SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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PRESENTATION GOALS

a) Explain Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development and how it aids professional development

b) Characterize and describe servant leadership and its organizational benefits

c) Demonstrate how servant leadership can be used to help others into a zone of proximal development
CONTENTS

• Context
• Traditional approaches to professional development
• Zone of Proximal Development
• Servant leadership
• Scenario exercise
• Conclusion
• Questions
CONTEXT
94% of employees say they would stay with an organization that invested in their career development.*

68% of employees want to learn at work.*

56% of employees would take a manager-recommended course.*

59% of millennials cite professional development as extremely important when applying for a job.**

* LinkedIn Learning, 2018
** Adkins & Rigoni, 2016
TRADITIONAL APPROACHES
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• Seminars and conferences
• Webinars
• Professional organizations
• Articles/books
• Motivational speakers
• Team building activities
• RETREAT!!
ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT
Zone 1 – Learner can do unaided

Zone 2 – Zone of proximal development (Learner can do with guidance)

Zone 3 – Learner cannot do

*Vygotsky, 1978
LEADERSHIP STYLE
TWO TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

EMPLOYEES AS A MEANS

Organizational Success

EMPLOYEES AS ENDS

Individual Success
SERVANT LEADERSHIP

GREENLEAF, 1977

“...the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”

EVA, ET AL., 2019

“...an other-oriented approach to leadership manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, and outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community.”
SERVANT LEADERSHIP

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE*

• Empowerment
• Accountability
• Standing back
• Humility

• Authenticity
• Courage
• Interpersonal acceptance
• Stewardship

* van Dierendonck, D. & Nuijten, I., 2011
WHAT SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS NOT

• Not to be confused with service industry
• It is not merely providing resources to your team.
• It is not a sacrificing of one’s self to be a leader
HOW DOES SERVANT LEADERSHIP HELP OTHERS ONTO A PATH OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT?

THE PATH...

• Is perilous and chaotic
• Is risky and uncertain
• Requires active engagement
• Requires reflection
HOW DOES SERVANT LEADERSHIP HELP OTHERS ONTO A PATH OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT?

SERVANT LEADERSHIP...

• Identifies areas of improvement on an individual basis
• Creates an environment that encourages risk-taking
• Empowers team members to make decisions
• Gives employees the courage to take responsibility
SCENARIO 1

- University One relies on a recruitment team of 8 in-office recruiters and 5 regional recruiters. While the in-office team feels well-supplied and connected to their office colleagues, the regional recruiters often feel disconnected and under resourced. In fact, over the last several recruitment cycles, turnover on the regional team has been much higher than for the in-office team. Additionally, there are fewer regional applications and students admitted than local prospective students, and the number of regional student applications is down from the last cycle. One of the regional recruiters often calls the in-office recruiters to complain about the lack of communication and says that he doesn’t feel as motivated as when he was first hired. He also expresses frustration that the regional team is viewed by the in-office team as a failed experiment that no one believed in from the start.
SCENARIO 2

- Community College One serves a large city with several feeder high schools. The recruitment team is fairly small but works very hard to ensure that the college meets its enrollment goals. One of the newer recruiters frequently comments that while there’s a lot of prospective student data, it’s rarely used to inform enrollment strategy. She has stated that she is more than willing to take on the project, but one of her colleagues has convinced her that it would just be a waste of time. She is starting to think that campus politics may be getting in the way of her performance goals and has even started looking for another position.
SCENARIO 3

• University Two relies on a recruitment team of 12 recruiters, only one of whom deals with all of the institution’s transfer students and one of whom deals with all prospective students coming from out of state. Several recruiters feel burnt out by their workload and often talk about not having enough work/life balance. They also frequently report that they’re too busy with day-to-day tasks and don’t have enough time for professional development. Some of the more senior recruiters report that even though they have several ideas about how the office can improve, this is the way it has always been and it’s not likely to change.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

• Traditional methods of professional development do not create a culture of development

• Cultures of development are those that nudge employees towards a path of proximal development

• Cultures of professional development are cultivated by leadership styles

• Servant leadership is ideal style for cultures of professional development
QUESTIONS


