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Leadership in Higher Education

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Presentation Objectives

1. Critique ideas about leadership (including those offered in this presentation)
2. Understand the various approaches to defining leadership (and their limitations)
3. Be able to apply reflection in and reflection on practice and how that practice relates to leadership (Donald Schon)
4. Understand the context for leadership in troubled times



What is Leadership?

“Calling for leadership is easy. But despite thousands of essays, research studies, and other scholarly and practical works, the fact remains that little is actually known about the phenomenon we refer to as ‘leadership’.”



What is Leadership?

“There is still no agreement on how leadership can be defined, measured, assessed, or linked to outcomes, and no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders.”

(Birnbaum, How Colleges Work, and Bennis and Nanus)





Thinking About Leadership

“Cognitive biases allow us to see the ‘evidence’ of the effects of leadership even when it does not exist.”

Birnbaum, 25





Maier's Law

- If the facts do not conform to the theory they must be disposed of



Murphy's Law of Research

- Enough research will tend to support your theory



Audience Responses

Describing Good Leaders

- Decisive
- Confident
- Self-assured
- Open
- Honest
- Possesses integrity
- Inclusive
- Charismatic
- Flexible
- Creative
- Focused
- Passionate
- Listens
- Drive
- Demands quality & excellence
- Trusts people
- Empathetic
- High emotional intelligence
- Professional
- Caring
- Sees big picture
- Future oriented





So what is Leadership?

AND HOW CAN WE LEARN IT?





Theories of Leadership

1. Trait theories
2. Power and influence theories
3. Behavioral theories
4. Contingency theories
5. Symbolic and cultural theories





Thinking

- The first changed behavior





Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

- Reflecting in practice
- Reflection on practice



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A Dual World

Analysis	Synthesis
Short-Term	Long-Term
Detail	Big Picture
Managing Yourself	Managing Others
Doing Things Right	Doing Right Things
Rational	Intuitive
Reputation	Prestige





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Behaviors/Disciplines You Can Adopt

1. Don't get mad, but if you do, don't act (especially don't write anything)
2. Beware of righteous indignation, in yourself and others
3. Be courageous, don't shrink from confrontation or difficult situations
4. If you have to do something you don't like, do it with grace



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Behaviors/Disciplines You Can Adopt

5. Be promptly responsive, big and small
6. Exceed expectations on a regular basis at all levels
7. Be available, exercise sound time management techniques
8. Trust people until you can't
9. Communicate well and often
10. If you make a mistake, admit it, apologize, and take necessary steps



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Behaviors/Disciplines You Can Adopt

11. Make sure you consult the right people before making a decision
12. Reflect in and on action, with others if possible, continuously, and as a matter of habit
13. Be a witness to events (avoid unnecessary emotionalism)
14. Personally engage, professionally distance - simultaneously





Leading in Difficult Times

- Get Real
- Communicate
- Be Decisive



References

- Critique of Donald Schon's work:
 - <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-schon.htm>





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