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A Portfolio on three leadership styles.

What is Leadership?

Kano (2012) stated that the term leadership refers to the influence and power that a leader holds in order to lead and transform good practice. Yammarino (2013) believes that without direction from a leader, nothing would be accomplished.

Kano (2012) and Silva (2016) suggest that leadership expects employees to accept that they have a leader, leadership holds a team of staff together. O'Sullivan (2009) states that a leader's role is to bring about successful performance from their staff in order to achieve a shared vision that can enhance their goals and achievements (Gittinane, 2013) and similarly, Kaiser et al. (2012) believe that leadership is about guiding members of staff to achieve a goal. Both Jones and Pound (2008) and O'Sullivan (2009) say that a leader will need to hold the ability to recognise when change is needed and be able to react and enable their staff to respond to any change. There is no right or wrong leadership style, a leader will choose to use a style that suits the type of setting they are leading and leaders may have a preference on one type of leadership style (Zhu, 2017). In addition to this, Bolden (2007) says that leadership should be viewed as a group quality, tasks must be completed by team members in order to reach a shared goal.

A good leader will understand that staff will not always see them as their friend, a leader must be able to make the ultimate decision, however tough that maybe (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Boe and Hognestad (2017) agree and they say that leaders must ensure that they are not working at the same level as their staff, they must acknowledge that they have a leadership role. However, O'Sullivan (2010) points out that many early years leaders feel lonely in their leadership role. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2006) share a similar view as they say that many early years leaders are unhappy in their jobs, they feel that their leadership role has taken them away from directly working with children, leaders do not like spending time alone in the office (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2006).

Early years leadership.

Jones and Pound (2008) believe that good leadership is associated with a settings performance, good leadership skills have been found to make a difference to the overall development of children (Hallet, 2013). Brown and Rogers (2014) state that

good leadership can enhance the quality of the setting. However, Murray and McDowall (2013) say that as the adult child ratios are high in early years settings, most leadership is based around hierarchy, as team work is important when working with young children. In the same way, Linton and Linton (2011) believe that leaders of early years settings need to realise that they cannot do everything themselves, it is within the best interests of the setting, that leaders realise the need to share their work load, trust their members of staff to do their jobs and take on some extra responsibility, this will ensure the smooth running of the setting (Linton and Linton, 2011).

One of the main differences between leadership at a variety of different organisations and leadership within early years settings is that early years leaders are predominantly female (Jones and Pound, 2008; Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). Little is known for the reason that early years leaders and its workforce are mainly female but (Hallet, 2013) believes that one reason could be that working in the early years requires a caring role and caring comes more naturally to women. To elaborate further, The Office for National Statistics (2013) state that females dominate occupations within the caring industry. The figures in image one proves that females account for eighty two percent of the work force in caring and leisure roles. As the early years workforce is mainly female, it is difficult for female leaders to research leadership styles, much of the research done on this subject is based upon male approaches and experience (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2006). Murray and McDowall Clark (2013) say that more research is needed in leadership in the early years to aid the female leaders and to inspire early childhood practitioners to one day become leaders. Muijs et al. (2004) believe that female leaders use a different leadership style to that of male leaders, however they have found no research that says this.

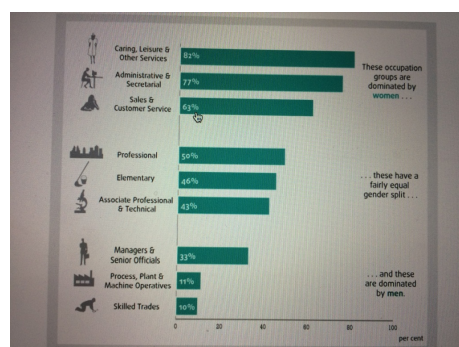


Image 1.

(Source: Office for National Statistics, 2013)

Transformational Leadership.

Many authors such as Gittinane (2013), Hallet, (2013) and Kendrick (2011) suggest that a transformational leader inspires their employees, works with them as part of a team and has the ability to enable clarity, which helps them to see the right thing to do in order to achieve the goals and visions of the setting.

Transformational leaders have the ability to focus on and motivate employees, enabling all members of staff to perform well and develop leadership skills in all employees (Kendrick, 2011). Niessen et al. (2017) say that there is significant evidence to suggest that a transformational leader can relate to and gives consideration to their employee's well-being, often putting their employees needs before their own (Niessen et al., 2017). Similarly, Jones and Pound (2008) believe that when individual members of staff are encouraged to envisage that they could potentially be the next future leader, this gives the individual the opportunity to gain and develop necessary skills and enables a team of staff that are driven to ensure high standards (Jones and Pound, 2008).

Lindon and Lindon (2011) suggest that transformational leadership only works if the leader has an ability to create change and is able to share their vision for the future of the setting with the staff. However, Giltinane (2013) believes that some transformational leaders can become engrossed in management tasks and may sometimes lose focus on the needs and shared values of the team (Giltinane, 2013). In contrast to Giltinane's belief, Sims et al. (2009) say that transformational leaders motivate their staff with a clear vision and strive to work together as a team to meet their shared goals. Rolfe (2011) also believes this as he says that when staff feel part of a team and have their opinions listened to, then this builds the relationship between the leader and their staff members. Lindon and Lindon (2011) state that staff members will always support a transformational leader, they know that the leader is not only trying to improve standards with in the setting but is also trying to improve knowledge and understanding amongst staff (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). However, Niessen et al. (2017) say that research has proven that transformational leadership can exhaust some members of staff as they feel they are constantly trying to better themselves.

A transformational leader works closely with their employees and takes the time to get to know each individual member of the team (Wang and Howell, 2010), in doing this,

it allows the leader to understand each person's potential, abilities and skill (Bass, 2008). Both Bass (2008) and Vinkenbergh et al. (2011) suggest that a transformational leaders approach can be compared to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, transformational leaders will not only ensure they meet the needs of everyone, but will also go further to ensure that their team have high levels of self-esteem and will ensure they work to their full potential.

The transformational approach works with emphasis placed on trust, in order to work well, there must be trust between the leader and the practitioners as when this happens, they are willing to carry out tasks and work to the leader's vision and goals (Bach and Ellis, 2011; Grimm, 2010). Transformational leaders inspire their staff to achieve and this results in higher levels of job satisfaction, a team who are prepared to go above and beyond their job description (Lindon and Lindon, 2011).

Marriner Tomey (2009) says that this type of leader will consult with staff before making any suggestions or decisions, this works well and helps build good morale amongst the team as this allows team work and communication skills, however, Marquis and Huston (2009) say that this could be frustrating for some individuals as this style could be time consuming, in some situations a quicker decision may need to be made.

Wang et al. (2017) states that a transformational approach is change orientated and encourages all members of staff to seek change and become creative thinkers. Transformational leaders are able to adapt and make changes to the setting, staff see this as a positive opportunity rather than a threat (Wang et al., 2017).

Transformational leaders often choose a democratic approach, they are thoughtful leaders and share responsibility within their team. This approach allows practitioners to develop leadership qualities and reduces the work load of the leader (Bass, 2008; Rolfe, 2011).

Whitehead et al. (2009) suggests that democratic leaders are more flexible in their approach compared to other leadership styles and believes that this enhances motivation and creativity among the team. Vinkenbergh et al. (2011) shares in this view as they say that transformational leaders inspire their teams of staff to go that little bit further and this boosts motivation and creativity among staff. Additionally, Lindon and Lindon (2011) say that transformational leadership works well in early years settings

and when transformational leadership is progressing well, members of staff are committed to their work, they do not work just for their salary, they are doing it as they feel appreciated and needed at the setting (Lindon and Lindon, 2011).

This type of leadership style would be useful at an early year setting in a situation where a member of staff is struggling to deal with one of their key children. For example, if a key child was having frequent behaviour issues and the key worker was struggling to deal with this behaviour every day. The key person would feel able to approach their leader as they know that they will be listened to as they feel valued and feel part of a team. The leader could arrange a team meeting to discuss the issues and a solution would be found in order to move forward and reduce the stress on the key worker. A transformational leader would look to distribute this work load and could arrange for another key worker to do a job share, this reduces the stress on the key worker. Different approaches could also be discussed and used in order to help the child with their difficulties and enable all staff members to work together as a team and help each other.

Pedagogical Leadership.

According to Department for Education (2015) pedagogy relates to how practitioners practice their work. Pedagogy is about the strategies, policies and guidance that settings follow, in order to develop a positive attitude, in a safe learning environment that allows children to develop their knowledge and skills (Department of Education, 2015). Similarly, Jappinen and Anneli (2012) share in this view as they say that pedagogical leaders lead a group of staff members collaboratively to ensure they all work towards an agreed idea. Furthermore, Jappinen and Anneli (2012) say that pedagogy is about leaders and practitioners practice with children and is not about any designated role.

Pedagogical leaders develop a holistic approach to support and develop quality early years environments for children, this is based on child centred learning (Leather, 2016). O'Sullivan (2015) say that pedagogical leaders have a deep understanding on the development of children in their early years and they consider the needs of the child at home and at school (Coughlin and Baird, 2013; Male and Palaiologou, 2012).

Pedagogical leaders have belief in their methods and have a learning-centred approach to leadership (Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) state that pedagogical leaders frequently give opportunity for sustained shared thinking as they are consistently engaging with and observing the children, Department of Education (2015) say that in settings where sustained shared thinking frequently occurs, children have been known to make better developmental progress. Pedagogical leaders remain focused and are driven by the vision and methodologies of their pedagogy (Male and Palaiologou, 2012; Male and Palaiologou, 2015). Through their pedagogy, leaders enable children to make sense of the world around them and to explore and learn in an environment where they feel safe (Male and Palaiologou, 2012). Mlgo et al. (2016) say that pedagogical leaders genuinely care for the children and their staff, the environment is one of a caring nature with a clear vision where each and every child is valued (Blatchford and Hallet, 2014).

A pedagogical leader would be beneficial at a forest school. A forest school leader works towards the pedagogy of forest school and the policies and procedures associated with it (Forest school, 2012). Forest schools focus on a learner centred pedagogical approach (Forest School Association, no date). Male and Palaiologou (2017) say that pedagogical leadership should be a learner centred approach as this will not only benefit the children but will also ensure that staff are only concerned with how the children progress (Male and Palaiologou, 2017). The North School (no date) believes that forest school leaders help facilitate, nurture and guide children and are responsive to the needs of every child attending the setting (Forest School, no date). According to Forest School (2017), pedagogical leaders tune into the needs of children and their staff and can adapt and provide coping strategies if it is noted that children and staff are struggling. Rodd (2013) believes that pedagogical leaders have good personal qualities that allow them to generate a feeling of trust and security, it is through these qualities that leaders are able to influence others to work towards the learning outcomes (Rodd, 2013).

Male and Palaiologou (2017) believe that pedagogical leaders have trust in their staff to carry out their duties and this has a positive impact on staff, they feel confident in their job roles, valued and supported (Boe and Hognestad, 2017). Pedagogical leaders always consider the learning and development of their staff, and that of

themselves (Male and Palaiologou, 2012). They inspire staff and are good role models (Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). The North School (no date) state that a forest school leader is always observing and ready to adapt the environment or the session to suit the needs of the child.

In order to set up a forest school or incorporate it into the setting, leaders would need to ensure that they send their staff on a specific forest school training course. Image three shows staff receiving Forest School training on an inset day. The training includes practical activities that help build stronger team work. The pedagogy surrounding forest school could be much different to the practice they currently work within as stated by Jappinen and Anneli (2012), and leaders need to be sure that practitioners know how to work within the pedagogy of forest school to limit the chance that they would transfer their old ways of working into the forest school pedagogy (Jappinen and Anneli, 2012). Maynard and Waters (2007) agree with this and they say that practitioners need to be convinced that forest school pedagogy works within the best interests of the child (Mistry and Sood, 2017).

According to Male and Palaiologou (2015) pedagogical leaders practice their work with a passion and vision and are willing to take risks with the curriculum, this enables their members of staff to work creatively as they are able to set their own goals and plan around the needs of the children (Male and Palaiologou, 2015). Blatchford and Hallet (2014) agrees, they say that as part of their role pedagogical leaders have a duty to support staff in order that they remain focused and motivated, to further improve the needs of the children at the setting (Blatchford and Hallet, 2014).

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership (2016) suggests that pedagogical leaders continuously try to improve their practice. Both Coughlin and Baird (2013) and Government of South Australia (2013) share a similar view, they say that pedagogical leaders ensure that they themselves and their staff spend time reflecting on their practice. They ask themselves questions and observe one another, this enables practitioners to think about their practice and how to continuously ensure that the environment is that of a nurturing one for the children. Pedagogical leaders allow their staff to have time to reflect and do not rush the process (Coughlin and Baird, 2013; Government of South Australia, 2013).

Rodd (2013) suggests that early years pedagogical leaders need to be developing their setting as a community and not just thinking of it as a separate group. Blatchford and Hallet agree with Rodd, they say that pedagogical leaders should be enabling their setting to become focused and to include the community, with a vision to becoming a community of practice. Similarly, Male and Palaiologou (2015) agree as they say that pedagogical leadership is based around building relationships within their local environment and the community, it involves activities that integrate the relationships between these and to further develop children's knowledge of this. This is evident in image two, the picture shows learning communities coming together to share interests and ideas, they are beneficial to the setting as they enhance relationships between adults and children.

Male and Palaiologou (2012) state that research has shown that many leaders in settings today are stressed and weighed down by the demands of performance outcomes and achievements, pedagogical practice allows leaders and their team of staff to focus entirely on the needs of the children and their outcomes, they strive to improve their performance and the environment to meet the needs of the child, and not to just simply tick a box on a checklist (Coughlin and Baird, 2013; Male and Palaiologou, 2012).

Image 2.



(Source: Coughlin and Baird, 2013)

Image 3.



(Source: Forest Schools, 2017)

Distributed Leadership.

According to Avalio (2009) and Gunter (2012) distributed leadership is defined as the ability for all members at early years setting to work together in order to improve their practice and to lead one another to achieve their set goals.

Blatchford and Manni (2006) stated that leadership is no longer the responsibility of one leader, working from the distributed style enables a leader to distribute some responsibility on to their staff members. Jones and Pound (2008) agree as they say that distributed leadership among early years settings prevents the leader from carrying the burden for everything, it allows some members of staff to take responsibility in certain areas. They say that early years settings are fast becoming too complicated to be in the hands of just one leader (Jones and Pound, 2008).

Distributed leadership has been known to boost morale amongst a team of staff and gives these staff members the confidence to develop leadership skills for their future careers (Blatchford and Manni, 2006). Research has proven that when settings work with this type of leadership style, they have a lower turnover of staff (Blatchford and Manni, 2006). Jones and Pound (2008) state that under distributed leadership, every member of staff is encouraged to develop the necessary skills and view themselves as potential future leaders. However, Heikka et al. (2012) makes it clear that distributed leadership needs to be well managed, planned and must be monitored to ensure it has a positive input on the leadership at the setting.

When done correctly, distributed leadership can raise standards (Blatchford and Manni, 2006; Heikka et al., 2012). The leader has the ultimate responsibility to their staff members to provide support when taking on new additional roles within the setting, leaders need to ensure that they continue to support them throughout their new responsibility (Jones and Pound, 2008). Sylva et al. (2010) share in this view as they believe that one of the benefits of distributed leadership is that it can increase the quality of provision at the setting and has a positive effect on children's learning and development. However, Bolden (2011) states that there is very little evidence to suggest that distributed leadership can have a lasting effect on children's development.

Distributed leadership can sometimes be seen to leaders as they are having a smaller workload (Karila, 2010). However, Jones and Pound (2008) say that the purpose of

distributed leadership is to further improve the setting and is not intended to ease the burden of work that comes with a leadership role, as some leaders may believe that when they have designated certain roles to members of staff, that their job is done (Jones and Pound, 2008). NHS (No date) say that distributed leadership is not the answer to the problem of a heavy work load, it should be viewed as a tool to enable a leader to complete task and improve practice in other areas.

Another key point to consider as stated by Heikka et al. (2012) is that distributed leadership shares many qualities of shared leadership. Shared leadership is not just about team members sharing their work, but it is about members of staff integrating and working together towards a shared goal through independent work (Heikka et al., 2012). Kocolowski (2010) shares a similar view and states that shared leadership is to do with tasks being distributed amongst team members and this enables the leader to concentrate on other things rather than having to be responsible for everything (Kocolowski, 2010).

Kangas et al. (2016) suggest that shared leadership is based around an idea that all members of staff have good knowledge and expertise in different areas of early childhood, when leadership is distributed with this in mind, it can have a positive impact on the setting (Kangas et al., 2016). However, Blatchford and Manni (2006) emphasise the need to consider that distributed leadership should not be undertaken with inexperienced or a very young team of staff. Welsh Government (2016) remind us that it must not be forgotten that distributed and shared leadership is about the work that team members do, not about any potential leadership roles.

Both distributed and shared leadership limit the possibility of a leader making a mistake as there are many more people sharing the responsibility, therefore mistakes are more likely to be spotted before they happen (Heikka et al., 2012). Distributed and shared leadership are carried out based on an element of trust, the leader must trust the capabilities of their team members in order to be satisfied that the work will be completed to a good standard (Bolden, 2007). Research has proven that when staff members feel trusted and have knowledge that their leaders trust them, this is when they work to their true potential (Vinkenbug et al., 2011).

Gomez et al. (2010) are keen to state that a vital part of distributed leadership is communication. Leaders must have effective communication between themselves,

their team members and the children and their families at the setting. However, Kangas et al. (2016) points out that it can be difficult at an early year setting to find the time to discuss and implement development due to the need to adhere to the high child staff ratios (Welsh Government, 2016).

As pointed out by Kocolowski (2010), a benefit of distributed and shared leadership is the potential to have diversity in decision making, leaders can take into account that decisions are being made with a variety of people, with a variety of different thoughts and opinions from a variety of backgrounds (Kocolowski, 2010). However, NHS (No date) disagree with this view as they state that some highly creative leaders work best on their own as decision making in this way hinders their creative thinking and any potential ideas they may have to improve practice at the setting.

Distributed and shared leadership would be a useful practice to use at early years setting with regards to continuous professional development for all members of staff. Leaders have a big work load and in accordance with Welsh Government (2016), all settings are required to keep up to date files on members of staff and a record of any training they have attended, along with any compulsory training that Welsh Government insist they have. For any member of staff looking to further improve their leadership skills, this would be a good opportunity for them to begin as they would need to put a recording system in place to record all training attended by all members of staff, when this training and certificate will expire and they would then need to arrange for staff to renew these certificates and attend the necessary training in order to achieve this. This would not only benefit the member of staff taking over this responsibility but it would also free up more time for the manager to work on other important tasks within the setting as management of staff files can be a time consuming.

Conclusion.

To conclude, I feel that within some early years setting there is no right or wrong leadership style. A leader needs to adapt their style in accordance with a given situation. Transformational leadership supports effective team working as it encourages staff to work together and enables all members of staff to remain focused on their jobs and maintain the quality of their provision. Pedagogical leadership will

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always encourage team work and good quality settings as practitioners are continuously reflecting on the work they do. Pedagogical leaders and practitioners always have the child at the centre of anything they do and they work holistically towards child development. Pedagogical leaders maintain quality within their settings through sustained shared thinking, the children are having engaging and quality adult interaction.

Distributed leadership improves the quality of the setting as staff are continuously looking to improve their roles and take on leadership tasks. When leaders distribute their work load, this increases the quality of the work as this work is often distributed based on practitioner's qualities and capabilities. This encourages team work and as all practitioners are working towards the same shared goal.

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