How ethical leadership and practice affects workplace climate and culture

Metacognitive Revision Paragraph

After reviewing the comments and suggestions made by my peer, I made some modifications on my writing draft by streamlining the paper to avoid unnecessary words; to demonstrate brevity and clarity. Although, there was much feedback or correction in the way of content information I tried to find an effective way to re-draft the paper and make the presentation more fluent and relatable. If my audience or reader connects to the material, the information becomes more accessible to digest.

Abstract

A leader's actions if they are devised only to satisfy the leader, the group will not go nearly as far, nor achieve nearly as much. Getting everyone involved, as servant leaders do, provides a climate of inclusion, and takes a long step in the direction of achievement. A servant leader is motivated to help subordinates achieve goals and objectives to meet the needs of the organization and each other; he or she must be able to anticipate outcomes, to dividing responsibilities and encouraging teamwork. To do that well the leader must be responsive and remember that we are not merely selling products but aiming to be a partner with our learners. It is important to note that because leaders have influence, they play a significant role in establishing an ethical climate of their organizations. According to Heifetz (1994), leadership involves the use of authority to help followers deal with conflicting values that emerge in a rapidly changing work environment and social cultures. The leaders' duties are to assist the follower in struggling with change and personal growth. In our view, this is important because it

does not trap us into a single leadership approach. While our values and ethics should not change, how we present this to others can change, mainly when we deal with all types of people and organizations. Selecting the right approach is essential.

Keywords: Leadership, Relationship, Connection, Ethical, Culture, Climate

How Ethical Leadership and Practice Affects Workplace Climate and Culture.

Education has and will always be a primary necessity. Learning new ideas, tools, and opportunities can help us as an educational community grow and improve the quality of life and the success of ourselves and future generations. We have had the idea that what one pursues will determine the paths one travels, the people one associates with, characters developed and so on. During my over two decades journey as an educator, there burns in me the belief that my role is to create the right environment for learning to occur and to find ways of educating, extracting the innate gifts that our learners possess and motivating them holistically. So that ultimately, it leads them to lives with meaning and purpose. The title of leadership in any educational organization has been one that wears many hats, performs various functions and attends to every stakeholder, students and faculty's needs. Thus, the significance of instructional leadership to any academic institution provides credible insight into the operations and validity of such institution and most importantly for the improvement of students' achievement. Therefore, it takes a committed and focused individual to make a fundamental and lasting change in an organization.

The importance, influence, and immense contribution of a school head, director, or program coordinator as the instructional leader of a school, cannot be overstated. On this premise, it is of critical significance that the relationshipbetween an individual in this position and other members of the faculty or administrative staff be sound, healthy, and collaborative. The element of school relationships has always piqued our interest because in understanding the impact that leaders and school administrators have on teacher morale and the overall school climate; one can understand its influences on student achievement.

MyConnection

Culturally, we have been influenced by diverse backgrounds, consuming teachings and life skills as we traverse through life and we have learned to approach life, as one large school, whose rules and laws govern our daily interactions. Mezirow (1991) posited that all our meaning perspectives are formed from the impactful experiences from our lives, both conscious and subconscious. Learning that unconscious learning takes place from our childhood experiences and shapes our weltanschauung as we grow into adolescence and adulthood was a notion that has always floated in our reasoning. Although, this idea of learning, was brought to the fore of our consciousness when we forayed into transformational learning. Transformation theory embraces this notion; however, it also, holds that conscious experiences that we acquire by interacting with our parents, teachers, community members, and friends, that form our preconceived worldviews are not free from interpretation, as stated by Mezirow (1991).

The way each views the world is profoundly predisposed to be influenced by

our culture, language, and personal experiences, and naturally, by our parents and guardians' ideas and interpretations.

Leadership as a concept flouts many of the guidelines that define other theories in any simple sense, perhaps because it encompasses various forms. There is a plethora of definitions, almost as many as there are people who have tried to define it. Outlining leadership in any capacity including in the field of education is an exercise in ethics because as a leader, our core values and authenticity stems from the sum of our education, life experiences, and journey. Willard (2014) submitted that "[our] body is the original and primary place of [our] dominion and [our] responsibility...[our] Life experiences come to [us] through or in conjunction with [our] body" (p. 161). The ethical or unethical characteristics that we cultivate in our life's journey would dictate the direction of our leadership. The approach of our leadership in education from a moral compass is a vital one because this lens provides the vision that influences our actions, thoughts, feelings towards all human beings that interact with their spiritual being. As Covey (1991) stated, " their experiences constantly educate principle-centered people. They read, seek training, take classes, and listen to others; discover that the more they know, the more they realize they do not know" (p. 33).

One premise, from which educators operate, most directly this author, is that we are agents of change in the classroom and that reflection can help us be better instructors and administrators. The process of reflection is not one that is on the top of the list that we find enjoyable, but it is a tool that we find very valuable. Reflective practices that support metacognitive thinking are not just for us as educators, but also for our students. Although there is a

chance of over reflecting, and one must be mindful as an educator not to get to a point where learners are bogged down in overthinking but understanding how we think is just as important as thinking. Mezirow (1991), claimed that communicative and instrumental learning are the two principal domains of learning, but we would argue that it is the emancipatory learning of self-reflection that drives us forward in the world. It is the engine that brings meaning to knowledge.

Mezirow Theory of Transformational Learning (2000) defined the process of identifying, analyzing, and making thoughtful changes to the assumptions that lead us to think, act, and behave in certain ways; which have been innate to our worldview over time. Transformative education is an experience that occurs in our lives as individuals, as time moves us through life in an endless cycle. It is an opportunity for one to grow in their understanding of the world around them and forces one to examine their perspectives, meaning of that perspective and the assumptions that follow. As adult learners in general and educators, it is necessary that we can think and talk about what we learned in the classroom as an aspect of our professional growth. Additionally, it would be beneficial to educational programs and the students, for such programs to provide preservice teacher's programs, which emphasizes next steps from what individuals' instructors have reflected about for the advantage of all. They need to be able to use what they learned about themselves to chart their journey and genuinely use their reflections as tools for improvement in their professional development.

A one size fits all code of personal ethics or a universal definition of an ethical body, is implausible to achieve, if not impossible owing to the differing views of what a standard code represents to different cultures, people and circumstances. To adequately discuss our personal ethical, there must be an understanding of the higher purpose of our being and the direction we want to drive our spiritual life; which I think would determine how our life would go overall. In almost every human endeavor there have always existed the concepts of good versus evil and right versus wrong; it is highlighted in the golden rule of doing unto others, as you would want them to do unto you. Therefore, society has always judged our goodness, ethics, and morality through the lenses of our fellow human beings and thus measured our character and behavior by how others see us. However, we have always viewed through our lens, and have always judged our actions by our compass which may not always be right, but we have perfectly rationalized this method all our life.

As leaders, in any capacity, whether to our children, as mentors, and role models, it is essential to look at our beliefs to make sure our decisions are based on some sense of ethics (Covey, 1992). Ethics mean different things to different people, for some it is based on their spiritual and religious beliefs, others, it is their basic understanding of right and wrong, and for others still, it is whatever the society deems wrong or right according to the laws that govern their society. In most societies, the role of the ' family' is central to the culture — the family which is " group of individuals living together during important phases of their lifetime and bound to each other by biological and social and psychological relationship" (Sethi, 1989, p. 23).

Families operate under a culture of interdependency; the wellbeing of one is dependent and contingent upon the welfare of the whole. As the family is to an individual, so is the community to a group of people in a society. A family and community's ethical or unethical positioning can shape society for generations. It is imperative for any society to live and die by the belief that all men are created equal, and the human body has the right to be preserved and not to be exploited by another person (West, 2010). As Bonhoeffer (2005) suggested, " the human body must never become a thing, any object, such as might fall under the unrestricted power of another man and be used by him solely as a mean to his own ends" (p. 181). Social justice and cultural changes must not adopt a step-by-step approach but must race toward ethical choices that alter entire generations towards the right.

Over time, it has come to mean a medley of all of the above with our spiritual conscience as a guide. As we pursue our daily endeavors, it is imperative to assess our beliefs to ensure our interactions with colleagues, friends, family, and their decisions that guide them, based on some sense of ethics (Covey, 1991). Although we all tend to reserve our critical lenses outwards in the judgment of others, it is prudent to train those lenses inwards, and we have had to that regularly as a matter of practice. The responsibility of an educator can be a very daunting commission; our lives and that of the learners are so intertwined that their failure inextricably becomes our failure and their success becomes ours to celebrate vicariously as well. As such, igniting a genuine intellectual curiosity and providing the students with information to make informed decisions is one of the most powerful things an educator can do. In exposing our students to new ways of

thinking, we are ethically bound to retain awareness of diversity in race, religion, culture, and ethnicity in our classrooms. With the enormous power and authority, as educators and an ethically minded part of a collective body, we must master the art of navigating the slippery slope that is teaching without offending the sensitivities of our learners. Therefore, we must use discretion to educate and not deprive (Markie, 1994). Our noble goal as educators must be taken a more precise focus: to be more determined to have devotion in our profession and let students take precedence over all our actions.

Organizational Control

Control of any organization is a connection between people; is an engagement that transcends the ability to influence others. Therefore, leaders need determination in moral and spiritual guidance to achieve an understanding of ethics in order to make ethically sound decisions. According to Bennis (1993), " a leader is not simply someone who experiences the personal exhilaration of being in charge. A leader is someone whose actions have the most profound consequences on other people's lives, for better or for worse, sometimes forever and ever" (p. 1). We have found the profundity of the quote a charge that every leader should hold. To attain the mantle of leadership, one must be dedicated and resilient to withstand the challenges that come with this title. As a school administrator and in all our previous endeavors professionally and personally; I have always been guided by integrity, inclusivity, authenticity, and a sense of familiar leanings that we as humans are all in this together. Every leader should endeavor to foster growth in their staff.   By encouraging

the staff to grow professionally and personally, they can begin to take pride in their job and therefore unleash their fullest potential. Focusing on making the subordinates grow individually for the greater growth of the organization is an example of a transcendent leadership.

Houston (2001) noted that school leadership focuses on the substance of what it means to be human and to live together harmoniously in the world. Education is not about the skills we teach; it is about the spirit we nurture (p. 432). As Northouse (2007) posited, it is a fact that, leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.   However, I have always been one who is guided by my heart and weigh any leadership decision on its effect on all the parties involved against the goals of the organization; especially as it relates to developing talents and improving the organization. Organizational development is a system that has been created for organizations to grow and change internally. Schmuck, Bell, and Bell (2012) explained how change occurs with individual improvement; aimed at improving organizational functionality and the quality of life for these organizations

Within an educational institution, one should focus on systematic evaluation with an eye towards improvement. All the effort on the part of leadership of an organization should focus on changes to formal and informal procedures, processes, norms, and structures. With a goal of promoting unity in mind, we should always identify specific features that characterize the uniqueness of individual members of staff and harness it for the realization of the common goal. Never attempting to ever pull rank with the lowest member of the; because by fostering enthusiasm amongst the staff, one helps even the

least member of the staff transcend their limitations. One of the critical assumptions of Organizational Development is that educational institutions have inherent norms and behavioral regularities that exist separate and apart from the personalities on the individuals that are part of the organization; regularities as part of a group culture that must be shifted for any substantive change efforts to succeed (Schmuck, et al., 2012).

Impactful Awareness

According to Linsky and Heifetz (2009), " leadership is worth the risk because the goals extend beyond material gain or personal advancement. By making the lives of people around us better, leadership provides meaning in life, it creates purpose" (p. 3). Leadership is about getting from the pie, what you put into it. Bringing clarity, connectivity and always remaining the exemplary in communication, is an indispensable skill that can be impactful in the lives of the leader and the led. We adopted the art of transparency and communication with our learners as well, and this has been one of the most inspiring aspects of being an educator and a leader. The ability to help students find their truth; to be a motivation on their road towards what that truth is. As Markie (1994) stated, " we are obligated to promote intellectual inquiry, to aid those students who attempt it, and to make success in it, a necessary condition of success in our course." (p. 42). It is so exciting to shape young minds by showing them the paths they can travel down on their own to fulfill their calling as we all do.

In our role as a program administrator, we have had to question in-depth, and understand what our essential roles and ethical roles are and how our

choices and decisions towards school policies affect the lives of the students and staff who are in our charge. Each time we have arrived at the same conclusion that one of the most inspiring duties we have as an administrator, is to help our learners find their truth and serve to guide them on their path towards what that entails. According to Markie (1994), students function more effectively when they know where they are being led and why. The challenge that comes from being a program administrator is stimulating. However, one must be careful to take precautionary measure to protect the young minds by promoting ethical values. As educators, we are continually learning and growing as new and better truths continually overwrite our previously held beliefs. Therefore, we must challenge our students as well and encourage them to ask questions even if it veers into uncomfortable territory especially since we are the " the material's representative" (p. 5). We must push, question and lay a seed of doubt in their preconceived notions, giving them a reason to believe in something else. Therefore, encouraging inquiry is the best and most lasting tool we have since we are obligated to promote intellectual inquiry.

Conclusions

My core leadership style charts the transformational leadership lens, which was first introduced by Burns (1978) who describes this leadership style as a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation. Burns posited that transforming leadership style is based on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goal; a leadership style that can and should work together with

servant leadership. The part that appeals to me is that it generates

significant changes in the life of people and organizations. This to me says

that, great leadership inspires the others: a sort of passing-of-the-torch

aspect.

When a leader not only achieves personal success but also generates and

elicit peers and colleagues to reach their best potential; he or she is truly

transformational. Palmer (2004) put it best that, we must develop a circle of

trust, people come together and work on developing growth. Sometimes, a

leader is often viewed as that figure whose task it is to inspire and sell a

vision to others. Either by exemplifying it, projecting it or promoting it.

According to Avolio and Yamarino (2002), the leader provides " influence

(charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and

individualized consideration" (p. 111). On this premise, I assess leadership as

morally purposeful and elevating, thus as a leader in my program and most

importantly in my community, I intend to deploy my skills, choose visions

and purposes that are based on their fundamental values to support those

that look up to me.

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