Perception by Others

Objectives
1) Students will understand the importance of perception by others in leadership.
2) Students will understand how people are perceived through stereotypes and the significance of that.
3) Students will recognize how they are perceived.
4) Students will understand the essential difference between contingency and situational leadership theories and be able to relate them to the skills and trait theories.
5) Students will realize how these leadership theories relate to perception by others.

Outline Agenda
1) Audience Change-Up
2) Tracks Activity
   Johari Window
3) Interactive Johari Window
4) Introduction to the Theories
5) Contingency vs. Situational Leadership
6) Skills and Trait leadership theories

“Perception is strong and sight weak. In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things.” -Anonymous
Audience Change-up
(20 minutes)

**Purpose:** To have students understand how knowing how others perceive you is important to leadership.

**Directions:** Pull three student volunteers out of the class and give each one a scenario. Have each student act out the scenario for one minute for each audience type. Feel free to adjust the classroom environment for each scenario (e.g., tell the students what audience they are supposed to be, or let the audience react to the speaker depending on the situation). Since the activity might get a little bit redundant choose 2 of the 3 scenarios below and focus more on the discussion afterwards.

**Scenario 1: (a more general scenario, not necessarily a real leadership one)**
You want to go to your home school’s homecoming, but at the same time you have a big test coming up on Monday. Please talk to the class on this issue. First, treat the class as a group of friends who also go to IMSA but are from your home town convincing them to come too. Next, treat the class like your parents and convince them to let you go.

**Scenario 2:**
You want sophomores to be allowed to have intervizes first semester, and you would like to express your point to the community. Please talk to the class on this issue. First, you’ll treat the class like they are your peers at a lunch table. Then you’ll talk to the class like you are giving a presentation on the issue to the Parent-Teacher Association.

**Scenario 3:**
You are a camp counselor. Your job is to help groups of people bond and become closer, so you’ll have the class go around in a circle and have each person share something about themselves. [Or, offer to let the student do a different, but equally simple, activity—just have them run it by you first.] First, treat the class like a group of second-graders. Then, treat the class like a group of adults who all work for the same Fortune 500 company.

**Discussion:**
How did the speakers change their body language, their speech, the material, etc., based on the audience?
Was it necessary or not necessary for the speaker to adjust? Why? Is it dependent upon the scenario?
Why is understanding how others will perceive you important? What would have happened if the speaker did not adjust to the audience? Would it have been any different?
How does understanding perception by others relate to other forms of leadership?
Tracks Activity
(15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To have the students realize how they perceive others sometimes even before they speak with them and how that affects their view of the person.

**Directions:** Have 6 pieces of paper up around the room labeled: Asian, Nerd, Jock, Woman, Gamer, College Grubber, and Leader. Have students go to one of the papers and write what they think of when they think of that stereotype on the paper. Then get the class together and ask people who say they identify with a certain stereotype to go to one side of the room. Then read out what is written on the sheet (make sure you censor anything that needs censoring).

**Discussion:**
For the students who said they identified with that stereotype beforehand, did they agree with all the things said?
How different was the reality from what the class had written?
How often do these stereotypes constitute the first impression of a person?
How do these things influence your perception of a person?

Johari Window
(10 minutes)

**Purpose:** To introduce the Johari Window concept to the students.

**Directions:** Explain the Johari window, as shown below. As a class, try and create a Johari Window for a well-known character, such as Dr. McGee or Oprah.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Known to self</th>
<th>Not known to self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Known to others</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not known to others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN SPOT</td>
<td>BLIND SPOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIDDEN SPOT</td>
<td>UNKNOWN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interactive Johari Window
(20 minutes)

**Purpose:** To visually represent students’ ideas of themselves and of others’ perceptions of them, and to identify differences between the two.

**Directions:** Split the student up into groups of three. Have the students choose their partners, as it is important they have people they know fairly well. Tell each student to go the following link: HYPERLINK "http://kevan.org/johari" http://kevan.org/johari and have them fill out the first part of the Window (follow the instructions). Then have each student e-mail the link of their Johari window to each student in their group. Finally, each student should complete the Johari window for their other group members.

**Discuss:**
1) Why did you choose this trait? *(discuss in small groups or to each other)*
2) Do you think this trait is more prominent than the traits I chose for myself? *(discuss as a class)*
3) How do you think your Johari Window will change throughout your IMSA career?
4) How will your Johari Window change as you get to know each other better?
5) What new insights do you get from completing your Johari Window?
6) How do these affect the decisions that you make for yourself and others?
7) How do these traits/perceptions lend themselves to your leadership ability?

Introduction to the Theories
(15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To get students thinking about the two leadership theories in context.

**Directions:** Read out some or all of the scenarios and have the students move towards one side of the room to represent who they think would be the better leader in each one (similar to Leadership in Line). Make sure to ask probing questions. For example, if the students feel the president should lead in one situation but the assigned leader of the group should not lead in another, ask why that is different, etc. Note that there is no correct answer to any scenario.

**Scenario 1:**
The ship *Elizabeth* has a crew of 4: first the captain, then the carpenter (who is in charge of fixing the ship), the Gunman (who is in charge of the cannons) and the lookout (who keeps an eye out for storms and enemies). One day, there is a problem. There is a pirate ship approaching and if the *Elizabeth* doesn’t make it to its destination, then the merchants will lose a lot of money. Who should handle the situation?

**Scenario 2:**
In the mythical country of Abracadabraland, there is a president, the head of the farmer’s association, the president’s advisor for public health and an advisor for foreign relations. One day, the food supplies get infected. The country is in chaos
and people are hungry and some are sick but the hospitals don’t have the medicine they need. Who should directly handle the situation?

Scenario 3:
Dallas, Kevin, Ayun and Stephanie are assigned a group project where they write a paper, create a poster, and give a presentation about physics. Stephanie is the main leader—she stays on top of everything, oversees the other’s work, and organizes everyone’s responsibilities. She is also the best writer in the group. Ayun and Kevin are the natural-born speakers. Dallas is the most artistic. While working with the group on the poster, Kevin accidentally draws the wrong diagram, but no one notices until five minutes before the presentation. Who should take care of the situation?

Scenario 4:
Ryan, Arjun and Kristine are really good friends. After high school, they decided to go camping together in Japan. Arjun is the only one who can speak some Japanese and he is considered the leader of the group. Kristine enjoys watching the TV shows *Survivor Man* and *Man vs. Wild*. Ryan is the most athletic. While in the Japan wilderness, Arjun drops the compass and they got lost. Their cell phones are out of range, so they can’t call anyone. Who should lead the group to safety?

Leadership Theories
*(10 minutes)*

**Purpose:** To introduce the students to contingency and situational leadership theories with connections to skills and trait leadership theories.

**Directions:** Explain the situational/contingency theories to the class. Ask the following questions:
- What is the main focus of these two theories?
- How do they differ?
- What is the importance of these theories?
- What do they say about way a leader is perceived and his personal skills? (tie into the previous activity)

Explain the skills and trait theories and have the class try to tie them in with situational/contingency theories. Don't forget to make connections back to the scenarios activity.

**Content:**

*Situational Theory*

"http://www.changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/situational_leadership.htm"

http://www.changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/situational_leadership.htm and

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Contingency Theory
"http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/theories/contingency_theory.htm"
http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/theories/contingency_theory.htm

Skills Theory
This theory states that learned knowledge and acquired skills/abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership. Skills theory by no means disavows the connection between inherited traits and the capacity to be an effective leader – it simply argues that learned skills, a developed style, and acquired knowledge, are the real keys to leadership performance. It is of course the belief that skills theory is true that warrants all the effort and resources devoted to leadership training and development
For further reading: http://theleaderlab.org/2010/02/skills-theory/

Trait Theory
This theory postulates that people are either born or not born with the qualities that predispose them to success in leadership roles. That is, that certain inherited qualities, such as personality and cognitive ability, are what underlie effective leadership. There have been hundreds of studies to determine the most important leadership traits, and while there is always going to be some disagreement, intelligence, sociability, and drive (aka determination) are consistently cited as key qualities.

For further reading: http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/trait-theory.htm

NOTE TO FACILITATORS:
This is just a little spiel about the focus of the module that may be helpful in directing the module properly.
So, the culmination of the Self Awareness and Perception by Others modules is the understanding within the students that in order to become more effective leaders and also problem solvers that they must understand their own strengths, weaknesses, values and at the same time how others perceive them. By understanding this one can work towards improving your own leadership by realizing what you are good at and how you can apply your strengths and general perception and make up for the weaknesses. Only then can you truly be an effective leader, because as the situational and contingent theories mention no one person is a perfect leader in each situation. One must adapt and change to meet the needs of a situation whether that be by self-change or through delegation of tasks to others who are more qualified (seniors think back to the management stuff we learned in LEAD our sophomore year). This last point is what we need to stress, how without self-awareness and understanding how others perceive you, you will not be able to adapt or figure out how to properly tackle a situation.