

Task Four – Shared Leadership

Leadership has two major elements. I would not say one is more important than the other nor would I say one has to occur before the other, but there are two major elements. One is the removal of obstacles to success and the other is guidance. I believe it to be the ultimate responsibility of a leader to set up an environment that allows and even encourages an employee to be successful. This means removing items, eliminating issues or solving problems that are an impediment to an employee's success and an impediment to their involvement in the greater issues of the organization. For example, one of the issues we had to deal with here in my program is the issue of time; specifically having enough time to complete our screenings of the children. We have two teachers in each classroom and at the beginning they must complete a screening on each child. This takes them out of the classroom for each screening and impacts their daily plan and routine. Since we are a grant driven program we develop a new implementation plan each year, so once we identified this as a problem then we developed a solution that was then funded through the new grant implementation plan.

My second leadership element is guidance. Prior to solving the problem of time we, as a program, never seemed to have as much teacher involvement in projects as we wanted. Having removed the time obstacle for teachers, or at least improved the situation, they have been more involved in projects with other teachers and with administration. Now it is my opinion that with group projects that it is necessary for the leader to provide guidance but then allow the group to lead itself. I believe the very best leadership is the type of leadership that goes unnoticed. Where the group believes they have done all the work on their own and do not even notice the guidance provided by the leader.

This type of leadership requires the sharing of responsibility, because a team would not feel like they have done all the work on their own if a leader was directing every move that the team made. There is a point I have made already in class discussion and that is that the situation to a certain degree dictates whom the leader should be. This concept of leaders providing guidance just supports this idea. The leader sets up a team to work on a specific project and then depending on the stage that the team is in you will have one or more persons who naturally come to the forefront to lead a project at a particular time. This takes advantage of the team member's strengths and hopefully yields a better result. For example, organizing and just getting a project started may be one member's strength but then as the team gets into the heart of the project someone else may come to the forefront to lead the team through an analysis of different curriculums for example, followed by another team member who is good at summarizing and presenting the team's recommendations.

I know what I do not know. Therefore, I need others to be involved and that means at times for others to take the lead. Honestly, while I always want to learn that does not necessarily translate into wanting to know everything I do not know. Sometimes I am happy for other people to know the answer.