

IFAS Leadership Development: Everyone Is a Leader¹

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Introduction

This article is part of the series *IFAS Leadership Development*, with eleven modules developed for use by Florida Cooperative Extension agents. They are designed for training agents and officers. Information and activities provided in this series will help Extension leaders in facilitating leadership development for their agents and officers. Handouts for audience use are labeled in the leadership development modules. These may be duplicated for use during training sessions. Each lesson is designed for a workshop approximately two hours long. Various parts of the modules can be shortened or expanded according to the needs of participants and availability of time.

Recommendations for Leader Training

Prepare to teach this lesson by reading and familiarizing yourself with the objectives, materials, handouts and activities/exercises.

- Begin preparation several days in advance in order to secure whatever additional resources you need to make the lesson a "local" learning experience.
- Plan a learning environment with care so that the surroundings contribute to the achievement of the objectives.
- Begin on time and end on time. Schedule a break at about halfway through the lesson.
- With each lesson after the first one, ask participants what they did as a result of the previous lesson. Record these!
- Introduce each lesson with an overview of how it fits into the overall major leadership development program.
- End each lesson with a summary and restatement of objectives. Explain what the participants are expected to do with the lesson after they leave.
- Heighten anticipation for the next lesson by sharing a brief description of it, but be cautious not to give too much away.

Objectives

1. To make participants aware that everyone is a leader at various times.
2. To make participants aware of what leaders do.
3. To give participants an understanding of the local opportunities for being a leader.
4. To inform participants that not all leaders are alike.

Lesson Outline

Introduction and overview of objectives (24 minutes)

- *Everyone Is a Leader*
- *Leadership Evaluation Check Sheet* (Table 1)

Lecture and Group Exercise (20 minutes)

- *What Do Leaders Do*

Break (5 minutes)

Lecture and Group Dialogue (30 minutes)

- *Where Are Opportunities for Being a Leader*

Lecture and Dialogue (25 minutes)

- *Which Leadership Style Is Best*

Summary and Evaluation (15 minutes)

Total Time: 2 hours

Lesson Plan—Everyone Is a Leader

Step 1—25 Minutes

Use *Everyone Is a Leader* as background for lesson and as general overview of purpose of leadership development series. Allow time for discussion. Write objectives on chalkboard.

Give each participant a copy of *Leadership Evaluation Check Sheet*. Ask them to respond to questions and score themselves. A perfect score is not expected, and results are not shared. Emphasize that it can be used to formulate personal leadership development goals. Participants (or

trainer) may add other items that are consistent with level of group's abilities and aspirations.

Step 2—25 Minutes

Ask participants to make a short list of what they think leaders do.

Use *What Do Leaders Do* as background for lecture.

Use lists as a discussion. Emphasize that leadership skills can be learned.

Step 3—30 Minutes

Use *Where Are Opportunities for Being a Leader* as background for lecture. Supplement this with local vignettes and profiles of community residents.

Break into small groups and ask each group to make a list of opportunities for leadership in their own club, community or city.

Step 4—25 Minutes

Start this step with a question to stimulate discussion: "Is there one leadership style that is best?"

Have small groups list what they think the traits of a community leader should be.

Present brief lecture from *Which Leadership Style Is Best*.

Step 5—15 Minutes

Review objectives and emphasize main points covered in steps one through four.

Tell about what participants can expect from other lessons. Heighten their anticipation to motivate them to return.

Hand out evaluations; ask for recommendations and suggestions; collect evaluations and adjourn.

Everyone Is a Leader

What does the term **leadership** mean to you? Leadership probably has a different meaning for you than it does for your neighbor or even for the other members of your family. Perhaps you have wondered why some persons are "good" leaders while others fail as leaders, but did you ever investigate the situation to see why one leader fails while other leaders succeed? Probably not, but then you may never have fancied yourself as the leader you are. What? You say you are not a leader—sure you are! Everyone is a leader.

There are just different kinds of leadership. There are different demands for leadership in the various and specific situations in which you may find yourself. In one or more of these "situations" you either have been, are presently or will become a leader. That is, you will exert

more influence within a group than anyone else is exerting at a particular time. Situations vary, so leadership must also vary. There is no one individual who operates best within all situations or all groups. There is also no magic leadership formula.

If all individuals and groups had the same level of skills, experience and conscious-unconscious needs and motivations, then an instant success formula for leadership could be given. However, groups arise and are organized to meet the needs of people. Since people and local situations differ, then logically, groups must also differ to meet these various needs.

This module has been designed to help you as an individual understand what is meant by the term "leadership." It is hoped that during this study you will develop an awareness and understanding of leadership. Such knowledge, if properly applied, will make both you and the groups to which you belong more effective and meaningful.

Counter to the thinking of many people, leadership is not a highly complicated or formalized position open only to a few select individuals. Moreover, individuals normally occupy more than one position of leadership at a time. Leadership may be formal leadership (e.g., president of the local school board) or it may be informal leadership (e.g., the influence one exerts upon others as a member of family, social or business groups).

An individual may occupy a position of formal leadership in one group and a position of informal leadership in another group. In other words, leadership is diffused and "passed around" from one person to another and from one group to another. Most organized groups assure that leadership will be passed around by having semi-annual and annual elections of officers at a regularly specified time as stated in their constitutions and bylaws. To be more specific, however, leadership is normally passed around from one person to another (and from one group to another) several times in consideration of only one issue. Whoever has the "floor" is the leader at that time.

Most of the leadership within groups is not of the strong authoritarian type personified by a military commander. Rather it is a more democratic leadership as personified by you and the other individuals you associate with daily. Why? Because most other groups need democratic rather than domineering leadership. Both of these kinds of leadership may have a place within our society, but the "place" must be determined wisely.

It has been stated previously that at least a minimum knowledge in group skill techniques and human relations understanding are important items for a leader to have at his or her ready disposal. Of course, everyone agrees that a newly elected leader may need help in understanding and

mastering the various facets of leadership, but what about the "old established" leader? He or she may need to stop and analyze the group's present needs. All groups change in this modern day and age just as automobiles change. When a leader "wears out," he or she is traded for a new model— except in dictatorship. This simply means that when a leader no longer recognizes or fulfills the group's needs, he or she is replaced by someone who will "keep up with" and "ahead of" the group.

In summarizing what has been said thus far—the important point to remember is that you—yes, you—are at times a leader. In other words, you exert influence over persons around you. Stop and think—how many times were you in a position of leadership today?

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

What Do Leaders Do?

What are some of the more important jobs or functions a leader must perform? The general "job" of leadership, first, is to knit individuals into a cooperative functioning group. This task (job) is necessary because no two members ever join a group for the same reason. These diverse individual reasons must be drawn into a common agreement or consensus before a group can hope to function. Proper functioning leads to goal achievement adequately delegating responsibility to get the job done.

The second "job" of leadership is to work with the group. This happens in many ways, depending on the ability and maturity of the group. Group maturity is determined by length of organization, membership group experience and other related factors. A good leader will

1. Define and interpret the purposes of the organization.
2. Clarify the responsibilities of the various officers, committees and individual members to aid in program planning.
3. Find alternative methods of reaching goals.
4. Remind group of its defined purposes and goals.
5. Encourage group to grow into a more progressive organization.
6. Evaluate where group started, where it is, and where it is going.

Of course, for any individual with leadership responsibility to carry out these various jobs adequately there must be a thorough understanding of the group. In order for a lay leader to thoroughly understand the group, there must be a close working relationship between the leader and the other group members.

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Where Are Opportunities for Being a Leader?

Leadership responsibilities are usually, although not always, carried out in voluntary special interest groups. Some examples of voluntary groups are Family and Community Educators (formerly the Extension Homemakers), 4-H Club, Lions Club, Masons and Toastmasters. The decisions most leaders make daily are not so complicated that they get worldwide publicity. Yet, each person is one of the leaders who keeps our county strong and operating efficiently. The value of the various leadership roles that you, your neighbors and children fill is immeasurable.

When it was stated that everyone was at times a leader you may have been skeptical. Now in classifying children as leaders your skepticism has probably doubled. An explanation of these "leadership" premises are in order before you stop reading. Did you ever think that parents are leaders as they make family decisions, or that older brothers and sisters are leaders as they guide the actions (either consciously or unconsciously) of younger brothers and sisters? Even small children at play have a "leader." These preceding examples are probably not the ones that normally pop into your mind when you think of leadership—yet influence is exerted by someone in every one of the above situations.

Did you ever watch children at play? They often change leaders for every new game. This is leadership at its best. Perhaps small children realize that no one individual has all of the skills and/or knowledge necessary to be best at everything. For certain, young children have not yet learned to guard their leadership positions as jealously as we adults. Therefore, a new leader emerges with a new situation. Perhaps, it is unfortunate that part of our childhood wisdom is sometimes forgotten.

Ever since the time of Adam and Eve, whenever two or more people have congregated, a leader emerges. Small, informal groups may have no elected leader, yet they do have a leader(s). Our more complex organizations, (e.g., federal government) have hierarchy of leadership. Stated another way, within the more formal organizations there are different levels of elected leaders or decision-makers. Decisions are made up and down the line, from the president to the custodian and back again. Only the number of people influenced by the decision and/or the intensity of the influence varies.

Thus, it can be seen that leadership is not an "all or none" matter. On the contrary, each member is to some extent a leader as he or she exerts some influence upon the other

members of a group. That is, the group with which a member is currently interacting since you are a member of more than one group. How many groups are you a member of today? You undoubtedly exerted influence upon others and they on you.

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

Which Leadership Style Is Best?

Everyone realizes that no two individuals are the same, so no two leaders can be the same. That is, all leaders have different ways of conducting meetings to get the job done. Consider for a moment the host of meetings which you have attended in many different groups to that you belong. You know that there are no two leaders who ever conduct a meeting the same way. Each leader has a different style or type of leadership.

Types of Leaders

Any particular individual may fit one or more of these broader leadership types: autocratic, laissez-faire and democratic. However, the general tendency is for a person to maintain a particular leadership pattern once it has been established. These three types of leadership may be either on the formal or informal level. As you study these various leadership types you can probably think of individuals who "fit" each type.

Autocratic Leader

The autocratic type of leader has been called a "snoopervisor" or a "one man show" because he is constantly checking on the members to see that they carry out his decisions. Someone has said, "autocratic leaders are generally so narrow-minded they can look through a small knot hole with both eyes." Do you know anyone like this? People "lead" groups this way to help overcome frustrations, or because of ignorance of a better way to lead. Other organizations, such as the Armed Forces, are so complex that they may need autocratic leadership to keep the group functioning. Most organizations to which we belong, however, are not as complex as the Armed Forces.

The autocratic type of leadership is analogous to a one-way street; the leader gives the orders and the members carry out these orders. The orders are never questioned openly. Hence, such orders may not be understood by the members. The autocratic leader sees the task of understanding as his job and not the job of the other group members. Whether members understand the task is of no concern to the autocratic leaders, as long as the end result is done to the leader's satisfaction. The leader has set the group standards. This type of leadership may have a place in our society; however, the "place" is specific and limited, as was cited previously with the Armed Forces.

Laissez-Faire Leader

Whereas the autocratic leader has an overabundance of self-confidence or authority, the laissez-faire leader has neither of these two characteristics. Consequently, he or she avoids direct contact with the group members as much as possible. With laissez-faire leadership, the group decides what should be done and how it should be done. The group never gets much accomplished since there is not a delegated leader to coordinate its activities. Laissez-faire leadership is also a one-way street, but it runs the other direction. The laissez-faire leader sets no clear goals. He or she is often not capable of making his or her own decisions alone, or helping the group arrive at workable decisions. The group has no clear set of standards, so things simply drift along. Unlike autocratic leadership laissez-faire leadership never seems to have a place within an active, functioning group.

Democratic Leader

Democratic leadership has been called the happy medium. In fact, it is the way of life that our country believes best for governing her people. Should it not also be the best type of leadership for "leading" a small group?

The democratic leader lets the group share in all phases of the organization's work; that is, all phases of work within the group's present capabilities. This is the super-highway approach. The insightful democratic leader also recognizes that group capabilities change. Thus, the responsibility given to the group should change as capabilities of members change. This point is especially important for the leader of volunteer groups such as Family and Community Educators. Capabilities change as individuals learn new skills. Have you re-evaluated your group's capabilities lately? Have the responsibilities been updated to be in line with the capabilities?

Group participation and decision-making, within the group capability framework, is encouraged and strengthened by the democratic leader. Increased participation leads to increased member commitment and involvement, which in turn, leads to a more active, productive group complete with satisfied membership. The democratic group feels the successes and/or failures of the group are theirs and not the leader's. In true democratic leadership, the leader is a part of the group rather than apart from it. The motto of a true democratic leader seems to be

"I will make myself as unnecessary as I can as soon as possible; since this will ultimately be of most benefit to the group of which I am a member."

In other words, the democratic leader delegates the responsibility to various members rather than keeping all the "power" himself. The democratic group has a clear-cut set of goals together with a clear understanding of how to obtain these goals. The goals have been arrived at by a cooperative group effort.

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Reference

Heasley, D. K. 1970. *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide*. Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

Table 1. Leadership Evaluation Check Sheet

	Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Never
1. Do I have a desire to lead?				
2. Am I group minded?				
3. Do I like to work with people?				
4. Am I willing to work?				
5. Do I have vision?				
6. Am I tolerant with people with whom I disagree?				
7. Am I aware of the need for facts and additional information?				
8. Do I take pride in what I do?				
9. Do I assume responsibilities?				
10. Do I try to help others become leaders?				
11. Am I persistent?				
12. Am I able to motivate and influence others?				
13. Am I a good listener?				
14. Do I have the ability to cope with problems?				
	Always	X 5 =		
	Most of the Time	X 4 =		
	Sometimes	X 3 =		
	Never	X 1 =		
		TOTAL		

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