WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: A REFLECTIVE EXAMINATION OF THE LEADERSHIP CENTER IN HONDURAS

"Educating women for leadership should become a priority for higher education in the twenty-first century. A high-quality, intellectually challenging women's leadership development program can connect experiential learning to academic inquiry, and extend the classroom to the co-curriculum, the community, and the world." ~ Mary K. Trigg

Charles P. Seeley, Grand Canyon University & The Leadership Center (Honduras)
Joseph Rahm, The Leadership Center (Honduras)

ABSTRACT

The opportunity behind this specific reflective practice is the transition of senior leadership of The Leadership Center in Honduras. The outgoing executive director, a U.S. missionary, is returning to the US with his family. A successful transition is critically important to all stakeholders because of the significant impact that The Leadership Center is having on young Honduran women and their communities. The authors applied the techniques of reflective practice and the literature of women's leadership development to analyze two major areas of practice for The Leadership Center: (1) values, and (2) women's leadership development. This reflective practice seeks to explore and address two critical questions. First, how well are we living out the stated values of The Leadership Center, and what can we do to live out our values more fully (Leitch & Day, 2000; Whitehead, 1989)? Second, how can we improve the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center (Leitch & Day, 2000; Whitehead, 1989)? The outcome of this reflective practice will be a valuable element in the transition process and will serve as a guide to improve the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This reflective examination was prompted by an opportunity, not a problem. Throughout its history, The Leadership Center has grown and experienced sustained success and is making a significant contribution as an incubation point for change across Honduras (Seeley et al., 2019). However, a transition is underway in the senior leadership of The Leadership Center. A transition such as this is "unique requiring particular characteristics and sensitivities" (Dewey, 2012, p. 133) to successfully bring The Leadership Center, and its stakeholders, into the next phase. Although it can be extremely disruptive, leadership transition is a "natural, but dynamic situation, occurring throughout the life cycle of institutions and individuals" (Dewey, 2012, pp. 134-135). When planned and executed well, a leadership transition can set the stage for subsequent growth and development of the organization.

A transition in leadership is an opportune time in the life of an organization to step back, assess the situation, and determine what, if any, changes should be recommended for the new leadership to consider. Weston (2018) points out that "the intellectual capital of an outgoing leader is often underutilized in times of leadership transitions" (p. 304). A reflective practice can be an effective technique for tapping into the intellectual capital of the outgoing leader and creating a snapshot that can be used in the transition to the new leader.

Such a transition in leadership should always be an occasion for reflective openness (Senge, 1990), a process that involves examining our ideas and approaches as well as the ideas and approaches of others (p. 278). In this situation, reflective practice gives the leadership of The Leadership Center an opportunity to better understand and approach women's leadership development from a variety of perspectives (Loughran, 2002), to consider adopting some elements found in other women's leadership development programs, and to develop an artifact that will be shared with the new leader. An effective and insightful reflective practice can lay a strong foundation for the success of the incoming executive director (Weston, 2018).

Much has been learned about the development of young Honduran women as ethical leaders and much has been accomplished in and through The Leadership Center in the past eight years. The current transition in leadership offers a significant opportunity to engage in a reflective practice of the women's leadership development program at The Leadership Center.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: THE LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Leadership Center (TLC) is a tertiary-level educational institution located in rural Honduras. It was established in 2011, with the mission of educating, training, and developing a new generation of ethical leaders by providing exceptional academics and hands-on leadership opportunities to individuals from underprivileged families (LMI, n.d.). TLC is an educational project of Leadership Mission International, a faith-based, U.S. nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and public charity. We practice and promote core leadership values throughout all aspects of the organization. The assessment of these values serves as an essential component of this reflective practice.

TLC students come from under-resourced families and communities located in twelve of eighteen Honduran provinces. A multi-national staff serves the students of The Leadership Center. Instructors and staff come from the US, Honduras, and other countries. TLC is a multi-cultural learning community dedicated to helping young Honduran women become all that God created them to be. The leaders of The Leadership Center believe that education is one of the most powerful methods of providing sustainable change to an impoverished community or country. It is through education that young women in Honduras will be empowered to inspire and initiate change.

Debebe (2009) observed that leadership training programs follow one of three major designs: 360-degree feedback, feedback intensive training, or skill-based training (p. 3). A design based on 360-degree feedback utilizes a structured feedback instrument completed by the supervisor, peers, and direct reports of the learner. A feedback intensive training design utilizes multiple activities and instruments to help the learner explore and understand aspects of her personality and performance. The design of skill-based training is focused on building the knowledge base of the learner, enhancing her existing skills, and giving her opportunities to develop and practice new skills and behaviors (Debebe, 2009). The Leadership Center is built on a skill-based design for women's leadership development.

Eagly and Carli (2007) point out a profound, yet simple, truth, "Leadership matters" (p. 11). Leadership matters in communities, countries, and organizations around the world. Leadership matters in Honduras, a country in which examples of ethical leadership are rare. Ethical leadership provided by young Honduran women matters! Training young Honduran women from under-resourced rural communities is a counter cultural approach in a culture characterized by a machismo mindset in which many girls and women are abused and fear for their lives (Filipovic, 2019). The vision of The Leadership Center is to graduate young women of integrity who will become successful leaders in a wide variety of professional careers. It is a foundational belief of The Leadership Center that everyone has the right to an education, not only those from elite families. Further, a second foundational belief is that women can achieve their dreams and goals and can succeed as ethical leaders in Honduras.

To date, The Leadership Center has accepted ten cohorts of students and has graduated eight. Our graduates are impacting Honduras through bilingual education, entrepreneurship, community development, investing in their local churches, and nonprofit leadership (Seeley et al., 2019). At the time of this reflective practice, there are 34 students on campus, beginning with only 10 in 2011.

While the curriculum of The Leadership

Center is focused on English, leadership, and community development, the students also take courses in history, speech, health and nutrition, research and writing, math, science, and business. By delivering a well-rounded, fully bilingual education, The Leadership Center seeks to equip our graduates to make positive impacts in many parts of Honduran society.

Our students come to us through recommendation only. Students are recommended to us by teachers, nonprofit leaders, pastors, priests, government officials, and missionaries from throughout the country who are familiar with the mission of TLC. We communicate with our in-country networks throughout the year and accept recommendation forms on an annual basis. To be considered for admission, young women must be:

- A high school graduate
- Single, not-married, and without children
- Recommended by a leader from her home community, someone who can speak to her leadership potential
- Willing to live away from her family on our campus located in rural Honduras

Women hear about the program at The Leadership Center through word of mouth—from a local leader, a family member, a friend, a friend of a friend, or so forth. We do no advertising yet have far more applicants than we can accept.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

There is a two-fold purpose behind this reflective practice. The primary purpose is to reflect on current practice in light of the literature on women's leadership development to assess where and how practice can be improved. A secondary purpose is to develop an artifact that can be used to smooth the transition to the new executive director.

This reflective practice is one element in the larger effort to lay the groundwork for the new executive director to succeed (Ciampa, 2016). Organizational transitions, especially a transition in senior leadership, affect the staff of the organization (Dewey, 2012, p. 134) as well as other stakeholders. For a non-profit educational institution such as The Leadership Center, a successful transition is critically important to all involved—current students, future students, alumnae, staff and volunteers, the Board of Directors of Leadership Mission International, sponsors and donors, and the new executive director. Gaining the insight of the departing executive director may very well be one of the "most value-added activities" (Weston, 2018, p. 305) to ensure a successful transition. This reflective practice contributes to the transfer of knowledge and experience from the outgoing to the incoming executive director.

TLC has earned a strong, positive reputation for developing ethical female leaders in Honduras. This positive reputation has resulted in experiential learning opportunities through internships for students and graduates as well as jobs for graduates. Ultimately, a successful transition is important to communities and organizations across Honduras (Seeley et al., 2019). This reflective practice is intended to facilitate the transition in leadership.

Conceptual Lens for Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is often initiated by a problem situation. This problem situation could be something that the reflective practitioner finds puzzling, curious, perplexing, or unexpected (Loughran, 2002). While a problem situation may be a common element in many instances of reflective practice, a reflective practice may also be initiated by something other than a problem situation. As Finlay (2008) points out, "In general, reflective practice is understood as the process of learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and/or practice" (p. 1). The essence of reflective practice is to understand the current situation, learn from your experience and the experience of others, analyze and assess the learnings, and make changes to improve self or practice.

This reflective practice aligns to the above general definition of reflective practice. There are two key elements in our approach that align to this definition: (1) "The process of learning through and from experience," and (2) with a purpose of "gaining new insights of self and/or practice" (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). This reflective practice follows a process of learning through and from the experience of key leaders of The Leadership Center as well as other practitioners and thought leaders in the field of women's leadership development, with a purpose of gaining new insights that can be applied to the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center. This specific case of

reflective practice "places an emphasis on learning through questioning and investigation" (Loughran, 2002, p. 34) with the stated purpose of developing understanding and formulating recommendations for improvement as well as facilitating the transition of leadership for The Leadership Center. It seeks to explore and address two critical questions that arise from the literature on reflective practice. First, how well are we living out the stated values of The Leadership Center, and what can we do to live out our values more fully (Leitch & Day, 2000; Whitehead, 1989)? Second, how can we improve the process of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center (Leitch & Day, 2000; Whitehead, 1989)?

This reflective practice is an example of reflection-on-action, in which we will describe, analyze, evaluate, and review the past practice of The Leadership Center with the goal of gaining insight to recommend areas to improve future practice as one step in the process of transitioning to a new executive director of The Leadership Center (Finlay, 2008, p. 3). As Loughran (2002) points out, "…the context, the nature of the problem, and the anticipated value of such reflection all impact on what is reflected on and for what purpose" (p. 33). The context of The Leadership Center, the impending transition of leadership, and the desire to set the stage for the success of a new executive director have shaped the nature of this reflective practice. This is a retrospective reflection (Van Manen, 1995, p. 34) of two major areas of practice for The Leadership Center: (1) values, and (2) women's leadership development.

To be effective, this reflective practice must go beyond a concern for improving practice at TLC. Given the social and cultural importance of women's leadership development in Honduras, and the mission of The Leadership Center to train the next generation of ethical Honduran leaders, this reflective practice is based on a broader understanding of the needs of young Honduran women being trained to be successful leaders in a male-dominated culture, as well as the moral purposes that form the foundation for women's leadership development in Honduras (Leitch & Day, 2000). It is for this purpose that we have included an assessment of the values around which The Leadership Center operates.

Focus of Reflective Practice

The focus of this reflective practice is on two major areas of practice for The Leadership Center: (1) values, and (2) women's leadership development. In later sections of this paper we will document a reflective examination of the values of The Leadership Center and explore the women's leadership development literature for lessons that can be applied to improve the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center.

Values

Values are items of critical importance to an individual or organization. Values serve as guides or "maps of the way things should be" (Covey, 1989, p. 24). Johnson (2012) asserts that, "Values provide a frame of reference, helping us to set priorities and to determine right or wrong" (p. 104). The assessment of values as part of a reflective practice of an educational institution, and specifically of a program in women's leadership development, is critically important since "education is a value-laden practical activity" (Whitehead, 1989, p. 45). The values of The Leadership Center are at the heart of and embodied in the practice of women's leadership development in Honduras (Whitehead, 1989).

For values to have any meaning and relevance, they must be "translated into action" (Johnson, 2012, p. 106). In this reflective practice we will discuss how the values of The Leadership Center are translated into action in the daily life of the TLC community, and we will assess how well we are living out our values. We will also make recommendations on what steps can be taken to live out our values more fully.

Women's leadership development programs

The development of female leadership is incredibly important in every country, especially in male-dominated societies such as Honduras where women are treated as second class citizens (Lomot, 2013; Rowlands, 1997). Women's leadership development programs are essential to fill the void left by traditional, male-oriented, leadership development programs that fail to meet the needs of emerging female leaders (Brue & Brue, 2016). In countries around the world women have been excluded from, and continue to be underrepresented in, formal leadership roles (Trigg, 2006). As Trigg (2006) observed, "Women's leadership can be a

vital source of change in an increasingly dangerous world" (p. 26). It is especially critical to develop young women as leaders "not only because young women will be among the next generation of public leaders, but also because society needs their vision, their civic engagement, and their idealism" (Trigg, 2006, p. 26).

The mission of The Leadership Center is to meet this need by developing young Honduran women as ethical leaders to serve their communities and their country. To the best of our knowledge, The Leadership Center is the only such women's leadership development program in Honduras and possibly in all of Central America. The Leadership Center is approved as a technical certification program by the National Commission for Informal Education (CONEANFO)—a branch of the National Department of Education. Upon completion of the two-year program of study, students are granted a degree of "Formacion bilingue en Liderazgo y Desarrollo Comunitario" (in English, "Bilingual Formation in Leadership and Community Development").

REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT: THE VALUES OF THE LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Leadership Center operates primarily on a value-based decision-making model. In contrast to a model that focuses on assigning penalties or consequences for specific actions or decisions, the hope of the institution is that students will learn to be motivated by a set of values rather than be intimidated by a list of penalties. While there are dozens of values that would be beneficial for the students of TLC to develop, the organization has decided to focus on ten primary values to guide students and staff. These ten values were selected by TLC leadership as core, and include, service, hard work, aspiration, love, courage, integrity, respect, optimism, commitment, and responsibility. Figure 1 graphically depicts these ten values.

Figure 1. Mural on the wall of a campus building depicting TLC core values, painted by students. Used with permission of The Leadership Center.

This section is focused on providing a more thorough understanding of the ten values of The Leadership Center. For ease of readability, the discussion is organized by specific value. Under each value, four primary questions will be answered. First, how does TLC define the value? Second, how is the value translated into daily life at TLC? Third, how well does TLC leadership believe the students and staff are currently living out the value? And finally, what can we do to live out each value more fully within the TLC community?

Service. We define service as, "The action of helping or assisting another person or group of people." This is important within the context of Honduran leadership because most Honduran citizens assume that the majority of leaders in their country are more concerned with the personal benefit of leadership than they are with serving the people they lead. If TLC is going to make a positive impact on Honduran society through educating, training, and developing a new generation of ethical leaders, then graduates of the institution must learn to place more value in serving others than in personal benefit.

Students have many different opportunities to serve others during daily life at TLC. In the morning at breakfast, students have the opportunity to serve food to one another, pour a cup of coffee, or wash another's plate. After breakfast, students and staff gather for a short devotional, or time of encouragement. Students are free to use this opportunity as a way to serve others through providing a positive word or motivation. Throughout the day, all students have the opportunity to provide assistance or support to another student who may be struggling academically. These are only a few examples of the kinds of service that TLC leadership is encouraging all students to be engaged in.

TLC students have improved a great deal in the past few years related to living out the value of service, yet there is still room to improve. Reflecting back, I (Joseph) believe this is likely because of the

intense focus on this particular value in academics, work hours, study sessions, and many aspects of community life. While all ten values are important, we (TLC leadership) believe that service is one of the main characteristics that will set apart TLC graduates from other leaders in the country. Thus, we make a point of encouraging students to serve others whenever possible.

With regards to growth in the area of service, our ultimate goal is that students would no longer need encouragement to take initiative in this area. Just as riding a bicycle is difficult at first, yet after mastery becomes a habit an individual does not need to think much about, the hope is that TLC students will build a habit of service. This will likely come from hard work, perseverance, and continual practice. Thus, it is our goal at TLC to continue providing service opportunities to all students so that service becomes part of the very nature of who TLC students and graduates are at the core of their being.

Figure 2. The value of service declared on a sign in the middle of campus. Used with permission of The Leadership Center.

Hard Work. The Leadership Center defines hard work as "investing slightly more effort and endurance into something than one thinks they are able to give." At TLC, hard work is not about maintaining the status quo, just getting by, or avoiding consequences for poor decisions. Hard work is much more about pushing ourselves beyond our perceived limits in order to become a person we did not imagine we could become. It is only through dedication to hard work that TLC graduates will be able to overcome the challenges that young women face in Honduras in order to become ethical leaders and individuals of influence.

Students are encouraged and pushed to practice hard work in a variety of areas during their daily life at The Leadership Center. This occurs in four primary areas—daily work hours, academics, relationships, and personal growth. While students do not pay anything to study at TLC, they are expected to work an hour and a half Monday through Saturday. This work may be caring for TLC's animals, crops, or vegetable gardens, or may be cutting and carrying firewood. Regardless of the work assigned, each student is encouraged to give her best effort. In academics, students are expected to give their best effort, recognizing that knowledge is one thing that will set them apart from other individuals competing for leadership positions in their community. With regards to relationships, it is common wisdom that good relationships do not come easily, so students at TLC are encouraged to work hard to establish healthy relationships with other students and staff. Lastly, personal growth is one of the primary reasons that TLC exists. Thus, students are encouraged to put maximum effort into their personal growth and development during their time at The Leadership Center.

In order for the students to make progress in the area of hard work, TLC staff seek to help them understand the reality of how challenging it is for young Honduran women to find and keep work in Honduras. For students to distinguish themselves after graduation, it will be imperative that they work harder, longer, and more intelligently than the men within their work context. Therefore, developing the ability to push themselves is a skill that will help them for many years to come. Additionally, when students experience the positive and productive feeling that comes with completing something that required a significant investment

of energy and labor, they are more encouraged to work even harder the next time. It is for these reasons that TLC leadership promotes the value of hard work.

Aspiration. The Leadership Center defines aspiration as "a strong desire and confidence in oneself to achieve something great." Many dictionary definitions use the word hope in the definition of aspiration, but TLC believes that aspiration is more than simply hoping for a better future. The kind of aspiration that we desire to see among students is impossible without strong desire and confidence. Strong desire is necessary to develop a vision for a better future, and confidence is what allows students and graduates to bring their visions into reality in spite of the obstacles they will certainly face in the machismo culture in which they live.

Aspiration is discussed regularly from the first day students arrive on campus; however, this particular value is more recognizable in students during their second year. At The Leadership Center, the first year of studies is focused primarily on learning English, while the focus of the second year of studies is on leadership and community development. It is during the second year that students are required to think deeply about their future, the future of their families, and their desires for change in their communities and country. Practically, this is done in journal assignments, reflective writing, homework, vacation projects in their communities, and the appropriate application of the knowledge they learn in their coursework.

Aspiration value was added to TLC's list of values in 2018, replacing kindness. This was done after a great deal of thought and reflection among TLC staff and graduates. Aspiration was selected because it was not being observed in students at the level that we would like to see it. Therefore, because it is TLC's newest value, it is also one that requires the most improvement. In Honduras, young women are told that their place is in the house, taking care of the men and children in their families. It takes diligent effort to help young Honduran women see their own value, and even more work to encourage them to believe in their ability to contribute to society in meaningful ways. While this will likely always be a challenge that The Leadership Center faces, the hope is to continue growing in this new value throughout 2020 and into the future.

One primary way that TLC hopes to more fully live out the value of aspiration is by inviting graduates who have had success in their communities to come to campus and share their stories. When TLC students see that other young women have made progress in achieving their dreams, it helps them to understand that it is possible for them as well. Furthermore, the camaraderie that develops when graduates and students are together is one that often automatically results in a greater level of aspiration.

Love. The Leadership Center defines love as "an intense feeling of affection for another person." The Leadership Center strives not only to instill the value of love in our students, but also to help them recognize what intentional and genuine love looks like. For students and graduates to succeed as ethical leaders in the culture of Honduras and to initiate change at a communal and societal level, they will need to demonstrate love consistent with 1 Corinthians 13—love that is genuine and real. Without such love, long-term change in the communities and country of Honduras will not be sustained.

The Leadership Center is a community setting. We do everything together. We eat meals together; we work together; we study together; we read together; and we pray together. Thus, relationships are always at the center in all that occurs. Without love, relationships would fail, and TLC would be a miserable place to live. Yet, the vast majority of our graduates return to TLC at some point after graduation talking about how much they miss the place. The primary reason for this, we believe, is because love exists at all levels of the organization and in all aspects of what we do. This is not to say that conflict and challenges do not arise, but we strive to always respond to these with love.

The students and staff are currently doing a fantastic job of living out the value of love. As previously mentioned, obstacles and conflict still exist, but staff members are quick to jump at the opportunity to resolve even our greatest setbacks in a manner of love. When we do this, everyone on campus learns how to love intentionally and genuinely. This leads TLC students and graduates to be more adequately prepared to respond to the challenges they will face as a new generation of ethical leaders in Honduras.

The primary thing that TLC students and staff

can focus on is continuing to practice the things we believe to be true and we are already doing well. At times, we may forget that love provides the answer to the majority of conflicts we face in life, so we seek to remind each other of the benefit of love. When we do this, life on campus is more enjoyable and peaceful, and everyone grows in love for others and as servant leaders.

Courage. The Leadership Center defines courage as "the ability to overcome the obstacles that frighten us or make us want to give up." Because Honduras is a male-dominated culture where "machismo" (chauvinism) is prevalent throughout the country, young women need an extra dose of courage if they desire to lead and influence others. This value is especially important because every TLC student has fears about the possibility of leadership. They are afraid of failure. They are afraid of ridicule. They are afraid of what others will think of them. And they are afraid of taking risks. This can be expected in the culture they have grown up in, which is the primary reason why courage is one of the ten values at TLC.

TLC students are asked to do difficult things all the time—things they do not want to do. This may be something relatively simple, such as asking for forgiveness after wronging someone (something that is not a common practice in Honduran culture), or may be more intimidating, such as learning how to swim in the river that borders our property. Regardless of the level of fear that exists in a student, they expect to do many things throughout their two years here that help them develop the characteristic of courage. If, during their two years studying at TLC, they are unable to develop courage, it is unlikely they will find success as a leader in the Honduran culture after graduation.

Students are living out the value of courage at varying levels. Some students are naturally risk-takers, jumping at every opportunity to try something new or do something challenging. These students often continue growing during their time at TLC and graduate as some of the most courageous women in the country. Others, who may not naturally have the characteristic of courage, resist the requirement to try new things and take risks while at TLC. Yet, we always find creative ways to help students grow in courage. Any amount of progress is better than none even when the growth appears small.

In order to more effectively live out the value of courage, we must continue asking our students to do things that challenge and push them. At times, TLC staff members are hesitant to ask students to do things amidst complaints or resistance. Yet those are the moments that students most need the staff to stand up and say, "You can do it." Therefore, each leader at TLC must continually look for opportunities to encourage all students to take risks and try new things, even when there is push-back. By doing so, TLC students will grow in courage in ways that they previously imagined was not possible.

Integrity. The Leadership Center defines integrity as "being honest and having strong moral principles." In a country that is known to be extremely corrupt (Martinez, 2019), integrity is vital if TLC graduates are going to bring positive change to their communities and country. TLC's experience in Honduras suggests that there are low levels of trust between followers and leaders in all facets of society. Low trust leads to slow progress. Therefore, it is our goal that every TLC graduate place a great deal of importance in becoming a leader of integrity.

Integrity is lived out among students in two practical ways on campus: first, by being intentional about practicing honesty and strong moral principles; and second, by having a system on campus that gives consequences to students who are dishonest or make decisions void of moral principles. Referring to the former, students are encouraged to be honest, even when being honest is difficult. Furthermore, we talk about developing strong moral convictions in classes, seminars, and devotionals beginning the day new students arrive on campus and continuing through graduation. Regarding consequences, TLC has a system that issues "strikes" for poor decisions, and students may be expelled after a certain number of decisions that demonstrate a lack of integrity.

The students and graduates of The Leadership Center are frequently praised for their level of maturity and integrity. Visitors, staff, government officials, neighbors, and others all see and comment on a level of integrity in TLC students that they often do not see in other young Honduran women the same age. This provides reassurance that as an organization we are currently doing a good job in instilling this value in our students.

One risk when anyone is succeeding in something is to become complacent and stop working hard. In order to continue being an organization recognized for its integrity, all students and staff at TLC must remain diligent. We must continue focusing on the things that have helped us develop into people of integrity.

Respect. The Leadership Center defines respect as "a feeling of admiration and reverence for another person." The majority of dictionary definitions add a phrase such as "as a result of their abilities, qualities, and achievements" at the end of the definition. At TLC, however, our goal is that our students and graduates show respect for all people, whether they have earned it or not. We see this as different from praise or worship of an individual. Respecting others is simply treating them the way that oneself would like to be treated. TLC believes that all individuals are worthy of this type of treatment regardless of whether they have earned it or not.

The leaders of TLC believe that respect can be shown at all levels of the organization. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see directors and staff members washing students' plates, working alongside them during work hours, or spending time doing the menial tasks that all organizations require in order to properly function. It is our hope that everyone who visits campus will see that respect is expected not only from those in lowly positions but is displayed by everyone in the organization. This kind of example encourages students to be respectful with one another, students to be respectful of employees, staff to be respectful of students, and so forth. Our hope is that in all daily responsibilities, respect would be clearly visible.

It is uncommon to see strong displays of disrespect on the TLC campus. Generally speaking, all individuals on campus understand how to show respect for others. However, in small ways, students and staff alike may slip into bad habits. This may be the temptation to roll one's eyes at a comment that opposes one's beliefs. It could be a student braiding a classmate's hair during a presentation or announcement. Or it may play out as not giving one's full attention during a church service or campus Bible study. While these things may seem insignificant to the outsider, the TLC staff is aware of them, and we work diligently to eliminate all forms of disrespect. This requires all individuals on campus to be mindful of each and every action, expression, or comment they make throughout every day. When we are fully mindful we are able to make more respectful decisions.

The opportunity for growth is connected to mindfulness. Often, actions that lack respect are made out of laziness or forgetfulness rather than malice. Therefore, the most effective way for students and staff to become more respectful is for all of us to become more mindful of each and every action we take during the day.

Optimism. The Leadership Center defines optimism as "confidence in the potential for positive outcomes in the future." It is important to mention that TLC does not equate optimism with blindness toward the realities of the world we live in. For this reason, we are intentional about the inclusion of the word "potential" in our definition. This encourages TLC students to recognize the potential for change in the future, while still recognizing the challenges that today presents in order to obtain a better tomorrow. Yet, even with the challenges that today presents, TLC believes that being confident that tomorrow can be better is vital for any individual who wants to be an ethical leader.

Optimism is difficult to implement in a culture where individuals are not encouraged to share their thoughts and true opinions. Many Hondurans learn to guard truth and withhold their true feelings for fear that releasing both may cause personal harm or damage. Thus, because it is difficult to truly know if a TLC student is feeling pessimistic or optimistic in any given moment, TLC staff tries to implement this value into daily life through leading by example and encouraging others to see the best in every situation.

Because The Leadership Center has chosen to work with young women from poor and marginalized families, the vast majority of our students' families are frequently experiencing conflict, challenges, and trauma. As a result, students often struggle with believing that tomorrow can be better than today, and sometimes they lack hope that they have the capacity to positively influence the future. The result is that TLC leadership must frequently remind students of the hope that we must have if we desire to see a better future.

Commitment. The Leadership Center defines commitment as "full dedication to a cause or a decision one has made." We hope to instill

true commitment in the lives of our students, encouraging them to stick with their decisions until they see them come to fruition. We recognize that many of life's decisions bring about obstacles and challenges, yet commitment demands that we overcome them to achieve important goals.

At TLC, we ask all our students to be committed to multiple things during any given academic quarter. Some activities are required every day for all students—work, classes, exercising, studying, and so forth. Yet students are also highly encouraged to choose one or two optional activities to commit to for an entire academic quarter. This may include the running team, book club, Bible study, and discipleship groups, among others. We believe that honoring a commitment develops perseverance, which is necessary to become an ethical leader.

The majority of our students were taught at an early age that commitment is not necessary unless there is a consequence or punishment attached to failure. Therefore, it has been difficult for TLC leadership to encourage commitment apart from giving consequences. In general, we are not an institution that desires to attach every good decision to rewards and every poor decision to consequences, so we have had to work through what commitment looks like in our students. Over the years, we have improved in this area, but there is a lot of work left to do.

Our desire is to help TLC students recognize the benefit of commitment as a value in itself. We hope that every student will have a strong desire to commit to something simply because they want to live committed lives. As much as possible, we try to bring in case studies, books, and stories of individuals who earned their success, leadership, and influence through continuous commitment to a goal of accomplishment. This includes individuals who fought for civil rights without giving up, women who have been committed to earning the respect of men, and figures in Latin American history who never gave up on a dream. By showing the students it is possible, our hope is that their desire to be committed individuals would grow over time.

Responsibility. The Leadership Center defines responsibility as "a willingness and desire to be accountable for one's actions, decisions, or duties." We see responsibility in two different forms. The first revolves around the idea that each action we take and each decision we make is fully under our control. For example, even if an individual has a job she hates and a boss she despises, it is still within her control to decide whether she will continue with that job or find another. Our hope at TLC is to help students understand that they always have a choice, and that they must be accountable to their own decisions. Secondly, TLC believes that all of us have specific duties we must perform as a result of our decisions. Every young woman who decides to study at TLC will be held accountable for daily and weekly duties. A responsible student honors those commitments.

Weekdays at The Leadership Center are very structured and require all students to be accountable to their duties. On any given day, this may include exercise class, washing dishes, leading devotional time, doing homework, giving a presentation, attending an optional activity, and much more. With a small campus of 34 students and between 6-8 staff members, it is pretty easy to recognize when a student is lacking responsibility.

In general, TLC students excel in being accountable to their assigned or chosen duties. Yet from time to time, TLC staff members are required to step in with gentle reminders when students forget or choose to not fulfill a previous commitment. In these times, we try to remember our other values (love, respect, and so forth), so that we respond to irresponsibility in a way that encourages future change and commitment. We all recognize that everyone fails to be responsible from time to time, and giving grace in these circumstances often encourages a greater level of responsibility in the future.

The best thing that can be done to encourage responsibility is to be committed to responsibility oneself so that others can see the resulting benefits. Irresponsibility often leads to failure or lack of results, while being responsible more often than not leads to achieved goals and a better future. Therefore, when staff members and students alike act responsibly, it encourages a cycle of responsibility that becomes contagious all around campus. Responsibility among one member living on campus is a spark for greater responsibility among everyone living on campus.

A reflective analysis of the values of The Leadership Center is one of the two major focal points for this reflective practice. A clear and concise set of core values, lived out in everyday life in the community setting of The Leadership Center

campus, distinguishes the women's leadership development program that is The Leadership Center from other women's leadership development programs discussed in the literature. The second major focal point for this reflective practice is an investigation into the literature of women's leadership development to provide insight that could lead to improvement in the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center.

REFLECTIVE INVESTIGATION: THE LITERATURE OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Women's leadership development programs fall into one of three major types: (1) short-term leadership seminars and programs for female managers and professionals, (2) study of leadership as a component within a women's study program at a university, or (3) a stand-alone women's leadership development program.

The literature base for women's leadership development programs is reviewed for the purpose of identifying best practices and potential areas in which the practice of women's leadership development at TLC can be improved. Table 1 categorizes the women's leadership development programs covered in this literature review according to the type of program.

As can be seen in Table 1, much of the literature on women's leadership development is focused on leadership development for managerial and professional women already in the workforce. However, this literature review also includes a women's leadership development program at Rutgers University and several pieces that explore youth leadership development. This broader perspective on leadership development is essential given that the mission of The Leadership Center is to educate young Honduran women as ethical leaders.

Model Curricula for Women's Leadership Development

Ricketts and Rudd (2002) conducted a detailed review of the literature related to leadership and personal development of youth. One of their intended outcomes was the development of a "conceptual model for teaching, training, and developing leadership in youth" (p. 7). This model has been successfully utilized for training undergraduate students in leadership development within the department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida.

The conceptual model for a youth leadership development curriculum consists of five constructs of leadership: (1) leadership knowledge and information, (2) leadership attitude, will, and desire, (3) decision making, reasoning, and critical

Table 1 Women's Leadership Development Programs Categorized by Type

Type of Program	Name of Program	Literature Citation
Short-term leadership seminars and programs for female managers and professionals	Women's Leadership Series, sponsored by Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research	(Debebe, 2011); Debebe, 2009)
	Oklahoma Career Tech Women in Leadership	(Brue & Brue, 2016)
	The Women's Leadership Program, sponsored by Center for Creative Leadership	(Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005)
	Women's Leadership Development Institute, sponsored by the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities	(Lafreniere & Longman, 2008)
	Women's Leadership Program, sponsored by the University of Cincinnati	(Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017)
	Sister's Leadership Development Initiative, a Hilton-supported leadership program in five African countries	(Wakahiu & Salvaterra, 2012)
Study of leadership as a component of women's studies	The Leadership Scholar's Certificate Program at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	(Trigg, 2006)
Stand-alone women's leadership development program	Leadership Development Training for volunteer mentors at [Program], a non-profit camp that empowers young girls and teens through music	(Kelinsky & Anderson II, 2016)
	The Leadership Center, Honduras	Focus of this reflective practice

thinking, (4) oral and written communication skills, and (5) intrapersonal and interpersonal skills (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002, pp. 11-12).

The intent of the leadership knowledge and information component is to present the concepts and ideas of leadership in such a way that "students understand the phenomena as a personal and attainable undertaking" (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002, p. 13). Leadership models and theories are demystified and taught in a way that youth can understand and relate to. The dissemination of leadership knowledge and information is an essential component of all women's leadership development programs. As but one example, knowledge acquisition and skill development, along with increased self-awareness and perspective change, are essential elements in the transformational learning process for women's leadership development advocated by Debebe (2009).

According to the authors of the youth leadership development model, "Leadership attitude, will, and desire is the dimension designed to stress the importance of motivation, self-realization, and health in fulfilling a student's leadership capacity" (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002, p. 13). This element of the model is consistent with the discussion in the literature about leader identity and leadership purpose, both of which are explored further. This element is also aligned to three of the themes identified in the Center for Creative Leadership study of women leaders (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005): (1) authenticity, (2) wholeness, and (3) self-clarity. Authenticity is the extent to which "daily actions and behaviors are in concert with deeply held values and beliefs" (p. 8); it is about acting on one's core values to "advance the work required to accomplish shared goals" (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011, p. 487). Wholeness is the "desire to feel complete and integrated as a full human being" (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005, p. 9), while self-clarity helps women understand not only how others see their strengths and weaknesses but also to "see themselves in the context of the many ways organizations treat men and women differently" (p. 9).

The authors of this model do not advocate teaching critical thinking, reasoning, and decision making as stand-alone courses or seminars, but instead advocate that they be taught by incorporating them into other courses or subject matter (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Given that the educational system in Honduras is based more on rote memorization than on critical thinking, these topics are incredibly important elements in the instructional approach at The Leadership Center and are incorporated as essential elements in other courses.

Communication skills, both oral and written, are essential skills for leaders to possess and therefore essential elements in leadership development. As Ricketts and Rudd (2002) point out, these skills are "the media for sharing knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions, feelings, and ideas in order to influence and ultimately lead others" (p. 14). Influence is foundational to leadership and the ability to influence is heavily dependent on the ability to communicate clearly.

The final dimension of this model for youth leadership development, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, consists of "conflict resolution, stress-management, teamwork, and ethics combined with knowledge regarding diversity, personality types, communication styles, leadership styles, and other human relations abilities" (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002, p. 14). Relationship work is an essential element of all of the women's leadership development programs investigated through this literature review. This dimension aligns to the connection theme in the Center for Creative Leadership study of women leaders (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005). Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are important mechanisms for developing connection, which "refers to the need to be close to other human beings: family, friends, community, and co-workers" (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005, p. 8).

A second model curriculum is based on an organizing framework to guide the design of women's leadership development programs (Hopkins, O'neil, Passarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008). This framework is primarily focused on leadership development programs aimed at female managers and professionals, but it has relevance for the development of young female leaders as well. This framework consists of seven categories of developmental practices, both formal and informal: (1) assessment, (2) training and education, (3) coaching, (4) mentoring, (5) networking, (6) experiential learning (i.e., developmental job assignments and action learning projects), and (7) career planning (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 352).

Assessment, most often based on structured 360-degree feedback, is an element in many

leadership development programs (Debebe, 2009). However, Hopkins and her colleagues (2008) offer a note of caution about using standardized 360-degree feedback instruments as an element of women's leadership development because these instruments often embody a gender bias given that "conceptions of leadership have been found to be associated preponderantly with men" (p. 352). Given this bias, it is very important that someone with relevant expertise help the learner interpret the results of the assessment. It is also essential that feedback, however it is collected, be trustworthy, for "without trustworthy feedback, it is difficult to plan or to understand how to be more effective" (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005, p. 9).

Training and education is a pillar in women's leadership development programs. The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program at Rutgers University is situated within a women's studies framework (Trigg, 2006). Coursework explores women in leadership through readings in US and global women's history and case studies of women leaders as well as studies of gender in society. Women's leadership development programs should facilitate women to develop knowledge and expertise as leaders (Brue & Brue, 2016). Women participating in the Sisters Leadership Development Program in Africa engage in three core learning tracks focused on administration, finance, and project management (Wakahiu & Salvaterra, 2012). The intent of the Sisters Leadership Development Program is to promote sustainable leadership, which the authors define as "the ability for individuals and institutions to continue to adapt and meet new challenges and complexities in demanding and changing contexts" (Wakahiu & Salvaterra, 2012, p. 152). Seminars or workshops that engage learners in group process, help them develop conflict resolution skills, and help them learn to think critically are also very important in a women's leadership development program (Dugan, 2006; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). These seminars should help learners consider how their actions as leaders influence group level outcomes (Dugan, 2006).

Coaching is an important ingredient in many leadership development programs, often employed to reinforce or build on one of the other components. While coaching is of value to both men and women, it may be of particular value and importance to women (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 354). The insight and experience of a coach can be very useful when interpreting 360-degree and other feedback (Hopkins et al., 2008). Hopkins and her colleagues assert that, "Women's unique developmental concerns include connection, wholeness, authenticity, agency, and self-clarity" (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 354). An experienced coach can help the female leader navigate her way through the varied life roles she plays and the competing demands she faces, while also addressing her unique developmental concerns.

Mentoring is another common element in women's leadership development programs (Brue & Brue, 2016; Diehl, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2008; Lafreniere & Longman, 2008; Selzer et al., 2017; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2002; Wakahiu & Salvaterra, 2012). Mentoring relationships may help to enhance career development, clarify professional purpose, and promote personal development and learning (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 355). Vinnicombe and Singh (2002) mentioned a study that found mentees "valued the psychosocial functions such as acceptance, friendship, coaching and counselling rather more than the career development functions of sponsorship and exposure provider" (p. 304). Brue and Brue (2016) found that alumnae of the Oklahoma Career Tech Women in Leadership program placed significant value in having "informational and encouragement mentors" (p. 88). According to these researchers, all of their study participants "saw relationships, networking, mentoring, and informational connections as vital to leadership development" (p. 89). The Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (Wakahiu & Salvaterra, 2012) includes a mentoring process that provides mentors for participants and requires the participants to mentor others not participating in the Initiative. Diehl (2014) pointed out that the lack of mentoring relationships and opportunities is one of the barriers that women face on their path to leadership (p. 54). The availability of mentoring as an element in women's leadership development can remove this barrier, and it can also help in overcoming other barriers to women's leadership and success (Selzer et al., 2017).

Networking is also another common component of women's leadership development programs (Brue & Brue, 2016; Ely et al., 2011; Hopkins et al., 2008; Selzer et al., 2017; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2002). Participating in interpersonal networks can result in

an increase in influence and power, enhanced access to job opportunities, information and expertise, and improved job performance (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 357). Providing networking opportunities as a component of a women's leadership development program is very important given that "traditional structures and gender roles diminish networking opportunities for women" (Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 357). In their study of alumnae of the Oklahoma Career Tech Women in Leadership, Brue and Brue (2016) found that alumnae "placed immense value on building networks" (p. 88). Vinnicombe and Singh (2002) assert that introducing women's leadership development participants to the concepts of role models, networking and mentoring is invaluable, while Ely et al. (2011) advocate that women's leadership development programs equip women with networking strategies that take into account the challenges women face in developing meaningful networks.

Mentoring, networking, and other mechanisms for developing leaders to build relationships with more experienced female leaders and other women are incredibly important to women's leadership development. As Ely et al. (2011) point out, "A dearth of women leaders leaves younger women with few role models whose styles are feasible or congruent with their self-concepts" (p. 477). One of the themes identified in the study of alumnae of the Oklahoma Career Tech Women in Leadership program was that a relational model for leadership is essential (Brue & Brue, 2016). As these researchers explain it, "A substantial theme was the beneficial impact of establishing social capital associations, women leadership networks, mentorship connections, and leadership modeling" (Brue & Brue, 2016, p. 84). Connecting with other women in leadership is a "deeply meaningful" (p. 88) aspect of women's leadership development and is important in the development of female leaders (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005).

Experiential learning is a common theme across many women's leadership development programs (Brue & Brue, 2016; Dugan, 2006; Hopkins et al., 2008; Selzer et al., 2017; Trigg, 2006). Experiential learning can take many different forms, including internships and field experience, social action and community projects, interactive learning activities, stretch assignments, and opportunities to reflect on such field work and its alignment to other aspects of women's leadership development. Trigg (2006) reported that internships "help bridge the gap between university and community, while developing students' ethical capacities and sense of civic purpose" (p. 24), and giving developing leaders the opportunity to gain valuable professional experience and engage in skills development (p. 25). Experiential learning opportunities should "integrate reflection opportunities that connect students' values with their work within the community" (Dugan, 2006, p. 223) as well as with other elements of the women's leadership development program.

Career planning, while important, is not frequently mentioned as a component of women's leadership development programs. However, Hopkins et al. (2008) note the importance of career planning, pointing out that, "Intentionally managing one's own career plan has been demonstrated as a facilitator of women's advancement" (p. 359). As the authors Hopkins et al. (2008) point out, women are not often taught the concepts of career or succession planning in either their formal educational programs or in their organizations. Career planning is a very useful topic for a seminar or workshop or as an item in life coaching discussions. A professional development plan (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008) is a useful deliverable from these career planning sessions.

The model curricula proposed in the literature, and discussed above, provide ideas for consideration in this reflective practice of the women's leadership development program at The Leadership Center. The women's leadership development literature also offers several key ideas and best practices, discussed below, that inform this reflective practice.

Women's Leadership Development Literature: Key Ideas and Best Practices

Balanced, Holistic Approach. Both of the model curricula take a balanced and holistic approach to leadership development for women and youth. A balanced and holistic approach addresses both cognitive and emotional aspects of leadership. A balanced and holistic approach includes both formal and experiential learning activities. A balanced and holistic approach includes work internal to the developing leader and work to build and maintain relationships with others. A balanced and holistic approach to women's leadership

development addresses "relational connectedness, interactive learning activities, philosophical and practical leadership development pursuits" (Brue & Brue, 2016, p. 76); such programs "have the greatest impact on the development and advancement of women leaders" (p. 76).

Female leaders face much adversity, especially in cultures characterized by a machismo mindset. Aspiring female leaders face barriers including exclusion from informal networks, lack of mentorship opportunities, gender discrimination, harassment, cultural constraints on the choices women can make and the options open to them, a widely held perspective that aligns leadership qualities with masculinity, gender stereotypes, and gender bias (Diehl, 2014; Selzer et al., 2017). Helping female leaders prepare for and deal with adversity is a powerful component of a balanced, holistic women's leadership development program. In her study of the meaning of adversity for female leaders in higher education, Diehl (2014) found that study participants "used their experiences with adversity to analyze themselves (self-analysis), accept themselves (self-acceptance), define themselves (self-definition), and gain perspective over what was important in their lives" (p. 56). This internal work driven by adversity is a foundation for internal change and sets the stage for developing and internalizing a leader identity.

Based on an auto-ethnographic study of their experiences as participants in a women's leadership development program, Selzer et al. (2017) recommend designing structured time for reflection to explore the personal barriers and adversity women face in leadership development into women's leadership development programs. Resilience training, in the form of seminars, is another element of a balanced and holistic approach that may be very useful to help the aspiring female leaders at TLC cope with the adversity they are facing or will soon face. Resilience is defined as "an interactive product of beliefs, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and perhaps physiology that help people fare better during adversity and recover more quickly following it" (Siebert, 2005, p. 114). Resilience training may be a powerful addition to the TLC curriculum to help TLC students prepare for the barriers and adversity they will likely face as female leaders in the culture of Honduras.

Internal Change. Women can become conditioned to the negative messaging embedded in the culture. This negative messaging, if unexamined and internalized, can hold women back from achieving their full potential as leaders (Debebe, 2011). As Debebe (2011) points out, "Women often underestimate their capabilities because they have grown up in patriarchal societies that erode their confidence" (p. 688). Cultural messages that tell women they cannot achieve their goals or cannot lead as well as men can result in learned helplessness, "The giving-up reaction, the quitting response that follows from the belief that whatever you do does not matter" (Seligman, 2006, p. 15). Internal change as a critical aspect of fostering women's leadership development is a powerful answer to the downward spiral fostered by negative gendered messages (Debebe, 2011). The activities, content, and environment of the women's leadership development program should be designed to "create conditions in which learners will put down their defenses, suspend habitual patterns of perceiving, thinking, and acting, and become receptive to new possibilities" (Debebe, 2011, p. 686). A program designed and executed in this manner will have a greater possibility of leading to internal change on the part of participants, an internal change that includes the development of a new identity as a leader. As Ely et al. (2011) point out, "How people become leaders and how they take up the leader role are fundamentally questions about identity" (p. 476).

Identity Work. Identity work within a women's leadership development program is aimed at helping participants to incorporate the concept of leader into their self-concept (Debebe, Anderson, Bilimoria, & Vinnicombe, 2016; Ely et al., 2011; Selzer et al., 2017). In the context of a women's leadership development program, identity work involves all of the activities that participants engage in "to create, present, and sustain personal identities" (Debebe et al., 2016, p. 241) that are aligned with and supportive of their self-concept as a leader. This involves participants developing their leadership presence, which is "the combination of a woman's unique voice, style of engagement, and positive contributions—composed of her self-confidence (overall sense of self-assurance), self-efficacy (belief in one's leadership capability and ability to achieve), influence (transformational, communal, and often indirect and tempered

strategies to lead change), and authenticity (daily actions consistent with one's values, beliefs, and vision)" (Debebe et al., 2016, p. 241). It is through these relational and social processes that a woman's leadership presence is developed and she begins to see herself, and is seen by others, as a leader (Ely et al., 2011, p. 476).

The use of narratives can be a powerful instructional method in identity work. Ely et al. (2011) recommend that participants in a women's leadership development program reflect on their past experience and their goals to "construct coherent and actionable narratives about who they are and wish to become, grounded in candid assessments of the cultural, organizational, and individual factors shaping them" (p. 487). Narratives may be a powerful tool to help students at The Leadership Center process their life experiences growing up in a culture dominated by a machismo mindset and begin to lay out for themselves their own identities as female leaders in that culture.

A leader's sense of purpose shapes her leader identity. One aspect of identity work involves "developing an elevated sense of purpose" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 476). Damon (2008) defines purpose as "a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at the same time meaningful to the self and consequential for the world beyond the self" (p. 33). As this definition implies, an effective leader pursues a purpose that is aligned to her core values and at the same time is of importance to the world around her as a leader (Ely et al., 2011). Ely and her colleagues (2011) summarize the importance of the leader's sense of purpose to her leader identity when they state, "Hence, a central part of constructing a leader identity and of being seen as a leader is developing an elevated sense of purpose and conveying that sense to others" (p. 476). The stature of the female leader is raised when leader identity, sense of purpose, communication skills, and influence, all elements in a holistic women's leadership development program, come together for the developing leader.

Holding Environment. For internal change and the development of a leader identity to occur, participants in a women's leadership development program "must feel accepted and respected, challenged and supported" (Debebe, 2011, p. 686). All of the resources needed to complete program activities must be available to them. Establishing the contextual environment in this way can turn a classroom into a safe holding environment (Debebe, 2011; Ely et al., 2011), which "refers to the social interactions and learning resources assembled in a particular place for the purpose of fostering learning and growth" (Debebe, 2011, p. 685). A safe holding environment provides program participants with a "sense of belonging and acceptance" (p. 685). The intent of this safe environment is to allow learners to take risks as part of the growth process to prepare them for the demands and challenges of the external environment.

The Leadership Center meets these requirements to be considered a safe holding environment. TLC staff members do everything possible to create an environment in which students feel accepted and respected, challenged and supported. Students and graduates have reported that attending TLC was a life-changing experience (Seeley et al., 2019). Students develop strong bonds with each other and with TLC staff members, bonds that they carry with them after graduation. TLC is a mutually supportive learning community dedicated to preparing young Honduran women as ethical leaders who will change their communities and their country.

Authentic Voice. Authenticity is experienced when leader actions and behaviors are aligned with and based on the leader's core values and beliefs (Ely et al., 2011; Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005). The design of women's leadership development programs should include helping participants, especially young females, find their authentic voice (Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016). Women's leadership development programs should incorporate experiences that allow participants to "explore their interests, discover their authentic selves, develop autonomy, and increase their decision-making power in a steadily advancing and nonthreatening environment" (Anderson & Kim, 2009, p. 18). Activities that provide time and space for participant self-reflection (Selzer et al., 2017) will help them identify their core values and beliefs. Asking participants to prepare a written narrative (Ely et al., 2011) discussing their core values and beliefs will help these developing leaders to clarify and own their core values and beliefs. The personal reflection and internal work on core values and beliefs can be leveraged by participants to develop their leadership philosophy (Brue & Brue, 2016).

A leadership philosophy articulates the leadership attitude, will, and desire component of the youth leadership development curriculum (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002) and the core values and beliefs that serve as the foundation for authentic leadership. A well thought out and clearly articulated leadership philosophy will be of immense value when participants complete the leadership development program and step into their future roles as leaders.

Kelinsky and Anderson (2016) used a very interesting activity, called the "Scream Circle" (p. 164), in their leadership development program for young women. They describe this activity and its benefits: "Each female is asked to take a turn and scream in a manner reflective of her personality, which provides the participant with an opportunity to practice using authentic voice. When women feel comfortable and safe to express their opinions, share their experiences, and use their voice without retribution, it can lead to increased self-esteem and empowerment" (p. 164). This activity should be incorporated into the leadership classes at The Leadership Center as one means to help students develop and exercise their authentic voice.

Three additional instructional activities discussed in the literature are worth considering for adoption into the women's leadership development program at The Leadership Center. These include "meaningful artifacts" (Debebe, 2009), "Name that Leader" (Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016), and the development of a sense of purpose/personal leadership mission statement (Ely et al., 2011; Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016).

Meaningful Artifacts. A meaningful artifact is a physical object given to participants during training sessions that carries instructional, personal, and collective meaning (Debebe, 2009). Meaningful artifacts are useful tools to help participants overcome the tendency to revert to old habits and practices after they complete the program. Developing leaders can use the meaningful artifact they received during the program "to maintain the immediacy and urgency to act on a transformational insight well after training by reminding, inspiring, and/or strengthening the learner to act on the learning breakthroughs achieved during a training event" (Debebe, 2009, p. 9). Meaningful artifacts are triggers that remind the developing leader what she learned during her participation in the women's leadership development program. For example, an overview diagram of the seven habits of highly effective people can serve as a meaningful artifact to remind young leaders of the powerful principles and behaviors they learned in an organizational leadership class.

Name that Leader. During this activity, participants are asked to individually reflect on leaders they know about, select one, and write the name on a note card. They are then asked to write down three qualities that define that person as a leader. Participants are then divided randomly into small groups and asked to discuss their leaders and the qualities they identified for their leader. Each discussion group is asked to compile a list of the qualities from their group on a flip chart for presentation to the whole class, with discussion to follow (Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016).

This activity is designed to challenge participants to think about people they perceive as leaders and why, and to raise the awareness of participants about the mental models they hold about leadership and the qualities they associate with leaders. As a group, participants are exposed to how they individually and collectively define leadership. The intent of this activity is to create a more inclusive definition of leadership that transcends the traditional framework of leadership, in the hope that "more women will self-identify as a leader and become more empowered to possess greater confidence and assertiveness to lead" (Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016, p. 165).

These authors do not specify that participants be asked to reflect on female leaders and the character qualities of those female leaders. However, this modification to the assignment might be interesting and useful as a means to highlight and promote female leadership and the qualities of female leaders. This assignment should be considered for incorporation into one of the leadership classes at The Leadership Center.

Personal Leadership Mission Statement. Kelinsky and Anderson (2016) asked the participants in their women's leadership development training program to write a personal mission statement on a notecard, which participants could then take with them for future reference. A personal mission is, in essence, the person's reason for being (Jones, 1996). The personal mission statement encapsulates and expresses the leader's sense of purpose. Crafting a personal mission statement is very important work

to be engaged in as part of women's leadership development, for as Jones (1996) points out, "Finding one's mission, and then fulfilling it, is perhaps the most vital activity in which a person can engage" (p. x). Developing a personal mission statement is an instructional activity that should be considered for inclusion in one of the leadership classes taught at The Leadership Center.

RATIONALE BEHIND THIS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

This reflective practice is opportunity, not problem, based. The opportunity that is driving this reflective practice is that of an impending transition of leadership for The Leadership Center. The rationale that is behind this reflective practice is a desire to step back and reflect on the women's leadership development program that is The Leadership Center for the purpose of making recommendations for improvement for the new executive director to consider. This reflective practice will also serve as one element in the transition plan for the new executive director.

RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE?

We made numerous suggestions about instructional activities that should be considered for inclusion in classes at The Leadership Center, including adversity/resilience seminars, identity work to allow time for participants to develop their personal leader identity and their leader purpose, providing participants with time and activities to develop and practice their authentic voice, the use of meaningful artifacts that participants can take with them to remember key lessons learned, the Name the Leader activity focused on female leaders, and providing time and space for participants to develop their personal leadership mission statement. All of these activities will contribute to enhancing the experience of the women's leadership development program that is The Leadership Center. We also made suggestions regarding how we can better live out the values of The Leadership Center.

It will come as no surprise that gender is the common thread that runs throughout all of the women's leadership development literature. Eagly and Carli (2007) address this issue directly, stating, "People associate women and men with different traits, linking men with more of the traits that connote leadership. Such beliefs can make people conclude that no woman could have the 'right stuff' for powerful jobs" (p. 83). Exploration and consideration of gender related issues is one major step that The Leadership Center can take to significantly strengthen its women's leadership development program.

The exploration and discussion of gender-related concerns and experiences could be accomplished through a series of focused seminar discussions led by the TLC director of students, who is a Honduran female. Topics could include student experiences with gender discrimination or harassment in the machismo culture of Honduras, how gender affects their personal leadership styles, effectiveness, and careers (Ely et al., 2011), women's contributions to social change (Trigg, 2006) in Honduras and other Central American countries, barriers students will face as women when they graduate from TLC and how they might handle these barriers, the contradictory role expectations for women based on societal, cultural, and organizational norms (Debebe et al., 2016), and steps students can take to build and maintain their network with other students and graduates. Gender related topics such as these are "critically important to women's learning" (Debebe, 2011, p. 695).

A second major area that The Leadership Center can consider to significantly strengthen its women's leadership development program is to explore ways to expose students to successful female role models, especially female Honduran leaders, and to build a network of female leaders who are willing to mentor students and graduates. As Ruderman and Ohlott (2005) point out, "Women lack female role models for being powerful and political in a business setting" (p. 4). In the case of TLC students, all young Honduran females from under-resourced communities and families, they lack female role models and mentorship opportunities across all leadership settings. Previously, there were discussions about recruiting female leaders in the US to serve as mentors for TLC students and graduates, but nothing resulted from those discussions. We recommend that focused effort be put into recruiting female leaders to serve as mentors for students and graduates and that this mentor network be nurtured and maintained over time. We further recommend that a female member of the Board of Directors of Leadership Mission International take on ownership for this very important mentor network. As Vinnicombe

and Singh (2002) found in their study of women-only management training, introducing TLC students and graduates to the importance of female role models, the techniques and strategies for networking, and opportunities for mentoring relationships will no doubt prove to be invaluable.

REFLECTIVE CRITIQUE

This reflective practice is a very useful activity in support of the transition from the outgoing TLC executive director to the new director. We examined the values on which the women's leadership development program at TLC is based and made recommendations for what those in the TLC learning community can do to more fully live out the values. Much of this material on the core values of The Leadership Center had not previously been formally documented. Hence this reflective practice will be of great use in the transition process.

We also explored the women's leadership development literature to understand and identify best practices and potential areas in which the practice of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center can be improved. We made a number of recommendations for the new director to consider adopting.

As I (Dr. Seeley) reviewed the women's leadership development literature, several questions bothered me: As a male, can I really serve the female students of The Leadership Center well, in what is essentially a women's leadership development program? Should the faculty and staff of The Leadership Center be all female? The outgoing executive director and some of the instructors are male. The student director is a Honduran female. The remaining instructors are female, from both Honduras and the US. This is a somewhat vexing issue for me since I am passionate about serving the students of The Leadership Center and am convinced that God has called me to do so.

Ely et al. (2011) proposed a framework for women's leadership development which they grounded in theories of both gender and leadership. These authors addressed this issue directly based on questions they have been asked. Their perspective on this important issue is quoted in full:

> *We are often asked if WLP [Women's Leadership Program] faculty should be women as well. We do not think so. That said, being conversant in second-generation gender issues and being comfortable engaging in the controversial discussions that often arise in the classroom are prerequisites for teaching in these programs. In our experience, nuanced gender issues come up almost from the start in a WLP, as participants are eager to explore how gender affects their personal leadership styles, effectiveness, and careers. Instructors in these programs, therefore, must be willing and able to discuss second-generation gender bias and appear credible to participants on these issues (Ely et al., 2011, pp. 488-489).*

As an instructor at The Leadership Center, I am comfortable discussing gender-related issues with students in the classroom. As a senior manager at Intel Corporation, I went through micro inequities and gender-related training. I was a champion for making it possible for working mothers to work part-time so they were able to spend more time with their young children. I served as a mentor to numerous professional women and helped them advance in their careers. I am also trained as a Christian life coach and am passionate about helping the young women of The Leadership Center become all that God created them to be. Therefore, I am convinced that I can have a significant positive impact in the lives and development of the next generation of female Honduran leaders. Feedback from students and graduates affirms this conclusion.

The reflective practice approach to constructive inquiry is thought-provoking. We used reflective practice to explore key questions in preparation for a leadership transition: How well are we living out the stated values of The Leadership Center? What can we do to live out our values more fully? How can we improve the process of women's leadership development at The Leadership Center based on lessons from the literature? This reflective practice laid out our answers to these questions and resulted in a useful artifact to be utilized in the transition of leadership at The Leadership Center.

This reflective practice will be of interest and use to anyone who works in the field of women's leadership development and to those interested in the application of reflective practice for constructive inquiry. We encourage more researchers to explore

the use of reflective practice for issues other than specific problems. The essence of reflective practice is to understand the current situation, learn from your experience and the experience of others, analyze and assess the learnings, and make changes to improve self or practice. Reflective practice techniques can be productively applied to prepare for leadership transitions, organizational development, process improvement, and strategic shifts. Reflective practice techniques should be in the toolkit of researchers and analysts for use in constructive inquiry.

Soli Deo Gloria!

References

Anderson, J. C., & Kim, E. (2009). Youth leadership development: Perceptions and preferences of urban students enrolled in a comprehensive agriculture program. Journal of Agricultural Education, 50(1), 8-20.

Brue, K. L., & Brue, S. A. (2016). Experiences and outcomes of a women's leadership development program: A phenomenological investigation. Journal of Leadership Education, 15(3), 75-97.

Ciampa, D. (2016). After the handshake. Harvard Business Review, 2016, 60–68.

Covey, S. R. (1989). The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Damon, W. (2008). The path to purpose: Helping our children find their calling in life. New York, NY: Free Press.

Debebe, G. (2009). Transformational learning in women's leadership development training. Advancing Women in Leadership, 29(7).

Debebe, G. (2011). Creating a safe environment for women's leadership transformation. Journal of Management Education, 35(5), 679-712.

Debebe, G., Anderson, D., Bilimoria, D., & Vinnicombe, S. M. (2016). Women's leadership development programs: Lessons learned and new frontiers. Journal of Management Education, 40(3), 231-252. doi:10.1177/1052562916639079

Dewey, B. I. (2012). In Transition: The special nature of leadership change. Journal of Library Administration, 52(1), 133–144.

Diehl, A. B. (2014). Making meaning of barriers and adversity: Experiences of women leaders in higher education. Advancing Women in Leadership, 34, 54-63.

Dugan, J. P. (2006). Explorations using the social change model: Leadership development among college men and women. Journal of College Student Development, 47(2), 217-225.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Ely, R. J., Ibarra, H., & Kolb, D. M. (2011). Taking gender into account: Theory and design for women's leadership development programs. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 10(3), 474-493.

Filipovic, J. (2019). I can no longer continue to live here: What's driving so many Honduran women to the U.S. border? The reality is worse than you've heard. Politico. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/06/07/domestic-violence-immigration-asylum-caravan-honduras-central-america-227086

Finlay, L. (2008). Reflecting on 'reflective practice'. The Open University. http://www.open.ac.uk/opencetl/sites/www.open.ac.uk.opencetl/files/files/ecms/web-content/Finlay-(2008)-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf

Hopkins, M. M., O'neil, D. A., Passarelli, A., & Bilimoria, D. (2008). Women's leadership development strategic practices for women and organizations. Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 60(4), 348-365.

Johnson, C. E. (2012). Meeting the ethical challengs of leadership: Casting light or shadow. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Jones, L. B. (1996). The path: Creating your mission statement for work and for life. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Kelinsky, L. R., & Anderson II, J. C. (2016). Women's leadership development training for [program]. Journal of Leadership Education, 15(1), 161-170.

Lafreniere, S. L., & Longman, K. A. (2008). Gendered realities and women's leadership development: Participant voices from faith-based higher education. Christian Higher Education, 7(5), 388-404.

Leitch, R., & Day, C. (2000). Action research and reflective practice: Towards a holistic view. Educational Action Research, 8(1), 179-193.

LMI. (n.d.). Mission, vision, & motivation. The Leadership Center. https://leadershipmissioninternational.org/about-leadership-mission-international#our-mission-vision-motivation

Lomot, R. (2013). Gender discrimination: A problem stunting Honduras' entire economy. Global Majority E-Journal, 4(1), 15-26.

Loughran, J. J. (2002). Effective reflective practice: In search of meaning in learning about teaching. Journal of Teacher Education, 53(1), 33-43.

Martinez, C. H. (2019). Transparency international: Honduras. Transparency. https://www.transparency.org/country/HND#

Ricketts, J. C., & Rudd, R. D. (2002). A comprehensive leadership education model to train, teach, and develop leadership in youth. Journal of Career and Technical Education, 19(1), 7-17.

Rowlands, J. (1997). Questioning empowerment: Working with women in Honduras. Oxford, UK: Oxfam.

Ruderman, M. N., & Ohlott, P. J. (2005). Leading roles: What coaches of women need to know. Leadership in Action: A Publication of the Center for Creative Leadership and Jossey-Bass, 25(3), 3-9.

Seeley, C. P., Garcia, L. Y., Maldonado, M., Osorno, N. A., Ramirez, K., & Solorzano, E. F. (2019). Ripples of change in Honduran communities. Journal of Scholarly Engagement, 2(1).

Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Selzer, R., Howton, A., & Wallace, F. (2017). Rethinking women's leadership development: Voices from the trenches. Administrative Sciences, 7(2), 18.

Senge, P. M. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

Siebert, A. (2005). The resiliency advantage: Master change, thrive under pressure, and bounce back from setbacks. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Trigg, M. K. (2006). Educating women leaders for the twenty-first century. Liberal Education, 92(1), 22-27.

Van Manen, M. (1995). On the epistemology of reflective practice. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 1(1), 33-50.

Vinnicombe, S., & Singh, V. (2002). Women-only management training: An essential part of women's leadership development. Journal of Change Management, 3(4), 294-306.

Wakahiu, J., & Salvaterra, M. (2012). Sustainable leadership: Lessons and implications of a leadership development program for women religious in Africa. Journal of Pan African Studies, 5(2), 150-167.

Weston, M. J. (2018). Leadership transitions: Ensuring success. Nurse Leader, 16(5), 304-307.

Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind,'How do I improve my practice?'. Cambridge Journal of Education, 19(1), 41-52.