The Influence of Instruction on Leadership

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Introduction

"Leadership is an art, something to be learned over time, not simply by reading books. Leadership is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information, and, in that sense, I don't know how to pin it down in every detail" (DePree, 2004).

For decades, researchers have been studying leadership and have found it to be very difficult to fully understand. A basic knowledge of leadership is available, but the details are hard to specify. These details include the complexity of the construct of leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990), the difficulty of forming a single definition or theoretical perspective from many possible options (Edmunds & Yewchuk, 1996; Simonton, 1995), and the lack of valid and reliable measures of leadership ability (Edmunds, 1998; Jarosewich, Pfeiffer, & Morris, 2002). All of these issues make researching leadership difficult because it is hard to gain new knowledge and understanding of a topic when there is not a solid foundation to build upon.

Leadership has been examined on multiple levels including gifted programs in primary schools and leadership development in business, but not a lot of research has specifically looked at the college student and how they view and develop leadership. This study will focus on college student leaders and how they define leadership. Specifically, it will compare student leaders who are in a program designed to enhance leadership development with student leaders who are not receiving formal leadership training.

Literature Review

Defining Leadership

There is not one single definition of leadership. However, most definitions share common factors. These include interacting with people, having vision, and making change. Out of the three most reoccurring factors of leadership, relationships with people is the most discussed among researchers. "Leadership is a social process because it involves interaction with other people" (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 127) and can be developed by practicing in a safe environment. Some researchers view an effective leader as one who is skilled in group dynamics, can inspire others, and relates well to a wide variety of people (Feldhusen & Pleiss, 1994).

Just as leadership is hard to define, the characteristics leaders possess are even harder for researchers to agree upon. Karnes and McGinnis (1995) say the personality traits of a leader can include power, honesty, trustworthiness, determination, devotion, mercy, care, compassion, self-confidence, morals, risk taking, ambition, wisdom, and intelligence. Compared to the personality traits, Karnes and Bean (1995) believe the desire to be challenged, the ability to solve problems creatively, the ability to reason critically, the ability to see new relationships, skill of verbal expression, flexibility in thought and actions, the ability to tolerate ambiguity, and the ability to motivate others are some of the skills leaders must hold. These characteristics do not necessarily describe only leaders. These

characteristics can be found in anyone, including followers. This is one of the difficulties in leadership. Although there may be overlap between leaders, there are not a few personality traits or a few skills that are found in all leaders.

Every leader has personality traits and skills that are unique to them, and because of this each researcher has their own list of characteristics they believe are found in leaders. Their lists have been determined by who they have observed. The following are behaviors and attitudes often associated with leaders: creating a vision, leader communication, leadership and followership, creative thinking, trust, and teamwork (Daft, 2007; Hellriegel & Slocum, 2006). Hensel (1991) believes the characteristics of leadership are interacting with both peers and adults, adapting to new situations, high verbal skills, and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. The characteristics may vary between researchers, but there are commonalities found within them. Matthews (2004) also agrees that there are common characteristics in leaders:

It is possible to assemble some common denominators that appear in most characterizations of youth leadership. These include a) its social nature, particularly as expressed through relationships and the exertion of interpersonal influence; b) its developmental aspects, which appear to be even more central among young leaders than among adults and which involve building general, as well as task-specific, skills; and c) its particular context, including the organizational setting, surrounding individuals, and other external structural features that influence the ways in which particular individuals express their leadership abilities. (p. 79)

Whether or not researchers agree on all of the characteristics of leaders, there are some reoccurring traits. These include interacting well with others, trust, strong verbal skills, and motivating others.

Who Are Leaders

Most people think of a politician, a CEO, or someone else in a place of power when thinking of leaders, but leaders can be found in all areas of life (Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2005). Also, when thinking about leaders, people tend to think of the positive. Leaders, however, are not always leading for the good. Hitler, for example, was a great leader. He did horrible things, but he was able to influence a larger audience through his charismatic persona. Some people believe they can take the negative leader and turn them into a positive leader. This study will not examine negative leaders or the strategies to change leaders.

Most research involving leaders is focused on two groups: gifted students and adults in the business field. We will begin by discussing the gifted students and business leadership training will be discussed in the next section. There are numerous studies that show students labeled as gifted are the ones who have leadership ability and also those who are receiving leadership instruction. Some researchers argue that if you have a high IQ you will be a good leader. Although leadership is in the national definition of giftedness, the reality is that many gifted students are labeled only because of their academic skills and not their leadership abilities. Leadership is not even being taught in the majority of gifted programs (Karnes & Stephens, 1999).

Other researchers believe that leaders can be less effective if their IQs are too high. They believe it creates a distance between them and the people they want to lead; a leader cannot exercise influence over others who cannot relate to him (Simonton, 1994). It is better the leader have practical thinking

skills, yet while still retaining what is normally referred to as common sense. The greater issue is not necessarily intelligence, rather the ability to understand the needs of others in a way that instills growth and confidence.

A prominent argument among researchers is whether leaders are born or made. Some psychologists argue leaders are born, while others argue they are made. Based on the research it seems that most come to the decision it is a combination of both. Researchers believe some people have certain traits they are born with, such as energy, intelligence, persistence, confidence, and a desire to influence others that can be characteristics of leaders. According to Redwood, Goldwasser, and Street (1999), "Some leaders are born, but most need help" (p. 64).

The help needed to develop leadership skills can be found at an early age. People can be taught from a young age to become a leader. We are constantly surrounded by people who are examples of leaders. Parents, teachers, pastors, and neighbors can all be examples of leadership to children. They can provide the training children need to become successful leaders (Avolio, 1999). Although some would argue that there are natural leaders, the underpinning assumption here is that leadership activities develop leaders-in other words, leaders are made, not born (Hellreigel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2005).

Colleges and universities have been viewed as the training ground for future leaders. Reed (2001) believes that being an effective leader in college might be a predictor for future leadership ability and the leadership experience of student leaders impacts the rest of their lives, though some people argue that the personal characteristics of leadership cannot be easily acquired through higher education (Barsi, Hand & Kress, 1989; Zemke & Zemke, 2001).

Since this study will focus on young adult college students, it is important to have a basic knowledge about the stage of development these students are in. A development theory describes the adolescent and collegiate years as the period in which individuals establish their identity and often face identity confusion (Santrok, 1997). This period roughly matches the fifth stage of Erikson's psychosocial development, which is characterized by individuals who search for their identity. If this is true, many college students may still be in the process of developing their own leadership identity and style. As they develop, college students are likely to develop more leadership skills and abilities (Bird, Ji, & Boyatt, 2004).

In a school setting it is hard to identify who the leaders truly are. In a study done by Karnes, Chauvin, and Trant (1985), it was found that there were no differences in leadership ability between students who help leadership positions and those who did not. These findings show that school-level leadership positions may be attributed to popularity more than they reflect peer judgments of leadership potential. There is a strong desire of younger leaders to feel accepted by their peers. This could be a reason why they chose to run for a leadership position. Many people view a leadership position as being a means by which they can further their influence on their peers because it can improve their social exposure (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This need is probably more important to the student leaders, who are still trying to find their place among their peers and in society, than it is for established and committed school administrators. Park (2000) calls it the power of the tribe. She says that the power of the tribe is an important part of finding identity and making meaning.

There is a lack of research linking leadership among youth with adult leadership performance (Foster,

1981; Huckaby & Sperling, 1981; Roach et al., 1999). Theories of adult leadership look at the individual leader, whereas youth leadership seems to be primarily situational (Roach et al., 1999). There is such a gap between youth and adult leaders, and college student leaders find themselves right in the middle. They are technically considered adults, yet they are not perceived that way by some people.

The way adults view student leaders can influence their development as leaders. Today, there are so many issues that impact our lives. Our attention tends to be spread across the issues instead of focusing in on one. Because of this, young people have been misunderstood and criticized for not being leaders, for not being involved, for simply being lazy. (Marais, Yang & Farzanehkia, 2000) Many adults believe that leadership is something one earns or grows into and that young people cannot be leaders in the present. Many believe young adults may be ready to practice leadership, but not to perform it. Another issue is that some adults are not willing to give up their own positions of power to younger leaders. These attitudes can lead adults to limit the leadership development of young adults. Though it is true that young people may not have the same leadership experience as adults, a fresh perspective could lead to new and efficient ways of solving problems and making change.

Training Leaders

Leadership development programs tend to be found in business fields and in gifted programs. We already discussed the state of gifted programs and the lack of leadership training they provide. The second focus of leadership research regards business training. Companies often provide leadership training for the employees that will go on to become management. The training tends to focus on communication, delegation, and team building. "It is important for any organization that is interested in growing and doing continued business to not ignore leadership training…it is only through these programs that employees' potential can be seen and taken advantage of" (Icles, p.2). This is a take charge model. It is not a sit back and wait mentality. This kind of belief is based more on the concept of training those with promise to fulfill a specific responsibility within the company. "If we waited for one [a leader] to be born we would exist in a wasteland of followers with no leaders. The fact that we can grow and nurture them is proven in the landscape of the business world where leaders emerge, evolve, and enrich the lives of all around them" (Vokoun, p.2).

In school settings, leadership development programs may exist, but they are available to a limited number of students. Since leadership is hard to define and measure, Huckaby and Sterling (1981) argue that leadership development programs must be available to the entire student body. All kids need to develop leadership skills. As they grow, they will have opportunities to lead and they need to be prepared to do this. Children should be inspired to see themselves as leaders and should be encouraged to demonstrate leadership characteristics at an early age. Teachers need to have the confidence to teach leadership in their classrooms because it is possible for leadership education to be incorporated in all subject areas (Karnes & Bean, 1990). Boones & Taylor (2007) believe it is the responsibility of educators to provide training, direction, and guidance for students to be successful. Educators must ensure that students receive the training and support they need to become successful leaders.

Many leadership develop programs include training on leadership characteristics, leadership skills, use simulation exercises to incorporate creative problem-solving and decision-making skills, and use role playing activities to develop interpersonal and presentation skills (Chan, 2000b). Some researchers

use the *ABC's* of youth development. These include agency, which is acting or exerting influence and power in a given situation; belonging, which is developing meaningful relationships with other students and adults and having a role at the school; and competence, which is developing new abilities and being appreciated for one's talents (Carver, 1997). The use of the ABC's comes from research from both psychologists and youth developers and encompasses some of the major characteristics of leadership.

There are different paths that leadership development could take. These paths include service learning trips, social welfare activities, learning communities, volunteering, internships, and other activities that develop social consciousness and life-long learning (Wielkiewicz, 2000). Service learning is one of the most used activities in leadership development. Service learning can help students gain confidence and take risks by challenging students to get outside of their comfort level. Service learning can help students realize that they can achieve beyond the limits they have put on themselves (Pleasants, Stephens, Selph & Pfeiffer, 2004). In a finding supporting the use of service learning in leadership development, more students reported positive attitudes toward community service activities than toward student government participation (Wade & Putnam, 1995). Students indicated that they wanted leadership-development activities that offered them real responsibility and that they wanted to have a choice in selecting activities and making decisions within those activities.

Researchers form their own ideas as to which type of leadership development works best. Students also have their own opinions as to which activities are most useful to their development as leaders such as activities that develop cooperation, communication and knowledge of leadership theory (Smith et al., 1991) and group simulation exercises (Chan, 2000b). The activities the students rated as least important included a presentation by a politician, *alumni day,* and sessions on history and government (Smith et al., 1991).

Researchers tend to believe that many of the activities used in leadership development are not really effective in improving leadership ability. A common flaw in most leadership development programs is that there is no documented relationship between the training and effectiveness in actual leadership activities after a program is completed. Self-knowledge and small-group activities are often used in leadership development programs. However, these components alone are not enough to help youth develop a goal-oriented vision or the ability to motivate others to work toward such a vision (Roach et al., 1999). Foster (1981) discusses four views of leadership expressed in the literature (the great person, small-group, nonleader, and social-role perspectives). "The only one of the four that suggests leadership to be improved through direct educational intervention" (Foster 1981, p. 23) is the small group view. This is important to note as we will try to determine in our study what effects direct instruction of leadership has on the leaders. Some researchers, on the other hand, believe characteristics, such as interpersonal skills and self-efficacy can increase through instruction (Chan, 2000a).

There does seem to be an agreement between researchers that everyday, real-world contexts will make up an important part of any well-rounded leadership development program and that individual choice, responsibility, and the opportunity to assume multiple roles are also vital parts of how leadership develops among youth (Kitano & Tafoya, 1982, 1984; Roach et al., Wade & Putnam, 1995). Researchers believe leadership cannot be taught using simulations or artificial contexts, but can only be learned through experience in real situations. They believe content taught in an artificial

context will likely be low level and lead to a surface level proficiency, rather than higher, self-directed leadership (Huckaby & Sterling, 1981). Researchers have yet to find one single program in which they believe improves leadership skills all across the board.

The core focus of leadership development until recently has been to first have the ability to understand the theories and concepts of leadership and then to apply them in real-life leadership scenarios. During the past decade, some authors have suggested that active student engagement during the learning process should be an essential part of leadership training for university students (Buckner & Williams, 1995; Hickman, 1994). Hickman (1994) believes that educators should reverse the order of instruction by engaging students in guided activities and then have them learn the concepts of leadership that come out of the activities they participate in. This makes sense when most researchers have found that real-life leadership activities are the ones in which students develop their abilities the most.

Research Questions

Little research has been done on college student leaders compared to the widespread body of studies on leadership in general. The lack of research on this topic should be looked at carefully, especially because college student leaders are one step away from being fully merged into the real world. Not only are student leaders in a stage of developing who they are and how they view the world, they are taking on a role that has shown difficult to fully understand. Some student leaders receive training and instruction of leadership, while others take on leadership all by themselves. Even though leadership development programs have been questioned as to the effect they have on improving leadership abilities, they impact the students on some level.

This study was designed to examine how college student leaders at a private suburban university define leadership. Specifically, this study compared the definitions of student leaders in a leadership development program who receive formal leadership instruction with student leaders not in the program. This study also assessed whether the involvement in a leadership development program influenced the way the students viewed and defined leadership. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1.   How have student leaders been taught about leadership?

2.   How are student leaders at Eastern University defining leadership?

3.   In what ways are their definitions influenced by whether or not they are receiving direct leadership instruction?

Methodology

The research stands as a testament to the complexity of leadership studies and reinforces the need for narrowing the scope of research. That is why for this study we focused primarily on college student leaders. This was a qualitative study in which four student leaders and one leadership instructor at a private suburban university were interviewed about leadership. The plan was to interview two students in a leadership development program and two students who were not. Access was gained to the site and the participants due to both researchers being enrolled at the university. The participants were

found through connections the researchers had at the university and on the university's website. The researchers met with each participant. A consent form was read and signed by each participant before the interviews began.

The majority of research on leadership has used quantitative methods for acquiring information. For this study, interviews were determined to be the best method to access information so the researchers could mold and shape the interview questions around the answers of the participants. The interview questions for the students were developed to gain background knowledge of our participants' leadership development and to determine how they define leadership (See Appendix A). Each student leader had the same set of questions. However, the students in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) had additional questions about the program and the requirements of it. The non-LDP student leaders were asked questions about how they were developing their leadership skills. The interview questions for the leadership instructor were developed to get a better understand of leadership in general and the LDP (See Appendix B). Each of the student interviews took approximately thirty minutes, while the instructor's interview took almost an hour. The interviews were also audio-recorded so the interviews could be transcribed. The researchers took notes during the interviews, but the transcriptions helped in recalling word for word statements the participants used.

Leadership Development Program

We thought it necessary to provide a bit of information on the Leadership Development Program. The LDP was designed to help prepare the university students for future leadership roles. "Through education, experience, training and mentoring, students learn how to identify their leadership styles, improve communication skills, plan effectively, and inspire other as Christ-centered servant leaders" (Leadership, 2008). Servant leadership is a central concept in the program.

Each year approximately one hundred entering freshman apply for the LDP. The application process consists of writing three essays and getting two references. The director of the program never meets the students before they come to the university. The selection is based solely on the essays and references. Interviews are not used. Out of the one hundred who apply each year, only twenty are selected to be the cohort for the incoming class. The director attempts to bring a variety of leadership experiences to the group. A $2000 grant is given to each student in the program for every year.

Once in the program there are many requirements that have to be met. Each student must hold at least a 3.0 GPA over the four years. There are two classes and multiple retreats the students must attend. There are more classes available, but they are not necessary unless the student wants a Leadership Minor. The LDP students must get involved in a club or organization by their sophomore year and by their junior year they must hold a leadership position on campus. There is one component to the LDP that is quite interesting. The students in the LDP are not made public knowledge. The students are not supposed to advertise they are in it. "To be identified as part of a "leadership program" when you are still learning how to lead can be a difficult situation, creating expectations where there needs to be freedom to learn and grow" (Leadership, 2008).

Participants

Five participants were used in this study. Four out of the five were college student leaders. Three were females and one was male. This is proportionate to the student population at the university. Martha is

a junior studying Elementary and Early Childhood Education. She is part of the LDP. She currently does not have a leadership role on campus. Jordan is a junior studying Communications. She is also part of the LDP. She is currently the captain of the Eastern University Women's Basketball team. Lisa is a junior studying Business Management. She is currently the chair of the Student Activities Board and is part of the LDP. Cody is a junior studying English Writing. He is not part of the LDP and is currently the captain of the Eastern University Men's Soccer team, a Student Chaplain, and the leader of Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Our intent was to interview two student leaders in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) and two student leaders not in the LDP. We intentionally interviewed two students we knew were in the LDP. However, students in the LDP are not made known publicly, so as we interviewed our third participant it was found that she also was in the LDP. This is a limitation to our study as we would have liked the sample to be equal in our comparison.

The fifth participant was a faculty member. Tara is the Director of Leadership Development and Career Services at the university. She is also the founder and director of the LDP. She has held this position for eighteen years. We thought it was important to interview this participant because she is directly related to leadership development at the university and could give us more insight into the LDP.

Both of the researchers were Undergraduate and Graduate students at the university and were able to access the site and the participants because of this. Some of the participants were found on the university's website by finding lists of student leaders and others were acquaintances of the researchers.

Findings

How to Lead

According to the interviews there were three ways the student leaders liked to lead: through servant leadership, through delegating and by example. All four of the student leaders mentioned serving as being important in leadership at one point during the interviews. Two of the four believed that as a leader they need to lead by example. Two students also believed that delegation is a key component in leadership. Below are a few quotes that support these findings.

"Start serving and you will find yourself leading others." -Cody

"The definition of leadership is leading by example, leading through servant leadership. I am a firm believer that you have to be willing to do all of the grunt work and serve with all of your heart before you can be a leader." -Lisa

"But I think for me it's more of the realization that I do have influence on people and I have to watch the way that I conduct myself. I have to be leading an example with my life." -Jordan

Another theme found among the participants was the idea of following. All of the participants, except Cody, believed that being a leader did not necessarily mean that they had to be the main person or even the person in charge of everything. The interviews showed the participants believed that leadership is not usually a one person job, but a job that involves many people.

"You can't be a leader without other people. That would defeat the purpose of leadership." -Tara

"I don't necessarily have to by the one leading everyone to that goal. I'd rather be encouraging and kind of getting everyone excited about accomplishing a goal." -Jordan

"I like it when other people lead…it's nice to not always have to be in the leadership position… sometimes you just get sick of it and you need to be a follower." -Lisa

Definitions and Traits

None of the participants had the same definition of leadership. The most common theme out of all the definitions was that a leader needs to have a goal, break it down into jobs, and encourage people to accomplish the goal. Leadership for these student leaders seemed to be task oriented. The following quotes are examples of how two student leaders defined leadership.

"To have the ability to influence people in a positive way that is going to contribute to a group goal and going to accomplish that goal." -Jordan

"I would say someone who can see what needs to get done as a whole and then be able to take it, almost to little parts, and help everyone to participate, rather than doing it themselves. The ability to be able to explain to people what they have to do and have them understand." -Martha

There was more overlap among the student leaders in regards to what characteristics they thought were necessary for a good leader. These characteristics included communication skills, people skills, patience, organization, confidence, and vision. Tara and Jordan were the only two participants that mentioned the characteristics they listed were not universal for all leaders, but that they were the characteristics that are found most often in leaders.

"Leaders need to develop good listening skills, relationship building skills, a drive to want to succeed, and to want to accomplish their goals." -Lisa

"A good leader needs to have vision, morality/integrity, people skills, and need to be able to communicate." -Cody

"That's hard because it is going to depend on the situation and the context of what you are leading because I think people are going to shine in different situations." -Jordan

Born vs. Made

All of the participants, except Cody, believed that leaders are both born and created. They believed that people can be born with personality traits that are commonly found in leaders, but that those traits and skills need to be developed through practice. Practice and experiencing leadership were mentioned as ways to make or develop a leader. Cody was strongly against the concept of leaders being made.

"If you could create leaders then people would be lining up to 'become leaders.' I sort of think a leadership class is like those commercials that promise to make you skinny. Those things are a shame and a waste of time. People look up to you or they don't. Training might help you with knowing technical details which you can then pass on to others, but it can't give you desire/passion/vision/creativity. If you

want to try to be a leader, find a vacuum or hole in someone's life/organization that needs help. Start serving and you will find yourself leading others." -Cody

Do it

Another common theme found throughout all of the interviews was the idea that actually doing leadership was the best way to learn about it and also the best way develop the skills necessary to become a successful leader. Reading about leadership was mentioned by all of the participants as a component that has been used to teach them about leadership. Regardless, they all thought that leadership could be studied in a classroom, but not learned. Tara, the director of the program who uses reading in her curriculum, even acknowledged that experiencing leadership is better than reading about it.

"You can't just study leadership in order to be a leader." -Tara

"Just to do it. Reading about it and stuff is not as much. It might be helpful but you don't really know until you put it into practice." -Martha

"I think the best way is to just experience it." -Lisa

Discussion

How have students been taught about leadership?

All of the student leaders in this study learned about leadership in their childhood through different means. One student was a part of a community leadership project, one student attended several leadership conferences, and one was part of a church leadership group. Even though they learned about leadership in different ways, they all had one or more leadership roles in high school. None of the participants had formal training in leadership through school programs, even if they were part of a gifted program. This supports the research because, although leadership is in the definition of giftedness, it is not being taught in gifted programs.

High school seems to be the time when many students begin stepping into leadership roles, and often they are just thrown into them without any guidance. If high school is the time many students are beginning to explore their leadership abilities, why do many high schools not have some sort of program to develop leadership in their students? The research on high school leadership programs is minimal, but that does not mean those types of programs are not out there.

As Bolman and Deal (1997) revealed in their research, many student leaders in high school come into their roles because of popularity. We are not saying this is necessarily a bad thing, but if high schools are going to have leadership development programs they need to make sure they are available to all students. Leadership development needs to begin early. Since leadership is not really being taught in the elementary schools, high schools need to step up and prepare their students for the future. Students should not have to wait until college, if they even go to college, to receive training in leadership.

At the university level, many schools are now beginning to have programs for the development of leaders. The university in this study has only had their program for about ten years, and they were one of the first in their category of universities to start a program like it. Leadership programs are becoming

more prevalent at the university level, but they are still few and far between. The universities that do have leadership programs are not perfect either. Take the university in this study for example. In any one given school year, there are at most eighty students who are a part of the Leadership Development Program. These students receive training and support in leadership. What about all of the other leaders on campus?

Some students are lucky enough to find a leadership role in an established program such as the Resident Assistant Program and the Student Chaplain Program. These programs provide guidance and training for their specific leadership roles. The extent of the training those leaders receive was not investigated in this study. There are many clubs and organizations found at the university that do not provide leaders with any type of leadership development. At one point leadership classes were available to any current student leader. The leadership classes have now been closed to the general student population because of the lack of time and personnel. Tara, the Director of Leadership development, noted that "there are pockets of area without sufficient leadership development."

We do not know the solution to rectify this situation, but we do know that leadership development should be available to all students. Research supports this statement. Maybe the university needs to take on more faculty and staff who could pour in the time and energy to fix this problem. We are not saying that the LDP should accept more students into the program each year, but we are saying that all student leaders should have a place where they can talk about their leadership experiences and develop their skills.

How are student leaders at this university defining leadership and in what ways are are their definitions influenced by whether or not they are receiving direct leadership instruction?

As stated in the findings section, all four of the student leaders mentioned serving as being an important part of leadership. Specifically, the three students in the LDP used the exact phrase of 'servant leadership' as part of their definition. This is most likely because the mission statement and goal of the LDP, to serve and not be served, has been engrained in their minds from the moment they stepped into the program. The LDP teaches a certain style of leadership and it definitely influences how the students in the program define leadership.

Cody, on the other hand, was not a part of the LDP, but he also referenced serving as being a part of leadership. He was not subjected to the beliefs of the program, yet still defined leadership in a similar manner. The only other thing the participants had in common was their faith in God. We wonder if the concept of servant leadership is only found in the Christian realm or if serving is just a major component of leadership. It is something to be researched further.

All of the student leaders referenced leaders as having a goal and reaching that goal. Tara, who has more years of leadership experience under her belt, referenced accomplishing those goals as making change. Daft (2007) believes leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who anticipate real changes and outcomes that reflect their common purposes.

"The pros to leadership are that you are able to affect change. That is also a negative because people are afraid of change. It is really interesting that a leader is someone who realizes that nothing is possible without a change. The leader is the one that is to articulate that to people not to tell them what to do." -Tara

Change is why communication skills and people skills are so important for a leader to have. Change will not happen if a leader cannot communicate effectively what needs to be done or if the people they are leading cannot trust or relate to them. All of the participants realized the necessity of those skills.

Whether or not leaders are born or made will always be a topic of discussion. There are three main views: leaders are born, leaders are made, and leaders are both born and made. As a result of this study and regardless of whether one believes leaders are born or made, we found there is always room for growth, areas in life that need development and new ideas that need to be learned. Learning is a part of life, so is leadership. At some point the two will intersect.

Conclusions

Prior experiences, as well as direct instruction of leadership, have a significant effect on how individuals define leadership. Although the instruction influences the definition of leadership, the actual leadership ability of an individual can only be influenced by experience. Certain people may be born with personality characteristics that are often found in leaders, but that does not mean they will be successful leaders. Leadership has to be developed through practice. Instruction can allow individuals to learn about past leaders, leadership theories, and leadership styles. It can also provide them with an opportunity to process their experiences with others. Learning about leadership will do and mean nothing unless it is lived out. This supports the research in that the best way to learn and develop leadership is to do it.

The student leaders in this study all had a similar understanding of leadership. There were no major differences found between the students who were in the LDP and the student who was not. "It doesn't matter if they are in the program or not. What matters is the standard they are held to" (Tara). The students in the program did not stand out to be more successful leaders. They all proved to be capable leaders who are working to develop their leadership skills and improve the world around them. Granted, the students in the LDP all defined leadership using certain terminology, but in the end, how one defines leadership is not really important. What matters is how one takes what they believe about leadership and put it into practice. Leadership is about doing, not defining.

There are a few areas in which future research would be important. It would be interesting to look into high schools that have leadership development and review the programs. Successful programs could be implemented in other high school settings. It would also be important to discover why many high schools do not have leadership development programs.

Specifically for the university in this study, it would be important to expand this study to include more participants. Our results were slightly limited because of the secrecy of the LDP. The additional participants could further support the findings of this study or even present new ideas. It might also be interesting to examine students who applied for the LDP, but did not get accepted. Researchers could also focus on certain programs of the university and examine how they determine which students are qualified for certain leadership positions. The training these programs provide for the student leaders could also be examined for their effectiveness. There is much research to be done regarding leadership of college students.

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Appendix A

Interview questions for Administrator of the Leadership Program.

Section I: Background Information

Hi, how are you doing? Thank you for agreeing to participate. Do you mind if I tape this conversation?

1. Can you state your name and job title for the tape?

2. You run the Leadership Program, correct? How long have you held this position? What previous

experiences do you have?

3. Why were you interested in working for/with the leadership program?

Section II: Leadership

6. What is your definition of leadership? What are the positive and negative aspects of leadership?

7. How do you identify student leaders? What characteristics do leaders possess? Do you believe leaders are born or created? Why?

8. What type of training do you think student leaders need? What do you think works best? (ex. direct instruction, case studies, simulations, real life experience)

9. What challenges do you face coaching/mentoring/teaching students with leadership abilities?

Section III: The Leadership Program

13. Can you describe the Leadership Program for me?

-Can you give me an overview of the history of the program? When was it founded? Why was it founded? Who began the program?

14. Does the program define leadership? If so, what is the definition?

15. What is the application process like for the students? How do you select the students for the program? What percent of student leaders on campus is a part of the leadership program?

16. What is required of the students who participate in this program?

-Are the leadership classes open to anyone?

-The program focuses on 20 students each class. What about the other leaders on campus?

17. What effects do you think the program has on the leadership skills of the students?

18. Describe one or two differences between students enrolled in the program and those who are not.

19. Why is the Leadership Program an important part of Eastern?

20. Anything else you think I should know?

Thanks again for participating in our study.

Appendix B

Interview questions for student leaders

Section I: Background Information

Hi, how are you doing? Thanks for agreeing to participate. Do you mind if I tape this interview?

1. Can you state your name and your year?

2. What is your major?

3. What leadership experience did you have prior to Eastern? (ex. student government, team captain, stage manager, etc.)

-Did you have any training in leadership? Were you part of a gifted program?

4. What led you to take that role? Why were you interested?

5. When did you first realize you had the potential to be a leader?

Section II: Leadership

6. What is your definition of leadership?

a) What are the positive and negative aspects of leadership?

b) What are the characteristics/skills of a good leader?

7. What must students do to prepare themselves for leadership positions? Do you think it is necessary to have formal leadership training to lead well?

8. Do you believe leaders are born or created? Why?

-Do you believe leadership training is necessary?

-What do you think is the best way to learn about leadership or develop leadership skills?

9. How did you learn about leadership? Did you look up to anyone? Who?

10. Are you developing the skills you listed of a leader? How?

Section III: The Leadership Program

11. Do you know that Eastern has a Leadership Program? If yes, what do you know about it?

12. Did you apply to be in the Program? Why did you decide to apply for the Leadership Program?

13. If yes to #12, what did you think of the application process and its requirements?

(For the Leadership Grant students)

14. What are the requirements of the Leadership Program? Do you attend a class? What is being taught in that class? How have you benefited so far?

15. It is a requirement of the program to have a leadership role at least one year on campus. Do you hold a leadership position on campus now?

-If yes, what do you do?

-If no, what do you expect or want to do?

16. How do/did you decide what program to get involved with?

(For non-Leadership Grant students)

17. Do you hold a leadership position at Eastern? What is it?

18. Why did you decide to become involved in this organization? Were you a part of it before you took a leadership role?

19. Do you have a supervisor? What is their role? Do they help you become a better leader? How?

20. How do you think you would benefit from the formal training the leadership program provides for students?

(For both)

21. How do you relate to other student leaders on campus?

22. Is there anything else you would like to add about leadership or anything pertaining to it?

Thanks again for participating in this study.

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