Leadership Styles of an Emerging Leader in Education

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Leadership Styles for an Emerging Leader

There are several different philosophies and styles that leaders may employ. The style in which a leader decides to lead their subordinates is a choice and the choice is usually heavily based on the values, beliefs and past experiences. In addition to having a choice regarding how to lead there is also the opportunity to change the style in accordance with the situation and to let that style grow and evolve with you as a leader.

When thinking about effective leadership practices, the first thing I do is reflect on experiences that I have had with what I consider to be good leaders. Fortunately, I have had some great leaders and I have taken note when I see a best practice that facilitates the desired result. On the flip side, I have also seen some leadership practices that I have not aligned with and that I have considered to be borderline unethical. As a positive and reflective person, I am thankful for all of my experiences, as they have helped me shape into the type of teacher and future leader that I strive to be. One value that drives my thinking is honesty. “Leadership Theory and Practice” describes the Authentic Leader as one who leads through honesty, transparency and the intrapersonal perspective. According to the text there are four distinct components of Authentic Leadership and those four are: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. When initially researching the many different styles of leadership I identified with the Authentic Leader. Having been in a situation where I could clearly see that a leader was being dishonest, non-transparent and borderline unethical has confirmed my beliefs that honesty is always the best policy. I don’t respect people who are dishonest, so I hold honesty to a very high level because I strive to be a respectable leader and person in general.

After evaluating myself through several assessments, the data continues to indicate that my strengths and values are prioritized by honesty and positive relationships. One principal that I have worked with ran a “Choose Love” campaign all school year and the philosophy that she shared was to slow down before reacting to situations and approach all situations with love. This is one of those experiences mentioned earlier that I took note of. I felt a very positive feeling whenever this campaign came up at staff meetings, luncheons or even in emails. I think reaction time is important and slowing down and taking a loving approach to situations has really helped me to develop as a teacher and it has greatly impacted my relationships with students and colleagues. There is often a back story to certain behaviors and sometimes it is actually the back story that needs nurturing, behaviors can often be a result of a previous incident or situation. “Choose Love” is something that I keep with me and plan to bring with me moving forward with professional situations and professional relationships.

Moving forward with my leadership research, I began to also identify with the Servant Leader. I am very social and I am a team player and I really grabbed on to the idea of the leader actually being the servant to it’s followers because it aligns with the leadership style I employ in my first grade classroom. This is the philosophy I use when goal setting with my students and with myself. As a Servant Leader it is important to communicate a clear goal, create a road map for meeting that goal together and celebrating the success together as a team. The Servant Leader is basically the “face” of the group.

Integrity and fairness are two crucial concepts for a leader of a school. This aligns with my high value on honesty. To ensure accountability in an educational system there are some key things that need to happen consistently. Communication is crucial for success. Part of ensuring accountability is communication, progress monitoring and transparency. Both the Authentic Leader and the Servant Leader are willing to be transparent and evolve as leaders. A successful PLC will set goals, monitor progress, reflect on findings and make change where necessary. In the article “The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Entrepreneurship” the author
claims that Transformational Leadership is most effective and that it promotes higher levels of performance and productivity, higher levels of organizational culture and higher levels of emotional intelligence. Similar to the previously discussed leadership styles, I find myself partially identifying with the ever so encouraging Transformational Leader. A combination of these leadership skills should be the foundation to fairness when it comes to students, staff, access to curriculum and professional development and opportunities for families.

As a leader in the field of education, finding the combination of styles that works for the group is an ever evolving task that needs to have a few non-negotiables including: honesty, leading by example, encouragement of professional growth among staff, academic opportunities for all students and a climate that is positive and accepting. Author Helena Liu states in the article “Just the Servant: An Intersectional Critique of Servant Leadership” that servant leaders offer a compelling ideal that cultivates a culture of growth within the organization. My leadership philosophy includes the continual study of leadership and new research that can be applied and modified with each situation that arises. The Learning Zone is a zone in which everybody, including the leader, is constantly collaborating, reflecting and working towards improvement and growth.
References:


