FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

LEADERSHIP THEORY

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE FOR CULTIVATING CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

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USING THE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This guide was created both to support the main text, *Leadership Theory: Cultivating Critical Perspectives* (Dugan, 2017), and as a stand-alone book in its own right. In writing the main text, it became clear that the use of critical perspectives to deconstruct and reconstruct leadership theory might in fact reflect a learning opportunity not just for readers but also for instructors/facilitators. As editors of this volume, we have most certainly been stretched in our thinking about our own approaches to leadership education through the integration of critical pedagogies. This realization made the provision of resources to help instructors/facilitators engage with the material and feel adequately prepared to use it in learning experiences all the more essential.

Thus, the content of the guide may feel a little different than what is typically encountered in an instructor's manual. We have asked outstanding colleagues across disciplinary contexts to share their best practices in how to infuse critical perspectives into teaching leadership theory. What they offer is both a framework for understanding the application of critical perspectives and a set of step-by-step lesson plans. As you read through the guide, keep the following in mind:

- Each chapter aligns with a chapter from the main text, and in many cases there are multiple subchapters in this book designed to support a single chapter from the main text. This was done knowing that the number of concepts and/or theories covered in a single chapter of the main text is large and that instructors/facilitators may want to expose participants to all of these through assigned reading but focus in depth on a singular

concept/theory in person. Therefore, chapters in the guide can be combined in a variety of ways to meet the content needs of a particular instructor/facilitator.

- The depth of infusion of critical perspectives in each chapter of the guide is purposefully varied. This is to support its use with participants with varying levels of prior exposure to and developmental readiness for critical perspectives. This variation allows instructors/facilitators the ability to draw on a wider range of content appropriate for their particular audience. Note that each of the chapters can easily be adapted to either deepen or make more accessible the critical perspectives that are employed.

- Similarly, chapters are purposefully varied in approach, with some being decidedly academic and most appropriate for use in a traditional classroom setting, while others are more experiential and ideal for learning experiences outside the traditional classroom. All of the chapters equip instructors/facilitators with resources to adapt content to best serve their own curriculum.

- Each chapter begins with an overview of the theory and an explicit statement of the framework employed for the integration of critical perspectives. Step-by-step directions to implement the curricula follow and typically comprise multiple activities. Note that descriptive instructions for facilitation appear in standard (i.e., nonitalicized) type, while example scripts you can use during the actual facilitation of activities appear in italics.

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Leadership
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Introduction and Critical Facilitation

Amy C. Barnes

Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which [people] deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

SHAULLAS CITED IN FREIRE, 2000, P. 34

This guide was created by a dedicated group of educators committed to teaching, researching, and analyzing leadership theory and organizational dynamics using critical perspectives. As a companion tool for the main book, *Leadership Theory: Cultivating Critical Perspectives* (Dugan, 2017), this guide serves as a resource to help facilitators and educators bring to life a critical pedagogy of leadership studies. This guide is structured to mirror and supplement the main text; however, it can also be used as a stand-alone resource. Using meta-themes from critical theory as the paradigm through which participants learn, the following chapters contain intentional and unique curricula crafted to guide participants toward a greater understanding of how power, privilege, and oppression affect leadership dynamics.

Facilitation design is foundational to rich and insightful group processes. Giving thought to things such as how time is structured, physical environment and space configuration, framing of reflection, whether and when there should be breaks, what materials to use, and whether to provide food and/or drinks (to name a few), can maximize the focus, efficiency, and

effectiveness of group learning. Accordingly, each chapter within this guide includes (1) an introduction to the leadership theories or concepts discussed in the corresponding main text chapter; (2) a theoretical or conceptual framing of the specific curriculum; (3) learning outcomes and material lists for each activity; (4) step-by-step facilitation guidelines; and (5) tailored debriefing and facilitator notes to provide you with additional insight and support. Furthermore, if an activity suggests leading small- or large-group discussion, then sample questions are provided; and if supplementary content is needed to facilitate a specific activity, then the requisite instructions, materials, and/or resource links are also provided.

Although the authors have shared a comprehensive plan within each chapter, the curricula are designed to allow for flexibility in timeline and structure so that content can be easily adapted for use in formal classrooms as well as cocurricular or professional training environments. This guide is designed to equip you with ideas, strategies, and tools to effectively facilitate sociocultural dialogue and critical leadership learning. Facilitating curricula from a critical perspective where stereotypes, biases, and privilege are challenged can be difficult. Yet introducing these concepts, discussions, and perspectives is the necessary work of leadership educators. The remainder of this introduction will focus on critical pedagogy and an approach to facilitation that will help to support the teaching of this content.

❯ Experiential, Transformative, and Developmentally Sequenced Learning

The approach to this facilitator guide is activity- and discussion-based and reflects Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. Kolb's theory described learning as "the process

whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). The Kolb cycle of learning includes four stages that further learning, understanding, and integration of concrete human experiences through a cyclical process of feeling, watching, thinking, and doing. This approach allows learners to make meaning of current experiences and empowers them to engage in their own learning process.

Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning similarly articulates a cyclical process of experiencing, reflecting, and integrating newly obtained knowledge or insight. However, the scope of this theory extends beyond simple knowledge acquisition and weaves together both experiential and human development approaches to describe a process of learning that results in *cognitive transformation*: encountering and internalizing experiences and ideas that liberate one from "reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27). Situated at the core of transformative learning is the act of *metacognition*, which refers to critically examining the cognitive process itself (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). That is, the practice of metacognition involves one taking pause to first recognize a present thought or belief, and then interrogating one's own subconscious to unveil the underlying presuppositions framing that thought or belief. Dugan, Kodama, Correia, and Associates (2013) positioned critical self-reflection and metacognition as central mechanisms to effective leadership development, further claiming that leadership educators can increase awareness and attention to the metacognitive processes of learning by leveraging opportunities for critical self-reflection that are appropriately tailored to developmental readiness.

Hannah and Avolio (2010) defined *developmental readiness* as "the ability and motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and appropriate new leader KSAAs (knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) into knowledge structures along with concomitant changes in identity to employ those KSAAs" (p. 1182).

Translated to leadership education, *developmental sequencing* is a pedagogical method of intentionally delivering and facilitating curriculum in a manner that appropriately builds in complexity over time to ensure the successful evolution into new ways of knowing, being, and doing (Dugan et al., 2013). Moreover, developmental sequencing acknowledges the interrelationship of lived experience, critical self-reflection, metacognition, developmental readiness, and transformative learning/development by scaffolding learning opportunities that are rooted in the needs of participants, simultaneously validating developmental achievements and encouraging continued growth. The crucial importance of developmental sequencing is well evidenced within leadership literature (e.g., Day et al., 2009; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). In using this guide to inform practice, it is important to consider the unique needs of your participants and adapt the material provided to best align with goals and learning outcomes.

❯ The Art of Critical Facilitation, Teaching, and Learning

Facilitation is an art (and not a science). It involves planning that considers the unique developmental needs of the group, an attitude of openness and willingness to engage participants in shared learning and sociocultural sensitivity. Yet, even with thoughtful design and significant planning, you can never fully anticipate how human identity and emotion will influence a discussion or activity.

The art of critical facilitation includes the ability to anticipate what may occur, but also the capacity to respond to the unknown in a manner that encourages growth and learning while also validating participants' lived experiences and perspectives.

This is especially challenging when one of the outcomes is to help participants develop a *critical* perspective. For some participants, this may be the first time some of their beliefs are challenged and/or their biases uncovered. Therefore, the aim of critical leadership education becomes facilitating the confrontation, deconstruction, and subsequent *re*construction of the biases, pre-suppositions, and prototypes that inform our conceptualization, development, and enactment of leadership.

It is important to remember that facilitating group conversations and processes is based on the premise that both facilitator and participants share expertise and knowledge as they engage in mutually constructed learning (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). Furthermore, the priority must be creating a community of learners by empowering participants to learn collaboratively, teach each other, and assume responsibility for learning. You must create opportunities for participants to critically analyze the curriculum as they examine conventional interpretations and introduce alternative narratives (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The remaining sections describe the significant role of sociocultural conversations and the environmental requisite of brave spaces in challenging paradigms, promoting cognitive and metacognitive growth, and evolving facilitators and participants alike in their perspectives and practices of leadership.

Sociocultural Conversations

The importance of teaching individuals how to engage in meaningful dialogue about and across differences cannot be overstated, as the degree to which people interact with peers or colleagues across difference contributes significantly to their leadership development (Dugan, 2011). On the most basic of levels, increasing one's interactions with diverse colleagues leads to individuals being more open-minded (Laird, 2005). Meaningful interaction in diversity-related activities or conversations also

promotes individuals' educational growth and cultivates their self-confidence, social agency, and ability to think critically (Chang, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, 2006; Laird, 2005). In the 2013 report from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), sociocultural conversations were highlighted as the "single strongest predictor" for building socially responsible leadership capacity (Dugan et al., 2013, p. 9). Findings from the report further concluded that sociocultural conversations create a platform for individuals to clarify personal values and explore others' values, consider their values within larger contexts (social structures, cultural paradigms, or worldviews), and understand how to navigate those differences in an effective manner (Dugan et al., 2013). As such, it is essential that leadership educators and facilitators purposefully create opportunities for participants to engage in these conversations.

Facilitating sociocultural conversations requires emotional intelligence and an acute sensitivity to multiple social identities. These intersecting identities belong to both facilitators and participants, and it is important to first become aware of personal privilege and bias in creating mutual learning environments. As conversations unfold, you should encourage and model inclusivity, use gender-neutral language, and structure activities in ways that share power equally among participants. It is often helpful to allow participants frequent opportunities to share and reflect on their multiple identities and lived experiences; the more opportunities there are for all participants to share in the conversation, the more empowered they will feel and the greater the learning will be for everyone (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007).

The practice of conversations for growth is observed across disciplines, and what follows is a description of a developmentally sequenced, three-part strategy to engage learners in this conversational space. Although Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) offered this cognitive development structure from an applied, cross-cultural

linguistic perspective, their framework may be applied to sociocultural conversations addressing general differences:

- In the first phase, *explanation*, Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) suggested time be used to teach or offer rationale for the process that will follow; we further suggest that you establish rules and expectations to create brave spaces (e.g., Arao & Clemens, 2013) where participants are empowered as both learners and teachers.
- The second phase, *exploration*, may take many instructional forms. The core concern of this stage is to engage participants in dialogue by offering the opportunity to work with others, share experiences, and explore difficult questions—all ways to move individuals from curiosity to dialogue with one another (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002). Asking participants to analyze articles or texts, examine current media, or utilize personal stories are meaningful ways to initiate the dialogue process, which is the primary concern of this stage.
- In the final stage, *expression*, participants must insert their own stories, opinions, or conclusions—ultimately reflecting both on the experiences they share and the overarching process of exchanging perspectives (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002).

Through the use of this approach, and by providing developmentally appropriate amounts of challenge and support, you can create environments where rich, meaningful sociocultural conversations can occur.

Brave Spaces

Safe space is a phrase often used to describe the environment cultivated by social justice educators when groups create agreed-upon norms or community standards to guide sociocultural or otherwise sensitive discussion. Typically, the goal is that confidentiality

can be agreed upon and members of the group can feel their contributions are valued. Although facilitators have the best of intentions in attempting to create an ideal environment for sociocultural conversations, attempting to create safe spaces assumes that the security or safety necessary for every participant is the same. However, the measurement of personal risk associated with sociocultural conversations varies greatly based on social identity, lived experience, power dynamics within the group, developmental readiness, and level of personal experience discussing topics related to social justice. It is, therefore, impossible to remove the risk that someone might assume in these conversations just by agreeing to a few community guidelines. Arao and Clemens (2013) wrote.

> It became increasingly clear to us that our approach to initiating social justice dialogues should not be to convince participants that we can remove risk from the equation, for this is simply impossible. Rather, we propose revising our language, shifting away from the concept of safety and emphasizing the importance of bravery instead, to help students better understand—and rise to—the challenges of genuine dialogue on diversity and social justice issues. (p. 136)

In their work as facilitators of sociocultural conversations, Arao and Clemens (2013) found that a commonly used activity that asked participants to take a step forward or back based upon a list of statements about privilege actually left participants with significant feelings of discomfort, and most felt the activity was fundamentally incongruent with the idea of safety. In fact, the authors argued that "authentic learning about social justice often requires the very qualities of risk, difficulty, and controversy that are defined as incompatible with safety" (p. 139). They instead advocated for a new term to better capture the challenges participants experience when they choose to participate in critical dialogue: *brave space.*

To create brave space within a group setting there must be ample time to process what brave space looks and feels like to the participants. It is recommended that you set aside time to either read and discuss the chapter by Arao and Clemens (2013) or introduce the concept and lead a discussion using the following questions: *What does brave space feel like to you? How can we create brave space in this group? What hesitations or fears do you have about our ability to create brave space? How can we help to address each others' hesitations?*

Following the discussion of these questions, the group should articulate ground rules to foster and maintain brave space for the experiences and conversations that will occur. You might also ask a group, *How can we support each other in our bravery to tackle these challenging but important conversations?* By guiding an open, honest conversation where you, as the facilitator, share power, admit the challenge inherit in sociocultural conversations, and commit to the importance and bravery associated with the work, you cultivate a community in which people feel empowered to share their stories, discuss their opinions, and engage openly in dialogue. This approach may take extra time and may need revisions along the way, or the discussion may feel imperfect or unfinished because it is a *process*. But, the authentic conversation that can result from a true commitment to critical pedagogy on the part of the facilitator and critical reflection on the part of the participants can lead to significant growth for everyone.

Glancing into the Mirror

Facilitating dialogue and learning around systems of oppression, power dynamics, and the marginalization of underrepresented identities within leadership settings is vital in today's world. Just as participants are instigated and challenged by the curricula within this guide, you must also engage with this content meaningfully and vulnerably; you must walk, struggle, and advance *together*

through this work. It is both appropriate and expected that you will similarly confront, deconstruct, and reconstruct your own biases and presuppositions within the learning community. Understanding your privilege(s), knowing your triggers, and considering how your social identities influence your role as a facilitator, your leadership perspectives, and your participation in the social world are integral aspects of self-awareness.

Critical facilitation is based on the premise that knowledge, expertise, and power are shared, and that teaching and learning are reciprocal, coconstructed processes (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). Critical leadership development necessitates unlearning deep-seated binaries (e.g., teacher-student, right-wrong, good-bad) and overcoming deep-rooted fears (e.g., making mistakes, acknowledging bias, being flawed). Of course these challenging tasks are wholly dependent on our capacity to look ourselves in the mirror, name what we see, and share ourselves authentically in relationships. However, at the core of this work, being a critical educator and facilitator requires a foundation of bravery and courage. In her book, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead,* Brené Brown (2012) positioned authenticity and vulnerability as the definitive acts of leadership and self love, claiming that "the willingness to show up changes us. It makes us a little braver each time" (p. 42). Given the nature of critical work, it is important to ensure that the same amount of energy put toward the creation of brave space for participants is also invested in the creation—and safeguarding—of such a space within ourselves.

❯ Conclusion

As a facilitator, you play an important role in shaping the dynamics of learning. When power is shared, you ask open-ended questions, model the behavior you would like to see from