

Chapter XX

Innovative Strategies for Preparing and Developing Career and Technical Education Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Leadership development in career and technical fields is important; therefore, this chapter examines innovative techniques for preparing and developing career and technical education leaders. Synchronous and asynchronous techniques are described in detail. Emerging non-traditional leadership programs using innovative techniques are highlighted. Tools such as internships, job shadowing, virtual classrooms, innovative mentoring techniques, and distance technology sources are explored. Advantages of time, cost, and access are discussed. Lastly, disadvantages of technology use, future trends and conclusions are provided.

INTRODUCTION

In research conducted by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Moss and Liang (1990) confirmed “the importance of leadership development in vocational education” (p. 27). Their research also found “a consensus among

practitioners that the field now lacks an adequate number of leaders and is making almost no systematic effort to develop them” (p. 27). A little over 10 years later, Kister (2001) noted concerns about the lack of career and technical education leaders at the state and local levels. While this previous research has spanned over 18 years old, there are

still concerns over the leadership needs in career and technical education (CTE). Community and technical colleges are reporting high levels of senior retirement and lack of prepared individuals for their replacement. According to Wiessner and Sullivan (2007) "Community colleges, like other higher education institutions and many private sector organization, face a generational transition period in which baby-boomer leaders are retiring in significant number" (p.89).

Career and technical education is a broad discipline that encompasses diverse areas. According to the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), "Career and technical education is about helping students, workers and lifelong learners of all ages fulfill their working potential. First and foremost it's about high school and college education". Aspects of CTE encompass middle school and elementary education. Additionally, ACTE (2008) stated CTE includes education and training that provides a new start for those unemployed, opportunities for others to develop employability skills, education focusing on career advancement, and training and development through a variety of sources for those in the workplace to develop and refreshen their skills.

With CTE having such a broad scope, there are many leadership roles in the field. Leaders in high schools can be identified as the department heads, school directors, superintendents, and state directors. At the community college level, program heads, department chairs, Deans, Vice-Presidents, Presidents, and state level officials are leaders in CTE. Extending to four-year universities, department heads, Deans, program directors, and faculty that research in CTE are leaders. Others that direct continuing education programs, extension and outreach program for business and industry, business leaders in CTE, and federal government agencies serve as leaders. Outside of formal education, leaders can be in local and state government, business and industry, or non-profits that provide CTE training. While

this list is quite extensive others may also provide leadership in CTE.

It is important for the future leaders to seek opportunities to develop leadership. According to Wujcik (2008) "An active approach entails looking for the qualities you have that can be developed into leadership skills...it means identifying the skills you already have and enhancing them while seeking ways to gain the skills you are lacking (p. 7). This broad perspective of CTE challenges the field to develop a variety of leaders in the field. This chapter will address specific objectives in the development of CTE leaders. Additionally, innovative methods that can be used with a variety of leaders will be discussed.

BACKGROUND

Leadership development is not a new concern for career and technical educators. A number of scholars have written about leadership development programs in career and technical education in the 1990's (Moss, Leske, Jensurd, & Berkas, 1994; Moss, Finch, Lambrecht, Jensrud, 1994; Moss, Jensurd, Johansen, 1992; Finch, Gregson, Faulkner, 1991). Much of this research was supported by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE). At the national level support for leadership development in career and technical education emerged again in the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education (NDCCTE).

Specific studies in career and technical education present a variety of attributes that high performing CTE leaders' possess. Those attributes include adaptability (open to change), insightful, team building, willing to accept responsibility, motivating others, and information management (Moss & Liang, 1990). Additionally, communication skills (listening, oral, written), being visionary, confident, planning, networking, decision making, and delegating are leader attributes

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