

TO: Dr. Carnahan

FROM: Richard Cottone
Kimberly Crowley
Dwayne Davis

DATE: July 16, 2015

SUBJECT: PROJECT ONE: SKILLS APPROACH

Attached is the handout for Project One: Skills Approach as prepared by Group Two.

Thank you.

Skills Approach

Origins & Three-Skills Approach

Unlike other approaches that focus on personality characteristics, which are usually viewed as innate and largely fixed, the skills approach is comprised of skills and abilities that can be learned and developed (Northhouse Pg.43). In 1955, Robert Katz laid the groundwork for the skills approach theory after publishing the article “Skills of an Effective Administrator”. Katz introduced the Three-Skills Approach, which identified Technical, Human and Conceptual skills as the developable skills shared by effective leaders. Technical skill is someone’s knowledge of or competency in a specific type of work or activity (Northhouse Pg.44). Human skill is knowledge of and the ability to work with people. Conceptual skill is the ability to work with ideas and concepts. As managers move up the hierarchal structure, they tend to need more conceptual and human skills and less technical skills. Effective mid-level managers require an equal distribution of all three skills. Lower-level managers require more technical and human skills and less conceptual skills.

Five Components of Skills Approach

- **Individual Attributes**
General Cognitive Ability, Crystallized Cognitive Ability, Motivation, Personality
- **Competencies**
Problem-Solving Skills, Social Judgement Skills, Knowledge
- **Leader Outcomes**
Effective Problem Solving, Performance
- **Career Experiences**
Challenging Job Assignments, Mentoring, Appropriate Training, Hands-On Experience
- **Environmental Experiences**
Internal (technology, facilities, communication), External (economic/political/social issues, natural disasters)

Strengths of the Skills Approach

- Leader-centered
- Appealing
- Expansive view of leadership
- Provides a structure consistent with the curricula of most leadership education programs

Weaknesses of the Skills Approach

- Too many components make it more general and less precise
- Weak in predictive value
- Claims not to be a trait model when a major component includes critical attributes, which are trait-like
- May not be appropriately applied to other contexts of leadership

Application of the Skills Approach

- Hasn’t been widely used in applied leadership settings
- Provides a way to delineate the skills of the leader
- Helps us identify our strengths and weaknesses
- Design can potentially be used for the design of leadership developmental programs