



BA Hons Public Services

Title: Leading in action

Name: Rebecca Thomas

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P Number: 1702023

This essay will consist of a reflection and evaluation of my performance as a leader and to identify what mistakes I made as well as to identify if there were any improvements throughout the sessions. In order to critically analyse my performance, I will be using different models of reflection so that I am able to identify my strengths and weaknesses.

“Becoming a leader is not easy, just as becoming a doctor or poet is not easy, and anyone who claims otherwise is fooling himself” as stated by Clemmer (1995) shows that effective leadership is a result of hard work and practice and implies that for an individual to achieve this they have to find a leadership style that they are most comfortable using. Firstly in order to enhance my performance as a leader, I had to research many different types of leadership as I was aware it would allow me to identify which style I was most comfortable using. Becker (2018) explains that there are many different styles of leadership that work for different people. However, he states that there are 7 types that range from Democratic, Autocratic, Laissez- Faire, Strategic, Transformational, Transactional and Bureaucratic. After reading up these different styles I was certain that the styles I would mainly use were Democratic and Laissez- Faire. I believe I related these leadership styles to my personality as I am easy going and laid back however am able to take charge when needed although seek advice from other people in order to achieve the best result.

I will be using the “Gibbs reflective cycle” in order to evaluate my performance as a leader on each day. I have decided to use this reflective cycle as according to Husebø (2015) the reflection is to take place after the experience has happened. He states that this reflective cycle is very effective due to the guidance of the 6 stages which allow the reflection to be understandable and makes it easier to identify any issues with performance and therefore put a plan into place in order to improve.

Monday 12th November 2018

Description

We were put into teams of three people from the second year students who have to reflect on their leading abilities and five first year students who have to reflect on their ability to work within a team. This was beneficial as we were able to distinguish the different roles within the group. Firstly we got there and introduced ourselves in order to gain a good team bond as if you do not know each other's names then you can not communicate as effectively. Then we were told by an instructor the purpose of the days which was to be able to navigate ourselves around the tower by using a map in order to get from one set location to another. Even though we were positioned as leaders we still had an instructor with us in order to teach us how to read a map and how to use a compass. We took it in turns to navigate the group, the first years also had a go so that they could understand what to do. We used the map to see where we were and followed a marked route in order to get to the desired location.

Feelings

I feel that this was a very good day to get to know the team I was working with as well as to get comfortable with the map. I believe that leading this task was easier for me as I have a lot of experience when navigating with a map as I have completed the Duke of Edinburgh awards. I also have good experience navigating in the Gower as for my bronze and silver award the expeditions were placed in this area. Even though I was confident with the task I was not as confident with my leading as I was unsure of what leadership style would be most effective in this situation as well as how the team would respond to the type of approach used.

Evaluation (what was good and bad about the experience)

I believe that as a team we all worked well together apart from a few incidents when the first years did not follow instructions I gave them. An example being about 20 minutes after starting where we got to a few country lanes. I gave the instruction to go into a single file where they followed however after a few seconds it we went back to a group that were all

over the road. I found this very frustrating as if a car was to come around the corner at a great speed then someone could have been seriously injured but they cared more about continuing their conversations. I was frustrated at them for not listening but I was more frustrated at myself as I did not tell them again because I felt there was 'no point' as we were turning off to a footpath shortly afterwards. I took how I felt into consideration and whenever it happened again I did not hesitate to tell them even if it did make me look 'bossy' I believe that in a situation that could cause possible injury a Autocratic approach of leadership is most effective. I had to alternate the leading position with two other people however I also believe we worked well together to lead the team. Many times we found that one of the leaders had to go in the front when they were using the map and the other leaders stayed at the back so that the group did not separate. Another thing that I believe went well was my ability to make sure all the group were together as when I was at the front I would look behind me every couple of minutes just to check we were all together. If we happened to go ahead then I would tell the group to stop in order for others to catch up. Apart from serious instructions I used more of a democratic style of leadership as everyone had a go at navigating. Another example was when we got to obstacles such gates being changed I confined within the team to see what route everyone believed we should take.

Conclusion

Overall I really enjoyed this day as it is something I am comfortable doing. This made it a lot easier to lead people as I knew that I was confident with what we were doing and where we were going.

Action plan

In order to try and improve I think that I need to consider what leadership styles I need to use and when so that next time I can put them into practice and use the best leadership styles that will be most effective to my group.

Tuesday 13th November 2018

Description

This day started off better as we were all used to the people we were working with. We started off strongly with everyone having their own turn to navigate as well as myself and the other leaders taking it in turn to lead the group. Yet again the only challenges we really faced consisted of the maps being outdated and routes that had slightly changed however as a group we analysed the best and quickest alternative route in order to overcome this issue. Everyone put their best effort in when navigating which led to no mistakes. We knew where we were on the map at all times. It only took us a couple of hours to get to the location which was a great improvement from yesterday.

Feelings

I feel that myself and the team I was in worked very well together. I think that this does show as we got to the location within a few hours.

Evaluation (what was good and bad about the experience)

Today went very well with not many issues to mention. The team worked effectively together and everyone got involved. I believe that we had a better result today because we were more comfortable as a team and if we had any worries or questions we would ask each other. It also showed when we were helping each other climb the gates. The team were more enthusiastic today which means they were a lot easier to lead. I would give instructions that they would follow immediately. I think that the fact that I have identified what approaches to use and when definitely helped. I believe the fact that we all took part in navigating was the

reason why we did not get lost as it allowed us to have a break so that we were more concentrated when it was our turn.

Conclusion

Overall this day could not have gone any better.

Action plan

I think the fact that we were comfortable within our team aided the success of the day. Next time I will know what leadership styles to use and when so an action plan would be to continue to use them and also to make sure that people feel comfortable in the team just in case we have any new team members.

Monday 11th March 2019

Description

On arrival to the Gower we were put into the same groups as previously. This was very beneficial as we knew that we worked well as a team and were aware of how each person liked to work. Once we were put into groups we were given the maps and compasses and we went over the route we were going to take. By doing this we were able to ensure that everyone had an idea of where we were going as we identified that we would be walking through a specific number of fields before we turn right. There were no confrontation or conflict within the team when dedicating people to navigate the route and if someone was unsure of where to go we worked together to identify the correct direction. This resulted in no mistakes when navigating the route. At one point the route we were given came back on itself in order to increase the length of the route which caused a decrease in motivation as we were close to the end and had to walk an extra 1.5k just to come back to the same spot we were previously. Other than this one issue the day went according to plan with exceptional effort from all members of the team.

Feelings

I feel as if this day was exceptional as we completed the route in a reasonable time, there were no mistakes with navigating and we showed great improvements in comparison to the previous days. Another reason I feel as if this day was a success is because there was no conflict between team members which resulted in no tension therefore meaning everyone could focus on finishing the route.

Evaluation

I believe this day was so successful due to the cooperation displayed by my team it was clear everyone wanted to complete the route which kept motivation levels high. I also believe that my leading also resulted in the success due to reflecting on my performance from last time. I was able to correct the flaws in my leading in order to improve the overall performance of the group . I was not put in many situations where I had to alternate leadership styles and found that the team responded more effectively to a democratic style of leadership. This was beneficial for myself as I became more and more confident with using this style of leadership.

Conclusion

To conclude this day was not only a success as we completed the route but it was also successful because I have become more confident with leading my group, confidence in navigation has increased in all team members as well as an increase in confidence and trust in each other.

Action plan

My action plan for next time will include to keep communication a priority as well as to ensure everyone is involved. I will also continue using a democratic style of leadership in order to complete the last day.

Tuesday 12th March 2019

Description

As the team were all aware that this was the last day motivation to complete the route was the highest it has ever been. Due to yesterday being so successful we started off the same way by discussing the route and allocating different members to navigate parts of the route. We started off strongly however the only issue we had with the day was the fact that we took the wrong direction however it brought us to where we needed to be so it was not too much of an issue. This route was the easiest in comparison to the other routes we have had however due to the weather and rain we were rushing which led to little errors. Other than that we completed the route and were the first groups back to the finishing point.

Feelings

I feel very happy with my leading and the teamwork and effort of each person in my team. I felt like we all worked well together and could not have been put in a better team to work with.

Evaluation

I believe that this day was really good as not only did we complete it in the quickest time but we worked more effectively as a team. Even though a mistake was made which has been one of the only mistakes the team has made it was not a mistake with drastic effects on our motivation. I think that making the mistake had more of a beneficial outcome as it showed that we were able to identify as a team that we had gone the wrong way as well as work together to find out where we were as well as to resolve the issue. As a leader I put my input which was correct however I still asked if any other members had any suggestions to which they agreed with me. The weather had a really big impact on our performance as we focussed more so on finishing rather than following our location on the map which resulted in the minor mistake. After we resolved it we all realised that we needed to focus more on the map and luckily the weather improved which made it easier to do so.

Conclusion

To conclude this day was more successful as not only did it allow us to improve our navigation but to also improve problem solving skills and communication. The team worked best when trying to resolve the issue as well as not blaming those who were navigating at the time.

Action plan

My action plan is to not get ahead of myself if the weather deteriorates. Other than that keep doing what I have been as well as to continue using a democratic style of leadership as it is the one that I am most confident with and get the best results.

References

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