



LEAP
Leadership Empowerment
and Acceleration Program

Syllabus

Oberlin Group of Libraries

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Leadership Empowerment and Acceleration Program, Oberlin Group
Cohort #2: January-April 2026

Executive Summary

The Leadership Empowerment and Acceleration Program (LEAP) is a twelve week leadership development program intended for mid-career leaders. B. Cognition Labs developed LEAP for the higher education context, focused on Libraries and IT. It is a successful program we've offered to mid-career higher ed leaders. LEAP begins in late January 2026 and concludes in early April March 2026.

What Sets LEAP Apart from Other Leadership Programs?

LEAP is unique among leadership development programs for a few reasons:

1. LEAP emphasizes active learning—that is, making palpable changes in your actual work context. We'll introduce a variety of concepts, which you'll use to change how you interact with the people you lead and work with. To that end, we'll often summarize key ideas rather than require you to read in-depth articles or book chapters (but you can do the latter if you like).
2. LEAP includes 360° leadership assessments and individual leadership coaching. In addition to the topics we cover each module, there will also be a separate, special, very interesting module: the module of you! You'll learn a lot about yourself as a leader, identify (with help) a meaningful change you want to make in your leadership, and receive support in removing the inner obstacles that may keep you from making that change.

3. LEAP is based on theories of adaptive leadership and is centered around psychological safety. It works well for leaders at different stages of development.
4. LEAP targets established mid-career leaders—those supervising others as well as those leading by influence—who wish to thrive in complex and disruptive environments.

Program Essence

Every module of LEAP takes an idea or topic that is key to leadership, and gives you two ways to look at it. One, a conventional way of understanding the topic that you'll likely already have internalized, and another, a more sophisticated way of thinking about the topic that will likely be less familiar to you. Between the two points of view there is a continuum. In this way we take an idea and open it up like an accordion: giving you several ways to think about it, and several ways to integrate it into your leadership, where before you likely only had one or two ways. This is the essence of LEAP: we don't tell you how to lead; we give you options to think about that you can experiment with and grow into.

Program Elements

The major elements of the program are these:

1. Modules and experiments: Modules are the basic divisions of the course: they contain a topic explained through written texts, videos, images, and/or podcasts, and they include two experiments that ask you to try out, on your own time, the ideas of the module in your own work context.
2. Individualized leadership coaching and leadership assessments: We use our successful executive coaching practice as a base: you'll take a few leadership assessments to help you understand how you show up as a leader, you'll identify a "growth edge" or improvement goal you want to work towards in your leadership, and we'll support you with 4 - 5 sessions of leadership coaching.
3. Live sessions: Most weeks, we'll hold synchronous online sessions where you can engage with leadership and team dynamics in live experiments and explore applications of each module's key ideas with your cohort.

4. Cohort interactions and team work: You'll have the opportunity to work with other members of the cohort between the live sessions, and will have a group project you'll work on independently of the live sessions. You'll be able to report back on these interactions and partnerships during the live sessions.

LEAP Weekly Components

Each week feature these components:

- Overview / Introduction: This is generally a brief written description of the week's content and includes the intended learning outcomes.
- Learning Materials: Here we gather a few different looks into the topic of the week: sometimes an article, sometimes a summary of a book, sometimes a brief video lecture or Ted Talk, sometimes a podcast. We're asking you to be a leadership practitioner, not a scholar of leadership theory.
- Experiment: This is an opportunity to try out the ideas of the week in your own work context. These are generally simple to understand but a bit challenging to implement. We ask you to write up your experiment in a journal available to the whole cohort.
- Reflection Assignment: Here we ask you to step back a bit and reflect in your journal on your experiment: what you learned, any *a-ha* moments you may have had, any things that still confuse you, and how the experiment connects to the overall themes of the course.
- Reflection Conversations: Each week, we'll pair you with another LEAP participant for a 20 minute conversation in which you'll exchange takeaways from your experiment: what you did, how it went, and what you learned. You might even think together about whether either of you feels any growth taking place. Then, in each week's live session, we'll ask each pair for some brief insights.

Weekly LEAP Meetings (Zoom)

Week	Module	Week Starts (Monday)	Live Session* (Thursday)
0	Introducing + Assessing Yourself as a Leader (pre-work)	19 January	none
1	Opening Week; Opening Workshop	26 January	Wed/Thurs, Jan 28 & 29
2	Negotiation, part 1	2 February	5 February
3	Negotiation, part 2	9 February	12 February
4	Conflict, part 1	16 February	19 February
5	Conflict, part 2	23 February	26 February
6	Collaboration, part 1	2 March	5 March
7	Collaboration, part 2	9 March	12 March
8	Teams, part 1	16 March	19 March
9	Teams, part 2	23 March	26 March
10	Change, part 1	30 March	31 March**
11	Change, part 2	6 April	9 April
12	Closing Week; Closing Workshop & Celebration	13 April	Wed, Thurs April 15 and 16

* All live sessions take place via Zoom on Thursdays from 11 am until 12:30 pm ET.

**In Week 10, the live session takes place on a Tuesday.

Opening Workshop

Part 1: Wednesday, 28 January 2026

12:30 pm - 2:30 pm ET

11:30 pm - 1:30 pm CT

10:30 am - 12:30 pm MT

9:30 am - 11:30 pm PT

Part 2: Thursday, 29 January 2026

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm ET

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm CT

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm MT

11:00 am - 1:00 pm PT

Closing Workshop

Part 1: Wednesday 15 April 2026

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm ET

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm CT

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm MT

11:00 am - 1:00 pm PT

Part 2: Wednesday 16 April 2026

12:30 pm - 2:30 pm ET

11:30 pm - 1:30 pm CT

10:30 am - 12:30 pm MT

9:30 am - 11:30 pm PT

Week Descriptions

Week 0–1. Introductions, Assessment, and Opening Workshop

Learning outcomes:

- Explain your personal and professional journeys.
- Recall personal and professional information about your cohort-mates.
- Evaluate your current leadership by completing LEAP's P360 assessment.
- Interpret leadership feedback from key colleagues in your organization.
- Identify leadership areas for growth during LEAP.

Weeks 2–3. Negotiation

Learning outcomes:

- Explain the key concepts that comprise interests-based negotiation.
- Identify situations at work that could be resolved using interests-based negotiation.
- Identify situations at work where equity or fairness of some kind could be improved through thinking about negotiation in a different way.
- Design and implement a plan, based upon the principles of interests-based negotiation, to resolve a specific situation.

Key concepts:

- Positional negotiation
- Interests-based negotiation
- Equity-based negotiation

Weeks 4–5. Conflict

Learning Outcomes:

- Define the 3 parts of challenging conversations.
- Build an effective, 3-part plan for conducting a challenging conversation.
- Analyze the feelings that raise the stakes of conflict.
- Apply tactics that ensure equity and fairness during challenging conversations.

Key concepts:

- “3 Conversations” model for difficult conversations
- Centrality of feelings in difficult conversations
- Value of preparation for difficult conversations

Weeks 6–7. Collaboration

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify a strategic work relationship and planfully shift it up or down the collaboration continuum.
- Drill into the common understanding of “collaboration” and identify several degrees of more or less collaborative collaboration.
- Contrast our particular ideas of “collaboration” and “cooperation,” and decide which is best used in key work relationships.

Key concepts:

- Collaboration model based on mutual interest and shared purpose (Arthur Himmelman)
- Selection of a collaboration level for each interaction
- Utilization of planfulness in adjusting collaboration levels

Weeks 8–9. Teams

Learning Outcomes:

- Evaluate the impact of team norms, such as psychological safety, social sensitivity, and equal participation, on team effectiveness and satisfaction.
- Analyze how team composition, roles, and interdependence influence team performance and outcomes.
- Create strategies to overcome common challenges that hinder teams.

Key concepts:

- Concept of psychological safety in organizations (Amy Edmondson)
- 5 stages of team formation (Bruce Tuckman)
- Work group theory (Wilfred Bion)

Weeks 10–11. Change Leadership

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify one or two characteristics of adaptive leadership that you can use immediately to help your teams and organizations.
- Name some causes of resistance to change that you've experienced and some solutions you've used or seen used in the past.
- Experiment with one of the adaptive leadership techniques in your own workplace and see how (or whether) it alters the landscape of resistance to change.
- Design plans to improve psychological safety in your organization.

Key concepts:

- Adaptive (vs technical) leadership model (Ronald Heifetz)
- Resistance to change: causes and interventions

Week 12. Closing workshop & celebration

LEAP Completion Requirements and Rubrics

To complete LEAP, you need to do the following by the last day of the course:

- Conduct and post a write-up, and earn at least a “2” grade for every dessert experiment.
- Complete each module reflection assignment and earn a “2” grade.
- Attend each leadership coaching session having prepared as your coach and you agree you will; earn a “2” grade for each session.
- Attend and participate in each live session, or for any missed session, submit any make-up assignments agreed upon by you and your teachers.

Below is the LEAP rubric for grades of experiments, reflection sessions, make-up work, coaching sessions, and live session attendance:

Grade	Description
0	No assignment was submitted. The live session or coaching session was not attended.
1	For experiments and assignments: The experiment or assignment wasn't conducted in complete accordance with assignment guidelines, the work shows a misunderstanding of a key idea, or there is no demonstrated reflection. For live session participation: The student was late, left early, was unprepared, didn't engage, or did not treat others with respect. For coaching session participation: The student wasn't on time, wasn't prepared, or not able to work with the coach.
2	For experiments and assignments: The experiment or assignment was conducted in accordance with the assignment guidelines. The submitted work shows a basic understanding of the key ideas in the module and / or the ability to contextualize these ideas in terms of the course themes or in other personal terms. For live session participation: The student was in attendance, had reviewed relevant module content in advance, treated others with respect, engaged actively but also made space for others to engage. For coaching session participation: The student was in attendance, performed any assigned preparatory activities in advance, engaged with the coach, shared their experience and reflected openly about themselves.
3	For all activities: the submitted work or participation met all criteria and excelled in some particularly laudable way worthy of special note.

Eternal Redo Policy: If you get a 1 on any activity, which is relatively rare, we're happy to have you resubmit it, or resubmit something in lieu of it (in the case of a live session), after talking with your teachers.

Behavior and Feelings in LEAP

We expect participants to follow the norms of online professional behavior in LEAP. You'll be expected to participate in a way that is active and open and that makes room for and respects the other participants.

One of the unique challenges of our program is that you're likely to have more feelings than you expect. We are actively proposing ideas that may contradict your own assumptions about how leadership works. We're also inviting you to actively seek information about yourself—primarily in the coaching and leadership assessments—and how you show up may reveal to you things you don't necessarily like! And we're asking you to do things, in the assignments, that you normally wouldn't do. All of these things can be tough—it's normal to have some feelings related to them, and to have feelings about the teachers talking about these things (in fact, we'll explore this dynamic in our module on Change and Adaptation, because it will come up when you invite your own staff to make big changes). Our way of handling these feelings is to make them OK: to talk about them, to let you feel them and name them, to let them be part of the learning for you in the course. But you should be ready for them!

Faculty

David Wedaman, PhD is an Organizational Psychologist and Executive Coach; Faculty member, Department of Organizational and Leadership Psychology, William James College; and coach at Harvard Business School Executive Education. His twin superpowers are thoughtful application of leadership theory to meet the moment and highly tailored, personalized developmental coaching.

Joshua Wilson is the founder of [Flywheel Strategies LLC](#), Chair of Apereo Foundation, former VP and COO of Longsight Inc., former Associate CIO at Brandeis University, and former Associate Director of the MISO Survey. He excels at people, process, and product leadership, and is known for his exceptional mentoring skills. His superpower is participatory servant leadership, driving results while empowering his teams and honoring their humanity.

Stephanie Gerber Wilson, PhD is an expert in strategy, storytelling, and communications coaching. She specializes in making ideas and people better, more clear, and more effective. She's a keen observer of human interaction and often points out dynamics between people that might not be obvious. She talks about feelings. She also writes a column and hosts a podcast about freedom and democracy.