ASSESSMENT REPORT

OXP315118 OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

Section A

The report for Part 1 of the exam should be read alongside the exam paper and the marking tool.

CRITERION 2: Analyse and compare contemporary theories of leadership.
CRITERION 8: Communicate ideas and information in a variety of forms.

This part of the paper required candidates to write an extended response. The interpretation of the question and formation of response in Part 1 is designed to draw on a candidate’s knowledge of Leadership Theories and their application.

An award of: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- or Z was attributed to the question for criteria 2 and 8.

STUDENTS NEED TO:

- Identify and name two (2) of the chosen leadership theories (not acronyms) from the list provided in the question.
  - Situational
  - Contingency
  - Transactional
  - Transformational
  - Servant

Situational Leadership Theory

Generally, this theory has been discussed either very well, or very poorly. The weaker responses were a generalised discussion on the basics of the theory – adapting leadership styles to suit the situation faced – but did not provide adequate specialised terminology and/or define these terms appropriately. Application of weaker responses followed a similar pattern, as the lack of terminology meant key aspects of the theories were not discussed adequately to demonstrate deeper understanding of the theory.

As this theory has been published many times and in different formats, a wide range of terminology was noted and accepted as correct when assessing this question.

An ‘A’ rated response, needed to contain the following information:

- Identify, define and apply the different stages of development/maturity/readiness
  - D1: Low Competence / High Commitment
  - D2: Low – Some Competence / Low Commitment
  - D3: Mod - High Competence / Variable Commitment
- D4: High Competence / High Commitment
  - Discussion on leadership approaches linked to the different development levels of the group, for example:
    - Directing / Telling
    - Coaching / Selling
    - Supporting / Joining
    - Delegating
    - Sometimes links to autocratic, democratic and abdicratic were also used here
  - Discussion of the above aspects then all had to be tied correctly to the chosen leadership scenario that the students developed, with the advantages and disadvantages of both discussed in detail.

**Contingent Leadership Theory**

The students who wrote about Contingent Leadership Theory generally did not perform very well. There are a wide range of theories that can be considered Contingent Leadership Theories – so Markers were happy to accept any of these, with a view towards Fiedler’s Contingency Model as the most published and discussed. Many students discussed COLT as a contingency theory – however this is not correct and such an error was addressed through the marking process.

To discuss Fiedler’s Contingency Theory, students would have been required to highlight, identify, define and apply the following concepts
  - Leader-Member Relations – good to poor
  - Task Structure – high and low
  - Leader’s Position of Power – strong or weak
  - Favourableness of the situation – very favourable to very unfavourable
  - Appropriate Leadership Behaviour – task or relationship

A student would then need to correctly apply these concepts to their chosen scenario, discussing the advantages/positive and disadvantages/negatives of the theory.

**Transactional Leadership**

Strong responses demonstrated an excellent understanding of this theory, using a relevant and detailed scenario to highlight its application. Commonly used specialised terminology included reward and punishment, task orientation, leadership style, management by exception (active and passive), transaction between the leader and the participant. Strong responses explained the theory using specialised terminology and also applied the knowledge of the theory through a detailed scenario. Weaker responses were limited by the lack of specialised terminology, generally referring to reward and punishment and the task focus of the leader.

**Transformational Leadership Theory**

Strong responses were detailed and included examples such as: the leader puts the group’s needs ahead of their own, transformational leaders have a strong sense of mission and an ability to attract a loyal and committed following (Harris & Sherblom, 2002), the 4 I’s of transformational leadership (Idealised
Leadership, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration), promotes innovative ideas to solve problems, high expectations and sense of purpose, working together collaboratively to achieve a common goal, leadership style and orientation. The knowledge of leadership theory was demonstrated through the analysis of the theory and the application using a scenario, as well including a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the theory.

Weaker responses focused on the leadership style and orientation only and didn’t go into depth. Some responses listed the 4 I’s but didn’t explain or apply the content in the response, thus not demonstrating a deep understanding of the theory.

Servant Leadership Theory

Strong responses using Servant Leadership Theory were rare with many candidates who chose to discuss Servant Leadership Theory falling into the weaker response category. Stronger responses included the following content: Servant Leadership is a sub-category of Transformational Leadership, a leader is a servant first, ethic of care, people take priority over issues or tasks, sharing of power and decision making, placing ethics and social justice above personal and in-group grandeur. Many responses that attempted to discuss Servant Leadership Theory included incorrect information, highlighting a general lack of understanding of this theory.

Non-listed theories

If a student wrote about a non-listed theory the maximum rating they could achieve for criterion 2 was a ‘B’. Many students wrote on COLT with a few focusing on Feminist theory.

- Conditional Outdoor Leadership Theory (COLT)

Around 30% of students wrote about the Conditional Outdoor Leadership Theory, even though it was not on the list attached to the question. This was still marker however, under the guidance of TASC, but each paper was penalised in the most equal and fair way that the Markers could apply.

For a paper that contained COLT, the following was required:
  - All conditions of favourability named, defined and applied to the scenario
    - Group Unity
    - Leadership Proficiency
    - Individual Competence
    - Decision Consequences
    - Environmental Dangers

For an ‘A’ response, the rating system (High, Medium, and Low) needed to be discussed and applied. Students also needed to address and explain the different leadership orientations – task/relationship/combination. Finally, students needed to name and define each of the possible leadership approaches (Autocratic, Abdicartic, Democratic) – then correctly apply at least one of these leadership styles to their scenario.
In general, the student responses that contained COLT were very good, with all conditions generally named and rated. Students lost ratings when their information lacked the depth and details — for example only discussing one leadership style, or forgetting about how the leader’s orientation would impact on the leadership approach.

**Criterion 8**

Overall, students wrote well. The information was usually relevant to the posed question and was easy to follow. Some students repeated information or lacked clarity in their sentence structure, which impacted ratings. If a student’s handwriting made interpretation of their information difficult, their ratings may have been impacted. A recommendation to students/staff would be to have more handwritten tasks/essays and study practices that improve the legibility of handwriting and push students to write controlled, fluent sentences without requiring extensive editing and restructuring — as may be the habit with typed assessment tasks.

Spelling and grammar were looked at from a ‘first draft’ perspective. As such, while general mistakes in spelling and grammar did not have a significant impact on ratings, repeated mistakes — such as omitting capital letters for proper nouns, or adding them when not required — did impact ratings.

Specialised terminology is an essential element of criterion 8. The students with the strongest use of terminology were those who wrote about COLT. Although this theory was not listed in the question, students who wrote about COLT as a leadership theory were not penalized for this criterion. Of concern is that the students who wrote about COLT were only able to provide a good level of specialised terminology for one of their chosen theories.

It is crucial that students have a detailed knowledge of the correct terminology relating to the different theories they discuss. Generalised information about the theory does not award them high ratings in this element. Criterion 8 assesses the presence of correct terminology — it does not assess the sophistication and accuracy of application (which is assessed in criterion 2).

**General Structure**

Strong introductions were soundly constructed, highlighting what was going to be presented in the essay, including the theories to be discussed and even providing further discussion on the development of leadership theories. It seemed that introductions either followed this pattern or were absent all together, with students proceeding straight into their discussion on a particular leadership theory. An introduction is vital to a well-crafted essay.

In general, the paragraph structure was sound throughout most of the essays. Paragraphs, were generally kept to a good length and students grouped the relevant information together. Weaker students only included one or two paragraphs.

Many students struggled to provide a clear and well-structured conclusion, with a large contingent of students either not including a conclusion at all, or providing a final sentence that failed to conclude the discussion adequately. Conclusions provide students with an opportunity to bring together all their ideas strongly.
Students who failed to provide an introduction or a conclusion, or failed to set their essay out into logical paragraphs, generally did not achieve high ratings in criterion 8.

Referencing is an element of criterion 8. In an exam situation referencing is not required, however any developers of theories should be named. It is expected that ‘A’ and high ‘B’ students will provide these details.

Section B

The report for Part 2 of the exam should be read in alongside the exam paper and the marking tool.

CRITERION 3 Analyse leadership qualities and approaches

This part of the exam paper comprised four questions, requiring candidates to give a short response to each question. Responses had to address the set criteria in order to be successful. Marks were attributed through this part of the exam paper by appointing marks for each of the minutes suggested on each question. The marks were tallied by combining all marks for questions 2, 3, 4, and 5, to a total out of 40 and converted to an award of: A+,A,A-, B+,B,B-, C+,C,C-, D+,D,D- or Z.

Question 2

This question required students to describe how outdoor leaders use experienced-based judgement to help them make decisions.

Stronger responses clearly explained the link between experienced-based judgement and making a decision in an outdoor environment. They used appropriate terminology and mentioned how a leader can facilitate a group more effectively when drawing from past experiences to gain a positive outcome from the chosen scenario. Reflection techniques, to seek feedback, risk/reward ratio within decision making from past experiences also contributed to a solid response. Answers that linked experienced-based judgement to the Natural Decision-Making Model answered this question well by discussing how past experience and intuition plays an important role when making a complex decision for a group.

Moderate responses related experienced-based judgment to leader core competencies. They discussed how judgment is influenced by the core competencies and the leaders experience overtime.

Weaker responses lacked substance with students unable to establish the link with experienced-based judgment to decision making. Some responses repeated information which demonstrated a lack of understanding and inability to apply a scenario to strengthen the response.

Question 3

This question required students to describe and evaluate a minimum of two skills a leader could use to prevent an emergency in an outdoor activity.

Students generally answered this question quite well. Most students could describe two relevant skills with some answers including an explanation of the different types of skills (hard, soft and meta) and giving examples of each. Understanding the different types of skills is essential. Evaluating how a particular skill could help prevent emergencies varied, with some answers giving practical examples to
help illustrate a point. Stronger responses made the distinction between skills required to prevent emergencies and those required for dealing with emergencies. Given that this question was worth 10 marks, examples were a hallmark of stronger responses.

Communication, planning, organisation and decision making were the most common skills mentioned.

Question 4

This question required students to describe two attributes of effective leaders, using an example from an outdoor activity that demonstrates each attribute. Stronger responses applied the relevant attribute to a scenario well and justified why it is important as a leader to have this attribute and how it contributes to a successful outcome of an outdoor activity. Better answers often defined attributes/qualities well in their introduction.

Empathy and confidence were the most common attributes used and they were generally applied well in the stronger responses.

There was some confusion as to the difference between an attribute and a skill, with a number of responses discussing skills instead of attributes.

Question 5

This question required students to describe the relationship between two of decision making, problem solving and judgement, as used by leaders in managing groups in the outdoors. Strong responses described how important the relationship was, and made links between the two chosen elements. The Analytical Decision Making, Natural Decision-Making Model, experienced based judgement as well as simple and complex decisions were commonly discussed. Examples were often given to help illustrate the relationship. Weaker responses struggled to establish a link between the chosen elements, often just defining each one.

Section C

The report for Part 3 of the exam should be read in alongside the exam paper and the marking tool.

Criterion 5 Apply personal skills in group management and working collaboratively with others.

This part of the exam paper comprised four questions, requiring candidates to give a short response to each question. Responses had to address the set criteria in order to be successful. Marks were attributed through this part of the exam paper by appointing marks for each of the minutes suggested on each question. The marks were tallied by combining all marks for questions 6, 7, 8, and 9, to a total out of 40 and converted to an award of; A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- or Z.
Question 6.

This question asked students to identify and explain two advantages in having group members create their group goals. Many students were able to identify advantages of group members creating their own goals, such as motivation, understanding, commitment, increased success, etc. Explanations of why group goals are important varied, with many students unable to explain with clarity the advantages they identified.

Many students referred to SMART goals and if explained correctly this strengthened their answer.

Some students wrote about individual goals rather than group goals. Many missed the point of focusing specifically on the group creating ‘their own’ goals, and just discussed the advantages of goals and goal setting in general.

Question 7

This question required students to identify two conflict resolution strategies and the advantages and disadvantages for each. Many students were able to identify two known conflict resolution strategies effectively, describe what each involved and discuss the situations in which they would be most effective/least effective.

Students who discussed multiple advantages and disadvantages for both of their conflict strategies were able to strengthen and justify their answer effectively.

Some students included strategies that were not one of the five strategies taught in the course document (Avoidance, Accommodation, Competition, Collaboration, and Compromise) or did not include either an advantage or disadvantage in their explanations which impacted their overall mark.

Question 8

This question required students to describe and compare two different ways in which leaders may be tolerant and understanding when managing a group in the outdoors. Many students misunderstood this question and wrote their responses based on tolerating difficult behaviour, applying conflict resolution, while others left the question blank. Strong responses identified and described in detail two ways leaders can be ‘equitable’ such as adjusting and modifying activities to suit a variety of needs concerning: ability, culture, religion, socio-economic status, fitness, etc. Another way in which students answered this question was by describing two ways in which leader attributes/characteristics help to foster equity/inclusion within groups. These students also applied an example in appropriate depth and linked this to the question throughout their response.

Some students discussed two tiers of Maslow’s Hierarchy and used an example to discuss how leaders could be tolerant and understanding.

Very few students attempted to compare ways in which leaders can be tolerant and understanding and many students wrote about one way a leader can be tolerant and understanding but did not discuss a second. The broad nature of the question allowed for a variety of student responses.
Question 9

This question was generally answered quite well with most students identifying Tuckman’s theory of group formation and identifying all five stages of the model. Students should have identified Storming as the stage where the group was at in the scenario, and justify why. Some students identified a different stage such as Norming, however they were able to justify this effectively. The majority of students answered this question effectively, however some students wrote about Maslow’s Hierarchy, confusing this for a theory of group development.

Section D

The report for Part 4 of the exam should be read in alongside the exam paper and the marking tool.

CRITERION 7 Describe ways in which people experience and relate to the natural environment.
CRITERION 8 Communicate ideas and information in a variety of forms.

This part of the paper required candidates to write an extended response. The interpretation of the question and formation of response in Part 1 is designed to draw on a candidate’s knowledge of Leadership Theories and their application. An award of; A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- or Z was attributed to the question for Criteria 2 and 8.

This part of the exam paper was divided into two sections, requiring candidates to give an extended response in both sections. It is vital that students carefully read the question and understand the criteria being responded to — in this case it was necessary to talk explicitly about Human-Nature Relationships.

Question 10

In this question students should explore:

- how issues of visitor use and the idea that people should leave natural places ‘better than we found them’ impact Human-Nature Relationships
- how values and attitudes towards the natural environment have changed over time (historical versus contemporary). Values may include; scientific, recreational, spiritual, educational, aesthetic, social, cultural, economic, intrinsic.

Students may discuss; sense of place and space, the concept of wilderness, environmental world views, Peter Martin’s Signposts and metaphorical images, effect of different uses in natural areas over time.

A significant proportion of candidates answered Question 10 with regard to sustainability issues without referring back to the effects that these have on Human-Nature Relationships. Many wrote about Leave No Trace principles.

It is vital that students understand that this section assesses criterion 7 not criterion 6 and while ideas covered during the year in the Ecological Sustainability module can help inform responses, criterion 6 content will not be marked.

Candidates who misinterpreted the question were not penalised with regard to criterion 8.
Strong responses showed a good understanding of Human-Nature Relationships, factors that affect relationships, changes over time AND related their answer back to the question well. The better responses discussed the issue of values and attitudes, and provided a comprehensive response, with examples, as to how human interactions with natural environments have changed over time. Many referred to Peter Martin’s Signposts, environmental world views and metaphorical images of nature and explained how being more integrated and connected with nature led to better overall environmental management of areas.

Weaker responses demonstrated a limited understanding of Human-Nature Relationships and did not provide adequate theory. They discussed factors that affect relationships but tended not to look at changes over time or link their response strongly to the question. D-range answers did not address Human-Nature Relationships. Some responses were well-written essays about sustainability issues. These candidates were not penalised with regard to criterion B.

Question 11

In this question students were asked to discuss how leaders facilitate a connection with natural environments, and influence progression of views and attitudes toward the natural environment. Students who chose to respond to this question generally dealt with it well.

Strong responses covered a range of facilitation techniques leaders could draw on, many using examples to illustrate their ideas. Potential actions of the leader include:

- extended visits to nature and direct experiences with nature
- repeated visits to the one place at different times of day and during different seasons
- providing participants with language and ideas for describing relationships with nature
- making people comfortable in the outdoors
- equipping participants with the skills and competencies for outdoor living and travel
- providing time to reflect upon experiences and focus specifically on self and personal relationship with nature (solo time, nature journals, sharing of ideas and stories, use of poems, songs and other creative mediums)
- ensuring experiences in nature are positive
- use of interpretation to foster knowledge of, and connection to place
- focus on ecology and the interconnectedness of all species
- exploration and discovery.

Weaker responses provided minimal examples and either failed to connect Human-Nature theory to the actions of the leader, or didn’t mention the actions of the leader specifically at all. Some responses focused solely on explaining Human-Nature Relationship theory without connecting it to the question.

Question 12

This question required students to use a factual historical or contemporary example to illustrate how Human-Nature Relationships have changed over time. This question tended not to be answered as strongly as Question 11. Often students repeated the same information given in Question 10 rather than dealing with elements 2 and 4. Stronger responses provided a good understanding of the theory and connected it well to the question. Weaker responses did not actually discuss a specific example in
terms of change.

Some students used this essay to present a political view-point, which would be fine provided they connected ideas to the theory and explained how relationships can change depending on who the stakeholder is. Rants should be avoided as they generally do not demonstrate nuanced understanding.

**Criterion 8 – Question 10/11/12**

Students generally need to be more careful with their spelling and use of grammatical conventions and refer more to specialised terminology rather than give generalised explanations. At times students confused Martin’s Signposts with Tuckmans. Students need to improve their use of formal language—particularly avoiding cliché, slang and contractions, and ensuring the possessive apostrophe is used correctly.

Introductions were generally present and dealt with the question. It is important for students to explain in the introduction what the essay will explore. It is also important that paragraphs progress logically to build an argument that is concluded strongly.