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# Adopting a Transformational Approach to Basic Course Leadership

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We often have heard about basic course directors (BCDs) who struggle to win acceptance for their ideas about how the basic course should run, only to surrender those ideas in the face of departmental opposition and/or resistance from the people teaching the course. It has been our experience that some BCDs move on to other job descriptions within a fairly short time frame. Other BCDs have made sweeping changes in their programs, gaining financial and emotional support from their departments in the process and frequently enhancing the image of that course campuswide and disciplinewide (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Gray, & Yerby, 1993; Seiler & Fuss-Reineck, 1986). These latter BCDs report satisfaction with their roles and often stay on in the capacity of BCD for decades. What is the difference between these two groups of people? Is one group simply less prepared for the task? Do BCDs who give up the job lack courage? Motivation? Skills? Does the environment doom them to failure? Is the other group advantaged in some way? Are these people more charismatic? Harder working? More "in tune" with what is expected of them? Are there other factors that conspire to support one group and not the other?

There probably are many answers to the above questions and, in addition, it is quite possible that different answers apply to different basic course situations. However, one cer-

tainty does exist for many BCDs: Directing the basic course can be a frustrating, low-status and often confusing role. Three consecutive presentations at a 1991 Midwest Basic Course Director's Conference explored the viewpoint of the BCD, the viewpoint of the department chair and the viewpoint of central administration; all three presentations pointed to the potential for conflict between and among these leadership positions and the other related personnel (faculty, basic course instructors, students, etc.). In other words, the problems/questions posed above (as well as many other questions) still exist in/about the basic course. We need to search for ways to "frame" the issues so we can identify potential avenues for improvement.

One possible way to frame thought about the basic course comes from organizational theory. Indeed, basic courses are similar to business organizations in many ways. (For a more thorough discussion of how basic courses function within organizations, see Buerkel-Rothfuss & Kosloski, 1990.) Like any subsystem of a larger system, the basic course exists with a structure of its own (a director, some instructors, and students) and has its own rules, norms, and expectations. Like any organizational subset, the basic course exists within a larger sphere, the academic department. In turn, the basic course is influenced by the departmental system, the college system, and various other subsystems and supra systems. Places where boundaries meet (and overlap) are the interfaces between and among those components, and communication at those interfaces is critical for the effective flow of information in the system as a whole. These interfaces have been studied extensively in the literature on organizational communication.

The resemblance of the basic course to a subsystem of an organizational system, then, encourages closer analysis of the possible application of organizational theory to the basic course as a way of identifying a conceptual framework for basic course research and problem solving. Likewise, the need

for BCDs to "direct" or "lead" that subsystem implies a focus on those variables that enhance the BCDs' ability to function.

The purposes of this paper are both applied and theoretical. First, we describe one organizational perspective, transformational leadership, and present ways this approach can alter how BCDs both define their position descriptions and function in those positions. Then, to further research on basic course leadership, we identify variables that could be investigated relative to the adoption of transformational principles by basic course "leaders."

## APPLICATION OF GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY TO THE BASIC COURSE

According to Shockley-zalabak, an organization is a "dynamic system in which individuals engage in collective efforts for goal accomplishment" (1991, p. 30). As dynamic systems, organizations continually must adapt to changing environments. This adaptation process is the result of an organization's ability to create and exchange meaning through communication in an effort to manage environmental uncertainty. Understanding what an organization stands for and how it works requires an understanding of the process of organizational communication. Thus, we are interested in looking at the communicative behaviors of organizational participants, the effects of their behaviors and how those behaviors are interpreted by others.

Pace and Faules (1989) suggest that how one defines an organization is determined by one's point of view. One possible point of view, the *objective* approach, suggests that an organization is a tangible system with definite boundaries. Sometimes referred to as the *container* view, this approach implies that organizations are concrete structures that actually hold people, relationships, and goals. Objective approaches emphasize the importance of the environment (e.g.,

job title, organizational chart, duties and responsibilities) as a determining factor in explaining an individual's behavior. The *subjective* approach, on the other hand, places humans in a more active and creative role. Organizations are viewed as social collectives in which people act and interact. Humans do not simply exist within the organizational system, but they create the organization. Advocates of a subjective point of view recognize that an important part of organizational behavior is the way in which organizational members create their environment and how that environment, then, affects their subsequent behavior (Weick, 1979).

While these perspectives typically define differing theoretical approaches to research in organizations, they also suggest pragmatic applications for the basic course. For example, department chairs who take an objective view of the department/organization may not realize that they tend to see roles in the organization positionally and tend to expect compliance from subordinates based on what they perceive to be legitimate power. Should these department chairs request a format change for the basic course from self-contained sections to mass lecture, they would expect the BCD to make the change — period. BCDs who share this objective viewpoint may have little problem complying: A duty of a BCD is to follow orders from above. However, BCDs who take a subjective approach may resist such change until they can assess possible effects on the instructors and students. Change would come more slowly with such BCDs; only after input is sought from all involved would these directors be comfortable with a drastic format switch. Thus, conflict is likely between chairs who take an objective view and BCDs who work from a subjective perspective. Similarly, conflict based on differing perspectives could occur between BCDs and instructors or other faculty, between instructors and students, and in a variety of other relationships associated with a basic course.

Whenever such conflicts occur at the interfaces in the system, the potential for successful attainment of system goals is

jeopardized. Thus, identification of variables that maximize successful organizational development and change are critical for enhancing organizational behavior. This statement should be no less true for basic courses: identification of some critical variables in achieving organizational success in the basic course will be discussed later in this paper.

Other organizational concepts useful for application to the basic course are transformation and vision. In a successful organization, at least two things must happen. First, someone must demonstrate the ability to move the operation of that organization toward a desired future state (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This desired effect comes about by *transforming others,* by lifting them to higher levels of performance consistent with both the values and the vision, or mental image, of the organization and the role it is to play in the environment in which it functions. This process fits with the subjective view of organizations in that the mechanism for transforming others is tied to the negotiating, constructing, and sharing of meaning. Second, steps must be taken to ensure consistency of this vision at the various levels of the organizational hierarchy. The more consistent the vision among the various components of the organizational system, the more effectively that system can function overall (Tichy & Devanna, 1986; Tichy & Ulrich. 1984). This assumption fits with the subjective approach in that visions can be developed and maintained transactionally.

Again, these theoretical notions have practical applicability. A BCD frequently must transform new instructors (even inexperienced new graduate teaching assistants) into prepared, knowledgeable, and credible classroom teachers. As the instructors begin to teach, the BCD's vision of them may be of individuals who are prepared, knowledgeable and credible (probably due to training), but the BCD's immediate task requires helping the instructors to see themselves as prepared, knowledgeable, and credible. The BCD must work with these people to help them share the vision: the process of transformation that has taken place or is taking place. Then,

the BCD must ensure that this vision is consistent at various levels in the hierarchy. Suppose, for example, that the dean of the college believes that graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should not be allowed to teach autonomous sections of the course. The BCD must negotiate with the dean to arrive at a shared vision, perhaps by detailing the elaborate preparation that the TAs will receive prior to entering the classroom, by sharing copies of the handbook that will be used to train TAs, and by negotiating strategies for dealing with TAs who are not prepared to teach on their own. Thus, working toward congruence of vision is a persuasive, communicative process that involves negotiating meanings.

The ability to transform others and to transact with others to negotiate a shared vision successfully can differentiate between effective and ineffective BCDs. The effective BCD is a better "leader" than the ineffective one. Thus, leadership is an important concept for understanding the role and function of the BCD in the academic organization called the basic course and so will be analyzed more thoroughly in the next section.

# APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY TO THE BASIC COURSE

## *The Functional Perspective*

Historically, leadership has been studied in a variety of ways, depending on the researchers' conceptualization of leadership and choice of methodology. Current thinking tends to favor a functional approach because of its obvious focus on communication as central to leadership ability. In a functional approach, emphasis is not placed on specific abilities and skills of the individual in the leadership role, nor is the focus of research on environmental factors and their impact on

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leadership behavior. Instead, a functional approach helps us understand leadership success by examining the communicative behaviors that must be performed by the leader (and other group members) for the group to move toward a desired future state. Leadership is perceived as essentially a relationship between two or more people who rely on communication to develop and sustain relationships. In addition, communication helps individuals identify goals and opportunities, establish rules, exchange information, and generate and manage change. Research from a functional perspective on managerial effectiveness and perceptions of effectiveness describe communication competence as a central element in measuring a leader's success (Argyris, 1962; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Drucker, 1966). A functional approach, then, examines the communicative behavior of individuals as a means of assessing leadership effectiveness.

Within the past fifteen years, a transformational theory of leadership has emerged as a means of studying leadership from a functional approach. This theory of leadership holds considerable promise for useful application to the basic course.

## *Transformational Theory of Leadership*

Although transformational leadership has been studied in a variety of ways by a variety of researchers, the results of those investigations point to some clear dimensions of leadership. A *transformational theory of leadership* views leadership as a process, not as a set of discrete acts. Burns (1978) described leadership as "a stream of evolving interrelationships in which leaders are continuously evoking motivational responses from followers and modifying their behavior as they meet responsiveness or resistance, in a ceaseless process of flow and counterflow" (p. 440). At the same time. Leaders and followers, acting together with different levels of motivations, power potential, and skills, "raise one another to higher levels

of morality and motivation" (p. 20) in pursuit of a common goal.

Increasing others' awareness about issues of consequence occurs when an individual is guided by a deeply held personal value system (Bass, 1985). Burns refers to such a value system as end values. The expression of end values enables transformative leaders to unite followers as well as change their goals and beliefs (Burns, 1978). When followers adopt these end values as their own, a change in perspective, attitudes, beliefs, and goals occurs. As a result, transformative leaders motivate followers to accept more challenging goals and to achieve higher levels of performance than would otherwise be thought possible. Thus, a principal theme of transformational leadership is "lifting people into their better selves" (Hitt, 1988, p. 9).

Transformative leaders engage in four primary activities: (a) clarification of the organization's value system (Hitt, 1988; Peters & Waterman, 1982), (b) creation of a vision, (c) mobilization of commitment, and (d) institutionalization of change (Tichy & Ulrich, 1984). Every organization is guided by certain *beliefs or values*. The first step effective transformative leaders take, then, is to highlight the major values of the particular organization. Transformative leaders (a) articulate the value system of the organization, (b) ensure a sense of congruence between daily beliefs (situational factors that affect rules and feelings about everyday behavior) and guiding beliefs (the fundamental, principle foundations of the organization), and (c) identify critical success factors as a means of identifying specific areas that will ensure organizational effectiveness in light of the values. An organization may be governed by one or two guiding beliefs or by a complex structure of such beliefs. Examples of guiding beliefs include the following: innovation, teamwork, growth, profitability, longevity, prestige, impartiality, benefit to humanity, quality, integrity, and corporate citizenship, among others. An organization based on a profit motive will have different guiding

beliefs and, consequently, different daily beliefs, than one which is motivated by a desire to self-actualize employees or build a sense of a corporate family. A typical college or university would espouse guiding beliefs such as the following: tolerance, impartiality, excellence, integrity, intellectual challenge, benefit to humanity, and quality.

Second, transformational leaders *create a vision* which gives direction to the organization while being congruent with the leader's and the organization's mission. This vision, which is described in detail later, allows organizational members to see the organization's guiding beliefs in action and to anticipate the effects of proposed changes on the organization.

The third step is for transformative leaders to use their communicative ability to *mobilize* employees to accept and work toward achieving the new vision. According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), " a vision cannot be established in an organization by edict, or by the exercise of power or coercion. It is more an act of persuasion, of creating an enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to a vision because it is right for the times, right for the organization, and right for the people working in it" (p. 107). This mobilization step might be considered a form of motivating and/or empowering others in the system to work toward the shared vision. When the vision becomes one that they accept and value, moving them toward the desired change becomes easier.

The fourth step of transformational leadership is the *institutionalization* of change. New patterns of behaviors, decision-making processes, and means of communication must be adopted at every level of the organization. It is not enough for employees in one segment of the organization to adopt the change, because their activities necessarily affect every other component of the organizational system. Effective leadership involves envisioning how change will affect all areas of the organization and paving the way for the change to become a way of life at all levels of the hierarchy.

This four-step process easily applies to the basic course. For example, when the BCD at the authors' institution decided to convert the basic course from a mass lecture/lab recitation model to a Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) model, the first step was to assess the attitudes and values related to PSI models, both inside and outside of the department, and to ensure that incorporation of this model would not conflict with institutional guiding beliefs. In this case, several courses in other departments were being taught using PSI, suggesting institutional acceptance for such a model. Clearly, such courses would not have passed through the curricular process had there been doubts about the degree to which such a model supports university guiding beliefs. Inside the department, faculty expressed skepticism about PSI but willingness to experiment with new ideas, based on guiding beliefs in the value of innovation and in the importance of supporting one's colleagues. Having established that such a model would not conflict with prevailing values, the second step was to work out the details of the "vision." How would the new sections of the basic course function? How would they be structured and organized? How would staff be trained and who would train them? How would this new model be an improvement over the current system of delivery of instruction? Once the vision had been formulated and articulated, the BCD was able to persuade faculty to teach using the new system for a limited number of semesters: the commitment phase. As evidence began to accumulate (through program evaluation) that suggested superiority of the new model, these individuals began to recruit others into the program and they actively campaigned for departmental support for the model: the beginning of the institutionalization phase. Thus, transformational leadership provided for a smooth transition from a model that had been in place for many years to a new model that. in many ways, was a dramatic (and drastic) change.

# *Transformational Leadership Variables: Vision and Congruence of Vision*

The key variable here is not the magnitude of the change but, rather, the degree to which the purpose and direction of that change are clearly articulated and deeply felt: the degree to which the "vision" is clear. Littky and Fried (1988) state "the process of real change begins with the leadership of one or more people who have deeply-felt vision — call it a passionate vision" (p. 5). All studies seem to indicate that a transformative leader has the ability to create a vision and that developing a shared vision is central to organizational success. Consequently. this concept deserves careful scrutiny for BCDs, who function within a deeply embedded group of people who potentially do not share an even remotely similar vision of the role, function, and importance of the basic course.

What is vision? Shieve and Shoenheit (1987) described a vision as a "blueprint of a desired state .... an image of a preferred condition that we work to achieve in the future" (p. 94). In 1956, Appley suggested that the ability to create a clear mental picture, and the capacity to transfer that image to the minds of others, are critical to increasing the achievement and recognition of some executives. Moreover, Hitt (1988) contended that formulating a clear vision of a desired future may be the most important leadership function. Why is the development of a vision so vital to the success of an organization? It is because it provides all levels of the organization with a clear sense of purpose and direction toward a desired future state. The presence of a clear vision offers a number of practical benefits to the organization as a whole, as well as to individual group members.

According to Hitt (1988), a clear vision assists leaders in carrying out the basic functions of management. Vision aids in (a) planning, (b) organizing, (c) staffing and development, (d) directing and leading, and (e) evaluating and controlling. First, a clear vision aids in planning; it provides a road map

for getting from the organization's current state to its desired future state. Organizations with a clear vision are better equipped to establish goals, objectives, and priorities for the coming year. For example, BCDs who anticipate changes in enrollment in the basic course, who keep up-to-date on innovative technologies that might be incorporated into the course, who regularly update course content, and who keep abreast of pedagogical innovations will be more effective than those who never question the status quo. Second, a clear vision aids in the development of an organizational structure that identifies roles and responsibilities and promotes decision making consistent with the organization's mission. In the basic course, this vision would entail writing job descriptions for instructors and assistant directors, establishing means of organizing and disseminating information, and creating resources for the basic course. Third, a clear vision aids in candidate selection and promotion as well as training and development programs. Here, the vision allows BCDs to prepare teaching staff to do their most effective job in the classroom, perhaps through training and supervision. Fourth, a clear vision satisfies a basic need of group members by identifying where the organization is going, how the organization plans to get there, and the role each individual is expected to play. This information acts as a motivational force for group members and provides the necessary information to guide decisions and behaviors. For BCDs, this function entails group team-building and developing effective ways for group members to work together to accomplish group goals. Fifth, and finally, a clear vision provides a measure against which performance can be evaluated and necessary changes can be made. For BCDs, the vision presents the desired end state and allows for evaluation of the course in relation to that ideal. If the vision entails increasing satisfaction with the course, then increased enrollments, improved course evaluations, and higher overall instructor satisfaction all may indicate movement toward that goal.

In their study of transformative leaders, Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that when the organization has a clear sense of its purpose, direction and desired future state and when this vision is widely shared, individuals are able to identify their respective roles in the organization and in society. Knowing the organization's central purpose and objectives helps people determine what is and is not important, thus achieving consistency with organizational goals. In turn, a clear vision adds meaningfulness to work and thus appeals to a fundamental human need to be important, to feel useful, and to belong to a worthwhile enterprise.

Vision, then, may be a key variable in predicting the success or failure of a BCD. In many cases, a new BCD will be hired into an environment in which a vision is known, if not articulated. Perhaps the faculty in the department are committed to keeping class size small, content rigorous, and instruction personalized in the basic course. As a consequence, the vision may result in recruitment of a highly qualified BCD who is given considerable support and funding to run the course. Perhaps, on the other hand, the faculty see the basic course as a money-draining aspect of their program and not really central to the function of the department. In that case the vision may involve keeping the course as inexpensive and cost-efficient as possible. When a new BCD enters either environment, whether recruited to fit that job description or volunteered into the position as the person with lowest seniority in the department, that individual may feel the need to assume a leadership role. If that BCD's vision of how the basic course should run includes an expectation that TAs should be hired to facilitate a mass lecture of 1500 students, the incongruence between that vision and the expectations set forth in the first department may make for many painful years of impossible negotiations. Even if the disparity between the department's vision and the BCD's vision is not that large, subtle resistance in the system may subvert the BCD's attempts to institute such a change. In contrast, the same

BCD may function extremely well in the second environment, in which the two visions of how the course should be run and the purpose it should serve are more congruent.

Of course, congruence of vision is not limited to the relationship between the department (e.g., chair/head and faculty) and the BCD. Instructors in the course will have an image of how the basic course should function, what should be taught, what should be accomplished, and what their role should be as basic course instructors. These expectations form a sort of vision that is brought to the course by those teaching personnel. For TAs who hope to function as friends with their students and who see the basic course as a comfortable sanctuary where freshmen can learn about themselves and about their capabilities, working with a BCD who sees the basic course as something that must be strictly standardized and rule-based may prove to be an impossible challenge. While the TAs and the BCD may feud over what they perceive to be differences in attitudes toward students, the true underlying cause may be a broader orientation to the role of the basic course in the department: the vision.

This same logic carries over to the instructor-student relationship, as well. As an instructor, it may be the TA's role to lead the students to accept the vision behind the course and work toward accomplishing those goals. For a skills-based basic course in public speaking, the vision may include building a comfortable classroom climate so that students will feel relaxed in front of their peers. Some students may resist this goal, in part because they resist the entire vision that places them at the podium. Similarly, an instructor may visualize the classroom as an environment in which students actively discuss ideas, challenge each other, and arrive at new understandings together. For students who see learning as something that happens while sitting quietly in the back of the classroom, this vision may be too incongruent to make completion of the course possible.

Of course, as detailed previously, it is possible to change the existing vision or create a new vision. However, a necessary step in doing either is the ability to identify existing visions. Therefore, whether it be seeking situations with congruence of perception of the basic course or changing/creating commonalities of perceptions, the concept of vision may be central to the effectiveness of a BCD.

Thus, it is clear that leadership theory relates to the role of BCD. BCDs function in organizational environments in which they are expected to assume leadership roles. When the environment supports their vision, getting commitment and moving people to accomplish the desired goals may be easy. When their vision is incongruent with that of their department chairs/heads, colleagues, teaching staff (tenure-track faculty, temporary instructors, and/or TAs), and the students enrolled in that basic course, demonstrating leadership may be a formidable challenge. In either case, implementation of transformational leadership requires a variety of skills or competencies. Although the labels and degree of specificity differ somewhat from one study to the next, the commonalties across studies suggest strong support for this approach.

## *Transformational Leadership Competencies*

In 1985, Bennis and Nanus conducted a five-year study with 90 effective leaders, including 60 corporate leaders and 30 leaders of public-sector organizations in an effort to understand what successful leaders had in common. Effective leadership (transformational leadership) was defined as having the ability to "move organizations from current to future states, create visions of potential opportunities for organizations, instill within employees commitment to change and instill new cultures and strategies in organizations that mobilize and focus energy sources" (p. 17). Four common themes, or competencies, emerged as prevalent in the way all 90 leaders reshaped organizational practices to adapt to envi-

ronmental changes and how they empowered people with the confidence and ability to achieve new things.

The first leadership competency is the *management of attention:* the ability to draw others to them by communicating an extraordinary focus of commitment. Transformative leaders manage attention through the creation of a compelling vision that leads others to a desired outcome or goal. This skill may be difficult for many BCDs to attain, because many BCDs do not seek out the job, they are placed into it. Developing a passionate vision that will attract subordinates is difficult to manage when the leader's enthusiasm for the task is fairly low. Even BCDs who truly surge with pride over their courses may not realize that communicating that commitment to others is central to effective directing/leading. Whether the BCD's passion for the vision of the basic course is natural or has to be more "forced," the effective transformative leader must create an excitement about the worth of the BCD's vision of the course in order to get others to commit time and energy to this vision.

The second competency of effective leaders is *management of meaning* through communication. Organizational success depends upon the existence of shared meaning and interpretations of events at all levels in the organization. A shared interpretation of organizational events leads to coordinated action; group members speak and act in a manner that is consistent with organizational values and philosophy. Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that excellent leaders were concerned not only with what should be done but with how to develop messages that will convey the vision. Because the leader's goal is not merely explanation or clarification but the creation of meaning, transformative leaders used metaphors, models, and analogies as a way of making the meaning clear and tangible. Clearly, the management of meaning is central to being an effective BCD. "Selling" the basic course is a large part of the BCDs' and the course instructors' task, and helping course instructors see the direct application of this course to stu-

dents' lives may be one way to attain that goal. Metaphors like "the heart of the department offerings," "the foundation of the discipline" and "the starting block" are all common phrases that help to convey the centrality of the basic course's position in the department.

Essential to all organizations, *management of trust* is the third leadership competency possessed by transformative leaders. *Trust* as a strategy is difficult to define. Bennis and Nanus (1985) described trust as the "glue that maintains organizational integrity" (p. 44). The leaders in the Bennis and Nanus study generated and sustained followers' trust by exemplifying predictability, constancy. congruity between actions and words, and reliability. BCDs could manage trust by providing constructive feedback after observations, by showing support for course instructors, by representing their interests fairly in the department, and by setting standards that provide for equal treatment of everyone involved with the course.

Finally, the fourth competency possessed by transformative leaders is *management of self*. The leaders in Bennis' and Nanus' study reported that understanding one's strengths and weaknesses is critical to effective leadership. They did not dwell on mistakes, but focused on a willingness to take risks and accept losses. They talked about commitment, consistency, and challenge. Above all, they talked about leaders as perpetual learners. These transformative leaders regarded themselves as "stretching," "growing," and "breaking new ground." In the management of self, learning is viewed as indispensable in today's rapidly changing environment. BCDs who recognize the need for incorporation of new materials into the course, who seek out self-improvement opportunities, who listen nondefensively to feedback from TAs and other course instructors probably would be considered competent in their ability to manage self. BCDs who have used the same text for many years, whose standardized courses persist without

much change, and who surround themselves with people who will comply without question may not rank high on this skill.

In an effort similar to Bennis and Nanus, Tichy and Devanna (1986) interviewed twelve CEOs from a variety of organizations. The purpose of this study was to describe the behaviors of leaders faced with transforming organizations to adapt successfully to a changing and increasingly competitive environment. which certainly could be a description of a college or university campus in the 1990s. Based on their findings, Tichy and Devanna developed a four-stage process that characterizes the behaviors of transformative leaders. First, transformative leaders *recognize the need for change* (e.g., they see that the current policy of not hiring TAs is creating problems for the department). Second, transformative leaders *facilitate a transitional process* by helping people accept the need for change and increasing followers' self confidence and optimism about making a successful transition (e.g., BCDs may collect data that reinforce the assertion that TAs are good teachers, they may give current TAs a "pep talk" about their ability to teach, etc.). Third, with the assistance of other organizational members, transformative leaders *create a vision of a desired future state* (e.g., BCDs may map out a course description that will make it clear that the incorporation of TAs as instructors will be "an exciting challenge," "a big step forward," and other positive metaphors). Finally, change is institutionalized by *developing a new coalition of people.* both inside and outside the organization, who are committed to the vision (e.g., BCDs may assess the degree to which other faculty support the incorporation of TAs into the basic course and muster their support to help with the transition). During periods of organizational change an analysis should be made to determine whose commitment is necessary. Leaders depend upon their network of relationships with key people in the organization. As a result, the network may need to be expanded to include other individuals critical in forming and implementing policies and strategies. Similarly, leaders

may have to replace individuals in key positions with others who have the skills and dedication necessary to implement change successfully.

In a similar study, data collected from participants in an international program in management, representing some 10 or 12 different cultures, led Hitt (1988) to the development of a model of effective leadership. With the leader as a "change agent" at the core, transformative leaders were defined as exhibiting eight basic functions of leadership. First, leaders *create a vision* of a desired future state and then translate the vision to the minds of others. Second, leaders *develop a team* of individuals who share responsibility for achieving the group's goals. Third, transformative leaders *clarify organizational values* and communicate those values through words and actions. Fourth, effective leaders develop a strategy for moving a group from its present position toward the vision, called *positioning*. Fifth, leaders create a common understanding of the vision through effective *communication*. Sixth, transformative leaders *empower* their people by increasing their capabilities for doing or accomplishing something. *Coaching*, helping others develop skills necessary for achieving excellence, is the seventh function. Eighth, and finally, transformative leaders exhibit a *measuring* function through the identification of critical success factors associated with the group's operation and gauging progress on the basis of these factors. In other words, successful leaders collect feedback information and use that feedback to assess progress toward the vision. The example about shifting from temporary faculty to TAs in the basic course is further expanded by this perspective. The BCD first creates a vision that describes the positive aspects of the new basic course, perhaps drawing parallels between the envisioned improvements and other "model" basic courses (vision creation). Then, the BCD identifies those faculty who support the change and works with them to develop an action plan that will be acceptable to more resistant colleagues and/or administrators (team develop-

ment). This action plan should be fully articulated and clearly related to organizational values and goals so that the advantages of the change are clear (values clarification). Next, the BCD creates a "game plan" for moving toward the new program: a new syllabus that incorporates TA instructors, a training program for helping TAs understand the demands of their new tasks, a mentoring system to provide support for the new TAs, a strategy for observing and critiquing TA teaching, and so on (positioning). Thus, the vision is communicated to others in the system; in the process, input is solicited which helps others see themselves as instrumental in incorporating this change (communication). The BCD further reinforces the movement toward change by helping TAs and others involved see themselves as capable of making the change and by helping them to develop whatever new skills might be needed, perhaps through training programs (empowering and coaching). Finally, the effective BCD establishes criteria for evaluating the change and monitors the group's progress toward (or away from) the desired outcomes (measuring).

Research by Bennis and Nanus (1985), Tichy and Devanna (1986), and Hitt (1988) provides a first step toward a better understanding of how transformative leaders institutionalize change within an organizational system. In general, transformative leaders recognize the need for change, formulate a vision, develop a commitment to the vision among followers, implement strategies to accomplish the vision, and implant new values and assumptions into the culture of the organization.

Clearly, there are many variables to consider when approaching leadership from a transformational perspective. Also evident is the consistency among the various typologies just described, suggesting validity of the approach. The applications to change in the basic course are both interesting and direct.

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It should be noted that change in the basic course doesn't have to be on a large scale. BCDs as leaders could engage in various types of change: developing ways to better train TAs, switching to alternative pedagogical models for delivering instruction in the basic course (e.g., changing textbooks, adopting the Personalized System of Instruction, changing from self-contained sections to a lecture-recitation model, altering course assignments). Simply adapting to the changes imposed from the outside environment (e.g., budget cuts, expectations for the course specified by the institution itself, integration of various technologies into instruction) may force a BCD to deal with considerable change.

Having established the linkages between organizational and leadership theories and applications in the basic course, we turn now to a compilation of variables that may prove important for increasing our understanding of this important instructional context. Our discussion focuses on functional variables only, because these are the variables that relate to a transformational view of leadership in the basic course.

## APPLICATION OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH TO RESEARCH IN THE BASIC COURSE

Table 1 presents a list of functional variables related to the basic course. These variables refer to the relational and communication aspects of basic course leadership: relationships with others in the institutional hierarchy, clarity and feasibility of the basic course vision, leadership characteristics of the BCD, relationship of course policies/procedures to the broader institutional vision, and congruence of the BCD's vision with visions held by others in the institution (basic course instructors, departmental faculty, the department chair/head, other faculty, other administrators, and students). The functional variables describe the thinking. acting and interacting components of being a BCD and the degree to

Table 1
Functional Variables Relevant
to Leadership in the Basic Course

FUNCTIONAL VARIABLES

<u>Relationships:</u>

The basic course director's relationship with...

    ... the department chair/head
    ... faculty teaching the basic course, if applicable
    ... faculty not teaching the basic course
    ... TAs teaching the basic course, if applicable
    ... part-time faculty teaching the course
    ... undergraduate facilitators in the basic course, if applicable
    ... students enrolled in the course
    ... people outside of the department

       the dean of the school/college
       the dean of the graduate school, if applicable
       the provost
       other administrators
       the president of the institution
       faculty in other departments
       trustees
       alumni
       parents

<u>The BCD's Vision for the Basic Course</u>

Clarity of the BCD's vision

Feasibility of the BCD's vision

Leadership characteristics of the BCD
    ability to manage attention
    ability to manage meaning
    ability to manage trust
    ability to manage self
    ability to recognize a need for change

ability to facilitate a transitional process

ability to visualize a future state

ability to position basic course within the institution and nation wide

ability to develop a coalition of supporters/team-building

ability to clarify organizational values

ability to help others develop skills

ability to mesh goals with follower's needs/motivations ability to raise followers' levels of consciousness

ability to help followers transcend self-interests

ability to help followers recognize and fulfill personal needs

ability to empower others

ability to evaluate progress toward and away from goals

Relationship of course policies/procedures to the vision

Congruence of the BCD's vision...

...with that of the institution's various administrators

...with that of the dean of the school/college

...with that of the department chair/head

...with that of other departmental faculty

...with that of the various people teaching the basic course:

other tenure-track faculty

part time faculty

graduate teaching assistants

undergraduate teaching assistants

...with students enrolled in the course

...with faculty outside of the department whose students are served by the basic course

which the BCD's actions are supported or resisted by others in the institutional system.

These variables provide a basis from which those of us interested in basic course research may draw a wealth of research questions: What sorts of relationships between the BCD and other faculty facilitate change? What sorts of rela-

tionships subvert such change attempts? What happens when the BCD's vision is incongruent with that of the other faculty in the department? What happens when the BCD's vision is incongruent with that held by the basic course instructors? What communication strategies work best in such incongruent situations? Which leadership characteristics seem most important for BCDs? Which are easiest to achieve? Which are most elusive? The list goes on and on.

Clearly a laundry list of variables cannot create more significant, more applicable, or more far-reaching research in the basic course. What this list can do is begin to identify the complexity that underlies any systems analysis and point to some areas in which we can begin to apply transformational leadership theory to the basic course. We know that leadership is important in organizations. We know that BCDs are in a position to be leaders. What we do not yet know is how to advise BCDs to build upon and expand their leadership abilities, to negotiate their environments to bring others' visions into line with their own, and to promote support for the ever-changing process that we call "directing the basic course." Here is a place to start that learning/intervention process; steps BCDs can take as effective transformative leaders is a future goal to which basic course researchers/educators should aspire.

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