

Evolution of leadership in the educational system

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Abstract Throughout the history of education, leaders have used many different styles to lead faculty and staff. Leadership within the educational system has evolved over the years to become a more participative rather than a domineering style. The purpose of the paper is to explore in detail educational leadership theories. Educational Leadership Theories Leaders are not born; however, they do have natural traits that affect their abilities. In recent years, Educational accountability has been the focus of state and local governments.

Federal and state achievement standards are being created for students as well as educational leaders. Now more than ever school districts are under pressure to increase student achievement. Leaders are being asked to provide specific documentation that student performance is part of the goal and mission of the schools. Educational leaders are being held accountable for the processes they establish as well as the success of their faculty and students. They are being required to implement strategies for measuring and reporting student outcomes and connecting those outcomes to the performance of teachers and schools.

How a leader successfully runs a school directly impacts how successful students can be, this is second only to classroom instruction. Leadership entwines leaders' faculty and staff and their influence, organizational objectives, change and people. Everyone is leading someone somewhere, but the question is where and how. In order to be a good leader one must be a good employee. Many scholars define leadership as one who plans, directs, or guides people toward a mutual goal. Leadership has been described as an

influence relationship among leaders and staff who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes.

The basis for good leadership is a respectable personality and unselfish service to employees and the organization. The best leaders are those who are deeply interested in others and can bring out the best in them. Great leadership begins by modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging hearts. In order for one to favor a leadership style, one must understand where the leadership styles originated. However, one may wonder if certain characteristics or traits are inherent in leaders.

According to research, the 1940's found that leaders maintain certain traits. These traits were based on physical and personality characteristics as well as intelligence and interpersonal skills (Sahin, 2004). The limitations of trait theory are that leaders cannot be developed through their skills and education (Sahin, 2004). Directive Leadership This style of leadership is considered job-centered. The job-centered (task-initiating structure) behavior focuses on the leader taking control in order to get the job done quickly.

It relies heavily on faculty and staff taking orders from the leader instead of the leader offering much clarification or dialogue faculty and staff are inspired through threat of correction and reprimand. The directive leadership style offers several advantages: swiftness of task completion keeps group members from producing alternatives that influence the minority negatively, guarantees the leader is heard and informs staff when their conduct is undesirable. The disadvantages of the directive leadership style are: dissociates staff, non-development of employees and convenience.

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One might use this style of leadership when the faculty or staff is in danger of not accomplishing a task in a timely manner or in a crisis situation.

Laissez-Faire Leadership The Laissez-Faire leadership style places an emphasis on the staff centered attribute. Leaders who use this style fail their staff because they offer no positive or negative direction nor do they interfere at any time. Laissez-Faire leaders renounce their leadership, giving staff a wide spectrum of decision-making which could lead to amplifying their power and influence.

Leaders assume the staff will make decisions in a timely manner and handle whatever problems that arise. There are some advantages and disadvantages of using this style of leadership. It allows the staff members to develop a working relationship in an informal setting and generates an opportunity to be successful by making their own decisions. On the other hand, a staff member can dominate and take control which could lead the staff to make incorrect decisions and possibly have the staff reprimanded which would lead to negativity within the group; affecting the process and their motivation.

Participative (Democratic) Leadership Participative leadership requires and encourages participation from everyone and shares decision-making for the betterment of the organization. Staff motivation is derived through obtaining self-image awards. Leaders reward staff through positive evaluations which in turn increases motivation and morale. There are some advantages and disadvantages to using this style of leadership. Leaders who allow employees to participate in decision-making showed improvement in relations and encouraged employee commitment.

Coaching Leadership
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Coaching theories of leadership assert that people will follow leaders who are inspirational. The leader will develop a working relationship such as a teacher/mentor. The overall success of the organization depends on whether the mentor has the knowledge to strengthen the work relationship and create an environment where the mentee feels as though they are respected and valued. Coaching leaders are known to establish performance specifications and make sure they are accomplished by a given deadline, limit the contentment of employees and create a low amount of employee commitment.

Collaborative Leadership The affiliative leader has the ability to motivate staff to surpass their own individual aspirations for the greater good of the district. The affiliative leader is a morally responsible person who focuses on developing the moral maturity, values, and standards of his or her staff and strengthening their devotion to serve the well-being of others, their school, the district and the community. This leader is one who conveys a vision to inspire others sets long-term goals and emphasizes social and interpersonal skills.

These leaders must possess high self-esteem, self-regard and self-awareness to effectively transform organizations and employees. Leaders with these attributes are highly admired, respected, trusted, and have a high level of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-determination. They are usually regarded as role models and demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct. There are pros and cons in using the affiliative leadership style. These leaders place an emphasis on team building, and empowering and developing potential in order to reach long-term goals.

An Affiliative leader create and encourage a collaborative learning environment, improve morale, embraces accountability and conflict resolution, proactive towards change management, ignites communication and supports empowerment. These leaders also facilitate staff toward motivation and being involved in the vision they produce. Collaborative leadership is leadership shown by acting together to solve issues. It uses supportive and inclusive methods to ensure that all people affected by a decision are part of the change process. It requires a new notion of power... the more power we share, the more power we have to use. The district that I am proud to be a part of has a variety of leadership styles. The leaders in the district are a compilation of Participative (Democratic), Coaching and Collaborative Leadership styles. However, this has proven to be effective at all 11 buildings within the district. My elementary building has seen drastic change to the administration within the last 6 years. Finally, with a new superintendent as well as a new principal, the morale of the faculty and students far exceeds our expectations.

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