Scholars Showcase 2018: Innovations in Leadership and Learning

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The Brain as CEO: Teaching Neuroleadership

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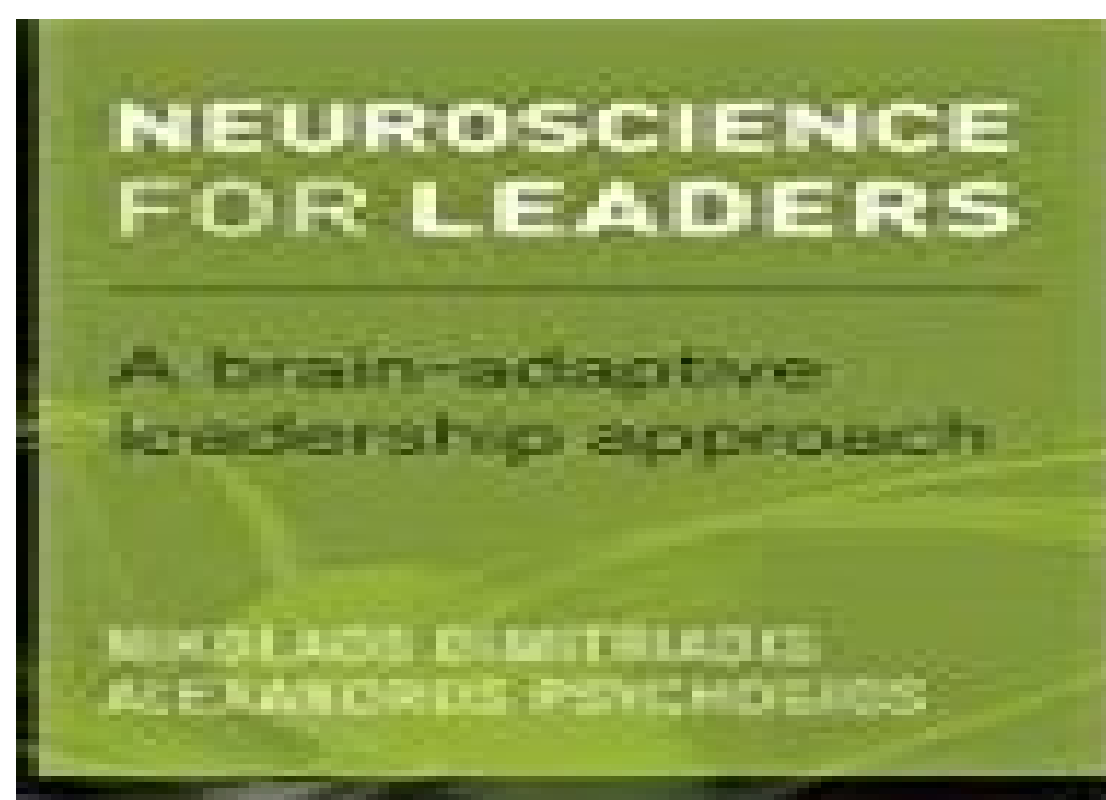
NEUROSCIENCE FOR LEADERS
A brain-adaptive leadership approach

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FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY
SCHOLARS SHOWCASE
INNOVATIONS IN LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

Abstract

Recent advances in the brain sciences have opened a window of opportunity for organizational leadership. For example, neuroscientists have determined that the prefrontal cortex of the brain is closely associated with the highest orders of human functioning such as planning, decision-making, control of attention and self-monitoring. This area of grey matter has also become a vivid metaphor for the primary executive or leadership role in business, the Chief Executive Officer or CEO. The burgeoning discipline of Neuroleadership attempts to apply the findings of relevant brain research to the field of leadership studies. A primary educational challenge is how to best translate the rapidly expanding neuroscience research findings into form and substance that can improve the performance of live human leaders in complex organizational settings. The Managerial Psychology course in Franklin University's MS in Business Psychology program explores the new Neuroleadership field and offers its students insights, tools, and techniques for immediate application.

Background

Traditional leadership education has variously focused on traits, behaviors, environmental influences, attitudes, interpersonal styles or character. At different times it has advocated one-best-way methods, contingency approaches, or individual values. The ongoing argument among practitioners has been whether leadership can even be taught al all. Modern leadership research based on evolutionary psychology and brain science holds promise to transcend the theory-practice debate.

Method

The learning process involves the use of videos, selected readings, review of graphic models, leadership assessments, self- testing of critical skills, written summary papers, response sharing, and instructor-led application discussion. The neuroleadership concept is first introduced in PSYC 601-Introduction to Business Psychology. and reinforced in PSYC 603-Managerial Psychology.

Example Assignments

4-2: Orientation to Neuroleadership

Purpose
•To triangulate three different expert perspectives on the field of Neuroleadership.

Action Items
1.View the video, Robert Edgar Piret: Neuroscience and Leadership Behavior at http://www.escpeurope.eu/media-news/media-press-room/escp-europe-videos/executive-mba-videos/faculty/robert-edgar-piret-neuroscience-and-leadership-behaviour/.
2.View the video, Neuroscience of Leadership (David Rock) at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5QtTJc6-38.
3.View the Kristen Hansen video, Neuroleadership presentation to Westpac at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I4RhvBtsZM.
4.Prepare a one-to-two page paper that:
•Lists the most memorable 2-3 key points about Neuroleadership from each of the videos
•Indicates what they appear to have in common
•Describes any notable differences
•States in your own words what you think Neuroleadership is and how it might differ from traditional management

4-3 Leadership Brains

Purpose
•To differentiate critical elements of brain-based leadership.

Action Items
1.View the video "Learning about the brain changes everything" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDIyxxayNig.
2.Read the article "Building Leaders in the 21st Century: Brains 3.0" by Ann Herrmann-Nehdi at http://www.hbdi.com/brainbytes/extras/HI_Leadersinthe21stCenturyHermannNehdi.pdf.
3.Using the graphic model at the top of page 6 of the article, check the elements in each of the colored boxes that you think will be relevant to your personal success as an organizational leader.
4.Prepare a one-page paper that:
•Notes the similarities and the differences between the video and the article.
•Discusses why or why not it is important for a leader to know about the human brain.
•Describes what you think the selected graphic elements say about you as a leader.
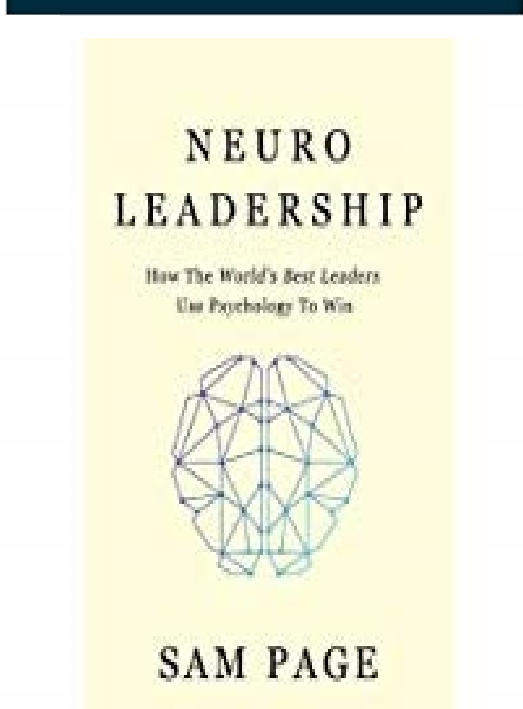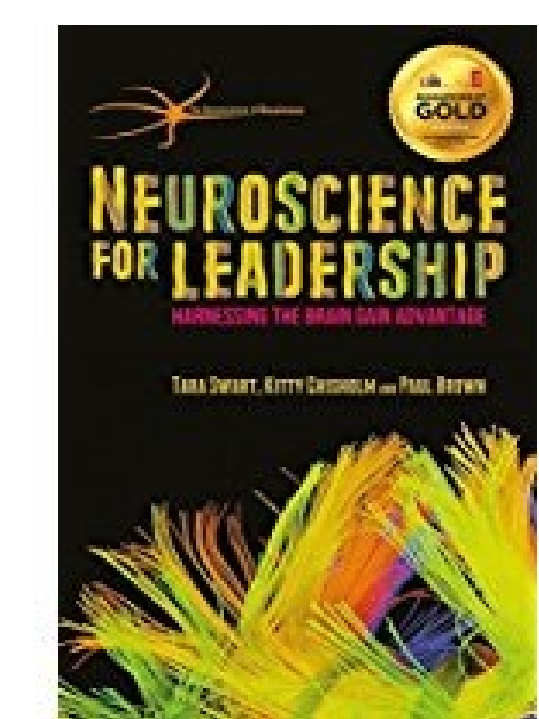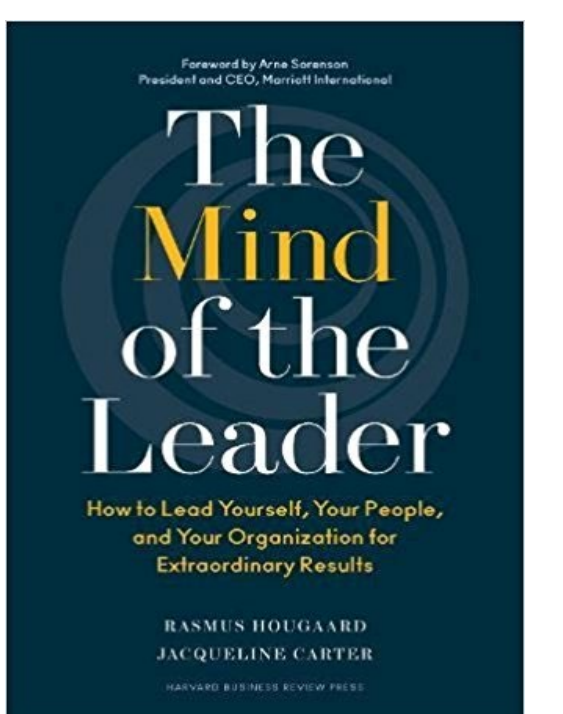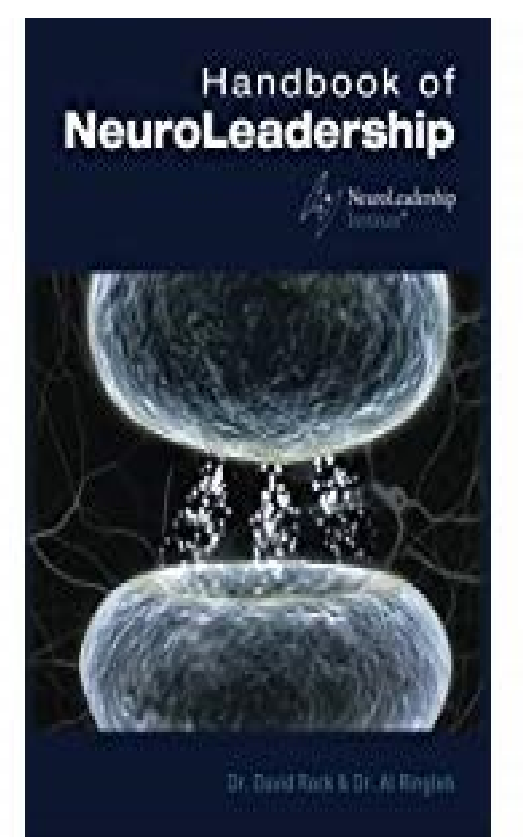
4-4: Brain Adaptive Leadership Assessment

Purpose
•To link critical management skills with Brain Adaptive Leadership.
Action Items
1.Review the four critical skills from a recent American Management Association survey at http://playbook.amanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2012-Critical-Skills-Survey-pdf.pdf.
2.Review the summaries in Dimitraidis and Psychogios (2016) of the Four Pillars of the Brain Adaptive Leadership model (Pillar One, pages 76-77; Pillar Two, pages 127-128; Pillar Three, page 160; and Pillar Four, pages 216-217).
3.Prepare a two-page paper that;
•Identifies possible connections between Action Items 1 and 2 above
•Describes the skills or pillars that seem to be most important to the leadership in your current organization
•Notes which of the skills or pillars you think will be most important to your own future professional success and why you think so

Resources

Handbook of NeuroLeadership

The Mind of the Leader

NEUROSCIENCE FOR LEADERSHIP

NEURO LEADERSHIP
SAM PAGE

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