

LEADERSHIP WITHIN CONTEXT

Timeframe:	16 hours
Learning outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine and understand perceived and tested relationships between leadership and behavioural constructs and concepts at individual, group and organisational level Explain the distinction between leadership and management
Prescribed reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allio, R. J. 2013, 'Leaders and leadership – many theories, but what advice is reliable?', <i>Strategy and Leadership</i>, 41 (1) 4-14, http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17076693 (accessed 20 May 2014). Nienaber, H. 2010, 'Conceptualisation of management and leadership', <i>Management Decision</i>, 48 (5) 661-675, http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0025-1747&volume=48&issue=5&articleid=1863757&show=html (accessed 14 May 2014).
Multimedia:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenneylou, 2010, October 28, 'Paradigm shift', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIRK1vqcuvg (accessed 20 May 2014).
Section overview:	<p>This section of the Study Guide allows you to reflect on your current knowledge concerning leadership. We will be investigating how you have developed this current knowledge of leadership. This concept is explained in Stephen Covey's book, <i>The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People</i>. Covey (2004: 23) promotes the "internalization of correct principles upon which enduring happiness and success are based". This internalisation of principles is what this section is based upon. It will look at how you have internalised the idea of leadership. This will allow for the identification of the paradigms concerning leadership within which you operate and this will put you in the powerful position of being able to challenge yourself in order to achieve growth.</p>

Introduction

Our understanding of and approach to leadership is influenced by our leadership paradigm. Once we are aware of our leadership paradigm and what has informed it, we will be more conscious of our leadership approach and areas in which we need to develop further.



Set the Context

1. Write down your definition of leadership.
2. What or who has influenced you to develop this understanding of leadership?

Paradigms

Consider the definitions on paradigms that follow:

A simple way to understand paradigms is to see them as maps [...] A map is simply an explanation of certain aspects of the territory. That's exactly what a paradigm is. It is a theory, an explanation, or model of something else.

(Covey, 2004:23)



A paradigm is like a theory but a little different. A theory is an idea that sets out to explain how something works, like Darwin's theory of evolution. It is meant to be tested, proved or disproved, supported or challenged by experiment and reflection. A paradigm, on the other hand, is a set of implicit assumptions that are not meant to be tested; in fact, they are essentially unconscious. They are part of our modus operandi as individuals, as scientists, as a society.... Another way to understand a paradigm is a belief system.

(Arntz, Chasse and Vicente, 2005:26)

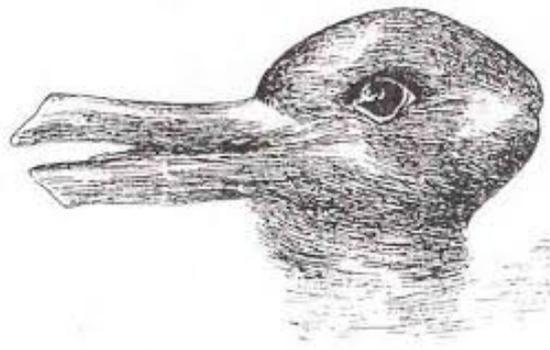
Your paradigm, therefore, is the way in which you view the world. It informs how you perceive the world and reality. If, for example, you think that all leaders must be charismatic, then you will consider charisma to be an essential trait for all leaders. If a person does not show charisma, you will automatically believe that they are not a good leader. Furthermore, you will defend your belief to anyone who does not think in the same way. Can you see how your beliefs influence how you perceive “the truth”?

When you answered the questions in the first activity of this section, you used your embedded knowledge concerning leaders and leadership. The way in which you approached the statements, how you answered the questions, how you think leadership should transpire, etc., all indicated your paradigm concerning leadership.

Have you ever considered whether your beliefs are “right”? Have you ever considered why you think the way you think and behave the way you behave – especially when you need to defend your position? More importantly, why should you care about it? The answer is simple: Everyone in the world has an underlying belief about leadership and what a leader should be – from the personal assistant of Richard Branson to a sheep herder in the middle of Africa. For you to be an effective leader, you need to be conscious of your underlying perceptions about leadership and reflect on whether your paradigm of leadership is truly appropriate for 21st century organisations.

Look at the optical illusion that follows.

FIGURE 1: OPTICAL ILLUSION



Wikipedia (2014)



Set the Context

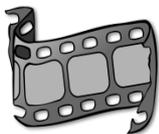
1. Refer to **Figure 1**. What do you see?
2. What is the relevance of this exercise for you as a leader at your organisation?



This Study Guide requires you to complete the activity questions based on your organisation. If you are not currently involved in an organisation, then apply the questions to an organisation of your choice.

What do you see? It is all about perspective. How does this relate to your visual paradigm? A paradigm shift has to occur in order to see the same information in a completely different way.

Watch the video and reflect on the importance of paradigms:



- Jenneylou, 2010, October 28, 'Paradigm shift', [video clip]
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIRK1vqcuvg> (accessed 20 May 2014).

We are under the impression that we see the world as it is but we actually see the world as we are. This is because we perceive and interpret our reality based on our worldview or paradigm. Paradigms inform our attitudes, which in turn inform our behaviour. In order to transform our attitudes and behaviour, we need to change our paradigm. This involves a paradigm shift.

Individual Context of Leadership

The previous section challenged your beliefs about and understanding of leadership. Because each individual has a different experience of leadership and a different expectation of leadership, it is necessary for you to explore your individual approach to the topic. Within the context of leadership, the individual (whether they are the leader or follower) prescribes what is needed for a leader to be successful.



Leadership Characteristics

In plenary, identify people who you think are leaders in any context. What characteristics and qualities do they possess? Provide reasons for your response.

In the task above, you had to identify a person who represents leadership to you. In your description, did you look at the individual's behaviour, personality or character to describe his/her leadership ability? Remember, all of these ideas are connected to your paradigm concerning leadership.

Despite the existence of many different definitions of leadership, crucial common elements within these definitions do exist.

The following definitions may provide a useful framework for discussion. The sections that follow will bring a clearer understanding of the "big picture" of leadership, and will shed light on the notions of communication, influence, power and performance that these definitions outline.



"Leadership is human communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviours of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs."

(Hackman and Johnson, 2000:12)

"Leadership is a choice, not a position."

(Covey, 2004: p?)

"Leadership is not simply something we do. It comes from inside us. Leadership is a process, an intimate expression of who we are. It is our being in action."

(Cashman, 1998:18)

What does it take to be an effective leader? What are the fundamental qualities/skills that enable individuals to be effective leaders?

These are questions that have inspired a startling number of scholars to study leaders across a broad spectrum. These scholars seek to identify critical competencies or success factors that distinguish excellent leaders from average leaders.

Leadership characteristics and qualities

The following four leadership experts provide their opinion about key qualities and characteristics that leaders require: Stephen Covey, John Adair, Warren Bennis and John Maxwell will be considered.

Stephen Covey

Stephen Covey (1932-2012) was a bestselling author of leadership books and a professor at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, Utah State University. He was instrumental in shaping our thinking about leadership.

Covey (2004) identified ten qualities of principle-centred leaders as described in **Table 1**.

TABLE 1: QUALITIES OF PRINCIPLE-CENTRED LEADERS

Persuasion:	The ability to argue strongly and convincingly about your position while maintaining genuine respect for your followers' opinions.
Patience:	Exercising patience over your followers' shortcomings, with the achievement of goals.
Gentleness:	Being gentle towards the feelings and vulnerabilities of your followers.
“Teachableness”:	Being open to learning new things from your followers.
Acceptance:	Accepting instead of judging your followers' mistakes or imperfections.
Kindness:	Being sensitive, caring and thoughtful.
Openness:	Being open to possibilities.
Compassionate confrontation:	Making corrections with warmth and concern.
Consistency:	Sticking to a personal code based on a solid set of values and principles and always acting based on this code.
Integrity:	Acting only for the good of others, without a desire to take advantage of them.

(Covey, 2004)