

This portfolio will discuss leadership and how effective leadership links to early years' practice and teamwork. It will also critically analyse three leadership styles, Pedagogical leadership, Reflective leadership and Distributed leadership, exploring how each style can affect early years' teamwork and provide examples for each style on how this is done.

According to Oxford Reference (2018) leadership is 'The action of leading a group of people or an organization'. Fiaz et al. (2017) describes leadership differently by stating that 'Leadership is a process by which an individual motivates or influence others to achieve organization goals'. These two definitions both provide different descriptions leadership, however Oxford Reference (2018a) definition of management is 'The process of dealing with or controlling things or people' and 'people managing a company or organization'. Comparing these definitions indicates that they both have the same meaning but change the wording. Throughout many years in academic literature, there has been a debate questioning if leadership and management are the same (Stacey, 2007: Garvey, 2017). Rost (1993) mentions that the definitions of leadership and management are similar which suggests they are both the same and Kotter (1999) states that people who are in the position of a leader are often called managers which also suggests that leadership and management are the same. However, the HR Society (2017) believes they are both different, stating 'The main difference between leaders and managers is that leaders have people who follow them while managers have people who work for them'. Authors such as Bertocci (2009), Nayar (2013) and Fiaz et al (2017) all agree with this statement, they all believe that managers are people who focus on counting the organisation's value. Managers have control and use this to plan and direct employees to achieve the organisations goals, deal with budgeting, setting tasks, comparing results and changing the system during difficult situations without the employee's feedback (Bertocci, 2009: Nayar, 201: Fiaz et al, 2017). In contrast leaders are people who focus on creating the organisations value, they also have control but use it to influence and motivate people to contribute and improve the organisations goals, they focus and deal with change by developing a vision and direction, get employees feedback, delegate roles and provide employees with support and encouragement (Bertocci, 2009: Nayar, 201: Fiaz et al, 2017).

What is effective leadership and how does this relate to early years?

An effective leader is described as an individual who understands that they have power and responsibility which can influence others in their workplace (Sutcliffe, 2013). Leaders must be knowledgeable, honest and develop a positive working relationship with employees based on trust and encourage them to achieve and develop their professional skills (Frasher, 2014). They must also have a view for the organisation which can improve it and be able to effectively communicate these views and allow other members of staff to contribute (Management Advisory Service, 2016). Leaders must also accept any mistakes that they make, provide a safe environment for staff to work in and have an effective leadership style (Sutcliffe, 2013 and Frasher, 2014).

Effective leadership relates to early years' practice because an Early Year Leader (EYL) is a person who understands and has experience in children's care and education, they have a vision to provide children and families with the best quality setting which enhances children's education, development and happiness (Early Childhood Australia, 2018). EYL are confident, passionate and enthusiastic about their job, can actively seek ways to improve their setting and allow their staff to contribute during discussions to find ways to improve (Rodd, 2013). Alongside this, EYL give their staff the opportunity and support to reflect on their practice and encourage them to study or do additional qualifications to enhance their professional development and the quality of care and education they provide (Muijs et al, 2004: Early Childhood Australia, 2018: Rodd, 2013).

EYL also have a responsibility to develop a positive relationship with the children, parents and staff that support their setting (Early Childhood Australia, 2018). It is important to develop a positive relationship with the parents and children because this has been viewed as an important part of effective practice. Having a good relationship with parents can have a positive effect on the child, from engaging and communicating with the parents, they can provide the practitioners with information about the child to ensure they receive the best possible education and care during their time in the setting. (Fitzgerald, 2004: Johnson, 2010: Lindon, 2012). It is also

important to build a positive working relationship with the practitioners working in the setting, Fiaz et al. (2017) mentions that an employee's commitment and motivation to their job is based on how they feel emotionally or psychologically towards it. This has been highlighted in McClelland's motivation theory, stating people's needs for power, achievement and affiliation can affect their behaviour in a working environment and leaders must be aware of this to ensure that their staff work effectively (Montana and Charnov, 2008). This shows the importance of EYL building relationships and a team which is based on trust, respect, honesty and support which will enhance staff's self-esteem and confidence to achieve the tasks within the early years setting (Johnson, 2015: Fiaz et al. 2017). It is also important for EYL to ensure that the practitioners are aware of their roles/responsibilities, understand policies/procedures and kept up to date with relevant legislation (Johnson, 2014).

An EYL must follow the current legislation related to children, there are many laws such as the Children's Act 1989, and United Nations Convention on the Right of a Child which all aim to improve the outcomes for children and their families; Early years' settings must base their policies and procedures on these and update them when any changes or new legislation come into place (Aubrey, 2011: Children's Rights Alliance for England, 2017). EYL must also follow legislation related to employee's rights such as the Employment Act 1996 (Legislation, no date) and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Health and Safety Executive, no date). This is because all employees have the right to feel safe, respected and comfortable within their workplace to work effectively and protected from issues such bullying, discrimination and unfair dismissal (Moyle, 2006).

All these factors contribute to the quality of a setting, Lindon and Lindon (2011) mention that the setting's quality influences children's achievements and motivation to their learning and development. This was shown in the largest European longitudinal study known as the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE), which collected data from 3,000 children between the ages of three to seven years and studied progress during their time in an early year's setting (Sylva et al, 2010). The EPPE showed that the different levels of quality had an influence on children's education, development, behaviour and future studies (Sure Start, 2004: Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007). It also showed that staff who were highly qualified in

early years also influenced how the setting ran and the activities and care they provided to promote children's learning and development (Hallet, 2013).

Pedagogical Leadership

The pedagogical leadership style is described as the bridge between research and practice (Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014) which involves understanding how children learn, develop along with the philosophy and practice that supports children's learning (Coughlin and Baird, 2013). There are many pioneers such as Froebel, Rousseau and Steiner who all helped to create current early years practice; they viewed play as an important element to children's education and development and recognised the importance of training to understand this (Johnson, 2014: O'Sullivan, 2009).

This is an Example of Pedagogical leadership, it is a case study taken from Whalley and Allen (2011: 74).

CASE STUDY

Allana, an EYP and manager of a private nursery

'EYPS highlighted the importance of "reflective space" for all practitioners. I have undertaken a significant project to review the key person approach to facilitate smoother transitions for children in my setting. I have provided training for all staff on the implications of attachment theory for the key person approach.'

Pedagogical leadership expands on the work of instructional leadership, which involves planning around a system like a curriculum to support children with their learning (Concordia University, 2018). From this style, it has led to the development of a learner-centred approach to leadership which is a part of pedagogical leadership, the main difference between the two leadership styles is the focus has moved from meeting the needs of a system to meeting the needs of an individual (Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014: Male and Palaiologou, 2016).

Miller and Cable (2011: 62) state 'Professionals who engage with pedagogic guidance can become actors of change and develop new pedagogic practices'.

Hadfield et al. (2015) also agrees with this stating, it can have a positive impact on children's outcomes. This has been highlighted in Ofsted's annual reports and the reports from the EPPE and Researching for Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (Hadfield et al. 2015). They all show that, the most effective settings that had an impact on children's learning and development had practitioners who had a good understanding of children's holistic development and pedagogical content, which was used to provide a curriculum and encourage children to make good progress in their learning and development (O'Sullivan, 2009: Whalley and Allen, 2011).

It is part of a pedagogical leader's role to use this knowledge to educate and inspire other practitioners to expand their knowledge and understanding of early years to enhance their professional development and achieve a high-quality setting (Whalley and Allen, 2011: O'Sullivan, 2009). This can influence effective teamwork as the leader shares their knowledge and experience with the staff, ensuring that they are all up to date with matters related to early years and they can support and share this information with each other, outside agencies/professionals as well as new members or students who come to the setting (O'Sullivan, 2009). This can be seen in the case study where the manager provides training to the staff in the key person approach to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting when a new child is transiting into the setting. However, this leadership style would not be effective if the leader had little knowledge or was not up to date with current information about early years and pedagogy (Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). This could be due to age, being young and having little experience in early years or they are older and have many years of experience and become comfortable with the setting's routines and are reluctant to change or update their knowledge (Ritchie, 2015). This can affect teamwork because members may feel that they are better than the others due to having more experience and qualifications, this can lead to conflict and affecting the working relationship between staff causing issues when working as a team and with the children (Ritchie, 2015).

Pedagogical leadership focuses on professional development as well as children's learning and development (Alameen et al. 2015). Pedagogical leaders view themselves as partners, co-learners and observers who work alongside children, families and the community and encourage their staff to do the same (Coughlin and

Baird, 2013). From this, it encourages practitioners to view themselves as researchers in a learning process which can help to build a learning environment where practitioners continuously learn, develop and reflect on their practice to enhance their professional development (Coughlin and Baird, 2013). For this to be successful, leaders must build a positive relationship based on trust and respect and provide staff with support during this time, allow them to make mistakes and develop their professional identity (Murray and Clark, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). Developing a positive relationship can lead to effective teamwork, this can lead to reaching the settings goals and working together to find their next goal. It can also help to make the job more enjoyable and interesting which helps each member to stay motivated and committed to their job (Coughlin and Baird, 2013). This can also help early years' settings become more involved with the community (Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). Daniel et al (2013) mentions the benefits of being a community of practice as it supports professional development as it encourages people to discuss, question, critic and develop their knowledge resulting to improving the quality of service within the early years setting. However, there could be issues with trust due to people not knowing each other well and feeling uncomfortable to sharing their experiences with strangers (Saric and Steh, 2017).

Pedagogical leadership also focuses on reflection as it can help practitioners to build on their pedagogic knowledge and discover new pieces of information (Miller and Cable, 2011). Pedagogical thinking is related to reflective thinking, it encourages practitioners to reflect on their values, practice and assumptions (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). From this, it can help them to understand the reasons for their thoughts/actions and how this can affect their work with children (Whalley and Allen, 2011). Whalley and Allen (2011) as well as Lindon and Lindon (2011) mentions that children's learning experiences highly depend on how the adult provides them and from reflection it can help them and find ways to improve and adapt their practice. This can be seen in the case study where the manager sees the importance of reflection and finds a way to improve the setting, by developing the staff's knowledge of children's transition in an early year setting through providing training on the attachment theory and transitions. Pedagogical leaders must give themselves and their staff the time and methods to reflect, study and view different methods of practice within early years; take interest by asking questions and discussing how

these methods can brought into practice, creating a learning environment to promote practitioner's knowledge and professional development (Coughlin and Baird, 2013).

Reflective Leadership

Reflective leadership is described as the 'consistent practice of reflection, which involves conscious awareness of behaviors, situations and consequences with the goal of improving organizational performance' (Castelli, 2016: 218). The importance of reflection has been around for many decades, it was first developed by Knowles during the 1960-70s who stressed the importance of individual experiences because they are considered valuable learning resources which can help people to problem solve and find a solution to their issues (Lindon and Trodd, 2016). This has been developed further by authors such as Kolb, Gibbs, Dewey and Lewin who all emphasise the importance of reflection for professional development and improving the quality of an organisation (Parker-Rees and Leeson, 2015).

This is an example of Reflective leadership, it is a case study taken from Newstead and Isles-Buck (2012: 23).

First person – building reflective practice

I organised a behaviour course for our whole playscheme team, who had been working together for a couple of summers but had never really got the 'behaviour thing' right. I did the course with them, and during the day it became very obvious that everybody had very different ideas and opinions about 'behaviour'. It really did highlight the fact that our current approach to behaviour wasn't consistent, as what might be acceptable to some of the team was not acceptable to others. So straight after the course I arranged for a team meeting so that we could do some reflective practice to try to put what we had learnt into practice this time round. Instead of starting with the usual question about 'behaviour', I asked the team what sort of playscheme they wanted for the kids and used the reflective practice model to guide the discussion from there. By the end of the meeting we had agreed that what we wanted was a happy summer ('intention'); that our 'experience' of the last couple of years was that they could have been happier; that we'd learnt from the training that some of our 'actions' may have contributed to this (for example, two members of staff telling children off for the same thing at different times); and the 'outcome' of these actions were that children got confused and frustrated with us. We agreed that this summer we would all stick to the behaviour guidelines and leave our own opinions to one side ('development'), however hard that was for us to do!

Adventure playground Manager

Reflective leadership relates very closely to the leadership styles Change Management and Transformational Leadership, this is because Change Management involves making changes to the organization to improve the quality, while Transformational leadership refers to the leaders encouraging and inspiring their staff to find better ways to achieve the organizations goals (Castelli, 2016). These leadership styles are like reflective leadership because they all rely on employee commitment, communication, having a vision for change, good judgement and self-awareness (Castelli, 2016).

Being a reflective leader has been shown to improve the setting's practice and is a valuable part of professionalism (Castelli, 2016). Reflective practice can help leaders to look for strengths and improvements within the setting and make sense of situations that have caused issues (Castelli, 2016). Reflection also helps leaders to understand and respect their own and other practitioners' values, ideas, emotions and contributions, which can lead to a setting that values shared communication and thinking, information sharing and goal setting (Miller and Cable, 2011: Castelli, 2016). Reflection can help a team to be more effective, identify issues within the setting and through observation build an understanding of the reason for it developing and communicate with the team members to solve it, make goals and changes to benefit staff's professional development and the quality of practice they provide to children (Miller and Cable, 2011). This can be seen in the case study; the manager went on a behaviour course with the staff due having issues with the team not working effectively with managing behaviour and realised that the staff's views on behaviour were not consistent. The manager arranged a meeting and encouraged the staff to reflect on their practice and the course, which resulted in everyone wanting to improve their practice and created guidelines on behaviour to improve their practice in how they dealt with children's behaviour.

Reflection has many benefits to practice, it provides leaders and staff with the tools to evaluate their practice and actions (Moyles, 2006) and it allows everyone to develop skills such as awareness, communication, listening and critical thinking (Male and Palaiologou, 2016). When reflecting on an experience, practitioners can learn from their interactions, achievements and mistakes and this can encourage them to study further to find out the reason for their actions and different ways to

approach those matters/issues in practice in the future (Whalley and Allen, 2011). Because of this, it can support practitioners to identify areas of development which can promote their learning and development (Jones and Pound, 2008), this can result in improving the quality of education and care that children receive when they attend the setting (Moyles, 2006). Improving quality is considered an important factor in practice because it encourages people to continuously evaluate and critic their practice and allows them to make improvements and positively influence children's learning, behavior and development (Reed and Canning, 2012).

For leaders and practitioner to reflect effectively on their practice, they must be confident, honest, have self-awareness, stay up to date with current research, accept their mistakes and embrace the opportunity to study further into their actions and listen to other people's discussions to learn from a different perspective (Newstead and Isles-Buck, 2012). It is the leader's responsibility to provide support and encourage their staff to reflect by providing an effective reflective cycle, which can be a tool to help practitioners to develop their professional practice and if leaders do not provide an effective cycle this would not happen (Neaum, 2015).

It is also a leader's responsibility to provide practitioners with time and space to reflect for them to actively engage, collaborate and develop their professional skills (Miller and Cable, 2011). However, Cheng et al. (2015) mentions that some workplaces do not encourage reflection. The reason for this is, employers are more concerned with employing people who are prepared and able to follow the setting's procedure and policies (Fook and Askeland, 2007). This could suggest that the setting does not value reflection and do not provide practitioners with the time or space to reflect on their practice because their focus is following regulations due to them frequently changing (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011; Venninen et al, 2012).

However, there many barriers with reflection, Collin et al. (2013) mentions there is no official definition of reflection. Husebo and Reagan (2015) also highlight the lack of definition and mention this can affect how reflection is taught and implemented. It is important for leaders and early year practitioners to understand reflective practice for them to use it effectively, as not doing so can have a negative impact, with practitioners making mistakes, not reflecting and not learning from them (Venninen

et al, 2012). Another issue with reflection is not all practitioners have experience in reflection, this could be due to age or understanding of reflection (Newstead and Isles-Buck, 2005). All practitioners are different, they all learn, think and process information differently, this means that some practitioners would understand reflection while others would treat it as an additional skill that needs to be learnt which can affect their commitment and motivation to their work (Newstead and Isles-Buck, 2005). When reflecting, people seem to focus on the negatives of an experience and this is considered natural when reflecting because it is a part of the process of understanding the experience (Gibbs et al, 2005: Johns, 2013). Focusing on the negatives can lead to development of a negative attitude and little motivation to reflect (White et al, 2006). Emotions can also influence the way practitioners reflect, if practitioners have a bad experience they may avoid reflecting on it due to feeling uncomfortable about it and may not learn from it (Johns, 2013). Lastly leaders or practitioners with many years of experience may have difficulty or refuse to use reflection, this is because they could have many years of working in a practice that they feel comfortable with (Lindon and Trodd, 2016). This means that when changes are introduced or brought up during staff meeting they may be reluctant to change their practice (Newstead and Isles-Buck, 2005: Lindon and Trodd, 2016).

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is focused on moving the traditional idea of leadership being based on one person to sharing the responsibilities with more people (Jones and Pound, 2008). Distributed leadership is also known as inclusive, participative, shared, collaborative or democratic (Jones and Pound, 2008). This is because they all share the concept of not one person having sole responsibility, but allowing others to contribute and share ideas during the decision-making process which can lead to successfully achieving or improving the organization's tasks (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). However, due to the many names that have been used for distributed leadership, this has caused confusion in management literature for many years (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Lindon and Lindon (2011) and Hekkia et al. (2012) mention that the terms are frequently used interchangeably but the most common term used within literature related to early years and education is distributed.

According to Landon and Landon (2011) and Moyles et al. (2012) distributed leadership is the best form of leadership within early years. They go on to mention that early years' staff are mostly female and females prefer to work in a collaborative way than in a competitive way. This is because females feel more comfortable with this type of style instead of the autocratic style which men prefer to use (Landon and Landon, 2011; Moyles et al. 2012). They also focus on developing a relationship with the community and staff, which allows them to work collaboratively with one another and this has been shown to improve the outcomes of children's learning and development (Landon and Landon, 2011; Moyles et al. 2012).

This is an example of Distributed leadership, it is a case study taken from Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet (2014: 68).



Case study: Collaborative school policy

All policies are created via consultation between leaders and members of staff. An initial discussion offers *all* members of staff an opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions to improving or developing policies around issues such as behaviour, health and safety and curriculum. The ideas and suggestions that emerge during this initial session are then reflected upon, and where appropriate used, by the head teacher and deputy head of the nursery or relevant curriculum leader, who proceed to draft a written copy of the policy. This written draft is then presented to the staff for re-examination, discussion, amendment and finally approval before the policy is finalised as a document. This 'finalization' is regarded as temporary as the policies in this nursery school are returned to and reviewed regularly, either as part of their routine of review or in response to an environmental stimulus. Environmental stimulus might include an incident within the setting, for example, unmanageable behaviour of a child, which calls into question current behaviour management practice and requires reflection, discussion and modification of current policy and practice. The head teacher reflects upon the process of collaboratively developing school policies:

If you have sat down as a staff and talked out a policy, really talked it through, where people raise questions, ask for clarification and suggest amendments or omissions based on observations or experiences, then you can be fairly certain that the policy and more importantly, the practice it intends to guide, will be understood with a deeper level of consistency, with those responsible for ensuring its implementation ... the process is great. When we come to review we take the policy apart and we add bits and take bits away until we get it 'right' and then we argue it out some more.

Distributed leadership allows staff the opportunity to adopt a leadership role, take an active lead and have responsibility for their work (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Staff may not have full control of all aspects within the setting but they have a strong influence and this has been considered to have a positive effect on services related to early years (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). For this to be successful, it relies on leaders and staff building a positive working relationship, along with creating a working environment which encourages diversity, equality and the freedom for staff to share their professional knowledge and experiences like the approach of a pedagogical leader (Heikka et al. 2012: Hadfield et al. 2015). This is beneficial because it allows all practitioner to discuss, debate and take part in decision making process which can promote their motivation and enthusiasm to work towards the setting's goals and identify improvements which benefit the settings' quality of education and care (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). This can lead to effective teamwork because it can make each member feel that they have a role within the setting, they also feel respected due to their feedback being taken into consideration when changes are being made which can lead to having a positive working environment and promote the staff's commitment and motivation to their job (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). This is seen in the case study; all members of staff are given the opportunity to share their ideas and improvements during the discussion about developments in policy. Once this is completed, the leader writes a draft and shares this with the staff and gives them another opportunity to critic, discuss or find another method to create the policy before it is finalised.

However, there some issues with distributed leadership, a leader may avoid sharing some responsibilities because they believe it only one person is needed to complete the task and this could result to conflict and damage the relationship between team members (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Also, if team members cannot agree or negotiate on a matter/issue during a staff meeting, there must be a leader who can take control and bring everyone's focus back to the reason for the meeting and encourage them to discuss a way to solve or improve the matter, without this the decision-making process could take much longer (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Another issue which Lindon and Lindon (2011) and Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet (2014) consider is new members, a new member may join the setting when a current member leaves for a new job, retirement or maternity and somebody is employed to

take over. This means that the new member will need to build a relationship with the other staff members which can be time consuming (Lindon and Lindon, 2011: Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014). Lastly, having negative people in the team can affect the commitment and willingness of other members to achieve the setting's goals which can affect staff relationships and the quality of service they provide as they work together to support children and their families (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014).

To conclude, leadership is an important part within in early years' practice, there are many positives and negatives in any leadership style which has been explored through the leadership styles chosen for this portfolio. The effectiveness of these styles can have an impact on the service quality the setting provides in relation to team work within early years and the way practitioners provide support to children which can affect their growth, learning and development.

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