Class Activities

# Chapter 7: Creating a Vision

## Guide to the Class Activities

Each activity is designed based on Fink’s Learning Taxonomy and is tagged with the following tags under the taxonomy’s learning and assessment structure:

1. Foundational Knowledge (F)
2. Application (A)
3. Integration (I)
4. Human Dimension (H)
5. Caring (C)
6. Learning How to Learn (L)

These activities may be used in either small-group or large-group settings, depending on class size and time available. Some may also be suitable as homework.

## Activities

### Acrostic (F)

Begin class by asking students to create their own acrostic, using the word “vision.” For each letter, they should find a word that begins with that letter that also relates to “vision.” For example:

**V** alues

**I** nspiring

**S** eeing the future

**I** nclusive

**O** rienting

**N** new

Have students share their acrostics in class and identify words their peers have used that are especially creative or evocative. Discuss how articulating a vision and choosing the right words and symbols can motivate others.

### Password (F)

The rules for this game are explained in the Class Activities for chapter 4. This is a fun exercise with which to begin class. It helps students learn the terms from the chapter and how to explain them to someone else. Terms:

Vision

Challenge

Change

Map

Picture

Status quo

Value

Articulation

Adapting the vision

Symbols

Inclusive language

Walk the talk

Terry Fox

### Latitude of Acceptance (A, I)

The concept of the latitude of acceptance is derived from social judgment theory (<http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/social_judgment.htm>). In brief, on any given issue there are a range of possible attitudes or positions. People will generally have a range of opinions but will have an anchor position. If the issue is tied to a person’s sense of identity it is harder to change the anchor position. The latitude of acceptance refers to the range of positions that would be acceptable to a person. The latitude of rejection refers to the positions that a person would clearly oppose. In between is the latitude of non-commitment, which includes those positions which are neither accepted nor rejected.

In class have students brainstorm controversial issues on which everyone has an opinion. Have them select one. Brainstorm again all the possible positions concerning this issue. Draw a continuum on the board of all the positions ranging from the most favorable to the most critical. This will involve some debate and negotiation among class members. Number the positions for easy identification. Take a secret vote (slips of paper, no names attached) of where students place themselves on the continuum. Mark on the continuum the position receiving the largest number of votes as well as the location of the most extreme positions.

In small groups have students choose either the majority position or one of the extreme positions and discuss how a leader could articulate a vision for change to an audience at this position. The change could be in either direction. What are the areas of agreement? Where can a sense of consistency be reinforced? Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion then have groups share their ideas. The rest of the class can assess how persuasive they found the various arguments and how likely they would be to move their anchor position. Debrief: How much effort is involved in message adaptation? What insights does this exercise give into leadership? How is persuasion different than explaining a vision to others?

### The Story (A, I, H)

American Public Media features a radio show broadcast from North Carolina called *The Story* (<http://thestory.org>). It profiles ordinary people “whose lives are intersecting with significant issues in the news” and gives them the opportunity to tell their story. This site can be used in several ways for instruction. Students can be assigned to listen to a weekly broadcast, or one from the archive. The instructor can bookmark a particular story and share it with the class via email. Students can be invited to contribute their insights and commentary on current events as part of *The Story’s* public journalism project. Brief broadcasts can also be listened to in class and used as discussion starters. One example: Listen to the story “Swimming for the Rivers” found under the topic of “Clean Water.” Discuss how Christopher Swain developed his vision for cleaning up the Columbia River in Oregon.

### Inspirational Speeches (F, A)

Ask students to bring to class examples of visionary speeches they have found inspiring. In class, briefly explain the four components of the rhetorical situation: The speaker, the speech, the occasion, and the audience. How did these elements combine to make the speech effective? What symbols or phrases were particularly moving? Instructors may wish to show a clip of an inspirational speech such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

### Walking the Talk (A, I)

Ask students to bring to class examples of leaders who “walk the talk,” who model integrity and consistency in their words and behavior. In small groups discuss what accounts for these persons’ integrity. What do the leaders have in common? Is integrity an inborn trait? Developed in childhood? Reinforced by a community of support? What stressors have these persons experienced that could have pushed them off their paths? How does a leader sustain vision under duress?

### Profit-Seeking and Visionary Leadership (A, F)

Businesses are often concerned about making a profit, which may run counter to the goal of creating vision that challenges people in the organization to benefit others. Ask students to identify businesses that have succeeded in being profitable over an extended period of time while also benefitting others. How have they managed to do both? What steps did the leaders take to make this happen?

## Writing Assignments

### Virtual Leadership (A, I, H)

In a 4-5 page paper have students report on a vision for change that was primarily created over the internet, either through a blog, social network site or tweets. Have them analyze the process chronologically, explaining how the characteristics of the vision were created, how the vision was articulated and then implemented. Who is the “leader” in this effort? Who are the “followers”? Who “speaks” for the change? Which voices prevail?

### Sketch-noting (F, A, I)

Sketch-noting is introduced in the Class Activities of chapter 1. It is a way to think visually about an issue. Making sketch notes is not about drawing, or artistry, but about making marks on paper (or a white board) to help oneself think. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Everyone will do it differently.

Ask students to sketch out (on paper you provide, or a page of their own) one hope they have for a positive change in society, such as eliminating poverty, providing good public education for all children, slowing climate change, or similar. What elements are needed to making this change possible? Have them create symbols or labels for these elements. How do the elements connect with each other? Where is the student in this sketch? Where does energy enter into the sketch? How can that be depicted?

After a time of drawing have students post their sketches around the room and look at one another’s visions and hopes. What are some similarities in how people see this process? Differences? How are leader behaviors activated?

### Perspective Taking (A, I)

Bring out the user profiles students developed in Week 3 and ask students to imagine how this persona would respond to different kinds of visionary leadership. What issues would matter to him or her? What core values would be most appealing? What metaphors or symbols might be motivating? Discuss in small groups or have students write a brief response paper to these questions.

### One Minute Paper Topics (F, A, I)

For you, what is the hardest part of creating a vision?

When have you been the most inspired by a leader?