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Abstract

This chapter describes a leadership institute based on the theories of Kouzes and Posner created in Rochester, NY. Participants were surveyed 10 and 12 years after their participation about the impact of the institute on their career and leadership style. The leadership characteristics taught in the institute are compared to leadership characteristics proposed by two library organizations. Due to the similarity, the author suggests future institutes aligned with Kouzes and Posner would be a good way to train future library leaders.

Keywords

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Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

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Growing Our Own: A Regional Leadership Challenge

Melissa Jadlos

In 2001, librarians in the Rochester, New York area realized a large number of library administrators and managers were expected to retire over the next five years. In order to create strong leaders to fill these vacancies, a training program was developed to create and sustain a library leadership development program. The goal of the program was to create a leadership curriculum aimed at middle managers, developed and taught by a nationally recognized leadership-training consultant. At the same time, the consultant would train five local library staff members to facilitate future leadership training programs.

In 2002 and 2004, the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC) and the Monroe County Library System hosted “Accepting the Leadership Challenge: A Library Leadership Institute.” Funded by Library Services and Technology Act grants from the New York State Department of Education, the purpose of the program was to “train select staff from member libraries in the skills most needed in order to successfully lead libraries in the technologically complex environment of today and the near future. This training is intended to enhance leadership at all levels of library service.”¹ A secondary goal of the 2004 institute was to create a faculty of library staff trained to present this curriculum to future cohorts. The session included a separate train-the-trainer component to educate five library staff, growing our own regional cadre of library leaders.

About the Institute

RRLC is a network of all types of libraries from the Greater Rochester, New York region. The Monroe County Library System is comprised of 30 public library branches in the city of Rochester and throughout Monroe County. As a joint program, the institute was open to 20 participants from each organization (i.e., 20 public library staff from Monroe County and 20 staff from libraries of all types in the Greater Rochester area).

The Leadership Institute was facilitated by Louella V. Wetherbee in 2002 and 2004, and Florence M. Mason in 2002. The institute was based on the book *The Leadership Challenge* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner.² The two institutes varied slightly in format. The 2002 institute consisted of six sessions spread over four months; the 2004 institute was compressed into three and one-half days to reduce travel costs. Five alumni of 2002 participated again in 2004 with the intent to become future institute facilitators.

Leadership Institute participants were selected based on a competitive application process. Applicants provided an essay, a letter of support from the applicant's supervisor, and a description of a project the participant would lead while attending the institute. The essay was to describe how the institute would benefit both the applicant's career and institution. The first year there were not enough successful applicants to fill the program, so members of the steering committee reached out to likely candidates, encouraging them to apply.

Before the beginning of each institute, applicants were asked to fill out the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory 360 (LPI) and solicit colleagues to fill out the survey form intended for their supervisors and direct reports. Developed in the mid-1980s, the LPI is a formative evaluation tool that assesses "the frequency with which people engage in The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership."³ This is based on research by Kouzes and Posner that "the

more frequently you demonstrate the behaviors included in the LPI, the more likely you will be seen as an effective leader.”⁴

The curriculum was framed around the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as created by Kouzes and Posner.⁵ Both institutes included an introduction to the research behind the theory, followed by a section focusing on each practice. The sections included a definition of the practice, examples from the world of libraries, and practical exercises to build the participant’s skill in each practice. Since we had the results of our self and peer LPI evaluations, we could target areas for improvement and were given suggestions on how to practice and improve our skills in those areas. In 2002, each session was a full day with a month between. In 2004, approximately half of each day was devoted to each practice, and the sessions were held consecutively. The course materials included the most recent edition of the book *The Leadership Challenge*, supplemental readings and exercises created by the facilitators, and the *Leadership Practices Inventory Participant’s Workbook*.⁶

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership program is based upon leadership trait research conducted by Kouzes and Posner over two decades beginning in the early 1980s. The researchers identified 20 qualities looked for or admired in leaders. They surveyed over 20,000 people on four continents and asked them to list the top seven qualities they “most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow.”⁷ The results have been consistent over time and across cultures and industries. These 20 qualities could be considered the core competencies of leadership as described by Kouzes and Posner. The top five leadership qualities, reflected in the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.⁸ Kouzes and Posner

contend that leadership can be observed and learned. By developing skills in the area of the Five Practices and using them consistently, ordinary people can become extraordinary leaders.

Literature Review

The theories of Kouzes and Posner have been discussed in relation to libraries since 1990.⁹ The facilitators, Wetherbee and Mason, used this concept in Florida, Texas, and Indiana. The Rochester Leadership Institute was discussed in Mason and Wetherbee's article, "Learning to Lead: An Analysis of Current Training Programs for Library Leadership," wherein it is referred to as the Library Leadership Institute (Monroe County Library System) and described as a six-day program for librarians and support staff, with selective admission and a primary emphasis on personal assessment and leadership skills development.¹⁰ Based on the use of the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory, Mason and Wetherbee described the institute as "feedback intensive."¹¹ As stated in "Learning to Lead," Mason and Wetherbee cited the research of Leanne Atwater, Paul Roush, and Allison Fichthal, when they write, "Research on 360 feedback approaches has shown that use of these tools does lead to increased job performance."¹²

Theoretical Framework for Viewing Leadership

In their 2004 article, Mason and Wetherbee indicated there was no agreed upon statement of leadership skills for librarians or a list of core competencies.¹³ Therefore it was difficult to develop a leadership education program without knowing what the learning objectives of the program should be. Also, without measurable objectives, it could not be determined whether the training was effective. In her 2013 article, Mary Wilkins Jordan describes her research study to identify a set of competencies for public library leaders.¹⁴ By first identifying terms mentioned in the literature as being important for library leaders and then refining the list by surveying

successful public library directors (results are listed in table 13.1), Jordan developed a list of nineteen competencies “most important to the profession for the next decade.”¹⁵

Table 13.1. Core Competencies Defined by Successful Public Library Directors

Competency	Definition
Enthusiasm	Optimism, positive emotional connection
Demonstrating leadership	Being perceived as a leader; taking charge of situations effectively
Delegation	Handing off both responsibilities and sufficient authority to accomplish tasks
Accountability	Taking responsibility for results—positive and negative
Planning	Setting goals and developing strategies to achieve those goals
Integrity	Following professional code, being honest, being a role model for how to behave; honesty
Risk taking	Not taking the easy way; taking a chance of failure; bold or courageous action
Credibility	Building trust in others; doing what you say you will do; being consistent in speech and actions
Resource management	Finding money, facilities to accomplish goals
Creativity	Seeing different ways to accomplish goals; bringing forward new ideas
Customer service	Both internal and external; remembering that patrons are the focus of the library
Interpersonal skills	Effectively working together with others of different levels or different positions (staff and public); good social skills; building rapport
Communication skills	Speaking, writing, listening; understanding your message and conveying it to others
Flexibility	Changing course when necessary, changing plans to be successful
Vision	Looking at the future and seeing where the library can go; articulating directions
Political understanding	Government relations, board relations, working with city/county departments, understanding organizational structure
Maturity	Calm and in control, emotional intelligence, thinking of others first
Problem solving	Assess a situation and see what needs to be done
Advocacy skills	Being visible in the community and library, active in community organizations, building relationships with decision makers

Source: Jordan, “Developing Leadership,” 42.

In 2008, the Library Leadership Administration and Management Association (LLAMA) of the American Library Association (ALA) began the task of creating a list of competencies for library leaders.¹⁶ The authors of the list were members of the 2008 class of the ALA’s Emerging Leaders Program.¹⁷ The project design included research, a literature review, and interviews of current leaders in the profession. The model proposed by the LLAMA Emerging Leaders group included 17 broad competencies divided into four central leadership competencies. They were cognitive ability, vision, interpersonal effectiveness, and managerial effectiveness. When the leadership competency model was presented at a poster session at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, an additional category was included: personal attributes. Listed below in table 13.2 are the broad competencies grouped by the central leadership competencies.

Table 13.2. ALA LLAMA Core Competencies

Cognitive ability	Culturally competent	Strategic planning
Problem-solving	Accountability	Collaboration
Decision making	Team building	Flexibility or adaptability
Reflective thinking	Development	Personal attributes
Vision	Inspirational or motivational	Principled or ethical
Global thinking	Communication skills	Honest
Creative or innovative	Managerial effectiveness	Humble
Forward thinking	Manage change	Gracious
Interpersonal effectiveness	Resource management	Teachable

Source: Ammons-Stephens et al., “Developing Core Leadership Competencies,” 68–71.

Table 13.3 compares the LLAMA and Jordan competencies with the leadership qualities identified by Kouzes and Posner. There are many common terms and phrases among the lists. Separately, two library organizations have developed competencies that align with Kouzes and Posner’s characteristics. This suggests using training based on the concepts of Kouzes and Posner may develop leadership skills recognized as such by the library community.

Table 13.3. Competencies Compared with Characteristics

Core competencies defined by public library directors	Core competencies according to ALA LLAMA	Kouzes and Posner’s characteristics of admired leaders
Enthusiasm	Cognitive ability	Honest
Demonstrating leadership	Problem-solving	Forward-looking
Delegation	Decision making	Inspiring
Accountability	Reflective thinking	Competent
Planning	Vision	Fair-minded
Integrity	Global thinking	Supportive
Risk taking	Creative/innovative	Broad-minded
Credibility	Forward thinking	Intelligent
Resource management	Interpersonal effectiveness	Straightforward
Creativity	Culturally competent	Dependable
Customer service	Accountability	Courageous
Interpersonal skills	Team building	Cooperative
Communication skills	Development	Imaginative
Flexibility	Inspirational/motivational	Caring
Vision	Communication skills	Determined
Political understanding	Managerial effectiveness	Mature
Maturity	Manage change	Ambitious
Problem solving	Resource management	Loyal
Advocacy skills	Strategic planning	Self-controlled
	Collaboration	Independent
	Flexibility/adaptability	
	Personal attributes	
	Principled/ethical	
	Honest	
	Humble	
	Gracious	
	Teachable	

Source: Jordan, “Developing Leadership”; Ammons-Stephens et.al, “Developing Core Leadership Competencies”; and Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 25th ed.

Mason and Wetherbee summarized the evaluations of three leadership programs.¹⁸ They were primarily based on post-training evaluations, and the article pointed out the weaknesses inherent in self-reported evaluations. In their conclusion, Mason and Wetherbee stated the need for longitudinal research and further study to determine if the programs achieved their stated

objectives.¹⁹ In the follow-up survey discussed below, I used questions similar to those summarized by Mason and Wetherbee.²⁰ By surveying participants nine and 11 years after their participation, I hoped to provide more information on the long-term effects of a trait-based, feedback-intensive program such as the Library Leadership Institute.

What I Learned

At the start, I did not apply for the first Leadership Institute because I did not consider myself a leader. I subscribed to the theory that leaders are born, not made, and you either had it or you didn't. However, there were not enough applicants for the cohort in 2002 and I was invited to attend. Participation in the 2002 Leadership Institute played a pivotal role in my personal development and had a direct result on my decision to interview for a position as a library director. From the first day of the institute, when the facilitators explained the research behind the theory of Kouzes and Posner, I was hooked. Not only did the Kouzes and Posner research results trend across time, gender, culture, and industry; my institute colleagues' responses to the survey fell right in line. Table 13.4 compares the survey results in Kouzes and Posner's 1995 edition of *The Leadership Challenge* with our group exercise in 2002 and survey results from the 2012, 25th anniversary edition of *The Leadership Challenge*.²¹ The numbers refer to the percentage of respondents who selected the characteristic as a quality they would look for in a leader. The "X" notes the top seven characteristics selected by the participants in the 2002 cohort in no particular order.

Table 13.4. Comparison of 2002 Institute Results with Kouzes and Posner

Characteristics	1995 (%)	2012 (%)	2002 Librarians
Honest	88	89	X
Forward-looking	75	71	X

Inspiring	68	69	X
Competent	63	69	X
Fair-minded	49	37	X
Supportive	41	35	X
Broad-minded	40	38	
Intelligent	40	45	X

Source: Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed., 21; Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 25th ed., 34; Jadlos, "Leadership Institute Survey."

By demonstrating at the beginning of the first session that the theories of Kouzes and Posner held up over time and were directly aligned with my personal values, the facilitators validated the premise of the workshop for me, and I was prepared to continue with an open mind. As the days went on, I discovered that some of the actions I took instinctively and deemed common sense were leadership. For example, on the first day of the workshop, when we broke for lunch, there was a buffet set up against the wall. We had a short time to eat and there were over 40 people in line. I asked a colleague to help me move the table away from the wall so people could serve themselves from either side of the buffet. Even though it was a small gesture, it was a lightbulb moment when I realized this action fell under the practices of challenge the process and enable others to act.²² I began to assess past actions as activities described as leadership actions, and I began to think of myself as someone with leadership ability. After this, my confidence in my leadership abilities soared. With the results of my LPI in hand, I knew what areas I needed to strengthen in order to become a better-rounded leader. I also learned the value of hiring and relying on staff with strengths in areas that complement mine.

As a result of participating in the Leadership Institute and learning about the traits that people look for in leaders, I have consciously incorporated the practice of those traits in my daily life. I also learned that while acting like a leader is vital, it is also important to communicate what I am doing and why it is important. One of the five practices is model the way, which

means set the example for how you expect others to behave, or “walk the walk.” Instead of quietly setting an example and expecting others to follow, I will explain why I act the way I do. For example, copying a supervisor on an e-mail thanking a student for doing a good job or explaining why I am communicating with administration in a certain way. Sharing the why helps others to become more effective leaders, giving examples to learn from. In addition to using what I learned on a daily basis, I have also trained others: facilitating workshops for local library organizations, the State University of New York Librarians’ Association, and the New York Library Assistants’ Association.

In preparation for writing this chapter, I retook the LPI to compare with my 2002 results. Although I no longer have the LPI 360 survey results from my 2002 colleagues’ point of view, I distinctly remember being surprised by the vast differences between the ways I viewed myself and how others viewed me. My colleagues observed more frequent demonstrations of leadership behaviors than I observed in myself.

Now that I recognize leadership behaviors and consciously incorporate them into my life, my self-study scores are very different. Each leadership practice score is based on a 60-point scale. My scores increased an average of 22 points, a 36 percent improvement. I believe now that I have an understanding of which behaviors are recognized as leadership behaviors, my scores would be more in line with how my colleagues would perceive me if I repeated the 360 evaluation.

Survey Results

In 2013, I surveyed participants in both the 2002 and 2004 Leadership Institutes.²³ The purpose of this survey was to understand the long-term effects of a feedback-intensive program such as the Leadership Institute.

In February 2013, the survey was distributed to participants in the 2002 and 2004 Leadership Institute Cohorts. The survey was designed to collect information on whether the participants believed the institute had achieved its stated outcomes and if the institute had any long-term effect on the participants. With the assistance of the Rochester Regional Library Council, I found contact information for 36 of the 2002 and 34 of the 2004 cohorts. (Each cohort contained 40 participants.) Since five members of the 2004 cohort were also 2002 participants selected to attend as facilitators in training, they did not receive the 2004 survey. For the 2002 cohort, 21 surveys were completed for a 57 percent response rate. The rate of return for the 2004 cohort was 24 percent, or 7 completed surveys. The institutes contained similar content, differing only in timing. The 2002 institute was spread out over four months, and 2004 was a continuous session held over three and one-half days. Leadership development expert Jay A. Conger writes, “A single, one-time course is insufficient to create and support lasting behavioral change. Instead, courses should be designed as a weeklong session followed by a break . . . and then a follow-up course.”²⁴ The increased response rate for the 2002 cohort may indicate that spreading the curriculum over four months had a more lasting effect on the participants. Table 13.5 summarizes the responses and compares the results from the 2002 and 2004 cohorts.

Table 13.5. Leadership Institute Survey Results

Survey question	2002 (n21)		2004 (n7)	
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
The Leadership Institute gave me the opportunity to explore the many dimensions of leadership as described by Kouzes and Posner in <i>The Leadership Challenge</i> .	95	5	100	0
The institute gave me the opportunity to build practical and concrete skills to enhance my leadership abilities.	100	0	100	0
The institute changed my view of my	90	10	100	0

potential as a leader.					
The institute enhanced my view of the leadership potential of others.	90	10		100	0
My confidence in my leadership ability increased as a result of the Leadership Institute.	86	14		100	0
Eleven years later, are the Kouzes and Posner Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership relevant to your daily activities?	90	10		100	0
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Have you used any part of the curriculum to mentor others?	38	62		71	29

Note: N = number of completed surveys.

Responses to the survey were overwhelmingly positive about the institute and the participants' experiences. The first two questions in table 13.5 refer to the learning objectives of the institute. Among the respondents, 95–100 percent, depending upon the cohort year, agreed or strongly agreed that the institute met the stated learning objectives. A respondent commented, "The skills given were practical and easy to remember and practice."²⁵ Participants agreed or strongly agreed the institute changed their view of their potential as a leader and changed their view of the leadership potential of others. One participant stated, "A better understanding of leadership attributes helped me discover my own and other peoples' abilities."²⁶ In the results of the survey, 2002 cohort members responded with 86 percent agreeing the institute increased their confidence in their leadership ability and from the 2004 cohort, 100 percent of respondents agreed their confidence levels increased. A 2002 respondent stated, "I had never thought of myself as a leader, but began to understand how we can all be leaders."²⁷ From the 2002 cohort respondents 90 percent and from 2004 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed the Kouzes and Posner Five Practices are still relevant to their daily activities. Participants commented that they keep course materials such as the poster and bookmark where they can see them every day. Since

the institutes, 57 percent of participants have changed jobs or received a promotion. Although, most reported that the change was not related to the institute, several respondents commented they “felt more comfortable applying for jobs with a greater responsibility”²⁸ or it gave them the confidence to apply for leadership positions. Fourteen of the 29 participants who responded to the survey have continued to use the curriculum both formally and informally to train and mentor others. The 2004 cohort reported a much higher percentage of respondents who said they used some part of the curriculum to mentor others than the 2002 cohort. Since one of the purposes of the second cohort was to train future institute facilitators, there may have been more emphasis on mentoring during that session.

Discussion

According to the survey results, the Library Leadership Institutes were perceived as successful. Nine and 11 years after the institutes, more than 95 percent of survey respondents agreed that the institutes achieved the stated objectives. The institutes gave library staff an understanding of what leadership qualities are, how to recognize them in themselves and others, and how to strengthen their skills in these areas. Even after so many years, the Leadership Institutes are relevant and memorable. Participants continued to use the skills they gained and reported increased confidence in their ability to lead in the workplace and in their personal lives. The Leadership Institute facilitators had positive results training library staff, and the program has achieved its purpose to “train select staff from member libraries in the skills most needed in order to successfully lead libraries in the technologically complex environment of today and the near future.”²⁹

Conclusion

Since the year of the last institute (2004), library leadership core competencies have been identified by public librarians and the ALA LLAMA section.³⁰ The Kouzes and Posner qualities of leadership closely align with these competencies. Therefore, it seems the Library Leadership Institute used competencies very similar to those that have been identified by library organizations since 2009 in their leadership development program.

It would be a significant addition to library leadership training if the Leadership Institute could be continued. Kathy Miller, director of the Rochester Regional Library Council, stated “formal institutes have not been offered by RRLC since 2004 due to cost and a smaller pool of eligible candidates remaining after two cohorts of 40 participants” (pers. comm.). Offering the institute every three to five years using the trained local facilitators may address the need to generate a pool of participants and contain facilitator costs.

Going forward, the survey results and other research, such as reported by Conger, indicate that the most effective format for this kind of learning was the multiple-session syllabus spread out over several months.³¹ The curriculum should remain based on *The Leadership Challenge* with additional discussion of how these qualities align with emerging library leadership core competencies such as the competencies being developed by ALA LLAMA. Creating a local team of facilitators may reduce overall costs and encourage replication of the institute curriculum throughout many types of libraries across the country.

Notes

¹ Joyce. “Leadership Institute.”

² Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed.

³ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 25th ed., 85.

⁴ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Practices Inventory*, 6.

⁵ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed.

⁶ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 25th ed; Kouzes and Posner, *Leadership Practices Inventory*.

⁷ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed., 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹ Jurow, "Preparing for Library Leadership."

¹⁰ Mason and Wetherbee, "Learning to Lead," 198.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹² Atwater, Roush, and Fichthal, "The Influence of Upward Feedback"; Mason and Wetherbee, 205.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁴ Jordan, "Developing Leadership."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁶ Ammons-Stephens et al., "Developing Core Leadership Competencies." LLAMA is a division of the ALA (<http://www.ala.org>). More information about LLAMA may be found at <http://www.ala.org/llama/>.

¹⁷ More information about the ALA's Emerging Leaders Program may be found at <http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/leadership/emergingleaders>

¹⁸ Mason and Wetherbee, 208–213.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

²¹ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed; Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 25th ed.

²² Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 2nd ed.

²³ St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board approval, File No: 3178-022113-06, was received on February 11, 2013.

²⁴ Conger, 56.

²⁵ Jadlos, “Leadership Institute Survey,” Respondent 4.

²⁶ Ibid., Respondent 2.

²⁷ Ibid., Respondent 6.

²⁸ Ibid., Respondent 1.

²⁹ Joyce, “Leadership Institute.”

³⁰ Jordan, “Developing Leadership”; Ammons-Stephens et al., “Developing Core Leadership Competencies.”

³¹ Conger, 56.

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