

Introduction

1

INTRODUCTION

There are few professions that one can say are synonymous with leadership. Education is one of those. By the very nature of what educators choose to do—facilitate the teaching of others—they are leaders.

Leadership is a complex phenomenon that has many definitions and is conceptualized in a variety of ways. How one approaches leadership is based on many things, from your cultural orientation and experiences to your personal beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Despite the multitude of ways in which leadership has been conceptualized, the following components are identified as central to the phenomenon: (a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals. Based on these components, the following definition of leadership is used in this text:

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Following this definition, it is easy to see why education and leadership seem to go hand in hand. Whether they are in the classroom or the administration building, in front of students or facilitating school admissions, individuals in the discipline of education are influencing others to achieve a common goal. That common goal is to create a safe place where students can effectively learn and grow.

That is why the study of leadership is particularly salient to the field of education. In this book *we examine how leadership theories can be applied specifically to educational settings*. The leadership theories we discuss range from the simple trait approach, where leadership is defined by characteristics leaders possess, to more contemporary approaches such as adaptive leadership, which looks at how

leaders guide followers through change, and followership, which examines the role followers play in leadership.

The field of leadership has grown exponentially in the last two decades, and there are many established leadership theories, each of which conceptualizes leadership from a unique perspective. However, the discipline of educational leadership has often addressed leadership with an emphasis on administration, curriculum, and instruction, giving less attention to leadership theory. As a result, there is a large, untapped body of information on leadership theory that can assist educators in understanding the dynamics of leadership in education.

The need for leadership in education is unprecedented. Research studies show that talented leadership plays a pivotal role in improving student achievement (Miller, 2015). Clearly, it is incumbent on the profession of education to pay close attention to developing leaders by making sure they get the proper training.

To better understand how select leadership theories have value in educational settings, it is worthwhile to discuss these approaches using authentic case examples. As Bush (2011) has pointed out, the relevance of theory to good practice as an educator is that theories and concepts can provide a framework for leaders' decision making as well as provide a rationale for those decisions. This is important because many educators "mistakenly rely mainly upon experience and intuition—with all the limitations to change which these contain—to guide them through their careers" (Day, 2003, p. 46). Admittedly, many people struggle with connecting theoretical concepts with the practice. The case study approach taken in this book is an attempt to close this gap.

In the research literature, there exists a deficit of articles that address how leadership theories can be applied to an examination of leadership in pre-K–12 and higher education settings. One exception is the work of Bess and Goldman (2001), which explores the utility of five leadership theories (situational, charismatic, transformational, path–goal, and leader–member exchange) in explaining leader behavior in K–12 schools and university settings. They point out that the leadership challenges faced by educators in these settings are affected by distinct modes of authority, the nature of everyday work, professional norms and assumptions, and the general dispositions of the educators who work in these settings.

Some leadership concepts work better in one setting than another. For example, Bess and Goldman (2001) argue that charismatic leadership is unhelpful as an explanation of leadership effectiveness in universities but valuable as it applies to K–12 schools with fewer resources where charismatic leadership has been used as an antidote to discouragement and disengagement, providing inspiration and hope to teachers and students alike.

One of the best ways to apply and understand theoretical concepts is through the experiential learning rooted in the use of case studies. Cases are detailed,

narrative accounts of situations that have been encountered in a chosen field. Employing case studies has been shown to encourage critical thinking (Popil, 2011), a finding echoed by Youngblood and Beitz (2001) who reported that experiential learning strategies, like the analysis and discussion of case studies, promote the development of critical thinking skills in individuals. In addition, case studies provide an avenue for using problem-solving skills and promote decision making in a nonthreatening environment (Popil, 2011).

That is the goal behind *Leadership Case Studies in Education* (3rd ed.). Designed to be a companion book to Northouse's *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.), *Leadership Case Studies in Education* provides case studies tailored for those studying education and educational leadership.

The leadership theories and approaches discussed in *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.) can be universally applied to many disciplines and organizations. Using cases directly from educational settings will help you to understand the leadership aspects of being an educator. For example, one case in this book analyzes an elementary teacher in terms of her leadership traits and how they play into her teaching situation. In another chapter, a case describes a university president's leadership style and how it hindered her from being as effective as she could have been. In both of these examples, the concepts from the chapter in the theory book help to explore, explain, and solve the dilemmas facing the educators.

The cases in this book are written by a number of contributors and practitioners from many levels—from teachers to administrators—and reflect issues and situations that have actually occurred. The cases directly correspond to the leadership approaches and concepts in *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.), and there are two cases for each approach: one for those focused on pre-K–12 education and one for those studying leadership in higher education.

Case studies are an active learning method: They do not give simple answers; rather, they provoke students to employ critical thinking skills to apply the use of theoretical concepts to practical problems (Dowd & Davidhizar, 1999). A critical part of using case studies as a teaching strategy is the discussion that cases can invoke. Research by Levin (1995) shows that case discussion is especially valuable to students and beginning teachers because it leads to clearer understandings of the issues presented in the cases, as well as providing a catalyst for recognizing the need to change one's own thinking.

Our book is intended to help teachers and administrators understand leadership theory and be able to apply this understanding to their own practice. The format we use in the book is the same for each chapter. We begin each chapter with a basic introduction to a leadership approach or theory that is described in more detail in *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.). The reader will then find two cases—one written from the pre-K–12 perspective and another from

the higher education perspective. Each of these levels of the education discipline has unique qualities and challenges, and the cases seek to reflect the different variables educators face in both arenas. Following the cases are questions that will help readers to apply the concepts to the situations. The questions often ask the readers to reflect on what they would do or how they would approach the situation outlined in the case.

You can start with the case study approach here: The following two case studies provide a look at leadership from the macro level, but with many of the nuances that are encompassed in the approaches explored in *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.). These are not cases that you can solve quickly, but are reflective of the kind of leadership issues that educators face every day.

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies illustrate the role of leadership in decision making in educational settings. The first case looks at an elementary school principal trying to place students with special needs equitably among his teachers. The second case explores a university president's decision to implement a new college over the objections of the board that governs her.

At the end of each case, you will find two sets of questions that will help in analyzing the case. The first set can be answered using information provided in this chapter; the second set, Advanced Questions, provides an opportunity for deeper exploration of the definition and evolution of leadership and is designed to coincide with the concepts discussed in Chapter 1 of *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed., pp. 1–26).

Balancing the Workload

After getting the new student rosters from the district, Northwest Elementary School's principal, Xavier Morgan, has asked to meet with his three third-grade teachers. Northwest is in a public school district that employs Schools of Choice so that parents can request their children go to any district school even if it isn't their neighborhood school. Northwest is considered the best elementary in the city, so parents whose children struggle with dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, ADD, and other behavioral and learning disabilities are increasingly requesting that their children be enrolled at Northwest. There are 14 new students coming to Northwest Elementary in the third-grade class, and 10 of them are considered to have special needs.

Every spring, the third-grade teachers meet with the second-grade teachers to discuss the children moving up from the second grade, what their strengths and challenges are, and what type of class environment is best for them. The teachers spend a long time and a great deal of consideration in placing the students—balancing out gender, achievement, attitude, and behavior. They've been known to separate best friends and pair up socially awkward kids so that the social and behavioral environment is balanced as well.

There is no doubt that the new students with special needs will require extra time and patience from their teachers. Children's behavioral issues can adversely affect the learning environment of an entire classroom. While all the third-grade teachers have had professional development training in teaching kids with special needs, Mr. Morgan knows that not all of them are ideally suited to working with impacted children.

One teacher in particular, Mr. Terrell, has a hard time managing the students who need extra instruction, whether he is accommodating or redirecting them in order to give them an optimum learning environment. Mr. Terrell, who has taught at Northwest for 17 years, does an outstanding job with advanced students but begrudgingly adheres to and attends 504 and IEP meetings for students. Parents have complained to Mr. Morgan that Mr. Terrell is indifferent to their children's special needs and resistant to working with them to improve the situation. The school's inclusion teacher and the teacher consultant have told Mr. Morgan that Mr. Terrell is the most difficult teacher on staff to work with. Mr. Morgan, however, believes that it is important for Mr. Terrell's professional development that he continue to learn and improve his skills in this area.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Mr. Morgan knows that the newest third-grade teacher, Mrs. Rodriguez, who has been teaching for five years, is excellent at working with children with special needs. She devoted her master's degree work to alternative learning initiatives for kids with special needs and has presented at state-wide teachers' conferences on a new handwriting program for kids who struggle with dyspraxia and dysgraphia. She also convinced Mr. Morgan to drop plans to teach cursive writing to the third graders, using that time instead to fine-tune the students' printed writing and to teach them key-boarding skills. Mrs. Rodriguez is also pregnant and will be taking maternity leave for the rest of the school year after her baby is born in February.

Mrs. D'Amelio, a 10-year teaching veteran, is also good with students who have special needs. This past year she had two boys in her class who were on the autism spectrum. Their behavioral issues often disrupted the classroom to the point where the boys spent at least an hour each day with Mr. Morgan or in the school psychologist's office completing their class-work. Mrs. D'Amelio spent many hours outside of her class meeting the boys' parents and therapists to develop methods and tools to work with the boys. Then, in March, one of Mrs. D'Amelio's female students died in a car accident, and it had a great emotional impact on the teaching veteran. Mr. Morgan had hoped to give Mrs. D'Amelio a less challenging class to manage this year to allow her to get her bearings back.

In his meeting with the teachers, Mr. Morgan gives them each a document outlining the new students and their special needs and accommodations. "We have 14 new students this year, and 10 of them are going to require our very best teaching skills," he says. "I know you have spent a lot of time creating your class rosters, and I am asking you for your participation in placing these students so that we maintain the careful consideration that went into creating your class environments."

The teachers spend a long moment looking over the list. After they've had several minutes to do so, Mr. Morgan starts with Mr. Terrell. "Steve, which of these students would best fit into your current classroom?"

Mr. Terrell pauses and then pushes the list away, obviously upset. "Xavier, this is ridiculous!" he says. "We spent hours and hours last spring getting our rosters rounded out, and now you're making us choose these kids like we're picking teams for kickball. We don't know anything about these students other than what's written on this paper. There's no way to know whose class they belong in. It is unfair that you put this on us. You're the boss, you have the PhD, so why don't you assign them to the classes?"

After a tense, quiet moment, Mr. Morgan answers. "I don't want to do that, Steve, because that's not the kind of leader I want to be.

“And Steve,” he adds, “it’s not the kind of leadership I would hope from my teachers either.”

—Authors

Questions

1. Using the definition of leadership identified in this chapter, would you say Mr. Morgan and his teachers have a common goal? What is that goal?
2. Who are the leaders in this situation, and who are the followers? What components of the leadership definition did you use to determine that?
3. In this situation, Mr. Terrell is challenging the principal’s leadership. If you were Mr. Morgan, how would you respond to this challenge?

Advanced Questions

4. Is Mr. Morgan a manager or a leader? How about each of his three third-grade teachers?
5. What type and bases of power do you think Mr. Morgan has? Which of these is he exercising in this situation?
6. If you were Mr. Morgan, how would you proceed in getting the goal achieved?

President Severs, You're Fired

When Yolanda Severs was fired as the president of Broder State University, it was a dismissal that many of the faculty who served under her said she should have seen coming. But a larger contingent of the campus and the community where the university is located responded with outrage. What did she do that was so bad? She created an engineering college.

Broder State University is one of five state universities or colleges in a sparsely populated western state. The State Board of Higher Education, a politically appointed committee of 12 men and women, administers all five of the higher education institutions in the state, doling out funding and overseeing curriculum and program and degree offerings at the institutions. They also hire and fire the presidents at the universities.

The state has two dominant universities; both are Tier 1 research universities, and the State Board has evenly divided the choice programs between them. One school is considered the law, engineering, and science university; the other is the medical and liberal arts university. Members of the State Board are predominantly alumni from those two universities, and they regard Broder State as the black sheep of the state university system. Unlike the other two universities, which are both more than a century old, Broder didn't become a university until the 1970s, after serving as a junior college for 30 years. Broder's primary programs are education, business, and information technology.

Broder is located in Springville, a town that has experienced explosive growth. The impetus for the growth comes from the technology companies that call Springville home. Bridger Technologies, a very large international software company started by two Broder graduates, employs 4,000 people in Springville alone. Additional companies, many based in technology and engineering, have chosen to locate in Springville. Because of the abundance of jobs and affordable cost of living, the town's population has quadrupled since Broder became a university.

Broder State University has also enjoyed a healthy expansion in its enrollment, and as a result, the State Board of Higher Education has had to channel more funding into the university to meet the growing demands. Enrollment at the other state universities has fallen with many students choosing to go to Broder for general education courses because it is more affordable and located in an exciting, growing metropolitan area.

The founders of Bridger Technologies, along with several of the CEOs of other local companies, formed a group called the Technology

Consortium and asked President Severs to be a member. She soon found out why: The companies were having a hard time getting skilled workers and believed one reason was because Broder didn't offer the necessary programs to provide students with the skills needed to work for these companies. The consortium asserted that Broder needed an engineering school that would train design engineers, industrial engineers, software engineers, mechanical engineers, and electrical engineers—all skills needed by the local industry.

Severs agreed and assigned the school's provost and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to work with the consortium to put together a curriculum proposal, which she and the two Bridger founders presented to the State Board. They made their case clear: Broder wasn't meeting the needs of its own community with its current academic offerings. "We're outdated," Severs stated. "We have to offer the programs our students need to get the education required to be able to work and live in Springville."

The State Board quickly rejected the proposal, saying, "The state already has an engineering school." Severs pointed out that the engineering school at the other state university was 12 hours from Springville and didn't offer specialized engineering programs in collaboration with local industry. Broder State's proposed program would offer students abundant internships and co-op working opportunities that would augment their education. The State Board still said no.

The Technology Consortium was undaunted. They came back to Severs with a new plan: They would provide \$50 million in private funding to start a School of Engineering at Broder State. The consortium would also pay for a public relations advocacy firm to create public awareness and support for the school. And, the icing on the cake: The state's newly elected governor had pledged his support and vowed to put pressure on the State Board of Higher Education to approve the school.

Things moved with lightning speed. The gift was announced, and the State Board of Higher Education publicly responded that it would not approve the project. The advocacy campaign kicked in, the public demanded the State Board approve the plan, the governor put pressure on the State Board, and within a year Broder's new School of Engineering was under construction. It opened 18 months later with its first class of students. As a result, Broder's enrollment spiked again, outpacing the other two state universities.

The opening of the School of Engineering coincided with Severs's employment review with the State Board. At the beginning of the meeting, the Board's chairman read the following statement from Severs's contract:

(Continued)

(Continued)

“The president of Broder State University serves at the pleasure of the State Board of Higher Education.” He went on to say that, after a review of Severs’s performance, the State Board no longer had confidence in her ability to serve as president of Broder State University. The Board voted unanimously to fire Yolanda Severs.

Despite the outrage that followed, Severs was not reinstated. In interview after interview, Severs maintained that she did what was best for Broder State University. Those who were in favor of the State Board of Higher Education’s move said that she overstepped her bounds as a leader and was “empire-building.” The governor even spoke out in favor of Severs. All to no avail.

Six months after she was fired, Severs was hired to run a university in a neighboring state.

—Authors

Questions

1. Who are the leaders in this situation, and who are the followers? What components of the leadership definition did you use to determine that?
2. Leadership occurs in groups. Identify the various groups in this situation and how their leaders used influence within those groups.
3. Leadership is about advancing the common good. What common good was the State Board advocating for? What about President Severs?

Advanced Questions

4. What types of power were exhibited by the leaders in this case? Explain your answer.
5. Does Severs exhibit process or trait leadership?
6. Although she was assigned to be the leader, Severs tried to emerge as the real leader at Broder State University. In what ways did she fail, and why?