

LEAD 301

Theory & Practice of Leadership

Interview with a Leader Paper

Description

Students will select a leader in an organization (volunteer, non-profit or for-profit) and interview that individual. Leaders selected must not be current C.U. students and must not be close relatives of the interviewer. Each student will submit a 3-5 page paper describing this individual and their practice of leadership.

Maximum Points: 175

Steps in the Process

Interview

1. Contact your selected leader and arrange for an appointment with them. Your interview will probably take around 30 minutes. Be on time for your appointment, be organized and be respectful of your leader's time. Remember – everyday leaders are all around you! Before your interview, write out the questions you intend to ask. Basic questions you should include are:

- How do you define leadership?
- Please describe some examples from your practice of leadership.
- Have you read any books or articles on leadership that you would recommend to leadership studies students?
- (This will give you clues as to the way your leader defines and practices leadership)

Based on your leader's replies to these questions, you will want to ask follow-up questions to clarify and define their practice of leadership. You can, of course, add other questions to explore aspects of leadership which you find most interesting and compelling.

2. During the interview, you may want to record the questions and answers – this will free you up to listen closely and ask questions without trying to write down everything. ***Be sure to ask your leader for permission to record the interview.*** Be sure to ask for a business card from your leader.

Post Interview

1. After the interview, be sure to send a thank you note to the leader in appreciation of the leader's time.
2. Collect your thoughts and make notes from your recording of the interview – see if you can distill the person's definition of leadership to a few sentences. Using the definition, examples and follow-up questions, determine how this leader's practice of leadership fits within each of the theories we have studied so far.
3. Select one theory which seems most applicable to this leader, analyze and discuss similarities and differences in the heart of your paper.
4. Select a second theory which shows secondary similarities and analyze/discuss this as well, but more briefly than the first theory.
5. If you quote from our text or any other article or book, be sure to include a references page. I am not picky about whether you use MLA or APA format, just don't pass off another's work as your own. Since the subject of the paper is your interview with the leader, you do not have to cite the interview if you relate quotes from the leader.

6. A brief conclusion, wrapping up your learning about this leader from your interview will bring your paper to a close.
7. Your paper must be printed, double-spaced, on white paper in a 12-pt. font. You must have a title page that lists the title of your paper, your name, the date and the course number. Staple the leader's business card to the paper.

Some Helpful Hints

- Contact your leader NOW if you have not done so already. Leaders are busy people and so are you as a student – it may take some time to coordinate an interview.
- You might want to pick someone in your intended profession – this can serve as a great time to network. Several students in previous years have arranged internships or gotten jobs with the leader after interviewing them. This interview can help you get a foot in the door.
- While you can't interview a C.U. student or a relative of yours, you can use those people to refer you to a leader to interview. Current C.U. employees can be great subjects for your interview.
- Take enough time writing your paper that you proofread well. Run spellcheck. Don't just write down the questions you asked and the answers to them – analyze! This should NOT be simply a transcript of your interview.
- Don't forget to ask for a business card. The business card of the individual interviewed must be attached to the paper when it is submitted.
- Do not take up pages of your paper explaining the resume of the leader you chose. This is a paper about this person's PRACTICE of leadership, not about their accomplishments. A couple of sentences in your introduction about why you chose this leader will suffice.

Grading Criteria

The Interview with a Leader papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Content (125 points possible): Does the paper follow the content guidelines in the assignment? Is the analysis of the leader's practice of leadership scholarly and logical? Does the student cite at least 2 theories from our course and compare the leader's practice to those? Does the student appear to understand the theories and definitions they are applying? Are the arguments made clearly? Does the student explain why they selected this leader and how this leader defines leadership? Are examples used to reinforce the points the student makes? Does it feel like the student has taken adequate care to write a concise, yet thorough, analysis? Higher order thinking skills (Bloom's Taxonomy) are expected in this assignment.

Structure of Paper, Grammar & Spelling (50 points possible): Is there a logical beginning, middle & end? Does the student state ideas, support them with examples and then conclude that idea before transitioning to the next? Are there any run on or fragment sentences? Are there spelling errors? Do the sentences make sense? Are format requirements met (length of paper, cite references, etc.)? NOTE: The paper should be between 3 & 5 pages, not counting the title page and reference page. References do not have to be on their own page, but a title page is required.

