

LECTURE 7: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

transformational leadership

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The transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society; to consider their longer-term needs to develop themselves rather than their needs of the moment; and to become more aware of what is important. Using transformational leadership, followers are converted into leaders. According to Bernard Bass, transformational leadership can be conceptually organized using charismatic and inspirational leadership styles in combination with intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

Transformational leadership is not just due to charismatic leadership; instead, it is a hybrid where behavioral processes are learned and managed. The leadership process includes a systematic analysis, is consistent, and is purposeful with an organized search for changes. Once the needed changes are recognized, the transformational leader moves resources from areas of lesser to greater productivity to bring about a strategic transformation.

The transformational leader renews the organization's structure to meet the current leadership demands of the environment. In his book, *On Leadership*, John W. Gardiner states, "Leaders must understand how and why human systems age, and must know how the processes of renewal may be set in motion." In considering transformation, the following purposes for organizational change are offered:

- To renew and refine organizational values that counter the organization's current vision and mission
 - To empower followers who have been constrained by ineffective standard operating procedures, and instead instill new techniques and procedures to meet the requirements of the organizational work environment
 - To evaluate current goals and modify them as necessary to ensure they are feasible, acceptable, and attainable to meet the organization's challenges
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- To leverage new technologies and conduct research and development that evaluates current strategies, processes, and material resources that will lead the organization to perform more efficiently and effectively
 - To empower followers through education and lifelong growth

The pace of change for organizations is swift, and that's the only constant organizations can depend on. This is why transformational leaders have to concern themselves with continual renewal, understand how and why human systems age, and know the unique processes for renewal for their organization. Transformational leaders do not accept the system as it is; they develop a far-reaching strategic vision on how to incrementally adapt change into their organizations.

Understanding how your leadership style impacts the follower or subordinate is important to maintaining morale and consistency of work performance in your organization. Table 3.6 provides you with a summary of styles discussed in this section. By reviewing the content of this section, you can be flexible in developing your approach to leadership and become a more effective leader as the organizational situation presents itself to you. By understanding leadership styles, you can explore whether or not a particular style would benefit those you lead to accomplish the mission you are given.

Transformational	Transformational leaders are inspiring because they expect the best from everyone on their team as well as themselves. They often lead by example, and in organizations that provide a product or service, this leads to high productivity and engagement from everyone on their team. Leaders who use a combination of transformational and transactional leadership ensure that routine work is done reliably, while transformational initiatives can be incorporated to add value in the form of effectiveness or efficiency to the organization.	The leader recognized a downward shift in customer satisfaction in the level of service the company provided over the past year. If the business was to succeed, he knew a different approach would be needed. He reviewed the literature and recognized a new approach is required in the way they managed customers. To transform his company, he decided to invest in a customer relations management (CRM) training program to build brand and customer loyalty. To accomplish this, he would singularly motivate and lead the CRM transformation effort and ensure the appropriate change management steps were incorporated as part of the change management process. Only by his direct involvement could he inspire a dramatic transformation during the next quarter and reduce the amount of friction that change often elicits in employees.
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Transformational Leadership: A Practice Needed for First-Year Success

Transformational leadership has wide-spread and significant implications for educators and the educational system. Specifically, many institutions of higher education have developed first-year success seminars in an effort to improve retention, graduation rates, and campus connectivity with students. These programs require a transforming leadership effort from all stakeholders of the institution. Moreover, the administration and faculty of higher-education institutions need to understand and practice transformational leadership while engaged in success efforts. This essay will explore the role of transformational leadership and the major considerations and implementation strategies often associated with successful first-year seminar programs.

Exploring Transformational Leadership

Benefits of Transformational Leadership

Leadership, unlike many other academic fields of study, is difficult to precisely define or accurately describe. Moreover, the abundant and disjointed sub-categories of leadership offer only limited explanations and incomplete analysis of the art and science of leadership. However, transformational leadership appears to offer the most comprehensive description and generate the most beneficial results. Transformational leadership seems to genuinely seek to benefit followers. Transformational leadership offers followers three critical areas which include: committed service, charisma, and intellectual stimulation.

There is tremendous difficulty and debate in determining exactly when and where to exercise transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is grounded in

meeting higher-order needs within individuals in an attempt to motivate and inspire more success than previously thought possible. In the effort to inspire greater achievement, many transformational leaders exercise great charisma (Bass, 1990). Charisma can, however, fail to produce results. Lunenburg (2003) argued for a de-emphasis on leadership charisma and a stronger advocacy for vision, development, and commitment. Charisma is not necessary for stable organizations; however, charismatic leadership is prevalent in organizations experiencing change.

Positive Results

Beyond the charismatic component, many transformational leaders stimulate intellectual development within their followers (Bass, 1990; Bass, 1998). Moreover, Leithwood (1992) argues that transformational leadership produces tremendously positive results. Furthermore, there is a clear relationship between transformational leadership and teacher collaboration. Consequently, transformational leadership improves educational stakeholders' attitudes about improvement and reform efforts. Furthermore, Bass (1990) contends that transformational leaders are often the sole difference between success and failure. Likewise, Sergiovanni (2000) maintains that committed service facilitates transformational leadership efforts.

Ethical Considerations of Transformational Leadership

Questioned Results

Transformational leadership, however, is not without critics. In reform efforts, many transformational leaders fall victim to seeking their own desires and interests (Keeley, 1998). Additionally, Gronn (1995) contends that many transformational leaders fail to produce their intended outcomes due to the inability of most leaders to sustain a

motivational pattern. When such selfish desires occur, the transformational effort is reduced to transactional leadership. Transactional efforts reduce the impact of the leadership effort (Bass, 1990). Transformational leadership, however, is not intended to permanently replace transactional leadership (Bass, Avolio, & Goodheim, 1987). Rather, the two styles complement one another and facilitate actions. Consequently, Bass (1998) argued that a delicate mixture of transformational and transactional leadership is necessary to maintain the ethical dimensions of leadership. Nevertheless, the transforming effort seeks to improve morale and foster an atmosphere of continuous improvement. The atmosphere of continuous improvement sparked by transformational leadership provides an outstanding theoretical framework for student success reform efforts on college campuses.

Serving Students

A transformational leadership effort provides first-year college students an altruistic servant who is genuinely seeking to motivate and inspire students to set and meet goals. The inspirational challenges issued by transformational leaders build charisma, trust, and pride (Bass, 1990). Moreover, the practice of transformational leadership provides first-year students with intellectual stimulation. Charisma and intellectual stimulation combine in a powerful manner that facilitates student success. Furthermore, the work of transformational leadership within academic reform efforts builds morale and interdependence at all levels (Leithwood, 1992).

If transformational leadership functions properly, the followers should not need on-going guidance (Bass, 1990). Once a student has gained sufficient inspiration from a transformational leader, the need for constant charismatic supervision from the leader

significantly reduces. Moreover, once the charismatic, intellectual leader has established trust among stakeholders, the ability for self-management and creative ideas greatly increases (Sergiovanni, 2000). In short, transformational leadership inspires others to seek greater achievement and work towards continuous improvement. Transformational leadership empowers others to become free-thinking, independent individuals capable of exercising leadership.

Transformational leadership has no greater forum than within higher education. The rapidly expanding global marketplace mandates that students seek post-secondary education. However, very few students are adequately prepared for the transition from high school to college. Therefore, success-driven reform initiatives are necessary for the success of first-time college students.

Characteristics of First-Time Students

The first year of college is the most difficult transition that a student will face (Pascarella, Peterson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). In fact, the success rate within the first year of college is the single greatest predictive element for a student's overall success in college. Therefore, the implementation of success initiatives is of paramount importance. The first-generation college student faces unique and difficult challenges beyond the challenges of those who are merely first-time college students. The first-generation college student is perhaps the most vulnerable to making poor grades, dropping out and having low campus communal connectivity (Orbe, 2004). The solution to such problems can be answered through the successful implementation of first-year success seminars.

Colleges' Roles

Specifically, community colleges can play an enormous role in the development of students. A significant number of students enrolling at community colleges are first-generation students. Due to the tremendous first-generation enrollments, transformational leadership is an attractive approach to increasing campus connectivity and expanding and maximizing the college experience. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) found clear relationships between transformational leadership and organizational conditions. Additionally, these researchers noted a significant effect between student participation, engagement, and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership helps increase student participation.

There is sufficient evidence that family educational culture is the most significant factor impacting student participation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Orbe, 2004). Simply put, students who have family members who support educational efforts have a greater likelihood of achieving more. It is the duty of an educational institution to ensure that each student receives the proper support system in an effort to maximize the success of all students.

Sharing Dreams

It is also of great importance that all students have the opportunity to experience success. Gill (2006) argues that “good leaders help people make their dreams come true” (p. 12). This dream-reaching experience is especially important for first-year students. The realization of a dream is an experience that all should have the opportunity to pursue. Larson and Murtadha (2002) argue that love is the basis for transformational efforts. Love and genuine concern for students facilitate the transformational process. Moreover, Lyman and Villani (2002) argue for greater empathy and understanding for the

underserved and poor. With a growing number of students from poor and underserved backgrounds enrolling in colleges and universities (Carey, 2004), it is of vital importance that love and empathy dominate the transformational efforts of student reform. Simply put, educational leaders should love and honor the dreams of their students. The pursuit of educational dreams should never cease to motivate and inspire the transformational leader to continue striving to transform individuals.

History and Benefits of First-Year Success Programs

The first-year success seminar and student success is not an invention of the modern era. Education scholars have discussed and explored how to prepare students for the enormous transition to college from high school for more than a century (Dwyer, 1989; Hunter & Linder, 2005). Hunter and Linder (2005) note that nearly 74% of United States college campuses have a first-year program for new freshmen students. The benefits of freshmen success course work are tremendous. Orbe (2004) argues that first-time college students develop institutional identities based upon their experiences in the first year of college.

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