roles with positional authority, they feel like they get this much-needed respect that they did not have as Team Leads.

The memoing activity was beneficial and allowed for nuanced reflections that aided in the meaning-making process across cases. Charmaz (2014) also supported the use of memoing, as “analytic ideas may occur to you in the midst of an interview or during a moment in your ethnographic setting” (p. 111).

Additionally, to ensure trustworthiness, I coordinated what Thomas (2003) called “consistency checks,” which entailed “having another coder take the category descriptions and find the text which belongs in the categories” (p. 7). My action research team acted as these additional coders and were directly involved in the process of consistency checks, which allowed for more objectivity when generating larger meaning and themes.

Analyzing Focus Group Data

Focus group data was analyzed by the researcher, AR teams, and project sponsors. The transcribed files of the focus groups were coded for emerging relevant themes.

Data and the Research Question

Each of the methods chosen provided a narrative regarding the adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades. Individually, each of these methods created a more transparent narrative regarding the research problem and how it manifested at the individual, group, and system level. The organizational data helped the researcher and the AR teams understand what the system-level values and what the learning culture was. Data from the AR teams provided a nuanced understanding regarding the group level and how key stakeholders collaborated to best tackle the more significant organizational problem. The interviews

highlighted the adaptive challenges experienced at the individual level. Although interviewees relayed their own experiences as Team Leads, the assertions and cross-case themes noted generated data that provided insight at each of the relevant levels in this research. Similarly, findings from the focus groups produced knowledge regarding pertinent group dynamics while also generating broader themes at the individual and system levels.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

As mentioned earlier, the present study followed the transformative research tradition. To ensure the trustworthiness of the larger research, I was, as Roulston (2010) stated:

Consciously aware of [my] subjectivities in relation to the research participants and the research topic (reflexivity), and [will] continue to explore how these relate to the research findings in representations of research (subjectivity statement, inclusion of challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by researcher in the research process in reports of studies). (p. 89)

The Validity of Action Research Methodology

Anderson and Herr (1999) presented validities particular to the action research methodology. They explained that action research should meet the outcome (also pragmatic), process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic validities. One way the current study evaluated the validity of the primary methodology is through outcome or pragmatic validity, which describes whether the primary goals and purpose of the research were met. Process validity was evaluated by determining whether the research approach was effectively used. This determination was validated using Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) action research model that depicts the stages of the action research process. Democratic validity was rigorously maintained. Throughout the research, there was a commitment to co-creation and collaboration to address the problem being

investigated. The researcher frequently referenced meeting notes and personal reflections to analyze whether sufficient voices were heard and whether the environment was safe and conducive to larger problem-solving. Catalytic validity, the extent to which participants take ownership of the problem, was measured through the behaviors displayed by the AR teams (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Furthermore, interviews with each AR team asked questions related to their understanding of the problem and the degree to which they felt empowered to tackle the organizational challenge in the present and future. Dialogic validity, which involves review by peers, was inherently involved in the scholarly review process with my major advisor and dissertation committee members. Their feedback was critical in the data collection and analysis process, as they challenged my interpretation of the data and its relationship to the larger research problem. By adhering to these validities, the action research methodology was effective and trustworthy.

Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Methods

There was data triangulation, an audit trail, member check, and rigorous reflexivity to ensure trustworthiness and the validity and reliability of the data collection methods used by the present research.

Data Triangulation. The present study used various data collection methods, sources, and samples. This enabled us to “collect rich data, data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). Thus, there was data triangulation. The interviews and focus groups involved different Team Leads, which allowed us to gain insight into divergent views on the same research problem.

Furthermore, findings from the AR Teams or organizational documents allowed us to either

corroborate or dispute initial findings or conclusions. Hence, perspectives from the individual, group, and system-level had ample evidence surrounding the phenomena of interest.

Audit Trail. The researcher documented every step taken throughout the research process. This allowed the confirmability of our research findings while ensuring that the data collection methods and analysis were transparently described. Although our research was driven by the local context, the data collection methods and analysis may allow replicability in similar settings or potential adaptations.

Member Checks. Member checks or “the sharing of data and interpretations with participants” was actively implemented (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40). The focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded, and the audio files were transcribed using advanced speech recognition software. Each transcript summary was sent to participants to ensure that what they said was accurately represented. Participants’ responses to their transcripts was reported. Additionally, specific excerpts from the dissertation, particularly chapter 4, was shared with the AR teams. Their suggestions, inputs, and feedback were considered and notated by the researcher.

Peer Debriefing. Marshall and Rossman (2011) stated that peer debriefing is another crucial way to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative studies. In this process, the researcher “discusses their emergent findings with critical friends to ensure that analyses are grounded in the data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40). I, as the primary researcher, regularly engaged in this peer debriefing with my advisor and my committee. These professors helped challenge the plausibility of my conclusions and required that I search for disconfirming evidence, another way to “ensure that the rigor and usefulness of the qualitative study” were upheld (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40).

Reflexivity. Throughout this AR process, I engaged in reflexivity. I wanted to recognize when I felt tense or discomfort and reflected on the origin of these emotions. In accordance with this personal goal, I engaged in frequent journaling. I noted my feelings, thoughts, and actions at pivotal points in the change process. By doing so, I fully invested in first-person inquiry, where I challenged myself to reflect on my assumptions, beliefs, and biases critically. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) explained that a journaling practice “can help you understand your reasoning processes and consequent behavior, and so anticipate experiences before embarking on them” (p. 34). This self-awareness made me a more effective change agent. Furthermore, Scharmer (2018) suggested that this self-awareness cannot occur without a steadfast commitment to curiosity, compassion, and courage. Therefore, I pledged to a level of reflection that embodied these ideals.

Along with journaling, several memos were written at critical junctures of the research journey. In this collection of memos I noted issues of race, the interplay between heterarchical and hierarchical components, symbolism in the workplace, the reluctance of those in power to share it with those who have lower positional authority, and how the organization can be more receptive to change when they are publicly scrutinized. Proponents of the grounded theory approach explain that memo writing “involves researchers writing and reflecting on the research process and analytic decision-making, and documenting the development of interpretations throughout a study” (Roulston, 2010, p. 155). Maxwell (2005) illustrated the importance of memo writing by stating, “memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also facilitate such thinking, stimulating analytic insights” (p. 96). By “jotting down ideas and questions, and making connections between data excerpts and interpretations,” I indulged in the level of reflective practice that this research necessitated (Roulston, 2010, p. 156).

This commitment to self-reflection allowed me to get on the balcony, a compelling metaphor proposed by Heifetz and Linsky (2002). They asserted that great leaders can properly shift from seeing themselves as an actor in the change process to getting on the balcony, taking the role of an outsider to see the full picture. This complete picture also placed a critical focus on myself so that I could see how I was inadvertently affecting the change effort. Moving back and forth from the balcony perspective was a strategy I utilized so that I could see myself clearly. By doing so, I was a more objective researcher and moved beyond my blind spots.

Subjectivity Statement

In the present research, I, as the primary researcher, operated as a scholar-practitioner and an actor in the system. Thus, my prior knowledge, beliefs, and biases about the organization shaped the way I engaged with the research. In my role as a Senior Learning and Development Consultant, I have developed specific programming for the population that I am trying to serve. As a result, I had relationships with these employees and genuinely cared about their well-being. These relationships made me personally invested in advocating for these employees and the hardships they encountered.

One of these major challenges, the reorganization discussed in this study, occurred at the beginning of my tenure with the organization. Thus, I experienced firsthand what turmoil it created within the lives of employees. When presenting this catalyst for change, I see the faces and stories of those that were impacted. These experiences have shaped my own perception as to what I believed would work in this context. Simply put, I hope that these localized solutions that were created can prevent future organizational dysfunction.

Prior to my involvement with the present organization, I worked in a Campus Services division of another competitive university. My experiences with this university informed certain

leadership practices and strategies that I attempted to implement. However, throughout this research, I recognized that every setting is different with its unique nuances. Thus, I actively combated these inclinations to ensure that my research focused on deriving solutions that were contrived by the people of this context.

In my aim of transparency, I must also acknowledge that I am a Latina and that I am the daughter of immigrants to this country. This actively shaped my perspective of the problem and my commitment to this population. The Team Leads and the custodial services workforce primarily consisted of individuals of color, of which many are also immigrants to this country. I see a lot of myself in our employees, particularly those that work in custodial services. We shared similar narratives and struggles and it was difficult to disentangle myself from these personal connections. On a more personal level, my father also works in the service industry, as a food service worker, and I saw the importance in these undervalued positions. This influenced my urgency around this issue and my desire to highlight this population in the broader research literature and landscape. My self-awareness was critical throughout the research process to ensure that my feelings were not impeding the primary objective of the research.

Furthermore, my personal connection to this population led to my deep frustration during two of the “storms” of our story, COVID-19 and the article in the student-run newspaper. In these moments, I was disillusioned at the way in which the organization reverted back to a state of survival when progress was being made. Strides towards a distributed leadership structure were halted and paused by those with greater positional authority. Although I sensed my own negative emotions impeding my commitment to the research process, my frequent journaling and my major advisor, allowed me to see past my biases and frustrations. Instead, I pushed my AR teams and the work forward and found that by owning my subjectivity, we could reach

unimaginable heights. In the case of the present study, I found that my commitment to the research, during adversity, led me to see an organization that found urgency around issues of social justice during their lowest point. Thus, movement towards positive systemic change occurred, where both technical and adaptive solutions were embraced.

CHAPTER 3

THE AR STORY

The Seven Summits represent the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. In Asia, straddling Nepal and Tibet, stands the tallest mountain in the world, Mount Everest. Climbers attempting to summit this majestic mountain are faced with the ultimate mountaineering feat. A climber's dedication, commitment, and athletic ability are factors that are required of a successful trek, but all individuals embarking on the journey understand that unpredictable factors can derail their success (New York Times, 2017).

Climbers on Mount Everest face extreme weather conditions and those who have died have endured "subfreezing temperatures and the high altitude, especially after running out of supplemental oxygen, and getting caught in sudden storms" (New York Times, 2017). In other instances, climbers have died from falls and avalanches. In the present action research, the action research teams or "climbers" completed their dangerous Everest trek with twists and turns that were so unpredictable that many thought the organization itself would not survive.

The Campus Services division faced horrifying storms in the form of a global pandemic, COVID-19, and an incendiary article in the student-run newspaper, which exposed the oppressive hierarchical structures within the organization. Climbers were forced to endure these storms during a racial reckoning in the United States, where police brutality and the need for social justice emerged to the forefront. Thus, making the impetus for change evident and necessary. Prior to these events, climbers were studying the benefits of and need for a distributed leadership structure from a distance, and, quite suddenly, were thrust headfirst into this dangerous adaptive challenge. When storms on Mount Everest take their disastrous path, some

climbers survive, others are injured and many die. Ultimately, our climbers emerged victorious as they were able survive these storms and thrust the organization and its key stakeholders into a state of thriving.

Introduction to the Context

The Campus Services (CS) Division, within a southeastern university, consisted of 800 employees who work in the following departments: Planning, Design, and Construction, Facilities Management, Finance and Business Operations, Customer Relations and Support, and Public Safety. This organization was the current service provider of choice for facilities services for the university community and aimed to serve in such a capacity continually. The research took place within the Facilities Management department of the larger organization. As mentioned earlier, the Facilities Management department consisted of 4 sub-departments: Building and Residential Services, Operations and Maintenance, Energy and Utilities, and Exterior and Auxiliary Services. The Building and Residential Services sub-department was the focus of the action research (AR). This sub-department provided cleaning services to the university.

As I explored this sub-department, I did so as a Senior Learning and Development Consultant within the Learning and Development team in the Campus Services organization. The purpose of my role was to tackle complex organizational issues and decipher whether or not those problems could or should be addressed through training. I served all employees within Campus Services, from frontline employees to senior leaders. Because of my unique role, I had access to a wide range of perspectives regarding organizational issues and was frequently sought out to give my perspective on potential solutions. Furthermore, I had a reputation for being a solutions-oriented change agent within my organizational setting. I have created and

implemented leadership development programs that have added value to the employees who have participated and the organization in my tenure.

Additionally, using CS employee feedback, I created a CS Employee Portal website that served as a hub for news and frequently asked questions. As a result, my position gave me the time and space to facilitate organizational learning that catalyzed organizational improvement. However, I acknowledged that as a member of the CS community, I had biases and preconceived notions of the organization that potentially impacted the research.

The major stakeholders in the client system primarily consisted of the leaders of Facilities Management and Building and Residential Services. Their support ensured that the process was implemented with fidelity and not unnecessarily hindered. Also, because the action research built leadership capacity in Team Leads, their involvement was critical. All interventions needed their participation and feedback. Furthermore, my direct leadership received constant updates throughout the project, as I devoted time and effort on the job to address this organizational problem. Thus, the project's relationship to Learning and Development goals were explicit.

After several conversations with my committee members, direct leader, and other constituencies, two AR teams were created. One of the AR teams included key stakeholders that hold positional authority and decision-making power and 2 Team Leads (informal authority). Team Leads included in this AR team also participated in a second AR team, including additional Team Lead members. The AR team that was solely comprised of Team Leads served as a pilot group for any intervention implemented at this level. Furthermore, it allowed Team Leads to have a safe space to share their thoughts and ideas without fear of repercussions.

Table 6

AR Team 1 Profiles

Individual	Department	Sub-Department
AR Team Member 1	Finance & Business Operations	Learning and Development
AR Team Member 2	Finance & Business Operations	Human Resources
AR Team Member 3	Finance & Business Operations	Senior Leadership
AR Team Member 4	Facilities Management	Senior Leadership
AR Team Member 5	Facilities Management	BRS
AR Team Member 6	Facilities Management	BRS
AR Team Member 7	Facilities Management	BRS

Table 7

AR Team 2 Profiles

Individual	Department	Sub-Department	Role
AR Team Member 1	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 2	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 3	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 4	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 5	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 6	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead
AR Team Member 7	Facilities Management	BRS	Team Lead

Problem Framing: “Base Camp”

At 29,032 feet, the majestic Mount Everest is the planet’s highest mountain and is called the “Roof of the World” (New York Times, 2017). I still remember the day I learned about the role that sherpas play in guiding mountaineers to and from this summit. Sherpas do not climb the mountain for the teams they lead. They merely facilitate the climbing process to ensure each of their team members and the group, as a whole, is successful. However, sherpas respect the mountain as conditions frequently change, and the journey is filled with risk, just like organizations facing adaptive challenges. I have been the primary researcher and sherpa for these action research teams and the larger organization throughout this doctoral journey.

To illustrate the action research cycles that were embarked upon by Sequoyah University’s Campus Services organization, I will directly map these cycles onto different points on the Everest trek. All journeys at Everest begin at base camp, which in this story will involve depicting the problem’s origins and framing the trek ahead.

In 2016, Building and Residential Services (BRS), a department within Facilities Management, underwent a significant reorganization. This department is chiefly responsible for providing custodial services to the university. At that time, the BRS departmental structure consisted of a director, three assistant directors (ADs), and supervisors. The previous organizational structure is illustrated below.

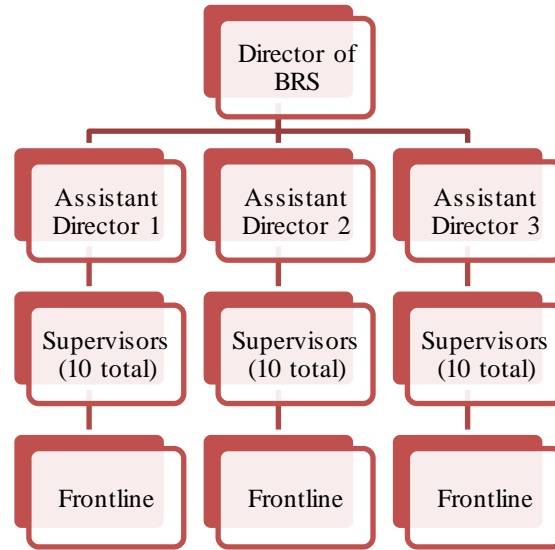


Figure 5. BRS Organizational Structure

In this structure, the ADs were mainly accountable for the administrative tasks of managing custodial workers, while supervisors were out in the field more closely inspecting the quality of the work. Of notable concern, several employees in the AD and supervisor roles were not meeting the larger goals of the department or key performance indicators.

Senior leadership in CS was receiving an increased amount of customer complaints, with several stating a significant variation in the quality of work in different buildings and areas of campus. Although this disparity was noted, senior leadership found it difficult to pinpoint who was responsible for the declining performance of the department. Conversations regarding these performance issues began between senior leaders and BRS leadership. The Director of BRS firmly believed that the problem resided in the ranks below, the AD and supervisor roles. Although the blame was placed on those individuals, some were operating effectively, while others were not. Despite this reality, the Director of BRS was pressured to fix the issue expeditiously.

A quick deadline to turn around the department led to the plan for the reorganization. Instead of pinpointing which AD and supervisors were underperforming, major layoffs took

place. Supervisor roles were eliminated, and three AD roles were consolidated into one.

Additionally, the role of Area Manager and Team Lead was created. The Area Manager position was designed to oversee the higher-level functioning of the team, such as determining effective routines and procedures, data management, and conducting performance evaluations. The Team Lead role was meant to oversee, monitor, and inspect day-to-day performance in the field while acting as informal leaders. The intended result of these new roles was to increase productivity and eliminate middle managers. However, discrepancies and evidence of an adaptive challenge can be noted from the Team Lead job description in Appendix E. In the job description, the Team Lead role was expected to “perform all essential duties and responsibilities of both Custodian and Senior Custodian positions” while also inspecting “assigned areas to ensure that the quality of work and work result is consistent with departmental standards.” This role came with significant responsibility, yet their job description limited them from taking corrective action. Their responsibilities were not aligned with their performance expectations. This was evident in the job description that stated that Team Leads must “report staff concerns, areas of deficiency, and any need for building maintenance to the shift manager or O&M zone supervisor for appropriate action.” While their new title denoted increased responsibility and pay, the Team Leads were not well aligned to carry out their new role.

Although the BRS Director and senior leadership expected improved outcomes soon after the reorganization, the department received a record number of customer complaints. Customers expressed that the quality of work had dramatically decreased after the change effort. The BRS Director was swiftly terminated, and a new leader was put into that role. These problems continued to persist even though the reorganization was designed to ameliorate these issues. Because they work directly with frontline employees, Team Leads were blamed for the

department's dysfunction. Such claims were made because there had been a multitude of complaints regarding the effectiveness of Team Leads. In most of these complaints, frontline employees expressed that the Team Leads mistreated employees, communicated ineffectively, delegated tasks inappropriately, and failed to inspect completed work. Furthermore, decreased employee morale, low employee engagement, and high employee turnover plagued the BRS department since the reorganization.

Interestingly enough, additional organizational changes took place during the AR journey. The new BRS Director reintroduced the supervisor role into the BRS organizational structure to assist the struggling Team Leads. In this reporting structure, Team Leads reported to supervisors, while supervisors reported to the area managers. These supervisors, according to their job description located in Appendix F, were tasked with "overseeing and delivering quality and reliable custodial services to the academic, administrative, and residential units on all of Sequoyah University's campuses" while "directly supervising staff." Under this structure, supervisors were granted formal authority and increased hourly rates, leading to an influx of high-performing Team Leads applying to these roles, which have subsequently been filled predominantly by former Team Leads. The current research conducted a more in-depth inquiry into the challenges of the Team Lead role and the dynamic BRS organizational structure.

The Everest Trek Begins

Now that we have established our base camp, or where the organization started, the Everest trek will begin. A high-level overview of this entire trek will be shared in this section. The purpose of this action research study was to explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades. Specifically, the study is fundamentally rooted in the belief that a distributed leadership structure would allow

informal leaders, Team Leads, to thrive within the Building and Residential Services Department. The distributed leadership framework detailed best practices for sharing leadership at varying levels of positional authority within an organization. Organizations that properly implement distributed leadership theory have seen improvements in group dynamics, workplace productivity, and organizational culture (Gronn, 2002; MacBeath et al., 2004; Spillane, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2006). Furthermore, distributed leadership structures leave organizations better equipped to face adaptive challenges.

The change journey that follows describes how the organization worked to transform the system into one that promoted the tenets of distributed leadership. The organization embarked on this pursuit for several years, starting in 2019. In these years, the organization saw significant successes and faced one of the biggest adaptive challenges that impacted the entire world, COVID-19. The action research cycle and its respective phases are used to capture the organization's path and demonstrate the transition from a primarily hierarchical structure to one that was more distributed in nature.

The following research question was the primary exploration:

What is learned at the individual, group, and system-level that advances distributed leadership theory and practice in action research within the trades?

- Sub-Research Question: How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?

To best answer the primary and sub-research questions, as mentioned earlier, Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) cycles for conducting action research were used. Each action research cycle

consists of the following phases: constructing, planning for action, taking action, and evaluating action. The organization's change journey consisted of four action research cycles, which are summarized and depicted in the table that follows:

Cycle 1 or "Camp 1": The action research methodology was introduced to action research team members, the training needs of the Building and Residential Services department was evaluated, and current Learning and Development offerings were reviewed. Furthermore, to frame the problem, pilot data were generated from 3 semi-structured interviews with Team Leads. 2 additional interviews, which took place later, were presented in Cycle 1. This data was then used to inform the development of technical and leadership development programming. The integrated leadership development program (BRS EQUIP and ENGAGE Labs) was evaluated using survey and focus group data.

Cycle 2 or "Camp 2": In this cycle, action research teams continued to look at the survey and focus group data to understand the next steps. AR team members were compelled to build a learning culture across the Campus Services Organization, which meant that leadership development programming regarding the tenets of distributed leadership would need to be presented to all leaders within the organization. A leadership development program was launched, and informal learning opportunities were investigated and integrated. Finally, survey data from the leadership development program was evaluated.

Cycle 3 or "Camp 3": COVID-19, a major adaptive challenge, took place, which led both AR teams to shift their focus to the organization's survival. This led to a pause on technical and leadership development programming. Two additional interviews took place. Strategies for a safe phased return to campus were explored, and cross-collaboration projects were formulated, integrated, and evaluated.

Cycle 4 or “Camp 4”: A plan for spring return to campus was explored, and leadership development programming resumes. The integration of a career mobility program, coaching program, listening sessions, and employee resource groups start.

Table 8

Summary of Action Research Cycles

Cycle 1: "Camp 1"	Dates	Interventions
<i>Constructing</i>	May - June 2019	Formation of AR Team, conducted first AR Team meetings, an overview of action research, review of internal documents, analyze BRS Training needs and current offerings of the Learning and Development department, conducted CIT interviews with Team Leads
<i>Planning for Action</i>	June 2019	Crafted a standardized cleaning vision and determined relevant technical and leadership competencies
<i>Taking Action</i>	July 2019 - August 2019	Deployed BRS ENGAGE and EQUIP Labs (leadership development program)
<i>Evaluating Action</i>	September 2019 - October 2019	Evaluated learner data from surveys, conducted follow-up focus group with Team Leads
Cycle 2: "Camp 2"	Dates	Interventions
<i>Constructing</i>	November 2019	Revisited major findings from learner survey data and focus groups
<i>Planning for Action</i>	November 2019 - December 2019	Designed a curriculum for a larger-scale leadership development program for all CS Leaders
<i>Taking Action</i>	December 2019 - March 2020	Launched leadership development program and CS Learning Week (informal learning opportunity)
<i>Evaluating Action</i>	March 2020	Review learner data from surveys
Cycle 3: "Camp 3"	Dates	Interventions
<i>Constructing</i>	March 2020	Analyzed university decisions and communications and gathered emerging knowledge regarding COVID-19

<i>Planning for Action</i>	June 2020	Leadership development/training is paused, strategy for COVID-19 Phased Return to Campus is created, and cross-collaboration projects are planned
<i>Taking Action</i>	July 2020	Implementation of COVID-19 Phased Return to Campus protocol and cross-collaboration projects begin
<i>Evaluating Action</i>	August - November 2020	Analyzed the completion rates of COVID-19 Phased Return to Campus requirements and evaluated whether cross-collaboration project milestones were met
Cycle 4: "Camp 4"	Dates	Interventions
<i>Constructing</i>	November 2020 - December 2020	Analyzed the impact of cross-collaboration projects and evaluated key concerns brought forth by student-run newspaper to inform future practice
<i>Planning for Action</i>	January 2020	Career mobility program, coaching program, FSAP Listening Sessions, EQUIP Leadership Development Sessions are planned.
<i>Taking Action</i>	February - March 2020	FSAP Listening Sessions and EQUIP Leadership Development Sessions are launched.
<i>Evaluating Action</i>	March - April 2020	Findings are shared and reviewed by AR teams.

In the following sections, there will be a high-level overview of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, where major interventions are highlighted. However, Cycles 3 and 4 are detailed by phase, as this is when climbers were caught in the midst of dangerous storms, the AR journey became personal, and the stakes were high for our climbers on the Everest trek.

Cycle 1: "Camp 1"

At 19,900 feet, Camp 1 is the first stop in our Everest trek. Climbers work to adjust physiologically to the new altitude conditions (New York Times, 2017). In the first cycle of this organizational change story, both action research teams needed to have a foundational understanding of the action research methodology and a clear delineation of the phases that we

would embark upon iteratively. Action research teams also established a concrete understanding of both distributed leadership and adaptive leadership theory. These foundational understandings mark the acclimatization process on our expedition up our Everest. Throughout much of this cycle, the action research teams were charged with understanding the present state of the organization and determining what the desired future state would be.

The Critical Incident Technique: Preliminary Findings/Pilot Data

To support the action research teams' inquiry and exploration of informal leaders' current challenges, initial interviews with Team Leads were conducted.

As mentioned earlier, the Critical Incident Technique (detailed in Chapter 2) was used to guide the interview process. Once the action research teams and I completed the rigorous coding process, we began to generate key themes and insights from the data.

First, we used a partially ordered meta-matrix to evaluate the feelings and concerns expressed by interviewees. As the present research explored the interpersonal dimension between Team Leads and their teams, these feelings and emotions lend to fully understanding the benefits and challenges of individuals in these roles. This tool also captured some meaningful In Vivo codes. By utilizing this tool, the interpersonal dimension of distributed leadership is shown. In the first column, each interviewee is listed. In the following column, feelings/concerns brought forth by interviewees are noted. Specifically, the plus sign indicates positive feelings, while the minus sign represents negative feelings or concerns. In the final column, insights about informal leadership, our sub-research question, are recorded. This visual depiction can be seen in the table below.

Table 9

Informal Leaders - Partially Ordered Meta-Matrix

Users (Pseudonyms)	Feelings/Concerns	Insights about Informal Leadership (Sub-Research Question)
Makayla	(-) Dislikes when employees skip the chain of command, (+)Enjoys helping other employees attain their goals and aiding in their development, (-) Feels disrespected by employees due to inability to take corrective action	Employees display resistance and disrespect those who lack positional authority.
Lydia	(-) Dislikes being "bypassed" by employees (where employees go directly to their supervisor to express concerns), (+) Enjoys showing employees more effective ways of completing routines	Employees are more likely to express concerns to someone with positional authority.
Deonte	(+) feels most influential when he builds trust with employees by demonstrating technical knowledge, (-) worries about workload given to employees	Employees value technical expertise shown by Team Lead. The display of technical expertise builds trust with employees.
Ruby	(-) describes Team Lead experience as "horrible," (-) expressed frustration when addressing poor completion of tasks with employees as they would go directly to area manager to complain, (+) appreciates "positive energy" from employees, (+) enjoys the ability to take corrective action as a supervisor and having the power to make a difference	Employees will frequently address concerns or complaints to those with positional authority. Also, the inability to take corrective action leads to frustration. When Team Leads transition to roles with positional authority, they appreciate the ability to take action when needed and setting a vision.
Michelangelo	(-) disliked the lack of authority given to Team Leads, (+) loves having employees aspire for something more and motivating them to develop themselves, (-) frustrated by the inability to take corrective action and when issues are escalated to leadership, they are unresolved, (+) the supervisor role is "easier" as there is power	The inability to take corrective action leads to diminishing respect for Team Leads. When Team Leads raise issues to those with positional authority, the issues remain unaddressed. When a Team Lead transitions to a role with authority, it is perceived as easier and more meaningful.

By noting each interviewee's specific feelings and concerns, larger noticings at the individual, group, and system-level emerged. These noticings were pertinent to our larger research question.

Miles et al.'s (2014) summary table was used to capture these emerging concerns at these varying levels. These concerns are listed in the table that follows.

Table 10

Summary Table: Individual, Group, and System Level (Primary Research Question)

Type of Concern
Individual Concerns
Relational problems exist between Team Leads and their staff.
There is a need to develop technical and leadership skills within all Building and Residential Services department levels.
Without demonstrated technical knowledge, Team Leads are challenged by their teams.
Group Concerns
Power and critical decision-making are reserved for those with positional authority.
There is a lack of follow-through from those with positional authority when Team Leads present issues (leads to lack of trust from their teams).
There are no shared standards or expectations for technical or leadership competencies within the department.
Employees will frequently bypass their Team Leads to address concerns with a leader with positional authority.
System Concerns
Frontline employees experience a perceived disparity.
Lack of organizational vision during ambiguous times creates tension among employees.
Employees need to understand the larger purpose or why behind their work or they lack motivation.
During adaptive challenges, like COVID-19, employees feel undervalued and overworked.

Finally, Miles et al.'s (2014) construct table was used to highlight distributed leadership constructs and illustrate supporting respondent quotes. This particular visual depiction “includes data that highlight the variable properties or dimensions of one key construct (or concept, variable, or category) of interest from the study” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 171). Additionally, it presented meaningful In Vivo codes that complemented the larger distributed leadership constructs, which served as “patterns” to verify or refute. The construct table for the present study can be found below.

Table 11

Distributed Leadership Construct Table

Code	Sub-Code	Supporting Respondent Quotes	Role
Building Capacity and Skills/ Sharing Expertise	Technical Knowledge/ Show Don't Tell	"I also want to be knowledgeable. I don't want to just have a title and not know what I am doing. I can't have people under me asking me things that I don't know. If I'm knowledgeable, I can speak about it, and that's trust."	Team Lead
Social Context/ Adaptive Leadership	Vision	"When customers aren't around, it is harder to motivate them to clean buildings."	Team Lead/Supervisor
Leadership as a Practice (not a role)	Trust	"I had to get to know my employees, which included learning the good things, bad things, and what they needed to improve. I had to connect to each employee differently."	Team Lead/Supervisor
Rethink Power	Power Struggles	"If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important, and they should do something about it. I should be able to hold employees accountable of X, Y, and Z. I feel like the system is disconnected because I can't."	Team Lead/ Supervisor

After completing these visual depictions and engaging in the generating meaning stage of Ruona's (2005) stages of data analysis, several big ideas began to emerge. A significant insight at the individual, group, and system-level is shared in the following section.

Individual Learning: Technical and Leadership Skills. Frequently, trade organizations are purely focused on technical expertise and productivity. To harness the tenets of Gronn's

(2002) conceptual distributed leadership framework, informal leaders in this trades organization needed to move beyond technical expertise to engage in spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice. For informal leaders, Team Leads, to succeed in their new roles within the custodial services department, it was clear that the organization needed to create a learning culture that expected knowledge beyond the technical. To illustrate this point, a former Team Lead, Ruby, recognized the importance of building trust as a leadership competency when she stated:

At my huddles, I started sharing each holiday that was on the calendar (even Pi Day). I noticed that things were better when I would bring non-work-related things to huddles. I knew what people liked and didn't like on a personal level. In my previous group, we were not able to come together as a group and have conversations about what they really liked and didn't.

Another Team Lead, Lydia, acknowledged that to lead effectively, she needed to be receptive to her team's feedback and concerns. She noted a particular instance where an employee was overworked and explained:

The next day, I talked to her about her frustration, and she told me that the bag she left was a pass-off. She said she couldn't get all of her work done. I let her know that I would work with her. I wanted to see what she did and how she did it. There had to be something more as to why she couldn't finish. So we worked together, and I saw all she had to do.

Lydia goes on to state that her receptiveness to the feedback from her employee led her to the realization that:

She [her employee] is doing the job of several recycling specialists and custodians by herself.

Thus, effective Team Leads learn of employee hardships when they welcome feedback and build the team.

Although leadership competencies are important, it cannot be overstated that both technical and leadership skills must be strengthened. Ruby referenced this point in the excerpt below when explaining the importance of technical skill regarding supplies:

Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can help with detailed work, such as toothbrushes or specific chemicals. For example, I say, “if you spray this or use this other thing, your job could be easier.” The employees are willing to work harder and improve their skills when they have new proven methods to do things.

Thus, these excerpts indicated that informal leaders can more effectively and efficiently influence their teams towards desired outcomes when they possess leadership and technical skills.

Group Learning: Positional Authority Matters. Another critical theme that emerged from the interviews was that positional authority mattered within the Building and Residential Services Department. Across several interviews, interviewees mentioned that those with positional authority are respected, while employees frequently bypassed those who lead informally. In the excerpt below, Michelangelo illustrated a particular instance where, despite his attempts to assuage a conflict between two employees, a leader with positional authority was able to resolve the dispute quicker due to their positionality:

When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who was responsible for the work. I talked to both of them, and they were at odds. They didn't want to resolve

their disagreement. I even tried to talk to them individually. When I got my area manager involved, she immediately called the employees and explained that she had heard that they were having issues. They immediately found a resolution. It was apparent that they were in fear of her and the potential of getting reprimanded. I literally had the same conversation, but it didn't mean anything to them.

Makayla corroborated Michelangelo's story by referencing the following conflict with an employee:

I have one employee who feels like I just don't know nothing. I had an incident with him a couple of weeks ago. He worked with me at one of my buildings. He has an issue where he wants to skip the chain of command. If something doesn't go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real bad, and he gets smart with me.

In this instance, we can see that when employees have concerns or are frustrated with their Team Lead, they are quick to "skip the chain of command" and address their issues with those who have positional authority. Interestingly, Ruby, a former Team Lead who transitioned into the supervisor role (with positional authority), shared how, within the department, with positional authority comes respect and decision-making power. This is noted in her excerpt below:

As a supervisor, when there are issues, the employees make sure to come to me instead of going over me to the area manager. I feel like I am making a difference because they come to me for the resolution of their problems.

She also noted:

I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but this is my group. I have to notice my people's struggles. You can't just write people up. Instead, it is about how to help people and notice what they struggle with.

As evidenced in these excerpts, Team Leads were unable to fulfill their role of practicing leadership at the frontline level due to employees who overstep Team Leads' informal authority and discuss issues directly with leaders who have positional authority. For this distributed leadership model to be effective, individuals with positional authority must continually reinforce Team Leads' ability to practice leadership and make decisions. Ultimately, leaders with positional authority must share power to promote the leadership of others, regardless of title. By doing so, individuals across the organization can collaborate to attain Gromm's (2002) institutionalized practice, which is when an organization sets the appropriate conditions for mutual collaboration to occur.

System-Level Learning: Vision and Purpose Motivates Employees. At the system level, another major finding is that informal leaders were successful in leading when vision and purpose are delineated by the larger Campus Services division or the larger Building and Residential Services department. This point is illustrated by Michelangelo below:

The new hires were not recycling properly. Even when the color of the bag matches the color of the bins, it seemed like they did not understand how to recycle or they didn't care. As a result, they were putting recyclables in the landfill pile. Despite me explaining the task, I realized that they probably did not understand the larger vision for why we do what we do. I decided to influence them by discussing the importance of recycling. I explained that it would lessen our carbon footprint on the Earth, which would make a better and safer world for our kids. After emphasizing the why behind recycling in a meaningful way, there were no issues about putting the right things in the right places.

In this excerpt, we see that the larger message surrounding sustainability helped motivate Michelangelo's employees. Simply explaining the larger purpose and the why behind recycling led to better productivity outcomes.

However, during adaptive challenges or ambiguous times, like COVID-19, the lack of an organizational vision or purpose created tensions on the teams of those leading informally. Michelangelo, a supervisor who transitioned from the Team Lead role, shared the following instance where he watched his Team Lead getting yelled at by employees on their team during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:

They were yelling, "Sequoyah doesn't care about us!" Everyone seemed to be nervous and scared. They had unanswered questions. One guy went on a tirade, saying that it was unjust that they were exposed. He even exclaimed, "Is it because we don't matter or make as much as everyone else?" I had to explain to them that our job cannot be completed at home. I went on to say, "We are learning new things about the virus every day. We are experiencing a time of uncertainty, and that when I hear more, I will share it with you. I don't have answers right now." I brought up their concerns to my leader, but they didn't have any answers either.

In this powerful story, it is evident that the organization needed to work to create a unified vision or reiterate the larger mission for the work to prevent the disenfranchisement of employees during times of ambiguity. Being that Campus Services is exceptionally diverse, it is even more critical to draw attention to employees' concerns and their experiences of feeling less than those in higher pay grades than trades employees. If these experiences are not acknowledged, the organization will fail to recognize the larger social context that trickles into the workspace. As a

result, resistance and decreased work productivity ensue, which inhibits the ability of informal leaders to lead effectively during turbulent times.

Ruby also delineated similar struggles during her leadership at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:

The employees that worked during this time were very negative. They were highly unmotivated and did not fully understand why they should clean. However, some employees were more understanding than others. I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that we still need to serve our customers.

All in all, for a distributed leadership structure to thrive and empower informal leaders to take up their leadership, the Building and Residential Services department and the larger Campus Services division would need to seek to unite employees with a common purpose and vision that connected them to the higher education setting in which they work.

Adaptive Challenge 1: A Standardized Cleaning Vision

After reflection on these interviews, AR team members discussed that it was critical to first address the Team Leads' skill gaps and those of the entire BRS department in congruence with a distributed leadership approach. It was evident in these critical incidents that a Team Lead's influence was largely impacted by their ability to demonstrate technical expertise. Since the reorganization, there had been no alignment around what technical skills were necessary to succeed within the department.

To start this process, AR team 1, the team with key decision-making power, decided that a vision for cleaning within BRS and the larger Campus Services organization would need to be crafted, as technical solutions can be part of adaptive change. They recognized that within the BRS department, there were no standard operating procedures for cleaning. This would need to

be changed, as Team Leads are expected to enforce certain cleaning techniques that have not been articulated or demonstrated to the larger BRS staff. For example, each custodian cleans bathrooms differently. This results in some custodians cleaning more efficiently than others. Such alignment of these custodial skills would be a necessary component of a Team Lead's success. Additionally, it was recognized that by doing so, overall employee productivity would be improved.

Technical Skills Gaps. As a result, the team brainstormed what foundational technical skills were necessary for all job roles within BRS. The topics that emerged as priorities were knowledge of chemicals and safety and general cleaning practices of bathrooms, laboratories, offices/meeting spaces, lounges/eating areas, and public areas. Once the topics were decided, a consensus was reached regarding the need for both content-based sessions and hands-on sessions. All BRS employees would be required to attend, from BRS leadership to frontline employees. Although these technical skills were determined to be the top priority, there would also be a future strategy of targeting specialized floor cleaning techniques, including the following topics: proper use of the scrubbing machine, steam machine, burnishing machine, and carpet care machine.

Leadership Skills Gaps. In combination with the technical skill strategy, leadership skills would be developed as well. Collaboratively, the following leadership skills were determined as top priorities: dealing with ambiguity, time management, effective communication, and accountability. Each leadership topic would be addressed with both content sessions and scenario-based practice. Thus, there would be two sessions for each topic. As each of the BRS people leaders (including Team Leads) partook in an effective communication content class within that year, there was only a scenario-based session for this topic. For

example, dealing with ambiguity topic would require one content-based session, and another session focused on the real-world application of concepts in a scenario format. AR team 2 played a critical role in the development of the leadership development curriculum. Particularly, their input was valuable in crafting the scenarios that would be utilized in the scenario-based sessions.

EQUIP and ENGAGE Leadership Labs

After extensive planning, the action research teams jointly decided to launch our new leadership development series. With the backing of both AR teams, the BRS ENGAGE Labs, the leadership development training program, was launched. All people leaders within BRS were invited to attend. These people leaders include Team Leads, Area Managers, and the Director of BRS. For data collection and analysis purposes, BRS leaders with positional authority (area managers and Director) were labeled as having attended an EQUIP Lab session, while Team Leads were denoted as having attended an ENGAGE Lab session. Although their leadership programs have different names, all participants attended training jointly. This was important to each AR team, as they found those interactions across levels of authority to be important. The sessions were well attended, and feedback from participants was collected. The Learning and Development department within Campus Services utilizes a standard survey to measure participant satisfaction and learning based on Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Evaluation. The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation is a four-level model used to evaluate training programs (Kirkpatrick, 1994). The levels included by the model are reactions, learning, behavior, and results. This model is depicted below (Kirkpatrick, 1994).



Figure 6. The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation. Adapted from <https://ellogiclearning.com/easily-implement-kirkpatrick-model-using-lms/>.

Participants were asked to respond to this survey via an online tool called Mentimeter. This tool allowed respondents to share their responses anonymously by using a generated code in real-time on their cell phones, computer, or tablet. The survey questions and the rating scale are included in Appendix O. These surveys were conducted after each content and scenario-based session. Of particular interest to the AR, teams demonstrated that learning took place, which corresponds with Level 2 of The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation. A summary of the response data can be found in the table below. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix P.

Table 12

Summary of EQUIP and ENGAGE Lab Survey Results

	Key Survey Findings
ENGAGE Labs (Team Leads Only)	Effective Communication, Dealing with Ambiguity, and Time Management courses led to increased self-reported learning for participants.
	Scenario-based training sessions led to larger increases in learning for participants.
	All session topics were rated as highly relevant and applicable.
EQUIP Labs (BRS Positional Leaders)	Effective Communication, Dealing with Ambiguity, and Time Management courses led to increased self-reported learning for participants.
	Both content based and scenario-based training led to similar increases in learning for participants.
	All session topics were rated as highly relevant and applicable.
Overall:	Overall, Team Leads reported higher levels of self-reported learning across all sessions as compared to BRS Leaders with positional authority.

Focus Group with Team Leads

The participant data from the leadership development program was shared with each AR team. Upon discussion, members were particularly interested in Team Leads' thoughts of the program after some time. It was unanimously decided that a focus group with Team Leads would be held to ask questions surrounding what type of challenges continue to persist and perhaps what other topics could be addressed through training. Both teams illustrated the value of regular capacity-building opportunities. However, they wanted data to substantiate whether this was truly what Team Leads wanted.

Two months after the leadership development program with BRS, a focus group was held with Team Leads in BRS. In this focus group, members were asked to complete four questions privately. These questions are noted in Appendix Q. As the responses were collected privately

via Mentimeter, they were shared in real-time with the focus group and served as a starting point of the discussion. Key findings included:

- Participants found the effective communication class the most helpful. The concept of leading with influence was covered in this class, and participants mentioned how salient those skills were in their leadership practice.
- Participants wanted more content and scenario-based sessions. The dual format was preferred to solely having content or scenario-based sessions. Of particular note, the participants enjoyed having other BRS leaders, with positional authority, during their scenario-based practice to help validate their application of concepts for their context.
- A majority of the focus group participants preferred to have monthly leadership development opportunities instead of quarterly or bi-monthly.
- Focus group participants requested the following topics as follow-ups to their leadership development program:
 - Leading with Influence (revisit with scenario-based practice)
 - Giving Effective Feedback
 - Stress Management
 - HR Policy Review
 - Managing Up
 - Effective Communication (revisit with scenario-based practice)
 - Teambuilding

Cycle 2: “Camp 2”

Climbers, our action research teams, have now reached Camp 2. At 21,300 feet, the journey up to this point has not been easy (New York Times, 2017). After hours of hiking

through the snow, climbers reach the Lhotse wall, where they can now find themselves amongst the clouds of the Himalayas. The climbers are getting used to the conditions but realize that they still have a long journey ahead.

AR Team Reflects on Focus Group Data

At this point in the Everest trek, responses from the focus group (via Mentimeter) with Team Leads were shared with both AR teams to plan the climb to Camp 3. AR team 1, which includes the Director of BRS and the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management, indicated their leadership development support as an integral part of BRS' departmental vision. Thus, they and the other members agreed that leadership development training would be available on a more regular basis. Upon discussion, the Director of BRS indicated that the only concern he had regarding monthly training, both content and scenario-based sessions, was that certain months are pretty hectic for BRS staff. He explained:

April, May, and August are the months with critical events. April marks the beginning of strategic preparation for commencement. Commencement, commencement-related activities, and move-out take place in May. We are already short-staffed, and it is unlikely that my managers will be on board. August is when summer conferences and camps wrap up in the dorms on campus, and our employees have a quick turnaround before students return to campus.

As a result, AR team 1 proposed a different solution. They devised the idea that there may still be twelve sessions, but more than one session may be facilitated in a given month to ensure that Team Leads are still given the same amount of classes they would have gotten otherwise. AR Team 2 mentioned that sessions could be longer, thus covering more material in a given day. This would be as opposed to having more than one session in a month.

Regarding the topics shared by Team Leads, both AR teams agreed that those topics were relevant and applicable to the job. Of particular interest to the AR team, was the desire for Team Leads to understand Human Resources policies. A Team Lead on this team stated that:

We can't take corrective action, but we still need to know what is and isn't against the rules. If we got to share in shift reports what is happening in our groups, this information is important.

This nuanced perspective was met with support from other AR team members. Increased opportunities for Team Leads to apply their leading with influence skillset were discussed, such as helping conduct inspections, assisting with employee evaluations, shift reports, and inventory.

Adaptive Challenge 2: Building a Learning Culture Across Campus Services

In the previous phase, the action research teams identified the next adaptive challenge they would address. Both AR teams realized there was a continual need for leadership development for Team Leads and all BRS people leaders. However, the AR teams felt that attempts to improve Team Lead's leadership and technical skills would be futile if the larger system, Campus Services, did not create a common and shared language for leadership across all departments and all levels of positionality. Thus, both AR teams devised a program curriculum alongside Campus Services leaders from each of the five major departments: Planning, Design, and Construction, Facilities Management, Finance, and Business Operations, Customer Relations and Support, and Public Safety. This would be the first step of spanning learning beyond the Building and Residential Services sub-department. This program would use the same program name, EQUIP, to mark the congruency and continuity with the previous leadership development program for BRS.

Leadership Development for All CS Leaders. Based on the focus group data, the AR teams understood that, beyond leadership skills, leaders needed a strong understanding of human

resource policy to be successful in the Campus Services organization. Jointly, members of both teams formulated the purpose of the program, the audience, and the format. The purpose of the program was stated as follows:

To equip people leaders of Campus Services with skills necessary to effectively engage customers and manage the customer and employee experience. Participants will also acquire knowledge and effective application of relevant policies and procedures.

The audience of the program was stated as people leaders in the Campus Services Division. Finally, the format would include facilitated classroom sessions, interactive workshops and include an EQUIP On The Go! Further details regarding the program can be found in the figure below.

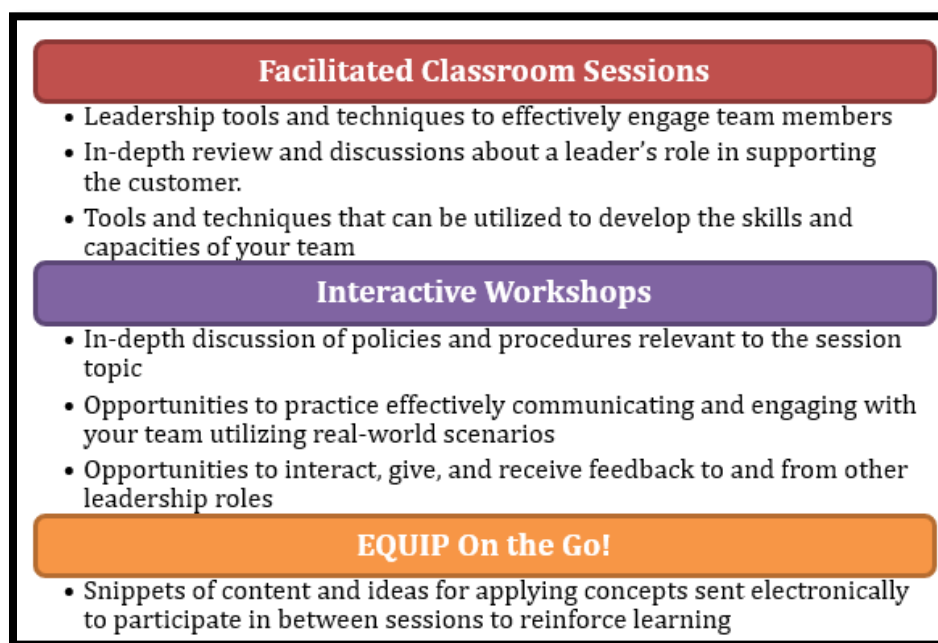


Figure 7. EQUIP 2019-2020 Format Description

Once the general structure of the program was devised, the AR teams conducted a “roadshow,” where they meet with people leaders across each of the Campus Services departments to co-create a curriculum that would be relevant for all CS leaders despite their differences in day-to-day functionality. Once “the roadshow” was complete, the AR team finalized the session topics,

including building both leadership and technical skills. The leadership skills sessions would focus on soft skills and competencies related to the larger distributed leadership and adaptive leadership frameworks. The technical skills portion of the program would solely focus on human resource policies that were directly linked to laws, which would lead to serious employee relations issues if any CS leader mismanaged. The session topics can be found in the table below.

Table 13

EQUIP Session Topics and Descriptions

Session
<p>Session 1: Decoding the Customer Experience Who are your customers? Provide outstanding customer service that exceeds expectations. Tool: Techniques to improve communication and manage expectations of varying customers</p>
<p>Session 2: Building Capacity in Others How can leaders help create a learning culture? Best practices for developing your employees Tool: The GROW Model will provide a framework to develop employees.</p>
<p>Session 3: Teambuilding Within and Across Teams What does effective teambuilding look like? Learn how to turn groups of individuals into a cohesive team. Tool: Best practices for establishing a common purpose/goal with employees on your team and colleagues across the organization</p>
<p>Session 4: Managing Change What is change? What is change management? What is a leader's role in guiding employees through periods of change? Tool: Best approaches for preparing, supporting, and helping employees through periods of change</p>
<p>Workshop 1: ADA Guidelines and practices regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act. Tool: Step-by-step outline to effectively navigate your role in abiding by the requirements of the ADA</p>
<p>Workshop 2: FMLA Proper procedures regarding the Family and Medical Leave Act. Tool: Guidelines for determining the appropriate type of leave, proper procedures, and its impact on your business</p>

Workshop 3: Workers' Compensation

Protocols for reporting and handling work-related injuries or illnesses.

Tool: Checklist to guide appropriate response to a workers' compensation claim

CS-Wide EQUIP Leadership Development Program Launched

After completing the roadshow and the finalization of the session topics, the leadership development series for all Campus Services leaders was launched. Feedback from participants was collected, via Mentimeter, at the end of each session. As described earlier, this tool allowed respondents to share their responses anonymously by using a generated code in real-time on their cell phones, computer, or tablet. For consistency, the survey was identical to the one used by participants in the BRS EQUIP and ENGAGE labs (refer to Appendix O). The following statements were posed and participants used the designated scale listed to answer:

A summary of the survey data for the first set of sessions (Decoding the Customer Experience, Building Capacity in Others, Teambuilding Within and Across Teams, and Managing Teams), denoted as the leadership skills sessions, can be found below. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix R. Unfortunately, due to a larger adaptive challenge that no one could have anticipated, the EQUIP program's technical skills or human resources portion was not completed in the in-person format. For that reason, participant data for the remaining three sessions (ADA, FMLA, and Workers' Compensation) were not included.

Table 14

Summary of CS-Wide EQUIP Leadership Development Program Survey Results

	Key Survey Findings
Pre- and Post- Learning	Managing Change, Decoding the Customer Experience, Building Capacity in Others, and Teambuilding Within and Across Teams courses led to increased self-reported learning for participants.
Application and Relevance	All session topics were rated as highly relevant and applicable.
Role	Overall, Supervisors reported higher levels of self-reported learning across all sessions as compared to groups with higher positional authority (AVP/Director & Mid-Level Leaders).

Campus Services Learning Week

Upon reviewing the survey data from the leadership development program's competency based-sessions, AR team members (from both teams) decided to integrate supplemental interventions in this phase. Furthermore, as action research is iterative, action research members remained authentic and receptive to feedback and survey comments received from key stakeholders regarding potential new avenues that could be explored to support the distributed leadership structure.

AR team members on both teams recognized that the adaptive challenge of integrating a distributed leadership structure in BRS would require a larger change to our organization's learning culture. The larger organization's learning culture would need to be inclusive of employees at all levels of positional authority. If Team Leads are expected to lead informally, the organization needs to empower employees, at all levels, to practice leadership by embracing the adaptive challenge of seeing leadership and themselves differently. Hence, the inaugural Campus Services Learning Week was planned, created, and implemented.

This learning week was a three-day event that included a learning fair, going back-to-school workshops, and career development workshops. Descriptions of each day are included in the flyer shown in Figure 18. The learning fair included community partners that shared educational resources. Representatives included Sequoyah University's Central Learning department, Sequoyah's Continuing Education department, Coaching Services, CS Learning and Development, a local computer center, and two local colleges. The Going Back to School Workshops consisted of the following: Educational Goal Setting, Tuition Reimbursement/Courtesy Scholarship, and Balancing Life, Career, and School. Finally, the career development workshops were: Networking 101, Resume Writing, Interview Skills, and Retirement Planning.

To accommodate most shifts, the workshops offered on Day 2 and Day 3 were taught twice – one set of workshops in the morning and the same set in the afternoon. Night shift employees would be provided recordings of the live sessions. To record the live sessions, Zoom, an online meeting platform, was used.

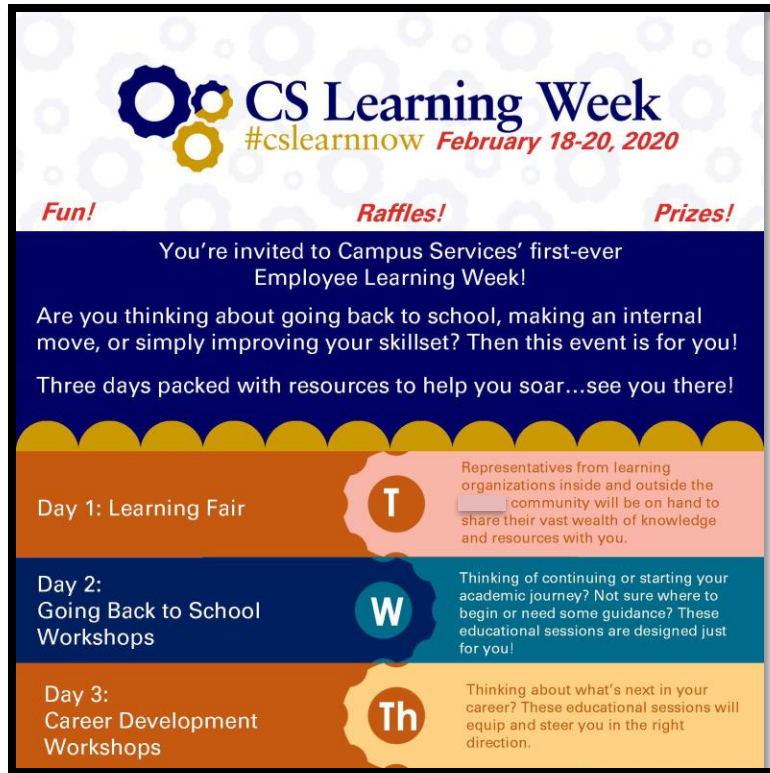


Figure 8. Campus Services Learning Week Flyer

AR Team 2 Meeting: Informal Learning Opportunities

After the agreement on topics for future ENGAGE Labs, Team Leads mentioned that they wanted to participate in informal learning opportunities. An AR team member stated the following:

It would be an excellent idea for us to go visit other surrounding universities and set up meetings with people in similar roles to us. That way, we can share our struggles with one another and learn new strategies from them. I'm sure there are things we can be doing differently, but we just don't know.

Another AR team member agreed and added their idea:

Also, we should learn new strategies from one [other Team Leads] another. A lot of times, Team Leads who work on different shifts do not get to interact with one another. It would be great if we could share the struggles that we experience. We could learn strategies from

other Team Leads, compare and contrast, get on the same page, identify similarities and differences, and give each other suggestions.

AR team members advocated for informal learning opportunities, both within their own BRS community and with other higher university peers.

Mentorship Program Interest Meeting

Following the EQUIP/ENGAGE Labs, the Assistant Director (AD) of BRS asked to meet with members of AR team 1. According to the AD, there was an interest in developing a mentorship program for BRS Team Leads. The AD found the below:

Team Leads can manage the work but not the people. There are several supervisor vacancies, and we would like to promote from within, which means that we would like Team Leads to progress into their roles. However, they lack organizational skills, delegating with purpose, and effective communication skills.

Issues with Team Leads and how they express their leadership persisted despite the completion of the BRS ENGAGE Labs. Thus, the AD realized “it was on the organization and the system to provide ways to put what was learned in these classes into their leadership practice.” After the AD’s feedback sessions, the AD determined that Team Leads desired to be mentored by BRS leaders, specifically those they do not report up to (they worried about power dynamics). This would allow Team Leads the opportunity to bring forth issues they were experiencing in the workplace and seek guidance from more experienced mentors.

In the meeting, a member of the AR team member reminded the AD that we will continue our efforts in the leadership development training program, EQUIP Labs, for Team Leads and that this new mentorship program could be a new addition to the program. By doing so, the leadership development program could be more holistic, as it would now include leadership content, scenario-

based practice, and a new mentorship component. However, a few days after this meeting, the world as we knew it would change.

Cycle 3: “Camp 3”

On the Everest trek, Camp 3 is not a place you want you to stay for a long time. At 24,500 feet, climbers face an icy incline that is extremely dangerous and face the risk of serious avalanches. One wrong step could be catastrophic. In this action research story, Camp 3 was marked by COVID-19, a huge adaptive challenge that forced my organization and those worldwide to rethink their priorities and strategies for survival. Thus, actions taken by the action research teams and the larger university are noted.

Constructing

Both action research teams worked to make sense of the implications of COVID-19. However, making sense of something so novel would lead the organization to regress from thriving to surviving. Instead, action research team members closely monitored decisions taken by the university during this time. Thus, at several points in this cycle, team members needed to construct anew to understand what new actions to plan, take, and evaluate. For this reason, major university actions are noted in this section.

Adaptive Challenge 3: Coronavirus (COVID-19). In the spring of 2020, there was an outbreak of a novel coronavirus, COVID-19, in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control, COVID-19 is described as follows:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. (Center for Disease Control, 2020, para. 1)

In March 2020, this disease was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, which meant that the geographic spread of the disease had impacted the entire world (World Health Organization, 2020).

Due to the severity of the virus, educational institutions and school systems canceled face-to-face classes for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester within the state that the AR research took place. Furthermore, at Sequoyah University, all non-essential personnel were directed to work remotely until further notice. As a result, my action research was forced to utilize online resources for interviews, focus groups, and other data collection and analyses.

Although the utilization of online platforms was critical to my research, my research participants were still working on campus. The Building and Residential Services staff are deemed “essential” personnel and are critical to maintaining the cleanliness of the university, which in turn maintains the safety of the Sequoyah University community. Essential personnel that continue to work on campus were authorized to receive “Essential Duty Pay” during the “Social Distancing Protocol” period. The communication to employees stated:

Essential Duty Pay will be twice the employee’s regular hourly rate of pay. If an employee is in overtime status, the pay rate will be 2.5 times the regular hourly rate.

Also, employees working within BRS were instructed to work on a rotating schedule. This schedule was described as follows:

Employees assigned to an essential role will be scheduled to work on campus for a certain number of days and then scheduled to be off-campus for a certain number of days. The number of days scheduled on/off-campus is at the discretion of each Campus Services (CS) unit.

Lack of Personal Protective Equipment. Due to the lack of preparedness in response to COVID-19, the United States government received desperate pleas from doctors and nurses for the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) (Lopez, 2020). There was a shortage of masks, gowns, gloves, and other forms of PPE. In many cases, healthcare workers were forced to reuse medical equipment. Inherently, medical personnel were put at risk while attempting to aid others impacted by this virus outbreak. As a result, Lopez (2020) explained:

Different levels of government are now trying to take action – with cities, counties, states, and the federal government racing to get more PPE and send it to places and hospitals that have been the hardest hit by COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

This behavior was replicated within the higher education system. At Sequoyah University, there was an interdepartmental competition to obtain PPE. Consequently, certain departments had vastly different supplies than others. To combat this, the university was forced to implement new rules that only allowed the university's central procurement department to order PPE, which would then be distributed equitably to all departments.

Within Campus Services, our action research teams were focused on solving the struggles of essential personnel, who were struggling with the lack of supplies that was fundamental to their daily tasks. In Building and Residential Services, employees denoted as having more potential exposure to COVID-19 were fitted for N-95 masks and were given five masks to reuse as necessary. However, they were not told whether they would be receiving additional masks in the future. All other employees received cloth masks.

Financial Impact of COVID-19 for Sequoyah University. In April, Sequoyah University released a statement regarding the financial impact of COVID-19. In this highly-anticipated communication, representatives from the university explained that “while Sequoyah does have a

large endowment, these resources do not serve as a reserve fund and, therefore, cannot be used to replace lost revenue.” Furthermore, the following cost-saving measures were described:

- *Hiring Freeze:* Hiring of new employees would be halted with limited exceptions. This hiring freeze would remain in place through August 31, 2021.
- *Travel:* Non-essential staff travel (such as conferences, peer school meetings, association meetings, etc.) will be suspended through August 31, 2021.
- *Merit Increases:* Sequoyah would not provide merit increases for faculty and staff through August 31, 2021. However, performance reviews will continue to be used as feedback tools.
- *Delay of Capital Projects:* Certain capital projects, renovations, and furniture upgrades will be delayed as there will be a reevaluation of master and capital planning initiatives.
- *Discretionary Spending and Budget Reductions:* Discretionary spending and non-essential activities (such as food, gifts, events, etc.) that are not critical to the operation of the enterprise will be delayed or eliminated through an anticipated date of August 31, 2021. Also, there will be a 5% budget reduction to each administrative unit in the 2021 fiscal year.
- *Zero-Based Budget Process:* All administrative units will undergo a zero-based budget process over the next two years to align our support activities with the needs of our students, faculty, and researchers, those at the core of our operations.

Resumption of Research: Phased Return Plan. Sequoyah released an email communication in mid-May that stated that there would be a multi-phased plan to gradually return to campus for research. The university stated the following:

The first phase involves planning at the levels of schools and colleges as well as research support units. Safely resuming additional on-campus and community-based research activities is crucial to our mission to create, preserve, teach, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity.

Interestingly enough, this university-wide communication was met with confusion from Campus Services staff, including the Building and Residential Services employees – the population of interest in the present study. A Return to Campus for Research Framework document was shared, including several key responsibilities that employees in our department would need to complete. For example, our organization would need to “establish clear guidelines and best practices for regular cleaning of facilities by custodial staff.” However, this information was not shared with the respective employees nor their leaders before its dispersal. Thus, this caused incredible anxiety with Campus Services staff. Particularly, employees in the Facilities Management department wanted to know who would be coming back and when. Many employees knew that changes to their schedules were likely, but the lack of clarity created by the university’s communication created ambiguity. The lack of communication and coordination between university leaders and departmental leaders of Campus Services was mainly disjointed.

Fall Semester Status and Leadership Compensation. After the announcement about the resumption of research, there was soon another university-wide communication on updates for the fall semester and leadership compensation. The communication stated that the university was still engaging in decision-making regarding the fall semester and would issue an update by June 15th. Furthermore, the financial impacts of COVID-19 were reiterated, specifically a \$10 million shortfall for the current fiscal year. However, the “full scope of loss for the upcoming fiscal year” was described as unknown.

Following the description of the financial loss, the “first of several actions” to mitigate costs were discussed. It was stated, “effective July 1st, the president, the president’s leadership team, and the deans will reduce their compensation by 15 percent.” Many Campus Services employees admired this major cost-saving attempt from the upper echelon of the university but were worried that perhaps this was done to ameliorate potential discomfort in the case that there are future furlough days or layoffs.

Sequoyah University Fall Semester Update. In mid-June, the university announced its long-awaited decision regarding the fall semester. Originating from the communication itself, the “topline decisions” were:

- We will offer both online and in-person classes this fall, allowing us to provide the excellence of a Sequoyah education to all students.
- The academic calendar will shift to start on August 19th, with classes ending by Thanksgiving and exams conducting remotely.
- Residence halls will be open with a standard of no more than two students per room.

As a result of these decisions, approximately one-third of courses would be taught remotely. Returning students would also be required to get tested for COVID-19 as they return to campus. Additional tests would happen at other points in the semester when deemed necessary. Although instruction would be offered in both an online and in-person format, the campus experience would be different for students as the social interactions would be largely limited.

In contrast, tuition would remain the same for both in-person and online classes. A vast majority of classes would take place twice a week in 75-minute blocks. Furthermore, a plethora of safety protocols would be introduced, and students were expected to sign an agreement that

enforces strict health and safety guidelines. Face masks would be necessary for all students, faculty, and staff.

Notably, adherence to these health and safety guidelines entailed significant changes to cleaning routines for the research participants of interest. For example, there will be a 30-minute cleaning period between classes. Specific cleaning initiatives would be discussed with the Building and Residential Services department.

Temporary COVID-19 Impact on Compensation. At the end of July, the university discussed the necessary limitation of campus density in the fall, which resulted in a significant loss of revenue in many areas, such as housing, dining, student fees, and tuition. These financial ramifications led the university to discuss the following:

It is for that reason that we have made the difficult but necessary decision to implement a temporary compensation reduction for all regular Sequoyah University employees, both faculty and staff, earning \$75,000 or more per year on an annualized basis (excluding postdoctoral fellows, medical house staff, and those who have already experienced compensation reductions, e.g., physicians who have incurred or will incur reductions during this period). This reduction of 5 percent will go into effect on September 1st and run through the end of the 2020 calendar year (four months). Our goal is to reinstate full compensation beginning in January 2021, but this will be dependent on the conditions as they develop through the fall semester.

Great unrest and discontent were felt throughout the university, so much so that Sequoyah's new president held a "Town Hall on University Finances and COVID's Temporary Impact on Compensation." In this virtual town hall, there was a discussion about the university's financial situation and an explanation as to why the reduction was necessary. Furthermore, senior

leadership at the university level wanted to “talk about the complex moment, which has seen COVID-19 affect our world and economy, and we will take a look at where Sequoyah stands today and where we are headed.”

COVID-19 Child Care Leave. On August 12th, Sequoyah University released a memo that announced the introduction of the COVID-19 Child Care Leave Program. Because many K-12 schools in the nation had transitioned to virtual learning in the fall, many parents faced challenges regarding child care. To ameliorate these issues, this program would “offer benefits-eligible staff members up to three (3) weeks of Sequoyah-paid time that can be used to care for children under the age of 18.” This benefit became effective on August 15, 2020. A key element of this program was its flexibility, which allowed the three weeks to be taken in increments of two hours or more.

Planning for Action

Previously, in Camp 2, action research teams were interested in a continual evaluation of our large-scale leadership development program and proceeding with the feedback they had received for informal learning opportunities to create a coaching or mentorship program. These were the actions that were to be planned during this stage. However, team members' attempts to continue efforts towards a learning culture proved to be futile when senior leaders found it more critical to focus on the operation and its sustainability throughout this adaptive challenge. After intense reflection, the action research teams had to pause their trek to Camp 4 and focus on safety.

COVID-19 Phased Return to Campus Training. Members of AR Team 1 stated that one of the priorities was to ensure the safety of the staff that would be returning due to the phased return of research. According to newly established university protocol, all employees returning to

campus must take an online course named “Mandatory COVID-19 Phased Return to Campus Training.” The course outline included the following: (1) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), (2) COVID-19 Prevention, (3) Preventative Measures for Sequoyah University Personnel, and (4) Sequoyah University COVID-19 Resources.

Strategies to ensure that all required employees take this course were discussed. Accessibility to computers and a stable internet connection was a concern, especially for the Building and Residential Services staff. A potential solution was to have employees with a lack of resources either email our Learning and Development department or reach out to their respective supervisors. Once the number of employees was determined, employees would be offered the alternate option of receiving the online content in the training room. The one caveat is that we would have to adhere to physical distancing guidelines to ensure learners are not at risk.

Taking Action

As mentioned earlier, the decision of the action research teams to pause their trek was an action. Put simply, would you continue your trek in dangerous weather conditions? Probably not, especially when such a choice could lead to political backlash from senior leaders and higher-level leaders within the university president’s cabinet. Instead, all professional development within the Campus Services organization was halted.

CS Professional Development Halted. The action research teams and the Campus Services organization decided to halt all professional development courses led by the CS Learning and Development department. This was done with the intent of adhering to the social distancing protocol, as a majority of courses were offered in an in-person format. As the primary researcher and Senior Learning and Development Consultant, my role duality was impacted by this decision, as my job responsibilities dwindled. Suggestions to move to virtual platforms for learning during

these times of ambiguity and uncertainty were denied and deemed non-essential. Instead, we would direct learners, who had been eager to continue their development based on our offerings, to other resources, like LinkedIn Learning and Coursera. Despite this setback, new opportunities demonstrating the organization's inclination towards distributed leadership and action research emerged.

New Cross-Collaboration Projects. Naturally, when the professional development was halted, I was concerned about how I would now contribute to my organization. However, shortly after, my leader, who is also on AR team 1, mentioned that I had been requested to work on new projects alongside senior leadership. For the following months, I would be a part of a Customer Experience Project, where we would use an action research methodology to evaluate how to best serve our customers throughout our various departments. In this project, there would be a specific emphasis on evaluating customer-facing processes within the Finance and Business Operations umbrella, which included the following sub-departments: Finance, Information Technology, Learning and Development, Human Resources, and Transportation and Parking Services. At the onset of this project, there would be a focus on Human Resources, with specific attention being given to both Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Leave process, offboarding, and recruitment. Grounding the larger customer experience project would be the four points highlighted below.

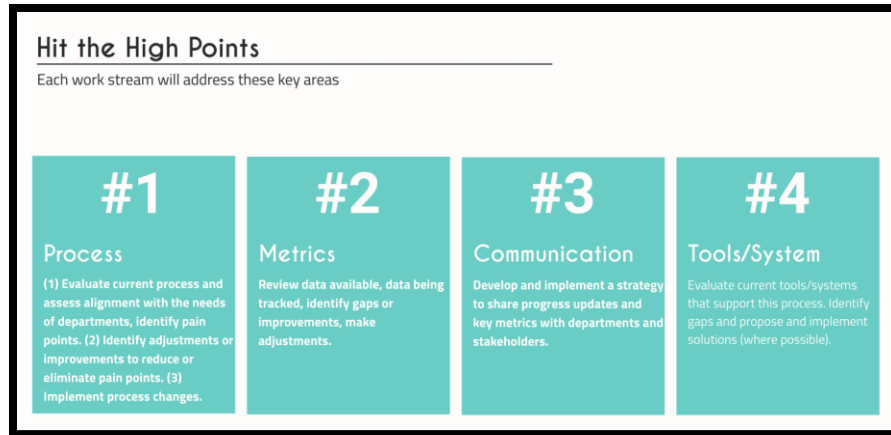


Figure 9. Customer Experience Project High Points

Although I was not the subject-matter expert in these departments, organizational leaders practiced distributed leadership by empowering other members of the action research teams and me to enact leadership that solved organizational problems alongside the individuals that changes would impact. This is a drastic change from the previous top-down, hierarchical approach to decision-making, where individuals with positional authority were assumed to be the experts.

Additionally, I was a part of a committee on the Transportation and Parking Services team, working on communication initiatives for their customers. There were major changes to the parking billing structure and parking assignments to accommodate the larger part of the Sequoyah community, both students and staff, that were now learning and working remotely. Also, due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, there would need to be a new transportation strategy for how our shuttle fleet would now operate. For example, shuttles would need to run more frequently due to the decrease in total shuttle capacity, deep cleaning of high-touch areas would occur throughout the day, and certain routes would be eliminated due to the lack of usage. The panel of Transportation and Parking Services acknowledged that although they had technical expertise, communicating their message in layman's terms would be of the utmost importance –

an effort that I spearheaded alongside the customers they were serving. Thus, this project would utilize action research methodology on the larger, university-wide stage.

COVID-19 Safety Training Launched. After planning the successful dissemination of the university's required safety training to promote accessibility for all Campus Services employees, the facilitated sessions began. CS employees were grateful to have the alternative for an in-class session to ensure that they could rejoin the workforce on campus without any difficulties.

Campus Services Return to Campus. At the end of May, Campus Services released a communication regarding returning to campus for its employees. June 14th was designated as the date that normal staffing operations would resume. However, the communication goes on to state that "in order to maintain a lower density on campus, employees who can productively work at a remote location will be allowed to do so. Guidance will be provided at the division level." Individuals who were deemed as not working at max capacity remotely were required to return to campus or fulfill temporary assignments within the department or throughout the university. Also, the pay status of "premium pay" and "paid-not-worked" would be discontinued.

To return to campus, all employees would be required to complete the required onboarding tasks. These tasks included the following:

- Complete a Health Screening Questionnaire
- Sign a Return to Campus Expectations Agreement
- Enroll in and complete required health and safety training modules
- Enroll in the Emergency Notification System if you have not previously done so. This will be used for contact tracing in the event of COVID-19 exposure.

- Provide a list of close contacts with whom you regularly work at Sequoyah for contact tracing in the event of COVID-19 exposure.

This communication is highlighted as it demonstrates a key action taken by the Campus Services organization, which resulted from the reasoning and strategic thinking of several action research team members.

Evaluating Action

In this phase, action research teams spent time evaluating their success with safely bringing employees to campus. Ensuring employees' adherence to the new university protocol was no easy feat, especially as new requirements were added regularly. Thus, each employee who was required to return to campus in person was able to complete the requirements was a major win. Additionally, as cross-collaboration projects began, it was great to see how action research team members were tapped into these efforts and me. Furthermore, milestones within each project stream were being completed effectively. Thus, these cross-collaboration projects kept distributed leadership at the forefront while showing the benefits of the action research methodology. These projects were critical in preparing the Campus Services organization for the return of students and essential staff to campus in the fall.

Cycle 4: “Camp 4”

Climbers are now entering Camp 4 or considered the “Death Zone” on Mount Everest. At an astounding 26,000 feet, the body of each climber experiences an oxygen deficit, their blood glucose levels drop, and there is a significant loss of weight and muscle mass. Simply put, the human body is not built to tolerate these altitudes. However, at this point in the trek, climbers are preparing for their final push to the summit and, despite their decreased stamina and exhaustion, the proximity to that magical peak entices them.

Constructing

At this point in the trek, the action research team members finally felt like they had survived the worst of the COVID-19 storm. However, in the “Death Zone,” new challenges arise that threaten the ability of teams to reach the summit. In this story, an article regarding discontent in the Campus Services organization shaped the path forward unexpectedly. As a result, both action research teams would need to fully dissect the article to assess how their final push to the summit would be impacted.

Student Newspaper Article. Before Sequoyah’s Thanksgiving break, a dramatic exposé regarding the employee experience within Campus Services was released in a student-run newspaper. The article included interviews from 11 former and current employees of Campus Services. The interviews were allegedly said to describe the toxic environment that employees working in Building and Residential Services experience. Departmental and senior leadership within the hierarchical structure were verbally abusive, promoting exhaustion, racism, and misogyny. According to the interviewees, the organization’s hierarchical structure bred mistrust and favoritism for those who did not defy the status quo. Furthermore, those at the bottom of the hierarchy, the front-line employees, asserted that they felt discriminated against and heavily criticized by the upper echelons of leadership.

Employees complained that promotions are typically given to those outside the organization rather than hiring competent internal candidates. Additionally, front-line employees felt like they were frequently overworked and highlighted how this need to perform continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when many stated that they were working double shifts to ensure that targets were being met. These findings were corroborated by employee survey results from Facilities Management in 2011, which indicated that employees found the working

environment denigrating and there was low employee morale. However, more recent data was not provided.

Furthermore, the pandemic instilled fear in employees. Many interviewees explained that they didn't feel safe, as fellow employees are not required to take COVID-19 tests. Sequoyah University policy simply stated that employees must monitor their symptoms and wash their hands. Although testing isn't required for employees, it is important to note that on-campus COVID-19 testing was readily available to employees at no cost. Employees simply needed to register for a testing slot in advance.

Planning for Action

Both action research teams acknowledged that action must be taken in response to the article. However, it was unclear whether senior leaders were ready to move from their regression towards survival to a thriving new state. Suddenly, the skies cleared. The final trek towards the summit was charted. It seemed attainable, as senior leaders and key stakeholders felt compelled to revisit the initiatives that the action research teams had advocated for before COVID-19, like continual technical and leadership training and the coaching program. The backlash from the article created a renewed urgency for the organization to consider how they may continue to promote a distributed leadership structure that fostered inclusivity and equity. This urgency propelled our movement forward and served as the oxygen tanks and tea to nourish our bodies.

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program Listening Sessions. Both action research teams agreed that the pandemic and the unrest from this article required a focus on the feelings of grief experienced by Campus Services staff. To aid employees in processing these emotions and to receive general feedback from the staff, listening sessions were planned. To ensure anonymity and comfort, these sessions were facilitated by a third party, the Faculty Staff Assistance

Program within the university. These facilitators would then provide high-level themes to the key stakeholders within the organization, which included action research team members. To promote candidness within the sessions, leaders and frontline staff would have separate sessions to share their feelings.

The following email was sent to participants in preparation for the sessions:

During these challenging times of dealing with a pandemic, social unrest, and ongoing change, we would like to provide you with a resource for support and dialogue. With support from Senior Leadership, Campus Services has partnered with FSAP to schedule Listening & Resilience Sessions.

What?

Listening & Resilience Sessions:

- These 1-hour virtual interactive group sessions, facilitated by FSAP, will provide a safe space for dialogue around challenges related to the impact of COVID-19, social unrest, and ongoing change and uncertainty.
- Participants will be invited to share personal and work-related challenges, as well as examples of coping strategies (what's helping).
- Facilitators will highlight FSAP and other resources for support, as well as offer suggestions for self-care, team-care, and overall resilience during these difficult times.

When?

- These optional sessions will occur during the weeks of Feb. 15 and Feb. 22 via Zoom. Employee sessions will begin in March, and the schedule will be released once finalized.
- You will be receiving a meeting request shortly from (*Name taken out for anonymity*).
- Please respond to the invitation to allow FSAP to plan accordingly, depending on the number of participants.

It is my hope that you will take advantage of this valuable resource during these unprecedented times. Please let me know if you have any questions.

EQUIP Leadership Development Sessions. Professional development would resume once more. This was an exciting moment for both action research team members. To plan relevant training, in January, a CS Leadership Development was released. This survey would allow employees to provide feedback on potential learning topics, preferred learning format

(virtual self-paced, virtual facilitator-led, in-person), and preferred time and frequency of sessions. As the pandemic continued, it was jointly decided that it would be best to offer learning sessions on an optional basis to provide flexibility to our learners.

Survey results indicated that learners were eager for the following skills-based and competency-based topics. Also, learners suggested the topics be under the umbrella of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the competency-based topics.

Skills-Based: Budgeting/Analyzing Financials/ Excel, Data Analytics, and Project Management

Competency-Based: Inclusive Decision-Making, Effective Team-Building/Coaching Your Team, and Difficult Conversations

Both virtual self-paced and virtual facilitator-led options were going to be made available.

The following program details were crafted and shared with participants.

Table 15

EQUIP Leadership Development Program 2021 Description

Session	Session Date/Times	Self-Paced Option
<p>Session 1: Inclusive Decision Making: In this course, you will learn how to measure, manage, and improve who should be involved in the decision-making process and how effective decisions are made. Tool: The design thinking process will be the primary guiding framework, which is linked to improved business performance.</p>	<p>Tues, March 30 10am-12pm Wed, March 31 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Decision-Making • Decision-Making Strategies
<p>Session 2: Building and Engaging a Diverse Team How do you effectively engage and lead a diverse team? Learn how to foster relationships between diverse individuals to build a cohesive team. Tool: Best practices for establishing a common purpose/goal with employees on your team and colleagues across the organization.</p>	<p>Tues, April 27 10am-12pm Wed, April 28 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building High Performing Teams • Collaboration Principles
<p>Session 3: Fostering Inclusive Dialogue In this course, learn how to leverage diverse perspectives and foster meaningful relationships through productive dialogue. Tool: The inclusive dialogue planner allows participants to prepare for productive dialogue.</p>	<p>Tues, May 25 10am-12pm Wed, May 26 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having Difficult Conversations
<p>Session 4: Budgeting/Analyzing Financials/Excel This course addresses the principles and the process of strategic financial planning. Tool: Participants will learn key Excel tips and tricks that will help leaders analyze their financials.</p>	<p>Tues, Sept. 28 10am-12pm Wed, Sept. 29 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Financial Statements • Excel Tips and Tricks • Advanced Excel
<p>Session 5: Data Analytics Learn the basics of data analytics and reporting. Furthermore, participants will leave with an understanding of how to interpret and summarize data. Tool: Learn shortcuts and troubleshooting tips for data analytics using Excel.</p>	<p>Tues, Oct. 26 10am-12pm Wed, Oct. 27 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analytics for Business Professionals • Managing and Analyzing Data
<p>Session 6: Project Management Learn the fundamentals of project management, from establishing project goals and objectives and building a project plan to managing resources and work, meeting deadlines, and closing the project. Tool: The project management life cycle guides leaders to manage projects effectively and efficiently.</p>	<p>Tues, Nov. 16 10am-12pm Wed, Nov. 17 1:30pm-3:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management Foundations

Technical Training Program. To create a standardized cleaning vision within the Building and Residential Services department and an overarching vision regarding quality service within all departments, the technical training program was planned. The description and goals for the program are detailed below.



Figure 10. Facilities Management Technical Training Program

Career Mobility Program. To address the issues of internal mobility brought forth by the article, a career mobility program was designed. The program's purpose was to provide a pathway and support for professional development, skill mobility, and career advancement for Campus Services employees. It would also build an internal pipeline for talent development. The program was planned to be implemented in phases beginning in April, and full implementation would occur later in 2021.

Propel Coaching Program. Action research team members were excited to revisit their ideas of creating a coaching program for employees. To ensure the effectiveness of a large-scale coaching program, a smaller-scale pilot program would be released. The program purpose, audience, description of the pilot program, size of the pilot program cohort, and application process are shown in the image below.

CS Career Coaching: Propel

Program Purpose

- The purpose of the CS Career Coaching Program, Propel, is to provide structured support, guidance, and learning opportunities for CS employees interested in setting and achieving professional goals while enhancing competencies and skills.
- *Target Audience:* CS staff and leaders
- *Pilot Program:* To determine the effectiveness of the coaching program and garner participant feedback, CS will conduct a small-scale, short-term pilot to learn how a large-scale coaching program would work in practice. Cohorts will be selected quarterly.
- *Size of pilot program cohort:* approximately 10 employees across Campus Services
- **Application process for pilot program will be released in March 2021.**

Release of Application Process: March 2021

[BACK](#)

PROPEL

Figure 11. Propel Coaching Program Description

Taking Action

As described earlier, the urgency of the organization propelled our action research teams into meaningful action.

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program Listening Sessions. Starting in February 2021, the listening sessions began and continue to take place. As the goal is for leaders and frontline employees to participate in a session, these listening sessions are large in number and must continue to accommodate our large workforce.

EQUIP Leadership Development Program is Launched. In March 2021, EQUIP Leadership Development sessions resumed once more, which allowed all Campus Services employees who lead in any capacity to continue their development. The first two sessions, Inclusive Decision-Making and Building and Engaging a Diverse Team, were completed.

Career Mobility Program. The first phase of the career mobility program was launched in April 2021. In this phase, creating a Mechanic I position was announced, which allowed CS employees with no prior experience to apply to these roles. Applicants selected will spend a majority of their workday shadowing their assigned mentor, an experienced mechanic, to learn the required duties and responsibilities. In addition to job shadowing, they will receive foundational technical skill training. Thus, giving employees in other areas of the organization the potential to learn a new trade.

Propel Coaching Program. The application process for the Propel Coaching Program was opened at the end of April 2021. The selection of participants will take place at the beginning of May 2021.

Evaluating Action

Each of the above interventions is currently in progress. Thus, evaluation of these programs will continue and shape the organization's continued trek. However, findings and key learnings (detailed in Chapter 4) that have taken place along this journey have been shared and corroborated by both action research teams.

Conclusion: Approaching the Summit & Descent

The summit of Mount Everest sits at an elevation of 29,032 feet, and the team's dream has come true (New York Times, 2017). In the story of this organizational change and that of any organization, the summit represents a continual striving to an improved and desired state. In Sequoyah University's Campus Services, the longing of the organization to improve and adjust to the changing conditions (e.g., a reorganization, COVID-19, student newspaper article) of the mountain is in alignment with summiting. The organization has come a long way from base camp, where informal leaders struggled to enact their leadership and reach the summit, as well as

where the organization's espoused values match their actualized values of sharing leadership within a distributed leadership structure. Along this Everest trek, informal leaders not only gained competence but they gained confidence to take up their own leadership. This was particularly noted in those Team Leads who participated in AR Team 2 and gained confidence from having a safe platform to express their voices alongside their peers to impact larger organizational change. Furthermore, the action research teams and myself utilized the tension (COVID-19, the article, the racial reckoning in the United States), to "turn up the heat," to an adequate level that propelled the organization forward. Thus, there are no mere coincidences but strategic choices that kept us alive during our climb. However, organizations must remember that most accidents occur on the descent from the summit of Mount Everest. Thus, Campus Services must continue promoting and supporting distributed leadership in the organization until it is deeply rooted in the larger organizational culture.

CHAPTER 4

INSIGHTS AND ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

The findings in the present study result from the utilization of an action research methodology and, despite multiple data collection methods, a qualitative approach was used for data analysis. The purpose of this action research study was to explore ways to support individuals dealing with adaptive challenges associated with distributed leadership in the trades. In this chapter, the data collected from action research team meetings, focus groups, interviews, and leadership development surveys are used to answer the following research questions:

What is learned at the individual, group, and system levels that advance theory and practice in an action research project in distributed leadership?

- Sub-Research Question: How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?

Undergirding the study was Gronn's (2002) conceptual distributed leadership framework. This framework also guided the implementation of interventions and how our findings are interpreted and analyzed.

Primary Research Question Insights

In the following section, the primary research question is answered, and the relevant themes that align with Gronn's (2002) conceptual distributed leadership framework are discussed. This theory describes the organizational learning required at the individual, group, and system levels. Team leads (informal leaders) and Campus Services leaders (with formal authority) engaged in formal and informal professional development opportunities,

programming, and projects that addressed both leadership and technical competencies required of those who lead in the trades context. The curriculum utilized and chosen were directly congruent with Gronn's (2002) tenets of distributed leadership: spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice. Specifically, spontaneous collaboration maps onto the learning required at the individual level, intuitive working relations onto the group level, and institutionalized practice onto the system level. A summary of key findings and relevant learnings can be found below.

Table 16

Summary of Key Insights and Themes

Research Question	Insights	Themes
1. What is learned at an individual, group, and system-level that advances distributed leadership theory and practice in an action research project within the trades?	<i>Individual insight:</i> Informal leaders in the trades need to be competent in technical and leadership competencies to lead effectively in a hierarchical system aiming to be distributed.	Ensure formal and informal leaders within the same department have a shared understanding of which leadership and technical competencies are valuable to the operation and deploy relevant learning programs across the department.
	<i>Group insight:</i> A shared vision of expectations and follow-through creates an effective foundation for a distributed leadership structure.	Deploy learning programs that promote distributed leadership tenets across all departments of the larger organization to ensure alignment.
	<i>System insight:</i> Adaptive challenges can motivate organizational culture shifts.	When the organization is heeding the call for change, integrate distributed leadership ideals to achieve desired outcomes in times of ambiguity.

2. How can the knowledge gained at each of these levels be utilized to grow the capacity of informal leaders in the trades and the collective capacity of the department or unit to create a culture for distributed leadership to be enacted?	Heterarchical and hierarchical elements can jointly co-exist within a distributed leadership paradigm.	The utilization of adaptive strategies can prove successful in integrating a distributed leadership model.
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Individual Insight: Informal leaders in the trades need to be competent in technical and leadership competencies to lead effectively in a hierarchical system aiming to be distributed.

Frequently, trade organizations are purely focused on technical expertise and productivity. To harness the tenets of Gromm's (2002) conceptual distributed leadership framework, informal leaders in any trades organization would need to move beyond their technical expertise to engage in spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice. For informal leaders, Team Leads, to succeed in their new roles within the present custodial services department, the organization would need to commit to creating a learning culture that expected knowledge beyond the technical. This is necessary for *spontaneous collaboration* to occur, which is when individuals can begin to "pool their expertise together and regularize their conduct to solve a problem, after which they can disband" (Gromm, 2002, p. 430). However, these smaller-scale engagements can only occur if individuals have fundamental leadership capacity to complement their strong technical prowess.

For this reason, the action research teams were successful in devising a curriculum that would harness competencies that pertained to both leadership and technical skills. Thus, the Building and Residential Services department jointly worked alongside the action research teams to prioritize leadership skills to help Team Leads lead effectively in their environment. As Harris (2008) noted, at an individual level, "the key message is that leadership capability, and capacity

is not fixed but can be extended” (p. 174). By enabling the development of leadership competencies, informal leaders “are given the necessary support to make changes or innovate” (Harris, 2008, p. 174). Survey results indicated that the informal leaders found the topics of dealing with ambiguity, time management, effective communication, and accountability as an overall improvement to their leadership practice and that the session topics were both relevant and applicable. As a result, a similar curriculum is recommended for other trade organizations.

At the individual level, technical knowledge cannot be understated or supplanted by mere leadership ability alone. These skills must be developed in tandem, and a consistent cleaning vision for a department is necessary. In this study, this consistency was created through standard operating procedures, in document and video form, which guided employees on the most effective cleaning practices. As revealed through critical incident interviews, the importance of technical knowledge emerged as a key theme for those who lead informally. When informal leaders lead frontline employees, like custodians, their teams expect their teams to demonstrate their technical expertise. Frequently, informal leaders fail when they cannot prove that they understand how to lead and understand the business they are leading. Interestingly, the same is not always expected from those with formal and higher positional authority, as these leaders are seen as removed from the business itself.

Characteristic of action research and adaptive leadership, the BRS department remained flexible to insight, with data informing practice. As seen in this case, although informal leaders benefited from the development of leadership competencies, for distributed leadership to thrive within a custodial services department, the same leadership competencies would need to be taught to leaders with positional authority. By doing so, the department sends the message of continuity regardless of positional authority. Also, it reiterates to all leaders, both informal and

formal, that leadership is not simply a position but an action that, with practice, can be continually be improved.

Although the competencies of leaders with both formal and informal authority were developed, the present research would recommend extending the leadership curriculum to the frontline workforce, who possess no authority. Though frontline employees are actively engaged in the new technical training efforts, which is usually the extent of training given to those with similar positionality in other trades organizations, for the distributed leadership framework to prevail, all constituencies in a given department must be exposed to leadership competencies that encourage the tenets of spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice. Ultimately, the capacity of individuals must be built for meaningful collaboration to take place at the group and system level. Also, building the leadership and technical skills of informal leaders heightens their self-confidence, which “triggers interactions which may later crystallize into a routine” (Gronn, 2002, p. 430).

All in all, the professional development (both technical and leadership-based) occurring at the individual level addressed the lowest rung of Gronn’s (2002) distributed leadership framework, spontaneous collaboration. By creating a standardized cleaning vision and determining the necessary technical and leadership skills, the stage is set for bringing people together with different skillsets towards a shared, specific goal. However, addressing learning at the group and system-level requires the next two rungs of the distributed leadership ladder, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practice.

Group Insight: A shared vision of expectations and follow-through creates an effective foundation for a distributed leadership structure.

In the present study, the action research teams acknowledged that there would need to be a shared vision of expectations and follow-through for a distributed leadership structure to succeed. This finding is corroborated by Schein (1988), who asserted that for leadership to be distributed, job functions and expectations must be clear. By doing so, “any member of a given group can perform them” (Schein, 1988, p. 133). Furthermore, Gronn’s (2002) *intuitive working relations*, the next rung of the distributive leadership model, requires these shared expectations as “intuitive understandings are known to emerge over time when two or more organization members rely on each other and develop a close working relationship” (p. 430). Thus, intuitive understandings are shared understandings grounded in foundational knowledge of the work itself and the job functions required of all individuals within a given department and organization.

In many trade organizations, knowing the technical skill required for the job is usually enough and how employee success is measured. However, as identified in the adaptive leadership paradigm, organizations must heed the call of not simply surviving but thriving. Trades organizations must recognize that employees want opportunities to build their leadership skills in both formal and informal roles in this competitive job market. Even when organizations realize the importance of this shift, as shown in this research, it is noted that preparing trades employees to make the shift from solely valuing their technical skills to incorporating leadership competencies is an arduous process.

As discussed in the individual learning, trades employees must embark on their learning journeys to fill these leadership gaps. To complement the necessary learning at the individual and group levels, there must be a shared vision of expectations and follow-through that creates

an effective foundation for a distributed leadership structure. In the present study, this was established by key action research team members who collaborated with the Building and Residential Services department to create an alignment on the “Sequoyah way” of cleaning, which references the technical skills required of employees and standardizing cleaning practices while establishing the necessary leadership competencies to succeed within the department.

This alignment and resetting of technical and leadership competencies cannot just be integrated at the individual level or for Team Leads in silos. For informal leaders to succeed within the Building and Residential Services department, all leaders needed to be aware of new expectations and their competencies developed. A culture shift in BRS occurred when all leaders, informal and formal, attended technical and leadership courses outlined as important to the department. Higher positional authority and knowledge of the work were no longer equated with one another, as all leaders were given the same training in both the technical and leadership skill areas. Thus, expectations and accountability for a distributed leadership structure could be properly enforced. Regardless of tenure, expertise, or title, the department had a unified vision that propelled the adaptive work of integrating the distributed leadership structure forward. Furthermore, it created a shared language by which BRS leaders, informal and formal, could engage with each other.

However, if an organization is attempting to integrate a distributed leadership framework where power is shared, this shared language would need to be integrated across the departments in the entire organization. Essentially, a larger distributed leadership vision was created. Action research team members noted that the same leadership competencies taught within BRS would need to be shared with all leaders of Campus Services. Establishing this foundation among each of the departments allowed Team Leads to effectively lead informally and empowered leaders

with positional authority to reconsider their definitions of leadership. Those with positional authority embraced the notion that leadership was a practice and not a role. Gromn (2008) explained that intuitive working relations could occur when a strong vision is in place. Furthermore, in regards to informal leaders, he asserted that “once a vision is in place, these informal leaders tended to perform the on-the-ground battle for the hearts and minds of colleagues” (Gromn, 2008, p.151).

As evidenced by their survey responses, CS leaders across all departments demonstrated increased post-knowledge learning for each of the leadership competencies taught in the leadership sessions (managing change, decoding the customer experience, building capacity in others, and team building within and across teams). In other words, their leadership skills in each of the leadership competencies areas were improved from the baseline. Also, all participants noted that the sessions were applicable and relevant to their leadership practice. All in all, CS leaders welcomed the distributed leadership tenets and planned to integrate them regularly with their teams.

Creating shared language around distributed leadership with Team Leads, all BRS leaders (with positional authority), and all CS leaders emphasized the importance of dismantling the conventional notion that hierarchy and power are needed in trade spaces. By doing so, the action research teams and I aimed to address the reported power struggle that Team Leads experienced between different levels of authority. As mentioned earlier, these power struggles occurred as frontline employees frequently bypassed Team Leads to raise concerns and issues to those with positional authority. By promoting distributed leadership, those with positional authority can instead share power with Team Leads and redirect employees to address concerns with their informal leader. All in all, the intuitive working relations achieved created a “joint working unit

within an implicit framework of understanding” (Gronn, 2002, p. 430). Also characteristic of distributed leadership, the influence informal leaders began to have on formal leaders, and vice versa increased as shared understanding and work practices bred trust (Gronn, 2002).

System Insight: Adaptive challenges can motivate organizational culture shifts.
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Gronn (2002) asserted that institutionalized practices are new “structural relations in organizations that are formalized either by design or adaptation” (Gronn, 2002, p. 430). However, he denoted that this highest level of “concertive action” or “conjoint agency” can result from “dissatisfaction with existing arrangements,” which “can stimulate the search for new design elements” in the organization. This was manifested in the present case.

Organizations cannot escape their past. Despite the intentions of any organization to transition to a distributed leadership model to empower informal leaders, history will continue to repeat itself until it is acknowledged, addressed, and changed. In the current case, this reminder of the past or the organization’s history came in the form of an article by the student-run newspaper, where Campus Services’ issues of hierarchy and the overuse of positional authority created a perceived toxic environment that several past employees felt was abusive, racist, and misogynistic. The previous refusal of senior leadership and those at the top of the hierarchy to share power created mistrust and made employees feel like their own development and their desires for promotion or career movement were disregarded. Although each employee carries their unique truth, their realities and perceptions contribute to what is perceived as the larger organizational culture.

Thus, the impetus for the larger adaptive change to a distributed leadership model is necessary for trades contexts to move beyond the pure focus of completing a technical task, like changing an air filter or burnishing a floor, to creating an organizational culture that empowers

employees to enact their leadership - regardless of their positional authority. In this project, the institutionalized practice was achieved through Team Leads' involvement in the action research team and the incorporation of action research team members and frontline employees in cross-collaboration projects. The organic incorporation of action research team members in cross-collaboration projects at the system level demonstrated “that distributed leadership is not restricted to any particular pattern and cannot be prescribed in advance but emerges within the organization to solve problems or to take action” (Harris, 2008, p. 175). In this case, adapting to the pandemic could not be anticipated, but the organization took action with informal and formal leaders alike when faced with the problem. Thus, the “conjoint agency” characteristic of institutionalized practices that Gronn (2002) described was evident in this cross-collaboration projects as a “psychological bond (through synergy)” occurred, which “strengthened a coincidence of effort, goals, and resources in the pursuit of mutually agreed ends” (p. 431-2).

From the onset of the present action research project, it was apparent that the adaptive shift of transitioning to a distributed leadership model would take time. When implemented effectively, a distributed leadership approach will build leadership capacity and skills, acknowledge the social context, help individuals embrace leadership as a practice rather than a role, and create a culture where power and knowledge are shared. This action research project was successful in promoting these distributed leadership tenets.

However, upon reflection, I recognize that the Campus Services organization was more receptive to change when thrown into ambiguity and when leadership faced university backlash due to the negative outcomes of their hierarchical structures. COVID-19 created systemic ambiguity that was difficult to navigate, as the world was confronting a pandemic unlike anything that had ever been seen since the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919. Interestingly, as a

researcher, I noted that the organization was willing to reevaluate its hierarchical practices with urgency when the organization itself learned that the status quo of routine schedules, planned work orders, and contracts would need to be adapted to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the university during the pandemic. During this critical time, trades employees were deemed essential and managed to keep the university safe and functioning. Thus, the Campus Services division became the center of the university's focus, and our adaptability led to their ultimate success.

Concurrently, another adaptive challenge came to fruition in the form of a racial awakening that started in May of 2020 when the murder of George Floyd created a heightened awareness of race issues within our society. This awareness trickled into my higher education setting, where issues of race and oppression were on the forefront of Sequoyah University community members' minds. This led to Sequoyah University's students' interest in marginalized groups within the Campus Services department and drove their inquiry into the negative racial undertones that were embedded within their hierarchical structure. The murder of George Floyd created unrest within the Building and Residential Services department and their employees, who were predominantly people of color. Traditionally, employees may have feared retaliation or felt these issues would simply be ignored. However, Sequoyah's new focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion empowered them to speak out against the negative environment created by hierarchical structures and individuals within them, thus resulting in an article that sparked change within the Campus Services organization.

This change was evident as the organization quickly saw the convergence between a distributed leadership structure and the fostering of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was as if the organization finally saw itself and recognized that a distributed leadership structure

inherently promotes social justice for all employees. As a result, the educative intent of action research was achieved. The Campus Services organization and the action research teams have learned how to create their change initiatives moving forward. This can be seen through the Campus Services' efforts to create listening sessions with employees across all departments and leadership levels, implementing a career mobility program to increase internal mobility, designing a coaching program for all employees, and revamping leadership development curriculum to intertwine distributed leadership and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Unless an organization is incredibly proactive, it often takes external adaptive challenges for organizations to change their practices, especially when it means challenging the status quo and disrupting the concentration of power at the top of the hierarchy. More strongly, the research findings suggest that organizations must capitalize on meaningful adaptive challenges and problems that can create organizational culture shifts and catalyze larger social change. Adaptive challenges rarely present themselves in the same form again. They must be embraced and the organization's urgency for change monopolized.

Sub-Research Question Insights

The knowledge gained at the individual, group, and system levels allowed me and the action research teams to gather new insight regarding this sub-research question. Ultimately, we determined that Campus Services and other trade organizations must continually rethink hierarchy. Although the organization integrated each level of Gromm's 2002 distributed leadership framework, the importance of "hybridity" or the "intermingling of both hierarchical and heterarchical modes of ordering responsibilities and relations" is more attainable and sustainable over time (Gromm, 2008, p. 150). Gromm (2008) stated, "in hierarchical ordering, each level is successively implicated in the higher level, whereas with heterarchy, various levels exert

a determinate influence on each other in some particular respect” (p. 150). Both hierarchical and heterarchical elements can be beneficial.

Managing Polarities: Hierarchy and Heterarchy

Throughout this research, the importance of distributed leadership tenets is acknowledged and promoted, but we must also note that hierarchy isn’t evil and shouldn’t be completely disbanded in any organization. Instead, hierarchy and heterarchy should be embraced as polarities that are “connected and distinct entities” (Emerson & Lewis, 2019, p. 27). Polarities should be managed and thought of as an “infinity loop” with a distinct “energy flow” that occurs between the poles (Emerson & Lewis, 2019, p. 27). Essentially, key stakeholders should navigate these polarities by “harnessing the benefits of both poles while excluding neither” (Emerson & Lewis, 2019, p. 28). By doing so, the organization can move away from either/or thinking to a stance of both/and thinking.

Dismantling hierarchy is almost impossible in trade organizations since most of the work is focused on highly technical tasks that must be completed with precision. Thus, positional leaders must carry deep technical expertise that can inspect the work of novices in the field and ensure *outcomes* have been properly met or verified. This is corroborated by Gronn (2002), who stated that there must be “explicit coordination” by positional leaders who are responsible for “managing the dependencies between activities” and “the design, elaboration, allocation, oversight, and monitoring of the performance of an organization’s technical core” (p. 433). *How* informal leaders and frontline employees complete these tasks requires the heterarchical elements brought forth by distributed leadership. However, motivating an organization towards implementing heterarchical structures is the adaptive challenge we have been unpacking throughout this study. Thus, the adaptive strategies that Sequoyah’s University’s Campus

Services implemented are described below.

Adaptive Strategies

As mentioned previously in the literature review, Heifetz et al. (2009) present six key strategies or series of practices that can be used to implement change or interventions productively. Creating a culture conducive to enacting distributed leadership is an adaptive challenge, which means that collective learning from the organization would need to occur. Ultimately, these adaptive strategies enabled the implementation of distributed leadership tenets and are recommended for other trades organizations hoping to incorporate heterarchical elements that empower informal leaders.

Getting on the Balcony. The use of action research teams to solve the larger organizational problem of effectively implementing a distributed leadership allowed these “insiders” to take the role of an outsider to see the full picture. Bringing leaders with formal and informal authority together, as we had two action research teams, allowed for “shared decision making and openness to subordinates’ influence and provision of information,” which led to the successful implementation of a distributed leadership structure (Gronn, 2008; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Also, Coghlan and Brannick’s (2014) action research cycle allowed for actions and interventions to be grounded in data and concrete evidence. Thus, the correct problem was being solved rather than the symptom of the problem.

Identifying the Adaptive Challenge. In this study, the organization needed to see itself, which it ultimately did through the work of the action research teams. Early on, the key stakeholders involved noted the misalignment between what Heifetz and Linsky (1994) called espoused and actualized values. The organization said they wanted distributed leadership (espoused value) but was not actively integrating the distributed leadership tenets (actualized

value). This failure to meet these espoused values was demonstrated throughout the Team Lead interviews, where the focus on major power struggles was noted. Thus, the action research team had to frequently address the elephant in the room and identified and addressed additional adaptive challenges necessary to integrate a distributed leadership structure, like developing a standardized cleaning vision and creating a learning culture across Campus Services.

Regulating Distress. A metaphorical wrench is bound to be thrown into the organization at some point or another, like a reorganization, a global pandemic, or negative press. However, organizations must mobilize people through their distress. In this research study, when COVID-19 occurred, action research teams had to shift their focus to the organization's survival rather than their goal of successfully implementing a distributed leadership structure. Although the shifting of focus can seem like the progress towards addressing the adaptive challenge is being hindered, it is critically important to “pace the work” to reach the desired future state or summit (Heifetz, 1994, p. 259). Thus, deciding to pause the work can propel you forward at a faster pace.

Directing Disciplined Attention to the Issues. In this study, action research teams had to know when to pause and then revisit “ripe issues” (Heifetz, 1994). For example, when the article was released, where the negative impact of hierarchy was noted, it seemed like an appropriate time to reengage the organization in solutions surrounding the enactment of a distributed leadership structure. The acknowledgment of this “ripe issue” by senior leaders allowed the action research teams to resume their path towards their goal or summit.

Giving the Work Back to the People. The use of action research teams inherently placed the work of implementing a distributed leadership structure on those who had the most benefit from its successful integration. By having key stakeholders own the problem and the agreed-upon solutions, they felt more secure during change (Northouse, 2019). Furthermore, the

integration of an action research team composed of Team Leads allowed for collaboration and generative dialogue with those that were most deeply connected to the strife of informal leadership. It also connected them with key positional leaders that they would not have normally engaged with.

Protect Leadership Voices From Below. Finally, when addressing adaptive challenges, the “voices of dissent” must be included (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). In this case, this was achieved by integrating listening sessions with leaders and non-leaders alike across the entire organization. Also critical to this study’s success, the integration of AR Team 2 provided a meaningful platform for Team Leads to safely share their narratives regarding challenges they faced pertaining to leading informally. These instances served as opportunities for Campus Services employees to voice any of their concerns regarding larger organizational progress. Creating this forum lets all members of the organization influence potential solutions that the organization may consider. This reciprocal influence, which denotes the “influence of two or more parties on one another,” is critical to distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002, p. 431).

Future Research

Informal leadership roles have become more prevalent within organizations. Individuals within these roles are expected to lead with influence and not authority, yet organizations have not fully mastered how to develop those in these unique leadership situations. The present study has resulted in the exploration and implementation of interventions that aim to support informal leaders in a trades organization that aspired to integrate distributed leadership structures. Despite the major progress of the discussed organization, there are potential limitations in this study and several avenues that future research should consider.

The first potential limitation is regarding the research sample. Although this study was focused on Team Leads within the Building and Residential Services department, and therefore included those participants, the sample may have been enriched by including participants who hold informal leadership positions within other departments of the larger Campus Services division. Including these narratives would have allowed the present research to note how effective the organization was at embedding distributed leadership tenets on a larger scale. Also, the study used self-reported learning outcomes from study participants, which although important, could be strengthened by directly linking learning outcomes to performance ratings. Finally, in this action research, time constraints did not allow us to explore which hierarchical and heterarchical, or distributed leadership, elements can most effectively co-exist within a trades organization.

As previously mentioned, both hierarchical and heterarchical elements can be beneficial in organizations. Despite the necessity of both, finding the balance between these elements can be difficult and challenging for any organization to tease apart. Future research should consider which distributed leadership or heterarchical elements are most easily and effectively embedded into predominantly bureaucratic or hierarchical structures.

Additionally, COVID-19, a global pandemic, has and will continue to shape the workplace and how individuals work and engage with each another. More recently, this has led to increased virtual platforms, like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WebEx. Thus, future research may investigate best practices for integrating distributed leadership within hybrid (in-person and virtual) and fully remote settings. The existing literature could be enriched by evaluating how Gromm's (2002) distributed leadership framework manifests in these unique work settings.

Moreover, future research should consider how major adaptive challenges propel or impede organizations to change their work culture.

Also, additional research may benefit from investigating how organizations can align their performance management goals with distributed leadership competencies. By doing so, an organization's espoused values can more easily become actualized values, thus creating accountability for all employees within a given system.

Furthermore, research regarding the implementation of distributed leadership structures within the trades is non-existent. I hope that this pioneering study inspires other researchers to explore which tenets of distributed leadership or framework can most effectively be utilized within the trades organizations, as employees in the trades are essential to the daily functioning of our society.

Summary

In the present case, integrating a distributed leadership structure was an adaptive challenge. Thus, new learning that required a change in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to work needed to occur. To set the foundation for this new learning, key stakeholders crafted a standardized vision for cleaning within their custodial services department. Once this vision was determined, learning programs targeted in developing the leadership and technical competencies of informal and formal leaders were integrated. These learning programs were met with great success and embedded critical distributed leadership tenets within the department.

Furthermore, a culture of learning was created across the larger Campus Services organization to encourage informal and formal leaders across all departments to engage with one another regarding key distributed leadership tenets. This engagement took place through a larger-

scale professional development program. Informal leaders within a specific department cannot enact their leadership without the larger organization's understanding of these tenets. Thus, this level-setting proved to be beneficial and propelled the present organization forward. In tandem with these formal learning programs, action research teams integrated informal learning opportunities, like CS Learning Week, to connect these learners with the larger university community.

In the research's final phases, the organization was propelled to further action that integrated distributed leadership ideals that will continue past the present research's conclusion. These interventions include initiating a career mobility program, coaching program, listening sessions, and additional formal learning programs. Thus, the organization now has its sherpas, or guides, that will continue the trek to and from future summits.

Finally, there were three major findings at the individual, group, and system levels. It was learned that informal leaders need to be competent in both technical and leadership competencies at the individual level. Shared vision and expectations created an effective foundation for distributed leadership to be enacted regarding the group level. Lastly, at the system level, adaptive challenges can motivate organizational culture shifts, which align with distributed leadership in an organization.

Post-Script

I still remember "The Climb" by Miley Cyrus being played during the stormy patches in this AR journey. Specifically, the following lyrics:

Ain't about how fast I get there

Ain't about what's waiting on the other side

It's the climb

There were points throughout this Everest trek when I wanted to simply turn back around and descend the mountain, as the journey ahead seemed too arduous to complete. I would think to myself, I can still craft a story around this, right? In my mind, I kept thinking that there would be some sort of indication that there was a finish line. What grounded me in the present was the notion that the narratives of these marginalized groups were important and by navigating the messiness of AR, I could remain authentic to the process, as all organizations (and the people within them) are imperfect, messy, and in need of change.

However, as a change agent, I learned that no matter how badly the organization needs to change, transformation takes time. As a person with a Type A personality, I constantly focus on executing tasks and doing so in an expeditious manner. Thus, it was my erroneous belief that if I pushed my AR teams and myself enough, we would be able to make larger-scale change quickly. Reality does not work this way, and successful change agents must meet the organization where they are at. As Heifetz (1994) described, “one has to pace the work” (p. 259). Change agents must “strategically frame the issues, orchestrate conflict, develop structures and processes, provide a measure of orientation and protection, and maintain those norms that should endure” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 259). Moreover, the stakeholders that make up the organization must see themselves in order to change. A change agent can aid in this process, perhaps be the mirror that shows them who they are, but, ultimately, these individuals must own the problem, process, and solutions. To all my Type A change agents, remember that small-scale changes or technical solutions are successes too and can serve as the foundation for the larger-scale or adaptive change to come.

As I continue my work at Sequoyah University, I will embark upon future Everest treks and fully embrace the future avalanches and setbacks with the acknowledgement that

organizations frequently vacillate between what adaptive leadership theory denotes as surviving and thriving. At many points, it may seem like the organization is regressing to a previous unproductive state, but I have learned that when the organization is at its lowest point, it can also be open to the most change. I will be looking for the same glimmers of hope that I found at the conclusion of my study to propel me forward in this difficult work, as people and organizations need a resilient sherpa to guide the way. All in all, I'll remember it's all about the climb.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Action Research Team Solicitation Letter

TO: Name TBD
FROM: Janine Cabrera-Velde
DATE: Date TBD
RE: Invitation to Participation in Action Research

The primary purpose of the current action research study titled “Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority” is to build leadership capacity in Team Leads, or those who lead without positional authority.

Recently, leaders in the Building and Residential Services have expressed urgency around a need for leadership development of their Team Leads who are expected to lead frontline staff effectively.

This is an invitation for you to participate as a core team member of an action research study.

The purpose of this study is to identify the competencies and capabilities needed by these frontline leaders, to research the most effective ways for these leaders to learn and apply these skills, to use this information to create and implement leadership development program, and to measure the program outcomes at the individual, group, and system levels.

The initial commitment for this action research team will be to attend meetings monthly (one hour each), to conduct/assist with research, and to provide insight and recommendations to address this leadership development need. Our initial meeting will take place

_____.
Please let me know whether you wish to participate no later than _____. I
am available to answer any questions or provide additional information.
Sincerely,

Janine Cabrera-Velde

APPENDIX B

Team Lead Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled " Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority " conducted by Janine Cabrera-Velde, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014). I am being invited to participate in this research study because I am a participant in Sequoyah 's Campus Services leadership development program. My participation in this program is expected as a part of my role as a Team Lead in BRS. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and not required for program participation. I can refuse to participate in the research or stop taking part in this research at any time without giving reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this action research study is to investigate the needs of Team Leads and how to effectively develop the needed competencies. Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from program participants and how their learning impacts the university.

My participation in this study will involve:

- 1) Reflect on and document my learning at the end of each session throughout the program and provide this documentation to the researcher. This reflection will take about 5 minutes. (Janine Cabrera-Velde)
- 2) Create a short (5-10 minute) one-time oral presentation related to key learnings.
- 3) 15 minute semi-structured interviews at 3 different points during the study's duration to see the effectiveness of intervention)
- 4) Participate in a 30-minute focus group.
- 5) I understand that I may be contacted again by Janine Cabrera-Velde for clarification of my comments.

The benefits for me are the opportunity to participate in research for a doctoral dissertation and to express my perceptions, opinions, and concerns. The benefit to the university is the potential ability to enhance its leadership development programming and help contribute to knowledge about informal leadership at other institutions with similar structures.

No risk is expected. For data that will be collected during a focus group, even though the investigator will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future.

I understand that the researcher, Janine Cabrera-Velde, will maintain copies of my post course reflection documentation and my post program presentation. Additionally, notes will be taken during the post program interviews. All documentation will utilize code numbers for participants, and the code will be kept in a separate locked cabinet from the transcripts. Janine Cabrera-Velde alone will have access to the code. The notes, with identifiers removed, will be available to the Action Research Team that is helping Ms. Cabrera-Velde. If I am asked to complete a questionnaire, I will be assigned an identifying number and this number will be used on all of the questionnaires I fill out.

De-identified information obtained from this research may be used for future studies (or shared with other researchers) without obtaining your additional consent.

Your decision to take or not to take part in the research will not affect your employment or employee evaluations.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher. If you wish to contact the researcher, please email Janine Cabrera-Velde at *****@uga.edu. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at The University of Georgia, Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address: IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX C

Action Research Team Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled " Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority " conducted by Janine Cabrera-Velde, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014). I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I can refuse to participate in the research or stop taking part in this research at any time without giving reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this action research study is to investigate the needs of Team Leads (frontline leaders) and how to effectively develop the needed competencies. Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from program participants and how their learning impacts the organization.

I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Participate as a member of the action research team
- 2) Attend one hour, once a month team meetings and contribute to the research by following through on assignments and action items within requested timeframe
- 3) Participate in 15 minute semi-structured interviews at three different points

The benefits for me are the opportunity to participate in efforts to enhance leadership development at Sequoyah University. The benefit to the university is the potential ability to enhance its leadership development programming and help contribute to knowledge about informal leadership at other institutions with similar structures.

I understand that the researcher, Janine Cabrera-Velde, will maintain copies of meeting minutes and project documentation. The documentation, with identifiers removed, may be used as a part of the final dissertation. De-identified information obtained from this research may be used for future studies (or shared with other researchers) without obtaining your additional consent.

No risk is expected.

Your decision to take or not to take part in the research will not affect your employment or employee evaluations.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

If you wish to contact the researcher, please email Janine Cabrera-Velde at *****@uga.edu.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at The University of Georgia, Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address: IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX D

Faculty/Staff Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled " Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority " conducted by Janine Cabrera-Velde, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014). I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I can refuse to participate in the research or stop taking part in this research at any time without giving reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this action research study is to investigate the needs of Team Leads (frontline leaders) and how to effectively develop the needed competencies. Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from program participants and how their learning impacts the organization.

I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Participate in two 30 minute focus group sessions or two 15 minute semi-structured interviews (pre and post intervention)
- 2) Answer questions about my perception of the development needs of Team Leads

I understand that I may be contacted again by Janine Cabrera-Velde for clarification of my comments.

The benefits for me are the opportunity to participate in research for a doctoral dissertation and to express my perceptions, opinions, and concerns. The benefit to the university is the potential ability to enhance its leadership development programming and help contribute to knowledge about informal leadership at other institutions with similar structures.

No risk is expected. However, protection of confidentiality in this setting cannot be guaranteed. Even though the researcher will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future.

I understand that the researcher, Janine Cabrera-Velde, will maintain copies of focus group documentation. If I am asked to complete a questionnaire, I will be assigned an identifying number and this number will be used on all of the questionnaires I fill out. The transcripts, with identifiers removed, will be available to Janine Cabrera-Velde and the Action Research Team that is helping with this study.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

De-identified information obtained from this research may be used for future studies (or shared with other researchers) without obtaining your additional consent.

Your decision to take or not to take part in the research will not affect your employment or employee evaluations.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
---------------------	-----------	------

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

If you wish to contact the researcher, please email Janine Cabrera-Velde at *****@uga.edu.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at The University of Georgia, Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address: IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX E


Team Lead Job Description

[Home](#) » [Job Descriptions](#) » [Team Lead, BRS](#)

Pay Range Minimum	
Job Code: HD27	Hourly: \$14.47
FLSA*: Non-Exempt	Monthly: \$2,508.33
Grade: 226	Annually: \$30,100

***This is a Non-Exempt position. Employees in this position are paid an hourly pay rate, on a bi-weekly basis, and are eligible to receive overtime pay for any hours worked over 40 in a work week.**

JOB DESCRIPTION: Under the supervision and leadership of an Area Manager, performs custodial duties in accordance with established standards, routines, and instructions in an academic or student residential environment while functioning as a Team Lead for an assigned group of custodians. Assists in providing technical knowledge and skills in working, planning and organizing the daily activities of a team of custodians within an assigned area. Inspects assigned areas to ensure that the quality of work and work result is consistent with departmental standards. Monitors daily work of the team for quality, accuracy, and completeness. Helps to instruct and train custodians in the proper use of chemicals, supplies, equipment, procedures, and routines. Ensures that cleaning procedures and safety standards are followed. Performs all essential duties and responsibilities of both Custodian and Senior Custodian positions. Manages and controls equipment and chemicals assigned to a specific location, responsible for maintaining a stocked supply closet. Ensures all members of the team have the necessary and appropriate supplies and equipment to perform their jobs. Assists with inventory control and distributes requisitioned material to assigned custodial closet and/or team. Reports staff concerns, areas of deficiency, and any need for building maintenance to the shift manager or O&M zone supervisor for appropriate action. Coordinates support with fellow Team Leads embracing the larger mission of Building & Residential Services (BRS) and Campus Services. Performs other duties as required. This is a working position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: A high school degree or equivalent (GED), and three years related experience, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Ability to use a computer and mobile device for email communication, electronic timekeeping, and other basic systems. Positions in this classification may require a valid  driver's license and an insurable driving record.

APPENDIX F

Supervisor Job Description

[Home](#) » [Job Descriptions](#) » [Supv. Custodial Services](#)

	Pay Range Minimum
Job Code: HD36	Hourly: \$19.86
FLSA*: Non-Exempt	Monthly: \$3,441.67
Grade: 230	Annually: \$41,300

***This is a Non-Exempt position. Employees in this position are paid an hourly pay rate, on a bi-weekly basis, and are eligible to receive overtime pay for any hours worked over 40 in a work week.**

JOB DESCRIPTION: The Custodial Supervisor is responsible for overseeing and delivering quality and reliable custodial services to the academic, administrative, and residential units on all of [REDACTED]'s campuses. Supports the programmatic and operational strategy for achieving departmental goals. Directly supervises staff in the delivery of custodial program necessary to clean facilities in the most efficient and effective manner. Conducts Daily Quality Assessment to ensure service delivery is meeting the established Service Level Agreement. Assists the Manager in developing priorities to realize departmental objectives. Manages workload across the unit to ensure a timely and quality response to requests for service, and determines the most effective manner to allocate resources during periods of peak demand. Administers performance standards to meet the service expectations of a broad client base and productivity measures to identify and track progress and customer satisfaction. Continually assesses performance through established standards and applies corrective measures as required. Coordinates development and implementation of custodial programs, routines, and schedules. Analyzes feedback and adjusts programs, schedules, and service requirements accordingly. Supports the Manager and works closely with other managers and supervisors across Facilities Management to ensure a well-coordinated effort to maximize the provision of services. Promotes a safe work environment. Assists in managing parts and materials inventories for the Area to ensure adequate stocking levels. Participates in the hiring, training, evaluation, development, and termination of staff as required. Evaluates and makes recommendations on equipment, supplies, and procedures. Performs other related duties as required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: A high school diploma or equivalent and five years of related experience required, preferably in a large and complex organization, which includes at least one year of experience in a lead or supervisory role. At least two years of college coursework is preferred. Excellent interpersonal and written communication skills are required. Positions in this classification may require a valid [REDACTED] driver's license and an insurable driving record. Knowledge of all Microsoft Office software, proficient in Word, Excel, Outlook.

APPENDIX G

Project Sponsor Approval Letter

I, [REDACTED] on behalf of Campus Services, agree to participate in a research study titled "Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority" conducted by Janine Cabrera-Velde, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014).

The purpose of this action research study is to investigate the needs of employees who lead without positional authority, specifically team leads and crew leads, and how to effectively develop the needed leadership competencies. Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from training program participants and how their learning impacts the organization.

Participants will be asked to:

- 1) Participate in the Team Lead/Crew Lead Leadership Development Program
- 2) Reflect on and document learning at the end of each session throughout the program and provide this documentation to the researcher (Janine Cabrera-Velde)
- 3) Share key learnings as a part of focus groups
- 4) Participate in a post program interview to answer questions about key individual learnings that apply to their work in Campus Services.
- 5) Clarify comments with the researcher, Janine Cabrera-Velde.

Any additional involvement or deviation will require additional approval.

This is an action research study with the purpose of gathering information, sharing information and collaborating with each other in activities to help determine, design and implement supports that may be appropriate in the context of Campus Services. The benefit to the organization is the potential ability to enhance its leadership development programming. The benefit to the researcher is data upon which to base her doctoral project.

There are no foreseeable risks to Campus Services' (the organization) participation. In fact, you will have a chance to engage collaboratively in activities to identify, define and promote actions that may support an increase in access to, use of, and application of data to augment teaching and learning. This research may identify structures that need to be added, removed or improved upon to support your increased data use for leadership development. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates the organization's approval for the researcher to conduct the study and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

[REDACTED]


Organization Representative Signature & Date

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX H

UGA IRB Approval Letter



Tucker Hall, Room 212
310 E. Campus Rd.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
IRB@uga.edu
<http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/>

Human Research Protection Program

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

July 5, 2019

Dear [Aiki Nicolaides](#):

On 7/5/2019, the Human Subjects Office reviewed and approved the following submission:

Title of Study:	Rethinking Hierarchy: Distributed Leadership in the Trades
Investigator:	Aiki Nicolaides
Co-Investigator:	Janine Cabrera-Velde
IRB ID:	PROJECT00000383
Funding:	None
Review Category:	Flex-Exempt 7

Should you modify this study in the future, please be aware that not all modifications will require review by the IRB since it was determined to be "Exempt." For more information on modifications that will require review and approval by the IRB prior to implementation, please see Appendix C of the Exempt Research Policy (<https://research.uga.edu/docs/policies/compliance/hso/IRB-Exempt-Review.pdf>). As noted in Section C.2, you can simply notify us of modifications that will not require review via the "Add Public Comment" button.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Please close this study when it is complete or submit a Progress Report by 7/4/2024, whichever comes first.

Sincerely,
Benilda P. Pooser, Ph.D., CIM
Director, Clinical Research Compliance

APPENDIX I

Sequoyah University IRB Approval Letter

Date: July 22, 2019

Janine Cabrera-Velde, PhD Candidate

Principal Investigator

*ECAS: Ofc Undergrad Education DeptApproval

RE: **Exemption of Human Subjects Research**
 IRB00113100
 Developing Leaders Without Positional Authority

Dear Principal Investigator:

Thank you for submitting an application to the [REDACTED] for the above-referenced project. Based on the information you have provided, we have determined on **July 20, 2019** that although it is human subjects research, it is exempt from further IRB review and approval.

This determination is good indefinitely unless substantive revisions to the study design (e.g., population or type of data to be obtained) occur which alter our analysis. Please consult the [REDACTED] for clarification in case of such a change. Exempt projects do not require continuing renewal applications.

This project meets the criteria for exemption under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(D2, D3). Specifically, this project aims to build the leadership capacity and skills of Team Leads (who lead without positional authority) with the ultimate goal of improving departmental and organizational performance. .

- Protocol
 - Scientific Protocol.pdf
- Consent Documents
 - Action Research Team Consent Form Final.docx
 - Area Manager, Supervisor, Custodian Consent Form Final.docx
 - Team Lead Consent Form Final.docx
- Research Instruments
 - Semi-structured Interview Questions for Leaders.docx
 - Focus Group Questions.docx
 - AR Team Semi-Structured Interview Question.docx

Please note that the Belmont Report principles apply to this research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. You should use the informed consent materials reviewed by the IRB unless a waiver of consent was granted. Similarly, if HIPAA applies to this project, you should use the HIPAA patient authorization and revocation materials reviewed by the IRB unless a waiver was granted. CITI certification is required of all personnel conducting this research.

Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others or violations of the HIPAA Privacy Rule must be reported promptly to the [REDACTED] IRB and the sponsoring agency (if any).

In future correspondence about this matter, please refer to the study ID shown above. Thank you.

APPENDIX J**Team Lead Interview Guide**

1. *Tell me about your experience as a Team Lead.*
 - a. What does a typical workday entail?
 - b. What do you enjoy about your job?
 - c. What frustrates you regularly?
2. *Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.*
 - a. What happened? Then what happened?
 - b. What factors helped you influence them?
 - c. Who was involved?
 - d. How did you respond?
 - e. How did you feel?
 - f. What was the ultimate outcome?
3. *Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.*
 - a. What happened? Then what happened?
 - b. Why did you feel like you couldn't influence them?
 - c. Who was involved?
 - d. How did you respond?
 - e. How did you feel?
 - f. What was the ultimate outcome?
4. *Tell me about your experience as a Supervisor.*
 - a. What does a typical workday entail?
 - b. What do you enjoy about your job?

- c. What frustrates you regularly?
5. *Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Supervisor.*
- a. What happened? Then what happened?
 - b. What factors helped you influence them?
 - c. Who was involved?
 - d. How did you respond?
 - e. How did you feel?
 - f. What was the ultimate outcome?
6. *Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Supervisor.*
- a. What happened? Then what happened?
 - b. Why did you feel like you couldn't influence them?
 - c. Who was involved?
 - d. How did you respond?
 - e. How did you feel?
 - f. What was the ultimate outcome?
7. How has COVID-19 impacted your leadership?
- a. What happened? Then what happened?
 - b. Who was involved?
 - c. How did you respond?
 - d. How did you feel?
 - e. What was the ultimate outcome?

*Italicized questions are required. Follow-up questions (denoted by letter sequence) are not required of every participant and are added as a guide.

APPENDIX K

Coded Interview Transcripts

Interview: Michelangelo

1. Tell me about your experience as a Team Lead.

Swept Under the Rug

I had a good experience as a Team Lead. Before my promotion, I was in that role for a year and a half. It was the first leadership position I ever had. I learned from fellow Team Leads and area managers. Despite being a great learning experience, there were some challenges. The biggest challenge was not having authority. I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action. They never seemed to have the sense of urgency that I wanted them to have. Many issues got swept under the rug even when it was important to me. They just didn't seem to share the vision that I had. As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important and they should do something about it. I should be able to hold employees accountable of X, Y, and Z. I feel like the system is disconnected because I can't.

2. Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.

PATHWAY. As a team lead, there was some high potential candidates when that came along. I told them about my story and how it helped me become the leader that I was. I told them my story and it motivated people to apply. They didn't make the cut and they moved forward. Trying to develop themselves because I had.

3. Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.

Lollygagging

There was a time when I assigned an employee the task of auto scrubbing the floor. The task should have taken an hour. I gave him three hours to complete the task. Fifteen minutes after assigning the task, he told me that the machine wasn't working. I went back there and fixed it. When I came back later to check on his progress, he wasn't even halfway finished. After all my work to fix the machine, I wondered why he didn't even call to let me know what was going on or why he couldn't complete the job. I gave him ample time, so I assumed he was off lollygagging. When I followed up with the employee, there was no explanation as to why it wasn't completed. I reported the incident to my area manager at the time. Nothing was done to discipline the guy. It was obvious that the disciplinary action I requested was not considered urgent.

4. Tell me about your experience as a supervisor.

It is super fun and I like what I am doing. There are things that I want people to take urgency. Everything within my power is good. I don't have too many complaints. I think that having the power makes it easier.

Authority Does Matter

When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who was responsible for the work. I talked to both of them and they were at odds. They didn't want to resolve their disagreement. I even tried to talk to them individually. When I got my area manager involved, she immediately called the employees and explained that she had heard that they were having issues. They immediately found a resolution. It was apparent that they were in fear of her and the potential of getting reprimanded. I literally had the same conversation but it didn't mean anything to them. That day I learned authority does matter. When you don't have authority, they look at you as being unable to do anything to them. If someone with authority comes along, they go ahead and do what is expected before the situation escalates.

5. Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a supervisor.

Lessen Our Carbon Fingerprint

The new hires were not recycling properly. Even when the color of the bag matches the color of the bins, it seemed like they did not understand how to recycle or they didn't care. As a result, they were putting recyclables in the landfill pile. Despite me explaining the task, I realized that they probably did not understand the larger vision for why we do what we do. I decided to influence them by discussing the importance of recycling. I explained that it would lessen our carbon footprint on the Earth, which would make a better and safer world for our kids. After emphasizing the why behind recycling in a meaningful way, there were no issues about putting the right things in the right places.

6. Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a supervisor.

Influence

I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manager for a computer for our frontline staff for a long time. It has been several months. I don't understand why the staff's request is being dismissed. I would rather get a straight answer as to why it hasn't happened. To this day, I still have not managed to get that computer fixed for my employees to have computer access. My influence on my boss is clearly not working.

In regards to frontline, I get my staff to do what they need to do. To be honest, my authority is not the first tool. I am not afraid to use my authority. I don't get too much [ushaback.

7. How does COVID-19 impact your leadership?

Uncertainty

As the pandemic started, my staff and I were sent home. Apparently, someone had been exposed to the virus and we could perhaps have it. I was told to stay home for ten days. When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was being yelled at. They were yelling, "Sequoyah doesn't care about us!" Everyone seemed to be nervous and scared. They had unanswered questions. One guy went on a tirade saying they it was unjust that they were exposed. He even exclaimed, "Is it because we don't matter or make as much as everyone else?" I had to explain to them that our job cannot be completed at home. I went on to say, "we are learning new things about the virus every day. We are experiencing a time of uncertainty and that when I hear more, I will share with you. I don't have answers right

now.” I brought up their concerns to my leader but they didn’t have any answers either. The reality is that things are changing every couple of hours. The employees were very upset but within forty-eight hours, everything was shut down. At the point, everything was switched to a rotating schedule for my group. Once this schedule was declared, the employees seemed grateful to be taken care of by the university. They knew a lot of other people had lost their jobs. They were even more thankful to have double pay when they did show up to work.

As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important. My leader should then do something about it. Apparently, if tasks aren’t completed its because they have the whole shift to complete it. What I described earlier, as long as they finish in 8 hour shift, they can’t do anything. I have to give them the whole day. They can’t measure my pace. They have the whole 8 hours. They don’t know the whole dynamics. I can’t hold them accountable because of X, Y, and Z. There is a disconnect here.

12 Codes:

○ "challenged" In Vivo Code

3 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 2:50 ¶ 52, challenging in Ruby Interview / 2:52 ¶ 57, challenging in Ruby Interview

○ "great learning experience" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

1:20 ¶ 6, great learning experience in Michelangelo Interview

○ "swept under the rug" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

1:22 ¶ 6, swept under the rug in Michelangelo Interview

○ 1000: Employee Development [1002]

3 Quotations:

1:5 ¶ 9, PATHWAY. As a team lead, there was some high potential candidates when... in Michelangelo Interview / 3:2 ¶ 2, I told her she could apply for other positions in our department. She... in Combined CITs / 3:4 ¶ 2, Every time I find a little information, I try to tell them. It makes m... in Combined CITs

○ 2000: Adaptability [2001]

3 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:16 ¶ 34, The reality is that things are changing every couple of hours. in Michelangelo Interview / 2:29 ¶ 53, I chose my five best employees that work well under intense pressure.... in Ruby Interview

○ **2000: Purpose [2004]**

1 Quotations:

1:11 ¶ 24, The new hires were not recycling properly. Even when the color of the... in Michelangelo Interview

○ **2000: Vision [2003]**

3 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview / 2:31 ¶ 54, When customers aren't around, it is harder to motivate them to clean b... in Ruby Interview

○ **4000: Corrective Action [4001]**

9 Quotations:

1:2 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:6 ¶ 13, When I followed up with the employee, there was no explanation as to w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:17 ¶ 39, As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my lead... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:18 ¶ 39, I can't hold them accountable because of X, Y, and Z. there is discon... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:10 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn't write them up and employees didn't care. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 3:8 ¶ 4, The only respect I get is when I let him know that I'm going to let ma... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Managing Up [4002]**

4 Quotations:

1:12 ¶ 27, I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manag... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:17 ¶ 39, As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my lead... in Michelangelo Interview / 3:13 ¶ 6, The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, "No... in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Positional Authority = Respect [4003]**

11 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:8 ¶ 17, It is super fun and I like what I am doing. There are things that I w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:14 ¶ 30, In regards to frontline, I get my staff to do what they need to do. To... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:14 ¶ 38, As a supervisor, when there are issues, the employees make sure to com... in Ruby Interview / 2:16 ¶ 39, As a supervisor, I enjoy having the power to write employees up. in Ruby Interview / 2:18 ¶ 40, As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but... in Ruby Interview / 3:10 ¶ 4, I let leadership know about the issues I was having with him. in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:28 ¶ 12, One time, my area manager gave us a whole bunch of floor work that he... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Power Struggles [4004]**

32 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:3 ¶ 6, They never seemed to have the sense of urgency that I wanted them to h... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:7 ¶ 13, There was a time when I assigned an employee the task of auto scrubbin... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:13 ¶ 27, I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manag... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:19 ¶ 17, power makes it easier. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:21 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:23 ¶ 13, After all my work to fix the machine, I wondered why he didn't even ca... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:24 ¶ 13, I reported the incident to my area manager at the time. Nothing was do... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:25 ¶ 19, I literally had the same conversation but it didn't mean anything to t... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:26 ¶ 27, I don't understand why the staff's request is being dismissed. I would... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:2 ¶ 14, the first thing they would do is go directly to my manager or talk amo... in Ruby Interview / 2:3 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:4 ¶ 18, One time, when I was a team lead, all my employees got together and sc... in Ruby Interview / 2:5 ¶ 18, They said, "we don't have to talk to her or respond to let her know we... in Ruby Interview / 2:6 ¶ 21, When I met them individually (one on one), they said, "we heard bad th... in Ruby Interview / 2:9 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn't write them up and employees didn't care. in Ruby Interview / 2:11 ¶ 33, The manager would always have the employee's back. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 2:15 ¶ 38, Some employees still go over me because they feel like they will

get a... in Ruby Interview / 2:53 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:54 ¶ 18, I was there during that meeting, and the director said, “what is going... in Ruby Interview / 2:56 ¶ 33, When I would report these incidents to the area manager, the manager w... in Ruby Interview / 3:5 ¶ 4, He has an issue where he wants to skip the chain of command. in Combined CITs / 3:9 ¶ 4, At the end of the day, I’m your Team Lead, and you should be able to c... in Combined CITs / 3:13 ¶ 6, The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, “No... in Combined CITs / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, “You’re at h... in Combined CITs / 3:15 ¶ 8, This employee had heard that I was strict and hard in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:21 ¶ 8, “You know I was wrong about you. I figured I could break you down. You... in Combined CITs

○ 4000: Resistance [4005]

12 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:26 ¶ 47, They take advantage of the system and rely on the following shift to d... in Ruby Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview / 2:33 ¶ 57, A lot of them say no and to only call them when they have to go back t... in Ruby Interview / 2:41 ¶ 21, Those employees had better attitudes in Ruby Interview / 3:6 ¶ 4, His attitude is real bad, and he gets smart with me in Combined CITs / 3:11 ¶ 4, At one of our daily huddles, he just said nothing when I was giving ou... in Combined CITs / 3:12 ¶ 4, Right now he is fine, but his attitude, I don’t think that is going to... in Combined CITs / 3:19 ¶ 8, If I asked him to do something, he would say well you just do it and w... in Combined CITs / 3:20 ¶ 8, It was a hard, hard road because I felt stressed, almost like if I was... in Combined CITs / 3:26 ¶ 12, He told me that he already had too much work to do and that he wouldn’t... in Combined CITs / 3:29 ¶ 4, If something doesn’t go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real... in Combined CITs

Interview: Ruby

1. Tell me about your experience as a Team Lead.

The Little Flaws

It was horrible. Period. As a team lead, everything was difficult. I started as a team lead and the group I had was not the friendliest. I am very detailed and that can be a bad thing as I am told that nothing can be perfect. When something isn’t cleaned properly like restrooms or classrooms, it upsets me. I know the importance of entering a clean restroom or classroom. When I would check on employees and their routines, as I pointed something out to them.. like the dust above the whiteboard.. the first thing they would do is go directly to my manager or talk amongst each other. Sometimes in our morning huddle, which happened once a week, they would tell me that they wanted a meeting with my manager. They would

complain and say she is making us get on our knees to clean. The manager would tell them that it was part of their job. Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to manager. They would get so upset about me saying the little flaws. They only wanted me to say positive things, nothing negative.

Don't Be a Quitter

One time, when I was a team lead, all my employees got together and scheduled a meeting with the director to talk about me. I was there during that meeting, and the director said, "what is going on? What don't you like about her?" I heard employees say so many negative things about me. For example, they said that she expects us to say good morning. They said, "we don't have to talk to her or respond to let her know we are listening." I thought it was ridiculous. I wanted to quit that day and I went to my area manager's office and cried and cried. It was a very unprofessional meeting and it was hard hearing such hurtful words. I spoke to my grandma about it and she said don't be a quitter. I stayed.

Great Energy

There was a rearranging of team leads and I was moved to another area. It was better moving to another area. Those employees had better attitudes. They were happy to come to work and they had good energy. My other group had a negative energy and were constantly on their phones. My new group was ready to listen to me. When I met them individually (one on one), they said, "we heard bad things about you." However, they got to know me and they were nice to me. Like I said, they had a good energy and were willing to give me a chance. They were a great group of people. I was day shift then and when I got promoted I moved to second shift, so I didn't see them as much anymore. I still remember their great energy and their openness.

2. Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.

Holidays

As a team lead, we had to have huddles every day. We had to know which employees were here and who wasn't. It was also a time to know if they needed supplies, like microfibers or mops. At my huddles, I started sharing each holiday that was on the calendar (even Pi Day). I noticed that things were better when I would bring non-work related things to huddles. I knew what people liked and didn't like on a personal level. In my previous group, we were not able to come together as a group and have conversations about what they really liked and didn't.

With this group, I even threw them a pizza party because we had no complaints during our shift. We had a good team and I learned so many things about them. Talking about non-work related things made us closer. They would even ask me about myself. That was amazing, because, typically, no one wants to hear leadership's perspective. Normally, employees just want to talk about themselves. They asked about me! It made me want to be a better leader.

3. Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.

Useless

As a team lead, when I would walk a building, I noticed employees on their phones. I would say, "Excuse me, what is going on? Are you taking a break? If not, can you please get off the phone?" They would say, "give me a minute."

I knew that I couldn't write them up and employees didn't care. They knew I couldn't do anything, so they did what they wanted. They would even talk to customers to avoid work for longer periods of time. I couldn't even find employees at certain times. When I would report these incidents to the area manager, the manager would talk to the employee and they would say I was lying. The manager would always have the employee's back. Not mine. Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to lead others when I had no power to do write-ups. Basically, my job was useless.

4. Tell me about your experience as a supervisor.

Power

In the beginning, as a supervisor, it was very tough. I met my current team as a supervisor. They didn't know me before then. I didn't work with them as a team lead. I had to get to know my employees, which included learning the good things, bad things, and what they needed to improve. I had to connect to each employee differently. We became a good group eventually. As a supervisor, when there are issues, the employees make sure to come to me instead of going over me to the area manager. I feel like I am making a difference because they come to me for the resolution of their problems. Some employees still go over me because they feel like they will get an answer quicker from my area manager.

As a supervisor, I enjoy having the power to write employees up. When I write them up, I notice that they tend to improve. If there are attendance issues, like three consecutive write-ups, I ask the employee, "hey what's going on?" The employee that was having these attendance issues said that he was struggling with some of his tasks. Other employees struggled in the same area. In this employee's case, he felt like there too many offices to clean. I came up with a great idea. There was a total of 300 cubicle offices, and I sat with all my employees and we divided up all the offices. I asked them, "how many offices can you clean in one day?" I used that information to determine who was going to do what and to make a schedule. Then, I didn't have to do any write-ups about them not performing.

As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but this is my group. I have to notice my people's struggles. You can't just write people up. Instead, it is about how to help people and notice what they struggle with. You need to know what your employees are going through. I want to keep developing because I want to be the best supervisor.

5. Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a supervisor.

Supplies

Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can help with detailed work, such as toothbrushes or specific chemicals. For example, I say, "if you spray this or use this other thing, your job could be easier." The employees are willing to work harder and improve their skills when they have new proven methods to do things.

Things tend to get misplaced a lot, due to all the shifts. Many shifts use a single closet. If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy and do better work. One

time, I gave an employee a flat mop that they said had been missing and it motivated him to do his job better. However, I make sure to document these new distributed supplies in my shift report. I feel like if you the supplies you need, you have no excuse. I usually make the employees even sign that they have received the supplies, so that they know they should now be able to complete tasks they could not before. It's a commitment.

6. Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a supervisor.

Take Advantage of the System

Whenever we have major CS social events, evening shift employees come in early and those hours get counted as part of their shift. Basically, they aren't working their full shift. I try to remind them to enjoy the event because afterwards we still have work to do. However, they are too excited after attending the event, and they feel like I am ruining their day. As a result, a majority of their routines are not done. We give them the opportunity to enjoy what Sequoyah has to offer and, in turn, they are not doing their job effectively. They take advantage of the system and rely on the following shift to do their work. During these times, it is very difficult to give them any news, updates, or anything else. They are upset they have to work.

7. How does COVID-19 impact your leadership?

Unmotivated

During COVID-19, my employees were very upset. They noticed that other CS employees got to work from home and that they couldn't. It was very difficult. We had a rotating work schedule and many employees went to their doctors to get a doctor's excuse. A lot of our employees are older and have health conditions. Pretty quickly, I got 5 doctor's notes from employees that said they would not be at work because they were high risk. It was challenging to lead because we had already had plans of who was going to work and when. We didn't even manage to complete one week. By the end of the week, we switched from a rotating schedule to having a skeleton crew of people.

The employees that worked during this time were very negative. They were highly unmotivated and did not fully understand why they should clean. However, some employees were more understanding than others. I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that we still need to serve our customers. Currently, we only have five people in our zone and we alternate. I chose my five best employees that work well under intense pressure. They had to adjust to varying work schedules. One shift was changed from the usual 4:00pm-12:30am to an 8:00am-4:00pm shift. The change in the work schedule was hard. One of my employees didn't like the new shift and I still had a list of people who needed to come to work but hadn't.

To be successful during these times, I had to find projects to give employees and more specific tasks. When customers aren't around, it is harder to motivate them to clean buildings. They know complaints won't come. However, I walk all of my 13 buildings and check in on them and let them know they need to do the tasks I've assigned. They sometimes say, "Ruby, it's a lot." I get it. Completely. Less people working means more work on the people there but I have a good team and they are doing well.

Prepared

We need more employees on campus. I have to call other employees and ask if they would like to work. A lot of them say no and to only call them when they have to go back to work. They are getting comfortable with being out but people still need to help out. I had an employee come back to COVID-19, after being out for two months, and it was challenging. It was hard for her to remember which keys to use. Other employees have even locked themselves out of our key box, because they have been out for so long due to COVID-19. I am glad that I am still working and that I am prepared. I want to be prepared when everyone comes back. When I talk to other supervisors, ones that haven't been on campus, they have said that they will need to learn how to be a supervisor again.

26 Codes:

○ "challenged" In Vivo Code

3 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 2:50 ¶ 52, challenging in Ruby Interview / 2:52 ¶ 57, challenging in Ruby Interview

○ "cried and cried" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

2:39 ¶ 18, cried and cried in Ruby Interview

○ "didn't care" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

2:55 ¶ 33, didn't care in Ruby Interview

○ "don't be a quitter" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

2:40 ¶ 18, don't be a quitter in Ruby Interview

○ "good energy" In Vivo Code

2 Quotations:

2:44 ¶ 21, good energy in Ruby Interview / 2:45 ¶ 21, great energ in Ruby Interview

○ "horrible" In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

2:35 ¶ 14, It was horrible. in Ruby Interview

○ **"job was useless" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:46 ¶ 33, job was useless. in Ruby Interview

○ **"make a difference" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:48 ¶ 38, making a difference in Ruby Interview

○ **"negative energy" In Vivo Code**

2 Quotations:

2:42 ¶ 21, negative energy in Ruby Interview / 2:51 ¶ 53, negative in Ruby Interview

○ **"nice to me" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:43 ¶ 21, nice to me in Ruby Interview

○ **"ridiculous" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:38 ¶ 18, ridiculous. in Ruby Interview

○ **"take advantage of the system" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:49 ¶ 47, They take advantage of the system and rely on the following shift to d... in Ruby Interview

○ **"tough" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

2:47 ¶ 38, tough in Ruby Interview

○ **"upset" In Vivo Code**

2 Quotations:

2:36 ¶ 14, upsets me in Ruby Interview / 2:37 ¶ 14, upset in Ruby Interview

○ **1000: Technical Knowledge/ Show Don't Tell [1001]**

7 Quotations:

2:19 ¶ 43, Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can... in Ruby Interview / 2:22 ¶ 44, If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy... in Ruby Interview / 2:34 ¶ 57, I am glad that I am still working and that I am prepared. I want to be... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs / 3:24 ¶ 10, I also want to be knowledgeable. I don't want to just have a title and... in Combined CITs / 3:25 ¶ 10, One day last week, an employee called me to tell that a vacuum was not... in Combined CITs / 3:29 ¶ 4, If something doesn't go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real... in Combined CITs

○ **2000: Adaptability [2001]**

3 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:16 ¶ 34, The reality is that things are changing every couple of hours. in Michelangelo Interview / 2:29 ¶ 53, I chose my five best employees that work well under intense pressure.... in Ruby Interview

○ **2000: Disparity [2002]**

5 Quotations:

2:23 ¶ 47, evening shift employees come in early and those hours get counted as p... in Ruby Interview / 2:24 ¶ 47, As a result, a majority of their routines are not done. in Ruby Interview / 2:25 ¶ 52, They noticed that other CS employees got to work from home and that th... in Ruby Interview / 2:27 ¶ 53, The employees that worked during this time were very negative in Ruby Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview

○ **2000: Vision [2003]**

3 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview / 2:31 ¶ 54, When customers aren't around, it is harder to motivate them to clean b... in Ruby Interview

○ **3000: Feedback [3002]**

3 Quotations:

2:17 ¶ 39, In this employee's case, he felt like there too many offices to clean... in Ruby Interview / 2:32 ¶ 54, They sometimes say, "Ruby, it's a lot." I get it. Completely. Less peo... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs

○ **3000: Receptiveness [3003]**

4 Quotations:

2:19 ¶ 43, Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can... in Ruby Interview / 2:20 ¶ 44, If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy... in Ruby Interview / 2:21 ¶ 44, I usually make the employees even sign that they have received the sup... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs

○ **3000: Specificity of Tasks [3004]**

3 Quotations:

2:20 ¶ 44, If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy... in Ruby Interview / 2:21 ¶ 44, I usually make the employees even sign that they have received the sup... in Ruby Interview / 2:30 ¶ 54, To be successful during these times, I had to find projects to give em... in Ruby Interview

○ **3000: Trust [3001]**

11 Quotations:

2:7 ¶ 26, I noticed that things were better when I would bring non-work related... in Ruby Interview / 2:8 ¶ 27, Talking about non-work related things made us closer. They would even... in Ruby Interview / 2:13 ¶ 38, I had to get to know my employees, which included learning the good th... in Ruby Interview / 2:18 ¶ 40, As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but... in Ruby Interview / 2:32 ¶ 54, They sometimes say, "Ruby, it's a lot." I get it. Completely. Less peo... in Ruby Interview / 3:1 ¶ 2, Sometimes people just need to know that you are in their corner, that... in Combined CITs / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs / 3:22 ¶ 10, The ultimate outcome of that relationship was that it built trust in Combined CITs / 3:23 ¶ 10, . I could have told her I was coming and never came. To influence some... in Combined CITs / 3:24 ¶ 10, I also want to be knowledgeable. I don't want to just have a title and... in Combined CITs / 3:27 ¶ 12, We had already assigned him 3 labs to clean, and I know we only have 8... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Corrective Action [4001]**

9 Quotations:

1:2 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:6 ¶ 13, When I followed up with the employee, there was no explanation as to w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:17 ¶ 39, As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my lead... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:18 ¶ 39, I can't hold them accountable because of X, Y, and Z. there is discon... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:10 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn't write them up and employees didn't care. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 3:8 ¶ 4, The only respect I get is when I let him know that I'm going to let ma... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Positional Authority = Respect [4003]**

11 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:8 ¶ 17, It is super fun and I like what I am doing. There are things that I w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:14 ¶ 30, In regards to frontline, I get my staff to do what they need to do. To... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:14 ¶ 38, As a supervisor, when there are issues, the employees make sure to com... in Ruby Interview / 2:16 ¶ 39, As a supervisor, I enjoy having the power to write employees up. in Ruby Interview / 2:18 ¶ 40, As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but... in Ruby Interview / 3:10 ¶ 4, I let leadership know about the issues I was having with him. in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:28 ¶ 12, One time, my area manager gave us a whole bunch of floor work that he... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Power Struggles [4004]**

32 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:3 ¶ 6, They never seemed to have the sense of urgency that I wanted them to h... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:7 ¶ 13, There was a time when I assigned an employee the task of auto scrubbin... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:13 ¶ 27, I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manag... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:19 ¶ 17, power makes it easier. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:21 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:23 ¶ 13, After all my work to fix the machine, I wondered why he didn't even ca... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:24 ¶ 13, I reported the incident to my area manager at the time. Nothing was do... in Michelangelo

Interview / 1:25 ¶ 19, I literally had the same conversation but it didn't mean anything to t... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:26 ¶ 27, I don't understand why the staff's request is being dismissed. I would... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:2 ¶ 14, the first thing they would do is go directly to my manager or talk amo... in Ruby Interview / 2:3 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:4 ¶ 18, One time, when I was a team lead, all my employees got together and sc... in Ruby Interview / 2:5 ¶ 18, They said, "we don't have to talk to her or respond to let her know we... in Ruby Interview / 2:6 ¶ 21, When I met them individually (one on one), they said, "we heard bad th... in Ruby Interview / 2:9 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn't write them up and employees didn't care. in Ruby Interview / 2:11 ¶ 33, The manager would always have the employee's back. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 2:15 ¶ 38, Some employees still go over me because they feel like they will get a... in Ruby Interview / 2:53 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:54 ¶ 18, I was there during that meeting, and the director said, "what is going... in Ruby Interview / 2:56 ¶ 33, When I would report these incidents to the area manager, the manager w... in Ruby Interview / 3:5 ¶ 4, He has an issue where he wants to skip the chain of command. in Combined CITs / 3:9 ¶ 4, At the end of the day, I'm your Team Lead, and you should be able to c... in Combined CITs / 3:13 ¶ 6, The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, "No... in Combined CITs / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs / 3:15 ¶ 8, This employee had heard that I was strict and hard in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:21 ¶ 8, "You know I was wrong about you. I figured I could break you down. You... in Combined CITs

○ 4000: Resistance [4005]

12 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:26 ¶ 47, They take advantage of the system and rely on the following shift to d... in Ruby Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview / 2:33 ¶ 57, A lot of them say no and to only call them when they have to go back t... in Ruby Interview / 2:41 ¶ 21, Those employees had better attitudes in Ruby Interview / 3:6 ¶ 4, His attitude is real bad, and he gets smart with me in Combined CITs / 3:11 ¶ 4, At one of our daily huddles, he just said nothing when I was giving ou... in Combined CITs / 3:12 ¶ 4, Right now he is fine, but his attitude, I don't think that is going to... in Combined CITs / 3:19 ¶ 8, If I asked him to do something, he would say well you just do it and w... in Combined CITs / 3:20 ¶ 8, It was a hard, hard road because I felt stressed, almost like if I was... in Combined CITs / 3:26 ¶ 12, He told me that he already had too much work to do and that he wouldn't... in Combined CITs / 3:29 ¶ 4, If something doesn't go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real... in Combined CITs

Interview: Makayla

Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.

Climb All Mountains

I had one employee that kept trying to get another job. I would ask her, "Why are you trying to get another job? You already struggle to make it to work on time, and then you would have to go to another job." She was like, "You know what? You're right." I told her she could apply for other positions in our department. She was able to move from senior custodian to a recycling specialist. Then I was like, "What's the next step for you?" She said she wanted to do a leadership development class. I told her that I would inform her supervisor to help her with next steps. Sometimes people just need to know that you are in their corner, that they can come talk to you. You gotta tell them you can do it instead of saying no, that's not a good idea. I always say, "Climb all mountains." If I can do it, you can. Certain things don't require talent. It's not basketball. Some jobs you can learn and get better at through practice. I tell them all Sequoyah has to offer. Every time I find a little information, I try to tell them. It makes me feel good that somebody could reach out to me and say, "We see you got promoted. What is it that you did?" I then show them that I am enrolled in classes at a state school for my Bachelor's degree by logging into my student account. I show them how Sequoyah can help pay for classes through the tuition reimbursement program. They say, "Now that you've shown me, I feel like I can do it." I signed her up for classes and kept preaching climb all mountains.

Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.

Young

I have one employee who feels like I just don't know nothing. I had an incident with him a couple of weeks ago. He worked with me at one of my buildings. He has an issue where he wants to skip the chain of command. If something doesn't go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real bad, and he gets smart with me. When things don't go his way he says, "Oh you don't know nothing. You are too young." One day I asked him, "What is it that I don't know?" He said, "Y'all don't know how to run this operation." I told him, "I don't run the operation. Thanks for your opinion." The only respect I get is when I let him know that I'm going to let management know what he is doing. He is just one person I don't think I could ever influence to do anything. I let leadership know about the issues I was having with him. At one of our daily huddles, he just said nothing when I was giving out the assignments. So I just pulled him aside and said, "Some of things you say can affect how somebody might feel. What if I'm a person who cries or gets their feelings hurt easily? You have to watch how you say things. 'Cause when you say stuff, people might take stuff another way. You just never know how people are. At the end of the day, I'm your Team Lead, and you should be able to come to talk to me. If you feel like I am not doing something right, let me know." People need to adapt. Right now he is fine, but his attitude, I don't think that is going to change.

Interview: Lydia

Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.

Proof

One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at home. I want you to forget about this for now and enjoy your evening. We'll talk tomorrow." My supervisor reached out to me and let me know that this employee had left a bag full of recycling on the loading dock. The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, "No, no, no. Give me an opportunity to talk to her tomorrow and see why she left it." The next day, I talked to her about her frustration, and she told me that the bag she left was a pass off. She said she couldn't get all of her work done. I let her know that I would work with her. I wanted to see what she did and how she did it. There had to be something more as to why she couldn't finish. So we worked together, and I saw all she had to do. The one thing I wasn't aware of was the number of events in her building. I told her that people might not believe you have that many events. We went to the lady who coordinates all the events in that building. I asked if my employee could have printout of all the events. The lady said my employee would need to come every day because event schedules change. The printout serves as actual proof. One day, she had to clean after 14 events in her building. It's like 7 floors. She is doing the job of several recycling specialists and custodians by herself. 2 break rooms on each floor, one huge kitchen, and the outside. The one day I helped her, even though it was half a day, it helped her a lot. By the end of that day, she was laughing because she didn't stress out as much. I came up with a task she could leave on a daily basis. Instead, I needed her to focus on her events.

Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.

In Prison

This employee had heard that I was strict and hard. He had it out for me, period. He didn't want me to call him. He didn't even want me to come to his building to talk to him when he had issues. He would bypass me and go to the supervisor. He told my supervisor that he didn't want me talking to him and that he didn't want to deal with me. I told my supervisor, "You can't let him have that. He's such a good employee. We have to communicate." So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the employee that he had to come to me for stuff or for direction or to help him out. It took months and months and months for things to get better. I just had to stay positive and focused. If I asked him to do something, he would say well you just do it and walk away. He was an older gentleman, and, you know, you can get set in your ways. He didn't want me to come in there and make him do things a different way. I wanted to work through the issues. It was a hard, hard road because I felt stressed, almost like if I was in prison. Sometimes he would look for me to know if I was coming. He would sneak around and check to see what I was going to be doing in his building. All of a sudden, one day, just one day, he said, "You know I was wrong about you. I figured I could break you down. You do what you gotta do, and you'll help me work. You're not what everyone told me."

Interview: Deonte

Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.

Trust

One day last week, an employee called me to tell that a vacuum was not working anymore. They said the vacuum was broken. They think it's broken when it doesn't turn on. I told the employee I would come look at the vacuum. Being the experienced Team Lead that I am, I knew it wasn't broken. It was clogged. A while back, a guy at the repair shop showed me what to do to repair it and said that I could do it myself. When she called me, I took the vacuum apart and saw that it was clogged with all type of stuff. I got everything out and put it back together. It started to work. She was very happy about it. That's a big influence. They can count on you to do things. They won't feel like you are lazy or that you don't know what you are doing. The ultimate outcome of that relationship was that it built trust. I could have told her I was coming and never came. To influence somebody, you have to have trust. You need to build trust right off the top. I also want to be knowledgeable. I don't want to just have a title and not know what I am doing. I can't have people under me asking me things that I don't know. If I'm knowledgeable, I can speak about it, and that's trust.

Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.

Eight Hours

One time, my area manager gave us a whole bunch of floor work that he wanted us to get done. I was gonna do some of those floors myself, but I was also trying to influence this employee to help. We had already assigned him 3 labs to clean, and I know we only have 8 hours, but I went to him to see if he could help with some of the floors. I went to this particular employee because the labs he was supposed to clean was right beside the extra floors we had to do. I didn't want to pull in anyone else. I was trying to get him to complete that one as well. He told me that he already had too much work to do and that he wouldn't be able to do as good of a job. I tried to pump him up to do it, but he still wouldn't go for it. He was really good with floors. I told him to call me once he got into his work. I even told him I would come back in an hour to see where he was with the labs. When I checked in with him, he still had 2 more rooms in the labs to do. I ended up doing it. He wasn't too happy with me, and I guess he wasn't happy because he felt like I just put too much on him. 8 hours is all we have. I think he could have done it, but that particular employee takes pride in what he does. He knew the amount of time it was going to take him. He just didn't want to do it. I don't think the issue was about me. I think it was just the workload. It is nothing personal about him or me, but it's just the workload in general.

13 Codes:

- "bypass me" - In Vivo Code

1 Quotations:

3:17 ¶ 8, bypass me in Combined CITs

○ **"climb all mountains" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

3:3 ¶ 2, "Climb all mountains." in Combined CITs

○ **"too young" In Vivo Code**

1 Quotations:

3:7 ¶ 4, too young. in Combined CITs

○ **1000: Employee Development [1002]**

3 Quotations:

1:5 ¶ 9, PATHWAY. As a team lead, there was some high potential candidates when... in Michelangelo Interview / 3:2 ¶ 2, I told her she could apply for other positions in our department. She... in Combined CITs / 3:4 ¶ 2, Every time I find a little information, I try to tell them. It makes m... in Combined CITs

○ **1000: Technical Knowledge/ Show Don't Tell [1001]**

7 Quotations:

2:19 ¶ 43, Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can... in Ruby Interview / 2:22 ¶ 44, If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy... in Ruby Interview / 2:34 ¶ 57, I am glad that I am still working and that I am prepared. I want to be... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs / 3:24 ¶ 10, I also want to be knowledgeable. I don't want to just have a title and... in Combined CITs / 3:25 ¶ 10, One day last week, an employee called me to tell that a vacuum was not... in Combined CITs / 3:29 ¶ 4, If something doesn't go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real... in Combined CITs

○ **3000: Feedback [3002]**

3 Quotations:

2:17 ¶ 39, In this employee's case, he felt like there too many offices to clean... in Ruby Interview / 2:32 ¶ 54, They sometimes say, "Ruby, it's a lot." I get it. Completely. Less peo... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, "You're at h... in Combined CITs

○ **3000: Receptiveness [3003]**

4 Quotations:

2:19 ¶ 43, Employees rely a lot on supplies. Sometimes the smallest of things can... in Ruby Interview / 2:20 ¶ 44, If I ensure that the necessary supplies are there, employees are happy... in Ruby Interview / 2:21 ¶ 44, I usually make the employees even sign that they have received the sup... in Ruby Interview / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, “You’re at h... in Combined CITs

○ **3000: Trust [3001]**

11 Quotations:

2:7 ¶ 26, I noticed that things were better when I would bring non-work related... in Ruby Interview / 2:8 ¶ 27, Talking about non-work related things made us closer. They would even... in Ruby Interview / 2:13 ¶ 38, I had to get to know my employees, which included learning the good th... in Ruby Interview / 2:18 ¶ 40, As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but... in Ruby Interview / 2:32 ¶ 54, They sometimes say, “Ruby, it’s a lot.” I get it. Completely. Less peo... in Ruby Interview / 3:1 ¶ 2, Sometimes people just need to know that you are in their corner, that... in Combined CITs / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, “You’re at h... in Combined CITs / 3:22 ¶ 10, The ultimate outcome of that relationship was that it built trust in Combined CITs / 3:23 ¶ 10, . I could have told her I was coming and never came. To influence some... in Combined CITs / 3:24 ¶ 10, I also want to be knowledgeable. I don’t want to just have a title and... in Combined CITs / 3:27 ¶ 12, We had already assigned him 3 labs to clean, and I know we only have 8... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Corrective Action [4001]**

9 Quotations:

1:2 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:6 ¶ 13, When I followed up with the employee, there was no explanation as to w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:17 ¶ 39, As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my lead... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:18 ¶ 39, I canrt hold them accountable becvasse of X, Y, and Z. there is discon... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:10 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn’t write them up and employees didn’t care. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 3:8 ¶ 4, The only respect I get is when I let him know that I’m going to let ma... in Combined CITs

○ **4000: Managing Up [4002]**

4 Quotations:

1:12 ¶ 27, I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manag... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:17 ¶ 39, As a Team Lead, you need to have support. If I bring things to my lead... in Michelangelo Interview / 3:13 ¶ 6, The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, “No... in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs

○ 4000: Positional Authority = Respect [4003]

11 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:8 ¶ 17, It is super fun adan I like what I am doing. There are things that I w... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:14 ¶ 30, In regards to frontline, I get my staff to do what they need to do. To... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:14 ¶ 38, As a supervisor, when there are issues, the employees make sure to com... in Ruby Interview / 2:16 ¶ 39, As a supervisor, I enjoy having the power to write employees up. in Ruby Interview / 2:18 ¶ 40, As supervisor, I am in control. The area manager is there to help, but... in Ruby Interview / 3:10 ¶ 4, I let leadership know about the issues I was having with him. in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:28 ¶ 12, One time, my area manager gave us a whole bunch of floor work that he... in Combined CITs

○ 4000: Power Struggles [4004]

32 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 6, The biggest challenge was not having authority. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:3 ¶ 6, They never seemed to have the sense of urgency that I wanted them to h... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:4 ¶ 6, If I bring things to my leader, I want it to be considered important a... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:7 ¶ 13, There was a time when I assigned an employee the task of auto scrubbin... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:9 ¶ 19, When I was a team lead, there were two custodians arguing about who wa... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:13 ¶ 27, I find that managing up is difficult. I have been asking my area manag... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:19 ¶ 17, power makes it easier. in Michelangelo Interview / 1:21 ¶ 6, I had to rely on my area manager for any form of disciplinary action... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:23 ¶ 13, After all my work to fix the machine, I wondered why he didn't even ca... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:24 ¶ 13, I reported the incident to my area manager at the time. Nothing was do... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:25 ¶ 19, I literally had the same conversation but it didn't mean anything to t... in Michelangelo Interview / 1:26 ¶ 27, I don't understand why the staff's request is being dismissed. I would... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:2 ¶ 14, the first thing they would do is go directly to my manager or talk amo... in Ruby Interview / 2:3 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:4 ¶ 18, One time, when I was a team lead, all my employees got together and sc... in Ruby Interview / 2:5 ¶ 18, They said, “we don't have to talk to her or

respond to let her know we... in Ruby Interview / 2:6 ¶ 21, When I met them individually (one on one), they said, “we heard bad th... in Ruby Interview / 2:9 ¶ 33, I knew that I couldn’t write them up and employees didn’t care. in Ruby Interview / 2:11 ¶ 33, The manager would always have the employee’s back. in Ruby Interview / 2:12 ¶ 33, Even when I would document things, nothing happened. It was hard to le... in Ruby Interview / 2:15 ¶ 38, Some employees still go over me because they feel like they will get a... in Ruby Interview / 2:53 ¶ 14, Anything I said to improve their performance, they would always go to... in Ruby Interview / 2:54 ¶ 18, I was there during that meeting, and the director said, “what is going... in Ruby Interview / 2:56 ¶ 33, When I would report these incidents to the area manager, the manager w... in Ruby Interview / 3:5 ¶ 4, He has an issue where he wants to skip the chain of command. in Combined CITs / 3:9 ¶ 4, At the end of the day, I’m your Team Lead, and you should be able to c... in Combined CITs / 3:13 ¶ 6, The supervisor wanted to take disciplinary action, and I was like, “No... in Combined CITs / 3:14 ¶ 6, One employee called me from home, frustrated. I told her, “You’re at h... in Combined CITs / 3:15 ¶ 8, This employee had heard that I was strict and hard in Combined CITs / 3:16 ¶ 8, He would bypass me and go to the supervisor in Combined CITs / 3:18 ¶ 8, So my supervisor allowed me to handle the situation and told the emplo... in Combined CITs / 3:21 ¶ 8, “You know I was wrong about you. I figured I could break you down. You... in Combined CITs

○ 4000: Resistance [4005]

12 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 34, When I returned, I walked into a team huddle where my Team Lead was be... in Michelangelo Interview / 2:26 ¶ 47, They take advantage of the system and rely on the following shift to d... in Ruby Interview / 2:28 ¶ 53, I would explain to them that we still have students on campus and that... in Ruby Interview / 2:33 ¶ 57, A lot of them say no and to only call them when they have to go back t... in Ruby Interview / 2:41 ¶ 21, Those employees had better attitudes in Ruby Interview / 3:6 ¶ 4, His attitude is real bad, and he gets smart with me in Combined CITs / 3:11 ¶ 4, At one of our daily huddles, he just said nothing when I was giving ou... in Combined CITs / 3:12 ¶ 4, Right now he is fine, but his attitude, I don’t think that is going to... in Combined CITs / 3:19 ¶ 8, If I asked him to do something, he would say well you just do it and w... in Combined CITs / 3:20 ¶ 8, It was a hard, hard road because I felt stressed, almost like if I was... in Combined CITs / 3:26 ¶ 12, He told me that he already had too much work to do and that he wouldn’t... in Combined CITs / 3:29 ¶ 4, If something doesn’t go right, he just gets mad. His attitude is real... in Combined CITs

APPENDIX L

Final Coding Scheme

The final coding scheme can be found below:

Coding Scheme

1000: Building Capacity and Skills/ Sharing Expertise

- 1001: Technical Knowledge/Show Don't Tell
- 1002: Employee Development

2000: Social Context/ Adaptive Leadership

- 2001: Adaptability
- 2002: Disparity
- 2003: Vision
- 2004: Purpose

3000: Leadership as a Practice (not a role)

- 3001: Trust
- 3002: Feedback
- 3003: Receptiveness
- 3004: Specificity of Tasks

4000: Rethink Power

- 4001: Corrective Action
- 4002: Managing Up
- 4003: Positional Authority=Respect
- 4004: Power Struggles
- 4005: Resistance

APPENDIX M

Interview Question Coding

Interview Question:	Interview Question Coding:	Roles asked of:
Tell me about your experience as a Team Lead.	100	Team Lead & Supervisor (who have been promoted from Team Lead)
Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a Team Lead.	200	Team Lead & Supervisor (who have been promoted from Team Lead)
Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a Team Lead.	300	Team Lead & Supervisor (who have been promoted from Team Lead)
Tell me about your experience as a supervisor.	400	Supervisor
Tell me about a time you felt you were really able to influence others as a supervisor.	500	Supervisor
Tell me about a time you felt you were unable to influence others as a supervisor.	600	Supervisor
How has COVID-19 impacted your leadership?	700	Supervisor

APPENDIX N

Interviewee Coding

Role	Interviewees (Pseudonyms)	Q : 100	Q : 200	Q : 300	Q : 400	Q : 500	Q : 600	Q : 700
Team Lead	Makayla	X; GA	X; Climb All Mountains	X; Young	NA	NA	NA	PI
Team Lead	Lydia	X; GA	X; Proof	X; In Prison	NA	NA	NA	PI
Team Lead	Deonte	X; GA	X; Trust	X; Eight Hours	NA	NA	NA	PI
Team Lead & Supervisor (promoted from Team Lead)	Ruby	X; The Little Flaws, Don't Be a Quitter, Great Energy	X; Holidays	X; Useless	X; Power	X; Supplies	X; Take Advantage of the System	X; Unmotivated, Prepared
Team Lead & Supervisor (promoted from Team Lead)	Michelangelo	X; Swept Under the Rug	X; My Story	X; Lollygagging	X; Authority Does Matter	X; Lessen Our Carbon Footprint	X; Managing Up	X; Uncertainty

*GA=General Answer; Complete CIT could not be generated from response.

**NA= Not applicable; not asked of interviewee

***PI=Post-interview (COVID-19 occurred after these interviewees had already been interviewed)

APPENDIX O

Leadership Development Survey Questions

The following statements were posed, and participants used the designated scale listed to answer:

1. Indicate your understanding of (INSERT TOPIC NAME) before the training. (Scale: Very Little, Some, Quite A Bit, A lot)
2. Indicate your understanding of (INSERT TOPIC NAME) after the training. (Scale: Very Little, Some, Quite A Bit, A lot)
3. The session objectives were identified and addressed. (Scale: Strongly Agree [5], Agree [4], Neutral [3], Disagree [2], Strongly Disagree [1])
4. The course subject matter was relevant to my job. (Scale: Strongly Agree [5], Agree [4], Neutral [3], Disagree [2], Strongly Disagree [1])
5. The instructor presented the material in a way that was easy to understand. (Scale: Strongly Agree [5], Agree [4], Neutral [3], Disagree [2], Strongly Disagree [1])
6. I will be able to apply the knowledge I learned. (Scale: Strongly Agree [5], Agree [4], Neutral [3], Disagree [2], Strongly Disagree [1])
7. The instructor encouraged class participation and interaction. (Scale: Strongly Agree [5], Agree [4], Neutral [3], Disagree [2], Strongly Disagree [1])
8. Do you have any other comments/feedback about this session? (open-ended)

APPENDIX P

ENGAGE and EQUIP Labs Survey Results

ENGAGE Lab 1: Effective Communication

Scenario-Based Session
*No content session was given.

Knowledge Level	Pre-Training	Post-Training
Very Little	1	0
Some	3	0
Quite a Bit	1	0
A lot	5	10

Category	Average
Relevant to My Job	5
Apply the Learning	5

Content Session

ENGAGE Lab 2: Dealing with Ambiguity

Knowledge Level	Pre-Training	Post-Training
Very Little	2	0
Some	4	1
Quite a Bit	0	2
A lot	4	7

Category	Average
Relevant to My Job	5
Apply the Learning	5

Scenario-Based Session

Learning Level	Pre-Training	Post-Training
Very Little	0	0
Some	1	0
Quite a Bit	1	0
A lot	3	5

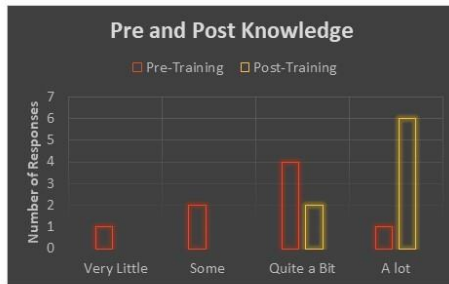
Category	Average
Relevant to My Job	5
Apply the Learning	5

ENGAGE Lab 3: Time Management

Content Session



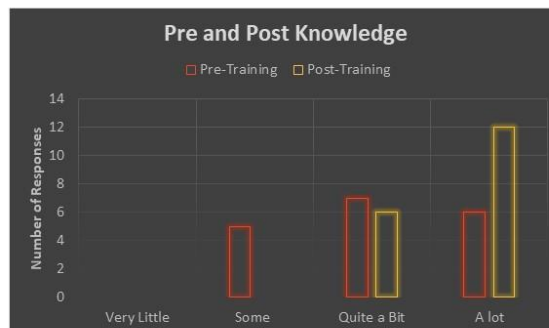
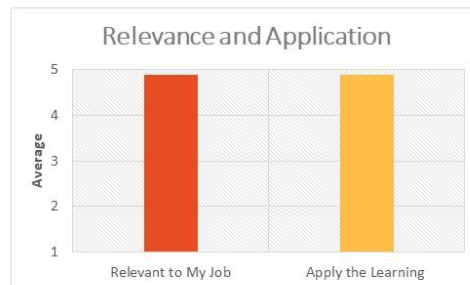
Scenario-Based Session



EQUIP Lab 1: Effective Communication

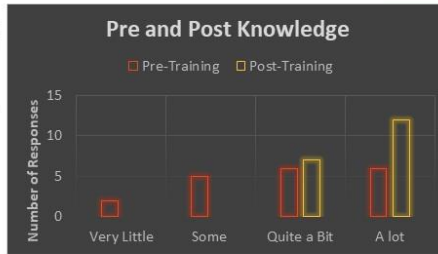
Scenario-Based Session

*No content session was given.



EQUIP Lab 2: Dealing with Ambiguity

Content Session

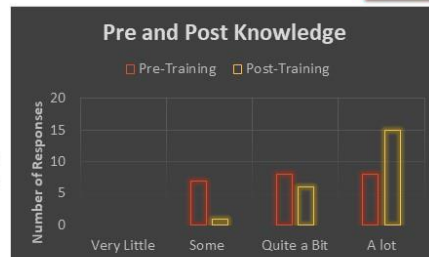


Scenario-Based Session

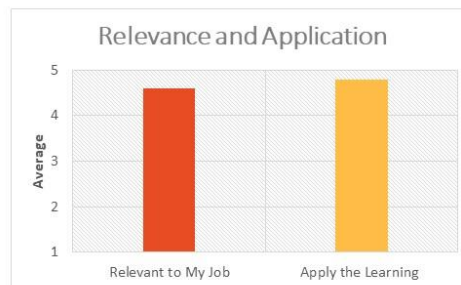


EQUIP Lab 3: Time Management

Content Session



Scenario-Based Session



APPENDIX Q

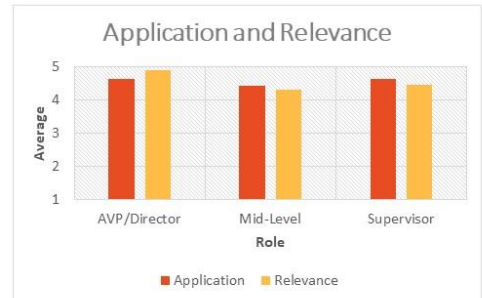
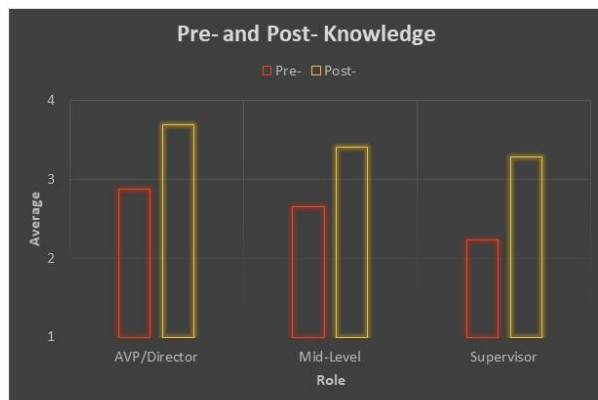
Focus Group Questions (Team Leads)

1. What session (during the leadership development program) did you find most helpful?
2. What development would you like to have after ENGAGE Labs?
3. How often would you like to have leadership development opportunities?
4. What content areas would you like to have sessions on?

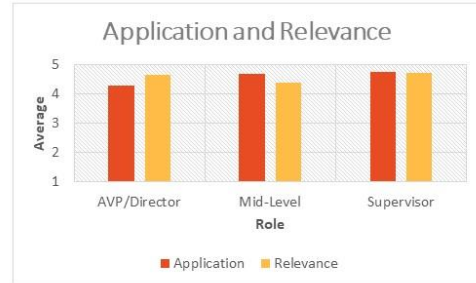
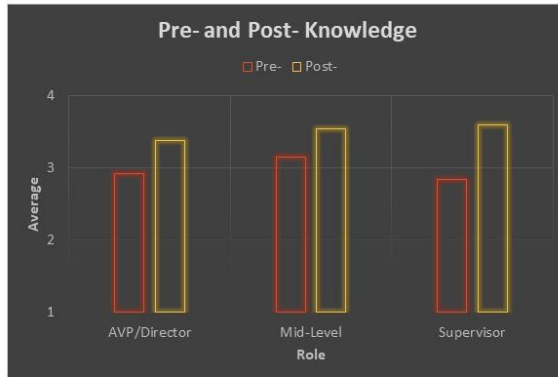
APPENDIX R

CS-Wide EQUIP Sessions Survey Results

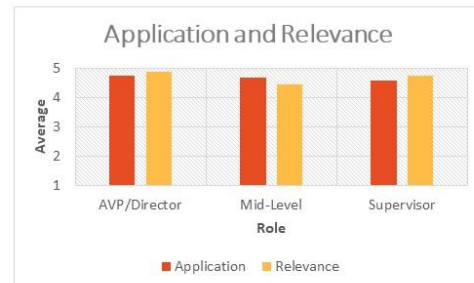
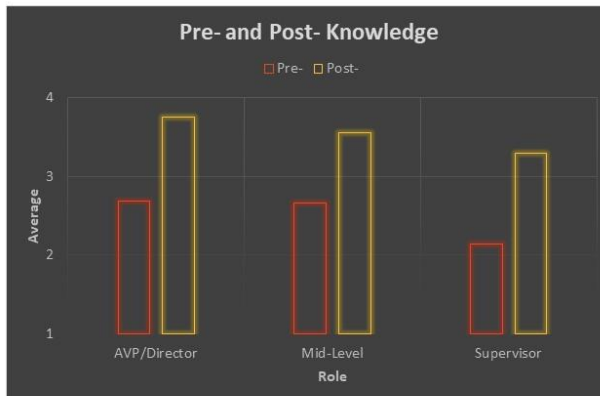
EQUIP Session 1: Managing Change (By Role)



EQUIP Session 2: Decoding the Customer Experience (By Role)



EQUIP Session 3: Building Capacity In Others (By Role)



EQUIP Session 4: Teambuilding Within and Across Teams (By Role)

