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Educational leadership : a reflective essay

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Educational leadership : a reflective essay

Abstract

The role of a leader is invaluable in setting the tone of the environment and the vision for the school. There are so many parts to leadership, that continual learning will be necessary for any successful school leader. A school leader plays many roles including: a reflective practitioner, a change agent, an educational improvement specialist, and a servant leader who remembers the people who make the system work.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

and Postsecondary Education

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Craig D. Murray

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I am learning about the facets that make-up school leadership. The role of a leader is invaluable in setting the tone of the environment and the vision for the school. There are so many parts to leadership, that continual learning will be necessary for any successful school leader. I believe a school leader plays many roles including: a reflective practitioner, a change agent, an educational improvement specialist, and a servant leader who remembers the people who make the system work.

In high school, I never thought I would go into the educational field. Both of my parents were in the educational field and I did not want to be like them. Over time I began to see how my parents contributed to society, and how much satisfaction they gained from their work with young people. During my early college days and after considering some of the things I enjoyed, including being around people and a strong connection to athletics; my apparent dislike for the educational field actually changed. I began to view education as a very worthwhile, rewarding career.

In college, I chose physical education as my course of study. It fit well with my strong interest in athletics and my interest in healthy life styles. Teaching physical education would give me an opportunity to teach lifelong skills and promote healthy lifestyles. It fit well with my strengths and interests.

I have now been teaching for ten years and have enjoyed every minute. I like seeing young people grow, their minds develop, and their bodies strengthen.

I teach physical education and really strive hard to instill in all students that they must give their best effort everyday. It is fulfilling to watch students who struggle with a skill, persist and progress to a point where they actually become proficient in that skill. Watching students persist until competence is attained, and knowing that I had a small part in helping that student is a satisfaction that money cannot buy. When thinking back to my own childhood, I can relate to the words of Tiger Woods as he stated,

“People took the time to help me as a kid, and it made a real impact on my life. I want to do the same for other kids.” (Wenk, 2000, p. 28)

Recently, I finished a unit on stilts. The first day there were quite of few students that were frustrated. The second day the students were asking if they had to do this unit, as it was too difficult. By the third day, students were starting to get up on the stilts and move around on them. When we reached the end of this unit, students were reluctant to move on to the next unit. They had learned how to balance and walk on stilts and they wanted to do more. One parent came to look at the stilts so she could buy a pair for her daughter and one student told me that his grandpa was going to make him a pair of stilts for use at home.

If we provide a learning environment that is safe, and non-threatening, where students can try things without being laughed at when they fail, they can

accomplish amazing things. This happens quite often. Students tell me they do not like what they are doing when first starting it, but later they are asking for more after exposure to a new activity and some guided practice.

It is rewarding for me to give students many opportunities for exploration and skill development. One never knows when an opportunity in physical education class might spark that interest in a student to become a gymnast, a basketball player, or to excel in any activity that will become a quality-of-life enhancer.

In my opinion, there is no other field where I can inspire so many young people to do their best and develop skills that may stay with them for a life time. I know that I make a difference in their lives and it is most rewarding. I have come to enjoy the career of my parents, and now understand why it was, and still is so appealing to them. I followed my heart to a profession that I love, and feel that I share a similar sentiment as Mike Krzyzewski, the head men's basketball coach at Duke University, as he stated, "I coach by feel. I follow my heart." (Phillips, 2000, p.117)

I believe that all children are capable of learning. All children should be given the opportunity to learn. All children do not have equal ability and all do not learn at the same rate. A teacher must understand differences and adjust the

teaching to fit the needs of his/her students. A good teacher can ensure learning for all by tailoring the teaching to the students who learn at different rates.

All children in America are born equal in the eyes of the law, but when it comes to educational opportunity, there are great differences for children depending upon where they are born and the social economic status of their parents. A child born into poverty has less chance for a good education than someone born to an affluent family. A quality education should not be reserved for those who can afford it; it should be available to all.

In America, we enjoy a democracy. For a democracy to properly function, giving all people a voice in the government through their elected representatives, it takes an educated population. To ensure a literate population requires a system that educates all.

I believe that a comprehensive K-12 public education is a vital part of what makes America as great as it is; and that all children need to be given access to a quality education for America to remain a free country as we know it. We can do better in America than we are now doing at providing an equal educational opportunity to all our children.

For me, teaching is very rewarding. I have seen children learn and understand how important learning is to their quality of life. I believe that keeping America as we know it requires a quality education for all. There is great

value in the public K-12 educational system. If America wants to maintain its leadership and strong economic status in the world, not only do we need to maintain our educational system for all, but this system must get better. It must become more rigorous and relevant. It must leave no child behind.

Leadership is the key for maintaining and improving a K-12 public education for all. To have a good school, there must be a strong school leader. This leader must have a vision and an ultimate goal. This leader must be able to get everyone to buy into that ultimate goal. This leader must be very organized and be able to prioritize. He/she must be able to motivate each of the workers to stay focus on the visions. He/she must be hard working and not waver in the face of opposition. This leader must be able to develop relationships and inspire others.

I am ready for the challenge. I want to take my experiences of working with young people in the classroom, in the gymnasium and on the athletic field into a leadership role. I want to take my love of people and my optimism for the future and share this with others. I make a difference in the classroom. I want to make a difference in a larger arena such as in a school or in a community.

John F. Kennedy stated in a speech to the country, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." This statement symbolizes my attitude toward leadership. I want to be part of the solution.

Education in America is vital. The current system has served America well for years, but it is time for change. It is time for education to become more rigorous and relevant. I want to be a part of that change, not just watch it happen from the sidelines.

Reflective Practitioner as a Leader of Learning

The research on the reflective practitioner implies that one must think on one's feet. Knowledge must be transformed into action. In an article, written by Ann Kernaghan entitled "Is the Reflective Practitioner Model an Impractical Theory?", Kernaghan refers to work done by Donald Schon.

Schon proposed that professional practice involved the use of knowledge-in-action. He put forward three ways of acquiring such knowledge. The first method was through self-instruction; the second was via an apprenticeship in a real world context. The third process for acquiring such knowledge is the process that focuses on reflection. The third and favored method was by means of a practicum or virtual world in which the novice practitioner was closely supervised by a master practitioner and coached 'in solving the problems posed in professional practice and how to negotiate the ladder of reflection'. By this process the novice gradually built his own repertoire of experiences that would ultimately enable him to

reflect-in-action as an independent effective practitioner. (Kernaghan, 2006, p.3)

As I reflect on my own experience in my attempt to gain knowledge about administration, I understand the value of a novice gaining insights from a master. This is exactly the model being used in this administration program where the novice is the student and the master is a practicing administrator. My experience, so far, is that this is an effective way to gain knowledge.

In a short article entitled "Becoming a Reflective Practitioner" (Kernaghan, 2006), the author suggests that there are many parts to reflective practice, including: think alouds, reflective journals, competency continuums, data collection/action research, video/audio tapes and reflective analysis, written self-evaluation, the problem solving process, coaching and conferencing, and the development of professional portfolios. This gives one an idea that the reflective process is not a simple one and it must be learned.

Reflective thinking is a learned process that requires time. Generally there is little, if any, time left at the day's end to reflect on previous events, and to design meaningful, creative problem-solving strategies. However, given the intent of the student teaching experience [administrative experience], time for reflection should be a critical and ongoing practice.

My research into the practice of the reflective practitioner convinces me that reflection is necessary and it will take a conscious effort on my part to learn.

As a principal I will incorporate time at the end of a day, set aside to reflect on the day's activities, and to contemplate future events. The specific activities that I would consciously attempt include: a reflective journal documenting the events of the day; data collection/action research, being a main part of the principal's job, and taking place throughout the day; a written self-evaluation, at least twice each year, which would be based upon my reflective journal and data collected for my action research; and finally, coaching and conferencing. It would be my responsibility to coach students and teachers, but I would also like to have a mentor willing to coach me. In addition, I would network with appropriate colleagues for the purpose of conferencing and sharing ideas.

In addition to the above listed tasks, I am reasonably sure that each principal in Iowa will be required to develop and keep a professional portfolio. I am not sure that without this being mandated that I would develop a portfolio, but if required, I will include this as part of my reflective practice.

I am now ready to connect the research on reflective practice with the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). The standards include: (1) a shared

vision, (2) management, (3) ethics, (4) family and community, (5) ethics, and (6) societal context.

It is my belief that the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders can only be accomplished well through a reflective practitioner. The six standards and a reflective practitioner are directly connected. Take for example, standard one: Developing a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. This cannot happen without collaboration, reflection, and the sharing of data. Collaboration, reflection, and the sharing of data, are all examples of what a reflective practitioner must do on a regular basis.

Elaine L. Wilmore concludes the following in regards to the six standards:

For any one human to accomplish all the complexities of these standards may seem as difficult as walking on water. Nonetheless, it is exceedingly important to have solid, research-based standards to strive for. Remember how we started with Les Brown's concept of reaching for the moon? Even if you miss it, you'll land among the stars. This is what these standards are all about. They set very high expectations. Not everyone will reach them all the time. But they are benchmarks to reach for. Even if we cannot achieve them in every instance, our achievement will be higher than if we had no goals. It is my firm and committed desire that every one of us strive for and reach the moon as we go after these new standards in a

focused and systematic manner. America's school children deserve nothing less. (Wilmore, 2002, pp.116-117)

Since the standards are of utmost importance it is imperative that principals design a strategy to meet the standards. Using the techniques of a reflective practitioner provides a strategy for reaching the moon.

Leaders' Role in Educational Change

What is the role that leaders play in educational change?

Change is everywhere. No one can escape change in his or her work or personal life. We are continuously bombarded with 18-second sound bytes about change: *the information age, downsizing, standards, diversity, substance abuse, violence, the economy, the environment, technology change in schools.* (Hall and Hord, 2006, p. 3)

The leaders' role in educational change is critical. With change being so pervasive in our culture, change in education is an integral part of the leaders' job.

The first job of a leader in regard to change is to understand what change is, and what it is not. Change is not a directive from the boss telling everyone to do something differently. Change is not a two-hour seminar that trains the staff on a new technique. Change is not simple and one-dimensional.

Change is pervasive and inclusive. It involves changes in attitudes and a change in the way that things get accomplished. Change is an ongoing process.

"In other words, change is not accomplished by having a one-time announcement by an executive leader, a two-day training workshop for

teachers in August, and/or the delivery of the new curriculum/technology to the office. Instead, change is a process through which people and organizations move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways. (Hall and Hord, 2006, p. 4)

Often leaders interpret change as being top down. Research indicates that this is not the best approach for making lasting, meaningful changes within an organization. When it is a top down attempt at change, people often wonder why is this change being made. The old way was working so no change is needed. Some might even say it wasn't broken, so why are we fixing it? This is especially true within the school system. Things appear to be running smoothly, and it seems as though they should be left alone. Often it seems as though the people mandating the change in schools are not in the school system themselves. They do not have the credibility to recommend changes since they do not understand students or teachers. When a top-down change is made with little input from the stakeholders, the change is met with resistance. This makes it difficult for change to be effective. Many people drag their feet and challenge the need for change when their input into the change has not been considered. Top down change can work but usually is more difficult to implement and sustain over time.

An example of a top down directive in education is the No Child Left Behind Legislation, (NCLB). Even though NCLB directs the educational system

to change, and even though change is needed, the fact that educators have been left out of the planning, makes it difficult for educators to accept the changes, and often resist the changes.

When all stakeholders become involved in a change that change is more likely to be accepted. Even though it is unlikely to get 100% participation and approval from all, involving all makes the change more likely to be implemented and sustained over time.

Hall and Hord refer to 12 principles of change. One of those principals is “Facilitating Change is a Team Effort.” (Hall and Hord, 2006, p. 12) They also indicate that all members of the teaching staff need to share in the leadership responsibilities so that change is actually sustained over time.

The staff participates with their peers in these strategies and facilitates implementation. These strategies are:

- Developing a shared vision
- Planning and providing resources
- Investing in professional learning
- Checking on progress
- Providing continuous assistance
- Creating a context conducive to change

(Hall and Hord, 2006, p. 31)

Change is a process and it must involve the stakeholders. The leaders’ role in this process is to understand it, and to facilitate it.

In addition to understanding the change process, the leader must understand what changes are important. Change for sake of change is not a wise

use of time. The role of the leader is to be aware of the changes needed in education so that when the leader facilitates a change, it makes a positive difference in student achievement and student success.

The leaders' role in change includes being well informed and able to use data to make good decisions about needed educational change. A timely report by the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce indicates that changes in Iowa's education must be made. This report makes the case that Iowa's educational system is failing. It is not getting students prepared for the workforce.

The Essential Problem: In 1950, only about half of our young people graduated from high school, and we saw little reason to worry. Those who did not graduate could still find jobs and lead productive lives. This is no longer the case. Now, for every 100 students starting ninth grade in Iowa, 83 graduate from high school within four years. Of that number, only 54 go on to college immediately after high school graduation. Of those, only 37 are in college the second year, and 28 of the original 100 students will get their associate's degree within three years of graduation or their bachelor's degree within six years of graduation. (An Agenda for Change. A Report to the Governor and the Iowa Legislature from the ITW Board of Directors, 2006, January 15, p. 4)

If only 28% of Iowa's students are obtaining an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree, than our K-12 school system needs to be improved. This implies change. My role as principal would be to facilitate the needed changes to see that more and more of Iowa's students are prepared for work in the 21st century.

In November 2006, the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce published its first draft report and recommendations prepared by Learning Point Associates. This report provided recommendations to Iowa's leaders as to what changes need to be made to prepare all students for the workforce in the 21st century. This report is part of what I, as a principal, will need to know to set the direction of change in my school building. (Friedman, Hallber, Kimmelman, & Smith, 2006, pp.1-33)

The ISSL Standards can be used to help me, as a principal, focus on change as well, and how to go about facilitating that change. The standards include promoting a shared vision, creating a positive school climate conducive to learning, promoting an efficient, and safe learning environment, collaborating with the community, operating in an ethical manner, and being involved in the larger political and cultural context.

These 6 standards must be in place for positive change to happen. The leader must facilitate a shared vision. The shared vision is where the school wants to go. It is why the change is taking place.

The climate must be positive for people to feel free to participate without intimidation in the change process. The learning environment must be safe for all. This is true for learning and it is true for positive change. Collaborating with the community is an excellent way to get “buy-in” for change beyond the school walls. It also ensures that the change will be long lasting, meaningful and supported by the stakeholders. Ethics is necessary for change to be supported and for the leader to be trusted when more change is needed. And finally, being involved in the larger political, and cultural context allows the change to be supported and helps in obtaining the necessary resources to sustain the change into the future.

In summary, the leaders' role in change is to be informed of the needed changes and knowledgeable of the change process. My research indicates that top down change is much less effective than collaborative change. This information is valuable to me as a future principal. I know that the changes I want to make will need to be collaborative in nature and not accomplished through a simple directive from me.

To put this knowledge to work in the school will take a considerable amount of time and effort. I will need to get to know my staff, the superintendent, the board, the community and the political climate in which I find myself. I will need to gather much information and data. Making changes will be very time consuming.

The ISSL Standards will be a guide for me in all aspects of the principal's job. The standards will remind me of conditions that must be in place for meaningful and lasting change to take place. Making meaningful change in a building may be some of the most difficult, yet necessary work of the principal.

Leader of Learners' Role For The Improvement Of Learning For Both Students And Adults

Educators believe it is becoming increasingly apparent that public schools in America are not educating students consistently and inclusively to a level that is needed to meet the needs of the workforce in the 21st century. Evidence indicates that countries such as China, India, and even Russia, are placing a high priority on education and educating their students to a much high level by grade twelve than occurs in the United States.

The federal government has seen the writing on the wall and has attempted to set mandates with the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB) requiring all students to be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014. "Americans are

facing an increasingly stark choice: is the nation really committed to guaranteeing that all of the country's students will succeed to the same high level? And if so, how hard are we willing to work, and what resources are we willing to commit to achieve that goal?" (Tough, News York Times, 2006)

One investment Americans can make is in their school leadership.

Leadership makes an important difference in the outcome of the learners.

Leadership does have an effect on learning. In fact, a strong relationship between leadership and the learning that takes place in the school building appears to exist. At one time, it was only assumed that good leadership had a positive impact the learning and, at best, that the impact was indirect. Recent research has shown that certain behaviors and activities of the leaders have a direct, positive impact on the learning.

Leadership has long been perceived to be important to the effective functioning of organizations in general and, more recently of schools in particular. However some researchers and theorists assert that at best the research on school leadership is equivocal and at worst demonstrates that leadership has no effect on student achievement. In contrast, our meta-analysis of 35 years of research indicates that school leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement and provides guidance for

experienced and aspiring administrators alike. (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005, p. 12)

Many researchers in the field of education have examined the impact of leadership in schools including: Peter Block, Warren Bennis, James Collins, Stephen Covey, Michael Fullan, Robert Marzano, Tim Waters, Brian McNulty and others.

Kathleen Cotton reviewed 81 reports in all, some of which dealt with more than one topic. Fifty-six of those reports dealt with the influence of principal leadership on student achievement, 10 dealt with effect of principal leadership on student attitudes, 8 with student behavior, teacher attitudes, teacher behaviors, and dropout rates.

The 25 categories are: (1) Safe and orderly environment, (2) Vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning, (3) High expectations for student learning, (4) Self-confidence, responsibility and perseverance, (5) Visibility and accessibility, (6) Positive and supportive climate, (7) Communication and interaction, (8) Emotional and interpersonal support (9) Parent and community outreach and involvement, (10) Rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic actions, (11) Shared leadership, decision making and staff empowerment, (12) Collaboration, (13) Instructional Leadership, (14) Ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning (15)

Norm of continuous improvement, (16) Discussion of instructional issues, (17) Classroom observation and feedback to teachers, (18) Support of teachers' autonomy, (19) Support of risk taking, (20) Professional development opportunities and resources, (21) Protecting instructional time, (22) Monitoring student progress and sharing findings, (23) Use of student progress for program improvement, (24) Recognition of student and staff achievement, and (25) Role modeling (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005, p. 12)

One of the most intensive correlation study between leadership and student achievement was completed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, (MCREL). The study identified 21 responsibilities of the school leader that positively impacted student learning, and quantified to what extent each responsibility impacted student learning. This study addresses effect size, first order, and second order change. To understand this study is beyond the scope of this paper but is well worth studying by any future school leader.

A future school leader interested in this study could begin with A Working Paper by Tim Waters, Robert Marzano, and Brian McNulty entitled Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. It can be located at website: www.mcrel.org.

Michael Fullan talks about school leaders in his book, *The moral imperative of school leadership*. He believes that school leadership plays an important role in providing a school system.

Moral purpose of the highest order is having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enable them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society. (Fullan, 2003, p. 29)

The research on leadership is clear. Leaders make an important difference in the life of the school. The leader impacts student achievement and adult performance. My job as a school leader will be to continually read and to study about leadership. The researchers mentioned at the beginning of this paper have written about leadership. I will need to read what they have written. More will be written about leadership and I will need to stay current with the latest research.

Part of my professional development plan will include reading, studying, taking short courses, and applying what I learn to the school where I become the leader. My job will be to positively impact the student achievement and adult performance in the school where I am the principal. I can only do this efficiently if I know what "good" leaders do, and then do it.

I will use the ISSL Standards as a principal to help me focus on my leadership responsibilities. Through application of the ISSL Standards, I will

positively impact all aspects of the school. The standards include promoting a shared vision, creating a positive school climate conducive to learning, promoting an efficient, and safe learning environment, collaborating with the community, operating in an ethical manner, and being involved in the larger political and cultural context. All of these standards involve leadership.

If I were to adopt the 21 principal leadership responsibilities as identified by MCREL, I could correlate them with the ISSL Standards. The correlation might look something like this:

ISSL STANDARDS

Shared Vision

Positive School Climate

Efficient Safe
Learning Environment

Collaborating with Community

Operating Ethically

Political/Cultural Context

21 MCREL RESPONSIBILITIES

Focus, Visibility, Communication,
Ideals and Beliefs, Optimizer
Intellectual Stimulation

Culture, Order, Contingent Rewards
Affirmation, Relationship, Input
Resources, Intellectual Stimulation

Culture, Order, Discipline, Input,
Flexibility, Situational Awareness
Resources, Curriculum, Instruction,
Assessment, Knowledge of
Curriculum, Instruction Assessment

Outreach, Communication, Visibility
Change Agent

Culture, Ideas and Beliefs

Culture, Visibility, Communication,
Outreach, Change Agent, Optimizer

Although the correlation above is my opinion and not an absolute, it definitely shows a strong relationship between leadership responsibilities and the ISSL standards.

Leadership is an integral part of being the school principal. The knowledge of leadership and its relationship to student and adult outcomes has been studied and researched in recent years. The body of knowledge around leadership has grown and will, most likely, continue to grow in future years. As a future leader I must become familiar with that research and use it to impact the students and adults in my school.

It seems like there is much to learn and much to know. This will definitely will be a major part of my personal professional development plan as I continue to learn to grow as an effective school leader.

Learners' Role of Service

Servant Leadership is leadership that is effective and should be considered by aspiring and practicing school administrators. Leadership has often been considered as having a "boss" as the one who is the person "in charge." The boss tells the workers what to do and the workers do it. The "boss" knows what needs to be accomplished and he knows how to go about it, so he tells everyone else what needs to be done, and his plan is followed. The boss does the leading and the workers do the following.

The concept of Servant Leadership challenges this more autocratic form of leadership by inserting the term “servant”. Using the term “servant” with leadership appears at first to be connecting two words that have opposite meaning. The words do not appear to go together.

A servant is thought of as one who serves and is on the lowest end of the social strata. The leader, on the other hand, is thought of as the “boss” and is much higher on the social strata.

Robert Greenleaf coined the term “servant-leadership” and had the following to say, the servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (Spears p.1, 2000)

The initial thinking about Servant-Leadership came in the early 1960's when Robert Greenleaf read Herman Hesse's short novel, Journey to the East. This is a mythical story about a group of people on a religious journey. This group was accompanied by a servant, Leo. One day Leo disappeared. After Leo, the servant disappeared; the group was unable to continue their journey. The

disappearance of Leo, the servant, should not have drastically affected the group, but it did. Leo must have been the leader that was allowing this group to travel forward on its journey. Many years later the group did discover that Leo was a leader. (Hesse, 1956) This story was part of the thinking that went into the initial Servant-Leader concept that later grew to become part of leadership theory that appears to be so effective.

Many have written about Servant-Leadership, including Robert Greenleaf, Warren Bennis, Ken Blanchard, Hamilton Beasley, Julie Beggs, and Larry Spears. Characteristics that can be found by the authors vary from author to author but some of the characteristics that appear in the literature more than once, include: (Greenleaf, 1991). Each of the characteristics listed below can be elaborated upon for clarity, but they are mentioned here only to provide a brief insight into the concept of Servant-Leadership.

- Listening and Understanding
- Acceptance and Empathy
- Knowing the Unknowable
- Foresight
- Awareness and Perception
- Persuasion
- One Action at a Time
- Conceptualization
- Healing and Serving
- Building Community

As a future school leader I will strive to become a Servant-Leader. The way of the past, where the leader gives orders and employees do what the leaders say without any input, is definitely the least productive approach to leadership. An autocratic leader may be effective some of the time, but when things are not working well within the organization, it would be very wise to get input from the stakeholders to see what changes might be appropriate. It would be wise to collaborate instead of dictate. I will try to develop the ten characteristics as listed earlier in this paper. I have some of the characteristics, and will work hard to develop some of the other characteristics.

Based on my research of this topic, it does not appear easy to become a Servant-Leader, but once that has been established, there is not much that a Servant-Leader cannot achieve. To develop the necessary characteristics does not happen over night. A leader must consciously want to be a Servant-Leader, and then must work hard everyday toward that goal. As a Servant- Leader, I will work hard to try to help all my employees strive to become Servant-Leaders, as well. If I could get this accomplished, I know that teachers, parents and students would be excited to be associated with my school district.

Areas that I believe are my strengths include: Listening, understanding, and empathy. Areas that I will be trying to develop include: foresight, conceptualization and building community.

The concept of Servant-Leadership and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) consists of the following six areas: (www.sai-iowa.org)

Shared Vision

Culture of Learning

Management

Family and Community

Ethics

Societal Context

Servant-Leadership aligns with all six standards. When an administrator works to become a servant leader, he will automatically meet all six standards. All administrators should strive to become a Servant-Leader.

Characteristics that can be found in the literature for Servant-Leadership can be aligned with the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. Below is a list of the ISSL standards with Servant-Leadership Characteristics (SLC) listed beneath each standard. This is one possible interpretation of how the standards and the characteristics can be aligned.

There is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two and sometimes the Servant Learning Characteristics may fall under more than one standard. The ISSL Standard, "Ethics" would have the concept of doing things correctly, and therefore all 10 characteristics of this paper would fall under Ethics.

Shared Vision (ISSL)

- Foresight (SLC)
- Conceptualization (SLC)
- Building Community (SLC)

Culture of Learning (ISSL)

- Listening and Understanding (SLC)
- Awareness and Perception (SLC)

Management (ISSL)

- Knowing the Unknowable (SLC)
- Persuasion (SLC)
- One Action at a Time (SLC)

Family and Community (ISSL)

- Healing and Empathy (SLC)
- Building Community (SLC)

Ethics (ISSL)

- All Characteristics (SLC)

Societal Context (ISSL)

- Listening and Understanding (SLC)
- Awareness and Perception (SLC)

I conclude that leadership is evolving into a kind of leadership where the concept of “servant” coupled with leadership makes sense. The leader, to accomplish the goals of the organization, must serve his employees. It is no longer effective or efficient to just “boss” the employees. The “good” leaders have always known this and I will apply it as well.

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