

Chapter 9

Educational Leadership: Cultivating Leadership Qualities Generates Student Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a field studied considerably since ancient years. Leadership scholars concentrate on the innate traits that born leaders have, while others focus on the traits attained throughout a person's life. Another common notion is that mainly individuals in higher positions in organizations practice leadership. Although students of leadership mainly study it during their university years, the plethora of leadership educational programs often teach on a theoretical basis leading to partial application to real-world cases. Recent research has surfaced the need to enrich primary and secondary education and curricula with instructional methodologies, which instill leadership qualities to students, like ethos, empathy, and compassion, while providing students with skills and capabilities essential to develop effective leaders of tomorrow. Additionally, educating young students to become accountable, compassionate, and kind while enriching their learning with service mindedness and the cultivation of belonging, collaboration, and interaction builds character and leadership qualities.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Leadership

Leadership and the precise identification and definition of the concept have been rather controversial. As old as ancient Greek, Plato attempted to define a leader in his statement “We must try to find a naturally well-proportioned and gracious mind, which will move spontaneously toward the true being of everything and perfected by years and education” (Wren, 2013, p. 64). Since then, multiple definitions and theories have been presented debating on the necessity of innate traits for someone to be a leader or the acquired ones. In earlier years, scholars believed that leadership was undertaken by individuals

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Educational Leadership

in higher positions in the corporate world or in politics. However, research as well as experience has shown that people practice leadership in their everyday lives, even in non-professional areas. Therefore, an appropriate definition of leadership is that leadership is exercised by a person or group of people who select, train, and influence a diverse group of people focusing on the organization's mission, vision and goals, using ethical means and aiming towards the greater good and benefit of the group and society, as a whole (Winston & Patterson, 2006). Questions are raised regarding who is a leader, what qualities this person may have, and how does one prepare to be a leader, when, how, by whom?

Leadership Categories

Scholars and practitioners attempting to define leadership and categorize it according to the characteristics portrayed, have come across the various leadership types as they are manifested in the different industries and leadership styles. Although leadership emerged as a business and corporate concept, as Wren (1995) states, it has been recognized as contemporary, timeless, and applicable to all groups, organizations, and communities having common goals, which they attempt and seek to achieve. Therefore, some of the leadership categories include military leadership, corporate leadership, educational leadership, government leadership, and so on. In this chapter, the leadership category that will be investigated is the educational leadership and the approaches that ought to be taken in order for students to be equipped with leadership skills in an attempt to prepare them to be leaders of their lives and of their future.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

To identify and respond to the previously stated questions one needs to explore the characteristics that define a leader. A leader is a whole and educated person guided by principles and values governed by ethos. Moreover, as Barrow (1980) and Lowecke (2016) argue, a leader must be a well-informed individual having developed, four significant and guiding types of awareness: historical awareness, individuality awareness, logical distinction awareness, discriminative capacity awareness, and civic engagement awareness, as well as self and social awareness. Educators are called upon to equip their students with skills and capacities to develop leadership qualities for themselves, their community, and their world. The objective is to generate individuals who will be informed about community issues and their connection with them, be cognizant about world problems and the human impact, comprehend the necessity that actions are to be guided by ethos, while feel personally responsible towards making a difference in the community and society as a whole, through tackling challenges impacting the current and future generations (Barrow, 1980).

Qualities and Skills of an Effective Leader in the Educational Context

More often than not, young people in today's world are eager to make a difference, feeling responsible for their personal and collective present and future in the world. The examples of students taking thoughtful stands in global issues are plentiful, including the KOINΩNOΣ Project, a student led project guided by their advisor offering joy and support to the homeless in the city of Athens; The Greek Mask Project, which is also student led and produce and deliver masks to health care workers with special symbols during the pandemic of COVID-19, and so on. Keeping in mind that these students will be the leaders

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