A Competency-Based Model for Youth Leadership Development

Corey Seemiller, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Leadership Studies in Education and Organizations
Wright State University

Abstract

Whether they are in a leadership program, participate in an organization, or engage in school-based extra-curricular activities, there does not appear to be a shortage of leadership development opportunities for youth. Despite the prominence of these experiences, the lack of youth leadership development models available for educators can pose a challenge in creating opportunities intentionally designed to enhance leadership learning and development. This study uncovers prevalent leadership competencies embedded in four professional preparation frameworks, three research studies, and objectives of four large national youth leadership organizations to create a holistic youth leadership competency development model.

Introduction

Bullying, body image, substance use, peer pressure, and teen suicide are not new concerns facing youth. However, add cyber bullying, online gossip sites, increased attention to gender identity and sexual orientation, and you have a generation of kids dealing with a number of serious issues. But, the pressure to simply survive adolescence is likely not the only thing on their minds. Our world is more complex than ever before, and as adults, this is a generation that will have to solve many problems their generation did not create. Developing critical leadership skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, ethical decision-making, and goal setting could help youth in navigating adolescence today while preparing them to solve the world's problems tomorrow.

Literature Review

The call for leadership development of young people is not new. Organizations and programs focused on youth leadership development have been around for decades. Involvement in formal leadership programs (DeSimone, 2012; Anderson, Sabatelli, & Trachtenberg, 2007; Carter and Spotanski, 1989), sports (Chelladurai, 2011; Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2007), faith-based and service activities (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003), youth-run community programs (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005), extra-curricular activities (Hancock, Dyk, & Jones, 2012; Carter and Spotanski, 1989), camps (Henderson, Bialeschki, Scanlin, Thurber, Whitaker, & Marsh, 2007; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007), and national organizations such as 4-H (Anderson, Karr-Lilienthal, 2011; Boleman, Merten, & Hall, 2008; Quinn, 1999) have all been linked to developing leadership skills of youth.

Other than formal leadership programs, though, these are experiences in which participation alone is the often the leadership development activity. Formal leadership programs

(in school or out of school), on the other hand, involve intentional instruction of concepts and skills and can include training sessions, workshops, and retreats. In reviewing the literature, few formal leadership programs for youth appear to be grounded in a model or theory for leadership development. This is evident in the litany of write-ups of various youth leadership programs that offer little explanation as to how the curriculum for that program was derived. Without a theoretical framework, a leadership program can end up being a collection of interesting leadership activities lacking an intentional and developmental approach. This assertion goes beyond a cursory investigation into youth leadership literature but has also been called into question by Redmond and Dolan (2016) and Murphy and Reichard (2011). Both specifically point out that a formal and comprehensive model of youth leadership development is lacking. Ricketts and Rudd (2002) developed the Model for Youth Leadership Curriculum based on a synthesis of models, findings, and taxonomies developed by other scholars. They note that their model at the time of writing had only been tested with undergraduate students and not with youth. And, Redmond and Dolan (2016) offer a conceptual model for youth leadership development, albeit absent a theoretical or empirical framework for selecting the components to include. The absence of a theoretically-based youth leadership development model creates a gap in understanding what youth should be learning about leadership.

Zeldin and Camino's (1999) widely used definition of youth leadership development is "the provision of experiences, from highly structured to quite informal, that help young people develop the competencies necessary to lead others" (Houghton & DiLiello, 2009, p. 235). Competencies can be defined as the knowledge, values, abilities, and behaviors that help an individual contribute to or successfully engage in a role or task (Seemiller, 2013). Competencies have been widely used in education (Schilling & Koetting, 2010; Palardy & Eisele, 1972), businesses (Conger & Ready, 2004), and professional organizations (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009) as a means to design training, development opportunities, and evaluations that are explicitly linked to leadership development.

The importance of leadership competency development for youth is not new. In the late 1990s, Woyach and Cox (1997) highlighted the need to help youth learn specific knowledge and skills related to leadership, in essence, competencies. In addition, van Linden and Fertman (1998) discussed three stages of youth leadership development, all focusing on a skill development approach. It is apparent that leadership competency development has been and continues to be important for youth. But, the call for youth leadership competency development has not translated into a theoretically-grounded competency model designed specifically for youth.

Purpose

This article highlights the development of a theoretically grounded framework for youth leadership competency development based on a meta-analysis of the leadership competencies embedded in four professional preparation frameworks, three research-based studies on youth leadership, and objectives of four large national youth leadership organizations, yielding 11 frameworks for analysis. This study posits two research questions:

1. What leadership competencies are embedded in professional preparation frameworks, research-based studies on youth leadership, and objectives of large national youth leadership organizations?
2. What leadership competencies are most prevalent within professional preparation frameworks, research-based studies on youth leadership, and objectives of large national youth leadership organizations?

The findings from the second research question, in particular, informed the creation of a competency-based youth leadership development model.

Methodology

In order to uncover competencies most prevalent across all 11 frameworks, it was important to use consistent competency language. To create this universal language, data analysis included using directed content analysis. This process involves using an existing theory or research to formulate initial categories for coding (Potter & Levine, 1999). In this case, the Student Leadership Competencies (SLC) framework (Seemiller, 2013) designed for college students offered a foundational model from which to analyze the 11 selected frameworks. The SLC framework is comprised of 60 leadership competencies and was derived from a rigorous document analysis of leadership competencies embedded in a variety of contemporary leadership models and the learning outcomes of all 522 academic programs within 97 academic accrediting organizations (see Seemiller, 2013 for a full description of the process and the competencies). The purpose in using the Student Leadership Competencies (Seemiller, 2013) as the grounded framework was that it is a robust, theoretically-grounded competency model designed for students. Although the initial context of the framework included college students rather than youth, the developmental nature of the model and its focus on competency development in an educational setting appeared to provide the most alignment for the task at hand.

For the analysis, each of the 60 competencies from the Student Leadership Competencies framework was designated a code, and these codes were used in the analysis of all frameworks. The process of analysis involved three aspects. First, any language in a standard, outcome, objective, or competency in one of the eleven frameworks that matched the language of one of the 60 Student Leadership Competencies (SLC) was coded with the SLC competency name (eg. Empathy was coded as the SLC, empathy). Second, because the language in the frameworks did not always match exactly with the language of one of the 60 Student Leadership Competencies, synonyms were considered (eg. Teamwork was coded as the SLC, collaboration). Third, when there was not a direct or synonymous translation, the meaning of the standard, outcome, objective, or competency was considered (eg. Respecting others' boundaries and space was coded as Appropriate Interaction given the definition of the SLC competency). After this process, all of the content listed in the frameworks were coded using the language of the 60 competencies. In some cases, one standard, outcome, objective, or competency in a framework included more than one Student Leadership Competency.

Professional Preparation Frameworks. Four professional preparation frameworks were analyzed in this study. These frameworks are associated with academic and/or career preparation and success and include the Common Core State Standards, Student Leadership

Competencies, National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Competencies, and the Common Career Technical Core.

Common Core State Standards (Common Core). The Common Core State Standards were developed in 2009 in collaboration with state leaders from 48 states (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2016a). The Common Core is a "clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills students need in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level so they can be prepared to succeed in college, career, and life" (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2016b, Overview). Because of their widespread use, familiarity with teachers, existing credibility, and focus on outlining key standards for career success, these standards provided a practical and useful framework for analysis. However, because the Math standards were highly technical and lacked many elements of behavior related to leadership, only the English language arts/literacy standards for K-12 (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) were used.

The 60 SLC codes were used to analyze the 987 English language arts/literacy standards from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Six hundred and sixty nine (68%) of the standards contained at least one Student Leadership Competency, with many standards including the same competencies. For example, the competency of Evaluation was present in 138 standards. In analyzing by Student Leadership Competency, 25 of the 60 Student Leadership Competencies emerged in at least one standard from Kindergarten through 12th grade, with 10 of those appearing 20 or more times across the K-12 curriculum. In order to ensure that competencies appearing one or only a few times were not given the same importance as those appearing more, only the 10 Student Leadership Competencies appearing 20 or more times were considered.

Student Leadership Competencies (SLCs). Although the 60 Student Leadership Competencies were used to analyze the other frameworks, findings from the Student Leadership Competencies study offer insight to consider as well. The study consisted of analyzing 522 academic programs within all 97 academic accrediting organizations in the United States (Seemiller, 2013), which yielded 60 leadership competencies. However, some competencies emerged across more programs than others indicating a more widespread integration across academic programs. Of the 60 competencies, five appeared in 33.33% or more of all academic programs analyzed and were included in this study.

National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Competencies (Career Readiness). Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers conducts a study of employers focused on college graduate employment. One hundred and sixty nine employers participated in the study in 2016. One particular question asks employers to rate the essential need of particular career readiness competencies. The four career competencies that yielded an average rating of 4 or higher (very important) were translated using the SLCs and resulted in the identification of eight Student Leadership Competencies (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017).

Common Career Technical Core (Technical Core). Career and Technical Education, specifically at the high school level, is designed to prepare students "to be college- and career-ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job-specific skills" (ACTE, n.d., p 1). Although the focus of this framework is on career preparation, "CTE initiatives play a vital role in mitigating the leadership skills gap" (ACTE, 2012). In 2012, more than 3500 education experts from across the country came together to create the Common Career Technical Core, which includes 12 career ready practices applicable across all careers (Advance CTE, 2012, p. 2). Through analyzing these 12 practices, 20 Student Leadership Competencies emerged.

Prevalence of Competencies. After analyzing four distinctly different professional preparation frameworks, 23 (38%) of the 60 Student Leadership Competencies were present in at least one of the frameworks. In addition, four competencies, analysis, evaluation, verbal communication, and writing, appeared in all four (100%) frameworks, and one competency, collaboration, appeared in three of the four frameworks (75%). Each of these particular competencies appear to align with skills needed to do well academically such as writing, analyzing, and evaluating information. Table 1 includes the Student Leadership Competencies associated with each professional preparation framework used in this study.

Table 1
Professional Preparation Frameworks

Common Core	SLCs	Career Readiness	Technical Core
Research	Analysis*	Analysis*	Research
Reflection and Application	Evaluation*	Evaluation*	Other Perspectives
Systems Thinking	Idea Generation	Problem Solving	Systems Thinking
Analysis*	Verbal Communication*	Appropriate Interaction	Analysis*
Synthesis	Writing*	Collaboration*	Evaluation*
Evaluation*		Verbal Communication*	Idea Generation
Receiving Feedback		Writing*	Problem Solving
Collaboration*		Responsibility for Personal Behavior	Decision Making
Verbal Communication*			Appropriate Interaction
Writing*			Collaboration*
			Diversity
			Social Responsibility
			Verbal Communication*
			Listening
			Writing*
			Facilitation
			Goals
			Plan
			Responsibility for Personal Behavior
			Ethics

Note. Competencies with an asterisk appear in a minimum of three of the four frameworks analyzed.

Research-Based Studies on Youth Leadership. In addition to uncovering competencies within professional preparation frameworks, it was also essential to consider frameworks presented in studies on youth leadership specifically, as these studies offer a research-based perspective into student leadership development. The three studies selected for analysis reflect elements of leadership other than professional preparation such as character development, civic engagement, social and emotional learning, and interpersonal dynamics. These studies include frameworks such as the Model for Youth Leadership Curriculum (Ricketts and Rudd, 2002), the Principles for Youth Leadership Development Programs (Woyach and Cox, 1997), Key Social and Emotional Learning Competencies (Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, and Weissberg, 2000).

Model for Youth Leadership Curriculum (Curriculum). Ricketts and Rudd (2002), synthesized leadership literature to develop their own leadership model for youth to be used to design leadership development curriculum. They present a hierarchical,

conceptual model with stages that align with both Kolb's experiential learning theory and Bloom's taxonomy (Ricketts and Rudd, 2002). In analyzing the constructs within the model, 16 Student Leadership Competencies emerged.

Principles for Youth Leadership Development Programs (Principles). Through a survey of 25 seasoned youth leadership professionals, Woyach and Cox (1997) found 12 principles important in youth leadership development. This list of principles was created to help educators determine both the outcomes and the content of leadership development programs (Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson, & Hare, 2004). Within the 12 principles are nine Student Leadership Competencies.

Key Social and Emotional Learning Competencies (SEL Competencies). In order to diversify the type of frameworks included in this analysis, it was valuable to include a model on social and emotional learning. These topics are critical to the leadership process as evidenced in the abundance of literature in the leadership field focusing specifically on the social and emotional element of leadership (eg. Emotionally Intelligent Leadership by Shankman, Allen, and Haber-Curran, 2015). The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning developed Key SEL Competencies, which include "skills, attitudes, and values that are critical to the promotion of positive behaviors across a range of contexts important to the academic, personal, and social development of young people" (Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, & Weissberg, 2000, p. 4). The authors integrated theories and research related to emotional intelligence, social development, social and emotional competence, social information processing, and self-management in creating this framework (Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, & Weissberg, 2000, p. 4). After analyzing the 17 Key Social and Emotional Learning Competencies, 18 Student Leadership Competencies emerged.

Prevalence of Competencies. Through analyzing the frameworks within these three youth leadership studies, 27 of the 60 (45%) competencies emerged. Only one competency appeared across all three studies: Self-understanding. Fourteen additional competencies were prevalent in two of the three (67%) studies. These included other perspectives, reflection and application, analysis, evaluation, problem solving, decision making, personal contributions, productive relationships, others' contributions, collaboration, others' circumstances, verbal communication, conflict negotiation, and ethics. Not surprisingly, most of these competencies center around a number of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills often linked to leadership. Table 2 showcases the Student Leadership Competencies associated with each framework listed in the research-based studies on youth leadership used in this study.

Table 2
Research-Based Studies on Youth Leadership

Curriculum	Principles	SEL Competencies
Reflection and Application*	Other Perspectives*	Other Perspectives*
Analysis*	Reflection and Application*	Analysis*
Evaluation*	Self-Understanding*	Evaluation*
Problem Solving*	Personal Contributions*	Problem Solving*
Decision Making*	Self-Development	Decision Making*
Self-Understanding*	Productive Relationships	Self-Understanding*
Personal Contributions*	Collaboration*	Scope of Competence
Productive Relationships	Others' Circumstances*	Appropriate Interaction
Others' Contributions	Service	Others' Contributions
Collaboration*		Others' Circumstances*
Diversity		Social Responsibility
Verbal Communication*		Verbal Communication*
Writing		Non-Verbal Communication
Conflict Negotiation*		Listening
Ethics*		Conflict Negotiation*
Excellence		Advocating for a Point of View
		Goals
		Ethics*

Note. Competencies with an asterisk appear in a minimum of two of the three frameworks analyzed.

Large National Youth Leadership Organizations. Both the professional preparation frameworks and the studies on youth leadership offer a theoretical view of leadership. In order to offer balance between theory and practice, the intended outcomes/objectives of four different youth leadership organizations were analyzed. These included 4-H, FFA, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. These organizations were selected because of how widespread they are nationally as well as the vast number of youth who participate.

4-H. With nearly 6 million participants, 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States (4-H, 2016). The organization, in partnership with public universities, offers opportunities for youth to engage in hands-on projects with guidance and support from mentors. These take place in after school programs, camps, and school organizations (4-H, 2016). The Targeting Life Skills Model was developed in 1998 by Pat Hendricks of Iowa State University in an effort to outline specific skills that fall under the 4-H categories of Head, Heart, Hand, and Health (Norman and Jordan, n.d.). The model includes four categories, 8 subcategories, and 35 skills, which when coded using the Student Leadership Competencies yield 26 competencies.

FFA. FFA began in 1928 as Future Farmers of America but now uses only the name FFA to be inclusive of the 629,000 members who are affiliated with a variety of

agricultural education initiatives (FFA, 2016). FFA deems itself as "a dynamic youth development organization within agricultural education that prepares students for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success" (FFA, 2016, p. 8). To do this, FFA has outlined the FFA Mission Precepts, which are components of the mission specific to developing youth in the areas of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success (FFA, 2016). Fifteen Student Leadership Competencies emerged through an analysis of the 16 different components of the Mission Precepts.

Girl Scouts. Being more than 100 years old and having 2.7 million members, Girl Scouts refers to itself as the "preeminent leadership development organization for girls" (Girl Scouts, 2016, Who We Are). Whether through participation in a troop, camp, or leadership program, Girl Scouts' aim is to build "girls of courage, confidence, and character" (Girl Scouts, 2016, Who We Are). In 2008, the Girl Scouts published Transforming Leadership, which describes the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This publication includes a model designed to help girls develop the skills they need to engage in shared leadership (Girl Scouts of the USA, 2008). The model was developed by bringing together experts in youth development along with volunteers, council members, and national staff to outline leadership outcomes (Girl Scouts of the USA, 2008). This process resulted in the identification of 15 different outcomes across three categories: Discover, connect, and take action. In analyzing these outcomes, 28 SLCs emerged.

Boy Scouts. As one of the "nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations," Boy Scouts offers the opportunity for young people to build character, learn about and participate in citizenship, and enhance personal fitness (Boy Scouts, 2016, About). The 2.3 million youth members (Scouting News Room, 2015) participate in troops, projects, camps, and programs. As each Boy Scout experience is different, there are no overarching learning outcomes that cut across all programs. However, these experiences are grounded in Scout Law (see Boy Scouts of America, 1998), making it the most organizationally universal set of objectives to analyze for competencies. Within the 12 points of the Scout Law, there were five Student Leadership Competencies.

Prevalence of Competencies. In looking at the competencies of these four youth organizations, only one competency was present in all four (100%) organizations: Appropriate interaction. This is not surprising given that each of these organizations is structured to help youth work and build connections with others, both peers and mentors. This fostering of connections with others is also evident in many of the competencies found in three of the four organizations: Diversity, others' circumstances, and verbal communication. Analysis, ethics, and confidence also emerged, highlighting the value of helping youth critically think and make good choices. Although 43 of the 60 competencies (72%) were present in one or more organizations, 20 (47%) of those appeared in only one organization, highlighting the diversity of leadership focus each organization offers. Only seven of the 43 emergent competencies (16%) showed up in three or more of the organizations. Because of the focus of this study on competency prevalence, only these seven were considered for this study. The Student Leadership

Competencies associated with each large national youth leadership organization are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Large National Youth Leadership Organizations

4-H	FFA	Girl Scouts	Boy Scouts
Research	Reflection and	Other Perspectives	Appropriate
Other Perspectives	Application	Analysis*	Interaction*
Analysis*	Analysis*	Evaluation	Helping Others
Synthesis	Decision Making	Problem Solving	Ethics*
Evaluation	Self-Understanding	Personal Values	Positive Attitude
Problem Solving	Personal Values	Scope of Competence	Confidence*
Decision Making	Self-Development	Self-Development	
Productive	Appropriate	Productive	
Relationships	Interaction*	Relationships	
Appropriate	Mentoring	Appropriate	
Interaction*	Diversity*	Interaction*	
Empathy	Others'	Motivation	
Collaboration	Circumstances*	Others' Contributions	
Diversity*	Verbal	Collaboration	
Others'	Communication*	Diversity*	
Circumstances*	Listening	Others'	
Service	Writing	Circumstances*	
Verbal	Vision	Inclusion	
Communication*	Responding to	Social Justice	
Non-Verbal	Change	Social Responsibility	
Communication		Service	
Listening		Verbal	
Writing		Communication*	
Conflict Negotiation		Conflict Negotiation	
Goals		Advocating for a	
Plan		Point of View	
Organization		Goals	
Responsibility for		Plan	
Personal Behavior		Functioning	
Ethics*		Independently	
Resiliency		Responsibility for	
Confidence*		Personal Behavior	
Excellence		Ethics*	
		Positive Attitude	
		Confidence*	

Note. Competencies with an asterisk appear in a minimum of three of the four frameworks analyzed.

Youth Leadership Competency Model. Forty-nine of the 60 (82%) Student Leadership Competencies were present in at least one of the eleven frameworks analyzed. The only competencies to not appear in any framework include:

- Creating Change
- Empowerment
- Follow-Through
- Group Development
- Initiative
- Mission
- Organizational Behavior
- Power Dynamics
- Providing Feedback
- Responding to Ambiguity
- Supervision

However, with 49 competencies that were present across the frameworks, how can an educator realistically plan a program, run an organization, or design a learning experience that addresses all 49? The goal is to narrow that list into one that is more manageable and more focused.

Using any of these frameworks alone or in combination with others can offer insight for developing youth leadership programs. An educator may find that a single framework provides the map to successful program design, whereas another might find that the overarching findings in one particular area such as the collection of competencies across professional preparation frameworks would be most useful. There is, however, a benefit to considering the findings from all 11 frameworks. Doing so can provide a balanced and holistic look at youth leadership development that includes elements of professional development, character development, values development, life skills development, emotional and social development, community development, interpersonal development, self-development, and academic development as these components were embedded into the frameworks analyzed in this study. To ensure balance across these areas, it was important to look at more than simply the total number of frameworks that include a specific competency (e.g. If a competency is present in 5 of the 11 frameworks, it automatically makes the list). Thus, to give merit to each of the three framework categories in this study, the same methodology discussed earlier was used to develop this model. For a competency to be included, it must have appeared in at least three of the four professional preparation frameworks, two of the three research-based studies on youth leadership, or three of the four large national youth organization frameworks. Any competencies that appeared more than once (e.g. Verbal communication appeared as a prevalent competency in all three categories) are listed only once in the model. Figure 1 highlights these competencies in four domains: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and strategic. The domains are based on the eight competency clusters from the Student Leadership Competencies (Seemiller, 2013).

Intrapersonal	**Societal**
Self-Understanding Personal Contributions Ethics Confidence	Diversity Others' Circumstances
Interpersonal	**Strategic**
Productive Relationships Appropriate Interaction Others' Contributions Collaboration Verbal Communication Writing Conflict Negotiation	Research Other Perspectives Reflection and Application Analysis Evaluation Problem Solving Decision-Making

Figure 1. Youth Leadership Competency Model

Using the Model for Program Design. Having a model for youth leadership competency development offers a solid start for leadership program design, however being able to utilize the model effectively is of paramount importance. There are three different recommended approaches for using the model. These approaches include developmental sequencing, progression of depth, and complexity.

Developmental sequencing. The first approach involves designing a program that sequences the competencies in an order that makes sense developmentally. One leadership model that could inform this approach is the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, which asserts that understanding oneself is a foundation to and precursor of working with others and working with a community (Astin et al., 1996). Three of the four domains of the Youth Leadership Competency Model align with the Social Change Model: Intrapersonal and self, interpersonal and group, and societal and community (Astin et al., 1996). Using the same sequencing as the Social Change Model, educators could focus on competencies in one domain at a time in the following order: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and then community. The strategic domain could be integrated last as a means to enact the previous three domains. The premise would be to fully immerse students from surface to deep learning of the competencies in each domain before moving fully to the next domain.

Progression of depth. In the original Student Leadership Competencies framework, four dimensions of development are discussed (Seemiller, 2013). These include the knowledge dimension (theories, concepts, and information related to the competency), the value dimension (beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives that highlight the importance of the competency), the ability dimension (motivation and skills to use a competency), and the behavior (using the competency) (Seemiller, 2013). Although the

original research did not discuss a particular ordering of these dimensions, given the definition of each dimension, there appears to be an inherent progression of depth. Understanding concepts related to a competency (knowledge dimension) might offer an arms-length learning around a competency (eg. What does this competency look like on paper?) But, when moving to value, students need to explore their own perceptions of the competency, making the competency more personal than an arms-length away. By the time a student engages in a competency, they must enact all that they have learned and believe about the competency.

In using this type of sequencing, an educator might cover the knowledge dimension of selected competencies, regardless of domain, before moving to subsequent dimensions of each competency. An example could include going over strategies for effective verbal communication (knowledge dimension), discussing the importance of respectful conversation (value dimension), and practicing "I" statements (ability) before asking students to engage in an activity such as identity dialogues (behavior dimension).

Complexity. Bloom's Taxonomy, which serves as a hierarchy of learning levels from simple to more complex (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956), can offer another approach for using the Youth Leadership Competency Model for program design. Bloom's taxonomy includes six levels of learning that begin with acquiring knowledge through actions such as the recall of information, observation, and naming and progress to the evaluation level, which includes assessing, evaluating, solving, and recommending (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956). Aligning competency learning with different levels of the taxonomy can help students go from simple to more complex levels for each competency. Using this approach, an educator might address selected competencies at lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, increasing with complexity over time. For example, being able to name three strategies for effective verbal communication would likely come before solving verbal communication issues. Youth leadership development can and should be more than a collection of interesting self-awareness and teambuilding activities. Being intentional in both what youth should be learning and developing (leadership competencies) and how the program is designed (the approaches) can make for a thoughtful and holistic approach to leadership development.

Conclusion

Youth are faced with many difficult challenges as they navigate their adolescence, challenges that could be addressed by executing effective leadership. Offering intentionally designed and theoretically grounded leadership development experiences that help youth lead today might also help them develop the competencies they need to tackle society's complex issues in the future.

References

ACTE. (n.d.). *CTE today!* Retrieved from
        https://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/What_is_CTE/Fact_Sheets/CTE_Today_Fact_
        Sheet_2016.pdf

ACTE. (2012, December). *CTE's role in leadership development*. ACTE Issue Brief. Retrieved
        from https://www.acteonline.org/issuebriefs/#.WCtlA6IrKCc

Advance CTE. (2012). *Setting a new standard for career technical education: The common
        career technical core*. Retrieved from
        https://www.careertech.org/sites/default/files/CCTCSettingNewStandardFINAL.pdf

Ammons-Stephens, S., Cole, H. J., Jenkins-Gibbs, K., Riehle, C. F., & Weare, W. H., Jr. (2009).
        Developing core leadership competencies for the library profession. *Library Leadership
        & Management*, *23*(2), 63–74.

Anderson, K. P., & Karr-Lilienthal, L. (2011). Influence of 4-H horse project involvement on
        development of life skills. *Journal of Extension, 49*(5). Retrieved from
        https://www.joe.org/joe/2011october/iw2.php

Anderson, S. A., Sabatelli, R. M., & Trachtenberg, J. (2007). Evaluation of youth leadership
        training programs. *Journal of Youth Development, 1*(3) 29-45.

Astin, H. S., Astin, A. W., Bonous-Hammarth, M., Chambers, T., Goldberg, L. S., Johnson, C.
        S., . . . Shellogg, K. M. (1996). *A social change model of leadership development:
        Guidebook* (Version 3). Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Higher Education
        Research Institute.

Bloom, B., Englehart, M. Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational
        objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain*. New
        York, Toronto: Longmans, Green.

Boleman, C. T., Merten, K., & Hall, G. (2008). State 4-H council: A look back on what it meant
        to serve. *Journal of Extension,* 46(1). Retrieved from
        http://www.joe.org/joe/2008february/rb5.php

Boy Scouts. (2016). *About the BSA*. Retrieved from http://www.scouting.org/About.aspx

Boy Scouts of America. (1998). *The meaning of the Scout law*. Retrieved from
        http://www.usscouts.org/advance/boyscout/bslaw.asp

Schilling, J. F., & Koetting, J. R. (2010). Underpinnings of competency-based education.
        Athletic Training Education Journal, 5(4), 165-169.

Carter, R. I. & Spotanski, D. R. (1989). Perceptions of leadership and personal development of selected high school students in Iowa. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 30*(4), 30-34.

Chelladurai, P. (2011). Participation in sport and leadership development. In S. E. Murphy & R. J. Reichard (Eds.), *Early development and leadership: Building the next generation of leaders* (pp. 3-38). New York, NY: Routledge.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2016a). *Development process*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/development-process/

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2016b). *Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/frequently-asked-questions/

Conger, J. A., & Ready, D. A. (2004). Rethinking leadership competencies. *Leader to Leader*, *32*, 41–47.

DeSimone, L. (2012). *Youth leadership development from the grade 8 perspective: A case study of a school-based program* (Thesis). Retrieved from https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/33643/1/DeSimone_Laura_201211_MA _thesis.pdf

Edelman, A., Gill, P., Comerford, K., Larson, M., & Hare, R. (2004). *Youth development & youth leadership*. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485711.pdf

FFA. (2016). *Official FFA manual*. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/nationalffaorganization/docs/2016_official_ffa_manual

4-H. (2016). *What is 4-H?* Retrieved from http://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/

Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J. & Deakin, J. (2007). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 10*(1), 19-40.

Girl Scouts. (2016). *Who we are*. Retrieved from http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/who-we-are.html

Girl Scouts of the USA. (2008). *Transforming Leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/research/transforming_leadership.pdf

Hancock, D., Dyk, P. H., & Jones, K. (2012). Adolescent involvement in extracurricular activities: Influences on leadership skills. *Journal of Leadership Education, 11*(1), 84-101.

Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What adolescents learn in organized youth activities: A survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 13*(1), 25-55.

Henderson, K. A., Bialeschki, M. D., Scanlin, M. M., Thurber, C., Whitaker, L. S., & Marsh, P. E. (2007). Components of camp experiences for positive youth development. *Journal of Youth Development, 1*(3), 1-12.

Houghton, J. D., & DiLiello, T. C. (2009). Leadership development: The key to unlocking individual creativity in organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 31*(3), 230-245.

Larson, R., Walker, K., & Pearce, N. (2005). A comparison of youth-driven and adult-driven youth programs: balancing inputs from youth and adults. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(1), 57–74.

Murphy, S. E. & Reichard, R. J. (2011). Preface. In S. E. Murphy & R. J. Reichard (Eds.), *Early development and leadership: Building the next generation of leaders* (pp. 3-38). New York, NY: Routledge.

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2017). *Job outlook 2017*. Retrieved from http://www.naceweb.org/

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common core state standards (English language arts/literacy).* Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers.

Norman, M. N. & Jordan, J. C. (n.d.). *Targeting life skills in 4-H*. Retrieved from http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/206232.pdf

Palardy, J. M. & Eisele, J. E. (1972). Competency based education. *The Clearinghouse: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 9*, 545-548.

Payton, J. W., Wardlaw, D. M., Graczyk, P. A., Bloodworth, M. R., Tompsett, C. J., & Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Social and emotional learning: A framework for promoting mental health and reducing risk behaviors in children and youth. *Journal of School Health, 70*(5), 179-185.

Potter, W. J., & Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999). Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*, 258-284.

Quinn, J. (1999). Where need meets opportunity: Youth development programs for early teens. *The Future of Children, 9*(2), 96-116.

Redmond, S. & Dolan, P. (2016). Towards a conceptual model of youth leadership development. *Child & Family Social Work, 21*, 261-271.

Ricketts, J. C. & Rudd, R. D. (2002). A comprehensive leadership education model to train, teach, and develop leadership in youth. *Journal of Career and Technical Education, 19*(1), 7-17.

Scouting News Room. (2015). *BSA at a glance*. Retrieved from http://scoutingnewsroom.org/about-the-bsa/at-a-glance/

Seemiller, C. (2013). *The student leadership competencies guidebook: Designing intentional leadership learning and development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shankman, M.L., Allen, S.J., & Haber-Curran, P. (2015). *Emotionally intelligent leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Thurber, C. A., Scanlin, M. M., Scheuler, L., & Henderson, K. A. (2007). Youth development outcomes of the camp experience: Evidence for multidimensional growth. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 36*, 241-254.

van Linden, J. & Fertman, C. I. (1998). *Youth leadership: A guide to understanding leadership development in adolescents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Woyach, R. B., & Cox, K. J. (1997). Principles for youth leadership development programs. *Leadership Link*. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Leadership Center.

Author Biography

Dr. Corey Seemiller is a faculty member in Organizational Leadership at Wright State University. She has served as the co-chair for the National Leadership Symposium and the co-chair for the Leadership Education Academy. Dr. Seemiller is the author of *The Student Leadership Competencies Guidebook* and *Generation Z Goes to College*.