

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

STAND AND DELIVER

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Studio: Warner Brothers Released: 1988

Genre: Drama Audience Rating: PG

Runtime: 103 minutes

Materials

VCR or DVD, television or projection system, Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles handouts (single-sided), notepad, writing utensil.

Objective

Students will identify Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles illustrated within Stand and Deliver and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Plot

Based on a true story, "Stand and Deliver" is an inspirational tale of a dedicated teacher who rescues a group of poor Latino students from potential delinquency by turning them into math whizzes. Using humor, imagination and whatever other means necessary, Jaime Escalante gets his students at a tough East Los Angeles high school so excited by learning that they are able to pass advance placement tests in calculus with flying colors. Their scores are so spectacular, in fact, that the testing board decides the students have cheated and forces them to prove their new-found knowledge by retaking the test. (Synopsis from [Rotten Tomatoes](#))

Cast of Main Characters

Edward James Olmos.....	Jamie A. Escalante
Lou Diamond Philips.....	Angel Guzman
Carmen Argenziano.....	Mr. Molina (Principal)
Vanessa Marquez.....	Ana Delgado
Ingrid Oliu	Guadalupe ‘Lupe’ Escobar
Will Gotay	Pancho
Ratrick Baca	Javier Perales
Mark Eliot.....	Tito
Virginia Paris	Raquel Ortega (Math Department Chair)
Karla Montana	Claudia Camejo

Facilitation Options

Stand and Deliver illustrates an abundance of leadership values and principles. This film can also be used to address ethical issues within the wildland fire community. Examples of both good and bad leadership can be found within the film. Students should have few problems identifying those that correspond to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. The objective is not to identify every leadership principle but to promote thought and discussion. Students should be less concerned with how many principles they view within the film and more concerned with how the principles they do recognize can be used to develop themselves as a leader.

The film can be viewed in its entirety or by clip selection, depending on facilitator intent and time schedules. Another method is to have the employee(s) view the film on his/her own and then hold the discussion session.

Full-film Facilitation Suggestion

When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should determine a good breaking point near the middle of the film.

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles with students.
2. Advise students to document instances within the film that illustrate/violate the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles on the handout provided.
3. Break students into small discussion groups.
4. Show students Stand and Deliver.
5. Break. (Suggestion: After summer school ends.)
6. Begin the guided discussion.

7. Provide a short synopsis with some “ticklers” to pay attention before beginning the rest of the film.
8. Resume the film.
9. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that have difficulty.
10. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Clip Facilitation Suggestion:

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Value or Principle targeted for discussion. (May be given or ask students to identify the value or principle being illustrated after viewing the clip.)
2. Show the clip.
3. Facilitate discussion regarding the selected clip and corresponding value and/or principle.
4. Break students into small discussion groups.
5. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that may have difficulty.
6. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Mentor Suggestion

- Use either method presented above. The mentor should be available to the student to discuss lessons learned from the film as well as incorporating them to the student’s leadership self-development plan.
- Encouraging individuals to keep a leadership journal is an excellent way to document leadership values and principles that are practiced.
- Suggest other wildland fire leadership toolbox items that will contribute to the overall leadership development of the student.

Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#). Encourage students of leadership to visit the [website](#).

Stand and Deliver

The following clips illustrate the Wildland Leadership Values and Principles. These are only guidelines and may be interpreted differently by other views; they are presented as a guide for facilitation.

Duty

- Jaime teaches math with determination even though he was hired to teach computers. (Take charge when in charge.)
- Although the math class is called Math 1A, Jaime teaches the students Algebra. (Consider individual skill levels and development needs when assigning tasks.)
- Jaime requires that students take summer and Saturday school to take Calculus and the AP test. He also requires a signed contract. (Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives. Clearly state instructions.)
- Raquel the Math Department Chair fails in her leadership duties. (Take charge when in charge. Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions. Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment. Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks and assignments when appropriate.)
- Jaime takes students who haven't been recognized for their skills and abilities and makes them top quality calculus students. (Develop your subordinates for the future.)

Respect

- Jaime steps into violent situations when fights occur on campus. (Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.)
- Jaime institutes a daily quiz. (Provide accurate and timely briefings.)
- Angel repays his mentor by refurbishing Jaime's car. Jaime visits Ana's father and gives Angel three textbooks. (Take care of your subordinate's needs.)
- Jaime pushes self and the students to the extreme. Summer school is held in a locker room. (Consider team experience, fatigue and physical limitations when accepting assignments.)
- The principal breaks up a fight between Poncho and Angel. (Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.)

Integrity

- Jaime admits to the staff that he can do more to help the math scores. Jaime tells administration that he wants to teach Calculus. (Keep your superiors informed of your actions.)
- Claudia tells Jaime that she is offended by comments concerning her personal life. (Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.)

- Jaime teaches from his hospital bed. (Don't sow discouragement when facing setbacks.)
- Claudia tells her mom why she wants to take Calculus. Angel chooses a better life style. (Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character and skill level.)
- Jaime agrees to a retest although he does not support this alternative. (Credit subordinates for good performance. Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.)

Stand and Deliver

Guided Discussion – Possible Answers

1. Jaime Escalante is thrust into the classroom without a plan of action. How does he handle the situation? What would you have done differently in his situation?
 - **Although Jaime voices his concern that he was hired to teach computers, he “jumps into the fire” and teaches math with enthusiasm and dedication. He assesses the situation and makes corrections to the curriculum to fight the needs of his students. He challenges the students to be better.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
2. As a rookie teacher in the Math Department, one would assume that Jaime would have a mentor; Raquel Ortega (Math Department Chair) seems the logical mentor. How did Raquel perform as a mentor and as overall leader of the department? Have you experienced this type of leadership as a wildland firefighter? How did you handle the situation?
 - **Ms. Ortega did not perform as a solid leader. She gave no briefing to Jamie before he entered the classroom, felt there was no way to bring up test scores, placed a lot of the problem on the students and their lifestyles, and gave little if any support to Jaime in developing the students for the future.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
3. When students are told to take their seats at the beginning of the film, a girl makes a comment asking if the class can talk about sex. Jaime responds with what another female student mentions could cost him his job. Was this appropriate? How does this apply to the job of the wildland firefighter?
 - **Answers will vary.**
 - **Although this comment was relatively innocent, offense may be taken by some. All employees have a right to: (1) A safe and healthy environment, (2) Freedom from discrimination, (3) Be treated with dignity and respect. These types of comments could violate ethical standards and are not tolerated in the workplace.**

4. What point is Jaime making to the students by dressing in a chicken fryer outfit? Does he mention why he is dressed as such? How powerful is nonverbal communication between individuals?
 - **Jaime is making a point that the students can aspire to higher levels.**
 - **Jaime doesn't specifically talk about the outfit, but does say, "Tough guys don't do math. Tough guys fry chicken for a living!"**
 - **Nonverbal communication is responsible for more than half of communication between individuals. As the cliché says, "Actions speak louder than words."**
5. Jamie's authority is challenged by a few students ("Finger Man" and Angel specifically) who come in late to class. How does Jamie handle the situation? Has your authority as a leader been challenged? How did you handle the situation?
 - **Jamie clearly lets the challenging students know that he is in charge. He makes an example out of Finger Man by using finger math to make a point of his authority.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
6. Angel is asked to solve a simple problem: "Fill in the hole." What approach does Jaime use to get Angel to answer the question? Is this an effective technique?
 - **Jaime keeps asking that Angel fill the hole. Then he uses Angel's image to make him answer—he tells Angel that he doesn't want the other students to make fun of him.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
7. During a staff meeting concerning accreditation, Jaime is the only teacher who admits that he hasn't done enough to solve the problem and can do more. He makes the following statement, "Students will rise to the level of your expectations." What is meant by this statement?
 - **Answers will vary. A good leader will not make rush judgments about a subordinate. Being objective and encouraging them to do well will promote leadership development. Good leaders will rise to the challenge.**
8. Giving a subordinate the tools he/she needs to succeed is vital to leadership development. Jaime gives Angel three books to succeed in the class without damaging Angel's reputation with his "homeys." What tools have you been given or can give to subordinates to develop leadership?
 - **Answers will vary. Refer to Toolbox on the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#).**
9. Jaime speaks of the term ganas—desire. "All you need is ganas." How can you inspire ganas within yourself or your crew?

- **Answers will vary. Promote the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. Develop a leadership self-development plan. Refer to the Leadership Toolbox for references.**
10. Ana Gelgado drops her math class to work for the family business. Mr. Delgado views Jaime's visit and comments as an insult. What barriers have you encountered while developing yourself as a leader? How did you overcome those barriers? Do you need assistance in overcoming those barriers?
- **Answers will vary.**
11. Being a leader can present challenges. Which student challenges Jaime the most? How effective was Jaime in mentoring this student? What would you have done the same or differently?
- **Angel challenges Jaime the most of all students. Jaime is highly effective at mentoring Angel. He uses techniques that Angel can relate to while treating him with respect and dignity. He tells Angel often that the counselor is looking for him, but always provides a second chance for success.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
12. When Tito, Lupe and Poncho rebel by refusing to take the math quiz, Jaime disciplines Lupe by placing her in front of the classroom. Is this an ethical disciplinary action? Is the technique effective?
- **Answers will vary. Some may view this as hazing or a sign of disrespect.**
 - **The technique is highly effective. The concept of consequences for your actions was presented well. The students were the ones who chanted the consequences when situations occurred.**
13. Jaime makes this comment, "It's not that they are stupid, they just don't know anything." Students of leadership are continual learners; what tools do you have available to you to gain knowledge? Do you have a leadership self-development plan?
- **Many tools are available in the Toolbox on the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#).**
 - **Answers will vary. Refer students to the Leadership Self Development Plan on the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#).**
14. "If you want to turn this school around, you're gonna have to start at the top." How has the leadership program been implemented in your organization? Can leaders at the bottom of the chain of command bring about change at the top?
- **Answers will vary.**
 - **Changes can be made from the bottom up. If you are at the lower level, develop leadership tools in your organization—create a local staff ride, promote the Professional Reading Program, recognize quality leadership through the Lead by Example award, etc.**

15. Jaime requires that calculus students and their parents sign a contract before they can take the advanced placement test. Students fear that Jaime doesn't trust them. Is this an issue of trust or a sign of commitment to the program? Have you made similar commitments during your employment as a wildland firefighter?
- **Answers will vary. Refer to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. Values are attitudes about the worth or importance of people or things. Every leader is influenced by multiple sets of values. However, Duty, Respect, and Integrity should be the guiding values for those in leadership roles. The Leadership Principles are the specific actions that leaders should take in order to demonstrate those values.**
16. Jaime's comments to the class about Claudia's personal life. Is Claudia's offense to the comment warranted? Are these types of comments ethical in the wildland fire community?
- **Claudia's response to the verbal attack is warranted.**
 - **All employees have a right to: (1) A safe and healthy environment, (2) Freedom from discrimination, (3) Be treated with dignity and respect. These types of comments could violate ethical standards and are not tolerated in the workplace.**
17. When Jaime has a mild heart attack, the school hires a substitute teacher to instruct the class. What qualifications does this teacher have? What are the students'/Jamie's perceptions of the teacher? What does Jaime do from the hospital to help the students? What are possible consequences to poor leadership in the wildland fire community? What can be done to mitigate these consequences?
- **The substitute has no experience in mathematics; he is a music teacher.**
 - **The students respect the teacher, but teach themselves. Jaime saw the substitute as a babysitter.**
 - **Jaime sends students lessons through a nurse at the hospital.**
 - **Answers will vary. Discuss safety concerns.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
18. Why do you think students made the same mistakes on the AP test? Team cohesion is stressed a great deal in the wildland fire community. What are mistakes that can be made within a wildland firefighting crew because you spend so much time together? Who is responsible for seeing that mistakes are not made?
- **Students spent a great amount of time together and learned the same why. Because Jaime was there only teacher, students were bound to make the same mistakes.**
 - **Group think can plague a crew. Ensure that the silent minority is heard. Conduct frequent debriefings and encourage a devil's advocate. Follow**

LCES and avoid the temptation to follow when things don't feel right. All employees have the right to refuse risk.

- **Everyone is responsible to see that mistakes are not made.**

19. Do you agree with Jaime's charge that the EST's investigation was racially based? If you feel racially discriminated against, what should you do?

- **Answers will vary.**
- **Report the incident to your supervisor or EEO counselor.**

20. Jaime's efforts to bring about change in the math program were successful for many years after the first AP test. How has the wildland fire leadership program helped you to become a better leader? How will you use the program in the future?

- **Answers will vary.**

DUTY

Be proficient in your job, both technically & as a leader.

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

Make sound & timely decisions.

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies & consider consequences.
- Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe & assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks & assignments when appropriate.

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels & developmental needs when assigning tasks.

Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinate's needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

Keep your subordinates informed.

- Provide accurate & timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments & tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

Build the team.

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize accomplishments & reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue & physical limitations when accepting assignments.

Know yourself and seek improvement.

- Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character & skill level.
- Ask questions of peers & supervisors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Accept full responsibility for & correct poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

Set the example.

- Share the hazards & hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

Stand and Deliver

1. Document film clips illustrating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles.
2. Discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with group members or mentor.

Duty

- Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
- Make sound and timely decisions.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
- Develop your subordinates for the future.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Duty”?

Respect

- Know your subordinates and look out for their well being.
- Keep your subordinates informed.
- Build the team.
- Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Respect”?

Integrity

- Know yourself and seek improvement.
- Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Set the example.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Integrity”?

Stand and Deliver

Guided Discussion

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