

Creativity & Leadership – A Partnership that “Leaps Beyond”

Personal Information

Tony Andenoro
Doctoral Graduate Assistant – Leadership Development
Texas A&M University
217 Scoates Hall
2116 TAMU
Email – tandenoro@aged.tamu.edu
Office – 979.458-3039
Cell – 979.571.6487
Fax – 979.845.6296

Presentation Information

Description

Leaders are constantly faced with problems or situations which force them to make decisions and act without having any learned, practiced, or habitual solutions. In circumstances like these, it is imperative to assert one's creative thinking powers and “leap beyond” convention wisdom.

In leadership education, we discuss that creativity is important but we barely scratch the surface of how we can teach and empower creativity and the creative process to our learners. If leaders are continually challenged to use creativity, then it is imperative that we, as leadership educators, provide our learners with the tools to be effective creative thinkers. This presentation will address that need and convey some strategies to enhance the creativity of our students.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session the participant (learner) will be able to:

1. Identify the relationship between leadership and creativity
2. Analyze current leadership education programs and practice for the application of creativity
3. Develop enhanced leadership curriculum with regards to creativity and the creative process

Professional Bio

Tony Andenoro is a Doctoral Graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University. His studies have a strong emphasis on Leadership Development and College Teaching.

Tony “caught the teaching bug” as a kindergarten teacher in 2000 and continues to teach several classes for the Department of Agricultural Education today. He is also involved in campus organization advising. He has extensive experience in the field of student affairs working as an Admissions Counselor at the University of Toledo, a Residence Hall Coordinator at Coastal Carolina University, a Judicial Affairs Officer at Prairie View A&M University, a Hall Director at Texas A&M University, and as an Area Coordinator at John Carroll University.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Tony earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Communication from the University of Toledo and his Master's in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University. He holds certifications in Professional College Teaching, Instructional Leadership Development, Diversity Education, and Administrative Leadership. He was awarded the Enhancing Diversity Award for Texas A&M University in 2001. His interests include student development, student empowerment, popular culture and its application to teaching, and creativity and intelligence.

Practical "Blues" Paper Submission

Abstract

Leaders make decisions and when faced with new problems or situations, leaders must act and decide based on their creative process. This inherently links leadership and creativity, which asserts that leadership education must not only focus on, but must enhance the creative process and learner creativity.

This essay examines the development of creativity as a foundational pillar of leadership education. Moreover, this essay complimented with its presentation illustrates the connection between creativity and leadership and offers evaluation and application strategies for enhancement of current leadership education practice.

Leaders are constantly faced with problems or situations which force them to make decisions and act without having any learned, practiced, or habitual solutions. In circumstances like these, it is imperative to assert one's creative thinking powers and "leap beyond" convention wisdom. In leadership education, we discuss that creativity is important but we barely scratch the surface of how we can teach and empower creativity and the creative process to our learners. If leaders are continually challenged to use creativity, then it is imperative that we as leadership educators provide our learners with the tools to be effective creative thinkers. Providing that creativity is a fundamental pillar of leadership education, educators must be able identify the relationship between leadership and creativity, analyze current leadership education programs and practice for the application of creativity, and develop enhanced leadership curriculum with regards to creativity and the creative process.

Paul Torrance wrote that creativity, much like leadership, is teachable (1999). He believed that to truly make a difference, one must "go beyond" or examine situations by creatively processing them and developing new and

innovative techniques to better serve others. However, I surmise that most educators have addressed the common belief of students that they are not creative and that they are unwilling to tap into their creative process. This perspective stems from the suppression of creativity in schools in favor of structure. I am not advocating that structure is misplaced in school, but if educators examine the system, kindergarten is fun and dynamic and then something changes. Colors and imaginative displays adorn the walls in kindergarten classrooms and students spend time exploring their creativity through drawings, role playing, building, etc. In first grade, continuing through the majority of their college careers, students are given parameters and extensive explanations of how tasks should be performed. This inhibits their creativity and creative development. An example of this is a group of students that are told that cursive letters should look a certain way and students should practice conformity to that standard. This instruction leads their perceptions and suppresses their creativity.

Although this is a minor example of how creativity is stifled, it still provides us with an example of how teaching can suppress creativity. I would venture a guess that through analysis of our teaching practices we will find many more examples contradicting the importance of creativity in education. This is extremely important to consider when addressing leadership education. Leadership educators provide students with the foundational and practical knowledge to assist them in working with people and facilitating tasks. However when addressing change, which is a critical component of leadership education, we often fail to explain how they can be dynamic with regards to developing innovative ideas and solutions to current problems. Creativity is the underlying premise for developing innovative strategies. Hence, it is paramount to leadership and leadership education.

Torrance advocates that through specific skill development, the advancement of philosophical perspectives, and strategic practice we can enhance and supplement the creativity of learners (1999). Inclusion of

creativity development in leadership education furthers the development of our students and the development of leaders. It promotes dynamic approaches to problem solving and enhances the learner's ability to make holistically beneficial decisions in leadership roles. Thus, leaders will grow and "leap beyond" previous expectations through attention to and inclusion of creativity in their curriculum and education.

References

- Dacey, J.S. (1989). *Fundamentals of creative thinking*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.
- Knowels, M.S., Holton, E.F., & Swanson, R.A. (1998). *The adult learner*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.
- McKeachie, W.J. (1987). Instructional evaluation: current issues and possible improvements. *Journal of Higher Education*, 58, 3. 344-350.
- Rollins, T.J. (1990). Analysis of theoretical relationships between learning styles of students and their preferences for learning activities. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 31, 1, 64-70.
- Sousa, D.A. (2001). *How the brain learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.
- Torrance, E.P. & Saffer, H.T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press.