Skills and Dispositions

Teacher leaders all possess a set of skills and dispositions that set them apart from the normal classroom teacher. These skills and dispositions require that teachers go above and beyond the call of the normal classroom, and they also require that the teacher give deep thought and reflection to their own teaching practices. These two categories together form the core definition of teacher leadership (Danielson, 2006). In this paper, I will explore four skills and
four dispositions that I analyzed with regards to my skill set and the professional organization that I joined.

The first skill that I analyzed was monitoring progress and adjusting as conditions change. As Danielson (2006) stated, I realize that nothing in the teaching world is ever finished and that everything is able to be improved. I would utilize this skill in strengthening not only the band program, but the fine arts department as a whole in my school and perhaps district. I would like to collaborate with the other fine arts teachers to have a fine arts showcase. Usually we have our band concerts and art shows separate, and while they are successful in that manner, having them together would pull the fine arts department together as a whole, resulting in collaboration among the staff.

Secondly, I analyzed my skill in sustaining a commitment of others and anticipating negativity. I related to this skill instantly when I thought about putting together a musical production. In putting together a musical production, so many different people and talents are not only involved, but required for the show to be a success. As the head of the production, I am in charge in keeping everybody motivated, especially my teacher cohorts. Sustaining their interests can be a daunting task, and involves a certain skill set that I would like to refine: “Sustaining the commitment of others involves skills of facilitation and group process, such as listening, joint-problem solving, honoring other people’s ideas, maintaining focus, and knowing when to move forward.” I need to become better at gauging when the right time is to move forward, and to refine this skill, I will enlist the direct help from a mentor.

The third skill I analyzed was contributing to a learning organization. The professional organization that I joined is MENC. In my school, the music department is limited as there are only two of us that make up the whole music department. This makes me feel isolated, and contributing to a learning organization helps me feel like a part of a larger picture. The information that I am gaining through this organization is invaluable. I realize that I cannot fully reap the benefits of improved practice when I am the only one who is aware; I must become incorporated into the professional community through not only gaining knowledge from other music teachers, but also sharing my own (Danielson, 2006).
The fourth skill I analyzed was marshaling resources and taking action. I have only been employed at my school for two years, and due to the fact that I am also a second year teacher, I am apprehensive about presenting new ideas, and especially taking action. Marshaling resources and taking action is the skill I feel I need the most work on. I will use this skill to get a better handle on discipline in our school; first I will take action by devising a behavior plan and collaborating with the other teachers on this plan, hopefully gaining their support.

**Dispositions**

The first disposition that I studied was about deep commitment to student learning. According to Danielson (2006), many educators have the mantra “all children can learn” even though they realize that many students are not learning and they do not do anything about it. I realize that there are many students who get overlooked, and as a result, are not properly prepared for the next grade level. I would like to refine my skill of having a deep commitment to student learning by having both a fellow band director and a colleague who is not a musician to observe me. I will use this information to realize my strengths and weaknesses, and start to change my instruction accordingly to ensure that I am deeply committed to the success of all students.

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