

Collegiate Leadership Competition Team

Introduction:

Leadership education in higher education oftentimes falls in one of two categories: 1. Classroom education (i.e., theories and terms) without much hands-on practice, or 2. Out of classroom hands-on experiences without much information about theories and terms. Few experiences are comprehensive enough to contain adequate amounts of both components. This was the situation at Iowa State University.

To address this issue, we experimented by subscribing to the Collegiate Leadership Competition. “Collegiate Leadership Competition (CLC), a nonprofit college leadership program founded in 2015, creates a dynamic practice field where student leaders can apply what they’re learning in a context that stretches them to the boundaries of their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. CLC makes leadership a real, tangible experience for future leaders” (collegiateleader.org, 2018).

The purpose of this innovative idea is to share our experience recruiting, educating, and coaching a team of students to compete in the Collegiate Leadership Competition as a means to provide students with a rich, authentic experience that provides both classroom and out-of-class experiences.

How it worked:

To meet the objective of strengthening the link between classroom education and skill development/practice, a 3-credit experimental course was developed. The course was designed using the CLC curriculum, which is centered around ten acronyms focused on concepts, skill development/practice (i.e., L.E.A.D.E.R.S.H.I.P., F.O.L.L.O.W., S.O.L.V.E., S.T.Y.L.E.S., T.E.A.M.S., I.N.F.L.U.E.N.C.E., C.O.N.F.R.O.N.T., S.T.R.E.S.S.O.R.S., E.T.H.I.C.S., and C.O.N.F.L.I.C.T.). Theoretical content (i.e., Transformational Leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), Emotional Intelligence (Levy-Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015), and Social Change Model (HERI, 1996)), was integrated into the curriculum. Each class period consisted of learning an acronym and related theory, as well as hands-on activities.

An example of this integration was learning about teams, using the T.E.A.M.S. acronym (**T**rust, **E**motions, **A**ccountability, **M**ember norms, and **S**mall wins). CLC curriculum provided the base level of knowledge about teams by exploring the acronym and the meaning behind each of the components. Theories related to Emotional Intelligence (Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015) are key to working in teams and are the foundation of this acronym. These theories were examined using reading assignments and class discussion. In addition, a scaffold approach was used, which culminated in a trust fall, to experience various levels of trust, emotions, accountability, member norms, and small wins.

Formative assessment included weekly peer learning assignments where class members were paired with another class member for reading and reflective questions, class participation and instructor observation of interaction and skill development. Summative assessment was completed with a two-part final paper. Part one consisted of a reflection of their strengths and

weaknesses, including their own assessment, instructor feedback, and competition judges feedback. The second part of the assessment required students to apply the leadership content with their background in teacher education. Each student developed a lesson plan of how they would integrate one of the acronyms into their future curriculum.

Results to date:

The team competed in the Midwest Collegiate Leadership Competition in April. The two-day competition consisted of six, forty-five minute challenges where each team member was randomly assigned to lead one task. Each team member received extensive feedback on their process as well as the product. While the team had hoped to place higher than they did in the competition, each team member believed that they had learned from the experience.

- “Thanks so much for teaching this class this year. It was a great time. I learned so much about working with a team and about myself.”
- “I enjoyed and learned something every class period and had a blast traveling to Kansas. I strongly encourage the department to do it again next year.”
- “This class helped me think about how I will teach leadership in my classroom in the future. I can’t just assume that students are becoming better leaders because they are in FFA.”
- “This class challenged me to think about how I interact with others and how they may view me differently than what I intend.”
- “I liked seeing how our team formed from the beginning of the semester to the end. It was just like we were studying in class.”
- “I look forward to teaching leadership to my students. I have some good information to help me prepare.”

Future plans:

We have chosen to continue with this project for a second year. Our goal is to reach additional students by recruiting more students to the class. In addition, the students who participated spring of 2018 are planning to offer workshops to our undergraduate Agricultural Education club using the materials and information they learned.

Costs/resources needed:

Collegiate Leadership Competition Curriculum and contest – 1900.00

Travel to regional competition – 980.00

References:

Bass, R. E., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership, 2nd ed.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Collegiate Leadership Competition (2018). <https://collegiateleader.org>

Higher Education Research Institute (1996). *A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook version III.* College Park, MD: National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

Shankman, M. L., Allen, S. J., & Haber-Curran, P. (2015). *Emotionally intelligent leaders: A guide for students.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.