



# Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

## Resource Guide

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### What is Transformational Leadership?

Transformational leadership (TL) is one of the most prevalent leadership theories in organisational psychology. Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their followers' own leadership capacity. These leaders help followers to grow and develop by responding to followers' individual needs by empowering them and aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organisation (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

TL has been examined extensively in a variety of contexts, for example, the military (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003), the public sector (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004), business (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996), and sport (Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, & Hardy, 2009). Subsequent conceptualisation has led to a differentiated assessment of TL (Hardy *et al* 2010). This differentiated model of TL includes six transformational behaviours consisting of: *individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, fostering acceptance of group goals, high*

*performance expectations, appropriate role modelling* and one transactional behaviour; *contingent reward* (see table 1 for the definitions of these behaviours).

In the higher education teaching and learning context, Mawn, Callow, Hardy and Arthur (*in prep*) assessed the perceptions of lecturing through the use of focus groups with higher education (HE) students and semi structured interview with HE lecturers. Employing Hardy *et al*'s (2010) differentiated conceptualisation as a TL frame work, the findings from this study offers support for the applicability of the differentiated TL model in the HE context. Further, additional themes important to HE lecturing emerged. Specifically, six of the seven TL behaviours specified in Hardy *et al.*, (2010) were identified with *individual consideration* being particularly relevant for students; however, *fostering acceptance of group goals* was considered not to be relevant to the HE lecturing context. Moreover, additional themes emerged pertaining to lecturers; *self belief, sense of humour* and *interpersonal interaction* (see Table 1 for definitions of these behaviours).

## **How does transformational leadership relate to student dimensions?**

A recent government white paper '*Students at the heart of the system*' (2011) stated that the primary goal of upcoming education reforms is to improve the quality of students' academic experience and to increase their educational gain. In his recent report for the Higher Education Academy, '*Dimensions of Quality*', Gibbs (2010) identified student effort and engagement as two of the dimensions of a high quality learning experience. Related to these types of dimensions, a recent study funded by the HLST, (Mawn *et al.*, *in prep*) assessed the extent to which the TL behaviours would predict certain student dimensions. Employing the eight behaviour model for HE, Mawn *et al.*, developed a measure of transformational leadership. Using this questionnaire of TL and a sample of 349 university students, the authors found that the leadership behaviours positively predicted student related dimensions.

Specifically, individual consideration predicted student satisfaction and academic efficacy. Six of the transformational leadership behaviours positively predicted different types of intrinsic motivation. For example, individual consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation positively predicted intrinsic motivation-to-know. Inspirational motivation, high performance expectations and

contingent reward positively predicted intrinsic motivation-to-experience-stimulation and individual consideration, high performance expectations, self belief and contingent reward positively predicted intrinsic motivation-to-accomplish. Most interestingly, the TL behaviours also positively predicted students' module performance, that is, students who perceive lecturers to exhibit these behaviours more frequently also perform better than those who do not perceive these behaviours from their lecturer.

## Transformational Leadership: What are the key behaviours and examples of how to integrate them into lecturing?

The following guidelines for acting in a transformational way when lecturing were developed from a qualitative study which examined 'Students perceptions of Transformational Lecturing' (Mawn, Callow, Hardy & Arthur, *in prep*)

Behaviour	Definition	Example
<b>Individual Consideration</b>	Behaviour by leaders where they show their respect for followers and concern for their personal feelings and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide followers with physical support in the form of feedback, information, materials and understanding</li> <li>• provide support for followers self esteem by valuing followers, appreciate their contributions, and ensures they are progressing well</li> <li>• encourages the follower</li> <li>• demonstrate care for followers and take interest in them and their work</li> <li>• show respect, attention, and consideration towards followers</li> <li>• listen</li> <li>• demonstrate that you are approachable and available to followers</li> <li>• shows equality between self and the followers e.g. first names</li> <li>• consider differences between followers levels of abilities, ways of learning, and approaches to work</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of the followers personal situations</li> </ul>
<b>Inspirational Motivation</b>	Behaviour by leaders where they develop, articulate and inspire others to follow a vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gets followers engaged and interacting</li> <li>• provides followers with of a vision of the future that is achievable</li> <li>• states what followers will achieve in the lecture and for the next</li> <li>• provide meaning for the followers work</li> <li>• show followers how their work applies to real world</li> <li>• uses analogies to help to explain</li> <li>• provide examples of work for followers copy</li> <li>• inspire followers</li> <li>• behave in an enthusiastic, passionate and energetic way</li> <li>• shows the follower that they believe in them</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual Stimulation</b>	Behaviour by leaders where they challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes the follower think about their work in a critical way</li> </ul>

	followers to re-examine their assumptions about their work and re-think how it can be performed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breaks information down for the follower to understand</li> <li>• explains information, and does so clearly</li> <li>• challenge followers to come up with new ideas</li> <li>• ask questions that make the followers think</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate Role Modelling</b>	Behaviour by leaders where they set examples for followers to copy that are consistent with the values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set an example for the follower to copy</li> <li>• demonstrate how much effort you invest</li> <li>• model being prepared to the followers</li> <li>• show breadth and depth of knowledge to the follower</li> </ul>
<b>High Performance Expectations</b>	Behaviour by leaders where they express expectations for excellence, quality, and/or high performance on the part of followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tell followers you want them to do well and succeed</li> <li>• challenge followers to perform well</li> <li>• tell followers that you expect them to achieve high grades</li> </ul>
<b>Self Belief</b>	Behaviour by leaders that show they are confident in themselves, their knowledge and their material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lecture in a confident manner</li> <li>• show confidence in your knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Sense of Humour</b>	Behaviour by the leader that elicits follower amusement and laughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use humour in lectures</li> <li>• make relevant jokes</li> </ul>
<b>Contingent Reward</b>	Behaviour by the leader that provides reward in return for appropriate behaviour on the followers' behalf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expresses approval or admiration, for followers</li> <li>• identifying the follower in a positive manner on the basis of their work</li> <li>• gives/ provides something desirable to followers in return for what they have done</li> <li>• Praise, recognise and reward followers for appropriate behaviour</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Transformational leadership behaviours, definitions and examples of how to provide them.**

## Key Texts

### General

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectation*. New York: Free Press.

Yukl, G.A. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 285-305.

### Organisational Psychology

Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (Eds.). (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bass, B. M. (1990). *From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision*. *Organizational Dynamics*, (Winter): 19-31.

### Sport Psychology

Callow, N., Smith, M. J., Hardy, L., Arthur, C. A., & Hardy, J. (2009). Measurement of transformational leadership and its relationship with team cohesion and performance level. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 21, 395-412.

### Education

Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industrial, military, and educational impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

### Building Transformational Leadership

Hardy, L., Arthur, C. A., Jones, G., Shariff, A., Munnoch, K., Isaacs, I., et al. (2010). The relationship between transformational leadership behaviours, psychological, and training outcomes in elite military recruits. *Leadership Quarterly*, 21, 20-32.

Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 827-832.

## **Key Online resources**

Institute for Psychology of Elite Performance Website

<http://ipep.bangor.ac.uk/leadership.php>