

Guideposts for Success: Lesson Plans and Activities

Developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership

LESSON 21: TAKE THE INITIATIVE - A QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP

AT-A-GLANCE

Some people are natural leaders, while others purposefully choose to develop and hone the skills necessary to be an effective leader. This lesson introduces young adults to the qualities of good leaders and offers them the opportunity to plan for ways to take some leadership responsibilities at home at school.

Icebreaker Quote

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.

-Peter F. Drucker

Icebreaker Discussion

What does Drucker mean by his statement? What does he imply in the difference between “management” and “leadership?”

Lesson/Activity

What makes a good leader? If you ask 10 different people, you will probably get 10 different answers. In fact, you could search and find multiple “leadership” checklists that, when completed, may insinuate or suggest whether or not a person has what are listed to be “good” or “effective” leadership skills.

Rather than rely on what has already been created (because that would just be too easy), students will work in small groups to create a list of polling questions related to what they would like to know about leadership in general—and what qualities might make someone a good leader.

This poll can be created using pencil/paper, free online survey software (such as <http://www.surveygizmo.com>), or in any other way deemed appropriate by the group. Once questions are created in small groups, they must be presented to the larger group. Work with the group to help them come to consensus on six questions ALL will ask. For tallying purposes, questions should be addressed in Lykert scale format or true/false format. Allow only one question in open-ended format. Each participant should poll no fewer than 20 people—and then come together to consolidate the information.

With all of the information presented, have the group create their own definition of leadership.

Reflection

Did you get the answers you expected in your poll? What was the polling experience like? Did you enjoy asking others about their opinions?

Extension

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The following activity offers an opportunity for students to measure their own leadership traits.

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ACTIVITY 21.1 LEADERSHIP STYLE ACTIVITY

Adapted from: University of Connecticut, Department of Student Activities

Directions:

1. Read the two columns under “Traits List 1” and circle the word from each pair that best describes you.
2. Read the two columns under “Traits List 2” and circle the word from each pair that best describes you.
3. Add the number of words circled from each of the four columns, and write the total numbers underneath each column.
4. To determine which leadership style most accurately describes you, use the following key:
 - Column 1 = Informal
 - Column 2 = Formal
 - Column 3 = Assertive
 - Column 4 = Passive
5. Participants will either be Informal or Formal, AND Assertive or Passive. Using the chart on the next sheet, participants will exhibit the style explained in the box between the two styles that they were highest in according to the circled words in each column.

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ACTIVITY 21.1: LEADERSHIP STYLE

TRAITS LIST 1		TRAITS LIST 2	
Random	Patterned	Take Charge	Go along
Warm	Cool	Ready	Hesitant
Spontaneous	Calculated	Challenging	Accepting
Unorganized	Organized	Overbearing	Shy
Expressive	Withholding	Extrovert	Introvert
Relationship-oriented	Task-oriented	Loud	Quiet
Impulsive	Discriminating	Initiator	Receiver
Close	Distant	Leader	Follower
Exuberant	Reserved	Outspoken	Withdrawn
Relaxed	Self-controlled	Talkative	Listening
Unstructured	Structured	Pushy	Reticent
Gregarious	Aloof	Statements	Questions
Flexible	Rigid	Overt	Covert
Casual	Proper	Argumentative	Agreeing
Emotional	Mental	Dominating	Submissive
Slack	Taut	Forward	Ponderous
Available	Undisclosed	Outgoing	Timid
Unfocused	Focused	Approach	Avoid
Scattered	Disciplined	Expanding	Contracting
TOTAL:	TOTAL:	TOTAL:	TOTAL:

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LESSON 21.1: LEADERSHIP STYLE – CHART

INFORMAL

A S S E R T I V E	Promoting Style	Supporting Style	P A S S I V E
	- Creative, enthusiastic, expressive - May lack follow through, can appear phony, pushy, or insincere	- Accepting, cooperative, friendly - Can appear weak, indecisive, wishy-washy or smothering	
	Controlling Style	Analyzing Style	
	- Driving, efficient, results-oriented - Can appear insensitive, brassy, and overbearing	- Thorough, exacting, persistent - Can appear apathetic, bored, picky or stubborn	

FORMAL

According to this activity, which type of leadership style do you represent?

Promoting Supporting Controlling Analyzing

Do you agree with this (informal) assessment of your leadership style? Why or why not?

When might this style of leadership be effective? _____

When might this style of leadership have difficulty? _____

Why are different types of leadership styles important at work? _____
