ABSTRACT

The paper is based upon the program that we offer at the University of Delaware for women in public service. This program has been in development for the past 20 years and now consists of three phases with additional leadership offering for the graduates of all three phases. I have also taken the program to Russia (for 6 consecutive years) and to Germany for several sessions.

First, I will describe the elements that are essential for success in any program for public sector managers, including such things as audience appropriateness, research needed, program elements, length of time, cost and follow-up needed for constant learning.

This will be followed by a description of the program we offer at the University of Delaware for individuals in public service, including the mission statement, program elements for each of the three training phases, evaluation components for each phase (not only the evaluation tools but
also how we utilize them for continual program improvement) and lessons learned/changes made. Then we will compare our program with other known training programs by looking at their audiences, program design/elements, outcomes expected, etc.

Then, I will briefly discuss my experiences and lessons learned when taking the programs to other sectors and other nations. One cannot simply translate a program designed for an American public service audience to another sector, language and culture. There are many nuances of the culture and even the language that must be considered for the program to be successfully exported.

**PAPER**

When initiating a discussion about any training, it is important to define a training experience versus a lecture experience for adult learners. We are all familiar, as both students and professors, with the lecture experience. It is how most of us learned in the classroom. Typically, the format is for the professor to impart his or her knowledge to the students. Often it is pure transfer of information, “I tell you about a given field, you take notes and will be tested at regular intervals.” If the students are fortunate, there will also be discussions, projects, and guest speakers. This experience is “about building a knowledge base and the skills for developing that knowledge base.” The focus is “Learning About.” (Milano and Ullius)

If we consider the lecture experience as a science, then training can be viewed as an art. Training, in contrast, “focuses on building specific areas of knowledge, skills or attitudes that directly influence a person’s ability to perform a job, execute a task, or solve a problem.” The focus is in “Learning How.” (Milano and Ullius)

This places a different responsibility on the presenter. While the lecturer is valued for his or her knowledge base, the trainer must put that knowledge in a format that is engaging, involving, and enjoyable for the participants. In successful training, the room is filled with energy, people dialogue and share experiences while the trainer imparts his or her knowledge, but with a significant difference in engagement. The participant’s input is considered as valuable as the trainers’ knowledge. The material must be practical and useful for the participants own development.

**Designing Powerful Training**

In their discussion of *Designing Powerful Training*, Milano and Ullius emphasize the 3 E’s: Effective, Efficient & Engaging. Effective means that the training is relative to the participants’ needs; Efficient means that it makes good use of the participants time and energies; and Engaging means that the process grabs the learners and brings them directly into the learning process.

Public administrators are busy people, often with high workloads and really do not want to spend a day either listening to a lecture or leaning something that is not practical. A pure academic
approach is not useful to them. It is certainly not because they lack the mental capacity to understand the material, but they want something immediately useful. If they have to take the lecture material and somehow make it apply to their own situation, they simply will not do it. For them a day of lectures is not only boring but a waste of their time.

The adult learner is a very special person:

“To children, experience is something that happens to them; to adults, their experience is who they are... The implications of this for adult education is that in any situation in which adults’ experience is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not rejecting just their experience, but rejecting them as a person.”

—Malcom S. Knowles (Milano and Ullius)

Milano and Ullius present six Principles for Training and Design for adult learners.

* **Personal experience is the key learning tool.**

Adults enter the training with a huge reservoir of personal experience, they expect to use it in the training and they learn best when they can use that experience. They learn very quickly those things that fit with their experience, but they need more time to process any information that does not fit with those experiences.

* **Motivation for learning is driven by needs: problem solving or personal satisfaction.**

Adults are most motivated to learn about those things that relate directly to their immediate needs. This is not to say, adults don’t enjoy learning for its own sake, but most see learning as a means to an end. It may be developing a skill for their work, learning to resolve conflicts with their fellow workers or their family, managing their money more effectively or achieving balance in their hectic lives.

The more important the need, the more motivated adults are to learn what will help them meet the need.

Cyril Houle, in *The Inquiring Mind*, (Milano & Ullius) puts learning into three categories: goal, activity and learning.

* **Goal-oriented learners** are motivated to learn because they have set a goal and learning is one important way to achieve it. It may be a long-term goal, such as career advancement, or a short-term goal, such as learning a particular software program.

* **Activity-oriented learners** engage in learning events for the sake of the activity itself. They are motivated by being involved with others in the learning process.
Learning-oriented people are those who love learning for its own sake.

* Adults are independent learners.

   Adults interpret information according to their personal values and experiences. They may value the trainer’s opinions, but they are the ultimate judge of whether the training applies to their lives.

* Protecting the learner’s self-esteem is critical.

   The environment must be safe. If it is not, little learning is likely to happen. Learning takes energy and freedom, but if the environment does not feel safe, large amounts of personal energy will go into protecting the individual.

   Adults need to feel that they can question what the trainer says and discuss their personal experiences without feeling threatened.

* Adults have clear expectations about training.

   When adults enter into training, they bring with them a variety of experience in education and training. These experiences will largely determine their behavior, particularly at the beginning of the training.

   Some adults expect training to be like school (the lecture model); and others expect the experience to be highly interactive and engaging.

* Adults learn in a variety of ways and have preferences in learning styles.

   Each participant has preferences that affect the way they learn. Some prefer to listen and observe; others cannot wait to roll up their sleeves and try the new skill. “The challenge for those who design training is to incorporate a variety of learning styles into the program.

  **Russian Experience**

I shall always remember my first experience in Russia, as it so well illustrates these concepts. The audience was made up of public administrators in cities of the Ural region, and the mission of the three Americans was to discuss economic development. I was there as a member of the Delaware State Senate, sharing our state’s economic development strategies and experiences. In our first stop in Chelyabinsk, the participants were herded into a lecture hall with wooden seats and required to sit through three speakers and for the most part, three lectures.

I chose to go first, as at least I had colorful transparencies and could speak from practical experience. As I glanced around the audience, it was apparent that eyes were beginning to glaze
over and despite attempts to engage the audience, I was essentially lecturing. The two speakers that followed were pure lecturers and by that time, the audience had totally tuned out.

Apparently, this is the typical presentation format, and it was all the audience expected from us. The room arrangement was certainly not conducive to interaction nor was the audience accustomed to it. When it came to questions, I literally had to bribe them to ask questions, by giving out Delaware pins to anyone who asked a question.

From Chelyabinsk, we moved to Etakerinburg, the site of the U.S. Consulate. There at least, the room was not a lecture hall, but a classroom with small tables. I could move among the participants, as I discussed the material. This time there were many questions and a great deal more interest in the practical applications and “how to” of our economic development program. It was still not training, but at least the participants became engaged.

I returned to Ekaterinburg a year later and conducted real training. My audience was women from various fields and my mission was to conduct training on women’s leadership. The participants sat at tables that were in a “U” formation with an opening at the end for me to move closer to the audience. I began with an exercise and totally surprised the audience. It was as though they had never been asked for their opinions nor were those opinions ever seen as valuable for the discussion. From that point, the audience became fully engaged and often, I had to stop discussion lest the program run beyond the time limits. I also divided them into smaller discussion groups and utilized all my training “bag of tricks” to help them understand what leadership really meant and how they could become effective leaders. The materials were all translated so that they had a take home copy and I had a translator present at all times.

The program was so successful that I returned to Ekaterinburg five more times and also took the program to Perm and other cities in the region. Women from Chelyabinsk often appeared at our training and even rode a bus for several hours just to participate in additional leadership topics.

**Women’s Leadership Development Program**

With this as an introduction, let me describe our Women’s Leadership Development Program at the University of Delaware. Our primary audience is women who work for state and local government and non-profit organizations. We certainly welcome women from all backgrounds, as we believe it enriches the networking that we encourage.

**Our Mission Statement**

*Our mission is to help women in public service begin their lifetime leadership journeys by building leadership capacity and skills, learning, growing and embracing change to successfully meet the many challenges of the 21st Century.*
“To step out into the unknown, begin with the exploration of the inner territory. With that as a base, we can then discover and unleash the leader within us all.”

—Kouzes & Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*

This program began in 1989 with a four part mini-series: **A Leadership Symposium for Women: How to Be a Powerful Voice in Decision Making.** The topics included: *The Origin of Issues and How to Influence their Future, Creating the Community Buy-In, Building Partnerships and Negotiating Compromises and How to be Effective in Influencing Public Policy.* Sixty-eight women registered and the evaluations indicated a great interest in more programs for women on leadership.

The program has now evolved into a three-phase program (see diagram enclosed) that includes: Phase I, **The Power of Leadership;** Phase II, **Advanced Leadership** and Phase III, **Achieving Leadership.** Each phase is longer, more intense and incorporates one or more of the Conger model components (Conger, *Learning to Lead*)

Phase I is a one-day conference and the focus is on understanding and exploring leadership (Conger’s **Conceptual** component). This is the beginning of our metaphor of **leadership as a Journey.** Topics include the Special Role of Women in Public Service, Power, Leadership & Management; Men & Women as Leaders; Social Capital; a Leadership Scenario; Creativity and Your Personal Leadership Journey. We incorporate working groups around the topics of power, leadership, management, men & women as leaders, social capital and the leadership scenario. The participants are required to move around, meet new people and work together as groups. We also begin developing a list of “Characteristics of Effective Leaders,” a theme we expand upon as we move into the second phase. At the conclusion, we talk about creativity and show the video, *Everyday Creativity, Star Throwers.*

Phase II is a two-day retreat with the added components of **Skills Development & Self Assessment.** Under Skills Development, we review and illustrate our list of 16 Characteristics of Effective Leaders and do special sections on Change, Thinking Outside the Box and the New World Order (based on Margaret Wheatley’s *Leadership & the New Science*). For Skills Development we use the *Strength Development Inventory* (a behavior measurement) and the *Myers-Briggs* (an assessment of your innate preferences).

The *Myers-Briggs* is often the most popular of the topics, and is an eye opening experience for most participants, “Now I know why I do things the way I do, and I can begin to understand that not everyone is like me because they have a different way of doing things.” The topics included in the Myers-Briggs are: understanding the meaning of your preference letters, conflicts among each of the preferences, temperaments, how types handle change, communication, type dynamics, and leadership.

The *Strength Deployment Inventory* measures a different component of self-assessment—behavior, and is especially valuable for showing how we change during times of conflict.
We also explore an advanced look at Leadership Development: How Leaders Develop and What Develops, based on the *Leadership Handbook from the Center for Creative Leadership*, and give our participants a number of self-evaluation forms and other materials to help them continue their own leadership journey.

As the book for advanced reading, we give each participant a copy of *Leadership on the Line* by Ron Heifitz and Marty Linsky. We ask them to read selected passages and discuss those and the implication on leadership development. We also encourage the participants to read the entire book and some groups have established book groups to do just that. And we conclude with an exercise that now only stresses the value of networks but also gives us a more impromptu and often more honest evaluation of the program.

Phase III consists of eight half-day sessions and is conducted by my colleague Dr. Audrey Helfman, who worked with me in developing the full program. The participants learn more about topics as: decision-making, defining a vision, negotiating, disarming enemies and defining your leadership style. The most valuable component of this Phase is the opportunity for the participants to go out and practice leadership and then, in the very safe environment, of only their fellow participants, share what went well, what didn’t go well and lessons learned.

We have also started a more informal Phase IV which focuses primarily on the graduates of all three Phases. At least once a year we hold half-day seminars on topics we were unable to cover in the more formal programs. To date we have done programs on Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution. Our participants find these valuable for continued interactions with the women they had worked with as well as the opportunity for advanced learning. One of the past graduates of our three-phased program has greatly enhanced this continued learning and networking by writing a Leadership Newsletter and organizing luncheons (with speakers) for this group of women.

**Designing a Successful Leadership Development Program**

As we began to develop this program from its start as a four-part mini-series to a fully structured three-phased program, the lessons from Milano & Ullins were very valuable.

Our list of important components includes not only their list, but also others that we have learned from conducting these programs:

* The program must be research based, but delivered in non-academic language and methodology. The participants do not want to attend a class lecture; they want a training experience. However, it is essential that the trainers have sufficient knowledge in the subject matter. That knowledge comes from extensive reading of the literature and training experience themselves. From the classic leadership writings of James McGregor Burns *Leadership* to the most current texts and journal articles, we gather the basis of our training materials. It is also very helpful to have experienced other training programs. For example, I attended the Center for Creative Leadership’s *Leader Lab*, became qualified to administer the Myers-Briggs, Strength Deployment Inventory, Thomas Kilman and other instruments.
I am always very concerned when a trainer essentially buys a training program and is really not knowledgeable about the core materials.

* The program must be interesting and relevant. Although, it is tempting for a former academic to try and share everything I know about a subject, that is just not appropriate in adult training. Pick those core pieces, the “golden nuggets” to share and encourage the participants to explore further.

We have also become “translators” of the literature. While most of the leadership books, articles etc. are written for the business sector, we must put these in public service language. For example, the book we give the participants at Phase II, “Leadership on the Line,” was written at the Harvard Business School, but there are many valuable lessons to be learned from it. I am a subscriber of both the “Harvard Business Review and the “Wall Street Journal’ as both publications have excellent articles on leadership and women in leadership. We summarize these articles and put them in a public service framework.

* The program must be unique. We do not serve as another management program or simply as a question and answer forum, but focus on developing leadership capacity in individuals and hence in the organizations they represent. Our State Office of Human Resources offers many good management courses. Leadership is our mission.

* Participation in the programs should require motivation on the individual’s part. Our programs are self-selecting; that is, the participants choose to come and often must convince their supervisors, Division Director’s etc. that the program has value for them and their organization.

* The program must provide a safe environment. That is one of the major reasons that ours is a women’s only program. We have found in other trainings that if men, and only a few non-threatening men, are present, the dynamics dramatically changes. The women are less willing to share, talk about their own experiences or assert themselves. It is unfortunate in this more “enlightened” and more “equitable” world that gender still is a very important consideration.

* The participants must have an opportunity to share their experiences. More extraverted individuals love this, but introverts must be encouraged to participate as well. They may be somewhat reluctant, but call on them and provide a “safe” way for them to respond without judgment by you or the other participants. But, beware of the “always wants to talk” individual. These people can quickly dominate and take over the training. Do not let them. It angers the other participants and destroys the continuity of the training. Learn some effective ways of dealing with these people, as at least one of them is present in all training events.

* The program should be open to participants of all levels of public service. All too often, programs are designed for women (and men) of only certain levels, for example only Division Directors or only supervisors. What many organizations fail to realize is that people (men and women) from all levels have a great deal to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the
services provided This is the concept of building leadership (learning) organizations, “where leaders exist at all levels and leaders actively develop the next generation of leaders. The organizations that win will be those that build and maintain a focus on developing leaders at all levels.” (Noel Tishey, *The Leadership Engine*) And, as recent Wall Street Journal article stated, “Leaders cannot change organizations on their own. The secret is to foster a leadership mentality throughout the ranks.” (Wall Street Journal, March 3, 2007).

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and help them become what they are capable of being.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

* Vary the learning experiences the program offers. Adults learn in many ways. Some prefer obtaining information in an almost lecture style, while others prefer an experimental method, “If I can participate in exercises and learn with my hands, I will learn more.” Our program utilizes many different kinds of learning experiences: information sharing, group exercises, hands on activities and learning from experiences of others.

* Avoid information overload. This is difficult for us as there is so much valuable information available about leadership and women in leadership. It is tempting to commit the ultimate sin of training: putting so much information in the formal presentation that neither you or your participants ever comes up for air or has an opportunity to reflect about something that was just said. We have partially solved this problem in two ways. First, if anything new goes into the presentation, something else must come out. Secondly, we provide supplemental and extra reading, materials in all our Phases. We may include a comment, but then give them the actual source. From experience, we do know that many of our participants do read many of the materials. For Phase I, we provide an extra folder and in Phase II, a separate notebook.

* Avoid “Death by PowerPoint.” With the advent of power point as the presentation of choice, there is an additional temptation of too many slides and not enough discussion or interaction. It is a wonderful tool and certainly does save time from the old transparency or flip chart formats, but be aware that the human eye gets very tired of slide after slide after slide. Also try to keep the lights on and use colors that are easy to read.

* Always give the participants copies of the power point slides. If you do not, then they will spend most of their time taking notes, instead of listening and participating. I am always amused in the beginning of our Phase I program by the “note takers.” Although we promise that we will give them copies of all the slides, but only after they have defined and discussed the topics of power and leadership, some participants do not believe us and still take notes.

* The program must challenge the participants to go further in their own leadership journey. If all they do is come, learn a few things, meet some new people and go home saying, “that was an interesting conference.” Then we have not done our job of encouraging growth. For all Phases, we give the participants self-evaluation exercises, action plan formats, supplemental reading and an extensive list of leadership materials.
* Keep the program fresh and interesting. If I did the same program for every Phase I and II, I would be bored and it would show in my presentation. I have the good fortune of having a female Master’s degree student working with me and presenting with me. These students come in with very valuable knowledge and experience and learn important aspects of leadership in their classes. I always encourage them to add, change or even eliminate materials that do not seem important or relevant. In this way, we have an internal evaluation of materials.

* Include other speakers to avoid their boredom with you. In Phase II, we do have a communications speaker. In both Phases my graduate student is also a presenter. It is a good experience for the student and provides a break for the audience and me.

* Include some surprises and hands on games. If everything you do is so very predictable, then they will lose interest. Throwing balls of yarn and using other “toys” surprises and amuses them.

Adults love to use crayons or colored markers. We did not outgrow this love of crayons as we get older, but too many trainings fail to take into account the importance of letting people be creative. Remember, art talent doesn’t count. Encourage the participants to share their “art work,” and never comment about the skill or lack of skill they demonstrate.

Lois Levy, a professional trainer, writes that “to help (my) clients lighten up, I give even executives crayons. Coloring is a great way to help them relax. But, I have to give them a ten-minute warning when it is time to stop. When I’ve got a group coloring, they don’t ever want to stop.” (Lois Levy, in Roxanna Popescu).

* Have fun! Training should be informative, but also fun. When the participants leave a training smiling about the good time they had, as well as how informative and inspiring it was, then you have conducted a successful program.

* Use cultural appropriate materials. This is particularly true if you do training in another country. One of the games I often use in the Myers-Briggs is putting together puzzles. Russian women, especially older women just couldn’t do it in a reasonable time frame, and they became very frustrated. No more puzzles in Russia. Then I also discovered that they had difficulty throwing and catching balls of yarn, however they enjoyed the game and also enjoyed helping each other catch and throw. So it became not only a leadership learning experience, but also an experience in helping others. We have had the good fortune of having a number of Russian students in our MPA program. They not only do some of the translation, after they have participated in the program, but help us evaluate some of the symbols we use. To represent mentoring and helping others, we use a picture of training wheels. This had no relevance in Russia, and with their help, we found a better symbol.

* Create an appropriate “giveaway,” that is, something the participants can take home with them. In Phase I, all we give them are very professional looking certificates and encourage them to put it their personnel file. In Phase II, there is also a certificate, and a surprise tote bag to carry everything home in. It has our colors and logo on it and therefore has the advantage of serving
as advertisement for others to attend. “Giveaways” do not have to be expensive and even a professionally created certificate is sufficient.

* Use only materials that are professional in appearance. With today’s computers, you can easily generate very professional looking materials with little, or no, additional cost. Our notebooks and folders have our logo on them, the nametags are generated on a computer with our logos and we organize the materials so that they do not have to fumble through a maze of papers.

* Do take breaks. No one can sit still too long, even if there are activities included in the segment. Everyone, including you, needs a few minutes to relax. Have refreshments available as well. But, don’t let the participants wonder too far away or take too long.

* Ask everyone to turn off or mute their cell phones. Nothing is worse to hear a cell phone ring, especially with a loud or musical ring. These are busy people and they may have to attend to an emergency, but at least they can mute the phone so it doesn’t bother everyone else.

* Conduct the training in a comfortable and network friendly facility. I always go back to my first experience in Chelyabinsk Russia and try to use facilities that are comfortable, encourage group activities, and the participants rate very highly. We are fortunate in Delaware by having ideal conference centers for both Phase I & II. Phase I is conducted at Buena Vista, a former Governor’s private home and is located south of Wilmington; Phase II at a University conference center is southern Delaware.

Sometimes there is a perceived advantage of using out-of-state facilities, but this often creates problems for our participants in justifying the costs, even if that facility is actually less expensive than the ones we use.

• Create a mechanism to promote your program. In the beginning of our training, we often had difficulty getting women to sign up for the next year’s programs. So I created an “Advisory Group” that I meet with once a year and ask them to distribute copies of our registration forms. Often these are women who have attended our training and can speak first hand about the value of the experience. Several suggestions about such meetings: don’t have them very often, make them short, serve refreshments and provide some sort of give away besides copies of the registration forms. We give them a new leadership book each year. This last element has greatly increased attendance and given them a useful tool for further self-learning or group discussions.

**Evaluations**

The only way you will know if your programs are valuable and have impact on the participants is to do extensive evaluations. Milano & Ullius have some useful information on this subject, but we have found the most relevant material from Donald Kirkpatrick’s: *Evaluating Training Programs*.

Kirkpatrick proposes four levels of evaluation:
Level 1: Evaluating Reaction

Do the participants now have an increased knowledge of leadership? Did they find the program interesting and stimulating? Did they find the facility conducive for learning? Will they continue their leadership journey?

Level 2: Evaluation of Learning

Did the participants learn something from attending the training? Did they learn more about leadership skills and personal assessment?

Level 3: Evaluation of Behavior

How has this learning affected their behavior and leadership success in the workplace and personally?

Level 4: Evaluation of Organizational Results

Has your training had an impact on the organization in terms of its ability to be more efficient and effective and better serve their clients?

For our WLDP, these levels break down in the following way:

Phase 1:

By the end of this workshop you will have an increased knowledge base of the basic leadership components so that you can use this knowledge as a building block for your own leadership capacity.

Phase 2:

By the end of this workshop, you will have gained a better sense of your strengths and weaknesses so that you can incorporate this sense of self with the building blocks of leadership and become a better leader.

Phase 3:

By the end of phase three, you will have a better understanding of your leadership skills, learned what has worked or not worked in various situations and will have an array of examples from which to learn and share with others.

KEY

Learning Level of Evaluation
Reaction Level of Evaluation
Behavior Level of Evaluation
We have not done a Level 4 evaluation as our participants come from so many different departments. The good news is that we have had inquiries from some of these organizations about doing such a Level 4.

More specifically for our three phased program:

**Phase I:**

We do the **Reaction Level** of evaluation. We have designed the evaluation tools ourselves to match the materials covered. At the very beginning, before the program begins, we ask them: What are their expectations for this day of training?” At the end of the evaluation, we ask how well we met their expectations. Other questions cover the various elements of the program, which we ask them to rate on a scale of 1 to 6. We also ask them to rate the facility and leave an extra page for specific comments. These evaluations are scored and the comments read very carefully. If we are not meeting our goal of developing a conceptual understanding of leadership, then changes need to be made.

Our difficulty in all evaluations is ensuring that they are returned before the participants depart. We have resorted to a “transactional” technique: “You do not get your certificate until you hand in the evaluation.” This has been the only process that guarantees our collection of the evaluations.

**Phase II:**

Here we do both the **Reaction Level** evaluation, based again on the elements of the training, and the **Learning Level** of evaluation. The reaction level is fairly easy to do and have it returned.

The Learning Level proved to be a bit more difficult to administer as we want them to answer the same set of questions (again relative to the training) three times. There is a pre-assessment (Step 1) or what did you know about the topics before the training started. This is mailed out with other materials prior to the training. At the end of the materials we are having them evaluate, we ask them what do you know now? (Step 2). Then, we collect that form and give them another identical question sheet that asks, “What did you really know before you came to the training?” (Step 3). The typical responses show that the participants thought they knew more than they really did, hence the need for that third response. If you compare the second step and the third step, then the true learning can be assessed.

There are many problems with administering these three steps. Ideally, we wouldn’t ask for steps two or three two until some time after the training. However, if we don’t catch them while they are with us, the return rate is less than 50%. After much trial and error, we have found that several things are essential for the participants to really pay attention to this whole process. We set aside a specific time in the program (near the end of day two). We provide very specific instructions – often several times. We provide refreshments and play relaxing music. We hand
out Step 2 and as we collect it, we hand out Step 3 and again explain the difference. Each of the steps has a different colored cover.

Then we complete the program (another hour of topics), so that this evaluation is not the last thing that they do. If it is left until the end, they rush through it and the results are meaningless.

We created the questions to match the content of the training and we give them a range of responses to each. The questions are all on one page. After many attempts to have results that are meaningful, not just that they all learned a great deal, we have gotten back some meaningful results. Still some of them do not pay attention to the instructions and their results often indicate that we “unlearned” them.

The final exercise is another version of the reaction level evaluation. We divide the participants into two groups and my graduate student and a “volunteer” that I recruit from the audience takes each group. They must be separated and I cannot participate in this. The exercise is often called “the twine game.” They stand in a circle and someone is given a ball of twine. The first person tells their group what they found most valuable about the program, then throws the ball to another person in the group and so on until everyone has a piece of the twine and is connected to everyone else. The group facilitator asks them to look around and notice the network they have built, a network that is important for them to stay connected with. Then, as they unwind this network, we ask them to tell us what wasn’t meaningful and ask for any changes they would suggest.

The facilitator of each group takes notes on both parts of the exercise. We find that this is perhaps the most honest evaluation we can possibly get. It is done spontaneously and it is a fun way to end the conference. Again, we review these comments, as they are very valuable to our knowing if the training has been meaningful.

*Phase III.*

In this phase we do the reaction level and the behavior level of evaluation.

The women in Phase III are together for eight half-day sessions and have had the opportunity to practice leadership, share experiences and really network. The biggest question is whether all this training has improved their leadership behavior.

To this end, we created our own 360 instrument. It has 44 questions and participation is entirely voluntary. If the women choose to participate, we send them a set of questions for themselves and three others (again different color covers) to distribute to their colleagues. Ideally, it should be given to a direct report, a peer and a supervisor.

These other evaluations come back directly to us, so the participant never sees the results of their colleague’s comments. Confidentiality is crucial. We then average the three other results and prepare an Excel plot of the participant and the average. In this way, the participant has a quick view of her own perceived leadership abilities versus how the rest of her colleagues view them.
Then I call or meet with them to discuss the results. Significant differences at any point in the curve indicate a disconnect between their view and others views, and become areas on which the participant needs to work.

This is done at the beginning of Phase III, so that if any deficiencies appear, they still have time to work on them and share with others.

Summary Comments

How do we know that this program has made a difference and what can we do to keep it relevant and a growth experience? The evaluations, of course, provide us with information about each of the Phases and the 360 is an indication of how effective our program has been in developing leaders.

But, perhaps the most obvious, yet un-measurable factor is the growth and change we see in the participants as they progress through the program. We have seen significant changes in behavior, attitudes and leadership skills. Many of the Phase III graduates continue meeting in an informal setting. We do not conduct these programs, the participants do. From time to time, they may contact us for additional information or suggested readings. This information is now on the Resources page of our website. One of the graduates from several years ago is now writing a Women’s Leadership Newsletter to which we contribute and organizes luncheons with speakers on relevant topics.

Then, they continually ask us for more programs, more opportunities to learn and share. We began this informal Phase IV with a reunion dinner that was open to anyone who had graduated from Phase III. We asked them to share stories of their own leadership journey. The stories were amazing and certainly made us feel that all this work had been worthwhile and made a difference. Every year we are planning special half-day sessions on extra topics and to date have done Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution. In the next year, we hope to have a program on Moral Leadership.

Our challenges are to keep the programs relevant, stimulating and a starting point for a significant leadership journey. On our part, this requires a great deal of research, incorporation of relevant materials and participation in other training events. We also must constantly improve our evaluation process, so that we are getting a true measure of the impact of each Phase and the overall impact of the program. And, we must constantly update our contact list in the state and local government organizations so that information about the programs will reach the employees of those organizations.
In closing, I would like to share my favorite leadership quote. It comes from a Successories Card:

True leaders have the confidence to stand alone,  
the courage to make tough decisions &  
the compassion to listen to the needs of others.  
They do not set out to be leaders,  
but become them by the quality of their actions  
and the integrity of their intent.  
In the end, leaders are much like eagles…  
they don’t flock,  
you find them one at a time.
References

1. Quoted in this paper:


2. Additional References on Evaluation:


3. Important Leadership References (from the WLPD Leadership References list):
A. Basic References:


B. Newer References


* Leadership is an Art, Max De Pree, Doubleday Publishers, 2004 (New Edition)


PRICE PRITCHETT Handbooks (www.PritchettNet.com)

(Note these are inexpensive, very readable and contain valuable information. See the website for additional titles.)
The Leadership Development Model

Phase I
- Conceptual
  - What is... Leadership? Power? Management?
  - Transformational Leaders
  - Men and Women as Leaders
  - Characteristics of Effective Leaders
  - Social Capital
  - Leadership Case Studies

Phase II
- Feedback
  - Myers-Briggs
  - Strength Deployment Inventory
  - Skills Development
    - Effective Communication
    - Leading in a New World Order
    - Understanding Ourselves and Others
    - Leadership Styles and Development

Phase III
- Personal Growth
  - Achieving Leadership
  - Taking Time to Develop Your Leadership Skills
  - Learning, Growth, and Change on your way to the 21st Century

adapted from the four categories of leadership training from Jay A. Conger, “Learning to Lead”

Women’s Leadership Development Program / Institute for Public Administration / CHEP / University of Delaware