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**EAD 801 Final Paper: Who do I Want to be as a Leader and Why?
(Characteristics, Values, and Behaviors Leaders Should Encompass)**

Through the course of one's life, many different opportunities for learning present themselves. It is how we let these opportunities shape our lives and thinking in regards to multiple aspects, that one is able to develop strong beliefs in many systems. It is through my very own exposure to different concepts embedded in EAD 801 that I have been able to decipher key characteristics that every leader should have, including the future of my very own leadership responsibilities. This discussion demonstrates what I feel is characteristic in a leader and ultimately addresses the question of "Who do I want to be as a leader and why?" Although there are many imperative characteristics that any given leader should hold, I have learned through the course of this class that "different situations call for different types of leadership" (Goleman, 1998), it is here that one will see what I value in regards to leadership qualities in relation to the immense concepts and individuals discussed in this course: David Goleman, Peter Senge, our very own professor of education, and lastly, the ISLLC standards.

As I started this course on leadership, one concept among many, has truly changed the way I have viewed leadership significantly and should be noted first in my concepts of who I want to be as a future leader: emotional intelligence. It was through our

discussion on “emotional intelligence” that I realized this was something that I had never connected to that of a strong, vast leader. By evaluating and conversing about Daniel Goleman’s theories, I have come to believe “that effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence.” (Goleman, 1998) This being a new concept in my leadership thinking and learning, it was prevalent that there were five key aspects that any successful leader had in common “the components of emotional intelligence-self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill.” (Goleman, 1998) These five components of emotional intelligence were unlike anything I had heard before in regards to leadership theories (although I had encountered very few) and the very aspect of a leader being strong in these areas made me think that this was something extremely important for me in my newly emerging leadership skills.

Although Goleman offers five central components of emotional intelligence, there was one that truly struck me as pivotal in my learning thus far: self-regulation. From the concepts discussed in Goleman’s emotional intelligence theories, I felt that this aspect was my weakest area in the set of emotional intelligence skills a leader must have. I strongly felt that these were concepts I would embrace when I faced leadership roles, but this notion was one that I would definitely have to learn how to control and use. Self-regulation “is like an ongoing inner conversation, is the component of emotional intelligence that frees us from being prisoners of our feelings” and deals with matters of our “emotional impulses” in which we “find ways to control them [our feelings] and even to channel them in useful ways.” (Goleman, 1998) Although this concept is such an important aspect that I plan to include in my leadership abilities, I must admit that I am

not always confident in my ability to control my feelings and foster them in useful ways. However, this aspect of emotional intelligence is something I plan on “taking the right approach” to “develop” so that I can be a leader who has “mastered their emotions” and “are able to roll with changes.” (Goleman, 1998)

Even though Daniel Goleman’s views on emotional intelligence are such a large factor of the leader I aspire to be, many characteristics I desire in my own leadership qualities come from the ponderings of Peter Senge. Senge’s ideals have brought about many characteristics leaders should encompass including the ideals of being life long, continual learners (and provide those opportunities), being committed to servant leadership, and building a shared vision within the organization. Although Senge’s philosophies cover much more than mentioned above, these three concepts have truly changed the way I have committed to my future leadership capabilities.

To delve into the aspect of continual learning, Senge discusses the need for this in his call for new leaders in which the times have changed and the duties of leaders have changed as well. I have always strived to seek continual learning myself, but it is through Senge’s thinking that brought the attention to leaders as providing that continual opportunity, “leaders in learning organizations are responsible for *building organizations* where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future-that is, leaders are responsible for learning.” (Senge, 1990) It has been brought to my attention, through this course and its offerings, that leaders are responsible for other’s learning as well (not just their very own). Being a new teacher, I strive to maintain my own learning, but it has beyond a doubt been difficult to provide these opportunities for others. In my

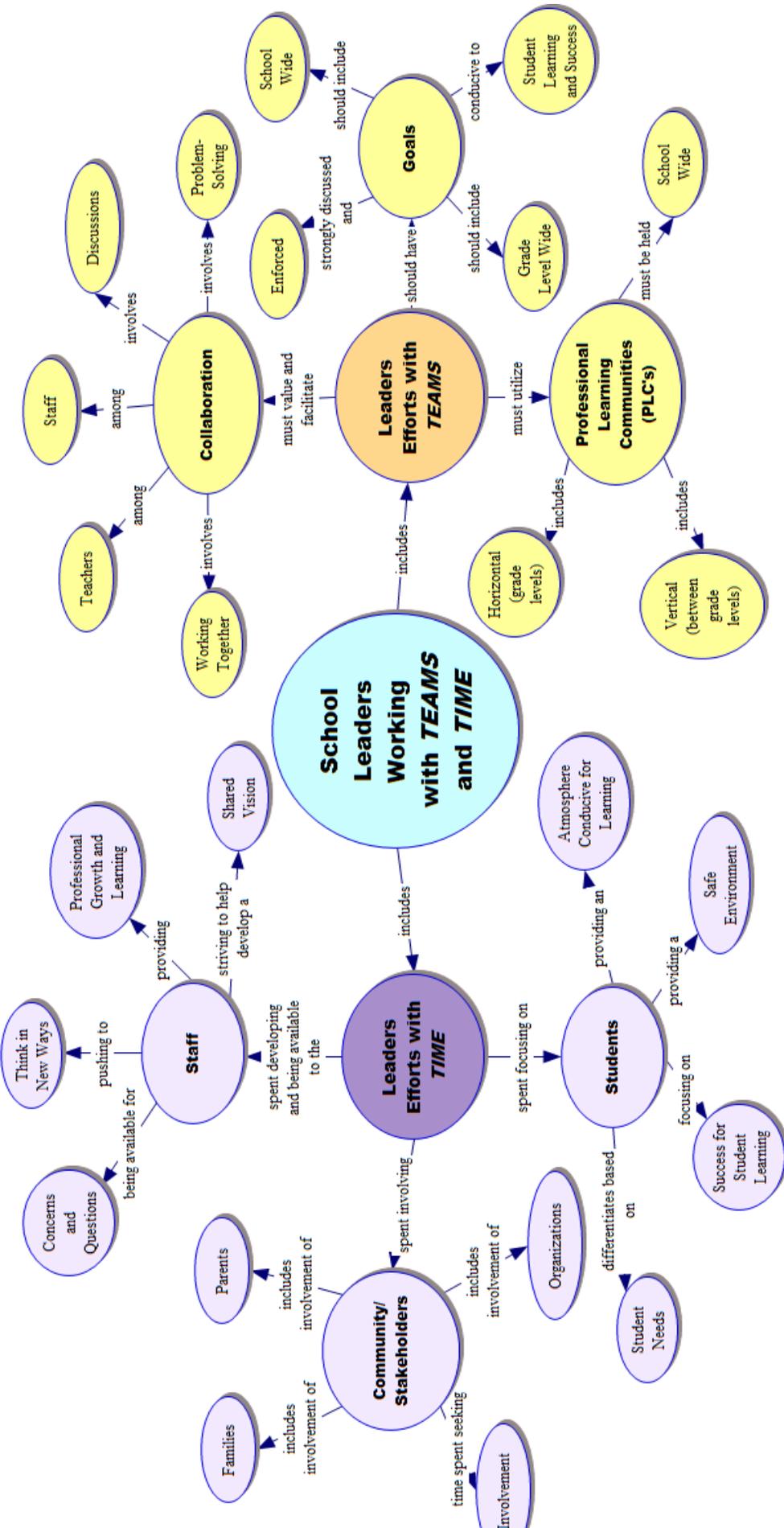
future leadership responsibilities this is something that I will seize for the organization and staff that I am included in.

To discuss further Peter Senge's leadership roles that I will attempt in my own practices, one characteristic that I believe I already have a firm understanding of is that of leaders as demonstrating "servant leadership". Servant leadership "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. This conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead." (Senge, 1990) I strongly believe that through ones life in leadership roles, this should be something that everyone strives to complete. I have always felt a strong sense to put others before myself and this is something I will continue to practice within my responsibilities. Leaders need to be able to put the staff, children, community, stakeholders, and the organization as a whole at the forefront and feel the need to serve those before them. This sense of stewardship is something that I plan to apply and one needs to consider that this aspect of leadership is "almost solely a matter of attitude." (Senge, 1990)

The last aspect of Senge's ideals on leadership and the organization that I plan to encompass in my practices is the value of building a shared vision. This principle of building a shared vision is a direct part of what Senge offers in the "new skills" that a leader will need to exhibit. Although I was aware of the need for a leader to develop a set of goals for any given organization, it wasn't until my encounter with Senge's standards that my opinions on this matter were furthered and my thinking of my own leadership capabilities were altered. Building a shared vision encompasses much more than one can originally see, in fact it includes: "encouraging personal visions, communicating and asking for support, visioning as an ongoing process, blending extrinsic and intrinsic

visions, and distinguishing positive from negative visions.” (Senge, 1990) Building a shared vision includes much more than just stating ones vision and the aspect of this article that justly changed my thinking completely was the aspect of “communicating and asking for support”. It was found in my original thinking that a vision was developed solely by the leader, but “leaders must be willing to continually share their own vision, rather than being the official representative of the corporate vision. They also must be prepared to ask, ‘Is this vision worthy of your commitment’.” (Senge, 1990) When accepting the kind of leader I am prepared to be, this is something that I can rightfully say will be considered and accomplished.

The next facet of this course that has altered my views and actions as a leader is in regards to two very important concepts that have just recently been brought to my attention: collaboration and its association to consensus decision making. As a leader both currently and within my future (in differing ways) collaboration is among one of the most important aspects I believe in. Leaders need to consider the whole when discussing educational leadership: the staff, students, parents, community, stakeholders and more broadly, the organization. As demonstrated in the Concept Map #3 (seen below), a leader must collaborate with many different features of an organization. Although many aspects are discussed in this map, if one were to focus on the ideas surrounding “collaboration” one can see how my thinking has evolved in regards to this subject matter. Not only do I plan to extend my leadership roles and responsibilities to all parties involved, I plan to do that through discussions, problem-solving, and working together (which would include consensus decision making). Collaboration is among one of the most important concepts I can see myself using as an upcoming leader.



As mentioned briefly before, collaboration is a valuable tool that any leader should plan on extending to their organization. One way of doing so that I plan to implement in my practices is that of “consensus decision making”. This is a remarkable instrument that can be defined as “working toward the highest level of agreement possible, while arriving at a decision every member of this: study group, selection committee, planning group, task force, etc. can live with and support when our work is over.” (Jennings, General Consensus Data and Info) Consensus decision making first delves into its process by “assembling groups of stakeholders (committees) to make important decisions or recommendations to the governing board.” (Jennings, General Consensus Data and Info) The principles embedded in this process can be directly correlated to the concepts discussed through collaboration. It is through the use of a consensus that I have come to believe and understand that “Consensus is important...because I believe in the collective energy of stakeholders, working together to help an organization become strongly rooted in its direction as change and growth take place.” (Jennings, General Consensus Data and Info)

The last imperative characteristic that I have discovered through the journey of this course is that of a leader implementing, abiding by, and using a strict set of “Educational Leadership Policy Standards” in which I too plan to utilize. Although two very specific and distinct sets of standards were offered and discussed within the setting of this course, one set of standards has provided for an intense learning experience in relation to leadership and the qualities/beliefs I have come to know, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). This specific set of standards offers a guideline for leaders and is “used as a model for state education leadership policies.” (ISLLC 2008)

With the importance of standards presented in this course, I have come to understand that “Standards are the foundation and can inform all components of an aligned and cohesive system-preparation, licensing, induction, and professional development” and “they can set parameters for developing assessment instruments, practice standards, and professional development to facilitate performance growth toward expert practice.” (ISLLC 2008)

In further regards to leaders using a specific set of standards to direct and provide for their responsibilities, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium has six extensive, but also very thorough standards, “ISLLC is designed to serve as a broad set of national guidelines that states can use as a model for developing or updating their own standards. These standards provide high-level guidance and insight about the traits, functions of work, and responsibilities expected of school and district leaders.” (ISLLC 2008) It should be noted that wherever my leadership capabilities take me, one can be assured that I will use a set of standards or guidelines to monitor my actions and ensure that I am providing for my organization in the finest manner possible. The six standards have been a crucial part of my learning through leadership and will forever be considered in my procedures and decisions in the future.

Further more, through the continuation of this course; my views on leadership have expanded to such great extents. Having started off this course as merely fresh to the educational world, I feel that I have developed a very strong and significant sense of who I want to be as a leader as I continue to grow and develop in every method. Although I anticipate adding to the traits I have mentioned and discussed above, I know that I will hold these concepts true and continue to test my theories of leadership. As I maintain my

journey with these specific traits, qualities, characteristics, beliefs, and values I do anticipate encountering new ways of thinking and learning. However, one needs to remember on this journey that “human beings are designed for learning” (Senge, 1990) and “superb leaders have very different ways of directing and team...and different situations call for different types of leadership. (Goleman, 1998)

Formal Citations:

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