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## Developing ITA Proficiency Using Leadership Training Techniques

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TESOL 2008

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## Step Ladder Theory Of Groups

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### Who am I?

- Who am I in this group ?
- What influence will I have?
- How will people treat me?
- Will people listen to me?
- In leadership studies, it has been determined that once we feel secure about who we are then we are able to trust others.

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### Who am I?

- Attitude handout
- Provide recording of Attitude passage
- Have students mark off stress and intonation
- Practice passage in pairs
- For discussion, how does one's attitude when working in a group effect reaching team goals?

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### Who are we?

- When working with a team, what has to happen in the group to allow you to feel "safe"?
- What do others have to do?
- What do you have to do?
- In pairs, have students discuss rules of citizenship.

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### Who am I and who are you?

- Preferences handout
  - Students answer individually
  - Share answers with a partner
  - Discuss why you answered the questions the way you did
- Group Discussion: What does it mean to you being a student, colleague, TA, advisee, PhD candidate?

Regarding:

- Learning styles/Teaching styles
- Giving feedback
- Communicating learning goals

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### Group Identity: Who are we?

Group identity can be created by the group (i.e. assigned to be a Physics TA)

- How do you define yourselves? What makes you a group?

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### Goals: What's our task?


Goals of the group

- What can we do to work together?
- How much time are we willing to put into working together?
- How do we create/maintain buy in?

For example,

- grade together?
- share resources and activities?


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### Vision: Where are we going?

- Determine vision
  - Where are we going? Why do we want to do this? Why would we want to invest time in the group?

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### Scenario 1

- You are all in an ITA class and you must decide at the beginning of the semester your group's identity.
- What are your goals and how are you going to get there?

Step Ladder Theory of Groups handout

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### Scenario 2

- You have a student that is consistently late for class and it is causing a disruption. You must talk to him/her about it.

Five Keys Actions/Constructive Feedback handout

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### Scenario 3

- Your TA group has noticed that students have been cheating on homework. You all decide you should have a meeting to determine what to do. You are asked to be the facilitator.

Principles for the Facilitator handout

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### Scenario 4

- You have gotten negative feedback from your students about your teaching on your mid-semester evaluations. What will you do for the rest of the semester to check in with your students?

Data Collection/Discussion Methods and Techniques handout

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### Scenario 5

- You're teaching Economics and your students tell you that they need more concrete examples/practice. Using the list of activities on this sheet, describe some activities that might be done in or out of class to help them.

Data Collection/Discussion Methods and Techniques handout

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### Next Step

Have students work in pairs to discuss:

- What are the barriers/obstacles to being an effective leader?
- What are the causes of these barriers with regard to being an effective leader?

Barriers to Effective Leadership handout

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### Closing Thought

Teach, teach, and teach.

In my view, the most valuable manifestation of leadership behavior is when a leader continuously takes the initiative to unselfishly convey knowledge to those in his or her sphere of influence; facilitates their internalization of such knowledge; and creates a passionate environment for continuous improvement where the application of such knowledge is approached with a revolutionary spirit.

Louis Laguardia, Ph.D. NYU Research and Measurement


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### Resources

- All handouts are from Cornell University Leadership Development Program handbook
- Icebreakers  
<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html>
- Cornell Team Dynamics Packet  
<http://edudevday.outreach.cornell.edu/Docs/A032-Presentation.pdf>
- Kinlaw, D. Handbook of Leadership Training Activities : 50 One-Hour Designs

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<http://clt.cornell.edu/campus/itadp/index.html>

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# Attitude

by Charles Swindoll

*"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skills. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for the day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitudes."*

# PREFERENCES

## Are you ...

More like a clothesline \_\_\_ or a kite string \_\_\_?

More likely to walk on thin ice \_\_\_ or to tiptoe through the tulips \_\_\_?

More like a hotel \_\_\_ or a motel \_\_\_?

More red \_\_\_ or green \_\_\_?

More like a singer \_\_\_ or a dancer \_\_\_?

More of a loner \_\_\_ or a grouper \_\_\_?

More like a rose \_\_\_ or a daisy \_\_\_?

More like a shark \_\_\_ or a sardine \_\_\_?

More like a shoe \_\_\_ or a sock \_\_\_?

More like a saver \_\_\_ or a spender \_\_\_?

More like a window \_\_\_ or a door \_\_\_?

More yes \_\_\_ or no \_\_\_?

More of a talker \_\_\_ or a listener \_\_\_?

More like a teacher \_\_\_ or a student \_\_\_?

More like the country \_\_\_ or the city \_\_\_?

More like a tree \_\_\_ or a bush \_\_\_?

More like a dog \_\_\_ or a cat \_\_\_?

More like a heel \_\_\_ or a sole \_\_\_?

More like summer \_\_\_ or winter \_\_\_?

More like the present \_\_\_ or the future \_\_\_?

More likely to go along \_\_\_ or go against \_\_\_?

More like coffee \_\_\_ or tea \_\_\_?

More like a mountain \_\_\_ or a valley \_\_\_?

More fast \_\_\_ or slow \_\_\_?

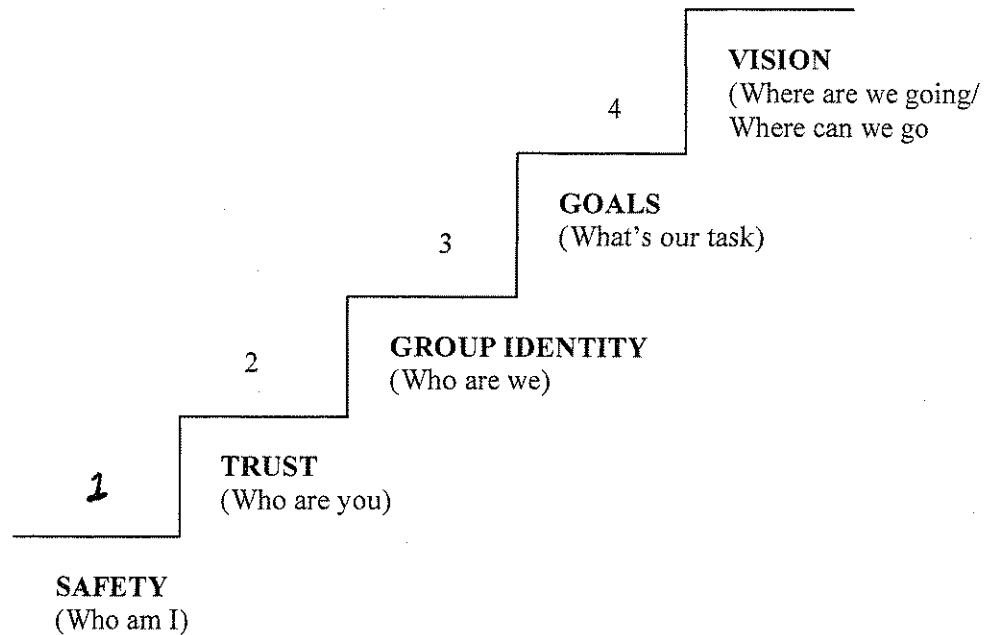
More like an apple \_\_\_ or an orange \_\_\_?

More like steel \_\_\_ or gold \_\_\_?

More like an elevator \_\_\_ or an escalator \_\_\_?

## STEP LADDER THEORY OF GROUPS

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- A “big vision” (organizational for instance) could be the catalyst for a group process which then leads to the individuals growing together through the steps to understand each other, the tasks needed to be accomplished and then create a new vision of what is possible next as a group.
- Any time problems occur, the group needs to revisit the earlier steps and build again – even as far as Step 1 (safety).
- The process is cyclical and depends on people and events.

### Step Ladder Theory

This is a simple yet powerful theory of group and team process including sequential series of steps that a group of 2 or more people need to be effective together. These steps, if you use them, will help any group be more effective.

1. The first step is creating **safety** – this is about who am I – the first question anyone asks is “who am I” in this group and what influence will I have, how will people treat me; will people listen to me? Once I feel pretty secure about who I am – that I won’t be put down or ridiculed, then I am able to move into the 2<sup>nd</sup> step...
2. ... Which is moving into who are you (the others in the group) and how do you think, what are your strengths, what can you do, what resources do you bring to the group, what issues do you have? When we know more about each other, we begin to build **trust**, which leads to step 3.
3. **Group Identity or Synergy** is just a way of saying that we understand our group better and comes as a result of increasing closeness and comfort level with each other. Once I feel safe, have built some trust, and understand who others are in the group, we can build “who are we” together. We can then explore what’s possible, what can we do as a group, given our skills as a people in this group – when we put all that together, what can we do?
4. Once we’re secure in who we are as a group, we can deal with what we’re supposed to be doing – what’s the **goal** or the task. We then can focus outward and look at the work to be done. Often what we do is jump right into the goal or task without building the safety or trust or understanding our group’s resources. We often ignore what motivates people and what they need to be fully engaged in the task at hand – thereby making the group less effective.
5. Finally – once we know each other, our resources, and understand what we can do as a group, we can look forward to the future as a group. What are our dreams as a group – where can we go, what s our new **vision**?

## 5 KEY ACTIONS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

1. Convey your positive intent
  - Point to a common goal.
  - Mentally prepare to give feedback.
  - Consider the timing.
  - Briefly state what you'd like to cover.
2. Describe specifically what you have observed
  - Be specific.
  - Be brief and to the point.
  - Focus on the behavior or action not the person.
  - Limit your feedback to one behavior or action.
3. State the impact of the behavior or actions
  - Link the behavior or action to important business needs or challenges. State how the behavior or action impacted you.
  - State only one or two of the most significant consequences.
4. Ask the other person to respond
  - Ask open-ended questions about what they think.
  - Listen carefully and objectively to the response.
  - Summarize (active listen) the person's key points.
5. Focus the discussion on solutions (not blame)
  - Determine next steps (may need to visit 1-4).
  - When appropriate, ask for the change you want.
  - If you are making suggestions, be open to other solutions.
  - Leave responsibility for action with the other person (unless of course, you clearly have responsibility for part of the action needed).
  - Manage your own expectations and follow-up.

### CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

#### **When you are the receiver of feedback:**

- Focus on the content, not on the person.
- Listen calmly and attentively.
- Clarify the feedback.
- Acknowledge the other person's concerns.
- Avoid defending or over explaining (don't justify).
- Welcome suggestions.

#### **And on an ongoing basis:**

- Ask for feedback regularly .
- If in doubt about the merit of feedback, check with others.
- Evaluate feedback you receive and decide what changes you can and want to make.
- Let people know when you implement changes that stem from the feedback they gave you.

# Principles for the Facilitator

1. Never compete with group members. Give their ideas precedence over your own.
2. Listen to group members. Understand their point of view.
3. Don't permit anyone to be put on the defensive. Observe the roles other members are playing.
  - Never require justification.
  - In disagreement, accept both points of view.
  - Enforce spectrum policy. "Tell us what you like about what Mr. D. said."
  - Keep ideas alive...ask for help...how to improve on an idea...add on...what are the implications.
  - Put ideas aside gently. "Let's hold off on that idea for now. We can come back to it later. It may help us out then."
  - Avoid pinning down an individual. Ask the group for advice rather than an individual.
4. Involve every member of the group.
  - Dominating member...say "Thank you. I've got it now."
  - Avoid compulsive talkers' eyes when you ask for a response.
  - Hold up hand to a talker. Look at someone else for a response.
5. Keep the energy level high.
  - Your interest, alertness and intensity are catchy.
  - Select area and examples that are of interest to you.
  - Keep meeting moving at a fast pace. Counteract boredom.
  - Humor is invaluable. If amusing associations occur to you, bring them out.
  - Challenge is good. Ask difficult questions. "Give me some examples of..."
  - Surprise group. Mix up ideas, list and review them.
6. Keep the members informed about where they are and what is expected of them.
  - Review progress notes
  - When you move from one step to another, make this clear by the questions you ask.
  - When the group is deeply involved in discussion, restate where you are when it's time to go on to another point.

# Data Collection/Discussion Methods and Techniques

- Nominal Group Technique . . .** Go around the table and let each person give their thoughts on a subject.
- Delphi Process . . . . .** Use a questionnaire survey to get information and pool it to create a database.
- Dyads or Triads (helping pairs)** Small groups of two or three discuss a subject.
- Sub-groups/Buzz Sessions . .** Use of small groups of more than three people to discuss a subject and report findings.
- Plenary Group Sessions (round-table discussions)** Using the whole group for discussion.
- Role Playing . . . . .** Getting individuals to act out or rehearse what they are going to say or do.
- Rotating Interview Pairs/Lines** Having people interview each other.
- Fishbowl . . . . .** Small group discussing a topic within a larger group of observers sitting outside the small group observing the discussion.
- Self-Assessments . . . . .** Having individuals ask/answer questions about their abilities or performance.
- Ranking or Rating . . . . .** Setting priorities or weighting alternatives.
- Simulations/Games . . . . .** Engaging a group in a competition that parallels work situations.
- Case Studies/Incidents . . . . .** Fabricated or true-to-life description of situations or events.
- Skits . . . . .** Acting out a situation in a dramatic fashion to illustrate a point.
- Metaphors/Analogies . . . . .** Using parallel situations or models from other fields to explain something.
- In-baskets . . . . .** Problem-oriented decision-making exercises used to assess individual performance.
- Shared History . . . . .** Getting the group to explore its past history.

Other CAT Classroom Assessment Techniques  
Jossey-Bass, 1993.

## BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

List the barriers or obstacles to being an effective leader.

<b>Barriers/Obstacles</b>	<b>Causes of Barriers</b>