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Leadership Platform

ELP 625 SEM A: Studies in Educational Leadership

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I believe all children deserve an education that is equitable regardless of race, ability, zip code, social status and gender identity. It is a right to be educated in our country, however, as we have learned these past two weeks, many school systems are not functioning to the best of their ability to meet the ever-changing needs of the school populations. A true school leader needs to follow their core values and focus on a leadership style or theory to make a difference in the building they are assigned in. A few of the core leadership values that I am passionate about are integrity, service, respect and belief in human potential.

Zydzianaite (2018) goes into detail on the five key practices of school leaders which focuses on creating a climate hospitable to education in the second key factor. “Effective principals ensure that their schools allow both adults and children to put learning at the center of their daily activities. Such ‘a healthy school environment,’ as Vanderbilt researchers call it, is characterized by basics like safety and orderliness, as well as less tangible qualities such as a ‘supportive, responsive’ attitude toward the children and a sense by teachers that they are part of a community of professionals focused on good instruction.” (pg. 8). I believe students cannot learn effectively if they are not comfortable and safe in their environment. One leadership core value I believe strongly in is human potential. However, for a student to fulfill their potential they need to be in a community in which they feel welcomed and safe. My Fashion Design Technology classroom at the Harkness Career Center is just that. The first thing I accomplish each year as new students arrive is teaching them a basic sewing skill

of mastering straight, secure seams using ½” seam allowance. Students master this within a class day and the next begin to build upon the geometric side of sewing creating patchwork pillows. all students are working and creating showing their true self through these simple skills yet they are designing to their personalities by choosing the fabrics and patterns. The pride I see growing in their minds and creations gives them ownership of their place in my classroom. Once our first hands-on project is created, we start with the first chapter of the curriculum which embraces all ethnic and cultural differences in Fashion Psychology. Kids experience curriculum as to why they dress the way they do. We focus on differences between social and family influences as well as psychographics and demographics of each student. The hope is all students no matter race, gender identity, zip code or means will start to feel like part of our diverse classroom community early in the school year. I am proud to say it works! My core value of all humans have potential is reaffirmed within the first month of school.

Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube (2015) outlines and explains different theories of leadership. For example, behavioral leadership theory qualities “are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born”. (2.5) Another of my core values, service, falls into this theory. I have dedicated most of my adult life to service. I have served my community volunteering in political canvassing,

operating a co-operative preschool bringing it back from the brink of bankruptcy while directing a board of volunteers that supported the preschool, as well as participating in many church, historical society and Lioness group fundraisers. Our service in these groups helped to make the community better in many ways. From fundraisers to beautifying Main Street with planted flower baskets to serving food at the Friday Night Concert series in the park and organizing free workshops at the local library, these assets improved the day-to-day life in a small town for the residents of all ages. On the job service, where I always go above and beyond on assignments, tasks and projects gives inspiration to coworkers is another form of service. When we show passion in service the rewards are life changing as each event comes to fruition and the benefits to the community are observed..

I strongly believe that without integrity and respect a leader cannot effectively be a role model for their team. Zydziunaite (2018) suggests that “principals play a major role in developing a ‘professional community’ of teachers who guide one another in improving instruction.” (pg.10). My principal believes in allowing teachers to do the job they are trained for. He is an excellent role model for me in this core value. He demonstrates integrity daily, admitting when he is wrong or that another could have a better idea or plan while exuding leadership qualities that help us feel we have a leader to go to if the need arises. During Covid, his leadership inspired us all. Even though many teachers were asking questions he didn’t know the answers to because rulings from NYS Education were coming down daily, he

always listened to the questions and reassured us we are all in this together and to lean on each other for support. Without great integrity and respect from our staff, our administrative team could not have navigated Covid as well as they did. Our professional community at Harkness has great breadth as we all have our content areas of skills where we are experts, we teach our students for their future industry careers. However, we all have each other's backs and are willing to assist anyone in the building if needed especially when it comes to being a community. It is an inspiring place to work!

Each educational leader will have their own set of core values. Matching these core values with a leadership theory is the first steps of becoming a successful school leader. Based on the Behavioral Leadership qualities mentioned above and my lifetime experiences at this point in my educational journey this is my leadership style. While I do not believe I was born to be a leader, the life circumstances I have navigated through have sent me on this leadership pathway. I am an observer, listener and contemplator using life experiences and outcomes to direct me in my decision-making process. Integrity, service, respect and belief in human potential are my core leadership values that will assist me in being an excellent educational leader.

References

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