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Dr. Robert Emmerling (left) and Adam Ben-Hanania discussing their research partnership with think2perform Research Institute

Measuring the Impacts of the Future Leaders Academy

As think2perform Research Institute's first cohort of Future Leaders celebrates their graduation from the 18-month Future Leaders Academy program, the program itself is embarking on a journey of discovery through a research project conducted by the [Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations \(CREIO\)](#).

When t2pRI's Executive Director, Brian Hammer, approached CREIO leaders about a collaboration, they saw the potential.

“We're interested in evaluating the program's key elements to understand the types of impacts it makes on actual participants,” says [Dr. Robert Emmerling](#), Director and Co-Chair of CREIO and a leading expert in the assessment and development of competencies and emotional intelligence in the workplace.

“I really connected to the notion of preparing young adults to be better leaders in their lives and in their communities,” says [Adam Ben-Hanania](#), Rutgers University doctoral student in organizational psychology and CREIO research assistant, who is managing the project. “Evaluating the program and understanding, really quantifiably, how it affects people seemed important.”

The program evaluation will collect qualitative data through review of participants' applications, journals, written assignments, and interviews. Quantitative data will be collected through surveys and scales. Four scales will be administered to the Future Leaders twice – once at the start of the Future Leaders Academy training and six months later at the end of the training. These scales are the Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale, the Brief Resiliency Scale, the Goal Directed Behavior Scale, and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale. “When people hear ‘evaluation,’ some get scared, like they're doing something wrong,” says Adam. “It's important to

remind ourselves that it's actually a good thing. This program is really successful and it's doing a great job. We're here to help the program enhance itself and be the best it can be.”

At the end of each training module, surveys will be administered to the Future Leaders and group facilitators. Surveys for Future Leaders will evaluate cognition to gauge learning retention, as well as solicit feedback on participants’ interest level, opinions on the module’s strengths and suggestions for improvement. “We're interested in what's engaging to the participants, what assignments are they finishing? Which ones are they not as interested in as evidenced by them maybe not completing them to the same rate?” explains Rob. Leadership Workshop facilitator surveys will gauge program fidelity to determine if facilitators were able to implement the program as intended by program developers. “Program fidelity is a big portion of the evaluation,” says Adam. “Because we can’t have a Ryan and LaCresia everywhere, we need a very structured way of doing it so that other people can deliver the program with the same quality.”

Following the six-month Leadership Workshop training, the Future Leaders Academy includes a year-long mentorship period that will also be evaluated by administering the Mentoring Relationship Quality Scale to both Future Leaders and mentors.

“It has a mentoring component which to me is quite interesting,”

says Rob. “How did the participants experience that mentoring relationship? Does it help them with objective tasks that they have in front of them?” Knowing that many Future Leaders’ objective tasks include college and future career choices, Rob hopes for a positive answer to the question: “Does the program increase participants confidence in their ability to make good career decisions for themselves?”

A pilot evaluation of the current Future Leaders Academy program is underway now. The launch of a full program evaluation will coincide with the upcoming 2024-2025 Future Leaders Academy cohort.

“I envision this program as being supplemental to education everywhere,” says Adam. “I think it's really important that everyone know how to set goals, work towards their goals, understand people's emotions and utilize that understanding to influence other people or influence ourselves.”

“think2perform Research Institute is grateful to Dr. Rob Emmerling, Adam Ben-Hanania and CREIO for their investment in our program,” says t2pRI Executive Director Brian Hammer. “We look forward to their findings in support of our efforts to help prepare high-achieving high school and college students from low-income backgrounds or underrepresented communities to become exceptional leaders.”



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