

**TITLE:** An Exploration of the Leadership Practice "Enabling Others to Act."  
A Case Study

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**OBJECTIVE:** To investigate possible explanations of why a discrepancy between leader and follower commonly exists in Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice of "enabling others to act."

**METHODOLOGY:** Research design involved a multiple case with embedded unit analysis case study. In each case, the researcher directly and indirectly observed and collected data concerning the interaction between a leader and their followers. Three sites were selected from departments or centers located within Colleges of Agriculture at land grant universities from the Midwest with strong leadership reputations. Three leaders and 21 subordinates were involved. All respondents completed the LPI (self or observer form, as appropriate) and provided demographic information, prior to their being interviewed.

**KEY FINDINGS:** At Site X the five leadership practices were ranked in the exact same order by the leader and his/her constituents; the only statistically significant difference between self and observer scores was on Modeling, with self being lower. At Site Y the leadership practices were ranked differently by the leader and his/her constituents, and there were statistically significant differences between self and observer scores on Challenging, Inspiring and Encouraging (self lower). At Site Z, the rank order was approximately the same between the leader and his/her constituents, and constituents scored higher than the leader on Enabling and Encouraging. Overall, the embedded unit analysis failed to replicate the significant difference commonly found between leaders and their constituents on Enabling Others to Act.

"The results of the study were very supportive of both the transformational theories of leadership and Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices....The leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner were also identifiable in the case study analysis" (p.170). Moreover, "this study produced evidence that the LPI can be used as an effective measurement device of a leader's leadership practices" (p. 177).