

A case of social justice leadership assignment

[Education](#)



As a result of these changing demographics, the school district has been challenged by the superintendent to “ take responsibility for creating a socially Just educational system” (Ryan and Katz, 2007)” because there has been biases towards minority subgroups- race, sex, physical ability and sexual orientation. These biases have been brought to attention in the evaluation of the district in the district report card. According to the report, “ African American students, Hispanic students, students categorized as economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities are not meeting state academic standards” (Ryan &

Katz, 2007). ” The mission of the superintendent is to find out how to create a more socially Justice educational system in her schools. Summary of the Case In a suburban school district in the Midwest, Superintendent Dry. Gloria Montana recognized that there were major issues with social Justice in her school district due her evaluation of the state district report card. The report card revealed that “ forty- five percent of the students in the district are students of color, while ninety-three percent of teachers in the district are White” (Ryan and Katz, 2007). Additionally, it as found that students classified as African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged and those who are possess a disability are shown to be “ significantly less proficient in meeting academic standards compared to their White and Asian/ Pacific Islander peers” (Ryan and Katz, 2007)”. Dry. Gloria Montana, a superintendent with a social Justice definition of having all children “ truly able to get what they need to succeed” by having “ school leaders create an environment where all children learn well”, realized that it was time for her to “ roll up her sleeves and get to work” (Ryan and Katz, 2007).

Montana was aware that student achievement must be examined from a social justice standpoint (2007). As a result, she challenged her principals to evaluate their own biases and thinking about diversity by engaging them in a district workshop. After the workshop it was assumed that the administrators will replicate the same approach with their own faculty and staff in their schools by implementing “ professional development programs that help the district’s educators to uncover and identify their feelings, ideas, and beliefs toward cultural groups”(Ryan and Katz, 2007). Mimi Vandenberg, principal of Holland Elementary School in Dry. Montana’s school district took on the challenge of not only implementing workshops in her school, but also immersing herself in various classes, workshops, and conferences that addressed issues of A Case of Social Justice Leadership By reestablishing because she herself had been put in many positions of questioning her leadership due to her race and institutionalized racism. After attending a State University workshop, Vandenberg came away with three activities that she wanted to implement with her staff.

The first was Peggy Macintosh’s essay “ White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” coupled with the list of reveilles. Vandenberg felt that this would help bring considerable insight to her White teachers on the benefits they may take for granted because they are a population born into them. The second activity was GREECE Model activities which focused on how diversity categorized as gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and ability is socially constructed based on “ binary thinking, power and privilege”(Ryan and Katz, 2007)”.

The third activity was the Roundtable which is a large-group activity that explores ideals of equity, shared leadership, appreciation of preferences, authenticity, value clarification, and self-reflective listening and speaking (Ryan and Katz, 2007). Vanderburgh goal is for her staff to come new insights on how to create inclusive education for all students and members of the school community. Analysis The purpose of this case study is to evaluate Dry.

Montana's and Principal Panderer's approach to the issue of social Justice and equality in the school district. There are many frameworks that can be applied to analyze the actions of these educational leaders. The first framework used is Lindsey, Robins, and Dotterel's Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders (2003) which is used to measure cultural proficiency and the status of equality in the school district. An analysis of Lindsey model of a Cultural Proficient Leader (2003) showed that principal Vanderburgh and Dry.

Montana's embrace of learning and obtaining more personal knowledge of diversity issues was a positive move in the direction of a culturally proficient leader by showing that they too embrace the population change and are indeed concerned about helping these students to be successful. It also showed that the two leaders demonstrated Lindsay institutionalized cultural knowledge effectively. Evidence of this can be seen in that they both took proactive measures in ensuring the education of their students by providing training to their faculty and staff.

Additionally, their concern for their student population leads me to believe that they are both leaders who are instrumental in looking at the school data and noting areas in which can be improved in order to make sure all of the district's students have an environment where they are all able to meet expectations. Lindsay model (2003) also contends that a cultural proficient leader must learn to both value culture and adapt diversity. To adapt diversity the leader must assess policy and propose changes where appropriate.

By doing so, this shows cultural sensitivity to the needs of all students. It is safe to say that both leaders mastered this Lindsey ideal. In addition, the Lindsey model (2003) also says a culturally proficient leader is aware of their culture, the school and district's culture and the culture of the students and their families. I think this was evident with both leaders. Dry. Montana was instrumental in looking at the state data of her district and pointing out problem areas.

As a result, she began to apply solutions to the problems outline. Similarly, Principal Vandenberg took an even further approach by taking the time to immerse herself into training in order to check Vandenberg is what Lindsey says is a leader able to manage dynamics of difference and able to provide training, support systems and resources for developing and establishing new conflict resolution strategies. Another framework used is Donna Ford's (1998) model of the Multicultural Educator.

Ford's (1998) model contends that the multicultural educator will possess the following knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which includes adopting a

Social Justice Ideology which includes: Adopting democratic attitudes and values Knowledge of the stages of cultural identity Immersing self in diverse settings Recognizing that we are all prejudiced, but seeks to change Adopting multicultural education Viewing society and issues from multivalent viewpoints Appreciating and respecting diversity According to the Ford Model of a Multicultural Educator, it can be seen that Dry.

Montana possesses the skills of adopting a democratic attitude and recognizes that we all are prejudiced, but seeks to change. Additionally, it can be seen that she attempts to adopt a multicultural education for her school district and views society and issues from a multivalent standpoint which was evidence in the way she analyzed her school data and focused in on the historical context of the district. Additionally, it was seen through all of this that Dry.

Montana appreciates and respects diversity. Similarly, it can be seen that Principal Vandenberg possessed even more of the skills in Ford's model of a Multicultural Educator. She adopted democratic attitudes and values, recognized that we are all prejudiced from her own personal insight and training, attempted to adopt a multicultural education environment for her school, and proactively went the extra mile when faced with a diversity dilemma, which showed that she appreciates and respects diversity.

It is vital for both leaders according to the Ford Model (1998) is to immerse one's self into different diverse settings and to obtain knowledge of the stages of cultural identity. The case study did not provide evidence of either having occurred. A way for Dry. Montana to participate in immersion would

be to visit different schools in her district with different populations. Here she will be able to see firsthand the experiences faced by different students in different areas.

Principal Vandenberg on the other hand can simply visit the neighborhoods of students in her school and immerse herself in their environment rather it be to visit a local church or attend a cultural event in the community. This will give her a strong sense of where her students are coming from. The third framework used is the adapted strategies proposed by Bartenders and Gardner (2004) for the social entrepreneur of the corporate world into the role of the school administrator.

The term social entrepreneur can be applied to the school administrator in that the school administrator is in the position to effect change, love social problems, and adhere to the mission of helping all students achieve academic success. School leaders are in a unique position to be able to work with children, bring to the table conversations concerning some of the issues raised in educating at-risk, gifted, and under identified gifted students (Gentry, 2006), as well as work with families and communities as an educational liaison or some sort.

Three advocating for equality and Justice for all students: reframing challenges, adhering to a sense of obligation, and discerning measures of success Consequently, in order to maintain a commitment for change, the school leader just possess also a strong sense of obligation to his or her work and to the people and communities it will effect. If the main focus for the school administrator is to facilitate academic success for all students, it is

imperative that leaders invest time and commitment in helping to close the achievement gap, thus turning around a social problem.

Individuals with deep convictions into their work and cause are willing to respond to and act on their obligations (Bartenders et al. 2004). It can be seen from the case study that both leaders possessed the strong sense of obligation o their work and invested time in helping to turn around a social problem occurring in the Mid-West school district. In addition, social entrepreneurs regularly evaluate their work (Bartenders et al. 2004). There are certain standards by which social entrepreneurs evaluate their work.

Similarly, Florida School Leaders also have certain standards by which they evaluate their success. In the age of accountability, school leaders are now being held accountable for students' academic success. As a result, an effective school leader will recognize and measure their successes by the impact they have on students, parents, and communities. There was no significant evidence that either leader in the case study evaluated their efforts in way that is measurable.

It is vital that A suggestion would they to do some sort of pre and post survey evaluation or climate survey with students, staff and parents to evaluate their efforts. Goals, Challenges, Potential Outcomes and Challenges
An American society once dominated by Whites will soon cease to exist. By the year 2010, racial and ethnic minorities will become a numerical majority, constituting a " Diversified America" with White Americans comprising approximately 48% of the population (Sue and Sue, 1999).

Consequently, by the year 2020, the majority of students attending public schools will be students of color or children from diverse cultural, ethnic, and or linguistic backgrounds (Holcomb- McCoy, 2004; Sue and Sue, 1999).

Although the Brown v. The Board of Education's landmark case in 1954 set out to eradicate the inequality that existed in America's schools and increase student achievement, a disturbing achievement gap still exists between students of color and the majority.

With the American society rapidly changing and becoming more “multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual” (Sue and Sue, 1999), it is clear that school leaders] will interface with a diverse population of students (Hobnobs and Kanata, 1996; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001 ; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy and Myers, 1999. One of the major challenges facing the school [leader] profession today is the preparation leaders who will be able to address the needs of all students (Hobnobs and Kanata, 1996; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; and Lee, 2006).

Sue and Sue (1999) found that [people] who are unaware of the biases or differences that occur between them and their culturally diverse [peers] are likely to impute negative characteristics. Multicultural competence has been described “ as having the awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively work with diverse [people]” (Sue and and attitudes and how people are the products of their own cultural conditioning (Holcomb- McCoy, 2005).

Knowledge refers to the person's understanding of the worldviews of their culturally different peers (Holcomb- McCoy, 2005; Sue and Sue, 1999).

Finally, skill refers to “ the process by which the person actively develops and practices the appropriate intervention strategies needed to work with culturally different [students](215)”. It is clear that school leaders have as their mission the unification of student development, welfare, and success (Gogh, Wahl, McDonald, Briskest, and Yon, 2007). With this said, school leaders are on the front line when it comes to eliminating the achievement gap that lies between racially and culturally diverse students and their white peers. In an era of increased accountability, the role of the Florida School Leader has begun to change.

With a focus on accountability in education, leaders are being asked to justify how they are meeting the needs of all students. However, one of the major challenges faced in creating a school climate of acceptance and diversity awareness is the influence of society. It is safe to assume that students and staff will buy into the notion of “ we are all created as one” while in the school setting, but if the outside society does not also embrace this philosophy, then what good will it do? The question then becomes: is just in school enough? Although the efforts of Dry.

Montana and Principal Vandenberg are excellent in trying to bridge the gap in diversity and create a social Justice educational setting, how far will it make a difference without the buy in of the surrounding community? Consequently, it has been discovered in the literature that societal factors may have a greater impact on young people’s decisions(Bassos, 2012). While the efforts of the leaders in this case study prove to be great, it is imperative that the bridge between school, community and parents be closed in order to see the lasting effects of such an effort.

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The mission set out for school leaders is a challenging one that involves a lot of effort, time and patience to see through. However, by investing this time and effort, it can be almost assured that the effects will be lasting.

Recommendations In order to see where your school lies in terms of cultural competence it is imperative that one do an Equity and Needs Assessment on the school and or district in question. By doing this one can gain invaluable insight that will lead to coming up with new strategies for bringing the school district up to cultural proficient standards.

This district will benefit from focusing their attention in examining their Equity and Needs by focusing on the Four Tools for developing cultural competence in order to see better results in their Equity and Needs Assessments. The first tool one must focus on is the barriers. With any big task comes a barrier to change. According to the Lindsey (2003) text there are three things one must keep in mind when working to create personal and organizational change: the presumption of entitlement, systems of oppression, and unawareness of the need to adapt.

Here the district can be first looked at as a whole, then each individual school would need to access its own barriers based on population. For instance, the presumption of entitlement can be seen as a barrier in that the dominant culture of the district being that of White. How will the community receive the new school changes in policies even that the majority of the population of the district is of the dominant group? Lindsey et. Al (2009) state that we as educators must be weary of community backlash [different] lifestyles... Or advocate for societal change” (p. 7). The second tool to look at is the guiding principles of the district and or community. For instance, given <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-of-social-justice-leadership-assignment/>

that there are disproportionate groups in this particular district it may be safe to say that “ group identity of individuals is as important as their individual identities”(Lindsay, 2009, p. 6). Each culture usually takes great pride in itself so the leader would need to rather examine what are the guiding principles in that school and/or district. The third tool to examine is to see where the school and/or district falls on the continuum phase.

Just from a little analysis of the case study, it could be inferred that the district lies somewhere between Cultural Blindness and Cultural Preconception (Lindsay, 2009) , if there is such a category. On the one hand, I believe the dominant culture of the students and staff, notice that there are other cultures within the school, however, they treat everyone in the system the same way without recognizing the need to change up the interaction. For example, much of the staff recognizes that there are differences in the student body however; some are not sensitive to the needs of those students.

However, on the other hand, this district may be in the Cultural Preconception stage in that they are starting to have an increased awareness for diversity and are moving in a positive direction. The fourth tool in is the evaluation of the essential elements. According to the text, “ the essential elements are an interdependent set of standards to guide being intentional in [ones] journey to cultural proficiency’ (Lindsey et al. , 2003 p 25). For any school to become more cultural competent school environment, it would have to start from the inside out, beginning with the staff.

In my opinion, first, the staff must begin by assessing culture. Since the majority of the staff stem from the dominant culture (White), it is imperative that some sort of diversity training take place which provides the opportunity for staff to recognize how their culture affects others. The expectations and life values often differ with other cultures. This was already done in both cases of leadership. Secondly, staff must begin to value diversity by celebrating and encouraging the presence of a variety of people.

This may involve some sort of Multicultural Show; however, it may be beneficial for each individual teacher and staff to promote diversity in the classroom or around their offices. This can be done by incorporating diversified lessons in the classroom as well. Thirdly, staff must change the way things are done in order to acknowledge and embrace differences. Lastly, it will be beneficial to keep the staff learning about diversity by institutionalizing cultural knowledge. This can be done by providing diversity training once a month during staff meetings.

Although it may be a tedious task to get teachers to buy in, it could provide to be beneficial in the long run. Leadership Take-aways Diversity: High Performing Leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school and the local community. (FADE, Florida Principal Leadership Standards, 2006). The first of many lessons I learned from this case study is the importance of diversity and being a culturally proficient leader. This class has also prepared me to be just that.

As a result, I have been more closely in tune to the policies and the chance in order to make things better for all students. Additionally, this assignment has shown me the importance of reaching every single student group and making sure that all groups feel connected and important in the school culture. It is important that the school climate changes to fit the needs of the school and student population. This has been the most important lesson this term in my courses. It is vital that leaders take into account the culture of all the students and embrace diversity.

Learning Environment: Effective school leaders structure and monitor a school learning environment that improves learning for all of Florist's diverse student population. (FADE, Florida Principal Leadership Standards, Standard 5, 2012). The second lesson I will take away from this case is the importance of accessing and continuing to improve the learning environment for all students. Student success depends on the environment in which they are learning and diversity should be used as an asset in the development of school procedures and practices as it is vital in being able to reach all students regardless of background.

It is important for leaders to constantly review data and reports to assess the school's success. Even more important is to take those results and implement changes into the learning environment as needed. **Student Learning as a Priority:** Effective school leaders demonstrate that student learning is their top priority through leadership actions that build and support a learning organization focused on student success. (FADE, Florida Principal Leadership Standards, Standard 2, 2012).

The efforts of the leaders in this case showed that it is vital to go above and beyond to ensure that learning is a top priority for all students. Learning is just not the inclusion of good test scores and stellar graduation rates, but it also involves the maintenance of the learning environment in which all students feel comfortable and are able to share in the learning process. It is vital to make sure that the staff is providing the best learning possible and differentiating instruction across the board.

As a competent leader, one must lead staff and guide them toward working as a system focused on student learning by aiding them in helping to close the performance gaps by providing additional support and trainings.

Reflective Conclusion In conclusion, it is important to note that it is vital that all leaders embrace and immerse in culture. In doing so, one is equipped with more of the tools necessary in order to be an open-minded leader who is able to embrace diversity and able to embrace the changes necessary to make in order to serve all students effectively.

It is clear that cultural competence is critical in the role of the school leader. With the inclusion of multicultural competence, the role of school leader calls for them to be advocates and take on many roles such as team facilitators and collaborators with members of their schools, families, and communities (BEMA & Chunk, 2005; Bryan, 2005). The school leader is also placed in the position to consult with other school officials in order to ensure that all students are treated fairly and that the school engages in the appropriate standards for a multicultural education.

Due to the inevitable “ Diversified America,” school leaders are obligated to change their roles, engage in activities that force them to recognize and embrace differences. It will not be long before the majority of America’s schools systems are comprised with mainly students of color. In order to keep with the times as well as eliminate achievement gaps, and most importantly- practice ethically, school counselors must become culturally competent. References Bassos, B. (2012). Upholding equality and social Justice: a social constructivist perspective on emancipators career guidance practice.