



Learning Outcomes

Leading with Agility Certification

International Certification Alliance

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LICENSING INFORMATION

The work in this document was facilitated by the International Certification Alliance (ICA) and done through the contributions of various experts and practitioners. These learning objectives are intended to help the growing Tomorrow-Ready™ community worldwide.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that accredited member organizations must address to offer ICA's Leading with Agility certification.

Each learning outcome (LO) follows a particular pattern, described below.

O.O.O Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The learning outcome's purpose further describes what is expected to be imparted to the learner (e.g., a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. WHY AND WHAT OF LEADING WITH AGILITY

1.1. NEW ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES WE NEED TODAY

1.1.1 Organizational Agility Capability

For most of the 20th century, organizations have been optimized to increase efficiency and maximize production in large part by exploiting economies of scale.

Organizations need to optimize for increased innovation and accelerated learning to survive and continue to remain relevant. Examples of effective capabilities used for agility are:

- An innovative culture: An organization-wide mindset to seek and explore, and a cross-functional ability to quickly spark, develop and implement new ideas.
- A nurturing collaborative environment: a work environment where workers are inspired, and they can thrive and create.
- The ability to continuously adapt: The ability to adaptively respond to rapidly changing external conditions, including the ability to continuously evolve value streams, product and strategy. Continuous adaptation extends beyond incremental improvement of discrete processes to include broader, deeper, enterprise-wide change.
- Organizational learning and sense-making: A systemic capability to sense the unfiltered, often-chaotic external environment and then make sense of it by synthesizing diverse perspectives into coherent accounts capable of driving decisions, innovation and policy. Traditionally leadership instructs the rest of the organization. In the learning organization, the rest of the organization instructs leadership.
- Continuous engagement: The ability to stay engaged and aligned with employees, customers, partners and other stakeholders, even as internal and external conditions continuously change. Relying on a few, fixed communication pathways for the sake of efficiency no longer suffices when conditions are emergent and the source of meaningful signals is unpredictable and structure is dynamic.

1.1.2 Why Agility in Leadership is Needed

Organizations must transform to develop the new capabilities required to face the challenges of the world we live in today. To lead our transformed organizations effectively, we must also transform ourselves as leaders. The leadership and management practices developed to manage efficiency and production-focused organizations are not suitable for leading learning organizations or for cultivating innovative cultures. Transformation is continuous and never-ending — there is no end-state, rather the organization is continually improving and evolving.

Provide an opportunity for leaders to discuss how traditional approaches to management and leadership don't always meet the needs of our transforming organizations. In particular, leaders will self-assess to determine how they might need to change their own behavior and attitudes to properly serve the needs of 21st century organizations.

1.2. BEHAVIORS THAT INCREASE AGILITY

1.2.1 Understanding Power & Influence

There is a difference between the vested authority of a title and the ability to influence by other means. Understanding the situational factors is key to applying the appropriate style of power and influence.

Provide ways of assessing the need for power in various situations to understand the difference between positional and natural authority, especially in regards to influencing people. Ground this discussion in the culture of innovation that agile leaders strive to create and the ways various forms of power and influence could undermine or promote that. For example; how do you know what kind of power or influence to exercise at any given time? What are the variables to consider as you make your choice? Even if you have to take direct control, how do you enable people to engage and transition to greater empowerment over time? Be clear about the difference between the vested authority of a title and the ability to influence through other means. How effective is coercion or force as a means of persuasion in today's workplace?

1.2.2 Leadership Styles

Leaders often associate effective leadership with particular leadership styles. However, even though a given leader may have a predominant leadership style, the agile leader understands the need to expand their range and bring in new styles depending on the situation. Also, it is essential to bring awareness to the impact of certain leadership styles on the goal of cultivating agility and a culture of innovation.

Introduce different approaches and/or models for leadership to foster awareness of the participants' personal leadership style and help them develop awareness of how to expand their leadership range. Discuss different types of leadership styles and the impact they have on motivating behaviors to increase learning, innovation and collaboration

2. DEVELOPING PERSONAL AGILITY

2.1. DEVELOPING SELF AS INSTRUMENT

2.1.1 Self-Awareness & Self-Management

Self-awareness refers to how aware an individual is of their own emotional state and how it may impact their behavior in a given moment. Self-awareness also refers to the kinds of behaviors one defaults to in different situations. Self-management refers to one's ability to apply insights gained from self-awareness to act from one's intention and leadership stance.

Review and discuss one or more models for emotional intelligence in enough detail to gain general familiarity with the "personal competence" aspects of emotional intelligence (as outlined here).

2.1.2 Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to focus in the present moment and take in everything that is happening around you and within you, including your own thoughts and feelings. When fully aware, we enable ourselves to act deliberately in the present moment rather than impulsively, thereby magnifying our efficacy. This also enables us to make decisions calmly in a thoughtful, non-reactive way.

Explain the concept and value of mindfulness and introduce the learner to at least one mindfulness practice.

2.1.3 Growth Mindset for Leadership

Personal and professional growth involves believing that we can change, then examining and deliberately advancing our patterns of thought, feelings and behavior. We can develop new mental and emotional capabilities.

Explain the criticality of a growth mindset for leading with agility.

2.1.4 Personal Purpose and Values

Leaders are most effective when they lead in alignment with their personal purpose and values. The first step is to make the effort to reflect upon and identify one's own purpose and values. This helps ensure that leaders lead organizations from a place of authenticity with respect to how they align to the organization's purpose.

Illustrate the importance of clarifying one's own purpose and values for authentic and effective leadership. While it is common to act automatically from inherited values, an agile leader intentionally chooses the values which will guide their thinking and actions and constantly works to close the gap between espoused values and values-in-action. Emphasize the connections among these concepts and the concepts of self-awareness, self-management and mindfulness. Provide one or more tools / techniques to help participants identify their purpose and values.

2.2. DEVELOPING SELF AS LEADER

2.2.1 Assessing Yourself as a Leader

The ability to assess oneself as a leader using a variety of measures is a crucial step in leadership development.

Explain at least one model for self-assessment such as the Leadership Circle™, Agile Leader Health Radar™, Blind Spot Assessment, and/or Implicit Association test.

2.2.2 Skills of Self Development

Personal development for leaders has often been considered only "nice to have" in leader development. More and more research, however, is revealing a correlation between the level of personal development and organizational efficacy.

Describe the importance of personal development for leaders and how it relates to organizational efficacy.

2.2.3 Mental Models

The term "mental models" refers to the deeply ingrained assumptions, beliefs, and stories we hold about ourselves and the world. Agile leaders regularly practice surfacing and examining their own and others' mental models. They also recognize that others have a different experience of situations, sometimes radically different, and that we cannot assume a common frame of reference.

Teach ways to identify one's own mental models, and to be aware that others will have different mental models. Explain concepts like Chris Argyris' practice of double loop learning, or William Isaacs' Dialog process. Relate the importance of identifying mental models to the overall process of self-development.

2.2.4 Committing to and Practicing Agile Values

On the personal leadership journey, aspiring agile leaders are called upon to serve as role models for the values they encourage their organizations to espouse.

Convey in concrete terms what agile values are and why they are needed to develop organizational agility. Leaders will discuss how emergent agile values may conflict with values long existent in organizational culture and how critically important it is for leaders to resolve this conflict by demonstrating that they have personally adopted these values.

3. DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP AGILITY

3.1. INTRODUCTION TO EQ: SOCIAL CONTEXT

3.1.1 Emotional Intelligence in Relationships

Emotional intelligence also refers to an individual's social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness is a person's ability to sense and empathize with another. Relationship management is a person's ability to interact with another on the basis of what could best serve that other, or the relationship you have with that other, as opposed to interacting with another on the basis of one's emotional reaction or habitual behavior.

Introduce the INTER-personal aspects of emotional intelligence. Review and discuss one or more models for emotional intelligence in enough detail to gain general familiarity with the different aspects of emotional intelligence in the context of Agile organizations.

3.1.2 Thinking About Organizations as Human Systems

Effective Agile leaders need to understand organizations as multi-leveled human systems. The roles that people play in organizations are complicated by the fact that they simultaneously participate in multiple systems and sub-systems. The implication for leaders is that policies or decisions that are perfectly acceptable in one system's context may generate an unintended consequence or conflict in a different system's context.

Develop leaders' awareness of the different systems found within organizations, the often hidden dependencies between them, and how conflict can arise when they have incongruent agendas. Introduce steps leaders can take and practices they can adopt that will help them navigate, maintain congruence and reconcile concerns across systems.

3.2. EXERCISING AGILITY IN KEY CONVERSATIONS

3.2.1 Conversations as the Key Vehicle of Communication in Agile Leadership

Communication skills commonly emphasized in leadership courses imply a one-way exchange, with the intention of making the communication successful enough that it is fully received and accepted. A conversation, on the other hand, is by definition at least a two-way exchange, and is the primary mode of communication for an agile leader. This implies that a variety of points of views will be exchanged and allows for the possibility of a meeting of diverse minds. The quality of conversations is therefore key.

Highlight the importance of being able to engage in effective conversations. Provide the opportunity for learners to practice inquiry & advocacy skills, including framing invitations rather than demands and asking clarifying, opening, deepening, and provocative questions. Also, discuss the importance of enabling high-quality conversations as a leader as opposed to always participating in them.

3.2.2 Telling Compelling Stories as a Leader

Story telling is a key skill for leadership – stories are inspirational and make a message personal and relatable. Also, careful use of metaphor and understanding of the power of what language conveys is key to stories and conveying intent.

Show how to extract the meaning from a situation and craft a compelling story. Provide examples of how metaphors and language influence what is taken away from stories.

4. LEADING TO AGILITY

4.1. ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION AND AGILITY

4.1.1 The Nature of Organizational Transformation

Organizational transformation differs significantly from more limited organizational change initiatives. Often, transformation teams mistake organizational transformation for a series of limited change initiatives.

Describe how transformation is different from typical sponsored change initiatives. Point out that transformation generally implies change in purpose or strategy that is radical and systemic, while sponsored change initiatives are more limited and typically focus on the how and less on the what and why. Discuss how the transformation process is different from the change process of more limited change initiatives. In particular, discuss how transformations tend to take their own course on their own time and that they are less predictable and less controllable than more limited change initiatives. Note that transformational change can run deep and have a profound impact on personal identity, norms, attitudes, mindset and corporate culture. Explain how traditional organizational change models designed for limited change initiatives may not provide all leaders need to navigate transformation.

4.1.2 Why Transformation is needed for Agility

Development of capabilities needed for sustainable organizational agility involves much more radical and systemic changes.

Discuss the reasons why established organizations need to undergo transformation in order to develop agile capabilities. Cite examples such as radical shifts in how decisions and responsibility are distributed and fundamental changes in mindset (e.g., shifting from a fixed to a growth mindset), values, culture and purpose.

4.2. LEADING CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

4.2.1 Leading from the Future and the Larger Context

To paraphrase a famous quote, you get what you pay attention to. If you attend to the present, you get a variation on the same thing. If you think about future possibility, you are much more likely to achieve something new. As Peter Senge has written, "It's not what the vision is, it's what the vision does."

Describe and experience what standing in the future is like and how that impacts one's assumptions and behavior, as opposed to focusing on future goals while standing in the present state. Creative tension is the gap created when one stands in a desired future, while at the same time honestly works with a clear picture of current reality.

4.2.2 Leading vs. Managing Change

It is sometimes said that you can't manage transformation but you can learn to lead it successfully.

Discuss how the emergent quality of transformation makes it inherently difficult to predict precise outcomes. Discuss the differences between managing and leading change and why and how leadership grows more important as uncertainty increases (i.e. co-creation of strategies and desired outcomes, bolstering a learning culture by shortening feedback loops and celebrating failure, etc.). Introduce tools and techniques to help gather and distill important information in the face of uncertainty.

4.2.3 Leader as Agent of Transformation

Leaders can only take an organization as far as they themselves are willing to go and must always see themselves as role models for and agents of the transformation they wish to catalyze in the organization.

Discuss how the emergent quality of transformation makes it inherently impossible to predict precise outcomes. Discuss the differences between managing and leading change and both why and how leadership grows more important as uncertainty increases. Review some tools and techniques that help leaders lead as opposed to manage change.

SPECIAL THANKS

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