Effective Leadership Education: Developing a Core Curriculum for Leadership Studies

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Abstract

Educators must develop leadership studies programs that prepare students to deal with the reality of a diverse world so they are able to handle constant change as they lead in the 21st century. The purpose of this paper is to consider a variety of questions that need to be answered when developing core curricula for college and university leadership studies programs. The discussion is based many years of researching, developing, and teaching in this area at state universities as well as at private liberal arts and Christian colleges. This paper offers a review of the importance of leadership education, a review of Hosford's (1973) curriculum development model, and an examination of three case histories. Hosford (1973) has developed a model of instructional design that suggests a strong interrelationship exists between any given curriculum program and the subsequent teaching involved in the program. Hosford's model challenges the educator to ask a variety of questions concerning issues affecting professional, practical, political, package (i.e., program), organizational, interrelated dynamics, teaching/learning, and implementation. As illustrated by the three case histories, with attention to each dimension of curriculum development it is possible to develop meaningful and successful leadership studies courses and programs at the college and university levels.

Introduction

Living in the 21st century means needing new technologies to deal with challenges such as population growth, food supplies, disease, pollution, waste disposal, urban sprawl, societal unrest, economic crisis, corporate growth, and war. Just as importantly people need leaders who are skilled in critical thinking, communicating, and effective leadership. Leaders are needed who are capable of dealing with family problems, poverty, politics, ethics, interpersonal and international relations as well as many other problems. Effective leaders are needed at all levels of our society. Obviously "understanding leadership has practical importance for all of us" (Hackman & Johnson, 2000, p. 1).

Leadership education must not be limited to discussions in classrooms and think tanks. In 1988 Alvin Toffler (cited in Sawin, 1995) said, "we use the 'first wave' to mean the process associated with agriculturalization and the agrarian era; the 'second wave' to mean the processes of industrial era; and the 'third wave' to mean the changes forming a new society today" (p. xviii). Effective leadership education will need to prepare people to deal with the diverse reality present in a pluralistic world. Leaders must be able to communicate effectively -- interpersonally and organizationally. They need to be able to handle constant change. They need to understand human perception, physiology, neurology, psychology, and social behavior. Such individuals need to apply critical thinking, language, and behavior that are appropriate in a myriad of situations. All in all the leaders of the 21st century will need to be able to skillfully communicate with people in order to lead effectively while promoting cooperation and mutual understanding among diverse people.

The good news is that today there is general agreement that leadership can be learned. Few people would deny there is a critical need for effective leadership in human affairs. Certainly a person's thoughts are shaped by the leaders that individual comes in contact with daily. And, while leadership behavior may appear to be subconscious, such learning is not inconsistent with much of human behavior. People often are not conscious of various aspects of their personalities and behaviors. Yet, because too little about what constitutes effective leadership is known, leadership educators must strive to make the subconscious dimensions of leadership conscious, and thus, at least in theory, enhance the education and training of effective leaders.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to consider a variety of questions that need to be answered when developing core curricula for college and university leadership studies programs. The discussion is based on many years of researching, developing, and teaching in this area at state universities as well as at private liberal arts and Christian colleges. This paper offers a review of the importance of leadership education, a discussion of Hosford's (1973) model for developing a core curriculum, and an examination of three case histories involving the development of leadership studies courses and programs.

Importance of Leadership Education

The 20th century saw an ideological shift in higher education from the belief that education is a tool of cultural transmission to a more contemporary belief that it should serve the needs and wants of students (Watt, 1980). This shift is reflected in increased accessibility to higher education. It supports the importance of education. College attendance, once only for the well-to-do or rich, is now considered a right that everyone enjoys. While significant social and racial

barriers still exist, higher education is making strides to meet the needs of all citizens in the United States of America.

For over 2,500 years liberal arts education has reflected a basic philosophy of what is needed to adequately educate students to fulfill the responsibilities placed on them (Watt, 1980). Today colleges and universities are involved in preparing students for a wide variety of professions and occupations. In more recent years changes within liberal arts education has included a focus on effective leadership education. Many colleges and universities recognize the importance of including courses and programs that provide education for developing effective leadership.

Leadership education has experienced many theoretical explanations that have shifted from one model to another and then back again (Brungardt, 1996 Summer). Brungardt identified five major theories -- "trait, behavioral, situational, power-influence, and transformational" (p. 82). Crawford, Brungardt, and Maughan (2000) note that "leadership theorists have struggled with one basic concept: the definition of leadership" (p. 1).

Brungardt (1996 Summer) points out that "it is important from the outset to distinguish and define the critical and sometimes confusing terminology" (p. 83). "Leadership development" deals with almost all forms of growth or stages of development in the life cycle that promotes a person's leadership potential. On the other hand, "leadership education" refers to those learning activities and educational situations intended to enhance leadership abilities. Unfortunately throughout history leadership education has been for a select few and not always available to everyone who can and should benefit from leadership development programs (Watt, 1995).

Certainly leadership education can and should achieve a number of goals (Wolfe, 1996 Fall). A function of any leadership education program is to promote both youth and adult leadership as a key component of individual and community growth. Secondly, such programs should enhance leadership by establishing relationships for the exchange of ideas, information, and research. Another dimension of leadership education is to develop an environment that encourages the translation of leadership theory and research into practice. Leadership programs should encourage the creation of new educational partnerships. And, finally, they should provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

According to Quigley (1996 September), there is a clear need for emergent leaders who have the capacity for resolving divergent human problems. These divergent problems require ethically based leaders. In support of this point, Holkeboer and Hoeksema (1998) assert that "leadership should endorse ethical principles and embody moral integrity" (p. 5). "Contrary to popular belief, being ethical makes us more, not less, successful. Being a 'good' leader means being both ethical and effective" (Johnson, 2001, p. 138). Woyach (1993) claims that

"anyone can exercise leadership…young or old, assertive or quiet, a man or a woman" (p. xi). Leadership brings together diverse points of view to achieve common goals and create shared visions. Watt (1995) advocates that it is possible to provide students with learning environments that foster the learning and development of leadership skills.

Wren (cited in Watt, 1995) identified seven considerations in teaching leadership development. His considerations include:
- Students must be made to feel comfortable with the concept of leadership.
- Students must be able to recognize the various elements of leadership.
- Students need to know about the process of leadership.
- Students ought to have an increased awareness of the practice of leadership.
- Students should have a sense of the purposes of leadership.
- Students should begin to develop an awareness of their individual strengths and weaknesses as leaders.
- Students need to enhance their skills of analysis along with improving oral and written communication skills.

In today's pluralistic and complex world people need to be able to lead effectively in many different settings. What are needed are not masses of intellectuals, but women and men educated to feel, to act, and to think. A curriculum that contains a leadership studies component is better able to provide students with requisite leadership skills. Students so prepared are better able to explore their world, to maximize their intellectual capabilities, and to be life-long learners with an ability to act autonomously. Such people are better able to lead others. Leaders are needed who are well educated in their fields, yet, possess the capability to lead effectively at home, play, and work.

Quigley (1996 September) discusses the "leader as learner" (p. 18). He points out that leaders "must continuously learn the skills of effectiveness to ensure economic survival in a competitive environment" (p. 18). This recognition of the importance of effective leadership skills affirms the need to develop appropriate leadership curricula. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider how educators can develop worthwhile leadership studies courses and programs.

Curriculum Model

Hosford (1973) has developed a model of instructional design that suggests a strong interrelationship exists between any given curriculum program and the subsequent teaching involved in the program. Improving teaching and instruction in the classroom results in a higher quality of education. It cannot be overlooked, however, that the better the curriculum program being taught the better the chance the student will experience a positive learning environment. In Figure 1 Hosford's model depicts the relationship needed between curriculum, instruction, and teaching. Without attention to each dimension there will be inadequacies in developing any educational program.

The Hosford (1973) model for curriculum development is helpful in developing effective leadership education programs. The model is applicable to meeting the needs for course and program development at any college or university around the nation. It addresses national trends on issues related to the development of leadership studies.

The first dimension identified is "professional considerations." Curriculum development must deal with occupational matters. Some questions that need attention include:
- Will there be a gain in prestige or a loss if the institution is involved in the program?
- Who will teach the new course/s?
- Will those involved in teaching and administering the program receive acceptance from their "client/s"?
- Is the program vocational, technical, professional, or liberal arts?
- Are the personnel too overspecialized to effectively handle the program?
- Will their self-concept allow them to function freely in the new program?
- Is there likely to be a fear of failure?
- Are the personnel experienced enough to handle the program?

Figure 1. Ideal Relationship Between Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum

Instruction

Teaching
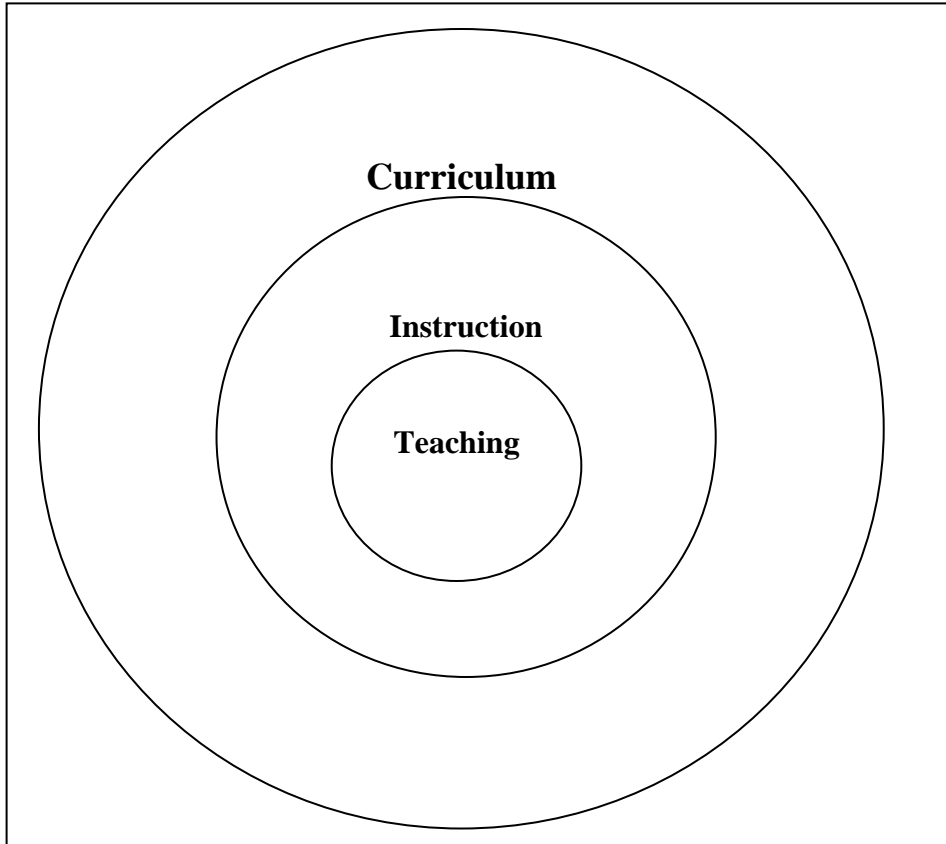
Adapted from *An instructional theory: A beginning* (1973) by Philip L. Hosford.

A second dimension involves "practically." Questions involving practicality include:

- Is the new program feasible?
- Is the new program cost effective?
- Will it require new materials?
- How much will it cost?
- Is the institution going to have to hire new personnel? How many?
- Will someone else be lost because of the new program within the system?
- How long will the program last?
- Is the new program an improvement?
- Will it improve the educational process for students?
- Will it improve the students' life experiences?
- Is the program such that it is local enough for those wishing to participate in it?
- Will there be enough students interested in the program?
- Can the new proposal be effectively and efficiently evaluated?
- Will it require special facilities or will the existing ones suffice for the task?

"Political climate" is the third dimension. In the area of polity there are several issues which must be considered in the development and adoption process of a new program, including:

- Will the community accept the new plan for teaching their students?
- Will the societal norms allow for instruction in the specific areas covered in the program?
- What about the religious sanctions within the community that might come in to play if the new program is adopted?
- What effect will government have on the proposed curricular development — local, state, and national?
- What about the philosophic value biases that face the new program?
- How will the change be perceived by governing personnel? Administrative staff? Faculty members? Student body?

The fourth area presented in Hosford's (1973) model relates to the issue of the "package." That is to say, what are the specific considerations about the curriculum? Some questions concerning this element include:

- Is the program creative enough to allow the students to encounter new learning experiences in a meaningful way?
- Does the program include experiential, interactive hands-on types of learning experiences that can enhance the knowledge gained in the classroom?
- Are the students capable of handling this particular series of learning experiences at this time in their education?
- Are the students likely to be interested in learning the program material?
- Are the overall costs and time spent worth the development and adoption of the curriculum?
- Does the curriculum provide the students with alternate settings where they will be challenged to learn?

Fifth, developers must consider "organization." As the model suggests, a curriculum program must be able to satisfactorily deal with structural and institutional considerations if it is to be worthwhile. The questions to be answered include:

- Does anyone know who is responsible for the program?
- Does the program fit within the institutional philosophy and mission?
- Is the program a consistent activity or is it haphazard and ineffective?
- Can the program fit in and survive the routine administrative maintenance procedures of the institution?

The sixth consideration deals with the "interrelated dynamics" of the various concerns in the developmental process. In this discussion these will be referred to as - "interaction effects." One must consider the interactions among administration, curriculum, faculty, governing personnel, and students if new program development is to be successful. During these negotiations it is essential for the participants to recognize the interdependence of these diverse items. Each

entity must listen to the others' positions concerning the proposed curriculum. Approaching the issues with a win-win attitude will result in synergy allowing for positive outcomes that promote the development process.

The seventh consideration involves instructional theory issues labeled "teaching/learning considerations." Questions include:
- Are new teaching strategies required or will the instructional methods presently in use work in the new program?
- How does the new program fit into the instructional goals and objectives that have been set down?
- Where will the curriculum program fit in the scope and sequence of the overall educational offerings at the institution?
- Will the program require further education and training for faculty who teach in the new program?
- Can the teacher provide alternate settings for learning within the framework of the program?
- How will the program be evaluated and assessed?
- Will the philosophy and values held by the teacher interfere in the effective instruction of students?
- How will the instructional supervisor assess student progress and learning?
- Is the teacher likely to be too dependent on someone else for the effective and efficient completion of her or his task because of the manner in which the program was implemented?
- Does the experience of the teacher allow for effective instruction?
- Are teachers likely to reject the new program because of professional prestige image problems - real or perceived?

And, the eighth area of concern is "implementation." Some of the key questions requiring answers include:
- Will those involved with the program be able to identify with it?
- Are personnel and students likely to accept the course of study?
- Who is going to make the decision to implement the program?
- How can the decision be enforced without alienating everyone involved?
- Will the proposal remain consistent over an extended period of time?
- Does the program fit the overall curriculum structure at the institution?
- Do those involved in the implementation process have the initiative to see the program through to its natural conclusion?
- Has an evaluation procedure been clearly established to ensure the program achieves its goals and objectives within the educational curriculum of the institution?

In summary, the Hosford (1973) model focuses discussion on a number of curriculum related questions that must be dealt with in the development and adoption of leadership studies programs at colleges and universities. Developers of new courses and curricular programs will find the work is difficult and time

consuming, but it is worthwhile when it is done correctly. When developers of leadership studies respond to these developmental questions, the answers will likely enhance the development of courses and programs of leadership education offered by various institutions.

Figure 2. Relationship of Leadership Curriculum Development Factors
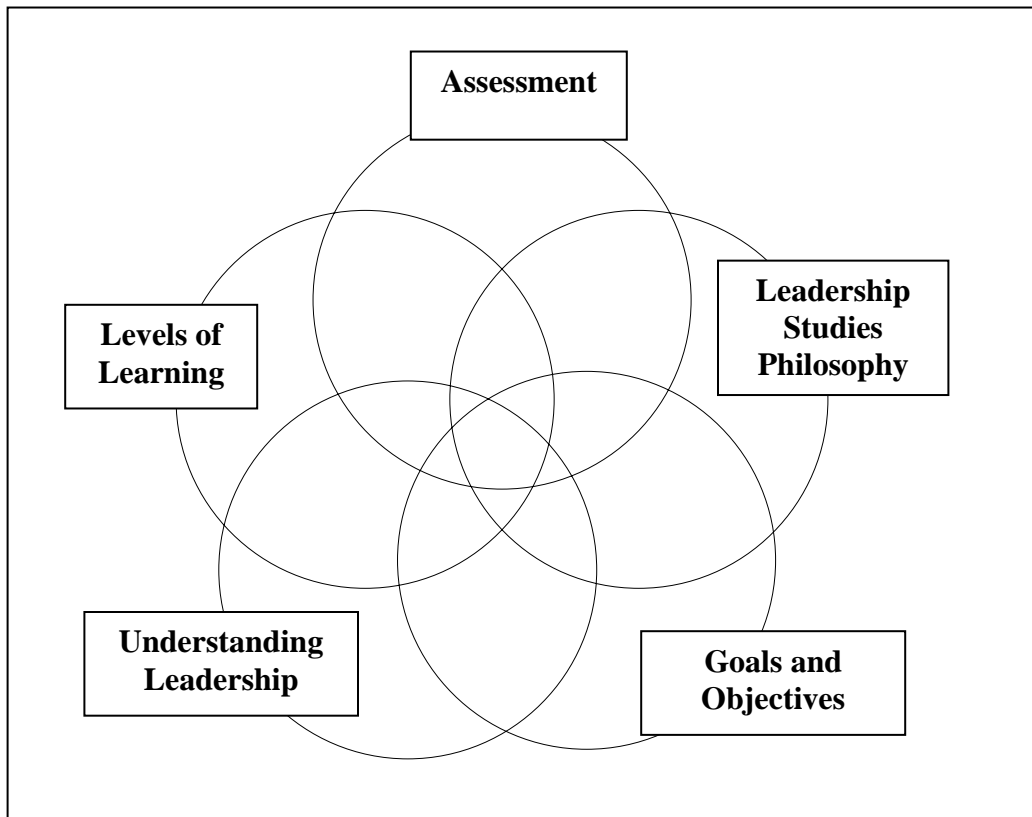
Leadership Studies: Case Histories of Program Development

The following discussion focuses on five factors that were a part of the creation and development of three leadership studies programs (refer to Figure 2). These include (a) levels of learning, (b) understanding leadership, (c) leadership studies philosophy, (d) goals and objectives, and (e) assessment. These factors were considered as a result of the writer's research, teaching, and development of leadership studies courses and degree programs at state universities as well as private liberal arts and Christian colleges.

Levels of Learning

In each of the three academic settings, three levels of learning were identified: comprehension; analysis and synthesis; and, application. Comprehension deals with the fact that the students should be introduced to theories and concepts through assigned readings, lectures, and audio-visual materials. Students need to

be tested to reinforce their intellectual mastery of course material. Analysis and synthesis focuses on the expectation that students must be able to demonstrate they have critically analyzed course materials, thereby enabling them to synthesize the materials presented in class discussions, oral reports, and written assignments. Finally, students must be able to effectively apply their understanding of leadership behavior in a "relatively" safe environment by participating in structured learning exercises (SLEs) in the classroom.

Understanding Leadership

Understanding leadership is important. In the forward of his book entitled, *Developing the Leader Within You* , Maxwell (1993) notes that "leadership is not an exclusive club for those who were 'born with it'" (n.p.n.). Understanding leadership cannot be achieved without recognizing that several factors affect the way actions and leadership potential is interrelated. Maxwell hints at this interrelatedness when he points out that those concerned with leadership must "link the definition of leadership (influence) with the responsibility of leadership (people development)" (p. 118).

Birnbaum (cited in Watt, 1995) claims that leadership is behavior that influences others. This is known as "legitimation." Legitimacy is a matter of interpretation that depends on the perceptions of those being led. He also stresses the importance of the concept of "intentions" as an important factor in understanding leadership. Birnbaum suggests outcomes must in some way reflect the desires of the leader. Because outcomes are related to human action rather than external forces or chance, the tendency is to search for a connection between events and leadership actions. A third dimension identified by Birnbaum is that of "initiative." He contends leadership is not "routine." Leadership involves interpretation. This means that people expect the leader to respond to situations by exercising independent judgment and discretion. Thus, leaders must make choices. Birnbaum correctly identifies another important leadership concept, "morality." Manz and Neck (1999) support his point. "We choose what we are and what we become" (p. 1). Birnbaum (cited in Watt, 1995) claims as individuals make choices, those very same choices define the moral dimension of the their leadership because they require value judgments outside the bounds of the rules. Finally, Birnbaum claims that leaders must be able to motivate and influence others. Thus, "behavior" is a critical element in understanding leadership. Leaders must be able to evoke changes in followers' behaviors by changing followers' perceptions.

Leadership Studies Philosophy

With this view of learning and of understanding about leadership in mind, it is possible to set the parameters of the philosophy of leadership courses for concentrations, minors, and degree programs. The leadership studies programs

referred to in these case histories were founded upon the following four principles.

- Given the complex problems and challenges of today's world, the need for leadership is as great as ever before. Effective leadership can make a positive contribution to a better quality of life at all levels of society.
- Leadership can be taught. It is possible to develop and provide students with a learning environment that will foster critical leadership skills and capabilities.
- Leadership education is not just for a select few, but rather, all individuals can and should benefit from leadership development activities.
- It is important to provide a balanced and interdisciplinary approach to leadership study. The theoretical literature in the field is interdisciplinary in content and the learning environment should also be interdisciplinary in its nature.

Goals and Objectives

Responding to the questions created by applying Hosford's (1973) curriculum development model to the development of leadership studies courses and programs, several common goals evolved. It was determined that in order to develop effective leadership behaviors, students should:

- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop increased written communication skills.
- Develop increased oral communication skills, both speaking and listening.
- Develop an understanding of the mental, physical, social, organizational, and emotional factors affecting individuals.
- Develop the use of strategies that promote productive interaction between "leaders" and "followers."

Assessment

Assessment of leadership studies programs is an important matter. It is essential for verifying that leadership studies programming is effectively accomplishing what it is intended to accomplish. According to Brungardt and Crawford (1996), effective assessment furthers the academic discipline of leadership education. Leadership education should be assessed based on multiple method strategies and conducted longitudinally as well.

Assessment efforts reflect the fact that the college and university leadership studies programs mentioned in this paper have grown by leaps and bounds during the past decade. While each leadership program is unique to its institutional mission, they have experienced many accomplishments and successes. Indeed enrollments continue to grow in the various programs.

Such successes are due to a commitment to continuous improvement of these various leadership programs through regular assessment. There are numerous considerations that guide effective program assessment, including:

- First, the focus, purpose, and direction of the program must be refined, refocused, and redeveloped over the years on a regular basis.
- Second, consistency between the sections of each course must be ensured.
- Third, the course, concentration, minor and/or degree program objectives and content must be regularly examined in order to evaluate the potential for new course methodologies and content.
- Fourth, it must be ensured that the core programming is aligned to deal with questions within the cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains of learning.
- Fifth, it is a good idea to seek to "grow" the leadership program.

Three Case Histories Concerning Leadership Studies Programs

According to Brungardt (1996 Spring), the leadership studies program at the state university has grown to over 400 majors. The program has continued to grow in size over the past several years.

At the private Christian college the mission is to educate, equip, and enrich leaders. Therefore, college personnel implemented a 10-hour leadership concentration for all of its bachelor degrees. Following the implementation of the leadership studies program the college has achieved regional accreditation and its most recent graduating class is the largest in school history.

The private liberal arts college is offering an interdisciplinary major in organizational communication and leadership. The program is a 30-hour program including course work in business, interdisciplinary studies, leadership studies, mass communication, sociology, and speech communication. The program is growing. The program appears to have strong potential for increased numbers of majors in the degree program.

Conclusion

This paper offers a justification for developing effective leadership courses and programs for training today's leaders as well as for preparing future leaders in the 21st century. The overview of leadership education literature clearly affirms the need and value of leadership education. The writer examined the development of core curricula for leadership studies courses and programs at the college and university levels. Applying the questions generated by the Hosford (1973) model for curriculum development, it was found through three case histories that the issues raised where instrumental in developing effective leadership education courses and programs. The model addresses important issues concerning professional, practical, political, package, organization, interrelated dynamics, teaching/learning, and implementation matters essential in the development of leadership studies programs.

The discussion of the three case histories involving courses and leadership programs at a mid-western regional university, a private Christian college in the

plains, and an eastern private liberal arts college support the application of Hosford's (1973) principles of curriculum development in developing leadership studies programs. The success of these three programs underscores the importance of giving proper attention to the educational foundation and curriculum development model used by an institution wishing to develop and implement leadership studies courses and programs.

From this examination, the writer suggests there are five essential elements of successful curriculum development. First, educators need to understand and apply what they know about students' levels of learning. Second, it is vital for educators to have an understanding of leadership. Third, leadership studies courses and programs ought to be well grounded in an appropriate philosophical foundation. Fourth, the goals and objectives of any course or program of leadership education must be clearly stated and understood by teacher and learner alike. Finally, assessment cannot be underestimated in importance as part of an effort for continuous improvement of a leadership studies course or program.

The challenge in the decades ahead will be for educators to expand their leadership studies programs. If the current program is a course, expand to a concentration of required courses. Should the program be a concentration, then seek to develop a minor. If it is a minor, go for a major. If it is a major, try to establish a certificate program. If it is a certificate program then you should consider expanding it into a bachelor degree program. If it is already a bachelor degree program, expanding to the next level - a masters degree – makes good sense. Ultimately, if resources allow and it fits the mission of the college or university, the institution may want to develop a doctoral program.

Hopefully educators will consider the issues and questions raised in this discussion in order to provide quality leadership programming for their students. Effective leadership studies courses and programs will help prepare students to deal with the reality of a diverse world. We need trained and educated leaders capable of handling the constant change facing them as leaders in the 21st century.

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