

Unit 6 Assignment  
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Each author has different perspectives on leadership approaches. One wants to create a framework for investigating leadership practice, which then can lead to the most appropriate approach (Spillane.) Another author believes that there are many things within a company, like change and culture, that influence its leaders (Yukl.) The final author believes that looking amongst various cultures to see how that culture influences its leaders (Hallinger.) I think that we can learn from each author, with differing viewpoints, to continually research leadership development and learn how we can better lead our schools.

A good way to look at improving a leadership theory would be to first understand the practice of leadership itself. Spillane says, "In summary, we argue that investigating leadership practice is essential to understanding leadership in organizations. However, such investigations have to be undertaken within a conceptual frame and we develop a distributed framework for such work" (page 5.) I like this idea that you should know exactly what you are looking at and why before being able to analyze it. To look ahead, Spillane looks back on numerous traditions and theories on leadership practices. To the author, it is more about the practice of leadership than about the qualities of the leader, though they can go hand in hand. I think this concept is crucial to looking at what you want your leader to accomplish and how they are going to do so. It is more on the philosophy of leading, and less on the qualities desired from the leader. The latter will fall in line with the philosophy once it is defined.

There is a different perspective on leadership approaches. Yukl focuses mainly on culture, vision, change, learning, and innovation (page 298.) It is the culture of an institution that the leader must fall in line with. It is discussed how many employees are resistant to change, different responses to change, and different types of changes that can occur (pages 301-303.) Leading during a period of change can earn trust of employees and define commitment and

confidence. I agree most with Yukl's viewpoint as I believe that the leadership team must keep in mind the culture of the school. Not all leadership styles can work in the vision of all schools; they must be adjusted to meet the needs or demands of that culture.

The final perspective on leadership approach focuses on the cultural influences that play a part in defining and affecting a leader. Hallinger states, "Our purpose in this paper is to understand how one might begin to explore educational leadership concepts and practices across cultures (page 2.) The author uses American schools as an example for what is expected from the students. This expectation, in turn, shapes what is defined for a leadership position. Because there are cultural differences and expectations, each school leader will be responsible for different avenues in the school. "Inferences drawn about the value systems of fifty nations led to conclusion that value patterns among countries varied along four main dimensions: individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity" (page 7.) It shows how countries find both similarities and differences in their leadership styles. I liked this article, but did not find it as helpful as the other two. It was more of a study into different cultures and how they view educational leadership. I did not find it as engaging, but more informational without a way to form an opinion. I will say that it is important to look to other cultures for to utilize different leadership concepts.

It is encouraging to see different aspects of leadership practice being developed and researched. It is clear that there are many viewpoints on leadership approaches. More research must be done in order to continually improve leadership positions and leaders. Looking at the school's overall culture can play a huge role in determining how to lead it. Taking input from different cultures to apply can be beneficial. All of these things and more should be addressed to facilitate and lead a successful environment.

Hallinger, P., & Leithwood, K. (1998). Unseen forces: The impact of social culture on school leadership. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 73(2), 126-151.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36, 3-34.

Yukl, Gary. *Leadership in Organizations*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, n.d. N. pag. Print.