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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an important activity. It is critical that today's youth learn to understand and exercise leadership, not as a power to be lorded over others, but as a relational skill which can enrich their lives and the lives of others, and can facilitate great achievements.

Many people assume that leadership is a gift, which some have and others don't. While there is no doubt that some children, from an early age, exercise leadership and are looked upon as leaders by their peers, many students can learn to better use the leadership qualities which they have. In addition, students can be taught to recognise leadership qualities in others, qualities which go beyond bossiness and charisma.

This book is based on the author's experience in teaching leadership to students. It can be used with Primary and Secondary students, and can be adapted by the teacher to the needs of the group.

HOW TO USE THESE LESSONS

This program can be used across a range of ages, typically from Years 6 to 12, and has been designed to fit a series of 10 x 45 minute lessons. However, we honour the wisdom of teachers in adapting a program to their needs. For example:

- You might adjust the number or length of lessons to fit your timetable and your students.
- You might use the course at a camp, perhaps spread over two or more days.
- You may have ideas for changing some lessons to suit your teaching style or your students' particular needs.

Typically, schools provide leadership training for those students who are selected as leaders. We believe that *all* students should receive training in leadership because leadership is not for the select few, but for all (see Assumptions About Leadership), and because the understandings and attitudes taught in this program are valuable for everyone.

THE AUTHOR

Dr Phil Ridden has been a teacher of primary and secondary students, curriculum writer and consultant, professional development consultant, principal, executive and non-executive director of school boards, author and conference speaker — and parent.

Through writing, teaching and mentoring, he has shared with students and colleagues his extensive experience in leadership. He has been honoured by professional associations for his contribution to the professional growth of colleagues.

In this book, Phil shares some ideas for teaching students about leadership, in the knowledge that moral leaders make significant contributions to the welfare of others.

Contact him at www.philridden.biz

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

If we are to teach students about leadership, we must consider our own assumptions about leadership, because our assumptions influence the conscious and unconscious messages we give students.

Look at the views expressed in the chart below. To what degree do you agree with each statement? Can you cite examples to support your opinion?

<p>Leaders are born.</p> <p>Leadership capabilities are allocated to an elite few.</p> <p>The leader of a group is visible by their assertive actions. They lead from the front.</p> <p>If a student does not display natural leadership, they will never be a leader. They don't have the skills or the presence.</p> <p>Leaders are always leaders in any situation.</p> <p>Leaders are people of action.</p>	<p>Leadership is a social or relational skill (or a set of such skills) which can be learned.</p> <p>All students have the potential to lead. Reflective and focused experience of leadership can develop leadership insights and abilities.</p> <p>Any person with the desire to lead, a degree of commitment and purpose demanded by the situation can acquire and exercise successful leadership behaviour.</p> <p>The most influential leader of a group is not always obvious. They lead from the centre.</p> <p>If a student does not display natural leadership, it may be because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• they lack the confidence• they don't see the need• the school/classroom ethos discourages such action• their leadership skills lie in areas not usually relevant to classroom leadership. <p>Different people show leadership in different situations. A leader in one situation may display leadership in another. Everyone can be a leader in some situation. Effective groups share leadership and allow different members to lead at different times.</p> <p>Leaders are reflective.</p>
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<p>Leadership is defined by a series of skills or abilities.</p> <p>Leaders are confident, devoid of doubt, and confident risk-takers.</p> <p>Leaders know exactly where they are going and what they must do.</p> <p>A leader's role is to get people to do as the leader wants in order to get the job done.</p>	<p>Leadership is a process of thinking and relating. It is seen as an interplay of complex interactions between a leader, other people involved and the situation.</p> <p>Leaders are self-reflective. They often doubt their own abilities and judgements, and even their right to lead.</p> <p>Leadership is found in the place of not knowing, of change, of new learning, of new directions.</p> <p>Leaders impact the way people behave and the way a group or organisation functions. They are intentionally inspirational, helping others to find their voice and purpose.</p>
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The understandings in the left-hand column are typical assumptions about leadership. They may not necessarily be wrong, but they are probably inadequate. This book is based on the understandings in the right-hand column. While some people are more naturally disposed towards leadership because of their personal and interpersonal qualities, others can learn to exercise leadership.

Sections of this course were conducted at a camp. After a series of practical activities, one student observed that leaders had emerged who were not seen as leaders in the classroom. It reminds us that contexts, opportunities, expectations and training all influence the practice of leadership.

CONCEPT 1. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE — PERHAPS I COULD DO THAT!

The purpose of this section is to create in each individual the awareness that they are not ordained to be or not be a leader, nor to lead in only one particular field (e.g. sport). Anyone can lead, given the right circumstances, motivation and confidence.

Understanding: By the end of the section, students may begin to think, ‘He/She can lead. Why can’t I?’ They may have discovered ‘Others think I’m a leader. Why don’t I?’

Leadership attitude: When faced with a situation in which a leader is needed, I will think, ‘PERHAPS I COULD DO THAT!’

LESSON 1A: MY PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP

Time required: Approximately 20 minutes

Outcomes

- We already have some knowledge about leadership.
- We can acquire more knowledge about leadership which can help us to become better leaders.

Learning experience

Ask students to prepare a personal concept map (or other summary format) about Leaders and Leadership. This may include names of leaders, qualities of leaders, what leaders do, leaders at school, how leaders become leaders, and so on. Then encourage them to add to the map their own questions about Leaders and Leadership. A template is offered as *Lesson 1A worksheet: About leadership*.

Context

There are four purposes for the concept map:

- To find out what students already know or believe about leadership.
- To serve as a baseline to evaluate changes in students' learning. The sheets could be photocopied and the copies kept until the end of the course and compared with each student's final map.
- To encourage students to reflect on their learning.
- To help students to map their own learning. As the course proceeds, students should add to their maps any new understandings or insights.

Throughout the course, commence each lesson with concept maps open, and add to it as new insights occur or questions arise.

Our experience

The students' maps showed us that they understood a great deal about leadership. Many responses showed that students saw leaders as responsible, skilled or talented, good listeners, helpful, organised, good examples, honest, decision makers, friendly ...

Some also identified specific people whom they saw as leaders.

LESSON 1B: A SURVEY OF LEADERS IN THE CLASS

Time required: Approximately 25 minutes

Outcomes

- Some people are readily identifiable as leaders.
- People differ in their assessments of leaders.
- Various people may be seen as leaders depending on the situation — including some not normally thought of as leaders in the group.

Learning experience

Explain that you are going to name some situations in which a leader might be needed. The students are to think who in the class they would choose as a leader in each situation. They should write their answers privately, without discussion, and be confident to make their own choices. They may choose a peer for more than one category. Emphasise that this is not a popularity contest.

From your class (or year level) who would you choose to lead:

- A class sports team?
- A Science group?
- A project to make a class newspaper?
- The planning of your class assembly?
- The class (a class captain or prefect)?

Invite students to share responses with a partner, giving reasons for their choices. Then, in a whole class discussion, sample the responses from the class to each position, and draw general insights.

Context

Clearly, some level of trust is needed in the group for this discussion. Some students will be mentioned by name, with their positive qualities highlighted. Some will find this very affirming; others may be disappointed at not being selected. It may be necessary to discuss this before sharing insights, to emphasise that:

- Everyone's opinion is respected.
- It is not a popularity vote.
- It is not a declaration of friendship or animosity.
- The discussion does not have repercussions outside the classroom.
- The focus is not so much on who the leaders are, but on the particular qualities identified as necessary for each position.

This lesson is important in encouraging students to think about the qualities which make a leader, rather than on who the most obvious class leaders are.

Our experience

Typically, most students choose a skilled sportsperson to lead a sporting team, and a person with sound knowledge of Science to lead the Science group. However, it is interesting to explore those qualities cited by those who do not think a sports captain has to be the best in the team. They tended to choose as leader for the class newspaper someone with literary skills plus skills in organisation and communication, with the latter skills seen as important to lead the planning of a class assembly. The class captain is often seen as requiring personal qualities, such as fairness and honesty, rather than particular skills. The list of roles, therefore, implies a transition from specific skills to more generic skills and qualities.

However, usually a number of 'surprises' are identified, with students named who would not normally be listed as class leaders, yet with qualities which were clearly articulated. This is insightful on the part of the nominator, illuminating for the class and greatly affirming to the nominees.

Lesson 1A worksheet: ABOUT LEADERSHIP

