

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF
PROVIDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS
AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION**

**Dr. Jerome I. Leventhal, Professor
Temple University College of Education
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, & Technology in Education
Career and Technical Education
and
The Center for Vocational-Technical Professional Personnel Development**

Index: Leadership Skill Development, Employability, Instruction Planning

Abstract: The concept of having all career/vocational/technical students develop leadership skills in addition to their other salable skills is recognized by both educators and employers. Total student development is necessary for all students to ensure successful roles in society, and to enter the labor market. Incorporating leadership skills in the instruction, improves the quality and relevance of the instruction, develops student leadership, enhances citizenship responsibilities, overcomes sex and race discrimination and stereotyping, and benefits all students including special populations and minorities. Occupational skills need to be enhanced with skills that enable the student to communicate with employers and do well in the workplace.

PRESENTATION

The concept of having all career/vocational/technical students develop leadership skills in addition to their other salable skills is endorsed by federal and State guidelines for conducting programs. The Policy Statement (National Coordinating Council, 1998), of the United States Department of Education, For Vocational Student Organizations, includes, “. . . total student development as being necessary for all vocational-technical education students to assume successful roles in society, and to enter the labor market”. The same statement continues, “. . . to improve the quality and relevance and instruction, develop student leadership, enhance citizenship responsibilities, overcome sex and race discrimination and stereotyping, and serve students of special populations, especially with respect to efforts to increase minority participation in these organizations”.

Teachers are urged to incorporate leadership development into their instruction based on the following rationale:

- a) Occupational skills need to be enhanced with skills that enable the student to communicate with employers and do well in the workplace.
- b) School activities tend to be minimized for students studying business and vocational-technical education due to the nature of the program and their involvement with field-based experiences/part-time supervised employment. Missing participation in activities such as student government, clubs, and other extra curricula activities, is compensated for by learning leadership skills in class/shop-laboratory experiences.

- c) Values and qualities acquired through leadership development help the student develop a stronger self-image and enable students to get along better with others in their personal and workplace life.

The focus of teachers is to have students learn occupational skills first, and then if time is available, have students learn some leadership. Usually there is never any time made available for this in the instructional program. The federal government's (Office of Education's) approach to this concept is to encourage educators to have leadership development integrated into the instructional program, and the burden for doing this falls to teachers and instructional leaders. It is appropriate when a school has a Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) (1995), Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) (1996), An Association of Marketing Students (DECA) (1997), and other organizations, but the point that is missed is that every class and every student are supposed to have these leadership experiences, according to good education practice. When each class has a career and technical student organization (ctso) or other classroom-related organization, there are many sets of officers, agendas, programs, etc. that actually expose all students to leadership skills. These activities usually take place in class once a week for a twenty to thirty minute meeting and program. Many teachers who participate in leadership instruction, arrange for this to take place during school time and class time as an integral part of the instruction. When programs are not obligated to a central or government agency, they should recognize the need for incorporating leadership skills into the existing instructional program.

In starting out to incorporate leadership skill development in the instructional program, the teacher could use a generic approach. Instead of being concerned about joining a national organization, a generic organization could be organized right in the class or shop/laboratory. Students studying Business Law or Welding or Electronics could be in the Business Law Club or Welding Club or Electronics Club, and they could elect officers, plan short weekly meetings in class, plan an agenda, and have programs that involve local employers or advisory committee members as speakers, or plan field trips. As part of this new activity the class could go on a field-trip to visit another class of the same subject at a nearby school. The two teachers would plan a program for that period which could include exchanging information about what is being studied, equipment being used, and if time allows, having a guest speaker. Students would meet each other and see that the same subject matter is being studied elsewhere. The realization that there are many students of the same backgrounds and/or interests, is a positive factor in the student's leadership development. Students are also able to network with each other and with employers.

As time moves on, and the generic organization is established with officers and weekly meetings in class, the teacher can then introduce the idea of national affiliation, regional and State events and conferences, and national literature and magazines. This slow approach works very well with teachers and/or students who may be overwhelmed with starting out with national affiliation from the very beginning.

It should be noted that there are other organizations that have materials on leadership skills that could also be utilized in the classroom. Teachers could use materials from business and industry, journals, and other publications that have articles concerning leadership. This information can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. Examples of organizations that have information and materials on leadership include: Junior Achievement (1996), Toastmasters (1992), DeMolay International (1996), International Order Of The Rainbow For Girls (1997), 4-H School Enrichment Program (1997), Kiwanis, Rotary, and many other groups interested in the development of young people. Special recognition goes to the Junior Achievement Program that assigns regular visitors/speakers/advisors from business/industry to visit classrooms on a routine basis. No other organization or student organization has such an arrangement on a wide scale.

Although learning and developing occupational skills in school is primary, it is another thing to be able to communicate and get along with employers, customers, co-workers, fellow students, and teachers. Leadership skills enable a student to “sell” their occupational skills to employers and use them in the workplace. Without the leadership skills, many students never get to the workplace or are unable to remain in the workplace. The National Coordinating Council For Vocational Student Organizations (1990) points out the importance of leadership skills for every student studying to prepare for careers in business, industry, and service occupations.

In schools that have formal memberships in the recognized ctso’s, every student in the classroom/shop should still be included in the leadership skill development instruction, even if they are not a dues paying member.

Research (Bell, 1989) (Lankard, 1996) has shown that students who had been involved with student organizations were:

- more likely to be involved in community affairs and organizations, school organizations, church groups, etc.
- able to gain professional experience and establish contacts with employers
- gain more poise, confidence, and strengthen personality traits.

The information that is to be taught according to Saulness (1990) is:

- Personal Leadership
- Group Dynamics
- Communication
- Officer Responsibilities
- Project Planning.

Also included is Planning A Leadership Retreat, for students and advisors. These leadership skills and activities are incorporated into the marketing instruction program.

In the VICA Professional Development Program (1995), master competency lists and the instructional content are included for students in the following broad categories:

- Work Force Awareness
- Self-Improvement
- Civic, Social and Business Awareness
- Work Force Basics
- Professional Strategies
- Career Planning
- Post-Competencies.

These competencies are to be studied in addition to the specific occupational area of the student.

The Marketing Education (MarkEd) Resource Center (1993) developed a learning activity package, *Leadership in Business*, to be used by students and instructors in examining leadership and its benefits. Included in this packet are:

- Define Leadership
- Characteristics of Each Type of Authority

Benefits of the Use of Leadership
There Are Different Leadership Styles and Traits
Three Distinct Categories of Leadership Style
Prevalent Leadership Theories
Six Important Leadership Techniques.

This package also examines increasing productivity through leadership, and then moves into leadership in business.

An example of a comprehensive textbook for secondary school students is by Ricketts (1996), Leadership - Personal Development & Career Success. This book is endorsed for use by students of agriculture, and includes the following:

Understanding Leadership
Communication and Speaking Before a Group
Leading Individuals and Groups
Conceptual (Thinking) Skills
Personal Development
Transition to Work Skills.

The instructor interested in incorporating leadership development in class could use an experience-based approach, contextual learning, for students. In explaining how students will participate in organizing and conducting their class-related organization, the following steps are to be included:

Electing Officers
Training/Preparing Officers
Defining Officer Responsibilities
Learning Parliamentary Procedure
Planning and Conducting Activities Related to the Instruction.

As the instructor implements leadership skill development, the emphasis is to have students gain insight into the kind of personality and leadership skills that are most appropriate to the field being studied. Students are able to identify the soft skills that are necessary in the workplace. In some occupations the emphasis may be working with customers or clients, while in other fields it may be working with supervisors or co-workers. Another concern is to have students identify whether productivity or quality control are key components of their chosen field. Being able to determine the expectations of management for personnel performance, and seeing how workers react is valuable to students. As students are more aware of leadership skills in the workplace, and how they are implemented, they will be more effective workers. Communicating more effectively, exercising critical thinking, setting goals, reflecting positive values, and getting along with others, will help students to be more successful in their personal and professional lives.

Between the numerous leadership materials from business and industry, and materials from professional groups, there is an ample supply of literature to be used by instructors and students. Encouraging more teachers to incorporate leadership skill development as instruction related to the specific career area is both a challenge and a need. Facilitating the student's ability to function in society and in the workplace serves a common interest.

REFERENCES

- Bell, Sarah L (1989): A Study Of Vocational Student Organization Activities In State Educational Agencies And The Relationship To Employability Skills. Unpublished Ed.D. Doctoral Study, Philadelphia, PA, Temple University.
- DeMolay International (1996): Making A Difference . . . With Tomorrow's Leaders. Brochure, Kansas City, MO.
- 4-H Program (1997): 4-H School Enrichment Programs 1996-1997. University Park, PA, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences - Cooperative Extension.
- Future Business Leaders of America (1995): Tomorrow's Business Leader. Fall 1995, Arlington, VA.
- Future Homemakers of America (1996): Building Strong Leaders In Families, Careers & Communities. Information Sheet, Reston, VA.
- Health Occupations Students of America, Pennsylvania Chapter of Health Occupations Students of America (1996): Get Actively Involved. Brochure, Harrisburg, PA, Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Junior Achievement Programs (1996): Brochure. Colorado Springs, CO.
- Kolberg, William and Smith, Foster (1992): America Should Go For The Gold In Skills For Blue-Collar Workers. The Philadelphia Inquirer, May 26, 1992, pp A11.
- Lankard, Bettina A (1996): Youth Organizations, Myths And Realities. ERIC Clearinghouse On Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center On Education And Training For Employment, Columbus, OH.
- Leventhal, Jerome I (1999): Marketing Education and the Development of Leadership Skills. Forum, Vol. 54, December, 1999, pp 44-45.
- Leventhal, Jerome I (1999): Providing Leadership Development for All Students: An Integral Part of Classroom Instruction. Tech Directions, August 1999, pp 22-24.
- Marketing Education (MarkEd) Resource Center (1993): Leadership in Business. Management LAP41, Marketing Supervisor Level, Columbus, OH.
- National Coordinating Council For Vocational Student Organizations (1990): Vocational Student Organization - A Reference Guide For The National Association Of State Directors Of Vocational Technical Education Consortium. Washington, DC.
- National DECA (1997): DECA: An Association of Marketing Students. Flyer, Reston, VA.
- Ricketts, Cliff (1996): Leadership - Personal Development & Career Success. Delmar Publishers, Albany, NY.
- Saulness, Cindy (1990): Effective Leadership - A Resource Handbook. DECA - An Association of Marketing Students, Reston, VA.
- Smith, H (1995): Future Jobs Less College-Oriented. USA Today, June 19, 1995, pp 11A.
- The Supreme Assembly (1997): The International Order Of The Rainbow For Girls. Brochure, McAlester, OK.
- Toastmasters International (1992): Toastmasters Communication And Leadership Program. Mission Viejo, CA.
- Vocational-Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) (1995): Professional Development Program. Part I, Part II, Leesburg, VA.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Jerome I. Leventhal, Professor
Temple University College of Education
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, & Technology in Education
Career and Technical Education and
The Center for Vocational-Technical Professional Personnel Development
1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue - RH334
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091
Telephone: 215-204-6076
Fax: 215-204-5154
e-mail: <mailto:jerome@astro.ocis.temple.edu>