Self-Reflection Leadership Plan

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Introduction

This course has helped us think more about who we are as leaders. And reflection is an essential step of making meaning and putting together all the pieces and parts we have learned throughout the semester. In this paper, I will reflect upon my predominant leadership style, specifically in the context of teaching.

Core Skills

I first registered for this course because it would also be my first semester teaching. I thought the material learned here would help me become a better leader, and thus, a better teacher.

When I first started planning for my course, I had this teaching philosophy in mind:

> *"In the student-centered classroom the roles of teacher and student of necessity change so that the teacher changes from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side' who views the students not as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge but as seekers to be guided along their intellectual development journey."*

I didn't want to simply tell my students *things* and leave it at that. I did not want the focus to be only on making the grade. Instead, I wanted to inspire them. My goal was to

help them bring meaning to their learning experiences. I want students to be able to leave my class, find value in what they have learned, and carry it with them into their futures.

But I didn't know how to accomplish this.

Completing the TRUMOTIVATE report was very interesting in that I felt like it helped bring more awareness to these points that I care about. One of my motivations was to "evoke recognition." When I first saw this, I was surprised and immediately disagreed. My MBTI personality type is an INFP. I am introverted and want nothing to do with being in "the spotlight," as this motivation initially suggested. But when teaching, perhaps this is necessary.

Furthermore, one of this motivation's contributions is to take on "inspiring roles," which is one of my main goals with teaching -- to inspire students. Other characteristics included desiring feedback and "heigten[ing] the awareness of a purpose or cause." In this context, I want to help students bring meaning to their learning by encouraging them to reflect and remember why they are in the class and what they want to take out of it. While these are my motivations, I still need the experience to accomplish them, which leads to current gaps.

Current Gaps

"*What are your personal goals for this class? What topics interest you most right now?*"

Silence.

Finding a proper balance between controlling the classroom myself and giving students more control is something I struggled with early on. While I wanted to give students the freedom to be creative and pursue their interests, too much openness seemed to also be overwhelming for them. On my first day, I tried to give the opportunity for students to discuss their opinions on the class structure, syllabus, and topics. But everyone was very quiet.

I was able to get some peers' feedback on this in one of our earlier class discussions. Perhaps for the first class, especially for undergraduate students, it may be better to have a set schedule and class plan in place to discuss right away. This way, students can begin with some expectations of the class. Then, over time and as they get more comfortable, I can open up avenues for discussing how they are doing, feedback on the course, and how I can adapt to help improve their learning experiences. This semester I only had twelve students, so it was easier to get to know them as individuals. I will have to think about how to handle a larger classroom in future semesters.

I will continue trying different teaching strategies to improve the course. However, as one of my motivations brought to light, I desire feedback and value being able to react to the audience (in this case, my students) to make improvements.

Strategic Goals

To assess whether or not my strategies are working, I would like to know how the students genuinely feel about their learning experiences. This will require better communication, active listening, and emotional intelligence (e.g., social awareness and relationship management). As we have done in this course, reflection and gaining awareness is the first step to improving these various aspects.

This semester, I would often reach out to students or talk one-on-one to get a sense of how they were doing and if there was anything I could do to improve their experiences. However, I have also wondered how comfortable a student would be to tell me if something wasn't working. So, I have been thinking about providing additional ways for students to give anonymous feedback.

Listening to the speaker, Mr. Jim Warren, was also very insightful (and fun). He had mentioned asking others: "Which tasks would you do for free? And which ones would you not even do for pay?" This made me wonder about ways I could bring similar

questions into the classroom. Of course, I can't exactly remove a whole section of material, but perhaps I can learn how to present the material in ways that will resonate more. How can I empower them?

Concluding Reflection

While I mainly focused on inspiring students and obtaining feedback, there are still many more skills that I'd like to develop further. For example, I also want to lead with emotional intelligence and empathy to help foster a sense of belonging in the class. In addition, I want to find a better balance between being stern and flexible to help keep students on track, but, again, to be empathetic about what obstacles they may face.

There will always be room for growth. :')