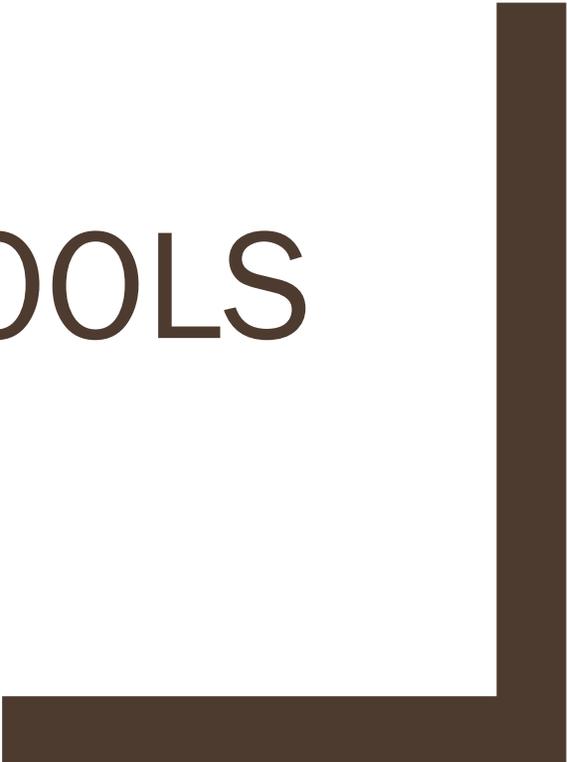# LEADERSHIP TOOLS

Benjamin Brewster

You Are All Leaders

- Briefly tell your partner about a non-teaching experience where you were a leader

Tools of Leadership

- Leaders employ many tools, many of which are experience-based, all of which must be practiced to be effective

- Here I present 3 tools you can use in any situation to better lead your charges, and communicate with your leaders

1 :: Interpersonal Effectiveness

■ This is the primary tool at your disposal: how effective you are at communicating

■ It might seem obvious, but to put us at a baseline, our communications should be:
  – *Uplifting (Causing feelings trending towards peace, confidence)*
  – *Motivating (Causing feelings of excitement, helping them see a reachable goal and understanding the benefits of reaching it)*
  – *Connective (Promotes communications again in the future)*
  – *Productive (Addresses the issues)*

■ If you're wondering about a particular communication, ask yourself this:
  – *If they forward my email on, will I be embarrassed where it ends up?*

Interpersonal Effectiveness - Examples

- Student Q: "When are Office Hours?"

- Original Instructor A:
  - *"Office Hours are posted on the website, see you in class."*

- Better Instructor A:
  - *"Thanks for asking, I'm glad you are looking to find help - I'm confident we can solve anything! You can find myself and my TAs at the schedule listed on our website here: [URL]. See you in class, let me know if you need anything else!"*
  - Uplifting, Motivating, Connective, Productive: it insightfully notices that if a student is asking for help, the student likely *needs* help

Interpersonal Effectiveness - Examples

- Why might we cover this here, behind sealed doors? Because I receive communications like this from our students:

  - *"I've been so frustrated by [CS class X] and [CS class Y] in so many different ways that it has put me really on edge, even in my personal life. This morning [Instructor] responded to one of my piazza posts with a message that I felt was highly inappropriate and insulting to the work my group did. ... it was so demeaning that I had to get up from my desk at work and take a walk around the block to cool off"*

- Whether or not the student's opinion of what happened is actually appropriate and/or based on facts, the feelings experienced are nonetheless *real*

Interpersonal Effectiveness

■ Self-Reflection: What changes would I need to make to improve my interpersonal communications?

2 :: Emotional Intelligence

■ Identifying and controlling your own emotions

■ Identifying *("reading the Room")* and playing to the audience and their mood

■ Calming down or cheering up others

Emotional Intelligence - Example

■ Consider this situation, perhaps presented by a student:

– *i have a 95% in [class] and given that each wrong test answer can lower my score by 0.5%, i can only miss 5 questions on the final, ... yet the questions are poorly written and they commonly are on things we haven't even discussed*

– *[the class is] a total crapshoot*

■ Assuming that the course is well set up, and doesn't *actually* reflect those criticisms, how would you de-escalate the situation?

Emotional Intelligence - Example

- Consider this situation, ~~perhaps~~ actually presented by a student:
  - *i have a 95% in [class] and given that each wrong test answer can lower my score by 0.5%, i can only miss 5 questions on the final, ... yet the questions are poorly written and they commonly are on things we haven't even discussed*
  - *[the class is] a total crapshoot*

- Assuming that the course is well set up, and doesn't *actually* reflect those criticisms, how would you de-escalate the situation?

3 :: Understanding Organizational Dynamics

■ In our leadership, no matter who we are leading, and in our own employment, we are always constrained by the specifics of the organizations we find ourselves in

■ Is this statement true?
  – *"Understanding the dynamics of your organization - and working within them - makes those to whom you are accountable happy"*

■ What are the pros and cons of this?
  – *One important con: sometimes you need to make special requests and/or blow the whistle*

Organizational Dynamics as Employees

- In teaching at OSU, we have constraints like these:
  - *Work load we can take on (number of courses taught and developed at once)*
  - *Operational Policies*
    - Hiring, HR, Office
    - Course Development procedures
  - *State Law*
- Organizational constraints define how you can:
  - *Effect change (via suggesting new initiatives, or asking for forgiveness afterwards)*
  - *Gain promotion (both advancing to new positions and to higher ranks)*
  - *Magnify your job (formal PD & CE, informal learning and personal projects)*

Organizational Dynamics of Being a Student

- Our students are constrained by:
  - *A progressive set of class prerequisites, dictating their sequence*
  - *Their teacher being both instructor* and *arbiter of their grade*
  - *Time*
  - *Money*

- What are the effects of all of these constraints, as teachers and for our students?

Reflection on Tools of Leadership

■ Self-reflection: How can you apply these principles in the leadership of your own classes or course developments?

   – *Interpersonal Effectiveness*

   – *Improving Emotional Intelligence*

   – *Understanding Organizational Dynamics*

Other Outward Skills of Good Leaders

Good Leaders:

- Seek to summarize and complete

- Choose good assistants and delegate

- Are in the business of *service*: both to those whom they lead and the larger customer base they all jointly serve

- Set goals, work towards them, analyze the successes or failures, then set new goals

- Self-reflection: As you lead, where could you add or increase your efforts toward these?