



Journal of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry  
Educators Association

Volume 20, Number 1  
(2020)

Bruce Ronkin, Editor  
Northeastern University

Paul Linden, Associate Editor  
University of Southern Mississippi

Ben O'Hara, Associate Editor (Book Reviews)  
Australian College of the Arts

Published with Support  
from



# Leadership in the Creative Industries: Addressing an Uncertain Future

Daniel Walzer

*Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis*

<https://doi.org/10.25101/20.5>

## Abstract

In recent years, the rise of the gig economy has brought a host of freelance opportunities for people working in creative arts professions, including music, entertainment, and media. Freelance professionals generate piecemeal income from several vocations. The freelance market's competitive nature requires recent graduates to cultivate a host of skills beyond their creative specializations. Equally concerning is the precarious state of the arts and entertainment sectors amid global health and financial collapse. In such uncertainty, the timing is right to consider how educators best prepare students to succeed in the coming years. This article argues for a shift in pedagogical mindset from an entirely skill-based model to a more holistic approach drawing on leadership across four areas: creativity, sustainability, vision, and community. The article puts forward a new theory, Creative Industry Leadership, to encourage a cooperative and holistic teaching and learning framework in the creative industries.

Keywords: creative industry, leadership, creative arts, sustainability, higher education

## Introduction

Educators working in the music, arts, and entertainment industries (termed creative industries) face an unprecedented set of challenges—both healthwise and financially. The perilous road ahead is unpredictable, and economists question how solvent the creative industries will be in the coming years. In early 2020 colleges and universities shifted to delivering courses via distance learning because of the increased global pandemic risk. To minimize the potential risks for infection, institutions around the United States sent students home and asked faculty and staff to work re-

motely. With little time or preparation in e-learning platforms and pedagogical best practices, many went into survival mode. Overhauling courses from traditional classrooms to Learning Management Systems (LMSs) in two weeks proved difficult. Indeed, these efforts are commendable; they are not, however, sustainable over the long term.

It will take several years to thoroughly analyze the impact of a global pandemic and economic downturn—this is especially true in colleges and universities training students for careers in the creative industries. Institutions scramble to make up for financial deficits due to shrinking enrollments, issuing refunds, and a lack of tuition. The creative industries also face significant hurdles as rising unemployment numbers hint at a major recession. Artists are often the first to feel the brunt of such dramatic changes. Freelancers piecing together multiple streams of income rely heavily on the discretionary spending of their peers. Without a safety net, the future looks murky.

This article argues that there is some upside to the unpredictable situation in which we find ourselves in higher education. The timing is right to consider how we might rethink our pedagogical approach in training the next generation of artists, musicians, and industry representatives. Instead of emphasizing business, management, and specialized paths, the article advocates a more cooperative model that emphasizes leadership—a term with a range of connotations. The following sections explain what leadership is. After defining the gig economy and creative industries, the article proposes a theory of Creative Industry Leadership based on four areas—community, vision, sustainability, and creativity. These four factors draw on the art and science of leadership; they prioritize how educators and practitioners can focus on the creative industries’ long-term solvency outside of the university.

## What is Leadership?

Leadership affects all aspects of organizational culture; leaders influence managers, employees, partners, and communities. In the arts, healthy leadership guides decision-making, funding choices, and curatorial direction. Yet, if management is more natural to pinpoint, what is it that leaders do, exactly? Precisely, what does leadership “look” like in the creative arts economy? Burns (1978) defines leadership as:

[The] reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers. The nature of those goals is crucial. (425)

If someone is deemed a “leader,” or as “having leadership potential,” a sensible question is whether they cultivated those skills or were born with them. Much like the nature versus nurture debate, researchers in leadership studies seek to understand the qualities that define a leader in organizations of all kinds. Kouzes and Posner (2007) argue that leadership is learned.

It’s just pure myth that only a lucky few can ever understand the intricacies of leadership. Leadership is not a gene, and it’s not a secret code that can’t be deciphered by ordinary people. The truth is that leadership is *an observable set of skills and abilities...* (339, original emphasis)

We all have a vested stake in successful leadership. We elect politicians to offices, watch coaches lead teams in competition, and buy products from companies with high-functioning executives.

Northouse (2010, 3) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” A leader influences followers in a fluid and dynamic way involving more than one person (Northouse 2010). Burns (1978, 18) expressed that leadership “is an aspect of power, but it is also a separate and vital process in itself.” Burns noted the power dynamics between the leader and follower:

*Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers.* Leaders are a particular kind of power holder. Like power, leadership is relational, collective, and purposeful. Leadership shares

with power the central function of achieving purpose. (18, original emphasis).

Leadership is complicated and draws on the fundamental aspects of human behavior. Moreover, leadership maintains an intentional focus in all kinds of organizations, drawing on emotions, psychology, and social interaction (Burns 1978).

## Leadership vs. Management

Zaleznik (2004 [1977]) first wrote about the key aspects of both in the *Harvard Business Review* over forty years ago. Leaders and managers rely on each other, but their roles and responsibilities diverge at times. For example, Kotterman (2006) argues that the differences between managers and leaders is often unclear, particularly in large, complex organizations.

Leaders and managers often hold similar attributes and accomplish related goals. Rarely, though, does one person fulfill a leadership and managerial role; executives frequently overlook managers for training and promotion (Kotterman 2006). Lunenburg (2011) agrees, stating: “First, good leaders are not necessarily good managers, and good managers are not necessarily good leaders. Second, good management skills transform a leader’s vision into action and successful implementation” (3).

Toor’s (2011) empirical study of leaders and managers produced three significant themes.

First, leadership pursues change that is coupled with sustainability, while management endeavors to maintain order that is tied with the bottom line. Second, leadership exercises personal power and relational influence to gain authority, whereas management banks on position power and structural hierarchy to execute orders. Third, leadership empowers people, whereas management imposes authority. (318-319)

Leadership and management enjoy a complementary and supportive relationship in a healthy organization. That is not always the case, but Toor’s (2011) research suggests that leaders build coalitions through influence and building into others. For artists entering a fraught and competitive market, building coalitions, much like guilds, allows a group of

people to build strength in numbers and build on each other's knowledge and creativity.

## The (Creative) Gig Economy

Music is everywhere. Though technology facilitates access to music in sundry ways, the ease of access to music makes it difficult to make a living. Gross states: "musical abundance, which denotes the ability for anyone to access music, anywhere at any time, if they have the right equipment;" easy access poses risks for the gig economy as the industry becomes fragmented and too competitive (481). In her estimation, the value of musical work as a commodity lowers along with the value of participatory cultures (Gross 2019).

Markusen, Wassell, DeNatale, and Cohen (2008) sought to define the creative economy—noting that the word "creative is popular but problematic" (24-25). Markusen et al. explain: "Cultural industries employ many workers whose work does not involve creative tasks, whereas cultural occupations include many cultural workers who are self-employed rather than assigned to any particular industry" (25).

In the creative sector, there is an allure about being entirely independent. The "gig economy," as it is often called, conjures up notions of freelancing and completing jobs via an app (De Stefano 2015). Friedman (2014) provides a description:

'Gig workers' are employed in occupations across the American economy. While the term comes from the employment of musicians to play for a particular set or for an evening performance, it is now used to describe a wide range of employments. (172)

Freelancers have some control over their schedules; however, being self-employed brings a series of complications. Burtch, Carnahan, and Greenwood (2018) found that while the gig economy provides employment opportunities, short-term ventures and failed crowd-sourcing campaigns negatively impact entrepreneurial efforts. At a basic level, being successful in the gig economy requires that there are enough opportunities to pay the bills and the ability to juggle multiple on-demand jobs. Kalberg and Dunn (2016) provide a cogent description of the gig economy itself:

The gig economy is generally characterized by short-term engagements among employers, workers, and customers. In this sense, the gig economy is not new. Instead, it represents a digital version of the offline atypical, casual, freelance, or contingent work arrangements characteristic of much of the economy prior to the middle of the twentieth century and that have reappeared in the past thirty years. (11)

The authors conclude that as digital platforms broker work between companies and freelancers, the payment structure, connection to the company, and level of personal control varies widely in the gig economy (Kalleberg and Dunn 2016). Analyzing salaries between on-site workers and those in the gig economy, Kalleberg and Dunn note:

Despite the relatively high pay in online platform jobs, wages are lower than they are in equivalent brick-and-mortar jobs, assuming workers are able to get those jobs (due to spatial or other constraints). (13)

In the arts, training emphasizes performance and related skills. The challenge here is that while universities can train people in a particular craft—music—for example, there is little emphasis on meeting the rigors of the gig economy, much less long-term Leadership skills.

The freelance market is brutal for some. Equally, we live in a changing world with divisive rhetoric and an all-out assault on the arts. Symphony orchestra payment scales remain fluid as ensembles must find ways to attract new audiences and address budget issues (Pompe and Tamburri 2016), and politicians look for ways to cut funding to arts organizations both nationally and at the state level forcing alternative fundraising strategies (Gallagher 2020).

Likewise, as of this writing, the world finds itself in a state of pandemic chaos. For at least the foreseeable future, the creative sector's future remains uncertain. Online lessons and streaming performances offer some solace, but there is an entire population whose financial prospects seem dire. Universities are no exception to this prognosis. Many institutions face a steep road ahead. Falling enrollments and refunds for room and

board will hurt smaller institutions in particular. The global economy will take many years to recover.

If there is *any* upside to what's happening, it might be the reflective opportunities that come about in the downtime. For those of us working with students in the creative arts industries, the precarious future ahead requires that we take time to check where we are as a community of educators. It is precisely for this reason that this article calls for a more in-depth inquiry into leadership training as early as possible in the creative industries.

One might consider that leadership is a skill worth cultivating in university programs. Institutional vision statements, along with accreditation requirements, stipulate the curricular foci of degree offerings. The closer the learning outcomes align with the institutional mission, the better. Yet, it is reasonable to ask whether programs in the creative industries “meet the moment” when pressed with ongoing challenges.

How do music business and related programs know if they train capable leaders? If one considers that leadership takes time and experience to build, they acknowledge the nurture side of the debate. Alternatively, advocates of the nature concept believe that leaders are born, not made. Either people have it or they don't, and it is not an institution's responsibility to make that prediction.

These are binary perspectives—written to spark some reflection on whether leadership matters. The truth most likely resides somewhere in the middle. People have certain inherent traits that increase their likelihood of leadership acumen later in life. Environment, social class, gender, and race, all play a part in determining upward mobility. We also have to question what leaders are and what they *do*. In a pathway so individualistic as the creative arts, this is a difficult task.

“Meeting the moment” means being tested. One cannot meet expectations without first knowing what such requirements are. And, while no one can predict when a catastrophic or paradigm-shifting event happens, it behooves us as educators to reflect on our primary aims in pedagogy and vocational training. What I propose is a renewed focus on leadership training in the creative arts.

Meeting the moment happens when stakeholders respond appropriately in times of uncertainty. Myriad possibilities exist here; one need not contrive a natural disaster as the mark of testing one's inner strength. Yet, as the music and entertainment industries crash amidst the coronavirus



quarantine, educators must reevaluate their vision and mission. Getting past purely vocational competencies for a moment, how else do we know what we're made of if we don't test it? Embedding leadership concepts into pedagogy requires an understanding of what leadership is and what it offers.

## **Mentoring and Building Leadership in the Creative Industries**

As expressed, meeting the moment and guiding change requires thought and action. Leaders have varied skills. A leadership-focused pedagogical framework evolves across four areas, Creativity, Sustainability, Vision, and Community. By no means exclusive, these four areas touch on fiscal, personal, and organizational matters affecting institutions and communities. Mentoring implies that leadership can be learned. The four aspects of leadership here seek to work towards continuous, long-term change in the music and entertainment business and educating those for such careers.

### **Creativity**

Teaching creative leadership concepts starts by considering the merits of service and project-based learning. Creativity is often process-oriented and based on small, incremental changes that eventually lead to insights. Sawyer (2006) contends that “explaining creativity can help our leaders to respond better to the challenges facing modern society” (4). For educators working in the creative arts, considering the merits of scientific research on creativity may prove helpful in dispelling myths of what creativity is and is not. Using psychology, for example, to understand better how the brain works, opens up interdisciplinary modes of thinking, teaching, and learning.

Problem-solving, or project-based learning, affords learners a chance to tackle a practical issue. Presented with an issue needing a solution, students work independently and in teams to find workable answers to the question. Sawyer (2006) notes that “explaining creativity can help educators teach more effectively” (5). Simulating real-world issues requires learners to communicate clearly, budget their time, and pool resources to carry out the task. Here, the educator's role gradually morphs into that of a supportive mentor. Peer feedback and review are encouraged, and experimentation prioritized. Any “failures” in the group exercise, along

with practical and supportive instruction, give learners valuable experience. Sawyer elaborates:

Explaining creativity provides more than intellectual satisfaction; it will lead to a more creative society, and will enhance the creative potential of our families, our workplaces, and our institutions. (2006, 5)

Service-learning functions similarly to project-based learning in that learners work with local or regional organizations on a collaborative project to provide students with field experience (Furco 1996). Though researchers have different views on the breadth and scope of service learning, Furco proposes a nuanced view: “Each program type is defined by the *intended beneficiary of the service activity and its degree of emphasis on service and/or learning*” (3, original emphasis).

Leaders foster relationships inside and outside an organization. Their role is, in some senses, much like an ambassador. Leaders communicate with a range of stakeholders; partnerships evolve, and projects begin. In the classroom, educators and learners work on a project, perhaps with a local non-profit, and complete it over several weeks or months. Service-learning projects may also support inclusion and social justice. Building connections across cultures is a crucial aspect of leadership.

## Sustainability

Like leadership, sustainability carries varied connotations. One might consider green and eco-friendly forms of energy or investment strategies that focus on long-term planning. Both of these are commonly expressed in business and in education. In their education research, scholars Hargreaves and Fink defined Sustainable Leadership below:

It is a shared responsibility, that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting negative damage on the surrounding educational and community environment. Sustainable leadership has an activist engagement with the forces that affect it, and builds an educational environment of organizational diversity that promotes cross-fertilization of good ideas and

successful practices in communities of shared learning and development. (Hargreaves and Fink 2004, 9)

In their view, leadership emerges when human beings consider the impact of their decisions on the world; ideas evolve when people cooperate and build into each other over a long period of time (Hargreaves and Fink 2004).

Gardening, as a metaphor, aptly describes cultivating sustainability in leadership. Planting seeds, a phrase often used by educators, reinforces the concept that education is a lifelong pursuit. Working in the creative industries, one must continually update skills to stay relevant. Such a quest requires “learning how to learn” over one’s career. For a farmer or horticulturist, knowing the climate and the local conditions is paramount for success. More importantly, understanding one’s roots in a given place informs one’s abilities to challenge the status quo (Shevock 2017). Gardeners must consider timing issues too. Growing reflects a personal and professional mission. As creative entrepreneurs amass experiences and skills, they apply such knowledge in an ever-changing work environment. To be successful, one must consider the time needed for investment and expansion.

Sustainability happens when an organization or person meets the demand of the market while enduring fluctuations. Another way of describing this is solvency. Being solvent is both financial and logistical. Leaders understand that significant change happens with time. Solvency depicts a model that is supported by adequate resources and operations. Such goals can be met with advanced planning and change as needed. One must consider that ideas and concepts change and evolve. Therefore, being solvent requires a proper mindset. This happens through critical thinking, evaluation, decision-making, and communication. Establishing teams with persons of like-minded interests and goals accomplish solvency.

Another way of referring to solvency is longevity. Successful companies, and individual leaders, combine a successful blend of communication, personal traits, stakeholder agreement, collaboration, and innovation. Consider for a moment any successful company. How did the organization achieve such long-term productivity? There are multitudes of explanations. Yet, as educators, it is our responsibility to cultivate an ethos of longevity in our students.

It is not enough that they meet the moment, once. Haas (2016) argues for a concept known as post-traumatic growth—the idea that human beings can build resilience from failures and difficulties. By controlling the mind, and one’s reaction to negative circumstances, growth and healing is possible. Haas takes care not to underestimate trauma; rather, she argues that resilience can be learned and nurtured over time and that science backs this assertion.

Training leaders requires that such persons meet the moment again and again. This happens after experiencing setbacks and failures. It is in the corrective actions where an entity matures. Thorley’s (2020) research on failure, the creative industries, and higher education reveals a correlation between risk-taking and innovation. He writes:

A new approach should nurture creativity and innovation, enable learning and development, and also acknowledge the role of failure. Creativity is the development of novel ideas which have usefulness—without such ideas, a University is unlikely to flourish. (73)

Flexibility, or pliability, is a trait that educators ought to prioritize in the creative arts. If the pace of change is such that business models and technologies become obsolete quickly, we must help our students understand how to be malleable. Just as planning and vision-making take time to grow, our students need to be flexible. Some visions and plans are not immediately clear. Forecasts change. How well are we preparing our students to meet a creative industries sector best described as vague? Flexibility, here, signifies people’s ability to mold themselves into settings as necessary. Like clay, one’s skill set meets the moment as the gig economy dictates. One achieves such a missive by being teachable and committed to moving ahead.

Haas (2016) explains that resilience “is a matter of small steps, of inching forward one step at a time” (7). In her interviews with survivors, Haas noticed that “[it] was only after they embraced their suffering and let it penetrate them to the core did things change” (7). Resiliency is akin to leadership. Progress happens slowly and takes time to advance. The crucial point is in how human beings use the mind to adjust and react to difficult circumstances. For educators, fostering resilience must be intentional,

steadfast, and built over a stretch of months and years. We can engage our students in that process too.

## Community

Leadership effectiveness is proportional to the quality and quantity of one's followers. Leaders cannot function in isolation. Their capacity to inspire and motivate happens through a community of people that share like-minded ideas and values. In the creative industries, leaders oversee non-profit organizations, performing ensembles, and businesses of all kinds. Freelance professionals build their portfolio one connection and project at a time. Referrals and word-of-mouth drive the progression of an independent's career in the early stages.

Working in teams is beneficial; this is especially true when people rally behind a common idea or vision. Seth Godin (2008) writes: "People want connection and growth and something new. They want change" (2). Leaders are formally and informally defined. The connection to shared values and ideas is crucial. Industry or internship-based courses also offer helpful context by giving students access to professional environments—particularly those that embrace collaborative creativity. One's career path is precarious in the gig economy. Instilling a leadership mindset requires that the person navigating the creative economy have a clear vision and ability to communicate it with others.

The leadership ethos here is not confined to power structures and hierarchies. Leaders build. They bring people together, see the best in them, give their colleagues room and support, and collectively work together to meet success. Leaders understand their success is reflected by the people they surround themselves with and by a willingness to learn. Educators must shift away from presenting the creative arts as a single, craft-based venture.

Adopting a leadership mindset in the classroom need not detract from learning one's craft—music, for instance. The philosophy explored here does away with a Darwinist presentation of success to one that brings people together. It is in building the communities that demonstrable change happens. DuFour (2004, 6-11) explains that successful learning communities embrace three ideas:

1. Ensuring that students learn: cooperative efforts by faculty to connect with students;

2. A culture of collaboration: pooling resources, process-driven, removing barriers; and
3. Focus on results: daily improvements, adjusting goals, revising approaches.

Equally important in such environments is that faculty learn from students. Industry and community partnerships also improve the quality of knowledge exchange.

Cultivating leadership demands that educators stay current about sociocultural issues in the industries they represent. Being current shows a commitment to guiding students ethically and practically. Such mentoring builds a legacy of future leaders armed with the self-efficacy and resilience needed to navigate the creative sector. Educators inspire and equip learners with an honest assessment of the challenges they'll face after graduating. Leader-educators prioritize connectedness, rather than competition. Competition exists, as does market saturation. Leader-educators strike a careful balance of honesty *and* supportive instruction.

Effective mentoring can also be learned. Professional development (PD) is a proper venue to address issues of resilience, self-efficacy, and building communities. Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner (2017, v-vi) analyzed over thirty studies on professional development and found that the most successful ones shared the following characteristics:

- Content focused;
- Promotes active learning;
- Supports collaboration;
- Uses models of effective practice;
- Provides coaching and expert support;
- Offers feedback and reflection; and
- Is of sustained duration.

In precarious times, compassionate PD provided at no cost may yield positive results and underscore the need for ongoing conversations on how to foster leadership in the creative industries.

Supportive instruction promotes a healthy and respectful learning environment; feedback is honest but fair. Students and teachers learn from each other. Leadership is not a top-down enterprise. Engaged leadership occurs when *everyone* in the classroom has a say. Their skills and talents find a home—the community emphasizes collaboration and cooperation.

Creativity is emphasized. Sawyer's (2017) research on group improvisation and creativity suggests that balancing collaboration with improvisation, coupled with the right environment, inspires people to innovate. The result of such efforts is that the creative sector changes. Educators build a legacy of leaders, rather than tradespeople.

## Vision

Unlike management, which concentrates on the day-to-day operations of a unit, leadership takes on a broader perspective. In the creative industries, vision touches on artistry and entrepreneurship. Conductors embrace a concept for the direction the orchestra takes, the sound the ensemble produces, and the programming to attract subscribers. Film directors work with producers to realize the vision of a script. These examples play out at the micro and macro levels.

Bolman and Deal (2003) remind us that leadership is something that is felt but not easily classified. They explain:

[Leadership]...is not a tangible thing. It exists only in relationships and in the imagination and perception of the engaged parties. Most images of leadership suggest that leaders get things done and people to do things; leaders are powerful. (337)

Bolman and Deal reiterate that people "expect leaders to persuade or inspire rather than to coerce or give orders. We also expect leaders to produce cooperative effort and to pursue goals that transcend narrow self-interest" (337).

A strong vision is solvent, collaborative, and innovative. The challenge for artists is to find a method to generate income from their craft. Here, the concept of vision emerges. Creative entrepreneurs face a series of difficult choices. What path do they take after graduating? Do they move to a new city? Do they specialize or focus on versatility? How do recent graduates build their networks? Weathersby (1999) notes:

Leadership...focuses on the creation of a common vision. It means motivating people to contribute to the vision and encouraging them to align their self-interest with that of

the organization. It means persuading, not commanding.  
(5)

Leaders articulate a vision based on shared values. They align themselves with people that care about the same things. Moreover, leaders care more about the bigger picture; they understand that their personal interests should embrace the organization's mission. This framework is different than networking. Building a network of colleagues does not account for how people connect relationally. Put another way, there is deeper value in aligning one's career path with others who share similar ideas and concepts. An emphasis on relationship-building means that purely skill-based training becomes less prescient. What matters is how educators guide students to identify their values and align themselves with others. Stricker et al. (2018) refer to this as Values-Based Network Leadership:

Values-based network leadership involves the application of skills associated with establishing, aligning, and sustaining a culture of higher purpose and calling suitable for an interconnected world. A values-based network leader advocates respect and understanding of diverse peoples and accentuates the need for cross-cultural appreciation and education. (2)

Many folks will find the job market oversaturated and challenging to infiltrate without patience. And while skill-building helps, so too does instilling a sense of higher purpose for learners in the creative industries. For example, as educators, we often tell our students they will face rejection. Yet, how much do we simulate this in our teaching practice? Grades are one thing; personal fulfillment and a sense of purpose is entirely another.

Leaders acknowledge that rejection and failures are inevitable. The difference between short-term and long-term goal-setting is that leaders persist. They recognize that one rejection is not the end of their path. Instilling a more profound sense of purpose in our students requires us to acknowledge the risks associated with an artistic career. For many who long for financial stability, building a freelance career comes with a steep learning curve. Bolman and Deal (2003) reiterate that leadership and vision are directly related:



Leaders think long-term, look outside as well as inside, and influence constituents beyond their immediate formal jurisdiction. They emphasize vision and renewal and have the political skills to cope with the changing requirements of multiple constituencies. (337-338)

Vision involves risk-taking and vulnerability. Doing right by our students' best interests means that we balance the day-to-day skill-building with a more philosophical look at vision. It is in the vision that students will persist and overcome their challenges. Educators must work collaboratively with them on this at every stage of their college career. Fostering leadership attributes might start in capstone courses, graduate programs, and curricula focusing on music business and the creative industries.

The review of leadership here aims to provide a clearer understanding of the complex factors, both personal and sociocultural, that affect how people set goals and persuade others to support their endeavors. The music and entertainment industries are people-driven sectors. And in times fraught with unemployment, lost revenues, and fear, vision becomes the crux of rebuilding what a new creative industry might look like in the next decade. When people hurt, they look to those who can see beyond the proverbial horizon and begin the vital work of starting over.

### **Shifting the Pedagogical Mindset and Focus**

In uncertain times, university educators provide crucial support for students and community members. As the creative industries likely face a difficult path of rebuilding in the coming years, the timing is right to consider how creative arts and industry programs can reconfigure their foci to include topics on sustainability, creativity, community, and vision. No doubt, universities face many financial and logistical issues in the near future. Among these obstacles include enrollment, protecting the health and safety of staff, faculty, and students, and making up for budget shortfalls. Reconfiguring pedagogy, however, cannot be limited to the transition to online learning. Educators must work to cultivate a supportive and creatively-informed environment wherever the courses meet—both online and, eventually, in the classroom. Similarly, the kinds of professional training opportunities offered must mirror the same flexible, nurturing, and relational focus that defines leadership.

## Building Roots on Inclusivity and Relationships

Prakash and Esteva (1998) argue that educators hold on to a certain faith that education serves a critical role in advancing cultures and human beings. The system of higher education needs scrutiny and organizational change across several areas. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of a healthy learning environment is a pronounced emphasis on sociocultural issues, inclusion, equality, and a climate where all stakeholders stand to enjoy learning instead of just surviving (Prakash and Esteva 1998). Prakash and Esteva embrace pluralistic education and respect for all living cultures. They want to see such efforts extend beyond lip service as they “seek limits for education and respect for different ways of living, learning, and teaching, through political controls. These reveal to us the importance of abandoning oxymorons like multicultural education” (28). Sustainability must reflect the learners in a university setting, and the physical world they inhabit.

Now, more than ever, educators must think critically about the future world graduates will have to navigate in the creative industries. The shift in pedagogical mindset to one of leadership starts first with the educator. Reflecting on the values one holds dear, educators can model creativity, sustainability, community, and vision through supportive instruction and by viewing their purpose as that of a supportive mentor to students. Remaining current on job trends is one thing; actively moving beyond one’s comfort zone is another. In the short-term, improving online pedagogy is a helpful start; educators must think critically about how to build student communities in new ways.

The competencies we inculcate in our students start with our intentions and vision. Establishing a comprehensive view of pedagogy that embraces the uncertain future is a crucial starting point. We do that by recalibrating our syllabi in less technocratic ways. We build rapport with students by offering virtual office hours and using social media platforms safely and healthily. Educators must embrace a “meeting the moment” mindset with our students.

Prakash and Esteva (1998) write that: “a growing minority of educators are recognizing the contamination and damage cast by global development and education” (25). Well-intentioned educators spread a message of hope, guiding students and stakeholders to think beyond their local communities, and to see the world from a more open perspective. Prakash and Esteva state that these efforts are helpful, but not enough. They observe:

“it is impossible to package the cultures of the other for transmission within the global classroom” (25). Put succinctly, we must make every effort possible to address the digital divide, to provide balanced curricula with student input, and to keep in mind that online delivery platforms have limitations. Speaking to those limitations, and remaining vigilant to overcome them, is imperative. When educational communities are most vulnerable, a more nuanced view of technology and its ramifications is essential.

Building communities through less formal grading structures, more flexibility, and student-driven topics, and prioritizing compassionate support for students is another place for improvement. Not that grades are not important; what matters is *connecting* with students and making sure that their health and wellness remain the priority. The health and welfare of the creative industries are incumbent on protecting the best interests of the next generation. We can do that and improve retention by working collaboratively with learners, staff, and our communities.

### Pedagogical Implications: Leadership Behaviors

“Meeting the moment” is another way of describing situational leadership. Contingency theories on leadership reiterate that such traits can be learned (Howell and Costley 2001). Howell and Costley (22) outline five behaviors that define leadership:

- *Directive*: delegation of tasks, goal setting;
- *Participative*: consulting others on key decisions, seeking varied perspectives and ideas;
- *Charismatic*: demands excellence, confident and skilled, expresses vision;
- *Reward and Punishment*: motivates others, corrects followers when necessary; and
- *Supportive*: empathy, concern, compassion for others, considers the needs of followers.

Of these five areas, at least three behaviors (Participative, Charismatic, and Supportive) support the four aspects of what I propose calling *Creative Industry Leadership*.

Howell and Costley’s (2001) analysis of leadership combines Participative (Community), Charismatic (Vision), and Supportive (Sustainability) behaviors into a cohesive model. Though not comprehensive in scope, these areas do share commonalities with the concept of Creative

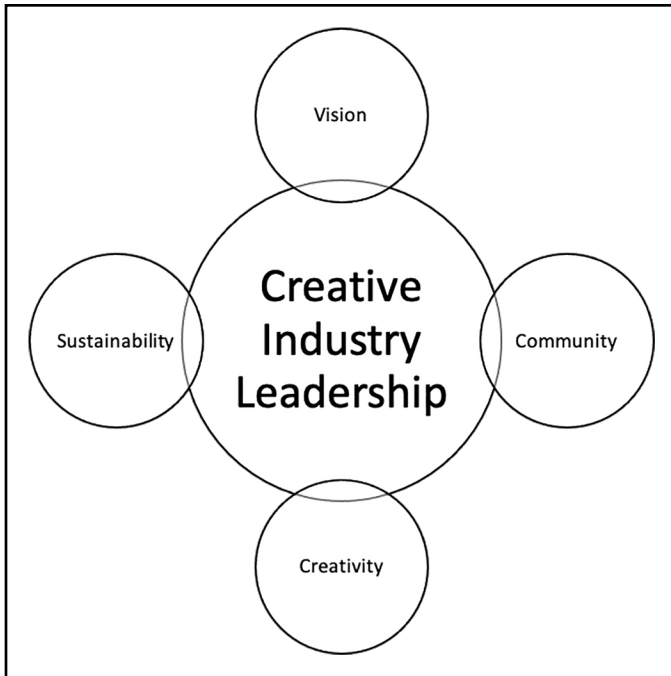


Figure 1. Creative Industry Leadership Theory.

Industry Leadership outlined in Figure 1. The creative industries require artists to build sustainable communities—both for long-term success and emotional and logistical support. Howell and Costley’s Directive and Reward/Punishment models do apply to the creative industries. Nonetheless, these traits must be taken with some openness, as the situational and interpersonal dynamics consistent with large organizations do not always match those of freelancers in the gig economy.

Infusing leadership skills in students requires that educators understand and build those same competencies in their teaching and research practice. Much like the creative industries, where acquiring knowledge happens formally and informally, it makes sense to reframe professional development in a less hierarchal fashion. Jan Robertson (2008) argues that coaching is the most effective way to build partnerships and mentoring relationships among stakeholders. She defines coaching as:

[A] special, sometimes reciprocal, relationship between (at least) two people who work together to set profession-

al goals *and* achieve them. The terms depict a learning relationship, where participants are open to new learning, engage together as professionals equally committed to facilitating each other's leadership learning development and wellbeing (both cognitive and affective), and gain a greater understanding of professionalism and the work of professionals. (4)

The time is right to rethink how teaching and learning happen in both the creative arts sector and higher education. The benefit of Robertson's Coaching Leadership model is that it removes the barriers between master and apprentice. Here, both entities (organizations and people) from the creative industries and higher education work cooperatively. They learn from each other, hold each other accountable, and establish a vision for the future. Understandably, there is a risk in assuming that both sides are ready to professionalize their growth process.

Professionalization need not be relegated to a job occupation status. It need not be limited to how much money one earns in a year. The Creative Industry Leadership theory proposed here advocates for a communally shared concept of what professional practice is in the present. The teaching and learning to happen in the coming years require new modes of creativity, building communities, thinking sustainably, and establishing a vision. The next few years may be turbulent for artists, musicians, entertainers, and yes, higher education representatives. Priorities include pooling resources, working strategically, and supporting one another at the personal and organizational levels.

Professional development is one way to cultivate communities dedicated to compassionate and supportive mentoring and coaching. Teachers need support, particularly those working in creative industries with an uncertain future. Providing access to research facilities, online databases, funding opportunities, job training, and resume building are other options. Other possibilities include free or low-cost access to software licenses; this is especially helpful for those persons needing access to technology.

Another benefit of the Creative Industry Leadership theory is that it recognizes knowledge and aims to *share* that expertise for the common good. This equates to building communities of thinkers and doers aimed at steadying the course of an uncertain future. Much like strategic investing, the goal is to develop a steady growth plan. Sometimes building a scenario

like this requires stripping away old ideas and ways of training people. In actuality, we know little about what will happen to the arts and entertainment sectors in the next several years. What we have is an opportunity to reframe how training and teaching and learning happen in higher education. Universities may consider providing free access to tutorials, videos, and research materials for those working in the creative industries.

Providing access to materials need not be confined to job development. Furnishing access to health and wellness materials is equally important. Mentoring and coaching cannot happen with a “dry well”. For the creative industries to thrive, especially in higher education, institutions must not monopolize access to helpful information. Along with access, providing support not only for current faculty and students, but for community partners, is equally beneficial. When institutions adopt a “help others” mantra, they do right by the communities they serve.

## Conclusion

As this article has expressed, leadership is not always clear; it is not still tangible. People know when they believe in something; when motivated to “meet the moment,” they often far exceed their expectations. By adjusting our aims to build leaders, instead of specialists, two critical things become more clear. First, as educators, we inculcate a longer-term focus for our students. We help them, and they help us become current on industry matters, and we coach each other in a supportive, communal, and artistic way. If technology is the crux of our initial communication, we work together to make that process more inclusive and welcoming.

The crux of Creative Industry Leadership theory is that it favors a strength-in-numbers model. People inspire each other when their common interests and goals intersect. Moreover, communities inspire creativity and sustainability when its stakeholders feel supported and valued. As the creative industries face unprecedented challenges, the pathway to future success is opaque at best. Thus, Creative Industry Leadership recognizes that vision-making requires building consensus among stakeholders. Those working in the creative industries need supportive coaching and mentoring; leadership is a learnable skill. Knowledge and practical application of leadership concepts requires a long-term commitment. Steady and continuous cultivation of resilience, compassion, and goal-setting yields sustainable growth.

The second thing that becomes apparent is that higher education and the creative industries must surrender to win. If our previous manner of training could use improvement, then we now do right by our students and the sectors we value so much. As Thorley's (2020) research reminds us, failure in the creative industries is common, even expected. In higher education, we can use the dramatic shift in daily activities to make room for reflection and a changing of course. While not a failure per se, leaders take stock of their successes and *learn* the most from their setbacks. In using the term "we," I include myself among those committed to taking part. May we build healthier communities and partnerships among stakeholders in the creative industries.

## References

---

- Bolman, Lee G., and Terrence E. Deal. 2003. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burns, James MacGregor. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Burtch, Gordon, Seth Carnahan, and Brad N. Greenwood. 2018. "Can You Gig It? An Empirical Examination of the Gig Economy and Entrepreneurial Activity." *Management Science* 64, no. 12: 5497-5520. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2017.2916>.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner. 2017. *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Palo Alto, California: Learning Policy Institute. [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective\\_Teacher\\_Professional\\_Development\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf).
- De Stefano, Valerio. 2016. "The Rise of the 'Just-in-Time Workforce': On-Demand work, Crowdwork, and Labor Protection in the Gig Economy." *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal* 37, no. 3: 471. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/cllpj37&div=34&id=&page=>.
- DuFour, Richard. 2004. "What is a 'Professional Learning Community'?" *Educational Leadership* 61, no. 8: 6-11. <http://www.siprep.org/uploaded/ProfessionalDevelopment/Readings/PLC.pdf>.
- Friedman, Gerald. 2014. "Workers Without Employers: Shadow Corporations and the Rise of the Gig Economy." *Review of Keynesian Economics* 2, no. 2: 171-188. <https://doi.org/10.4337/roke.2014.02.03>
- Furco, Andrew. 1996. "Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education." *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning*. Washington DC: Corporation for National Service: 2-6. <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1104&context=slceslgen>.
- Gallagher, B. Kathleen. 2020. "Passing the Hat to Pay the Piper: Alternative Mechanisms for Publicly Funding the Arts." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 50, no. 1: 16-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2019.1664690>.
- Godin, Seth. 2008. *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us*. London: Penguin.
- Gross, Sally Anne. 2019. "Can I Get a Witness? The Significance of Contracts in an Age of Musical Abundance." In *Innovation in*



- Music: Performance, Production, Technology, and Business*, edited by Russ Hepworth-Sawyer, Jay Hodgson, Juston Paterson and Rob Toulson, 481-493. New York: Routledge.
- Haas, Michaela. 2016. *Bouncing Forward: The Art and Science of Cultivating Resilience*. New York: Enliven Books/Simon & Schuster.
- Hargreaves, Andy, and Dean Fink. 2004. "The Seven Principles of Sustainable Leadership." *Educational Leadership* 61, no. 7: 8-13. [http://site.iugaza.edu.ps/magha/files/2014/05/seven\\_principles1.pdf](http://site.iugaza.edu.ps/magha/files/2014/05/seven_principles1.pdf).
- Howell, Jon P. and Dan L. Costley. 2001. *Understanding Behaviors for Effective Leadership*. Upper Saddle River, New York: Prentice Hall.
- Kalleberg, Arne L., and Michael Dunn. 2016. "Good Jobs, Bad Jobs in the Gig Economy." *Perspectives on Work* 20, no. 1-2: 10-13, 74. <http://erachapters.org/OJS/ojs-2.4.4-1/index.php/PFL/article/view-File/3112/3087>.
- Kotterman, James. 2006. "Leadership Versus Management: What's the Difference?" *The Journal for Quality and Participation* 29, no. 2: 13-17. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/219091679?pq-origsite=gscholar>.
- Kouzes, James M., and Barry Z. Posner. 2007. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lunenburg, Fred C. 2011. "Leadership Versus Management: A Key Distinction—At Least in Theory." *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration* 14, no. 1: 1-4. [https://cs.anu.edu.au/courses/comp3120/local\\_docs/readings/Lunenburg\\_LeadershipVersusManagement.pdf](https://cs.anu.edu.au/courses/comp3120/local_docs/readings/Lunenburg_LeadershipVersusManagement.pdf).
- Markusen, Ann, Gregory H. Wassall, Douglas DeNatale, and Randy Cohen. 2008. "Defining the Creative Economy: Industry and Occupational Approaches." *Economic Development Quarterly* 22, no. 1: 24-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891242407311862>.
- Northouse, Peter G. 2010. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Pompe, Jeffrey, and Lawrence Tamburri. 2016. "Fiddling in a Vortex: Have American Orchestras Squandered Their Supremacy on the American Cultural Scene?" *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 46, no. 2: 63-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2016.1150930>.

- Prakash, Madhu Suri, and Gustavo Esteva. 1998. *Escaping Education: Living as Learning Within Grassroots Cultures*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.
- Robertson, Jan. 2008. *Coaching Educational Leadership: Building Leadership Capacity Through Partnership*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Sawyer, R. Keith. 2006. *Explaining Creativity: The Science of Human Innovation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sawyer, R. Keith. 2017. *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*. New York: Basic Books [Kindle version].
- Shevock, Daniel. J. 2017. "Thoughts on the Law, Gatekeepers, and Re-rooting." *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education* 16, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.22176/act16.1.53>.
- Stricker, Andrew, Todd Westhauer, Travis Sheets, Toni Hawkins-Scribner, Cynthia Calongne, and Barbara Truman. 2018. "Values-Based Network Leadership in an Interconnected World." *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership* 11, no. 1: 136. <https://doi.org/10.22543/0733.111.1210>. <https://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl/vol11/iss1/12/>.
- Thorley, Mark. 2020. "Failing to Learn and Learning to Fail – Exemplars of Practice from the Creative Industries" *International Journal for Academic Development* 25, no. 1: 71-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2020.1712210>.
- Toor, Shamas-ur-Rehman. 2011. "Differentiating Leadership from Management: An Empirical Investigation of Leaders and Managers." *Leadership and Management in Engineering* 11, no. 4: 310-320. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)LM.1943-5630.0000138](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)LM.1943-5630.0000138).
- Zaleznik, Abraham. 1977, 2004. "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" *Harvard Business Review* 82, no. 1: 74. <https://hbr.org/2004/01/managers-and-leaders-are-they-different>.

**DANIEL WALZER** is an Assistant Professor of Music and Arts Technology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Originally trained as a percussionist, Walzer maintains an active career as a composer, performer, and audio production specialist. Walzer's research and writings on music technology appear in *Leonardo Music Journal*, *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, and in numerous edited collections. He is the co-editor with Mariana Lopez of *Audio Education: Theory, Culture, and Practice* published by Focal Press.



The *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association* (the *MEIEA Journal*) is published annually by MEIEA in order to increase public awareness of the music and entertainment industry and to foster music and entertainment business research and education.

The *MEIEA Journal* provides a scholarly analysis of technological, legal, historical, educational, and business trends within the music and entertainment industries and is designed as a resource for anyone currently involved or interested in these industries. Topics include issues that affect music and entertainment industry education and the music and entertainment industry such as curriculum design, pedagogy, technological innovation, intellectual property matters, industry-related legislation, arts administration, industry analysis, and historical perspectives.

Ideas and opinions expressed in the *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association* do not necessarily reflect those of MEIEA. MEIEA disclaims responsibility for statements of fact or opinions expressed in individual contributions.

Permission for reprint or reproduction must be obtained in writing and the proper credit line given.

Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
1900 Belmont Boulevard  
Nashville, TN 37212 U.S.A.  
[www.meiea.org](http://www.meiea.org)

The *MEIEA Journal* (ISSN: 1559-7334)  
© Copyright 2020  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
All rights reserved