

# Adaptive Leadership

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# Introduction - Boško Nektarijević

- BBA - Bachelor of business administration - Paris, France '99
- MBA - Master of Business Administration (Top 10 in EU)
- **Solvay Business School – University of Brussels '02**
- Executive education at the **Harvard University USA '05**
- Master programs at the **Boston University** and various other trainings..
- Work experience includes:
- teaching leadership, lobbying and fundraising at the

University of Brussels



# Methodology

## Case in Point

- What happens in this room is used as a case study and as an opportunity where leadership can be exercised
- The facilitator plays the role of authority - exemplifies the exercising of leadership from the point of view of authority
- A holding environment is created



# The importance of tension

**Tension**

**Adaptive Work**

**Limit of tolerance**

**Productive  
Range**

**Learning frontier**

**Work avoidance**

**Technical problem**

**Time**



# Benefits and challenges for reform «leaders»

- Potential to impact entire systems
  - Takes time
- Goes to the root of persisting problems
  - Temptation to give technical solution
- Gives responsibility back to the people
  - Potential for resistance
- Decreases dependency of the authority
  - Authority can be taken away

**Creates an environment where everyone can exercise leadership and create change**



# Adaptive Leadership

- How is it **different** from other leadership theories?
- Under which **circumstances** is it used?
- Could it work within the context of different **cultures ethnicities, and environments?**
- How can we **exercise leadership** within business, public service, government, and politics?



# Adaptive Leadership

- Developed by Dr. Ronald Heifetz, Harvard University
- Other academics, consultants:
  - Leadership on the Line, Marty Linsky
  - Real Leadership, Dean Williams
  - “Leadership in Innovation” Michael Johnstone
- Application and methodology:
  - Change Leadership, Robert Kegan, Tony Wagner
  - Leadership Can Be Taught, Sharon Daloz Parks



# How is it different?

- What does **Adaptive Leadership** offer that most other models do not?
  - Proposition that we can **all** exercise leadership
  - A **new way** of confronting problems during times of change and difficult situations
  - The opportunity to **generate** profound, permanent **change**
  - Skills to **manage** the dangers of leadership and **survive**
  - A new **vocabulary**





## Importance of Cultural and Ethnic Context

- Reality and ideosyncracies
  - How do we view our «leaders» in Serbia?
  - What type of «leaders» do we typically to we look for as a people?
  - Can this method of teaching be translated to our reality in Serbia?
  - Would it be accepted?



# What is Leadership?

leadership  $\neq$  authority

you can exercise leadership with or without formal authority

leadership  $\neq$  personality

leadership can be learned

leadership  $\neq$  power

not a role but an action

leadership  $\neq$  knowledge

what you know is less relevant than what you don't know

leadership  $\neq$  lone ranger

not about offering answers but about giving the work back



**Exercising leadership is...**

**Mobilizing people to confront  
difficult problems in order to find  
solutions that benefit everyone.**

**Action !**



# Leadership vs. Authority

<u>Task</u>	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Adaptive</u>
<b>Direction</b>	Provides problem definition & solution	Asks questions; identifies the adaptive challenge Frames key questions & issues
<b>Protection</b>	Protects from external threats	Discloses external threats, allows internal threats
<b>Order</b> <i>Orientation</i>	Orients people to current roles	Disorients current roles and assumptions; resists orienting people to new roles too quickly
<i>Conflict</i>	Restores order	Exposes conflict or lets it emerge
<i>Norms</i>	Maintains norms	Challenges norms or lets them be challenged



# Methods to exercise leadership

- Gain perspective
- Think politically
- Orquestrate the conflict
- Hold steady
- Manage hungers
- Anchor yourself



# Gain perspective

## Identify the problem

What is a problem?



What is the problem?

Expectations

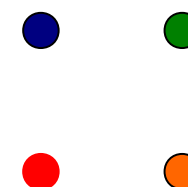
Reality

Cause

Symptoms

Does the problem require changes in:

- Values?
- Habits?
- Behaviours?



## Gain perspective

Type of Work	Definition of problem	Solution & implementation	Responsibility
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical – Adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and group
Adaptive	Complicated and confused	Requires learning	Group and Authority



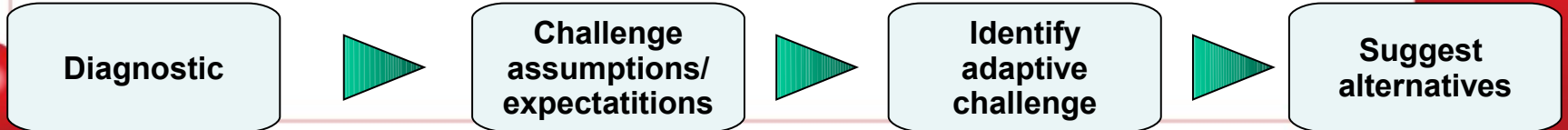
# Gain Perspective

- Get on the balcony
- Get on the dance floor
- Identify factions, loyalties, values
  - Listen to the song beneath the words
  - Diagnosis

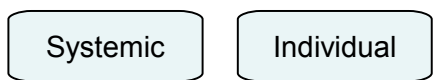




**MACRO**



**Micro**



Intervention through experiments and exploration

Put conclusions to test; work through factions

Give recommendations that would generate change

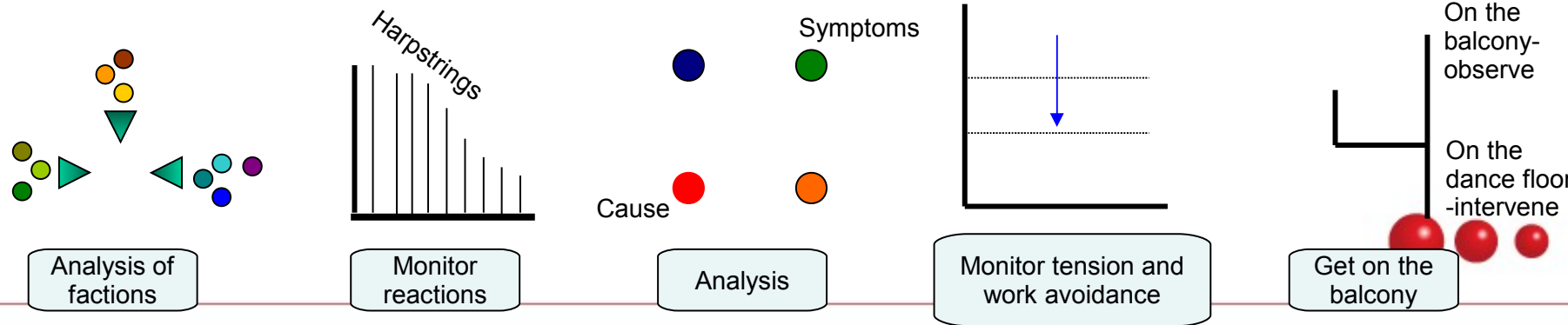
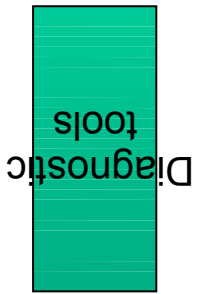
- Loyalties, allies and detractors
- Authority: formal & informal
- Existing norms
- Cultural prejudices, age, gender
- Impact of the environment by factions
- Assumptions about historical events
- Interpretation of problem and sequence of events
- Interpretation of reality
- Level and cause of tension
- Hypothetical questions: What if...?

- Provocation
- Evocation
- Look for hidden issues
- ID gap between reality and expectations
- Poke at affirmations
- Look for systems based on assumptions
- Any incomplete judgements
- Analyze the interpretation of the purpose or work

- Work avoidance
- Explore the values behind conducts and attitudes
- Identify priorities
- Identify losses
- Understand patterns of conduct/default settings
- Habits
- Question motives
- Orchestrate conflict

- Look for creative options
- Inspire
- Think politically
- Look for collaboration
- Look for leverage points
- Confront the conflict
- Hold steady
- Distinguish self and role

Sequencing of o...  
very impo...



On the balcony - observe

On the dance floor - intervene

# Gain perspective

Allies

Frontiers

Loyalties

Work Avoidance

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Select Text 200% How To..?

Conceptos básicos de liderazgo. participación en clase.

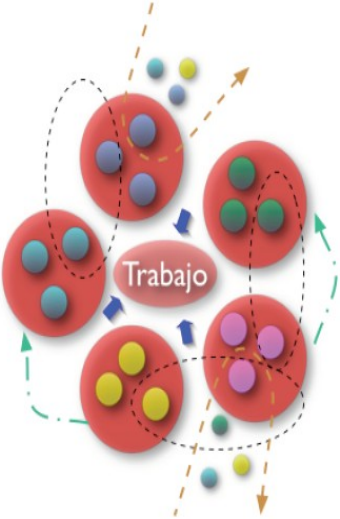
Analizar las implicaciones de las 3 capas para ejercitar el liderazgo como elástico, intervención, y auto-reflexión.

Analizar lo que representa el trabajo activo para generar "progreso" en la realidad problemática del aula.

Analizar estrategias para trabajar a través de una dinámica de grupos, generando cohesión a través de fronteras poco definidas.

Analizar las propuestas de proyectos y estrategias para el seguimiento a través de reuniones mensuales.

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*Representación abstracta del "trabajo" a través de fronteras y facciones en una dinámica de grupo.*



# Think politically

- Gain allies
- Keep close to the opposition
- Pace the work
- Make sure issue is ripe
- Recognize losses
- Set example with yourself
- Accept casualties



# Orquestrate conflict

Create holding environment:

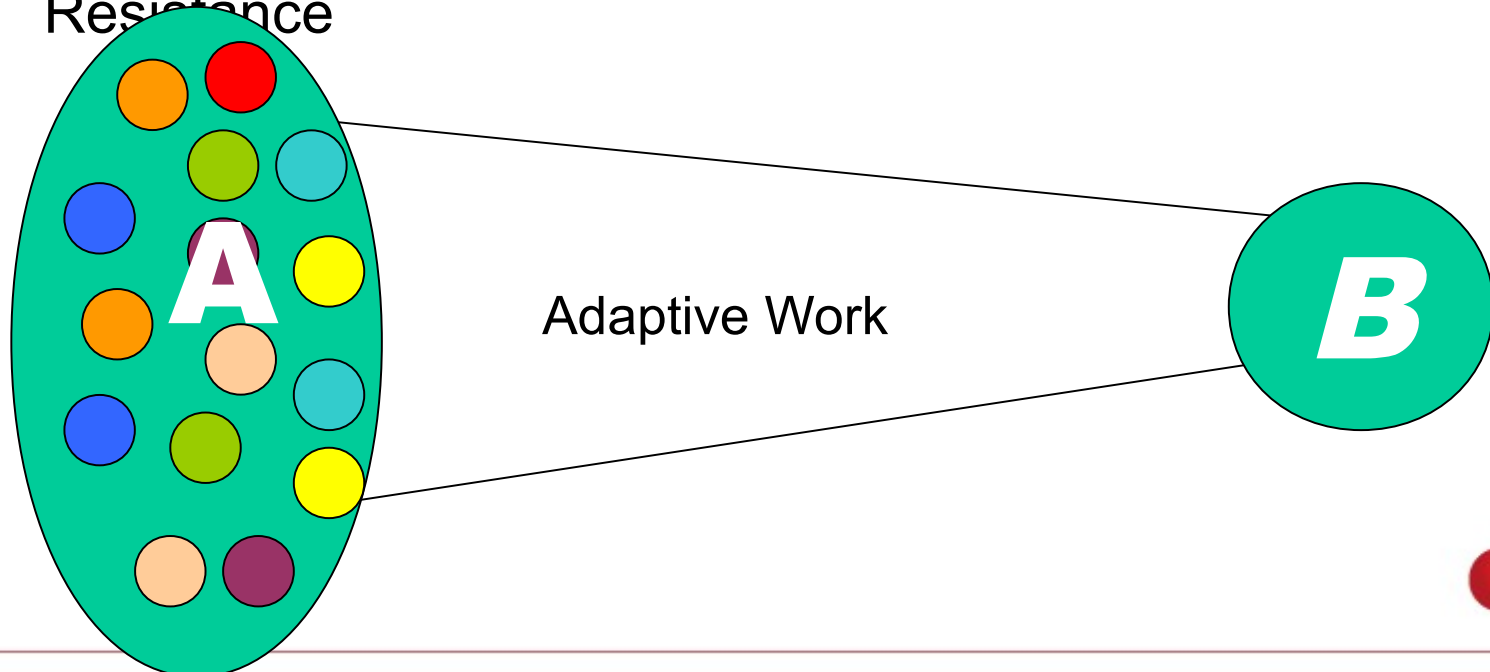
- Control temperature
- Identify the work
- Maintain focus on the work
- Give back the work
- Develop a stomach for the unknown



# Dangers of Leadership

To “generate progress” implies proposing changes that create:

- Losses
- Resistance



# Dangers of Leadership

- To be **marginalized**, by being identified with the problem
- To be **seduced**, the group gives you the role of “important or special person in order to avoid doing the real work
- To be **distracted**, the group gives you so much work that your agenda is expanded and you lose focus
- To be **attacked personally**, the group distorts your vision and what you say



# Survival

- Hold steady
- Focus on the work
- Manage hungers
- Separate role vs. self
- Use yourself as data
- Allies
- Confidants
- Sanctuary



# Questions?

