
Experiencing Different Leadership Styles During Internship

“Leadership is the capacity to translate dreams into reality.”

There are three contemporary leadership styles, Transactional, Collaborative and Distributed that we trialed. They all have different principles but all reach the same outcome overtime. Over the course of this internal I was involved in numerous activities that demonstrate different styles of leadership, which gave me a greater understanding of each leadership style.

The first contemporary leadership, Transactional was applied during Corporate Connections. In this activity we tried to implement as many principles as possible. The main principle of transactional leadership was ‘motivation to gain rewards or the fear of the punishment could also be a motivator’. This means the winner/the people who did the best received a reward and the losers/people who did the worst received a punishment. However, during Corporate Connections majority of us didn’t find the reward or punishment enough of a motivator to push us to win. Therefore this shows that not everyone will think the set reward is a motivator as everyone has different opinions and preferences. Another principle was that ‘there is only one leader’. This showed to be an advantage and a disadvantage to my group in the Corporate Connections. It was an advantage because there was little confusion to the strategy, as one person told us what to do. The disadvantage was no one could share their ideas resulting in majority of our team having better ideas but not being able to share them as they weren’t the leader. Therefore, this was a disadvantage to our team as we couldn’t share ideas to improve our strategy but had to follow the leaders strategy that we knew would fail.

Another contemporary leadership strategy was Collaborative Leadership. This leadership style was applied during the Egg Drop activity. The main principle in this style is ‘there is no leader, it is shared responsibility. This was a clear advantage for my group as everyone got to share their ideas and add to different people’s ideas by increasing the creativity of ideas and a better division of labor. This resulted in our group discussing ideas and developing further on others ideas until we all agreed upon one. However, the disadvantage of this principle is a lot of time is sucked up by the decision process. This is because all of us had to agree on one idea which took a lot of discussion which wasted valuable time. Another principle is the ‘open flow of ideas’ which translates to everyone shares ideas equally and have the same time to express ideas as everyone else. This is an advantage because it results in diversity of ideas, as one person may of thought of a good idea, but another person just added that extra touch to it making it a really good idea. The research I found stated that “The transactional leader provides material rewards (salaries and bonuses) and personal rewards (self-satisfaction, fulfilling a personal desire, recognition of their work, and peer recognition) to employees”. This is not necessarily true because everyone has a different idea of rewards, especially during Corporate Connections. The reward for winning was a lollipop and the punishment was exercise. Majority of my group didn’t find the lollipop and the potential exercise to be enough of a drive to win. Therefore, my experienced differed from the research. Another bit of research I found was “leadership refers to the process by which one individual works to influence other group members to work toward the achievement of group goals”. This didn’t happen during the Corporate Connections, as the leader didn’t have the rewards on him so he wasn’t influencing us mentally or encouraging us physically to do well.

Looking through a leadership report it stated that collaborative leadership “gives members participation and freedom to share ideas”. My experience with the egg drop activity matched this research. Collaborative leadership made sure every in our group was contributing equally and there was a consistent flow of ideas. There was someone in our group who didn’t normally share ideas voluntarily but when placed in a collaborative leadership situation, he shared the most promising idea to the group. “Promoting good outcomes is not just a matter of lecturing the players about the fact that there is more to be gained from mutual cooperation than mutual defection. It is also a matter of shaping characteristics of the interaction so that over the long run there can be a stable evolution of cooperation”.

This piece of research also match my personal experience with Collaborative leadership, because everyone had to work together to reach an end outcome, not one person making all the decisions. Also the characteristics of the interaction have to be shaped, meaning that everyone has a chance to share ideas, like from personal experience we went around in a circle so everyone got a chance to share their idea without being outspoken.

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