Enhancing Student Engagement Through Video Clip Curation: A Client-Focused Exercise for Self-Development Programs

Gordon B. Schmidt

University of Louisiana Monroe, College of Business and Social Sciences, USA

Kelly G. Manix

Middle Tennessee State University, Jones College of Business, USA

Abstract. This paper presents an experiential assignment designed to enhance student engagement and learning in leadership and organizational behavior courses through the curation of video clips. Grounded in research on co-creation and video-based learning, the exercise tasks students with identifying freely available video content that illustrates key course concepts. Students then align these clips with client-defined development levels and provide reflection questions to support trainee learning. By framing the assignment as a deliverable for a real or fictional client organization, the activity increases perceived stakes and promotes deeper understanding of course concepts. The exercise offers a creative strategy to address the underrepresentation of content on development programs in traditional management textbooks.

Keywords: leadership, video clips, development, HRD, reflection, co-creation.

1. Introduction

Both colleges and employers look to develop skills in their members. For colleges, the knowledge students gain in classes help them develop skills for their lives and careers. For employers, employee skill acquisition helps them become more effective and better meet organizational goals. Employers facilitate skill development through on-the-job training, human resource development programs, and leadership development programs. At some point in their tenure, almost every employee will experience one or more of these interventions.

While such development programs are essential, students rarely learn about them in classes or textbooks. Introductory Organizational Behavior textbooks barely touch on the topic, even those focusing on student skill development (Kinicki & Fulgate, 2018). Leadership skills-focused textbooks have a similar problem (Whetten & Cameron, 2020). Only in courses specializing in human

resource development or training is there a chapter of content (Blanchard et al., 2023). Depending on their role, students will experience these programs in organizations and may even be involved in their administration. Despite this, students are rarely asked to consider how organizations facilitate skill development.

In this paper, we present an exercise to help students better learn course topics by finding and creating content to teach others class-related concepts in Organizational Behavior and Leadership courses. In doing so, we also address the lack of content on development programs in popular textbooks by providing an experiential exercise where students contribute to designing a leadership and self-development program for a specified client organization, either real or fictional. Students are asked to find freely available video clips that connect to class concepts and create content related to the clip that would help a trainee learn from the video. Research has shown that films and video clips can be helpful tools for learning and engagement in the management classroom (Champoux, 2000; Fee & Budde-Sung, 2014; Lyon & Kusar, 2023; Tosti-Kharas & Levinson, 2023), and evidence suggests that greater learning can come from students finding and selecting their own relevant clips (Tyler et al., 2009; Schmidt, 2016). Thus, through our exercise, students explore development programs, consider how to facilitate others' learning of class-related skills, and, in the process, deepen their own understanding.

We begin by discussing the purpose, goals, and structure of leadership and self-development programs. Next, we explore the effectiveness of video clips in management education and the importance of student engagement via co-creation. We then introduce an experiential exercise in which students select video clips for a hypothetical training and development program, detailing the exercise's learning objectives, logistical considerations, implementation, step-by-step instructions, debriefing, and assessment criteria. We examine the use of real and fictional client organizations for the assignment, discussing the benefits and challenges of each approach. We present variants of the assignment to demonstrate its adaptability to different courses, class formats, and learning levels. Finally, we conclude by reinforcing the value of this interactive exercise in enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and real-world application of leadership and organizational behavior concepts.

2. Literature Review

Leadership, Professional, and Self-development Programs
Leadership, professional, and self-development programs are designed to expand individuals' perspectives and strengthen the skills needed for their current roles or future career growth (Werner, 2022). These programs commonly include assessments, group exercises, coaching, and self-directed learning resources

(Burke-Smalley & Mendenhall, 2022; Dixon et al., 2019). To be effective, program design should include learning outcomes and appropriate engagement strategies, and developers must thoughtfully integrate key concepts, learning theories, and instructional models (Burke-Smalley & Mendenhall, 2022). Content should be organized around clear goals and aligned with organizational or individual development objectives (Dixon et al., 2019). A common instructional tool in these programs is the use of video to relay content. In our focal exercise, students are tasked with evaluating and curating video content for such programs.

Use of Films and Video Clips in Management Education

The use of films and video clips has become a widely adopted instructional strategy in management education, particularly in organizational behavior and leadership courses (Smith, 2009; Graham et al., 2003). Research highlights key benefits, including increased student interest, enhanced comprehension, and deeper reflection (Kankel et al., 2023).

In a review of management education papers related to video usage, Fang and Chiu (2024) contend that video usage impacts cognitive outcomes (e.g., academic performance), affective outcomes (e.g., positive feelings in the classroom), and student motivation and engagement, among other factors. These potential benefits have led to films and video clips being utilized in many ways, including showing full films (Li & Urick, 2020; Urick & Sprinkle, 2019), clips from movies or television shows (Lewis & Mangum, 2024), TED talks (Julien et al., 2024; López-Carril et al., 2024), and even existing training videos (Schmidt, 2016).

However, there are challenges in ensuring that videos are accessible and relevant to diverse learners. Research indicates students respond differently to video content based on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Fee & Budde-Sung, 2014). For example, non-English-speaking students may struggle with comprehension due to language barriers and unfamiliar cultural references (Priya & Tapis, 2016). Fee & Budde-Sung (2014) found that native English speaking students and non-native English speaking students might see similar video clips differently. Non-native English speaking students saw clips as a way to clarify concepts while native English speaking students saw videos as a way to show a different perspective. These differences in part may be due to native English speaking instructors picking video clips that are familiar cultural elements to their native English speaking students but less so for the non-native English speakers.

To mitigate these concerns, instructors should seek to make video content as inclusive and relatable as possible, demonstrating to students the importance of representation and inclusivity in multimedia. Students' involvement in picking and contextualizing what video content is used is one potential way to do this.

Co-Creation as an Instructional Strategy

One promising approach to improving video-based learning is co-creation. Defined as collaborative innovation between students and educators, students

actively participate in curating educational content, which fosters student engagement, critical thinking, and ensures diverse perspectives are represented (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2017, 2023; Omland et al., 2025).

By involving students in selecting videos, instructors can promote shared responsibility, creativity, and relevance in instructional design (Hughes et al., 2019; Hsu et al., 2023; Stoddard et al., 2024). This approach also aligns with best practices in student-centered learning by increasing engagement, personal development, and satisfaction (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018, 2019; 2023).

Before implementing co-creation, instructors will need to consider classroom culture, time, logistical constraints, and student readiness (Bovill, 2019). Research suggests that co-creation is most effective when all students are engaged, rather than a select few, ensuring equitable participation. Additionally, while this approach fosters inclusivity and digital literacy skills (Spante et al., 2018), instructors must assess whether co-creation aligns with their course objectives and teaching philosophy, as the loss of control may not be realistic for some courses (Bovill, 2019).

Co-Creation and Student Curation of Video Clips

As mentioned previously, various challenges are associated with using video in management education, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Fee & Budde-Sung, 2014). In the context of our proposed exercise, co-creation helps address these challenges by involving students in selecting video content that resonates with their backgrounds and needs, ensuring video selections align with course material while remaining culturally relevant (Bovill, 2019).

If videos are curated for a client, as in our assignment example, co-creation can also help ensure that videos are relevant, culturally appropriate, and aligned with learning objectives. Moreover, co-creation encourages greater engagement and active learning from students, resulting in video content that is potentially more relatable and beneficial to the learning experience (Bovill et al., 2016). Finally, the evaluation of video content allows students to develop digital literacy skills, such as critically evaluating and sharing digital content responsibly and ethically (Spante et al., 2018).

This approach builds on prior research where student-led video selection was demonstrated to help student learning and engagement through enhanced analytical thinking and real-world application. Tyler and colleagues (2009) had student groups find topic-relevant video clips and present them to the rest of the class. Their classmates also rated the quality of the clips and how well they represented class topics. Students and the instructor rated the clips of others as highly relevant to class topics, and student comments suggested they found the assignment to be both fun and insightful.

Online platforms like Pinterest have been used for similar student-driven content curation. Schmidt (2016) had students in a Training Methods class find video clips relevant to weekly class topics, analyze them, post them on a course