
Preface

There is an old Chinese curse, “May you live in interesting times.” Current school leaders may feel that we are living in those times. We have increasing pressures on schools that keep education on top of political agendas. Newspapers report on how well—or not—schools and states are working to close the achievement gap. Critics state we must educate all students for the 21st century, whatever that means, because we must remain competitive in the global workplace to develop well-educated workers who are creative and work well in groups. Our school populations reflect the increasingly diverse general populations. Schools are criticized as being unfriendly to boys. Letting some students “slip through the cracks” can no longer be acceptable. However, methods and practices that used to work may no longer satisfy the needs of the varied populations we serve. In addition, since September 11, 2001, all of these agendas must be accomplished in most states with diminished resources.

Authors such as Michael Fullan, Stephen Covey, Jim Collins, Richard DuFour, Douglas Reeves, and Margaret Wheatley, among many others, write about the type of leadership that is necessary to accomplish these Herculean tasks in our contemporary schools. We can read about instructional leaders, visionary leaders, leaders in a professional learning community, and “Level 5 Leaders.” No one disagrees that leadership is important. However, there is no one theory or method that works with every leader. In fact, two people may adhere to the same philosophical viewpoint of leadership and exhibit different degrees of success, depending on the climate of the school where they practice.

To make leadership happen, whatever style of leadership it may be, it is necessary to know more than theories. It is important to understand history, politics, and human behavior, as well. Even

destructive leaders, such as Saddam Hussein and Hitler, had to understand how to put all the pieces together to create a culture, whereby they could accomplish their goals. Leadership is a blend of the visionary and the mundane, the prophet and the maintenance worker, and the salesperson and the consumer.

It is easier to develop a theory about leadership than it is to put that same theory into practice.

What part of leadership are the day-to-day management strategies that keep an organization running smoothly so that leadership can take place? Leadership also requires successful management. Graduate programs and seminars expose students to theories and ideas about effective leaders, but they seldom address the more commonplace aspects of how to put all the pieces together into effective management practices. Do we mistakenly believe that effective management strategies will just fall into place?

A leader cannot truly lead unless the elements of successful management also take place. Therefore, this book provides strategies of day-to-day management so that the educational leader has more time to practice educational leadership.

What makes this book different from other books is that it addresses leadership and management together. The book functions as a handbook for the new administrator and practicing administrator alike by providing strategies and resources based on research and cumulative years of experience.

Management and leadership are interwoven, much like a wall hanging consists of warp and woof weaves. Warp describes the longitudinal threads and woof is the name for the horizontal fill threads. Individually each thread may be beautiful, but it is just that, a thread. Many threads woven together create something new, because the synergy of the individual threads with their different colors, textures, and tension creates an entirely new object, a cloth, if you will.

Management and leadership are like the warp and woof weaves of a cloth. Leadership is like the longitudinal threads and management is the fill. Together they create something richer and more complex than the individual strands. Each of the threads—each chapter in this book—interweaves to create a piece that has a synergy that is greater than the sum of its parts. The book as a whole creates a new interaction among the pieces.

This book has four goals: First, its purpose is to act as a handbook containing an overview of the many individual components of school leadership that are normally scattered among many textbooks and

resources. Second, if more in-depth study is needed of any one topic, suggested resources are provided. Third, there are individual reflection questions, under the heading "Personal Journal," for personal use as one reads the book. Fourth, group discussion questions are provided to facilitate professional development discussions, particularly among a group of peers.

The book is designed to provide an overview in one place of the key topics in the daily life of an administrator. The chapters are designed to provide a basic understanding with the recognition that many, many books have been written about each topic. If someone needs more information about any one topic, resources are provided. The leader must be both a generalist and specialist. Putting all the major topics in one book provides a starting point for new administrators. It will also help someone to understand the complexity and interlocking parts and knowledge that are demanded of contemporary school leaders.

Another important reason for the book is to look at the management side of leadership. The most knowledgeable person in the world about leadership theories may not be an effective school leader if that person is unable to figure out how to build a master schedule, keep the buses running on time, and maintain a safe school. Those are management pieces.

We do not spend enough time with new administrators, in particular, helping them to put all the pieces together so that the school can run effectively and allow instruction to take place.

The book has a whole-to-part organization. It begins with an overall discussion of the major discussion of leadership and management in Chapter 1. Chapters 2 through 11 discuss topical items in a fashion that integrates management with leadership. Practical ideas are offered from the management perspective to deal with the more ethereal concepts of leadership. Chapters 12 through 14 take the topics to a very personal, reflective level for each individual to examine how they can take the big ideas of leadership and management and think about them from a topical perspective. They ask the individual to relate from a very personal, introspective frame.