The Voice of Leadership in Virtual Teams

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Project Title: The Voice of Leadership in Virtual Teams
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Project Description
A self-managing virtual (SMV) team is a configuration that permits team leaders to manage and administer their team with limited supervisory oversight. These teams are widespread in software and engineering environments where resources may be scattered globally (Yukl, 2009). Research into SMV team leadership is, however, in its early stages. Scholars have yet to confirm that traditional leadership theories operate in this theater. Research into emergent leadership provides limited insight into virtual teams, but current research fails to examine how emergent leaders manifest in the presence of an appointed leader.

This experiment will examine the communication of two expert teams (captured from Ventrillo) in virtual gaming environments in an attempt to better understand how teams varying leadership configurations communicate and how this communication manifests in team contexts. The student who works on this project will take part in transcribing the files, coding the resulting files, and assist in analyzing the outcomes. This initial work will be featured in a journal article in Perpetua, with follow-up articles in other journal venues where possible.

Student Duties
The selected student will work directly with faculty to transcribe audio files, code the resulting files, and assist in analyzing the outcomes. The audio files originate from a series of recordings of a team of 10 or more participants engaged in playing a virtual video across a series of months. Once the files are transcribed, then the data is coded. Both the student and the researcher will review the transcribed files and apply inductive codes explicating leadership acts or other tasks. The student and researcher with then analyze the results.

This is an outstanding opportunity for students to gain a better understanding of communication practices in collaboration. A positive attitude, excellent organizational skills, strong communication, and self-motivation are essential traits the successful student will need for this role.
The study will culminate with the completion of a series of publications explicating the research findings. The deliverables will be published initially as noted:

- Journal Article in UAH’s Perpetua—A peer-reviewed student academic journal describing the process of the study.
- Uahstudentblog.com—An official post on the UAH Technical Writing student blog describing the initial results of the study.

**Faculty Requirements and Mentorship**

The student will work on site with faculty in the VUElab. Working hours will be flexible, but students will be expected to adhere to the schedule once established. The faculty member will be supervising, mentoring, and also be working on the experiment so regular contact will be vital to the success of the collaboration. Direct interaction will occur regularly to assess progress, talk about and resolve issues, and to evaluate the ongoing work. Thoughtful, detailed feedback will be provided and is expected in return. Assistance will be available, but a high level of independence and problem solving is required.

**Student Prerequisites**

Students interested in this position need to be familiar with social science research including data collection from interviews, surveys, and observations. Additional familiarity with data transcription, grounded theory, and descriptive statistics is required. The successful applicant will have a good academic record and well as a PC gamer. While not essential, experience with analyzing text-based data and an understanding of World of Warcraft is desirable.

**Prior Awardees**

**Award Year and Project Title:** 2018 - Effects of Social Media Withdrawal on College Students

**Tangible Contributions Afforded by the Student:** Poster at the RCEU, of Lab Protocols on and equipment use.

**Specific Outcomes Provided to the Student:** experience primary data collection, learn about research protocols and gain a better understanding UX best practices. The student will be exposed to various technical skills and technology including recording equipment, video editing, transcription of interview texts, eye-tracking and software, data analysis, and collaboration with an interdisciplinary faculty team.