

**Benjamin Oberdick's
Final Reflective Work
EAD 801 Online Course Spring 2012
Alternative Format for Reflective Essay**

Key Learnings from the Course

What are key messages or big ideas which struck you as the most important about leadership, schooling, teacher leadership & change?
Why were they significant ideas or messages for you?

<i>Key Messages & Big Ideas</i>	<i>Reasons Why</i>
Emotional intelligence matters in leadership and leaders	The ability to understand yourself and also understand and empathize with your employees is a powerful, necessary, and important skill for leaders in any field. Having a high EI allows leaders to skillfully deal with the various personnel challenges and hurdles that may present themselves on a daily basis.
The power of relationships	The course material and content that focused on relationships was very eye-opening and insightful to me. I knew that they were important, but the course really brought forth just how important and key relationships are for a leader; whether those relationships are between the leader and his/her employees, between employees themselves, between the organization and the public, or some other kind of relationship. The climate and culture a leader helps build in an organization can help influence the kind of relationships that come about.
Importance of employee buy-in and ownership in team-building and change management	This course really helped me understand the power and importance of having employee buy-in and ownership. The activities we did like deciding on group norms, coming up with a school mission statement, description, and more really helped give us a stake in what we were doing and helped to bring home the importance of the value of these activities.
Teach, model, do	I liked the way Nancy used this kind of “plan of action” throughout the course. It helped me learn to have a lot of the topics, ideas, and activities first presented and discussed in some way, and then modeled by Nancy herself in some way, before we were expected to perform the task and activity ourselves. It made for an engaging course where we were

	not simply filled with information, but were asked and expected to demonstrate the knowledge and information we were learning.
Value of standards	The ISLLC Standards, while not directly relevant for my job in higher education, still were a valuable tool for getting me to think about the use of standards and how they can not only assess how a leader is doing, but also be an outline, goal and tool for someone to use when aspiring to be a leader in some field. I thought the use of standards to help highlight and elucidate what skills, abilities, and knowledge are important for someone in that field would be a great reference and roadmap tool for future leaders in that field.
Resistance to change is not uniform	I never thought that there would be so many different categories of kinds of people who are resistant to change. It was very helpful to learn about the characteristics of these different groups and anti-change agents, and I feel that I have a much better understanding of why and how people resist change. The article discussing this also had some wonderful and helpful ideas for how to combat these anti-change agents that I thought could work well in practical situations.

Shifts in Thinking, Beliefs or Values

In what ways have your thinking, beliefs, and/or values about leadership and change shifted? (a little bit or a lot)

You can use:

I used to think....., but now I think..... or

I used to believe....., but now I believe.....

I used to hold this value, but now I hold this value

Shifts

Reasons Why

I used to think that group work and interaction among students in an online course could never emulate a face-to-face classroom, but now I think that it can if the instructor puts in the work and effort to design it that way.	The instructor did an amazing job of putting us in the situations where we had to do “real” group work, which I appreciate greatly after taking many online courses where this was simply paid lip service. I thought the Live Chats were especially fun and interesting and a great way for the instructor to check-in and also get some real teaching and learning done. While I had a few technical issues when trying to participate in these, thanks to ANGEL, I thoroughly enjoyed the chats I did get to participate in. I hope some of my future online classes can also do something along these lines.
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I used to believe that leaders were born not made, but now I believe that leaders can be made.	I now believe that leadership can be learned, and leaders can be made, instead of only born. I think that a le
I used to think that emotional intelligence didn't have a big place in leadership, but now I think it is a vital ingredient for any successful leader.	I never placed much importance on emotional intelligence in a leader, or in leadership in general, but now I think it is vital for any leader who wants to succeed in the 21 st century. Leaders need to understand themselves in order to understand other people. A leader can no longer be simply a voice from the beyond, but needs to have a presences and direct impact on his/her employees in order for said employees to give their all and work towards a common goal or outcome.
I used to think that I would never make a successful leader, but now I think that with the time, effort and commitment I could be successful.	I've long thought that my passive personality, innate introversion, and aversion to conflict precluded me from ever being in any type of leadership position. I now know that with some effort and commitments to improve my deficiencies I could make this happen, if I want to. Leadership is made up of many things, most, if not all, of which can be learned, practiced, and incorporated by someone with the desire.

New Questions

As a result of this semester online course, what new questions are emerging for you?
These would be questions that were not yet in your mind last January

New Questions to Ponder or Address (one day)

How can I translate the ISLLC Standards to my field of academic librarianship?
Exactly how big a role does emotional intelligence play in the success of a leader?
How can I best take advantage of those small leadership opportunities that present themselves to me occasionally?

Summary

A summary statement or brief paragraph about your learning in this course about leadership and organizations.

Summary of Learning

This course has taught me a lot about the importance and value of "good" leadership an institution must possess in order to move forward in a positive direction and ultimately succeed. This is particularly important during times of change where a leader really proves his/her worth and must have the skills and abilities to lead an organization through whatever is happening. This course has taught me just how dynamic, complicated, and multifaceted leadership can be, and how many different skills and knowledge a leader must have in order to do the job effectively. Change can be hard for many people, and it can be difficult in many

different ways, but a leader who takes the time to think before acting, and who considers the people who will be affected by the change, will have a much greater chance at success than someone who just pushes ahead without taking the time to consider these important factors.

I also learned a lot about designing, developing, and teaching an online class that tackles “real” group work activities. I wasn’t sure about the live class chats when we first started this course, but by the end of the semester I was a big fan. I also enjoyed the group work activities and the way that the instructor designed real buy-in and ownership from the groups and group members by giving us a lot of stake in the process. Having us determine, as a group, what our norms would be, what our imaginary school would look like, etc., really made a difference in how I thought about the activities, and maybe also how much time and effort I put forth. I hope that my future online classes can in some way hold a candle to the way this course was conducted, because I haven’t seen it so far in my prior online course, but I certainly would like to see it again in the future.

Note:

Please submit your finished work in the Drop Box for the Final Version of the Reflective Essay on the LESSONS page in the EAD 801 website no later than midnight, Thursday, May 3.