Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Identify major personality dimensions and explain how personalities influence organizations.
2. Discuss attitudes and their effect on leader behavior.
3. Describe attribution theory and how perception influences the leader-follower relationship.
4. Identify individual differences in cognitive style.
5. Determine how to lead and work with people with different personality traits.
6. Identify how mental models influence behavior and relationships.
7. Discuss how to break out of categorized thinking patterns.
8. Differentiate between motivating others based on fear versus motivating others based on love.

Written Lecture

Chapter 4 explores some of the individual differences that affect leaders and the leadership process. Individuals differ in many ways, including personality, values and attitudes, and styles of thinking and decision making. One model of personality, the Big Five personality dimensions, examines whether individuals score high or low on the dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. Although there is some indication that a high degree of each of the personality dimensions is associated with successful leadership, individuals who score low on various dimensions may also be effective leaders. Two specific personality traits that have a significant impact on leader behavior are locus of control and authoritarianism.

Values are fundamental beliefs that cause a person to prefer that things be done one way rather than another. One way to think about values is in terms of instrumental and end values. End values are beliefs about the kinds of goals that are worth pursuing, whereas instrumental values are beliefs about the types of behavior that are appropriate for reaching goals. Values also affect an individual’s attitude. A leader’s attitude about self and others influence how the leader behaves toward and interacts with followers. Two sets of assumptions called Theory X and Theory Y represent two very different sets of attitudes leaders may hold about people in general.

Differences in personality, values, and attitudes influence perception, which is the process people use to select, organize, and interpret information. Perceptual distortions include stereotyping, the halo effect, projection, and perceptual defense. Attribution theory refers to how people explain the causes of events and/or behaviors. Based on their perception, people may make either internal or external attributions.
Another area of individual differences is cognitive style. The whole brain concept explores a person’s preference for right-brained versus left-brained thinking and for conceptual versus experiential thinking. The model provides a powerful metaphor for understanding differences in thinking styles. Individuals can learn to use their “whole brain”. Another way of looking at cognitive differences is the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, which measures an individual’s preferences for introversion versus extraversion, sensing versus intuition, thinking versus feeling, and judging versus perceiving.

Chapter 4 offers some tips for how leaders can work more effectively with varied personality types. By understanding their own personalities, treating everyone with respect, recognizing people’s unique abilities, circumventing communication breakdowns, and creating a positive environment, leaders can better keep diverse people productive and focused on goals instead of personality differences.

From Chapter 5, you will gain an understanding that leaders use emotional as well as intellectual capabilities and understandings to guide organizations through a turbulent environment and help people feel energized, motivated, and cared for in the face of rapid change, uncertainty, and job insecurity. Leaders can expand the capacities of their minds and hearts through conscious development and practice.

Leaders should be aware of how their mental model affects their thinking and know that their mental model may cause “blind spots” that limit understanding. Becoming aware of assumptions is a first step toward shifting one’s mental model and being able to see the world in new and different ways. Four key issues important to expanding and developing a leader’s mind are: (1) independent thinking, (2) open-mindedness, (3) systems thinking, and (4) personal mastery.

As a leader, you should understand the importance of emotional intelligence. Four basic components of emotional intelligence are (1) self-awareness, (2) self-management, (3) social awareness, and (4) relationship management. Emotionally intelligent leaders can have a positive impact on organizations by helping employees grow, learn, and develop; creating a sense of purpose and meaning; instilling unity and team spirit; and basing relationships on trust and respect, which allows employees to take risks and fully contribute to the organization. Most of the work in an organization is done in teams. Emotional intelligence applies to teams, as well as to individuals. Leaders develop a team’s emotional intelligence by creating norms that foster a strong group identity, building trust among members, and by instilling a belief among members that they can be effective and succeed as a team.

Traditional organizations have relied on fear as a motivator. Although fear does motivate people, it prevents people from feeling good about their work and often causes avoidance behavior. Fear can reduce trust and communication so that important problems and issues are hidden or suppressed. Leaders can choose to lead with love instead of fear. Love can be thought of as a motivational force that enables people to feel alive, connected, and energized. Each of these aspects of love has relevance for organizational relationships. People respond to love because it meets unspoken needs for respect and affirmation. Rational thinking is important to leadership, but it takes love to build trust, creativity, and enthusiasm.
Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

Reflection Paper

After you finish with the material for Unit III, reflect on your experience and write about it. What did you learn? What did not quite make sense? Can you apply the concepts you learned toward your career? How? The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to reflect on the material you learned and to expand upon those thoughts.

This is not a summary. A reflection paper is an opportunity for you to express your thoughts about the material by writing about them. Reflection writing is a great way to study because it increases your ability to remember the course material.

Use these guidelines as you reflect on the course material:

1. Write at least one page
2. Include your thoughts about the main topics
3. How does it apply to your career?
4. How does it apply to your personal life?

Format your reflection paper using APA Style. Use your own words and include citations for other articles as needed to avoid plagiarism. This is a non-graded activity, so you do not have to submit it.

Article Review

For this assignment, choose a peer-reviewed article to review. Search for an article related to one of the topics discussed in Unit III. Use the databases within the CSU Online Library or use another source that contains peer-reviewed articles. The purpose of this assignment is for you to practice reviewing articles related to the field. The authors of these articles are researchers and professionals in the field. Use these skills to contribute to research papers and other scholarly writing. As you read the articles, consider the following questions:

How could the topic of this article apply to your personal or professional life?
How could it apply to an organization you have observed?

The article you choose must meet the following requirements:

1. Peer reviewed
2. Related to the concepts within this course
3. At least five pages

The writing must meet the following requirements:

1. At least two pages
2. Identify the main topic/question
3. Who is the author’s intended audience?
4. Summarize the article for page one
5. Think critically about the article and how it applies to this course for page two

Format your article review using APA Style. Use your own words and include citations for other articles as needed to avoid plagiarism. This is a non-graded activity, so you do not have to submit it.