University-Wide Approach to Leader Development: A Playbook

LILLIE BESOZZI AND STEPHANIE TAYLOR | THE DOERR INSTITUTE FOR NEW LEADERS AT RICE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

In their mission statements, American universities commonly promise to develop students as leaders, but early research suggests there are a limited number of universities that develop students as leaders at an enterprise level.

University leader development programs tend to be boutique, exclusive, and absent of measured outcomes. Additionally, the business world spends the majority of leader development dollars at the very top executive level. This leaves the majority of our young leaders without access to high-quality, professionally-led leader development.

The aim of this practice poster is to provide a playbook for how to set up a comprehensive, principles-based, university wide approach to leader development.
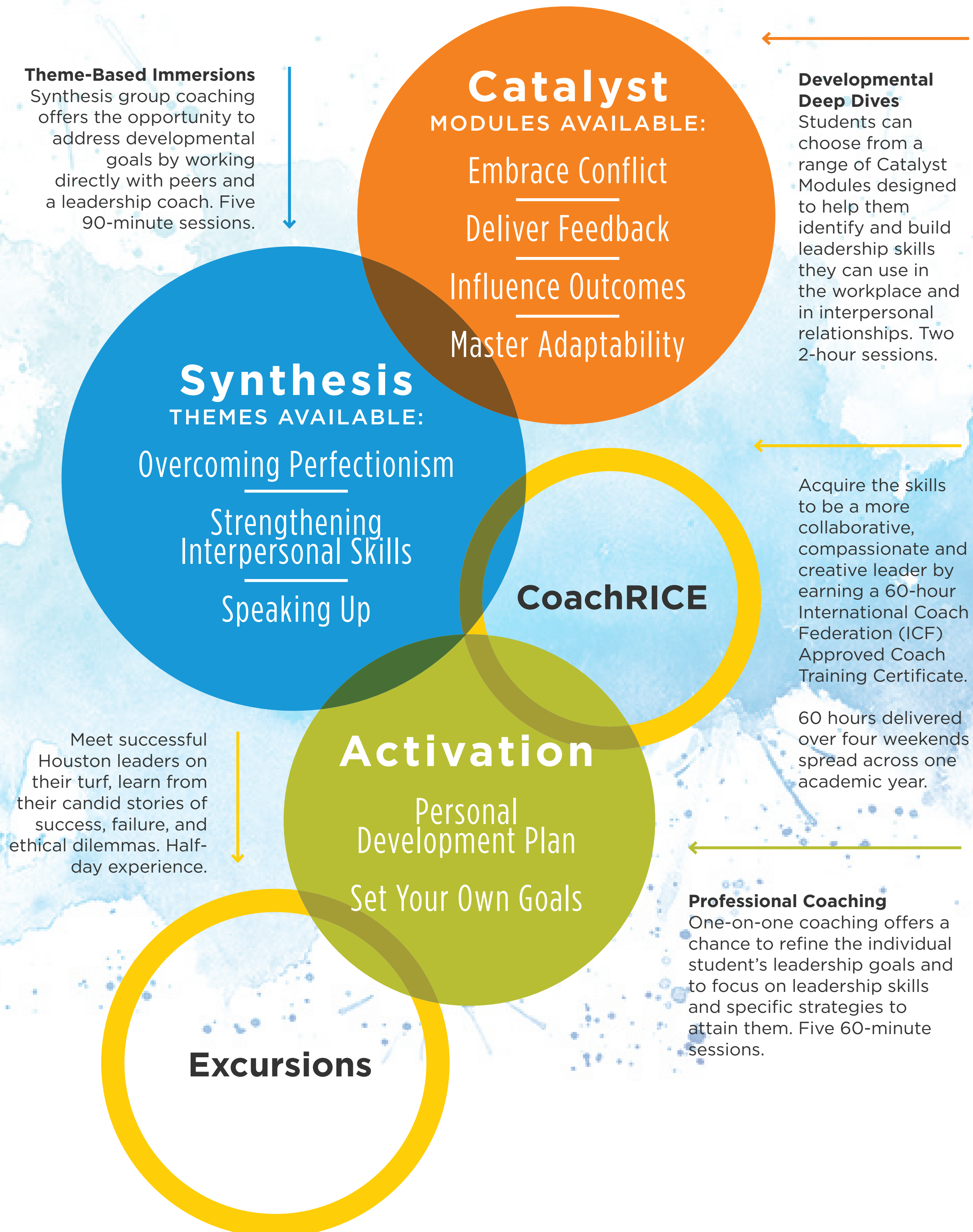
THE PLAYBOOK

Our vision is to change the way leader development is done at all universities that view leader development as part of their mission. Here is our proposed road map for how all top 20 universities could approach starting a university-wide leader development program.

1 Understand Context
Goal: Develop clear understanding of the culture, politics, current leader development opportunities, felt needs, history, and opportunities.
How we did it: Interviewed 185 stakeholders, 1 hour each

2 Proof of Concept
Goal: Determine if the evidence-based intervention will be successful in this context. If successful, repeat at larger scale. If unsuccessful, fail fast.
How we did it: Matched 12 undergraduate influencers with 3 professional leadership coaches. Scaled to 266 students the following semester. Repeated this process for 4 additional programs.

3 Create a Team
Goal: Hire professionals for university-wide implementation.
How we did it: Hired 10 full time staff, 35 vendor coaches, 45 student affiliates, 2 grad students, 4 student workers. Organized into 3 functional areas: Leader Development, Measurement, and Operations.

4 Establish Guiding Principles
Goal: Establish durable principles to keep the team focused and in alignment with the mission.
Our guiding principles:
• Leader development is a core function of the university
• Use evidence-based techniques
• Use professional people
• Measure outcomes objectively

5 Establish Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)
Goal: Establish OKRs to reach consensus on how to measure success.
How we did it: All team members read John Doerr's New York Times Bestseller, *Measure What Matters*. The team sets OKRs each semester.

6 Build Developmental Frameworks
Goal: Create a grounding framework to ensure we offer balanced developmental opportunities each semester.
How we did it: Derived a set of 21 Leader Competencies from contemporary research on leaders. Organized competencies into 5 broad, rationally-derived themes. Drafted a 3 year program plan.

7 Create Measurement Strategies
Goal: Articulate program impact through outcome measures, not just process metrics.
How we did it: Created and validated an "Authentic Leader Identity" scale that measures a student's
• Self-categorization as a leader
• Self-confidence as a leader
• Self-awareness as a leader
• Willingness to step into leadership roles
See more in the Results section.
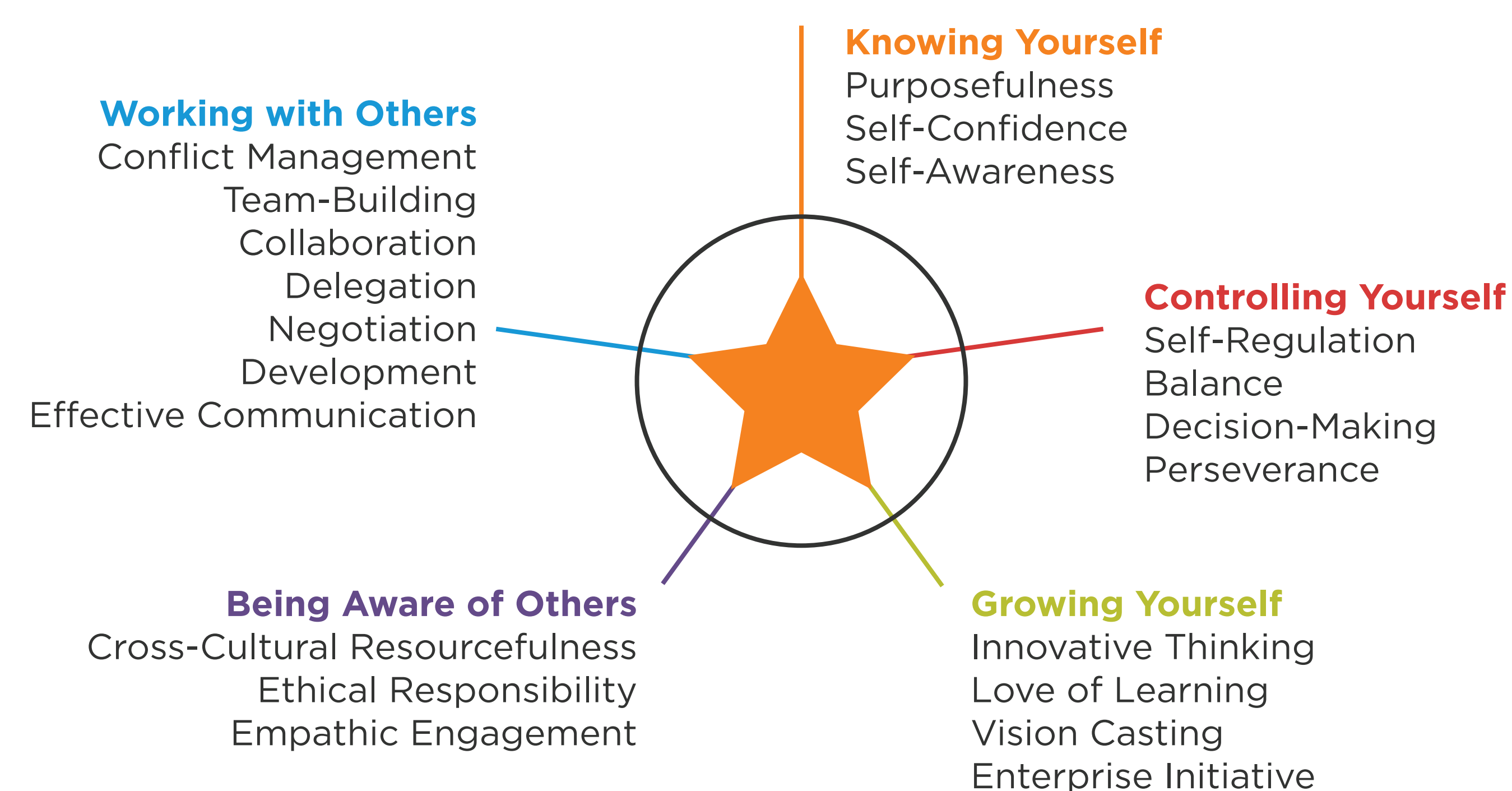
8 Design and Execute Aligned Programs

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

We have moved away from prescriptive, one size-fits-all leadership training approaches, instead offering coaching and training from certified professionals in five unique program formats. All five programs are free of cost and available to all students. There are no pre-requisites and students are encouraged to start with the program that best meets their developmental needs and time availability.

Theme-Based Immersions Synthesis group coaching offers the opportunity to address developmental goals by working directly with peers and a leadership coach. Five 90-minute sessions.

Developmental Deep Dives Students can choose from a range of Catalyst Modules designed to help them identify and build leadership skills they can use in the workplace and in interpersonal relationships. Two 2-hour sessions.

Catalyst
MODULES AVAILABLE:
Embrace Conflict
Deliver Feedback
Influence Outcomes
Master Adaptability

Synthesis
THEMES AVAILABLE:
Overcoming Perfectionism
Strengthening Interpersonal Skills
Speaking Up

CoachRICE
Acquire the skills to be a more collaborative, compassionate and creative leader by earning a 60-hour International Coach Federation (ICF) Approved Coach Training Certificate.

60 hours delivered over four weekends spread across one academic year.

Activation
Personal Development Plan
Set Your Own Goals

Meet successful Houston leaders on their turf, learn from their candid stories of success, failure, and ethical dilemmas. Half-day experience.

Professional Coaching One-on-one coaching offers a chance to refine the individual student's leadership goals and to focus on leadership skills and specific strategies to attain them. Five 60-minute sessions.

Excursions

Doerr Institute Leader Competencies

The 21 Leader Competencies are derived from contemporary research on leaders (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2009) and are organized into five themes that pertain either to the individual or to interactions with others.

Working with Others
Conflict Management
Team-Building
Collaboration
Delegation
Negotiation
Development
Effective Communication

Knowing Yourself
Purposefulness
Self-Confidence
Self-Awareness

Controlling Yourself
Self-Regulation
Balance
Decision-Making
Perseverance

Being Aware of Others
Cross-Cultural Resourcefulness
Ethical Responsibility
Empathic Engagement

Growing Yourself
Innovative Thinking
Love of Learning
Vision Casting
Enterprise Initiative

RESULTS

34% of Rice students engage with Doerr Institute programs prior to graduating. Every leader development program is rigorously assessed on multiple dimensions, from basic enrollment and attrition levels, to subjective evaluations, to pre-post impact metrics tailored to the objectives of each program.

Table 1: The table below provides a conceptual overview of our multi-dimensional approach to assessment.

	Engagement	Subjective Evals.	Impact Metrics
Activation			
Synthesis Theme A			
Synthesis Theme B			
Catalyst Skill A			
Catalyst Skill B			

Note: Green indicates a positive outcome (where success criteria are predetermined for each program); yellow indicates a mixed or less-than-desirable outcome; red indicates a poor outcome. Engagement includes enrollment and subsequent attrition. Subjective Evals include standard, multi-item indices of perceived value. Impact Metrics are pre-post indices (unique to each intervention/training program).

Table 2: The table below provides a snapshot of the subjective evaluation results for our Spring 2019 Embrace Conflict Catalyst module. Additionally, we ask students for open ended feedback.

Items	Mean : Conflict	
	S1 (n=24)	S2 (n=23)
Sign Up	33	
Attendance		
Overall, I was satisfied with this learning experience.	6.21	6.70
I would like to participate in a learning experience like this one again.	6.38	6.78
I would recommend this learning experience to my colleagues.	6.21	6.74
I believe that I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from this learning experience to my work.	6.29	6.65
Overall, the content was presented in a clear and understandable way.	6.42	6.61
Participating in this learning experience was worth the time and effort required.	6.21	6.65
The instructors used class time well.	6.42	6.65
The instructors were effective communicators.	6.50	6.61
The logistics related to this training went smoothly.	6.58	6.70
I was personally motivated to participate in this training.	6.50	6.91
I felt a strong sense of pressure from my advisor or some other authority figure to participate in this training.	2.46	2.17

Note: Response options range from 1= Disagree Strongly to 7= Agree Strongly Total N= 139; S1= Session 1, S2= Session 2

Table 3: The table below provides the impact metrics for our Spring 2019 Embrace Conflict Catalyst module. Impact metrics are pre-post indices unique to each training program.

Scale	Pre-Test	Post-Test	P-Value
Constructive Tactics	4.68	5.37	0.02
Avoidance	4.94	4.36	0.03
Forcefulness	4.00	4.30	0.27
Conflict Self-Awareness	3.25	4.50	0.03

Note: The response scale ranges from 1 to 7 for the measures presented in the table.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to create a scalable, rigorously evaluated leader development program if institutions are willing to invest the time, money, and attention necessary to take leadership seriously as an outcome of value. We believe that if universities develop leaders as a core function of the university, use evidence-based techniques, use professional people, and measure outcomes, our nation would produce measurably more effective leaders on a large scale. We are inviting all universities to take advantage of the time value of leader development and join the movement to change the way leader development is done at universities worldwide.

REFERENCES

Ashkenas R. & Hausmann R. (2016). Leadership development should focus on experiments. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2016/04/leadership-development-should-focus-on-experiments?utm_campaign=HBR&utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social

Brandon Hall Group (2016, November). Top Spending Trends for Training. Training. Retrieved from https://trainingmag.com/top-spending-trends-training-2016-2017/.

Doerr, J. (2018). Measure what matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation rock the world with OKRs. Penguin.

Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (2009). FYI. For your improvement. A guide for development and coaching. Korn/Ferry International.

Latham, G. P., & Locke, E. A. (1979). Goal setting—A motivational technique that works. Organizational dynamics, 8(2), 68-80.

Sonesh, S. C., Coultas, C. W., Lacerenza, C. N., Marlow, S. L., Benishek, L. E., & Salas, E. (2015). The power of coaching: A meta-analytic investigation. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 8(2), 73-95.

INTRODUCTION

In their mission statements, American universities commonly promise to develop students as leaders, but early research suggests there are a limited number of universities that develop students as leaders at an enterprise level.

University leader development programs tend to be boutique, exclusive, and absent of measured outcomes. Additionally, the business world spends the majority of leader development dollars at the very top executive level. This leaves the majority of our young leaders without access to high-quality, professionally-led leader development.

The aim of this practice poster is to provide a playbook for how to set up a comprehensive, principles-based, university wide approach to leader development.

THE PLAYBOOK

Our vision is to change the way leader development is done at all universities that view leader development as part of their mission. Here is our proposed road map for how all top 20 universities could approach starting a university-wide leader development program.

1

Understand Context
Goal: Develop clear understanding of the culture, politics, current leader development opportunities, felt needs, history, and opportunities.
How we did it: Interviewed 185 stakeholders, 1 hour each

2

Proof of Concept
Goal: Determine if the evidence-based intervention will be successful in this context. If successful, repeat at larger scale. If unsuccessful, fail fast.
How we did it: Matched 12 undergraduate influencers with 3 professional leadership coaches. Scaled to 266 students the following semester. Repeated this process for 4 additional programs.

3

Create a Team
Goal: Hire professionals for university-wide implementation.
How we did it: Hired 10 full time staff, 35 vendor coaches, 45 student affiliates, 2 grad students, 4 student workers. Organized into 3 functional areas: Leader Development, Measurement, and Operations.

4

Establish Guiding Principles
Goal: Establish durable principles to keep the team focused and in alignment with the mission.
Our guiding principles:
• Leader development is a core function of the university
• Use evidence-based techniques
• Use professional people
• Measure outcomes objectively

5

Establish Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)
Goal: Establish OKRs to reach consensus on how to measure success.
How we did it: All team members read John Doerr's New York Times Bestseller, *Measure What Matters*. The team sets OKRs each semester.

6

Build Developmental Frameworks
Goal: Create a grounding framework to ensure we offer balanced developmental opportunities each semester.
How we did it: Derived a set of 21 Leader Competencies from contemporary research on leaders. Organized competencies into 5 broad, rationally-derived themes. Drafted a 3 year program plan.

7

Create Measurement Strategies
Goal: Articulate program impact through outcome measures, not just process metrics.
How we did it: Created and validated an "Authentic Leader Identity" scale that measures a student's
• Self-categorization as a leader
• Self-confidence as a leader
• Self-awareness as a leader
• Willingness to step into leadership roles
See more in the Results section.

8

Design and Execute Aligned Programs

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

We have moved away from prescriptive, one size-fits-all leadership training approaches, instead offering coaching and training from certified professionals in five unique program formats. All five programs are free of cost and available to all students. There are no pre-requisites and students are encouraged to start with the program that best meets their developmental needs and time availability.

Catalyst
MODULES AVAILABLE:
Embrace Conflict

Deliver Feedback

Influence Outcomes

Master Adaptability

Theme-Based Immersions
Synthesis group coaching offers the opportunity to address developmental goals by working directly with peers and a leadership coach. Five 90-minute sessions.

Developmental Deep Dives
Students can choose from a range of Catalyst Modules designed to help them identify and build leadership skills they can use in the workplace and in interpersonal relationships. Two 2-hour sessions.

Synthesis
THEMES AVAILABLE:
Overcoming Perfectionism

Strengthening Interpersonal Skills

Speaking Up

CoachRICE

Acquire the skills to be a more collaborative, compassionate and creative leader by earning a 60-hour International Coach Federation (ICF) Approved Coach Training Certificate.

60 hours delivered over four weekends spread across one academic year.

Activation
Personal Development Plan

Set Your Own Goals

Meet successful Houston leaders on their turf, learn from their candid stories of success, failure, and ethical dilemmas. Half-day experience.

Professional Coaching
One-on-one coaching offers a chance to refine the individual student's leadership goals and to focus on leadership skills and specific strategies to attain them. Five 60-minute sessions.

Excursions

Doerr Institute Leader Competencies

The 21 Leader Competencies are derived from contemporary research on leaders (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2009) and are organized into five themes that pertain either to the individual or to interactions with others.

Knowing Yourself
Purposefulness
Self-Confidence
Self-Awareness

Working with Others
Conflict Management
Team-Building
Collaboration
Delegation
Negotiation
Development
Effective Communication

Controlling Yourself
Self-Regulation
Balance
Decision-Making
Perseverance

Being Aware of Others
Cross-Cultural Resourcefulness
Ethical Responsibility
Empathic Engagement

Growing Yourself
Innovative Thinking
Love of Learning
Vision Casting
Enterprise Initiative

RESULTS

34% of Rice students engage with Doerr Institute programs prior to graduating. Every leader development program is rigorously assessed on multiple dimensions, from basic enrollment and attrition levels, to subjective evaluations, to pre-post impact metrics tailored to the objectives of each program.

Table 1: The table below provides a conceptual overview of our multi-dimensional approach to assessment.

	Engagement	Subjective Evals.	Impact Metrics
Activation	▮ (green)	▮ (green)	▮ (green)
Synthesis Theme A	▮ (green)	▮ (green)	▮ (green)
Synthesis Theme B	▮ (yellow)	▮ (green)	▮ (green)
Catalyst Skill A	▮ (green)	▮ (green)	▮ (yellow)
Catalyst Skill B	▮ (green)	▮ (green)	▮ (red)

Note: Green indicates a positive outcome (where success criteria are predetermined for each program); yellow indicates a mixed or less-than-desirable outcome; red indicates a poor outcome. Engagement includes enrollment and subsequent attrition. Subjective Evals include standard, multi-item indices of perceived value. Impact Metrics are pre-post indices (unique to each intervention/training program).

Table 2: The table below provides a snapshot of the subjective evaluation results for our Spring 2019 Embrace Conflict Catalyst module. Additionally, we ask students for open ended feedback.

Items	Mean : Conflict	
	S1 (n=24)	S2 (n=23)
Sign Up	33	
Attendance		
Overall, I was satisfied with this learning experience.	6.21	6.70
I would like to participate in a learning experience like this one again.	6.38	6.78
I would recommend this learning experience to my colleagues.	6.21	6.74
I believe that I will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from this learning experience to my work.	6.29	6.65
Overall, the content was presented in a clear and understandable way.	6.42	6.61
Participating in this learning experience was worth the time and effort required.	6.21	6.65
The instructors used class time well.	6.42	6.65
The instructors were effective communicators.	6.50	6.61
The logistics related to this training went smoothly.	6.58	6.70
I was personally motivated to participate in this training.	6.50	6.91
I felt a strong sense of pressure from my advisor or some other authority figure to participate in this training.	2.46	2.17

Note: Response options range from 1= Disagree Strongly to 7= Agree Strongly Total N= 139; S1= Session 1, S2= Session 2

Table 3: The table below provides the impact metrics for our Spring 2019 Embrace Conflict Catalyst module. Impact metrics are pre-post indices unique to each training program.

Scale	Pre-Test	Post-Test	P-Value
Constructive Tactics	4.68	5.37	0.02
Avoidance	4.94	4.36	0.03
Forcefulness	4.00	4.30	0.27
Conflict Self-Awareness	3.25	4.50	0.03

Note: The response scale ranges from 1 to 7 for the measures presented in the table.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to create a scalable, rigorously evaluated leader development program if institutions are willing to invest the time, money, and attention necessary to take leadership seriously as an outcome of value. We believe that if universities develop leaders as a core function of the university, use evidence-based techniques, use professional people, and measure outcomes, our nation would produce measurably more effective leaders on a large scale. We are inviting all universities to take advantage of the time value of leader development and join the movement to change the way leader development is done at universities worldwide.

REFERENCES

Ashkenas R. & Hausmann R. (2016). Leadership development should focus on experiments. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2016/04/leadership-development-should-focus-on-experiments?utm_campaign=HBR&utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social

Brandon Hall Group (2016, November). Top Spending Trends for Training. Training. Retrieved from https://trainingmag.com/top-spending-trends-training-2016-2017/.

Doerr, J. (2018). Measure what matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation rock the world with OKRs. Penguin.

Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (2009). FYI. For your improvement. A guide for development and coaching. Korn/Ferry International.

Latham, G. P., & Locke, E. A. (1979). Goal setting—A motivational technique that works. Organizational dynamics, 8(2), 68-80.

Sonesh, S. C., Coultas, C. W., Lacerenza, C. N., Marlow, S. L., Benishek, L. E., & Salas, E. (2015). The power of coaching: A meta-analytic investigation. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 8(2), 73-95.