

VUCA

Volatility, Uncertainty,
Complexity, and Ambiguity

Lesson Guide

Goals:

This classroom session will enable the learner to:

- 1) define V.U.C.A.
- 2) discuss how the 10 identified Matrix Insights Competencies relate to V.U.C.A.
- 3) discuss the Emotionally Intelligent ways to handle the challenges of V.U.C.A.

Pre-work

Learners need to have a preliminary understanding of what it means to lead in a V.U.C.A. climate, and its relationship to EQ Agility. The Introduction to Emotional Intelligence provided on the Matrix Insights EQ Dashboard Resource Center gives you the material necessary for introducing EQ to the classroom. See: www.eqdashboard.com/resources center.

Have students read the Oxford Leadership blog entry “Leadership in a V.U.C.A. World” By Pablo Tovar. <http://www.oxfordleadership.com/leadership-challenges-v-u-c-world/>

Summary

Leaders, who are skilled at leading in a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, utilize these specific competencies:

Flexibility, Insightfulness, Intuition, Perspective Taking, Reality Testing, Managing Change/Complexity, Adaptability, Dealing with Ambiguity/Paradox, Collaboration, and Strategic Agility

Maximize

To maximize this classroom session, set up our class in the EQ Dashboard and pre-select the designated competencies for students to review and be prepared to discuss.

Script: The following script allows for exploring the session topic.

0-5 minutes	Introduce class topic, discuss the critical need for leaders to have skills in dealing with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity with the ever increasing speed of change in our global workforces and highly matrixed organizations. Share personal insights regarding the power of EQ when focused toward developing leadership skills around these 4 essential areas. Please let the class know that not all of these circumstances are present in every situation.
6-20 minutes	With classmate, discuss Worksheet #1 – V.U.C.A. Defined. Have students review slide 3 and discuss personal examples of each circumstance.
21-30 minutes	Review slide 4 - Leading Through V.U.C.A. in the deck. Have students discuss the Leadership Strategy responses to V.U.C.A. in pairs.
31-40 minutes	Using Worksheet #2, Leadership Strategies and Tactics, have students develop 1 tactic to support each of the Leadership Strategy responses for each VUCA condition using 1 of the identified competencies.
41-50 minutes	Debrief Worksheet #2, Strategies for Leading V.U.C.A. What strategy did you create? What competencies did you leverage?
51-55 minutes	Debrief the assignment.

Worksheet #1 – V.U.C.A. Defined

The acronym V.U.C.A. stands for:

Volatility - Is the speed of change compounded by the whiplash of unanticipated forces, and radical shifts.

Uncertainty – Critical decision making information is only partially available and much is ambiguous. This situation is in competition with external forces and pressures that work to redirect focus.

Complexity - There are so many interdependent elements that all proposed solutions have unforeseen and unintended consequences that can negatively impact project success.

Ambiguity – A lack of clarity, loss of stability, and exactness creating a situation where opposing solutions can be equally true.

Directions

Using the definitions provided, have students discuss the definitions of V.U.C.A. and relate personal examples of each of the circumstances.

What personal experiences have you had at work or elsewhere that reflect the definitions of V.U.C.A.?

Volatility _____

Uncertainty _____

Complexity _____

Ambiguity _____

Leadership Strategies and Tactics

Instructions

Using 1 identified competency from each V.U.C.A. condition, explain how that competency supports each of the Leadership Strategy responses, in other words, how does developing the competency of Flexibility support Vision as a Leadership Strategy?

V.U.C.A.	Leadership Strategy	Competencies
Volatility	Vision	Flexibility, Insightfulness, and situational awareness
Uncertainty	Understanding	Initiative and Listening Generously
Complexity	Clarity	Intuition and Collaboration
Ambiguity	Agility	Perspective taking, Openness to others and Tolerance

Leadership Strategy	Competencies
Vision	Flexibility, Insightfulness, and situational awareness
Understanding	Initiative and Listening Generously
Clarity	Intuition and Collaboration
Agility	Perspective taking, Openness to others and Tolerance