Chapter 21
LEADing From Behind: Exploring the Leadership Styles of Effective Teachers

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ABSTRACT
In this chapter, implicit leadership theories are addressed and discussed in the role of a classroom teacher. Teacher Education programs explore the theories and programs like L.E.A.D. that is experiential and takes that theory to practice. Highlighted are the instructional leaders’ styles of transformational, influential, distributive with a focus on servant leadership that models the role that works within classrooms, especially those with in-risk youth. Teachers can be change agents in this climate of social justice and inclusion.

INTRODUCTION
As founder and instructional leader of the L.E.A.D. program, I reflected on the successes and challenges that accompany any change initiative or innovation and how the program has been impacted. In 2007, the program began as an interdisciplinary volunteer opportunity for Human Kinetics and Education students to take a leadership role during a three-day camp excursion with grade 9 students that were deemed in-risk of struggling to graduate. From this grew the formal Service Learning program that connected teacher candidates with the Student Success initiatives in the local secondary schools. This innovation was unique to the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Although many faculties boast about their programs, this was different than any others as it looked at teacher candidates’ understanding of being inclusive leaders in the classroom.

In this chapter, I am examining the role of the teacher in leading their classrooms. To do that, I need to define my instructional leadership style. Terms like educational, influential, definitely not autocratic, and more closely participative (Nanjundeswaraswamy, & Swamy, 2014) define my style. Ultimately

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the leadership style applied depends on the situation at hand. If I were to narrow my style, it would be between transformational/influential and participatory/servant.

Along with the understanding of this leadership style is knowing that we all need to be change agents or change leaders (Fullan, 2011). Below are the dimensions of these leadership styles and how they impact any learning community, especially the classroom. They are explored in the context of the vision of the L.E.A.D. program.

**BACKGROUND**

It is essential to explore the various leadership styles and theories to find what works best with students and mainly in-risk students that deal with challenges, lowered self-confidence, and other critical issues. Here are brief descriptions of the leadership styles highlighted in the L.E.A.D. program and modeled by the instructors.

**Transformational Leadership**

According to Day and Sammons (2015), looking at educational leadership, the critical dimensions of successful leadership are identified as:

1. **Defining the vision, values, and direction**
2. **Improving conditions for teaching and learning**
3. **Enhancing teaching and learning**
4. **Redesigning and enriching the curriculum**
5. **Enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning)**
6. **Building relationships inside the school community and outside the school community**
7. **Emphasizing common values** (pg. 7).

I want to explore these characteristics in the realm of a new teacher’s classroom.

1. **Defining the Vision**: In examining this phenomenon, these characteristics also fit very tightly to the attributes of a good teacher. A teacher is a leader in the classroom at the micro-level, where the groundwork sets the stage for a great learning community and, ultimately, a thriving society. The vision, values, and direction are necessary for establishing the respect and rules of the classroom.

2. **Improving Conditions**: Improving conditions for teaching and learning is ongoing through the assessment process. Descriptive feedback, self-assessment, peer-assessment, and reflective practices are at the core of improving teaching and learning that is in constant flux as the learners are impacted by each other as well as the learning community.

3. **Enhancing Teaching and Learning**: From a strengths perspective, teachers need to look at what works and why it works. When it comes to redesigning and enriching the curriculum, teachers must determine the needs of the students. Good teaching is about understanding the learners as individuals with unique characteristics that, when explored, allows the learners to reach their highest potential.
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