From the seeming chaos of global integration and the confounding morass of wicked challenges emerges a new kind of leadership. This leadership integrates lessons gleaned from praxis and research, and ventures into the unknowable with vision, openness to generative learning and an expanding capacity to work with complexity.

*EMERGE: Public Leadership for Sustainable Development* is a curriculum co-produced by PSU and HCMA to prepare public officials to lead in a world characterized by dynamic complexity. This paper has three objectives. First, the principal premises of EMERGE and their theoretical foundations will be discussed. Then, the substantive focus of the EMERGE curriculum will be presented. Finally, the endeavor to develop cross-culturally relevant curricula will be described. The paper will conclude with recommendations on next steps for EMERGE leadership development.
INTRODUCTION

EMERGE: Public Leadership for Sustainable Development is a curriculum designed as part of a multi-year joint project between the Ho Chi Minh National Academy for Politics and Public Administration (HCMA), Vietnam and Portland State University (PSU), USA. EMERGE was designed to teach public officials to embrace complexity, and to lead their countries toward sustainable development. In a world characterized by increasing global integration and complexity, public officials in both highly industrialized and developing countries are challenged to integrate leadership expertise into their repertoire of skills and knowledge. EMERGE employs important innovations in leadership theory and practice. EMERGE, additionally, advances the field of leadership through its integration of systems thinking and sustainable development into the vision and practice of leadership in the 21st century.

In this paper, the principal premises of EMERGE and their theoretical foundations will first be discussed. Then, the substantive focus of the EMERGE curriculum will be presented. Next, the strategies to develop a cross-cultural leadership curricula will be described, with a particular focus on Vietnam and the USA. The paper will conclude with recommendations on next steps for EMERGE and leadership development.

EMERGE PREMISES AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Leadership theory and practice advance through a dual process of employing and building on theories and practice from the past and developing new ideas to respond to contemporary challenges. Van Seters and Field (1990) classified leadership theories of the 20th century into a succinct set of evolutionary eras to reflect this path of leadership theory development. EMERGE is part of this evolutionary path, integrating important innovations from previous eras and advancing theory and practice to address 21st century challenges.

Herein, the foundational premises of EMERGE are presented (see Figure 1). In this discussion, EMERGE premises will be located in the context of historical leadership development. They, additionally, will be described in relation to systems theory. The integration of systems theory into leadership development is one of the primary contributions of EMERGE to address issues particular to the 21st century. Systems theory provides vital perspective and direction to all other foundational premises as well as to the curricula itself, so will be referenced frequently herein. Dynamic Systems Leadership sets the stage for subsequent reference to systems theory.

Figure 1: Foundational Premises

EMERGE: Public Leadership for Sustainable Development

Dynamic Systems Leadership
Wicked Issues & Opportunities
Vision-Directed, Values-Based Leadership
Relational Leadership
Transformative leadership
Leadership Development
Emergent Leadership
Leadership Context
Leadership and Sustainable Development
**Dynamic Systems Leadership**

EMERGE presumes that leadership operates in an integrated, networked, dynamic, polycentric, and hence, highly complex world. Success in this context requires understanding systems and employing systems competencies and tools. EMERGE steeps learners in systems thinking and introduces competencies and tools to prepare aspiring leaders to successfully negotiate complex environments. Systems theory is central to this endeavor.

The systems theory referenced herein is founded in the New Science, i.e., quantum physics, presented eloquently by Fritjof Capra and Gary Zukav (1975; 1979), respectively, and further explored by scientists such as Gleick (1987), Bertalanffy (1969), Gunderson (2002), and Gribbin (1984). The implications of the New Science for human systems, in particular organizations, have been studied by social scientists, primarily Margaret Wheatley and Richard Scott (1998; 1992), respectively, but also Peters (1992), Selznick (1949), Morgan (1997) and others. The first application of systems theory within EMERGE is to the problems faced by leaders of the 21st century, i.e., wicked problems.

**Wicked Issues & Opportunities**

Complex problems issue from complex systems. These problems, coined wicked problems by Rittel and Weber (1973), are fundamentally distinct from other kinds of problems faced by leadership. *Tame problems* are complicated and defined by a limited degree of uncertainty. There are recognizable solutions and established strategies to address them. *Critical problems* are typically crises that require quick decision-making and action-taking. Solutions and strategies exist, leaving virtually no uncertainty about what needs to be done (Howieson & Kahn, 2002). Wicked problems, on the other hand, are complex, novel and very difficult or impossible to completely understand. Moreover, they manifest a high degree of uncertainty and dynamic change. Solutions aren’t readily evident and proven strategies to address them don’t exist.

EMERGE uses this typology of problems as a heuristic aid to understand wicked problems. Additionally, as wicked problems are characteristic of systems and endemic to the 21st century leadership context, EMERGE focuses on their elucidation in the practical realm of public leadership and on explication of strategies to work with them. EMERGE, however, adds three important contributions to this discourse.

First, EMERGE asserts that all issues with which leaders work are wicked, including tame and critical problems. The difference is in the degree of wickedness associated with any particular problem. Global integration is high and constantly increasing. In this context, leadership is faced with increasingly complex, interrelated and wicked political and policy issues. Even tame and critical problems are couched in a network of multiple and overlapping wicked problems that will have some influence on them. Hence, every problem, even those classically defined as tame or critical, will have some degree of wickedness.

Second, EMERGE posits an alternative terminology to ‘wicked problems’. EMERGE utilizes the term *wicked issues*. The presumption is that wicked issues can be challenges presented to leadership or opportunities that leadership pursues. Issues characterized as wicked are more than simple problems, i.e., tame or critical. They are incredibly complex. Moreover, wicked issues cannot be solved with strategies established to address simple problems. Rather, they require innovative thinking and practices. Hence, they are challenges. Furthermore, leadership is visionary, both in thought and in action. Leadership doesn’t just react to challenges. Leadership proactively seeks
opportunities to realize its vision and values. In a complex environment, those opportunities are bound to have wicked characteristics.

Finally, EMERGE is based on the tenet that wicked issues are opportunities for leadership. By their nature, wicked issues are more complex than any one person or leadership team can comprehend. In many cases they, in fact, may be unsolvable. However, couched within wicked issues are multiple and ongoing opportunities to affect positive change. Furthermore, what is perceived as a problem could actually be an opportunity. Leadership is uniquely suited to take up the opportunities embedded in wicked issues. Leadership needs only to discern the opportunities and then to navigate a path via those opportunities to make positive impacts on the larger wicked issue.

Leadership is creative and innovative in the face of complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. Leadership challenges entrenched ideas and practices, and experiments with new approaches. Leadership approaches wicked issues from this stance, examining them from new and different perspectives to gain novel understanding and searching to find hidden and potential opportunities. In this way, problems are re-envisioned as opportunities. Further, opportunities, previously concealed by old ways of thinking, emerge. Leadership then envisions a future wherein that opportunity is realized and inspires in others a shared commitment to contribute to that vision. Through conscious openness to generative learning, leadership ventures into the unknowable, integrates lessons gleaned from praxis and research, affects positive change for the public good and expands the capacity to work with complexity.

In EMERGE, leadership opportunities are defined as facets of public sector issues over which leadership has some discretionary authority and potential influence, whether they are tame or critical or wicked. EMERGE teaches leadership to discern wickedness in problems, to find the opportunities presented by those problems, and to work with those leadership opportunities. The EMERGE tools integrate state-of-the-art theories and practice into practical instruments that leadership can use to effectively address the opportunities inherent in wicked issues, thus effecting positive change for the public good.

**VISION-DIRECTED, VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP**

EMERGE is based on the premise that vision and values are the wellspring from which leadership emerges, the foundation of endeavors to realize the vision, and the criteria by which those endeavors are evaluated (Magis-Agosta, 1992). In short, vision is the reason and inspiration for leadership. In EMERGE, vision is distinguished from mission by its focus on a desired future reality that has yet to be created.

EMERGE equates vision with *strange attractors* (Magis-Agosta, 1995; Wheatley, 1992). In systems language, a strange attractor is the internal compass to which self-referent systems orient. Through self-reference, strange attractors induce the order inherent in complex systems. Strange attractors provide the system with boundaries and a context in which infinite possibilities are gradually pulled into shape (Gleick, 1987; Magis, 2007; Wheatley, 1992). Values are equated with *fractals* in EMERGE (Magis-Agosta, 1995; Wheatley, 1992). Fractals are simply stated rules and principles anchored to strange attractors. They guide behavior within the system and lend consistency and predictability to behavior despite complexity and diversity (Gleick, 1987; Magis, 2007; Wheatley, 1992). The vision is based on an enduring set of values, and is designed to integrate those values into practice so to generate vision-directed and values-based outcomes. Together, the vision and
values offer the compass and the guides to transform them from words to real outcomes for the public good.

The notion of vision-directed and values-based leadership is solidly established in the leadership literature. Vision and values were a focal point during the Transformational Era (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Explored by theorists such as Kouzes and Posner (1991), Yukl (1989), Roberts (1985), Tichy and Ulrich (1984), and Adams (1984), vision and values were understood to be essential to visionary leaders who were responsible for advancing organizational change. Visionary leaders were defined as those who facilitate the creation of shared vision and values, create conditions to enable people to transform their potential into vision-directed and values-based actions and outcomes, and encourage a process of collective action toward realization of the vision.

RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

EMERGE envisions leadership as a system comprised of leaders and followers in relation to each other and to a shared Vision, i.e., the leadership system. EMERGE further stipulates that this leadership relationship is characterized by people who move fluidly between leader and follower roles in response to changing contexts and circumstances. Transformation of the vision into real outcomes cannot occur by the efforts of one leader, no matter how superior the person’s acumen. It requires the collaborative efforts of many who share the vision and values, and who contribute their expertise to generating vision-directed outcomes. Reflecting on relationships from a systems perspective, Magis (2007) states,

Relationships are the heart of complex and open systems (G. Morgan, 1997; Philip Selznick, 1948). In fact, Morgan (1997) and Wheatley (1992) assert that understanding systems requires comprehension of the integrative processes occurring within the system’s multiple relationships. Isolation of parts destroys the very understanding one is striving to gain. Rather, Wheatley asserts, the system needs to be understood through its totality, its perpetually evolving external and internal relationships, its processes, and its emergent themes and patterns.

Theorists in the Anti-Leader Era (Van Seters & Field, 1990) examined the influence that organizations and subordinates exert over leadership and the subsequent accomplishment of leadership objectives. Their findings demonstrated leadership as a relationship (Howell & Dorfman, 1981; Kerr & Jermier, 1978). EMERGE states that all differentiated parts in systems, in dynamic relationship to one another, need to be considered for effective and ethical leadership. Hence, leadership needs to foster relationships within and across system levels, i.e., within the leadership system and across the suprasystem, i.e., the external system. Through these relationships, leadership facilitates realization of the vision.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

The tenets of transformative leadership are absolutely critical to leading in complexity, hence are integrated throughout EMERGE. Leadership engenders shared vision and values (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Wall, Solum, & Sobol, 1992), harnesses the transformative power of inspiration, enabling, encouraging, challenging and modeling (Kouzes & Posner, 1991), acts in service to others and the vision (Block, 1993), creates organizational conditions conducive to self-actualization, recognition and achievement (Herzberg, 1964, 1968; Maslow, 2001; Peters, 1987, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982), sustains the organization through difficult change and transitions (Kilmann, 1987; Moss Kanter, 1983, 1989), and facilitates learning at both individual and organizational levels (Kline & Saunders; Senge, 1990). Transformation Era theorists cited by Van Seters and Field (1990) further
reinforce these tenets (Bass, 1981; Tichney & Ulrich, 1984; Yukl, 1989). EMERGE also sees transformative leadership as critical for leaders endeavoring to re-conceptualize problems as opportunities and to find the opportunities embedded in wicked issues.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

EMERGE presumes that leadership skills can be learned and leadership behaviors, e.g., trustworthiness, can be practiced (Heifetz, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1991; Parks, 2005). In the Behavioral Era (Van Seters & Field, 1990), theorists explored the notion that leadership was not, in fact, an in-born trait, but rather a set of behaviors that one could practice and learn (Bass, 1981; Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Hunt & Larson, 1977; McGregor, 1966). Theorists in the Contingency Era reinforced the idea, asserting that leaders can change their behaviors to improve their effectiveness (Vroom & Yeten, 1973).

EMERGE adopts the approach to learning advocated by Senge (Senge, 1990), namely *generative learning*. Generative Learning is a process of continuous strategic learning to navigate complex issues, eliciting strategically appropriate and systematically viable judgments that direct attention to a preferred future. In short, this is intentional learning directed at developing the knowledge and skills required to move strategically toward realizing the Vision. Generative learning is absolutely vital when working in an environment defined by dynamic complexity.

**LEADERSHIP CONTEXT**

Van Seters and Field (1990) posited the unfolding of a new era which they called the Integration Era. In this era, they suggested that leadership theories would encompass technology, change, polycentric decision-making, dispersed actors and multicultural contexts (Hunt, Hosking, Schriesheim, & Stewart, 1984). EMERGE springs from this new era. One feature of the new era is reflected in the perception of the leadership context tendered by EMERGE.

EMERGE emphasizes that leadership is contextual (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; D. F. Morgan, Green, Shinn, & Robinson, 2008). The context includes both the proximate and distant environments and is highly dynamic and complex. Pertinent issues emerge from this context, as do those who would share a vision to address them. Leadership relationships and roles, accordingly, emerge from the current milieu and must adapt as those circumstances change. Hence, EMERGE asserts that, in order to realize its vision, leadership must continuously monitor and navigate the context.

Theorists in the Cultural Era (Van Seters and Field 1990) highlighted the power of organizational culture to influence behavior, and hence organizational outcomes (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale & Athos, 1981). EMERGE concurs and, further, asserts that the context influencing leadership extends far beyond the proximate environment and into the external environment, i.e., the suprasystem. The supra system is distant, multilevel and networked. It is comprised of domestic and international institutions, including those related to the environment, politics, culture, laws and regulations and the market. The suprasystem context creates conditions, manifest and latent, that support and constrain leadership. Hence, to be effective, leadership must make sense of, and successfully navigate, both the proximate and distant context.

**EMERGENT LEADERSHIP**

EMERVE distinguishes leadership as an emergent phenomenon. Emergence is a basic property of systems. Magis (2007) states,
Emergent phenomena are new and coherent structures, patterns and properties distinct from individual system constituents. They arise from interactions between the system constituents and the environment. Their emergence is often unexpected and invariably introduces additional complexity into the system (Bakke, 1959; Bertalanffy, 1969; Burns & Stalker, 2001; Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996; G. Morgan, 1997; Thompson, 1967).

Leadership arises in response to challenges and opportunities from all sectors and levels of organizations and society. It is fluid and responsive to changing contexts. In the Transaction Era (Van Seters and Field 1990), the relationship between leader and followers was conceived as based on equitable exchanges. This tenet was premised on the notion that leaders do not dominate followers. Rather, followers select and give their consent to whom they acknowledge as leader. This tenet reinforced the notion that leadership and followership are roles and that those roles can be interchangeable (Bass, 1981). The idea of emergent leadership also arose during this period (Hollander, 1958). Theorists in the Cultural Era furthered the idea of leadership emerging from all levels of the organization (Manz & Sims, 1987; Schein, 1985).

Leadership and Sustainable Development

The second major contribution EMERGE makes to address leadership challenges of the 21st century is the association of leadership with Sustainable Development. EMERGE posits that the lessons of Sustainable Development are key factors to successfully working in complexity and with wicked issues. Wicked issues cannot be approached in the same way as tame or critical problems. Rather, they need be approached from a perspective immersed in systems and attuned to complexity. Leadership must recognize complexity, design solutions to address complexity, monitor systems feedback, respond to emergent phenomena and surprises, understand the reasons for undesirable outcomes and fluidly modify strategies to integrate systems feedback.

EMERGE presents strategies to work with complexity. These strategies, or success factors, are distilled from literature on systems and lessons gleaned from the birth and evolution of Sustainable Development. Figure 2 lists the success factors. Sustainable Development was conceived in direct response to an internationally recognized wicked problem, i.e., the ecological and social devastation resulting from uneven development, overconsumption and poverty (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 2: Success Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGE: Public Leadership for Sustainable Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and different ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative practice, constant learning &amp; adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precautionary Principle</td>
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<tr>
<td>See the whole while working with the parts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think in both the present and the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance equally important but sometimes competing values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage tradeoffs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize unintended consequences and surprises</td>
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Sustainable development is both a vision and a process to address wicked issues. It is a vision of the world now and in the future, i.e., ‘…development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). And, it is a process. Many have endeavored over the last
decades to realize this vision, and in so doing have generated vital lessons about how to work with wicked issues (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996; Cooper & Vargas, 2004; Haq, 1999; Harris, 2000; Holling, 1973; Lemons, Shrader-Frechette, & Cranor, 1997; Magis & Shinn, 2009; Richardson, 1994; Streeten & Burki, 1978). These lessons can be used as principles, strategies, guides and evaluative criteria for leaders striving to work successfully in complexity. Hence, EMERGE designates them as success factors and challenges learners to integrate them into their worldview, knowledge base and skill sets, and actions.

**OVERVIEW OF EMERGE CURRICULA**

The tenets provide the foundation from which EMERGE was designed and the basis of the vision for EMERGE. The vision of EMERGE is to provide a theoretically-sound and empirically-based framework from which to prepare aspiring leaders to lead in a world defined by complexity.

Two aspirations further distinguish EMERGE. First, EMERGE is being designed in such a way that the distinctive qualities of specific polities can be integrated, maximizing both universal constructs and polity-specific applications. Second, EMERGE is based on the precept that leadership is a practice. Hence, EMERGE is taught at the nexus of theory and praxis, ensuring that learners develop a theoretical understanding of critical constructs and the practical skills to apply the ideas to the issues presented in their daily work.

The EMERGE curricula currently consists of eleven modules. In each module, relevant theory is presented and a tool to utilize associated skills is introduced. Plans to utilize the knowledge and tools on-the-job are designed and integrated into learners’ Leadership Projects. Though the primary audience for which EMERGE was designed is political officials, the combination of theory and praxis makes the curricula appropriate for scholars and practitioners alike. Further, the theories and practices upon which EMERGE is based have been developed in various sectors, making the constructs applicable across private, public and nonprofit sectors. In the following section, the objectives for each module and its relation to the EMERGE premises are presented.

**INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC LEADERSHIP**

The Introduction presents subject matter in three domains. First, the case for leadership development is presented. The complexity inherent in the leadership context is introduced, focusing on the particular ways in which complexity is manifest in the learners’ polity. For example, of paramount importance to the Vietnamese polity is its emergence as a middle income country and its deepening integration into the world economy, along with the attendant challenges of creating market reform with socialist characteristics. In this discussion, the typology of leadership problems is presented, and wicked issues are introduced.

Second, the portrayal of EMERGE leadership is initiated via its relationship to management. Herein, leadership is distinguished from management through an analysis of the particular functions of both. Complementarities between the two skill sets are highlighted along with a discussion of the fluid integration of the skill sets into all leadership activities. Finally, the idea of transformational leadership is introduced, distinguishing it from previous notions of leadership, and setting the stage for further elaboration in subsequent sessions.

Third, the notion of leadership as praxis is introduced through the initiation of praxis-based Leadership Projects. The purposes of the Leadership Project are to engage learners immediately with practicing leadership skills in real work issues and, to assist learners to utilize their new leadership knowledge and skills to accomplish important objectives in their work. Ultimately, it is through practice of new skills and application of new leadership ideas to real work-related issues that
leadership expertise is developed. As leadership development is the primary purpose for EMERGE, this self-directed active-learning process is started immediately and continued throughout the entire course. In each session, new theory and associated tools are introduced. Learners consider the relation of the new information and tools to their Leadership Projects and integrate them to move their projects forward.

**PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP**

The purpose of this module is to assist learners to discern the connection and import of EMERGE to their own leadership development. Learners first express their understanding of leadership. Then, the empirical basis of EMERGE and its foundational premises are introduced, after which learners compare their personal perspectives to EMERGE to identify personal learning opportunities. Of note, in this session learners are challenged to differentiate between myth- and evidence-based perspectives. This discussion lays the groundwork for the next session in which empirical evidence is presented that challenges learners to dispel outdated notions of leadership and consider contemporary theories and practices. The entire process is designed to enable learners to be active and self-directed in their own leadership development.

**HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP STUDIES**

The purpose of this module is to locate EMERGE on the developmental path of leadership studies. Leadership theory has developed through a process of responding to extant conditions by building on constructs developed in earlier theories and creating new knowledge and practices particular to the current context. Leadership theories and practices contribute to the developing understanding of leadership, generate new questions and offer lessons to the next generation of theorists and practitioners.

In this module, major leadership theories and practices from the 20th century are presented in an evolutionary context, emphasizing the developmental path of leadership studies. Then, EMERGE is located on that developmental path. Direct connections to previous work, i.e., integration of critical lessons, are illustrated, demonstrating the empirical- and theoretical-basis of EMERGE and substantiating its foundational premises. Finally, the unique contributions made by EMERGE to address contemporary challenges are presented.

**PUBLIC LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

This module focuses on the second major contribution of EMERGE to leadership studies, i.e., the crucial association of 21st century public leadership to Sustainable Development. EMERGE defines leadership in relation to wicked issues, which are characterized by complexity, dynamic and changing interrelationships, nonlinearity, intractability, discontinuity and hence unpredictability. Wicked issues cannot be approached in the same way as tame or critical problems. They require an approach steeped in systems thinking, i.e., that works in the realm of complexity. Sustainable Development provides one such approach. The strategies designed to realize the vision of Sustainable Development provide critical lessons to leaders working with wicked issues. In EMERGE the lessons from Sustainable Development are called Success Factors.

Hence the purposes of this module are to two-fold. The first goal is to assist learners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of wicked issues, their centrality to public leadership and their relation to learners’ Leadership Projects. The second goal is for learners to develop the vital understanding of the association between 21st century leadership and Sustainable Development, and the ability to identify and utilize pertinent Success Factors to address wicked issues.
**LEARNING ABOUT LEADERSHIP THROUGH REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

The inherent complexity of wicked issues guarantees that Leaders working with them will continually be challenged with the limits of their understanding and experience. Success requires continuous and intentional learning. Leaders are responsible to identify and address their own learning needs, to support the learning of others and to facilitate learning at an organizational level.

EMERGE approaches learning as a recursive process wherein learners consider new ideas, practice new skills on work-related issues and engage in continuous reflection to make associated improvements. In this way, new knowledge and skills are integrated into a constantly expanding and relevant repertoire of leadership behaviors.

Hence, the purposes of this module are for learners to develop a practical understanding of how adult learning occurs, and to utilize associated skills to identify their own learning needs and create a plan to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. Emphasis is placed on practical application of knowledge and skills on-the-job; learning as a continual, reflective practice required by all; and the leaders’ responsibility for facilitating that learning. Organizational learning is introduced to demonstrate the relationship of organizational systems to individual performance and learning as well as organizational outcomes. Future development of this module includes a complete rendition of practical skills for facilitating organizational learning.

**EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP SYSTEM**

EMERGE approaches public leadership from a systems perspective. Leaders work within interrelated systems on wicked issues that originate from those systems. Leadership, hence, is engaged in relationships within and across systems. The leadership role is dictated in part by the nature and scope of the wicked issues as well as the current context, which is continually changing. Therefore, leaders need skills to read the context, and to determine appropriate leadership knowledge and skills to operate successfully in that particular context.

This module addresses three learning objectives. First, learners are introduced to some basic attributes of systems and to public sector systems in particular. Then, learners study the Leadership System in depth. The Leadership System is the basic building block for public leadership. It is created to address a specific wicked issue and is comprised of leaders, followers and related organizational elements. Finally, learners apply the skills to their Leadership Projects, exploring particular leadership roles as they relate to elements within their Leadership System. In future iterations of this module, the organizational element will be expanded.

**MAPPING THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT FOR LEADERSHIP**

Wicked issues exist in the suprasystem, i.e., the broader institutional context. The suprasystem is distant, multilevel and networked. It is comprised of domestic and international institutions, including those related to the environment, politics, culture, laws and regulations and the market. The suprasystem context contains many dynamic conditions, manifest and latent, that support and constrain leadership. To effectively address wicked issues, leaders need skills to make sense of those conditions, and to use that information to develop foresight into possible futures, i.e., they need to develop contextual intelligence.

Leaders with contextual intelligence are able to generate real-time information pertinent to the wicked issue. They develop an integrative and holistic perspective of both the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the context which enables them to adapt quickly and effectively to changing circumstances. They can reduce or prevent costly and unnecessary human mistakes by minimizing uncertainty in decision-making. They are able to take a proactive stance in facilitating
shared leadership action with superiors, followers and key stakeholders. And, their work is legitimized as relevant, timely and valuable because it is based in a deep understanding of the current context. This module introduces the concept of contextual intelligence and describes its importance to effective leadership. It then teaches learners a method for developing contextual intelligence for particular wicked issues. Future development needs to expand the various constructs associated with contextual intelligence and develop associated tools to facilitate their implementation in leadership contexts.

**Embedding Vision and Values Through Inspiration and Norming**

Leadership needs a method to select and maintain clear direction within a complex and dynamic context. Vision and values provide the compass and strategies by which Leadership can act deliberately and efficaciously to accomplish the public good. Capitalizing on the inherent potential of vision and values requires that they be systematically transformed from words into vision-directed and values-based outcomes. Generating vision-directed and values-based outcomes requires that people ensure the vision and values are: 1) used as guides and criteria for decision-making and action-taking; and 2) institutionalized into organizational processes and systems.

This module addresses three facets of the broad topic of vision and values. First, learners are introduced to the purpose and potential power of vision and values within the public sector. Vision is described and differentiated from mission. Values are defined and set in relation to vision. Finally, the unique role of vision and values in the public sector is described. The potential power of vision and values, however, cannot be released without purposeful and consistent actions to transform vision and values from words into purposive action and ethical outcomes. So, the next two objectives address two critical associated skills, namely inspiration and norming. Inspiration is described and various myths regarding it are challenged. Learners then develop inspiration skills to transform vision and values from words into purposive action and ethical outcomes. Next, learners are introduced to norming, i.e., the process of institutionalizing values. Finally, they learn skills to facilitate the norming process.

The subject of vision and values covers significant and complex topics, all of which require in-depth exploration. Future development of this session includes separating it into several independent sessions to address the various topics more comprehensively, e.g., vision and values creation, inspiration and norming, and to include materials currently not addressed in the session, e.g., leadership behaviors facilitative of living the vision and values, e.g., enabling, modeling, encouraging, challenging (Kouzes & Posner, 1991).

**Effective Leadership Through the Use of Smart Power**

Within public leadership systems, leading officials can use various types of power to effectively and ethically address the wicked issue and to facilitate movement toward the leadership vision. These powers consist of a combination of formal authority, i.e., hard power, and informal influence, i.e., soft power. These can be used alone or in combination to empower, influence and persuade. The smart application of hard and soft power, referred to in the psychology and political leadership literature as smart power (Nye, 2002, 2008), depends on a deep understanding of one's own leadership strengths, the various sources of power and the unique characteristics of the leadership system.

In this session, learners are first introduced to core concepts related to power. They then develop skills to consider and choose the proper balance of hard and soft power to create a smart power strategy for particular leadership situations. This is one aspect of the broader concept of releasing the energy of self and others to advance the vision related to the leadership opportunity.
Future development needs to expand on the soft power aspect of smart power. Soft power is the least well understood and hence requires the most development in terms of knowledge and practice. In the future, other branches of this broad topic need to also be developed, e.g., leadership behaviors to fully engage people’s potential (Kouzes & Posner, 1991), organizational development to support effective, vision-directed action of people (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 1995), and requisite attendant personal and organization change (Moss Kanter, 1989).

**Convening Coalitions to Advance the Leadership Vision**

The complexity and boundary-spanning nature of wicked issues has important implications for leadership. First, contributions from different people with a variety of expertise are required to comprehensively address leadership issues. Additionally, the various groups affected by the wicked issue will have a vested interest in and potential resources to contribute to addressing it. Leadership, hence, is challenged to work toward realization of the vision within a networked system. Though this presents additional challenges to leadership, it also presents opportunity. Leaders can gain access to critical stakeholder support via stakeholder coalitions. Through coalitions, leaders can create regimes of mutual benefit (Crosby & Bryson, 2005), wherein unmet stakeholder needs are met and strategic movement to the leadership vision is accomplished.

In this module, learners are first introduced to the requisite inclusion of external stakeholders in the leadership vision and the challenge of gaining their active support. Stakeholder coalitions and creating regimes of mutual benefit are presented as the opportunity for effectively engaging external stakeholders. Learners are then introduced to motivation theory to demonstrate how regimes of mutual benefit can be created and nurtured. Finally, learners are taught a process to convene coalitions. Future development of this module includes elaboration and operationalization of the regimes of mutual benefit in coalitions as well as introduction to social networks.

**Enabling Wise Judgment Through Strategic Navigation**

Wise judgment is critical in leadership situations characterized by morally ambiguous and politically contested information and uncertainty. It is exercised through evaluating the situation and taking right actions, i.e., actions that are both effective and ethical. Effective and ethical decisions incorporate learning, application, and adaptation in what Hames (2007) calls strategic navigation. Hames describes strategic navigation as a continuous conversational braiding of collective reflection and decision-making informed by real-time intelligence. It is the art of confidently and ethically finding viable paths into the future, and negotiating unknown terrain and unprecedented complexity while retaining integrity and relevance. Strategic navigation is vision-directed, value-sensitive, knowledge-intensive, temporally-aware and intergenerationally-responsible.

In this module, learners learn principles and practices of strategic navigation. The specific application of the EMERGE tools to the strategic navigation process is then demonstrated, after which learners determine how strategic navigation can be utilized to facilitate movement toward the vision of their Leadership Projects.

**EMERGE: Building Cross-Cultural Pertinence**

A primary goal in the design of EMERGE is to maximize its applicability across polities. Polity, as used herein, references the political aspects of society, including but not limited to the government sector (Painter, 2003). Polities are shaped through time by the interplay of particular ecological, socio-cultural, political and economic forces expressed through a society’s institutions. Bass (1981) argues that though general leadership principles can be universal, the particular form they take depends on the specific context of local cultures. Culturally-dependent variances, he stated, could
be substantial. Hence, EMERGE designers employ a polity-centered approach (Durant, 1999; Painter, 2003), wherein the particularities of both Vietnam and the United States are considered in all phases of design and implementation.

Additionally, the HCMA/PSU collaboration is being approached as a learning laboratory, i.e., a strategy wherein scholars and practitioners engage in community-based problem solving in ways that generate new transferable knowledge while creating and implementing solutions\(^1\). The particular ways in which these strategies have been employed are presented herein. First, select aspects of the Vietnamese polity are presented. Then, strategies implemented by the design team to develop the cross-cultural relevance of EMERGE are presented.

**The Vietnamese Polity**

Despite the high level of international integration, the Vietnamese and American polities are unique and, in substantial ways, very different. EMERGE designers were US citizens and utilized leadership materials developed primarily in the US and other western countries. Hence, the materials strongly reflect western culture and the US polity. The challenge for the HCMA/PSU team was to ensure those materials were pertinent to the Vietnamese polity. To demonstrate the uniqueness of the Vietnamese polity, a few salient characteristics are described herein.

The 1992 constitution of Vietnam establishes it as a one-party political system, i.e., the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Designed according to the Leninist principle of ‘democratic centralism’ (Painter, 2003), political power is highly concentrated with the General Secretary and the 14 member CPV Political Bureau. Further reinforcing the one-party system, 90-95% of popularly elected National Assembly members are party members. These characteristics of the Vietnamese polity have implications for leadership practice in the country. First, the CPV is formally accorded leadership status, i.e., it selects societal principles and strategic directions. State officials and organizations are accorded management status, i.e., they implement party policy. Second, a fundamental Marxist-Leninist leadership principle is that the CPV needs to change the perception of the public to align with party ideology. Hence, ideological activities are emphasized in all activities.

A second characteristic of the Vietnamese polity is the East-Asian culture, which dates back 1,000 years. The East-Asian culture is hierarchical. Power is perceived to have a natural order that is expressed throughout society, e.g., old hold power over young, parents over children, the CPV over state officials. Obedience is of prime import in this social structure. It, in fact, is valued over critical thinking and articulation of individual opinions. East-Asian culture is also collective. One aspect of collectivism is that collective harmony takes precedence over individual interests. So, for example, collective acceptance may be valued over individual excellence. Finally, East-Asian culture is family-based. Family clans are structured like organizations with rules, culture, roles and expectations. Family members enjoy referent power derived the clan’s relative power within society. Family power and influence are visible throughout society, government and business. Hence, Vietnamese leadership must account for families in their endeavors.

The last characteristic of the Vietnamese polity is the fact that it is a poor, less-developed country. People are primarily focused on survival, e.g., basic needs such food, shelter and water. The CVP is concerned with developing and sustaining improvements in living for its citizens (Painter, 2003).

\(^1\) For more information, see [http://www.pdx.edu/sustainability/below-are-some-initial-thoughts-living-lab-concept](http://www.pdx.edu/sustainability/below-are-some-initial-thoughts-living-lab-concept)
Strategies to Develop Cross-Cultural Pertinence

The PSU/HCMA collaboration is utilizing a two-pronged strategy to develop EMERGE as a cross-culturally relevant curricula, i.e., the learning laboratory and polity-centered approaches. The learning laboratory approach works at the nexus of theory and praxis. The primary purpose for this approach is to address presenting issues while creating new knowledge. Innovations in thinking are tested in real settings and the subsequent feedback informs improvements in the ideas. The new knowledge created through this process is both theoretically-sound and empirically-based. The learning laboratory approach is working particularly well in facilitating the polity-centered approach, which in turn, is generating lessons vital to the development of EMERGE.

The purpose of the PSU/HCMA collaboration is to build leadership development capacity within HCMA. PSU staff contribute leadership expertise and access to significant stores of related information. HCMA staff contribute an in-depth understanding of the Vietnamese polity as well as expertise in their particular fields of study. Hence, PSU staff are tasked with curricula design while HCMA staff are responsible for ensuring the applicability of materials to the Vietnamese polity.

EMERGE Design Process. EMERGE partners do not have the luxury of immediate and regular face-to-face dialogue afforded colleagues situated in a geographically-proximate context. This necessitates that PSU staff generate draft materials that are then presented to their Vietnamese colleagues for consideration. Hence, EMERGE has been designed through iterative cycles of draft and response. Specifically, the PSU team generated two drafts of the proposed leadership curricula for review by their Vietnamese colleagues. Following each draft, the full team met for in-depth discussion and analysis during which HCMA staff educated their PSU colleagues about the intricacies of the Vietnamese polity and the team discussed implications for EMERGE. Those discussions generated the objectives for the next draft. Having thus reached initial agreement on the overall objectives and layout of EMERGE, the PSU team began drafting curricula materials and sending them to Vietnam for review. After several iterations of draft and response, the US team flew to Vietnam to test the EMERGE curricula with HCMA instructors.

Leadership as Praxis. EMERGE is a praxis-based curricula. Theory is always paired with application of knowledge and skills to real work situations. Every session includes a tool to implement new leadership concepts on-the-job, opportunities to practice utilizing the tool during the session, and time to plan how the tool will be utilized to advance the learners' Leadership Projects. Case studies employed throughout EMERGE are based on real circumstances from both the US and Vietnam. They are used to teach learners how to utilize specific tools and integrate new knowledge into their thinking and decision-making processes. Utilizing a praxis-based curriculum increases the probability of information retention and transfer, and contributes to learners' skill development. It, further, increases the likelihood that learners will attempt to utilize the new skills on-the-job.

There are other important benefits of praxis-based curricula. Utilizing the learning laboratory approach, EMERGE is being designed even as it is being taught, which provides opportunities for ground-truthing new ideas and tools. Learners apply the concepts and tools to their particular polity, experimenting with the fit, identifying discrepancies, finding connections and discovering new ways to express ideas in a way that aligns with their polity. In so doing, mistakes or omissions in the information are identified, the efficacy of the tools is tested, and critically needed revisions and next steps related to that particular topic are addressed. This strategy maximizes the contribution of scholars and practitioners, as well as teachers and learners, to the development of EMERGE.
This process is absolutely critical for developing a polity-centered curriculum. During all training sessions, EMERGE designers took copious notes on learner and instructor feedback to inform the next iteration of EMERGE design. The designers also facilitated sessions during which learners and instructors were asked to evaluate and provide feedback. This intentional ground-truthing of EMERGE materials resulted in continuous improvements to EMERGE instructional content and tools and to its cross-cultural pertinence.

**The Language Challenge.** Language, and correct translation between languages, is a significant challenge in developing cross-culturally based training. Concepts, understood in a certain way in one language can have a totally different meaning, or no correlation at all, in the other language. Translation discussions have occurred in every joint meeting of the US and Vietnamese partners. HCMA and PSU staff discussed terminology to ensure HCMA staff understood the intent of the original concept so they could find a way to articulate it in Vietnamese without changing the original meaning. Though this process slowed down and sometimes brought sessions to a halt, they were critical to creating a shared language and in developing polity-centered curricula.

**Train-the-Trainer.** HCMA does not have institutional capacity in leadership development, so a primary objective of the project is to train a select group of HCMA instructors in the concepts and practice of leadership. The first session in which EMERGE was presented by US staff was specifically to train HCMA instructors in the content and practice of EMERGE. Even though HCMA instructors were in a learning role, their questions and comments provided vital information about necessary improvements in materials and about the Vietnamese context.

The PSU team has since attended three additional training sessions with HCMA, two designed specifically as train-the-trainer events and most recently, the HCMA’s first formal training event for Vietnamese public officials. With each iteration, HCMA staff gain a deeper understanding of the various leadership constructs and hence are better able to make valuable contributions to the development of EMERGE. They are increasingly able to ascertain connections within the Vietnamese polity. Some instructors are now engaged in drafting Vietnamese case studies while others have developed Vietnamese-based illustrations to exemplify specific theoretical concepts. Instructors have also started making contributions from their own area of expertise, e.g., political science, public administration, etc.

EMERGE is entering the next level of development. As capacity is developed, HCMA staff will integrate eastern-based leadership theory and practice into EMERGE. Sessions will be developed in more depth and to address additional topics. Instructors will continue to teach EMERGE, experimenting with new tools and ideas and integrating feedback from learners. Illustrations and case studies from both polities will be designed to enable instructors to select materials appropriate to the specific needs of their students. And, the cycle of development, testing and integrating lessons into the next iteration will continue.

**CONCLUSION**

Many innovations from 20th century leadership studies and practice lend important contributions to leaders of the 21st century. Additionally, however, leaders must develop capacity to negotiate in a world defined by complexity. EMERGE: Leadership for Sustainable Development is a curriculum co-produced by PSU and HCMA to prepare leadership to lead successfully in the 21st century. EMERGE arises from the confluence of an increasingly integrated global context and the complex leadership problems issuing from that context. EMERGE advances historical innovations in leadership development and makes additional contributions that respond directly to complexity, i.e.,
systems thinking and the association of leadership with Sustainable Development. Additionally, EMERGE designers are endeavoring to create a cross-culturally relevant curricula. A two-pronged strategy is being utilized to accomplish this objective, i.e., the learning laboratory and polity-centered approaches.

The EMERGE design team is now challenged to move to the next stage in EMERGE development. The path forward is comprised of three primary objectives. First, EMERGE content and tools need to be further developed. For example, some modules address one part of a broad topical area, so need to be supplemented with additional material or modules to comprehensively address the topic. The Vision and Values module is one such example. Others need additional information to supplement and further develop various constructs. Additionally, the tools are originally conceived by EMERGE designers so need to be ground-truthed in real work settings and improved via incorporation of the lessons derived from those experiences. The second objective for future EMERGE development is to institutionalize the many lessons gleaned from practice regarding application of EMERGE to other cultures. The lessons emerging from the systematized learning laboratory and polity-centered approach will be critical in future applications of EMERGE to different polities.

The final objective is to discern the nature and extent to which the curriculum is relevant to the Vietnamese polity. A number of strategies are being implemented under the umbrella of the learning laboratory and policy-centered approach. Information generated from these strategies is systematically used to develop EMERGE. The next step is to conduct a formal evaluation of the relative success of these strategies. One important lesson from the work to date needs to be incorporated into the analysis. The lesson is that other issues can confound the question of relevance. These confounding issues need be identified to differentiate the real issues of relevance.

Language is one example of a confounding issue. On a number of occasions, Vietnamese colleagues and training participants initially thought a particular concept was irrelevant to the Vietnamese polity. Ensuing discussion, however, revealed the problem to be one of translation, not relevance. It was difficult to anticipate these translation challenges as the designers did not include someone who spoke Vietnamese as a first language. Rather, the team learned to watch for translation problems during training sessions and addressed them as they arose.

Another confounding issue that arose was distinguishing truly cultural differences from different aspects of the same phenomenon. Several examples of this phenomenon are provided as it seems to be quite common. These examples are drawn from the brief description of the Vietnamese polity. First, the description of the Vietnamese polity included a comment that leadership is accorded by position. Members of the CVP are given the title of leader and state officials are given the title of manager. So to, in the US, it is common practice to assign leadership status to people holding positions of power, whether in the public, private or nonprofit sector. Likewise, those with subordinate positions are assigned the status of management. If there truly is a difference between the polities, this initial level of analysis does not reveal it.

Another example of an apparent difference is the fact that CVP members are responsible for spreading the ideology of the party throughout the populace. In the US, likewise, political party members are tasked with convincing the populace of the superiority of the party’s ideology. Though both polities approach the advancement of vision and values in a way very different from that espoused by leadership theory and EMERGE, they are not different in the endeavor to expand the base of their constituents. A final example is the description of the Vietnamese polity as hierarchical. The US polity is also highly hierarchical (Weber, 1958). The bureaucratic model, built
on principles and practices of hierarchy, is ubiquitous in business, government and civil society. It is the dominant model of organizational structure in the US.

These examples do not negate the existence of real differences between the US and Vietnamese polities. Rather, this discussion serves to substantiate the claim that apparent differences need to be explored in-depth prior to abandoning leadership constructs or tools. There are significant and substantial differences that have important implications for EMERGE leadership and that offer critical lessons to members of different polities. American individualism and Vietnamese collectivism is one such example. Collectivism offers important lessons to Americans steeped in individualist thinking. Collectivism generates important skills in collaboration, dialogue and shared decision-making that result in mutual commitment to shared values and vision. This attribute of the Vietnamese polity is actually a great strength for leaders working in a highly networked world. On the other hand, the American focus on individualism has nurtured a strong focus on individual accountability and responsibility that could be beneficial within the Vietnamese polity.

Through careful analyses of perceived differences, the nature, extent and criticality of potential differences will be revealed. Once a determination of legitimate difference is made, the pertinent theories or practices need to be reviewed as they relate to that specific cultural context. Different conclusions can be reached based on this analysis, e.g., 1) the way in which the leadership construct is presented needs to be modified, 2) the strategies to implement the construct in practice need to be adapted, and/or 3) prerequisite changes in policy, etc. will be required prior to implementation of the idea in a particular workplace.

In conclusion, leaders, regardless of the polity from which they hail, face a world of increasing complexity. Success in this world requires innovative thinking, the will to embrace complexity, the ability negotiate through a terrain defined by uncertainty, and the capacity to learn even as they act. EMERGE: Leadership and Sustainable Development is designed to assist leaders succeed in this world.
REFERENCES


