PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

# Building Moral Imagination, Emotionally Engaged Thinking, and Adaptive Leadership Capacity in Leadership Learners Through the Power of the Holocaust

Anthony C. Andenoro, Iowa State University

JoAnna Wasserman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

W. Jake Newsome, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

### ABSTRACT

In 2015, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the University of Florida collaborated to develop a holistic model for moral decision-making within leadership learners. The collaboration yielded innovative learning experiences leveraging the power of the USHMM's Ethical Leadership Modules linked to their special exhibition, *Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust*. The learning experiences were piloted at the University of Florida in 2016, 2017, and 2018 with multidisciplinary undergraduate leadership learners. Learners engaged in intentional learning experiences grounded in reflective and agency-oriented behaviors through the intentional use of authentic memorabilia, audio recordings, and videos collected during the Holocaust. Qualitative findings collected over three years indicate that the content and methodological processes led to the development of moral imagination, emotionally engaged thinking, and adaptive leadership capacity in the learners. The resulting discussion provides implications for addressing and mitigating the challenges associated with systemic oppression, groupthink, social deterioration of moral judgment, and creates opportunities for change and social justice in our world.

## Introduction

Decision-making is becoming more complex for leadership learners due to an overwhelming amount of misinformation, competing priorities, and powerful implications for sustainability in our world (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017). Thus, it becomes increasingly important for leadership educators to develop the skills, capacities, and dispositions in learners that will lead to moral decision-making. This challenge is further complicated by a "morally complex landscape providing a veritable minefield of potentially damaging options that cut at the morally fragile credibility of organizations" (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015, p.130). In addition, narrow mental models often used by positional authority have a tendency to lead to superficial and unsustainable decisions (Enlow & Popa, 2008; Werhane, 1999). The sum of these factors creates increasing prevalence for substandard practice and morally clouded decision-making that can erode the ethical foundations of our organizations and communities. However, leadership educators play a critical role in addressing these challenges. The development of intentional leadership learning experiences rooted in historical perspective, applied practice, and oriented toward the future could prove to be beneficial.

The ever-changing dynamics of challenges facing our societies today create a need for developing Adaptive Leadership capacity in our learners. Problematically, leadership education often fails to extend beyond traditional educational methodologies. In fact, adaptive leadership and the accompanying principles are often presented in lecture form followed by the immersion of students in forced collaboration via group work that often leads to unintended consequences including the early departure from agency (Banerjee, 2013). This illuminates the critical need for a revision of current

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**Anthony C. Andenoro**, Ph.D., currently serves as a Leadership Studies faculty member within the Department of Psychology at Iowa State University. His research initiatives include the development of moral decision-making in leadership learners, the role of cognitive diversity and active learning strategies in the development of engagement, positive sentiment, and neuroplasticity within leadership learning environments, and the use of behavioral economics principles to shift attitudes and change behaviors in under-resourced communities for the purposes of addressing complex problems and creating sustainability. He has published 20 refereed journal articles, presented 69 refereed and invited conference papers, and secured and managed more than $10.3 million in gift and grant funding to advance his teaching and research initiatives. He is also actively engaged in the field of Leadership Education and Development through several professional associations and is the Project Lead for the National Leadership Education Research Agenda.

**JoAnna Wasserman**, M.A.T., is the Education Initiatives Manager for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She manages new audience outreach and cultivation and the creation of educational resources and programs. Her work involves developing partnerships and stewarding relationships with a range of educational institutions and organizations with the goal of integrating the Museum's content into new and diverse contexts. She has developed educational materials and programs rooted in the Museum's special exhibitions and initiatives on topics such as Nazi propaganda, human behavior, and Americans and the Holocaust. A Museum staff member since 2004, she has developed programs and resources for the general public, families, teachers, students, and specialized professional audiences. She received a BA in communication from the University of Pennsylvania and a MAT from the George Washington University's Museum Education Program. Prior to the Museum, she worked at Grey Worldwide, an advertising agency in New York.

practice. In an effort to develop adaptive leadership skills, competencies, and capacities necessary for addressing our most challenging organizational and community-based problems, leadership educators must be open to the utilization of diverse learning methodologies. Active learning methodologies aimed at advancing sustainable adaptive leadership behaviors provide leadership educators with a foundation for neurologically shifting attitudes and shaping behaviors that create a foundation for Adaptive Leadership practice and by association, for beginning to mitigate the challenges of our world.

To address this timely challenge, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the University of Florida have collaborated to deliver learning activities aimed at the development of mental models and behavioral dispositions that promote reflective decision-making in leadership learners. An approach based in historical exploration of the Holocaust examined how, when, and why ordinary people supported, acquiesced to, ignored, or resisted the violent and racist policies of the Nazi regime. It was developed by the Museum and piloted at the University of Florida. The purpose of the teaching resources were to enable learners to understand the causes, events, and consequences of the Holocaust, recognize the importance of its lessons about human nature and societies, and consider how to take an active role in confronting divisions that threaten human solidarity. The teaching modules and accompanying facilitation methods support three theoretical foundations – *Moral Imagination* (Werhane, 2008; 1998), *Emotionally Engaged Thinking* (Andenoro, et al., 2019; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015), and *Adaptive Leadership* (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Together the noted theoretical foundations create an underpinning for the development of positive decision-making in leadership learners. This underpinning becomes contextualized and gains an applied nature for leadership learners when it is connected to historical examinations of individuals' actions and choices during the Holocaust.

## Literature Review

### *Moral Imagination*
Moral imagination is "the ability to discover, evaluate and act upon possibilities not merely determined by a particular circumstance, or limited by a set of operating mental models, or merely framed by a set of rules" (Werhane, 1999, p. 93). It provides a foundation for escaping limiting mental models (Werhane, 2008) and allows individuals to perceive interpersonal relationships, parameters, and social dynamics immersed within a given context (Werhane & Moriarty, 2009). Ultimately, this leads to more

**W. Jake Newsome**, Ph.D., is the Manager of College Student Leadership Initiatives at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where he works with college students, faculty, and campus life professionals to teach civic engagement, ethical decision-making, and responsible citizenship through the study of the Holocaust. Through a range of programs and resources, he strives to empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to take an active role in promoting social cohesion and human dignity. Dr. Newsome is a scholar of American and German LGBTQ history whose research focuses on Holocaust history, gender and sexuality, and memory studies. His current book project, *Pink Triangle Legacies: Holocaust Memory and Modern Gay Identity*, explores how various individuals and groups in Germany and America have debated the legacy of the Nazis' violent campaign against homosexuality. These debates ultimately shaped contemporary understandings of sexual identity, human rights, and citizenship in modern democratic societies.

effective moral decision-making and creates an intuitive connection to leadership. By shifting leaders away from prescriptive or habitual ways of thinking, moral imagination prioritizes reframing existing situations, moving beyond constraining mental models, and formulating innovative responses.

Applicable moral imagination stems from the development of interpersonal competencies aligning with heightened awareness for the complexity of problems within diverse contexts (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015). Specifically, moral imagination includes the following three areas (Werhane, 2008):

1. Reproductive imagination - Reflection about oneself and the given situation, including disengagement from and awareness of the given situation.
2. Productive imagination - Reframing the problem and imagination of new possibilities.
3. Creative imagination - Development of moral alternatives for problem solving contextualized within the given situation.

Researchers have valued the inclusion of moral imagination at the higher education level to promote the development of moral decision-making (Enlow & Popa, 2008; Liddell & Cooper, 2012; Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015; Swaner, 2004; Whitely, 2002). Specifically, moral imagination challenges operative mental models in order to discover new ways of framing ethical problems and providing innovative solutions (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015). It is the critical cognitive connection between what is and what might be (Enlow & Popa, 2008) assisting the individual in disengaging from a specific process, evaluating the perspectives which are incorporated within it, and thinking more creatively within the constraints of what is morally possible (Werhane, 2002). Through the development of moral imagination, learners have the potential to develop heightened awareness, understanding, and capacity for action with respect to morally ambiguous situations.

The priority for the development of moral imagination in higher education settings coupled with the need for moral leadership in the face of pervasive denialism (Specture, 2009), politically charged rhetoric, and misplaced decisions grounded in asserting authority and maintaining control, illustrate the need for leadership educators to consider how they can effectively develop moral imagination in leadership learners. Leadership educators are uniquely positioned to "purposefully develop activities aimed at developing the moral reasoning and imagination of students" (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015, p. 141). Universities can leverage the power of moral imagination to assist learners in developing diverse viewpoints and producing new mental models and innovative solutions to complex challenges (Enlow & Popa, 2008).

### Emotionally Engaged Thinking

*Emotionally engaged thinking* (EET) (Stedman & Andenoro, 2015) is an outcome derived from an innovative educational process grounded in the intersection of counseling psychology, psychotherapy, and neuroscience. EET promotes systems thinking by incorporating emotions as the catalyst for positive decision-making (Andenoro, Dulikravich, McBride, Stedman, & Childers, 2019; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015), and is applicable for a variety of interdisciplinary contexts, creating a powerful facilitation tool for learners. The outcome of EET stems from the use of the FACE Method ©, *(Foundational Awareness, Authentic Engagement, Connective Analysis, and Empowerment and Change)* (Andenoro, 2014; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015). This process leads to enhanced decision-making as individuals are provided the tools to think through problems, recognize their emotions, engage in dialogue, and promote shared decision-making (2015). The use of experience and emotions via constructive means allows for leadership educators to enhance the decision-making process and predispose learners to using it in the future. The process has proven to be useful in developing enhanced engagement, systems

thinking, ownership of complex problems, and agency for creating sustainable solutions in leadership learners (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017). Further, it has been identified as a formative process for shifting attitudes and changing behaviors to mitigate complex problems (Andenoro, 2014).

As an applied process, leadership should be cultivated in learners to address organizational and community challenges in our world. Practically, emotionally engaged thinking is linked to moral decision-making (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017) and creates a foundation for addressing adaptive challenges (Andenoro, 2014; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015). Ultimately, using the FACE Method © affords leadership educators a tremendous tool for leveraging cognitive diversity (Mitchell et al., 2017) in learners and creating sustainable behaviors that catalyze change in our world through emotionally engaged thinking.

### Adaptive Leadership Capacity

Heifetz and Laurie (1997) write that "changes in societies, markets, customers, competition, and technology around the globe are forcing organizations to clarify their values, develop new strategies, and learn new ways of operating" (p. 124). This illuminates the need for adaptive leadership to mitigate the challenges of an ever-evolving and complex world. Adaptive leadership provides a means for sustainably addressing complex challenges and is essential for the development of decisions grounded in sustainable outcomes, or outcomes that align with the challenge of meeting future generational needs through daily provisions (Bruntland, 1987). More specifically, adaptive leadership is "oriented toward the engagement of complex challenges" (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013, p. 248), and requires discovery, innovation, and collective responsibility for a given situation (Heifetz, 1994). Adaptive leaders are called to "balance intense action with the practice of constant perspective taking and reflection using the analogy of moving from the dance floor to the balcony" (1994, p. 252). This is the foundation for positive and effective decision-making and a necessary hallmark of applied leadership learning curriculum.

The evolution of leadership learning to include Adaptive Leadership is intuitive, as "traditional, hierarchical views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world" (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seers, Orton, & Schreiber, 2006, p. 2). Further, it provides a culmination of additional leadership capacities that create value for organizations and communities. Specifically, self-awareness, intercultural competence, preference for collaboration, effective communication, systems thinking, and high internal locus of control create the underpinning for working with diverse populations and addressing complex problems (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017). These capacities, and by association adaptive leadership, provide a powerful tool for understanding contexts and utilizing moral decision-making. Adaptive leadership creates the foundation for change in our world, as it reflects the skills, competencies, attitudes, and capacities necessary for fostering adaptation, embracing disequilibrium, and generating leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

## Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of an intentionally designed learning experience on the development of moral imagination, emotionally engaged thinking, and adaptive leadership capacity in multidisciplinary leadership learners. The learning experience was grounded in two primary educational methodologies, 1) the FACE Method © and 2) exposure to USHMM artifacts.

The following research objectives guided the data collection.

1. Explore the learners' self-perceived disposition toward the USHMM learning artifacts.
2. Explore the impact of the intervention on the learners' moral imagination.
3. Explore the impact of the intervention on the learners' emotionally engaged Thinking.
4. Explore the impact of the intervention on the learners' adaptive leadership capacity.

Respondents were sampled over the course of three years (2016-2018) from leadership ethics and morality courses at the University of Florida. The respondents were juniors and seniors, representative of 23 majors, and 5 undergraduate colleges. A total of 136 were selected for participation based on their enrollment in courses (convenience) and 103 were purposively sampled to provide rich description of the context via qualitative data collection efforts. The students were purposively sampled based on their level of engagement and ability to provide depth of understanding for the context. Respondents were informed of the study parameters, risks, and benefits, and perceptions were coded and are reported in aggregate form to ensure for confidentiality.

### Learning Methodologies

The innovative teaching methodology used in the leadership learning context stems directly from the collaboration between the USHMM and the University of Florida. The methodology was developed using backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) and composed of a multi-stage process. Innovativeness and overall impact are directly linked to the facilitation processes inherent to the methodology. Specifically, the learning methodology is intentionally designed to develop moral imagination (MI) (Werhane, 2008), emotionally engaged thinking (EET) (Andenoro, 2014; Andenoro & Stedman, 2015; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015), and adaptive leadership capacity (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) within the learners via a five-stage facilitation approach grounded in psychotherapy and neuroscience. The following

learning stages were facilitated over the course of four 100-minute sessions linked to the Moral Leadership course at the University of Florida. Please note that Stages 1 and 2 were facilitated by USHMM educational staff over the course of the first 100-minute session and Stages 3-5 were facilitated by University of Florida faculty in the three subsequent sessions:

*Stage 1 – Exposure:* The USHMM, in coordination with faculty at the University of Florida, created an opportunity for multidisciplinary undergraduate learners to participate in a series of events titled the Moral Leadership Symposium. The events associated with the symposium created opportunities for students to view, listen to, and engage with memorabilia, videos, and audio recordings collected during and after the Holocaust. The Moral Leadership Symposium also included reflective learning activities and instructor-facilitated dialogue over the course of two weeks. The symposium was marketed to multidisciplinary students across campus and faculty members from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the College of Business assisted in the logistical efforts.

This stage centered on active interrogation of historical photographs, artifacts, film footage, and oral testimony to explore the widespread involvement of people at all levels of society in the Holocaust. More specifically, this stage utilized the USHMM ethical leadership modules developed in conjunction with the special exhibition, *Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust.* The modules examine morality and ethics in the context of the Holocaust revealing widespread leadership failures of individuals, societies, nations, and the international community. The modules also detail the political and cultural factors that influenced people's choices that were unique to the context of the Holocaust creating contemporary relevance for students. Through an understanding of the social and psychological dynamics

that played into people's decisions and actions during the Holocaust, students begin to understand similar human vulnerabilities posing ethical challenges in their lives and world today.

Students then participated in instructor-facilitated discussions addressing how the ethical failures of ordinary people in history connected with the ethical dilemmas they might face today. The narrative of the Holocaust told by the facilitators evokes emotions in the learners and engages them in the authentic nature of the atrocities perpetuated between 1933 and 1945. Consistent with the work of Litz (2000), the first stage effectively sets the foundation for managing moral decision-making by asking the learners to perceive norms, social roles, and relationships intertwined within the presented context.

*Stage 2 – Foundational Awareness:* This is the first reflection point in establishing EET and setting a foundation for MI and adaptive leadership. The goal during this phase is for the learner to become aware of his or her emotions related to the moral ambiguous and systemically challenged context. Using basic prompts, individuals are asked to consider personal implications of the problem. During this second stage, individuals take ownership of the problem, begin to apply their understanding of the problem to current contexts, and consider societal implications. Within the Moral Leadership Symposium, facilitators prompted students to consider the universal questions raised by the historical material explored. While some of the pressures and motivations that influenced people's actions and decisions were specific to the time period, others reflect social and psychological vulnerabilities all human beings face. The modules raise awareness of these vulnerabilities with the aspiration that learning about moral leadership in the context of the Holocaust can prepare learners to be more morally conscious leaders today.

This leads to application within similar contexts and is integral in socially constructing frameworks, which set the foundation for learners to progress to the next stage. Further, this begins the development of MI by facilitating the process of reproductive imagination (Werhane, 1998). Through this process, individuals develop awareness for contextual factors, the schema at play within the context, and what moral conflicts or dilemmas may arise as the schema progresses within the context (1998).

*Stage 3 – Authentic Engagement:* This stage is intentionally designed to create empathy within the learners for individuals affected by the identified problem. Authentic engagement relates to how the learner sees him or herself in the scenario. By focusing on the role of "ordinary people," the USHMM's modules move beyond the traditional categories of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders allowing learners to take ownership of the content. Learners develop historical empathy as they deduce that perpetrators cannot be simply dismissed as "evil". Instead, these were individuals responding to timeless pressures, fears, and motivations that humans continue to be susceptible to today. Therefore, these modules and the facilitation techniques presented raise questions not only about personal motivations in the past, but also prompt learners to contemplate how they might react in similar circumstances today.

Ultimately, this stage connects the learner with the problem, asking what the learner's role or obligation is with respect to the problem. This elicits an emotional response based upon the perceived situation and expectations for the situation. In an effort to best decide how to approach the situation, the learner must address how he or she feels about the problem. It provides a level of authenticity by being present in the moment. Stage 3 furthers the idea of reproductive imagination challenging or confirming the learner's perspectives and moral schema.

***Stage 4 – Connective Analysis:*** Through a systems approach aimed at meaning-making (Neimeyer & Raskin, 2000), learners develop a critical perspective for the variables influencing the problem. This leads to an emotional connection between the learners and the problem leading to increased engagement and the desire to share their newly acquired knowledge with friends, and colleagues. Within this stage, systems thinking leads to a synthesized understanding of the learner's perspectives, their peers' perspectives, and other contextual considerations. This provides an integrated and realistic understanding of the problem. The systems understanding stemming from this stage provides a connection to others while taking new possibilities into account within the scope of their context. Werhane (1998) identifies this as productive imagination, the second construct within MI. Productive imagination includes "revamping one's schema to take into account new possibilities within the scope of one's situation and/or within one's role" (1998, p.22). Further, the increased understanding for the context and ability to apply that understanding sets the foundation for practicing adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) and ultimately leads to the development of sustainable and adaptive solutions.

The USHMM modules and the facilitation techniques presented within this stage extend learning beyond the historical events to exploring fundamental questions of human nature. During this, learners are able to develop an emotional connection while studying the interconnected nature of individuals in a society and how their seemingly mundane actions (or inactions) can affect the lives of others.

***Stage 5 – Empowerment & Change:*** This phase psychologically shifts participants from the development of progressive attitudes to the practice of accompanying behaviors. The embedded attitudes and the related behaviors create the impetus for sustainable

and adaptive leadership practice and creative imagination, the third construct of MI. This involves the ability to imagine possibilities outside of the current context, imagine reasonable possibilities based on the context and outside factors, and evaluate the morality of new possibilities (Werhane, 1998). Further, this stage assists the learner in questioning traditional paradigms and exploring potential outcomes associated with the identified implementation plans (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015).

The USHMM's modules and the facilitation techniques within this stage prompt students to reflect on the collective impact that individual actions and inaction can have and illuminate that decisions often lead to unintended consequences. This stage is directly tied to adaptive leadership practice, as the content and facilitation techniques demonstrate that just as small, seemingly mundane actions can lead to harmful outcomes as they did during the Holocaust, individual actions can also lead to exponentially impactful, meaningful, and positive effects. This realization often leads to a sense of empowerment within learners as they acknowledge that they can exercise their agency and affect change in their communities based on moral decision-making practices.

### Data Collection

The data collection was conducted over the course of a three-year period. The researchers ensured for triangulation by using multiple data sources to understand the context. First, content analyses of learners' writing were conducted for the entire sample ($n$ =136). Second, qualitative data were collected via purposively selected focus groups ($n$ =103). Third, personal follow up interviews were conducted with respondents who attended the focus groups and demonstrated rich perspectives and depth of understanding for the context. All respondents participating in the qualitative focus groups were contacted via email to solicit participation. Following

the focus groups a second purposive sample was identified from the respondents and were contacted via email to meet with researchers in one-on-one interview settings (*n* =57). Focus group sessions and personal interviews were recorded and referential adequacy (i.e., field notes, audit trail, and transcription) materials were maintained, and member checks were conducted to ensure for confirmability and trustworthiness (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Krefting, 1991; Shenton, 2004; more information on the specifics of the data collection methodology are available from the authors).

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed via a constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This allowed for the emergence of categories and the accompanying relationships (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The data analysis included identification of reoccurring themes throughout the data. Thick rich description allowed for inductive analysis and lead to the discovery of patterns, themes, and categories. A peer debriefing process was used to discuss the findings and consider future directions for the research effort.

Emergent similarities were noted and generated identifiable categories for each research objective. Data were coded into emergent categories and via a constant comparison of the categories and their properties, the researchers developed theoretical perspectives about the contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) allowed for the identification the overarching components of the context. Axial coding (2008) was then used to identify causal relationships and phenomena that demonstrate understanding for why the respondents were impacted by educational methodologies.

Trustworthiness was maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process in four ways (Shenton, 2004). First, credibility was maintained by the use of well-established research methods, triangulation, iterative questioning, and member checks to verify the data. Second, dependability was ensured for through the use of overlapping methods (focus groups and personal interviews). Third, confirmability was maintained through the use of an audit trail allowing for replicability. Fourth, transferability stemmed from the presentation of significant contextual and data treatment information allowing for the findings to find application within a wide variety of higher education leadership ethics and moral leadership environments,

### Findings

Qualitative findings collected through focus groups, personal interviews, and content analyses (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) and analyzed through constant comparative analyses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) indicate that multidisciplinary undergraduate leaners participating in the identified learning experience are demonstrating depth of thought, increased levels of awareness, the ability to foreshadow potential complex consequences of their decisions, and improved agency for addressing and mitigating complex adaptive situations. These identified variables are foundational elements of moral imagination, emotionally engaged thinking, and adaptive leadership. Aligning with the grounded theory approach, the findings will be presented in narrative form providing a snapshot of the context (Charmaz, 2014) in addition to credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) for the study.

Open coding during the analysis allowed for themes to emerge from the context naturalistically. This led to grounded theory. With respect to the research objectives, data showed that the respondents demonstrated positive sentiment for the learning intervention, and specifically the opportunity to engage with the USHMM content and artifacts (89% of respondents). Further, the data analysis revealed that respondents noted increased capacity for moral

imagination, emotionally engaged Thinking, and adaptive leadership due to the learning intervention. This was determined through the emergence of subthemes associated with each of the overarching themes. Specifically, within the overarching theme of moral imagination, the analysis revealed that respondents show capacity for reproductive imagination (94%), productive imagination (67%), and creative imagination (62%). The analysis also revealed subthemes identifying learner capacity for emotionally

*Table 1*

**Frequency of Respondent Perceptions**

| Theme | Number of Respondents | Total Respondents | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Sentiment for USHMM Content & Artifacts | 92 | 103 | 89% |
| MI - Reproductive Imagination | 97 | 103 | 94% |
| MI - Productive Imagination | 70 | 103 | 67% |
| MI - Creative Imagination | 64 | 103 | 62% |
| EET - Awareness | 99 | 103 | 96% |
| EET - Ownership | 81 | 103 | 78% |
| EET - Systems Thinking | 91 | 103 | 88% |
| EET - Agency | 85 | 103 | 82% |
| AL - Fostering Adaptation | 74 | 103 | 71% |
| AL - Embracing Disequilibrium | 96 | 103 | 93% |
| AL - Generating Leadership | 88 | 103 | 85% |
| Instructor Presence & Relevance* | 94 | 103 | 91% |
| Reflective Prompts & Processes* | 84 | 103 | 81% |
| Relevance & Immediacy of the Content* | 83 | 103 | 80% |

*Reflective of why the learners were impacted by the educational methodologies.

engaged thinking (awareness – 96%; ownership – 78%; systems thinking – 88%; and agency – 82%) and adaptive leadership capacity (fostering adaptation – 71%; embracing disequilibrium – 93%; and generating leadership – 85%) due to the learning intervention.

Axial coding during the analysis further revealed the specific relationships and phenomena that created context for why the learning methodologies led to capacity development in the previously listed areas. Specifically, respondents identified three specific and consistent themes that led to their capacity development: instructor presence (91%), reflective prompts and processes (81%), and relevance and immediacy of the content (80%).

### Positive Sentiment for USHMM Content & Artifacts

Respondents (89%) noted positive sentiment and appreciation for the opportunity to interact with educational staff from the USHMM. Specifically, respondents noted their appreciation for the staff's willingness to travel, provide content and artifacts from the USHMM to supplement discussion, and validation that they felt within the context of the learning intervention.

> The videos of the survivors gave the discussion meaning. It became real for me as I watched, and it made me think about what I could do to prevent something like that from happening in the future (RC4).

> The words of the people in the videos helped me to empathize with the people of the Holocaust. However, I realized quickly that the depth of the pain and stories that conveyed that pain were more than I could feel true empathy for because I could not imagine the atrocities that they have seen and lived through. This led me to a place of reflection and I realized that the first step in preventing something like this from happening again is

listening. Once you feel the pain of the story, you will do everything in your power to prevent that pain from happening again (RC19).

### Development of Moral Imagination

The analysis of the respondents' perceptions identified that the learning intervention led to the development of moral imagination due to the emergent subthemes, reproductive imagination (94%), productive imagination (67%) and creative imagination (62%). Respondents overwhelmingly engaged in the process of reproductive imagination. Reproductive imagination is grounded in the process of intentional reflection about oneself and his or her situation (Werhane, 1999).

> After watching the videos, I see the importance of self-reflection and self-analysis. It's important to make sure that the communities we are a part of never fall to a level where it is acceptable to treat anyone as less than human. Everyone should be treated equally and fairly. In making moral decisions in the future, I think it is important to consider that decisions align with our moral value, not just those of the group (RB12).

> I gave a lot of thought to what I saw and heard in the videos and from my classmates. Unfortunately, we live in a world where things that are unacceptable happen. However, I need to take time each day to consider what role I play in supporting those who cannot support themselves. That consideration needs to lead to action and I need to hold myself accountable to that action (RC39).

Productive imagination was also seen within the context. Respondents noted that that it was critical to look at things from different perspectives. This aligns with Werhane's idea of reframing possibilities that is linked to the idea of productive imagination (1999). Many of the respondents noted their desire to see the situation through another person's eyes. "I tried to put myself in his shoes, which was extremely hard because I

do not know how he did what he did" (RA17). "I could imagine how hard it must have been to hear that from someone she trusted" (RA31).

> After watching the videos, I thought differently. I tried to think what I would do if I was being persecuted by the people I trusted most. At first I thought, I wouldn't take it and just leave. However, where could they go? They didn't have options and many of them had worked their entire life to create something of value for their families. It made me think a lot harder about the freedom that I take for granted. (RC10).

> The event made me think differently about what I have in my life. The people in the shaming video didn't do anything wrong and an entire community shamed them. I can't imagine what that must have felt like. One day you have friends, and the next day the entire community is shaming you for caring deeply for someone. It made me reconsider how I look at the world and what opportunities I have (RB3).

Creative imagination, or the development of moral alternatives for problem solving (Werhane, 1999), was evident within the context, but some of the respondents noted that the content presented was emotionally exhausting, which may have prevented more of them from reaching this stage of moral imagination. The majority of respondent perceptions aligning with this were grounded in the support of others. "This is unfair. After thinking about this situation and watching the videos, it is clear how important it is to build a coalition to address injustice" (RC11). "I feel like in times of adversity, regardless of the scale, it is critical to bond with those that you trust most" (RA22).

> When I am faced with group think, I still need to evaluate my decision-making process, starting with my core values. Once I set a baseline for moral practice, the decision will follow accordingly.

I think that this is the sign of true leadership. Regardless of what might happen, you have to stay true to your core (RB29).

*Emotionally Engaged Thinking*

The analysis of the respondents' perceptions revealed subthemes identifying learner capacity for emotionally engaged thinking (awareness – 96%; ownership – 78%; systems thinking – 88%; and agency – 82%) due to the learning intervention. Awareness was a foundational piece of the learning experience for the learners. Nearly every respondent noted the impact that the learning intervention had on their awareness. "I realized a lot during the sessions. I started to understand what happened during the Holocaust on a different level" (RA30). "The videos helped me to realize that I need to learn more about the world around me" (RB17).

> Through the symposium I learned a lot. I learned about the Holocaust and the horrible things that happened to the people during the Holocaust. However, most of all I learned about myself. I realized that I do not know exactly how I would act in a situation like [the Holocaust]. However, I will continue to listen, read, and share what I have learned and hopefully, grow along the way (RC2).

> I learned a lot about myself today. I learned that I need to always act in congruence with my values, regardless of the competing factors. Anything less would not be living up to my authentic self. The sessions made me think and I think that they contributed to this realization. Now, I just have to act upon it (RA6).

The respondents also accepted ownership of the problem, a critical hallmark of taking action with respect to a given problem (Stedman & Andenoro, 2015). "It is important to do more than talk. The solution starts with me, so I need to consider what I will do today to impact tomorrow" (RB16).

I wasn't alive during the Holocaust, but oppression is still seen today. The conversations today made me realize that while I might not be the one being oppressed, it is still my problem (RC15)

Systems thinking emerged from the respondent perceptions. Many students noted the complexity and overwhelming number of variables within the Holocaust. They also noted the complicity and varied methods of rationalization used by the people in the videos. "I knew a lot about the Holocaust going in, but I have a renewed appreciation for how complex the situation was" (RB28).

When we understand the systems, we can understand where the shadows are coming from. The behaviors were normalized by the people in the communities, Hitler, the military, police -- by everyone. However, it's even harder to believe we are still experiencing similar atrocities with refugees around the world (RA41).

Even though the problems seemed insurmountable in the time of Holocaust, when we began to break down the systems that affected how the people acted it helped me to see that if I take time to understand all of the factors influencing a given situation, I will be better able to practice leadership within that situation and promote change in the world (RC14).

Through the final stage of the FACE Method students also noted that they developed agency, a temporally embedded process grounded in an understanding for the past, context for the present, foresight for the future, and a propensity to act on that knowledge (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017). "Once you know, you can never go back to not knowing. The only thing left to do is act upon that knowledge" (RC13).

The videos showed me the dangers of group think from the past, but I also see things happening today and most likely things will continue into the future. While this is frustrating, it should not prevent action. Today and every day we need to do something tangible that creates change for our world. (RB39).

### Adaptive Leadership

The analysis of the respondents' perceptions revealed subthemes identifying learner capacity for adaptive leadership capacity (fostering adaptation – 71%; embracing disequilibrium – 93%; and generating leadership – 85%) due to the learning intervention.

Fostering adaptation is grounded in advocacy for change and a willingness to explore options. This aligns with many of the foundational elements of moral imagination but the respondents' willingness to embrace the process of change was apparent. "We have to consider our role in changing things so things like the Holocaust do not happen again" (RB15).

Change is going to happen, but we need to be ready for it. If we are proactive and stay aware, we can work with the people around us to ensure that things like the Holocaust do not happen again. Inevitably, we cannot be content to settle for status quo. We need to change, and it has to happen now (RC33).

Embracing disequilibrium was noted by a large percentage of the respondents. This aligns with the general disposition of many of the respondents' perceptions addressing the chaotic nature of the system during the Holocaust. "I cannot imagine the ambiguity and fear that the people must have been feeling during the Holocaust. Their support systems were taken from them and their lives were in chaos" (RB1).

There were a ton of things impacting the actions of the people during the Holocaust. With so many things happening, it would have been difficult to mount a resistance. However, understanding that everyone was in that same situation could have provided a brief sense of community. This could have potentially created an opportunity to challenge the situation (RC9).

Finally, the area of generating leadership was widely represented in the respondent perceptions. This is intuitive because most of the learners attending the learning intervention were from leadership courses, so they are predisposed to practicing leadership. "In the absence of leadership, leadership will emerge. It is critical to build a coalition in times of adversity" (RC18). "As a leader, it is important to understand the explicit and implicit implications that our thoughts and practices have on those around us" (RC23).

Leadership is the foundation for change in our world. We need to talk to each other, establish partnerships, and empower change. It is not enough to stand by watching people be dehumanized. Action is required, and that action starts with strategic leadership aimed at good for all (RA3).

### Contribution to Capacity Development

Phenomena emerged from the respondents' perceptions about the impact of additional variables within the learning environment on the overall learning of the respondents. The following provide context for why the learning methodologies led to capacity development. Respondents identified three specific and consistent themes that led to their capacity development, instructor presence (91%), reflective prompts and processes (81%), and relevance and immediacy of the content (80%).

The instructor presence was noted by a significant number of respondents. Respondents provided that the instructor was critical to the learning environment and that the overall facilitation coupled with the materials created the impetus for learning.

I really appreciated the materials and opportunity to explore several things that I had not seen before, but it was the instructor who presented and facilitated the discussions that led to me thinking differently and hopefully applying these ideas to my life (RC15).

The staff from the USHMM were wonderful. They treated me like I was an equal part of the conversation, which gave me the confidence to ask questions and consider how I could apply what they were talking about in my life. I really appreciated the opportunity to work with them (RB38).

Specific reflective prompts and processes were also noted by the respondents as contributing factors to the development of moral imagination, emotionally engaged thinking, and adaptive leadership.

The instructor reframed the conversation about the Holocaust in current day terms. This allowed me to see that it is still an issue and I need to work to change things (RC23).

The instructor asked the class to consider how the videos and images made us feel. He then asked to think about what the videos and articles reminded us of in our lives. It seemed odd at the time, but when I left class, I had a plan for something I could do to address oppression in our world today (RC14).

Finally, the respondents noted that the materials and discussion had significant relevance and immediacy.

Specifically, they noted that an understanding of the past is critical to consider in an effort to avoid repeating mistakes. They also noted the power of the content and memorabilia. "We often talk about theory or things that don't apply to our lives in our classes, but this was real and it was timely. We need more of this" (RC11).

> The materials were powerful, and they were raw. There was a shock value to them, but then I realized that this was not sensationalized. This actually happened. This was a powerful moment for me, because it helped me to understand that while it is not happening to me, it could be happening to someone else. Real leadership requires that I am aware and I am prepared to act (RB37).

The findings demonstrate that learners began developing a more complex understanding of the causes and events of the Holocaust. Through the study of the range of motivations and pressures that individuals faced in Nazi Germany, learners extrapolated universal lessons about human nature and responsibilities as an individual in society. The findings also indicate that the modules and facilitation techniques prompted awareness of individual agency and the potential to affect positive change in their communities.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

The findings indicate that there is tremendous benefit for leadership educators to use the proposed learning methodology integrating content and artifacts from the USHMM and the FACE Approach to develop moral imagination, emotionally engaged thinking, and adaptive leadership. This aligns with the previously noted literature (Andenoro, Bigham, & Balser, 2014; Andenoro, Dulikarvich, McBride, Stedman & Childers, in press; Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017; Stedman & Andenoro, 2015). The findings also show that learners show enhanced levels of moral imagination (Werhane, 2008; Werhane, 1998),

emotionally engaged thinking (Stedman & Andenoro, 2015), adaptive leadership capacity (the ability to foster adaptation, embrace disequilibrium, and generate leadership; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), and systems thinking (Andenoro, Sowcik, & Balser, 2017) due to the intentionally designed learning experience.

This aligns with the data supporting the inclusion of moral imagination in learning contexts as a powerful tool for developing better decision-making processes in learners (Odom, Andenoro, Sandlin, & Jones, 2015; Enlow & Popa, 2008). However, when these are joined within the innovative experiential learning context of the Holocaust, a tremendous educational environment with significant implications for addressing complex problems and promoting adaptive leadership emerges.

Through this innovative approach, leadership educators have the potential to serve as a catalyst for change with respect to student learning and agency for sustainable change. This is paramount as leadership educators attempt to create powerful learning interventions within the ethics and morality contexts to assist in the shaping of attitudes consistent with value-based practice and organizational and community advancement. This study demonstrates the impact of the proposed learning intervention to create affective shifts and behavioral changes in leadership learners. However, more research needs to be done. Understanding that change is grounded in sustainable behaviors, it will be critical to explore the long-term impacts on students engaging in this learning process. Future research stemming from this will explore the sustained attitudes and behaviors developed through this process and the motivating factors for internalization of the accompanying attitudes. In addition, this work yields a sequential exploratory foundation that could lead to retrospective quantitative measures that identify impact and lead to generalizability.

Ultimately, through our continued and deepened understanding of this process and its sustained impact on our leadership learners, leadership educators can create a foundation for more impactful leadership learning environments, deeper engagement for leadership learners, and more pronounced ownership of the critical leadership work that our world needs most. This is best exemplified in the following culminating quote:

> I was particularly moved by the sometimes harsh realities of human nature and behavior. Preventing something like [the Holocaust] takes individual decisions as much as or even more than mass opposition. More than anything, the Holocaust discussion reminded me of my personal responsibility to do what is right, rather than what is easy, regardless of the consequences (RA10).

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