

## READING POINTS February 2, 2004

Briefly chronicle the development of leadership research and explain why each of the following was considered important:

- leaders vs followers
- impact of the setting
- two dimensional model - organizational tasks and interpersonal relations
- contingency models
- nonleadership Leadership

Leadership was studied early from the 1900's to the 1950's. These studies differentiated between leader and follower characteristics. Then, in the 1970's and 1980's leadership focused on the individual characteristics of leaders such as intelligence, birth order, socioeconomic status, and child-rearing. Why important? There is a difference between leadership and followers.

The impact of the setting noted that "the situation approach maintains that leadership is determined not so much by the characters of the individuals as by the requirements of a social situation." Why important? This means that a person could be a follower or a leader depending on the circumstances.

The two dimensional model - organizational tasks and interpersonal relations = planning, organizing, and defining the tasks and work of people or how work gets done in the organization concentrating on the "human aspect." Why important? Leadership is "doing" and still considering who is "doing."

A contingency model is "situational leadership" approach contains an underlying assumption that different situations require different types of leadership, while the contingency approach attempts to "specify the conditions or situational variable that moderate the relationship between leader traits or behaviors and performance criteria." Why important? It is believed that group effectiveness is a result of the leaders' style and the situation's favorableness.

Leadership could be "shared leadership." Nonleadership could be leadership exercised by a team. Why important? Because there are many kinds of leadership such as individual leadership and team leadership.

Briefly discuss current leadership research on personal traits as determinates for leadership characteristics and the emergence of the leadership characteristic of 'vision'. Include:

- **leaders vs. managers** "Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing."
- **vision** "All leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place, and the ability to translate that vision into reality." A leaders vision needs to be shared by those who will be involved in the realization of the vision.
- **shared vision** "Some studies indicate that it is the presence of this personal vision on the part of a leader, shared with members of the organization, that may differentiate true leaders from mere managers." "Vision comes alive only when it is shared." A leader must have followers. Followers are created by the leaders ability to share his/her vision.
- **valuing human resources** Every person has something to contribute. We all see things differently. Every person has his/her unique gift or point of view in every different situation.
- **transformational leadership** "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation." These leaders are individuals that appeal to higher ideals and moral values such as justice and equality and can be found at various levels of an organization. This is where respect of one's leader comes to play. A leader must transform people and keep them on the right path. However, every leader cannot expect to have 100% participation or "buy-in" from those he/she is trying to lead. Why? Because we cannot have the same opinions toward morality and motivation.

### **SEDL Characteristics of Leaders of Change**

Discuss the coexistence of managers and leaders. Include a discussion of the notion that leadership is not limited to administrators.

From the article (paragraph 4)

"These leaders began with having a vision, developed a shared vision with their co-workers, and valued the organization's personnel. Leaders who changed their organizations were proactive and took risks. They recognized shifts in the interests or needs of their clientele, anticipated the need to change and challenged the status quo."

The rest of the article elaborates on this. Reflect upon your own experiences and relate examples of success and failure to the above passage.

My opinion of this paragraph is my own experience at my high school. We have a new principal who I consider to be an excellent leader. He is trying to get our faculty to meet, discuss and change the way teaching is done in our school in order to make our student scores go higher. He has developed a vision for our school and has shared that vision with the faculty. He has required us to have meetings during the working day for us to discuss the changes we are willing to make. He has given us VOICE which is something new at our school. In my 16 years of teaching at two different high schools, I have never been given the opportunity to discuss problems and have them heard much less acted upon. The risk he has taken in giving us VOICE, in my opinion, has helped many to participate in his vision. In some cases, the outcomes of our meetings have been acted upon and, thus, changed the status quo. I have felt this plan has been successful. However, I have heard from some teachers that the people in their meetings are incompetent and have no plan to join in the principal's vision. To help these teachers in the future, our principal has shared with us that leadership on the committees is going to rotate from one to the other within departments. I'm hoping that he sticks to his vision and does not deter, even though many gripe and complain that the meetings are ineffective.

### **Why Teachers Must Become Change Agents**

Why do many choose teaching as a profession? What has been the reality that faces many teachers as they become disheartened in their work?

Teachers become teachers because they like to be in charge, they care about children, they like knowledge, they are very value oriented and, of course, like to have holidays off with their own family. I've heard it said that many become disheartened with their work after they have reared their own children. It seems like the older teachers get tired of dealing with the attitudes of their students. They have reached the "empty nest syndrome" at home and start thinking of retirement from the teaching profession.

Many young teachers leave the profession because dealing with the "masses" is not what they expected. There is no "ivory tower" and many students have excessive baggage. More and more responsibility is placed on their shoulders like extracurricular activities because they have the stamina, and wish to keep their jobs. These teachers have a tendency to burn out quickly. Also, I find it extremely difficult for a new teacher right out of college to be able to teach high school students. Their age difference may be 4 years or less.

Discuss how the following are needed by teachers to fulfill the leadership role of change agent:

- **personal vision building** Every leader has to have a vision. Teachers have to know where they are moving to in order to move forward. Hopefully teachers will impart that vision upon their students or other teachers to have them move forward with them.
- **inquiry** Teachers need to inquire about their students to find out where they are in the process of moving toward their vision.
- **mastery** Teachers must have mastery of their subject matter in order to know where their vision should move. They need to keep up with educational trends. Especially in technology.
- **collaboration** Teachers must get others to "buy in" to their vision. They must work with "people" to understand that the vision is the correct vision. VOICE has to be a part of any leadership vision.

Discuss what the notion of leadership and professionalism means to you as you pursue your master's degree and advanced certifications.

Leadership and professionalism are very near and dear to me in my job. I feel that the we, sometimes, may be the only morally sound individuals that some students will come in contact with each day. We are looked up to, we are respected for what we represent and sometimes may be the only person who cares if the people whose lives we touch each day are affected in a positive manner. I hope that my love of learning, as proven in this master's degree program, will be contagious in my classroom. I have already gained two advanced certifications in Microsoft Word Core 2000 and IC3 certification. I have tried to convince my students that they can work toward getting these certifications themselves. I am hoping that by imparting my knowledge to them that they can gain skills for their own future.

### **Technology Leadership: Ten Essential Buttons for Understanding Technology Integration in the 21st Century**

Read the article. We will randomly (out of a hat) draw one of the ten buttons to discuss in class. You will have time to prepare, but if you haven't read the article, you might be at a disadvantage.