

# WALK IN MY SHOES: AN UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACH FOR LEARNING ABOUT LEADERS

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## ABSTRACT

*Nelson Mandela, Richard Branson, Fidel Castro and other leaders all stepped into my classroom last week. We spent two hours debating who was the best leader, comparing and contrasting how one becomes a leader, reflecting on our failures and successes, and looking at what we had in common (or not). In reality, students in my leadership class were invited to become the leader whose biography they had read, and, in doing so, they were able to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of these leaders than would be possible if they were simply asked to report on their investigation of these individuals. In this paper, I describe an experiential learning approach that turns student presentations of their book reviews into an active, personal learning experience. This approach invites students to incarnate the leader whose biography they read and to share their wisdom and insights with the other leaders in the room. Students experience the leaders, through the eyes of others, but also through the thoughts and feelings they have as they are presenting themselves as these leaders. This paper describes how the experience unfolds as well as some of the unique lessons that students have learned from their role models.*