



SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Center for Public Leadership and Governance

*Public Executive Leadership Academy
Leadership Development Workbook 2021*



This workbook belongs to:

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Introduction

Leadership is everyone's business. Some leaders may be born to lead, but most great leaders become good at what they do because they study and practice to become better leaders.

Often people say, "leadership is something they know when they see it." This implies that leadership is an observable set of specific skills and abilities that, when put into practice, result in good leadership.

If you accept that leadership consists of a set of learnable skills and practices, you begin to see that many people possess some of what it takes to be good leaders. Further, if you believe people can improve how they use these skills and abilities, you are closer to starting to develop and improve your own ability to lead.

Getting feedback is an important step in developing and improving your leadership skills and abilities. Feedback is always a gift. It is not always an easy gift to receive, nor is it always offered in a way that is easy to hear. However, if you open yourself and accept feedback as a gift, you increase your opportunities to learn and develop your leadership skills.

Leadership does not occur overnight nor is it ever completely achieved. Learning how to be a good leader is a lifelong pursuit and each person makes a different journey in becoming an authentic leader.

You are invited to use this workbook to design your unique path to developing your leadership skills. If you want to become a better leader, use these pages in choosing those first steps on your leadership journey.

This development guide is designed to help you do the following:

1. Articulate your own definition of leadership
2. Define central values for yourself as a leader
3. Describe your personal leadership vision
4. Identify your leadership strengths and developmental opportunities
5. Establish specific goals and strategies for developing your leadership skills
6. Develop a specific plan for practicing your leadership skill development and getting in-process feedback through coaching
7. Determine alternative leadership development options to best fit your situation
8. Target your skill development to support your work

For you to improve and have your leadership skills really “stick,” your development plan needs to follow an action learning model. An action learning model consists of 70% assignments, 20% people, and 10% training/education. In terms of making a difference in building skills, the following rank from the most to least effective:

1. Full-time jobs
2. Part-time assignments, such as task forces and special projects
3. Feedback
4. Coaching, counseling, and mentoring
5. Self-development
6. Courses/workshops/seminars

Building your leadership development using an action learning model can lead to you successfully improving your leadership skills. Most leadership development plans fail, not because the individual failed to recognize a leadership need, but because they failed to create a way to integrate leadership skill practice and feedback into their daily experiences. This guide will help you select leadership skill development strategies that best fit your situation.

Your definition of leadership

Consider for a moment what leadership means for you personally. What skills and abilities do you consider essential for good leadership?

Describe your vision of an ideal leader:

Considering those characteristics, write a definition of leadership:

Your core leadership values

Leaders stand for something. They know and work to align their actions with their core values. They do not impose their values on others, but rather look for ways to build consensus and develop a shared vision. Effective leaders foster agreement around core principles and then align their actions to be consistent with these values. Describe your core leadership values below.

Core Leadership Values:

Changing roles and environments

Leadership is a contact sport. Working with real people and in real places requires leaders who are open to changing and adapting to accommodate the realities on the ground. New roles for public managers and environmental shifts generate a need for new ways of leading.

What demographic trends are prompting changes in your community?

What professional trends are affecting your role as a public manager?

What do you see as your adaptive leadership challenge in this environment?

Articulating a public leadership vision

Leaders believe they can make a difference in the world. Being able to articulate a preferred vision of the future and enlist others in helping to achieve this vision are fundamental to effective leadership.

Where do you see yourself in five years? What will you be doing and with whom?

What is your ideal personal future?

Picture the party to celebrate your retirement after a long and distinguished career. Who will be there and what will they be saying about you?

What legacy would you like to leave your organization, family and your community?

Your adaptive change project

Part of the PELA experience is identifying an adaptive change effort you are part of and using it as the basis for “action learning,” where you reflect on how concepts you learn about can inform your leadership actions in the context of that change effort. The most substantial learning and development occurs through doing—applying what you are learning and reflecting on the results. Here are some questions to help you clearly identify the adaptive change project that you will use for action learning throughout and after PELA. *(This form is digitally fillable using MS Word)*

Brainstorm projects you are currently involved with or about to undertake that involve adaptive change (or should involve adaptive change):

Looking over the list above, which one would you like to focus on throughout PELA as part of your action learning experience? Which one do you have the opportunity to play a leadership role in and is clearly an adaptive challenge (i.e. not purely technical)?

Describe the change you are seeking through this effort. If everything goes well, what will the outcome(s) be?

Why is this change important for your community, now?

In what ways does this project involve adaptive change? In what ways does it involve technical change?

What are some of the biggest challenges you are facing or think you will face in helping make this adaptive change happen?

Innovative leadership

Innovation entails active measures to incorporate new ideas and approaches. It goes beyond incremental adjustments to current practices and represents identifying and implementing change with the intention of improving process or results. Innovative leadership blends the orientation and capabilities of the individual with the ideas and energies of creative thinkers throughout the organization and in the community. Successful innovation requires original ideas plus a supportive climate including an organizational culture that reinforces change.

In what way is innovation important to you and others in your organization or community?

What actions can you take to increase your own and others' capacity for innovation?

How does the attitude of leadership (management or elected) influence the organization's capacity for innovation?

Implicit and explicit bias

We are all biased—it is hard-wired into our brains. Implicit biases are below our conscious awareness. Explicit biases are ones we recognize in ourselves. We know from research that people may say they are not biased (explicitly) but behave in ways that are biased without realizing it. While no one can eliminate bias from their thinking, we can adopt strategies to manage and reduce how our biases play out. Use the questions below to identify your goals for reducing bias in your personal and organizational life.

What biases do I recognize in myself?

How might my biases influence my actions and/or affect others?

What strategies can I begin to use to reduce bias in my own work? In my organization? In my community?

Leading change

Leaders are change agents. What do you believe is your preferred change style? Are you a conserver, a pragmatist, or an originator? How does your preferred change style influence your decisions about what you want to do? Use the questions below to reflect on how your change style influences your approach to your community change project.

What challenges are you likely to face during implementation of your project?

How is your orientation towards change consistent with or in contrast to other group members?

What might happen to hold your group/team/board back?

What could you do to help the group/team/board move forward?

Sustaining your project

As you work on your project post-PELA, think about how you can sustain it until you reach your goals for the project.

What additional resources do you need to continue moving forward?

Is there a person or group who is not currently engaged who could help move the project forward?

What are the long-term challenges you expect to face?

Building an adaptive culture

As you have learned in PELA, moving forward with community efforts requires engagement of stakeholders. Unfortunately, the process for identifying stakeholders is not always simple. When considering undertaking a collaborative project, use the techniques taught in PELA to brainstorm the stakeholders in your project. For each stakeholder, determine the following:

Stake in adaptive challenge at hand. How will the stakeholder be affected by your project?

Desired outcomes. What would the stakeholder like to see come out of this project?

Level of engagement. How much does the person care about the issue and the project?

Degree of power and influence. What resources does the person control, and who wants those resources?

Values. What are the commitment and beliefs guiding their behaviors and decision-making processes?

Loyalties. What obligations does the person/organization have to people outside of your group?

Losses at risk. What does the person fear losing (status, resources, a positive self-image) if things change?

Hidden alliances. What shared interests does the person have with people from other major stakeholder groups that could lead the person to form an alliance that could build/block influence?

Leadership partners

No one leads in a vacuum. Successfully leading others, especially collaboratively, requires knowing what their interests are and finding ways to align your vision and theirs. Before beginning a collaborative project, brainstorm who are the individuals and groups that make up your partnership for community change?

- Who are the critical partners for my project?
- What roles do I need my partners to take on?
- What expectations do I believe my partners have of me? Are these expectations I share? If not, what can I do to clarify my role?

Your leadership message

Collaborative leaders regularly need to share information with others. Sometimes communication is needed to assure commitment and buy-in among members of the collaborative partnership. Other times, the communication needs to be with a broader, more diverse group of stakeholders or with the public at large. The following questions can help you craft/deliver a message with broadest appeal?

- What are the underlying interests of the stakeholders in your project (not their stated positions)?
- What are the values that are at the heart of those interests?
- Write 2-3 sample messages that might appeal to those interests to garner stakeholder support.

Using your coach

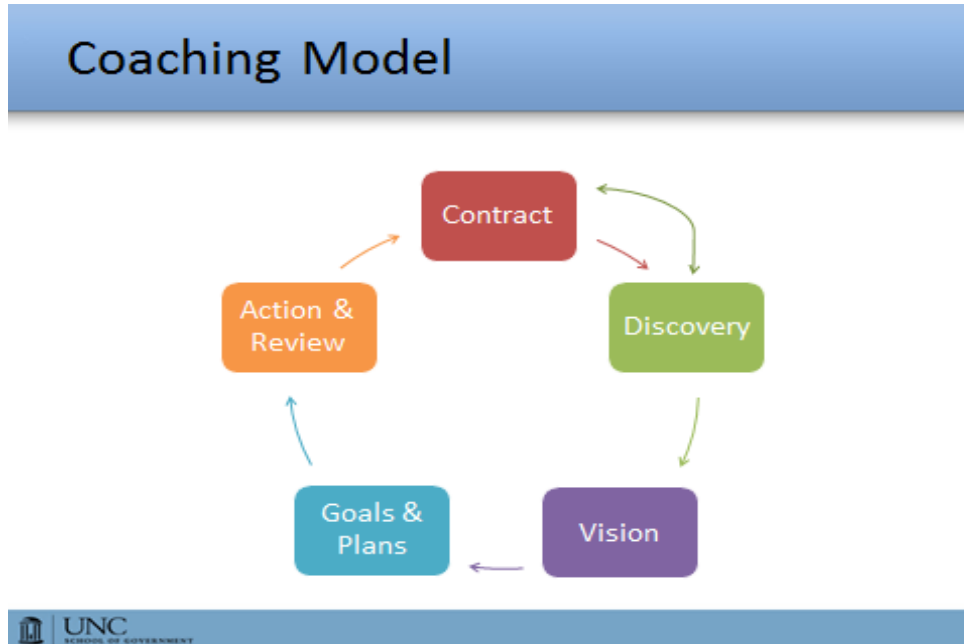
What is professional coaching?

A professional coach works in partnership with clients in a thought-provoking and disciplined way to explore and maximize potential, which is especially important in today's fast-changing, complex, and uncertain environment.

Working jointly with the client, it is the coach's responsibility to:

- Discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve
- Encourage client self-discovery
- Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies
- Hold the client responsible and accountable

This process helps clients dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while improving their leadership skills and unlocking their potential.



Some thoughts on how to use your coach

- Think of your coach as your partner in structuring your work and life in a way that is consistent with what matters most to you.
- Think about what you really want out of life ... have a vision for yourself. Want something big, something compelling and be willing to change to get it.
- Use your coach to help you identify gaps between where you are presently and where you want to go.
- Notice what gets in the way of your commitments (or what keeps you from doing what you want to do) and discuss those with your coach.
- Think of your coach as your co-designer when creating an extraordinary project.
- Use your coaching sessions as a place to try out new ideas and new approaches.
- Trust your coach to challenge you to expand your skills and perspectives.
- Examine conflict situations with your coach for more effective resolutions.
- Strengthen communication skills through conversations with your coach.
- A coach can help role-play interpersonal scenarios where you are exploring new communications and conversations.
- Use your coach to explore ways to overcome fears that may be holding you back.
- Use a coach to help you see the blind spots or obstacles in the road to success. A coach can help you navigate so you can reach your objective with less resistance and greater efficiency.
- Use your coach as a resource, not as an answer. Your coach does not have all the answers. Together, you will discover the right thing to do.
- Be willing to go outside your comfort zone.
- A coach is your constant reminder that integration of your work and personal life is essential for you to remain whole and have energy available for all parts of your life.
- Use a coach the way an Olympic athlete uses a coach... taking your talents and perfecting them every day, thus taking you to higher and higher levels.

What to talk about with your coach during your session

Because the coaching relationship is unique, it helps to know what is best to talk about during your call or meeting time.

HOW YOU ARE

- How you are feeling about yourself - good stuff and bad stuff
- How you are looking at your life
- How you are feeling about others

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST CALL

- Skills, wins and insights
- Any new choices or decisions made
- Personal news

WHAT YOU ARE WORKING ON

- Progress report on your goals, projects, and activities
- What you've done that you are proud of
- What barriers you are encountering

HOW A COACH CAN HELP

- Where you are stuck
- Where you are wondering about something
- A distinction
- A plan of action
- A strategy/advice

WHAT IS NEXT

- What is the next goal or project you want to work on

Your leadership development opportunities

Reflect on what you've learned in PELA and your conversations with team members and your coach. Identify three opportunities for future development. Your leadership development opportunities may be "blind spots," hidden strengths, or where you just want to go from good to great on a skill.

MAPPING MY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORUNITIES

OPEN: What do others see in me that I also see in myself?

BLIND: What did others see in me that I need to address to be more effective?

HIDDEN: What behaviors do I need to show more so others see what I am capable of?

UNKNOWN: What surprises were revealed in my feedback?

My three leadership development opportunities (list them here):

Now, for each development opportunity use the section below to describe: (a) how you behave now, (b) why you do what you do, and (c) how you would like to behave in the future.

Leadership Development Opportunity #1:

(a) When I demonstrate this competency now, I...

(b) I do things this way because...

(c) In the future, I expect to be able to do_____by improving this leadership competency.

Leadership Development Opportunity #2:

(a) When I demonstrate this competency now, I...

(b) I do things this way because...

(c) In the future, I expect to be able to do_____by improving this leadership competency.

Leadership Development Opportunity #3:

(a) When I demonstrate this competency now, I...

(b) I do things this way because...

(c) In the future, I expect to be able to do_____by improving this leadership competency.

Your leadership development plan

Now that you have set expectations for what you want to accomplish and determined what things you might do to achieve these goals; you need to be clear with yourself about what behaviors you want to practice. In this section, you will develop a specific plan for practicing your leadership skill development and getting in-process feedback. (Provide a copy of this to your coach)

Leadership Development Opportunity #1:

What strategy or plan will you use to develop your skill?

Who can help you?

What resources (financial, project assignments, on-the-job training) are available to you?

What improvement will you make in the next 30 days?

Leadership Development Opportunity #2:

What strategy or plan will you use to develop your skill?

Who can help you?

What resources (financial, project assignments, on-the-job training) are available to you?

What improvement will you make in the next 30 days?

Leadership Development Opportunity #3:

What strategy or plan will you use to develop your skill?

Who can help you?

What resources (financial, project assignments, on-the-job training) are available to you?

What improvement will you make in the next 30 days?