



- TITLE** Learning to Lead at 5,267 feet: An Empirical Study of Outdoor Management Training and MBA Students' Leadership Development.
- RESEARCHER** Darrin Kass and Christian Grandzol
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- OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of outdoor management training on the leadership development of MBA students.

METHODOLOGY

Thirty-three MBA students at one Pennsylvania State University institution enrolled in two sections of Organizational Behavior were the participants in this study. Twelve students (seven women, five men) enrolled in Section 1 which included an outdoor leadership development program referred to as Leadership on the Edge (LOTE). Twenty-one students (16 men, five women) enrolled in Section 2, the traditional section of the course offering. The majority of students (approximately 80%) across both sections were first-year MBA students. Both the average age of the students (26) and average years of leadership experience were similar across the two sections.

KEY FINDINGS

The two lowest pretest and posttest means were for the leadership practices of Inspire a Shared Vision and Challenge the Process, while the highest was Enable Others to Act. Means of the classroom section were greater than means of the LOTE section for both the pretests and posttests across all five leadership practices. Means of both groups increased from pretest to posttest; the magnitudes of these increases varied, with the LOTE section students increasing the most in Inspire, Challenge, and Encourage.

Both males and females increased between the pretest and posttest. These findings, according to the authors, "indicate that gender was not a factor affecting leadership practices for the sample, providing increased evidence that the course or the course section were the sources of difference" (p. 53).

Students in the LOTE section increased their frequency of more leadership behaviors than the classroom students (11 to 5). Generally, the magnitude of the mean change

was also larger for LOTE students. “Examining the individual behaviors where changes occurred adds insight to the potential benefits of both classroom formats,” according to the authors: “The classroom enabled students to, among other things, develop stronger cooperative relationships, help other people grow in their skills, and more actively listen to diverse points of view. The LOTE experience enabled students to, among others, increase their ability to speak with conviction, set a stronger personal example, to let others know of confidence in their abilities, and experiment and take risks. We believe these behaviors are consistent with expectations for the respective experiences” (p. 53).