

Teaching Note

CRAIG KIELBURGER VIDEO CASE SERIES

Mary Crossan wrote this teaching note as an aid to instructors in the classroom use of the case Craig Kielburger Video Case Series, No. 9B12M031. This teaching note should not be used in any way that would prejudice the future use of the case.

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Version: 2012-06-11

OVERVIEW

This six-part video case series features social entrepreneur Craig Kielburger as he faces pivotal moments in his life and the remarkable evolution of his organization. The primary dilemmas are strategic in nature, and the solutions rely on leadership character and social entrepreneurship. Students are able to walk in Craig Kielburger's shoes throughout the six cases. Each case begins with a video set-up, followed by a short one- or two-page case and a related discussion, concluding with a video clip of Kielburger describing what happened. To deliver this video case series in a cost-effective way and to ensure wide circulation, five of the six cases have been set up as a no fee, supplement product (product # 9B12M031B), and have provided a link to the video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9nKAnkFAIo&feature=youtu.be>

OBJECTIVE

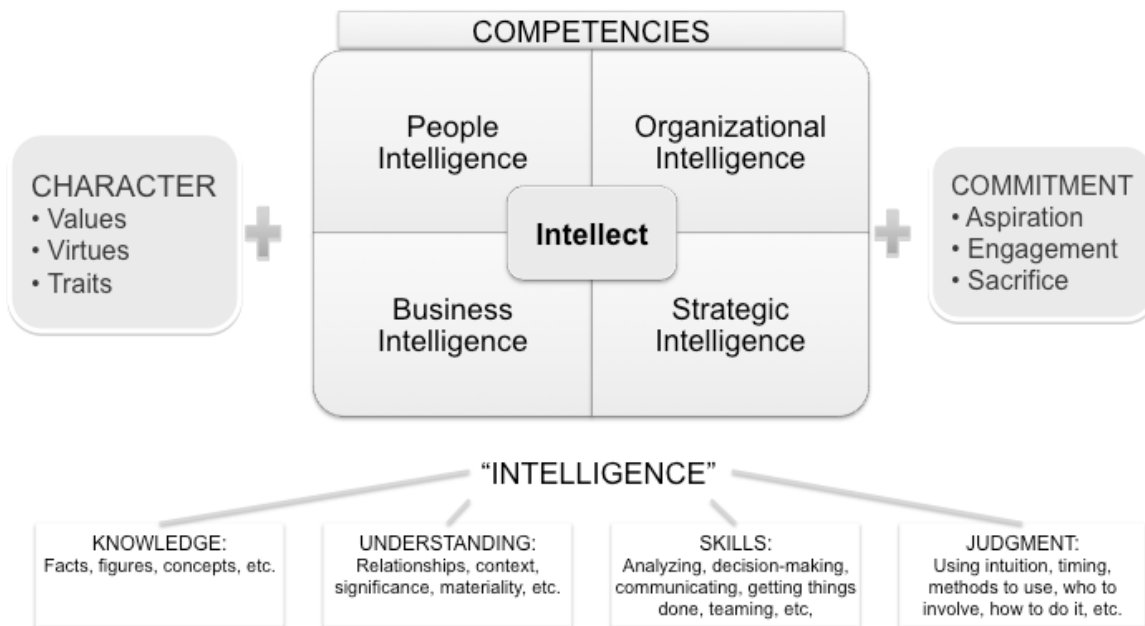
Since its scope is wide-ranging, the Craig Kielburger video case series can be used for a variety of purposes. It traces the evolution of both a leader and an organization through major strategic change. The case series lends itself to understanding leadership character, social entrepreneurship, strategic renewal, and innovation in both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. It has been successfully used with undergraduates, graduates and executives in courses on leadership, strategy and sustainability. The video case series provides an inspirational look at leadership and innovation, and it offers key insights about the relationships between leadership character, strategic renewal and social innovation. It is particularly suited to understanding the elements of leadership character — transcendence, courage, justice, humanity, temperance and wisdom — and the important role of character in strategic renewal and innovation.

ASSIGNMENT

Since this video case series is intended to unfold during the class, there is no case preparation or associated set of assignment questions. We do recommend having the students read the Ivey Business Journal (IBJ) article "Developing Leadership Character," product # 9B12TA07, prior to the class, since it will help the students identify elements of leadership character as the cases unfold in the class.

Alongside competencies and commitment, the article positions character as being essential to leadership (see Figure 1). The six cases describe incidents Kielburger has encountered, each requiring decisions/actions that rely on character, competencies and commitment.

Figure 1 – Character Competencies and Commitment



CLASS PLAN

The case package includes 68 minutes of video accompanying the six cases, along with 32 minutes of question and answer (Q&A) sessions; discussion can be managed to fill the available time. The following timing and teaching plan is for a three-hour class. The format for each of the cases is: 1) distribute and read the case; 2) video — Kielburger sets up the situation; 3) class discussion; 4) video — Kielburger discusses what happened; 5) video — company perspective of what happened. We recommend not having the class debrief on each video but rather waiting until the series is complete before reflecting on how character, competencies and commitment are revealed and discussing the associated implications for leadership. If less time is available, we recommend eliminating the last case in the series and shortening the Q&A video.

The best way for the instructor to prepare for the case is to read the short cases and the assigned article and view the video. There is a great deal of flexibility in how the instructor can choose to focus the discussion since, in many ways, the case/video teaches itself. Presented from the perspective of Craig Kielburger, the case series serves the purpose of revealing the role of character and commitment in augmenting leadership competencies.

A MOVEMENT IS BORN (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 12 minutes - video)

The case begins: “The morning was like any other. Craig Kielburger grabbed *The Toronto Star* to read through the comics over breakfast before school. He was in Grade 7 and had just turned 12. This particular morning, however, he never made it to the comics. Kielburger was struck by the front-page headline that

read ‘Battled Child Labour, Boy 12 Murdered.’” Kielburger brought the article to school and asked his teacher whether he could speak to the class about it. The case concludes with the realization “they would have to create the change they wanted to see. *Free The Children* was born, and now they had to decide where to start.”

Beginning the case series with Kielburger as a young boy illustrates the way in which life experiences shape leadership. This point serves as a connection for instructors who may choose to follow this case with an exercise that prompts students to reflect on their own Leadership Life Stories. The case also helps to reveal how small things can evolve into life-changing experiences and shows the role that others play in enabling that process.

Distribute and Read Case 1 (3 minutes)

Video Set-Up (3 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

There are many possible points of discussion; however, it is worthwhile to explore what would have happened if the teacher had been preoccupied or felt ill-equipped to deal with the issue. The case serves as a reminder that, often, just being prepared to listen can be very empowering. As the case series unfolds, this first case provides a glimpse of Kielburger’s character and his sense of commitment in the absence of competencies. Students can discuss what they would have done in Kielburger’s shoes. As Kielburger tells his story in the video that follows, it becomes readily apparent that there are elements of character and commitment that reveal why the actions he took are distinctly different than those that most children his age would have been willing to undertake.

What Happened (5.5minutes)

Video – Journey to Asia (3 minutes)

What Happened - Continued (0.5 minutes)

RESCUE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED? (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 10 minutes - video)

The case begins: “*Free The Children’s* initial mandate was to free children from child slavery. During Craig’s first trip to South Asia, he witnessed first-hand the appalling conditions in which children worked and lived, with little hope of escape. The group completed its mandate by supporting a rescue home for children who were freed from child slavery.” However, the rescue organization found that the same children were being freed over and over again, and it also discovered many systemic issues. The case concludes with a series of questions: How would the organization tackle these (and possibly other) systemic obstacles to development? Should *Free The Children* be doing more than rescuing children? If so, where should the scope of the projects start and stop: Just building the school? Continuing into other areas? Where to start, and when to stop?

Distribute and Read Case 2 (3 minutes)

Set-Up (4 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

The discussion focuses largely on the issue of strategic scope. Since *Free The Children* is an organization originally founded for the purpose of freeing child slaves, the strategic question becomes: How can *Free The Children* deliver on its original mandate in the midst of the many systemic problems on which child slavery is based. *Free The Children* is a fledgling organization with limited resources, and therefore the issue of scope is critical. As the subsequent video reveals, the organization decided to expand its scope in order to achieve a more long-lasting impact.

What Happened (4 minutes)

Video – Expand the Business Model (2 minutes)

CRISIS AT THE DOCKS (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 12.5 minutes - video)

The case begins: “The docks at Freetown Port in Sierra Leone were buzzing. Craig Kielburger and the *Free The Children* team were anxiously awaiting their next shipment of supplies to support their development projects in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in Africa. This particular day, however, not only was the tension palpable, but it was clear that rather than the usual influx of supplies for the large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the area, the vast majority were shipping *out* of the region. A sudden escalation of events in the recent war in Afghanistan had replaced the troubles in Sierra Leone as the headline of the day. These NGOs were responding quickly with typically reactive, short-term thinking by following the aid dollars out of Sierra Leone and into Afghanistan.” Craig realized that donor dollars followed crises, but he also knew their work was far from done in Sierra Leone, creating another dilemma with respect to their strategic priorities.

Distribute and Read Case 3 (3 minutes)

Set-Up (4 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

It is important to keep an eye on the scarce financial resources and the funding model that relies on servicing high-profile needs that typically arise in a crisis. Students will want to recommend changes to donor funding patterns; however, few will come up with the solution that Kielburger designed, in which the group decided to set up a for-profit organization called *Me to We* that would provide a more stable funding source.

What Happened (6 minutes)

Video – *Me to We* (for-profit organization) (2.5 minutes)

DEFINING SUCCESS (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 11 minutes - video)

The case describes the dilemma with respect to how NGOs define success. As Kielburger describes in the case: “These NGOs compete vigorously for donations, and how they deploy funds is central to that perceived success. These leading NGOs — some of which have been in existence and serving the same causes, communities and regions for decades or centuries — proudly measure their success in simple, objective metrics like the percentage of donated funds spent on direct services, the number of schools and clinics built, and the number of people they had subsequently educated and treated. But we began to

question this measurement. After all, how can this be considered success when the *need* still exists? The case poses the question, “What is the right measure of success?”

Distribute and Read Case 4 (3 minutes)

Set-Up (3 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

The discussion focuses not only on the right measure for success but also on the implications for the business model in terms of the funding required and the implications for raising the funds. Measures of success that are more dependent on long-term systemic solutions tend to be difficult to define and more complex to relate to donors.

What Happened (7 minutes)

Video – Donor Message (1 minute)

WE DAY (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 11 minutes - video)

The case begins: “Non-profit organizations and volunteer organizations share a mandate of goodwill. Each joins the discussion with the intention of making the world that we live in a better place for everyone. As each organization strives to reach that goal, however, it seldom shares the path with others. Craig Kielburger felt that it begged the question: If a better world for everyone is the common goal, why are we so competitive at best and combative at worst?” The case describes an initiative that is cause-agnostic and questions whether the organization should pursue it, and if so, how.

Distribute and Read Case 5 (3 minutes)

Set-Up (4 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

This discussion serves to challenge a business model that has already seen many modifications and expansions of scope across the series of cases. In particular, students debate the merits of a co-operative versus a competitive approach.

What Happened (5 minutes)

Video – We Day (2 minutes)

ME TO WE (13 minutes - reading/discussion; 11.5 minutes - video)

The final case in the series describes two struggling initiatives associated with the *Me to We* for-profit organization. As described in the case: “The first pertained to the marketing and distribution of a jewelry line handcrafted by women in *Free The Children’s* communities overseas. Craig asked, ‘How can we sustainably grow this part of the business while maintaining a high-touch and hands-on manufacturing process that helps women help their communities?’ The second concerned the *Me to We* music venture,

which had met with seemingly insurmountable challenges inherent in today's ever-changing music industry. Was there a solution to resuscitate interest in this initiative as a sustained revenue stream, or should it be effectively shut down? And if so, how?"

Distribute and Read Case 6 (3 minutes)

While the five preceding cases focus on overcoming obstacles, the sixth case pushes students to confront whether a can-do attitude is enough. In this case, it appears that *Me to We*'s pursuit of the music venture does not have a good strategic fit.

Set-Up (3.5 minutes)

Discussion (10 minutes)

What Happened (3.5 minutes)

Video – Me to We Artisans (4.5 minutes)

Q&A (32.5 minutes)

The Q&A focuses primarily on issues of leadership character, as follows:

Where do you get your inner strength? (5.5 minutes)

Do hope and optimism play a role? (4 minutes)

What is the role of the virtue of temperance in what you do? (4 minutes)

How do you stay focused and not feel overwhelmed? (3 minutes)

What advice can you give about finding your passion? (7 minutes)

What kind of obstacles have you faced? (6 minutes)

Have you seen the impact of your work over time? (3 minutes)

WRAP-UP (10+ minutes)

The Q&A can be managed to allow more or less time for the discussion and wrap-up. The plan presented in this teaching note would take 178 minutes and would allow for only two minutes of wrap-up, so unless some time is saved on the reading (quite possible), the instructor would need to consider which questions to review in the Q&A.

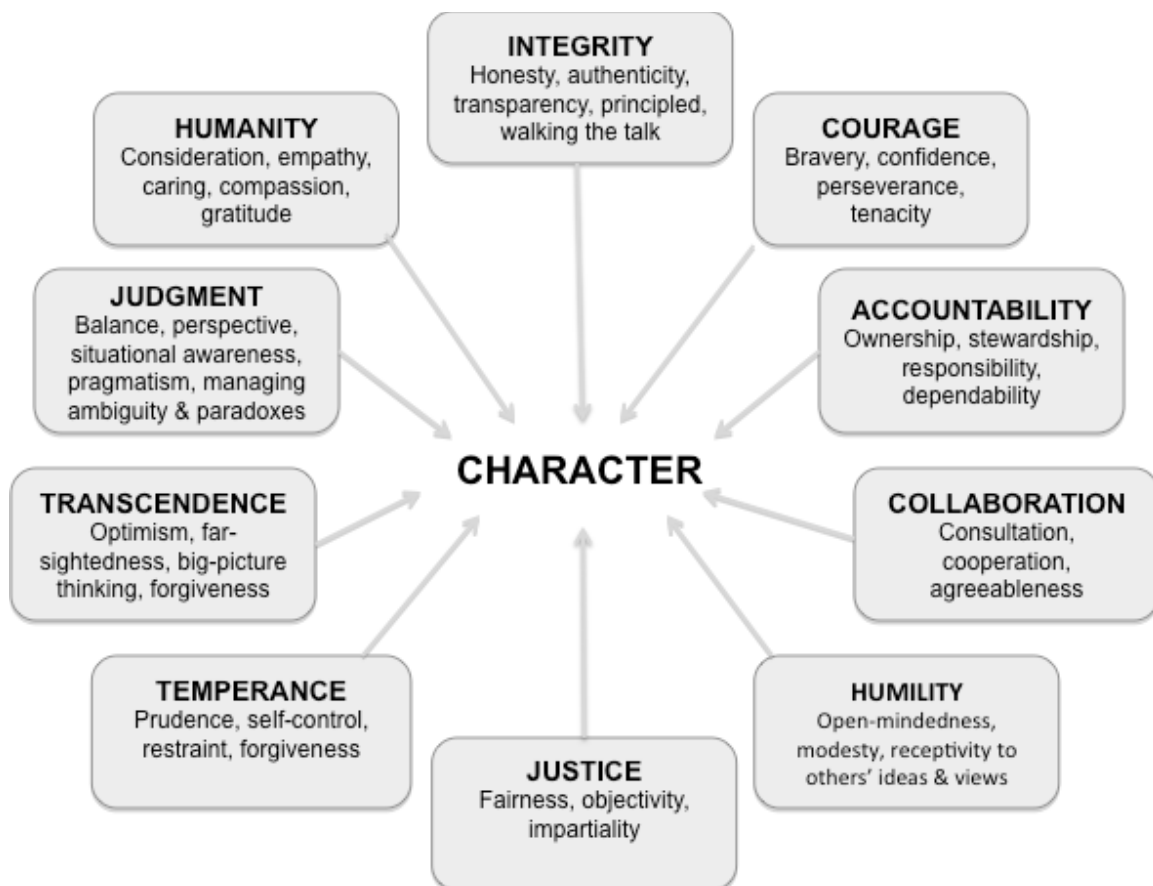
While there are many ways to wrap up this case series, emphasizing the role of leadership character in shaping decisions and actions serves as a particularly strong conclusion. Throughout the case series, it becomes readily apparent that most individuals would not have viewed or engaged in the issues in the same way that Craig Kielburger did. The elements of character shown in Figure 2 can be used to probe the ways in which character influences decision-making. As Aristotle warned, any virtue becomes a vice when it

exists in excess or deficiency, and hence there is opportunity here for discussion about the ways a leader can deepen his or her character strength without it becoming a vice. For example, courage in excess is simply recklessness. The discussion should reveal that the integration of the various character elements serves to strengthen each one. For example, temperance provides an important counter-balance to courage.

As noted in the article, we draw heavily on work by Peterson and Seligman (i.e., from their book *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004)), who identified six virtues — wisdom, transcendence, humanity, temperance, transcendence and courage — after extensive consideration of the various traits and behaviours that cut across cultures and religions and over time. We replace the term wisdom with judgment, since it is a more commonly used term in organizational practice, and we added in the terms collaboration and accountability and highlighted humility (originally part of temperance), given the importance of these terms in modern-day organizational contexts.

Since publishing the IBJ article, we have worked to refine/define character strengths in a research project. We are in the process of gathering a variety of materials to be made available on an Ivey website, and updates to the model will become available as we progress, along with teaching materials to aid in the development of these character strengths.

Figure 2 – Elements of Character



For many students, the case series is quite inspirational but also very humbling, as it naturally prompts students to reflect on what they have done with their own lives. We note that while it should provide some healthy self-reflection, the primary aim of the case is to create an awareness of the importance of developing and deepening the character strengths that ultimately support decisions and actions. These decisions and actions are also a reflection of character. Developing leadership character represents a life-long journey.