

LECTURE 8: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY CONTINUED

The purpose of this lecture is to explore the multidimensional facets of transformational leadership and the impacts of such leadership on successful educational programs. Specifically, transformational leaders with higher educational organizations must share vision, rally support and genuinely care about student's success. While leading success initiatives, transformational leaders must strive to share the dreams of their students. Educators should explore multiple and creative methods in which to ensure student success

Shaping Identities

The connectivity and identity of students can be shaped by first-year experience coursework. Ishler and Upcraft (2005) argue that students enrolled in freshmen-year experience classes show increased campus connections, have higher grade point averages, and have less difficulty in adjustment. Ishler and Upcraft (2005) note: "The first-year seminar is one of the most powerful predictors of first-year student persistence into the sophomore year" (p. 41). Additionally, Hunter and Linder (2005), suggest that successful first-year seminars should be offered for academic credit, involve faculty, include instructor training and ways of assessing their effectiveness. The first-year seminar is perhaps most important for first-generation college students. Pascarella, Pierson, Wolinak, and Terenzini (2004) note:

First-generation students perhaps benefit more from their academic experiences than other students because these experiences act in a compensatory manner and thus contribute comparatively greater incremental increases in first-generation students' stock of cultural capital (p. 280).

Beyond their tremendous lack of cultural capital, first-generation students have the most difficulty in social, cultural, and academic adjustment (Orbe, 2004; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Moreover, first-generation college students are significantly more likely to drop out of college after the first year than their more supported counterparts. The first-generation college population is the most critical. It seems clear that if this group is not reached, their life satisfaction will suffer.

Call to Action

Colleges and universities can no longer afford to allow students to aimlessly drift through the freshman year without guidance. It is of principal importance that all stakeholders within the higher-education community realize and understand the importance of transformational leadership, and in turn, act on the behalf of students. It is higher education's obligation to ensure that all who seek higher education have the opportunity to achieve their dreams. The moment that educators stop caring about student success and reform efforts is the moment that education ceases to matter. A college education provides the most awe-inspiring change that can happen to an individual.

It seems abundantly clear that transformational leadership is not something accomplished by a single individual. Transforming an organization is a lengthy process that requires a leader to raise the motivation and moral fiber of stakeholders. This is a worthy effort. As institutions of higher-learning take on more and more responsibilities, it is tremendously important that administrators and faculty work to ensure that students find success. There are five critical tips to remember as success efforts proceed.

1. Share inspirational stories about success
2. Know that transforming requires forming
3. Remember that transformation takes time
4. Stay focused
5. Live for the dream

Conclusion

The purpose of transformational leadership is threefold. First, the transformational leader sincerely serves the needs of others. This service empowers and inspires followers to achieve great success. Secondly, the transformational leader charismatically leads. This charisma sets a vision. Finally, the intellectual stimulation that a transformational leader offers produces followers of the same caliber as the leader.

Without these three aspects of transformational leadership, student success initiatives would not be as effective. It is, however, the goal of success initiatives to produce worthy students, fully prepared for the challenges of college. Transformational leadership and student success initiatives combine in an awesome force that will undoubtedly change and inspire the lives of students.

Finally, it is my hope that articles such as this will stimulate conversation about the issue of student success. In education's efforts to improve the world, educators must pursue the goal of student success with great passion and drive. Every student that succeeds is yet another testament to the value of education.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES

1. Pioneering



To be More Pioneering:

- They tend to be good at initiating change.
- They often trust their gut instincts.
- They're able to bring people together to achieve their goals.
- They tend to be inspiring.
- Actively seek new opportunities beyond your organization's walls.
- Break some glass. Stray away from your comfort zone.
- Learn to take leaps of faith.

Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve.

2. Energizing



To be More Energizing:

- They're able to rally people around group goals.
- They tend to look on the bright side.
- They're comfortable being in the spotlight.
- They're often accepting of other people's ideas.
- Make an effort to build enthusiasm for the group's goals.
- Be intentional about making connections with a wide variety of people.
- Learn to lead the rally.

Great leaders energize people to go the extra mile. They set stretch goals that motivate people to accomplish more than they think is possible.

3. Affirming



- They tend to be friendly and approachable.
- They're often generous in their praise.
- They're able to consider the needs of different groups of people.
- They're less concerned with their own ego needs.
- Monitor your "default" expressions.
- Let people know that you value them.
- Accept other people's limitations.

Leaders who fail are the ones who do it by themselves. Leaders who succeed are the ones who allow others to help them.

4. Inclusive



- They tend to be very people-oriented.
- They're often able to create a warm, safe environment.
- They're able to overlook other people's flaws.
- They tend to deliver reliable results.
- Show people that you're open to their ideas.
- Monitor your emotional output carefully.
- Work to facilitate two-way discussion on important issues.

Diversity is having a seat at the table. Inclusion is having a voice and having that voice heard.

5. Humble



To be More Humble:

- They're often able to head off potential problems with careful planning.
- They provide others with the tools necessary to do their work.
- They're able to create a stable environment.
- They maintain their composure, even under stress
- Maintain your composure by keeping things in perspective.
- Take the time to listen to the less powerful people around you.
- Make the needs of your group a priority.

Don't flaunt your authority. Humility will make you approachable. It opens the door to building relationships.

6. Deliberate



To be More Deliberate:

- They're often able to head off potential problems with careful planning.
- They provide others with the tools necessary to do their work.
- They're able to create a stable environment.
- They maintain their composure, even under stress
- Be deliberate in your communication.
- Show that you've done your homework.
- Pay attention to process management tools and methods.

Whatever surprises leaders themselves may face; they don't create any for the group. Leaders are all of a piece; they stay the course.

7. Resolute



To be More Resolute:

- They tend to be good problem solvers.
- They're often able to push their way through obstacles.
- They're able to hold people accountable.
- They're often able to identify potential weaknesses in plans.
- Learn to hold people accountable.
- Find and address problems.
- Get comfortable making unpopular decisions.

The expectations that successful leaders hold provide the framework into which people fit their own realities.

8. Commanding



To be More Commanding:

- They are able to set and stick to aggressive timelines.
- They tend to be very goal-oriented.
- They're able to speak with conviction.
- They're not afraid to take some risks.
- Get comfortable with making firm, public commitments
- Learn to act without permission.
- Create some urgency.

Psychologically, leaders lead because they convince others that they understand the issues better than anyone else. People follow them because they speak about solutions with persuasive conviction, project confidence when others are uncertain, and act decisively.

Group Discussion (15 minutes)

What is your leadership style?

Share:

- Your leadership style and its strengths and potential downsides
- Learn one trait from two other types of leaders that would enhance your leadership tendencies



Ps:

- All leadership styles have strengths and weaknesses
- Effective leaders develop to exhibit the right leadership dimension at the right time
- Which dimensions do you need to develop to be a more well-rounded leader? Study wisely.

References

Ishler, J. L. & Upcraft, M. L. (2005). The keys to first-year student persistence. In M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner & B. O. Barefoot (Eds.), *Challenging and supporting the first-year student* (pp. 27-46).

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