

DEVELOPING A MORE DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN SCHOOL

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Kurt Lewin, a pioneering psychologist, identified three primary leadership philosophies: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. This early study was tremendously significant and developed three basic leadership styles that have served as a springboard for more defined leadership theories, even though subsequent research has revealed more unique types of leadership.

Authoritarian leaders establish precise guidelines for what must be done, when it must be done, and how it should be done. This form of leadership places a great emphasis on both the leader's authority and the followers' subordination. The leader and the members are clearly separated from one another. Authoritarian leaders usually make choices without consulting the rest of the group.

Delegative leadership, commonly referred to as laissez-faire leadership, was shown to produce the least productive workers out of the three categories. Additionally, the members in this group were less cooperative, placed more expectations on the leader, and were unable to work on their own. Delegative leaders leave decision-making to the group members and provide little to no direction. Even though this approach can be helpful when working with highly competent professionals, it frequently results in poorly defined responsibilities and a lack of drive.

According to Lewin's research, democratic leadership—also referred to as participatory leadership—is often the most effective type of leadership. Democratic group leaders provide direction, but they also engage with the group and welcome feedback from other participants. Participant leaders promote group participation while

maintaining the final say in decision-making. Members of the group are more driven and inventive because they feel invested in the process. Democratic leaders frequently instill a sense of belonging in their followers, which encourages devotion to the group's objectives.

Democratic leadership style is being embraced by educational leaders since it has been regarded as the most successful type of leadership. Leaders that practice shared leadership put their teams in charge of coming up with ideas and solutions. This trust motivates teams to collaborate in novel ways without micromanaging, which fosters organizational creativity.

In addition, democratic leadership, in contrast to other leadership philosophies, promotes teamwork. Employees do not solely rely on the leader's directives to complete tasks. Instead, they are forced to find answers on their own, certain that their leader will take charge if a problem arises.

Participatory leaders, above all, have faith in their teams to complete tasks. They adhere to Douglas McGregor's Theory Y model, an upbeat strategy that presupposes employees are self-motivated, view their jobs as rewarding, and can come up with original solutions to problems on their own.

A school needs time to accomplish democratic school leadership, which is a challenging task. Leaders should take actions gradually to create a more democratic culture in the school. As generated from <https://www.living-democracy.com/>, the following are suggested from short-term to long-term objectives.

The principal of the school may avoid using overtly authoritarian language. Then, he may engage with the school community in an open and friendly manner. The long-term goal is to achieve mutual understanding between the personnel, other stakeholders, and the school's principal.

Another example is the principal may explain why he is concentrating on a particular problem. The staff should be informed of issues and problems that require attention. The final goal is that agenda for decision-making are created by representatives of the staff, students, and parents.

Moreover, the principal may clarify his or legal obligations and restrictions. Then he pays attention to and considers the idea of the stakeholders. Eventually, projects for the improvement of the school are planned and carried out by the principal, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Apart from these, the school head may tell the teachers what goals are in mind. With the teachers, the principal may consider different possibilities for making decisions. By then, representatives from the staff, students, and parents can participate in decision-making.

When evaluating the effectiveness and conduct of the teachers, the principal may express his concerns. He may assign teachers to certain tasks and in the long run, the school's growth and effectiveness are the responsibility of the faculty, students, and parents.

As regards to challenges, the principal may describe how he handles disputes. He must abstain from using authority to settle disputes. Through cooperation and dialogue, conflicts can be resolved, and this is the ultimate goal.

Without a doubt, developing a more democratic culture in school is challenging. The school head has a crucial role to play in empowering the team members to ensure that learning continues, and desired outcomes are attained.

References:

Zurich University of Teacher Education (n.d.) Reflect on your role as a school principal: developing a (more) democratic culture in school, retrieved from <https://www.living-democracy.com/principals/leadership/a-democratic-style-of-school-leadership/reflect-on-your-role-as-a-school-principal-developing-a-more-democratic-culture-in-school/>