



Advanced High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson AHS.11

BUILDING FOLLOWERSHIP: THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Unit.

Stage One of Development—ME

Problem Area.

Who Am I in Light of Serving Others.

Precepts.

C5: Persuade others to commit.

National Standards.

NPH-H.9-12.5 - Analyze how interpersonal communication affects relationships.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Understand the role of leadership and effective followers.
- 2 Recognize the characteristics and skills of effective followers.
- 3 Form a leader-follower relationship.



© 2004 National FFA Organization
It is illegal to reproduce copies of this material
without written permission from the National FFA Organization.
National FFA Organization





Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

Kelley, R. E. *The Power of Followership: How to Create Leaders People Want to Follow and Followers Who Lead Themselves*. Currency/Doubleday, 1992.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.A
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.B
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.C
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.D
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.E
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.F
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.G
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.H
- ✓ AHS.11.TM.I
- ✓ AHS.11.Assess—one per student



Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- ▶ Followership
- ▶ Self-management
- ▶ Self-leadership



Interest Approach

Say to students:



Write on a sheet of paper what we believe to be the characteristics of a leader and the characteristics of a follower.

After two minutes, have the students share their characteristics and write them on the writing surface, making sure to write the leader and follower characteristics in separate columns.

After all students have shared their characteristics, say to the students:



Today, we are going to take a closer look at the leadership or followership relationship. Specifically, we are going to explore the role of leadership and effective followers, recognize the characteristics and skills of effective followership, and form a leader-follower relationship.



SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Identify the role of leadership and effective followers.

I. The role of leadership and effective followers

Display AHS.11.TM.A or write on the writing surface and say to the class:



All too often in organizations, people are cast in either follower or leader roles-static positions, frequently to the detriment of the organization's goals and needs. How can this be changed? It can be changed by: giving members the tools needed to be skilled followers and leaders at the same time. With effective training, organizational members can become individuals who feel equal to any person taking a leadership role at any given point, individuals committed to the organization's mission and goals, individuals not afraid to participate and to differ constructively.

James Kouzes and Barry Posner, authors of *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, believe there is a natural and sometimes overt tension between the leadership role and the followership, or what they call the "colleague," role. Their research findings show that, despite distinct differences between expectations of individuals in leadership roles and individuals in followership roles, the characteristic most critical to work relationships is "credibility," or the ability to believe in another.

By developing skillful and credible followers, organizations will, by default, enhance their member leadership skills. By developing followership skills such as the power of self-reflection and self-management, organizations will create stronger and more perceptive leaders and a staff that can effectively shift roles as necessary. In addition, building the follower's ability to work alongside others may diminish the competitive urge that is fostered by a view of the leader as superior.

Jill Janov, in her book, *The Inventive Organization*, states that, "Leadership is not the purview of a few nor is followership the purview of the many. To lead is to guide the development of the system. To follow is to pursue the common cause . . . Leading and following are dormant or active depending on the nature of relationships between people or between people and their environment in the context we call organization."

In order to discuss the role of effective followership in an organization, it is important to understand leadership and followership as a symbiotic relationship. In other words, people may play leading or following roles depending on the situation and the organizational needs.

Display AHS.11.TM.B or write on the writing surface and say to the class:



In his groundbreaking book, *The Power of Followership*, Robert Kelley states, "If there is anything the nineties have already taught us, it's that most people are both leaders and followers." Kelley's research shows, however, that most people ascribe negative qualities to the word "follower." Among some of the words used to describe followers, he found "sheep"-the most prevalent response, "yes-people," "apathetic people," and "happy losers." His work investigates the ways in which individuals in follower roles can be effective and powerful contributors to the organization. In other words, people may play leading or following roles depending on the situation and they, therefore, require the ability to determine which role to take at any given time. Skills that an effective follower possesses include: critical thinking, knowing oneself, and understanding the needs and/or qualities of the people around them. Assessing the situation, an effective follower will decide whether or not to assume a leadership role.



Display AHS.11.TM.C or write on the writing surface and say to the class:

Virginia Vanderslice discusses the importance of separating leadership functions from leadership. She says, "Not only is it possible to fulfill leadership functions without creating static leader roles, but also there may be negative organizational consequences to leader-follower distinctions . . . In fact, lodging leadership functions in leaders may actually undermine the very goals leaders are supposed to achieve." Vanderslice, along with Charles Manz, Henry Sims, and others, agrees that power is the line along which we most often draw distinctions between leaders and followers.

As organizations adapt to changing environments and changing user expectations and needs, and as they continue their organizational learning process, this delineation along the lines of power loses its meaning. While issues of personal power will always exist, the new view of the cooperative workplace provides an opportunity to reduce individual and collective fixations on power. Douglas K. Smith writes in consonance with Vanderslice, stating that people in leadership positions—i.e., those with vested higher-level authority—also need to be able to consider when and where they might choose to follow rather than lead others.

As organizations adapt to changing environments and changing user expectations and needs, and as they continue their organizational learning process, this delineation along the lines of power loses its meaning. While issues of personal power will always exist, the new view of the cooperative workplace provides an opportunity to reduce individual and collective fixations on power. Douglas K. Smith writes in consonance with Vanderslice, stating that people in leadership positions—i.e., those with vested higher-level authority—also need to be able to consider when and where they might choose to follow rather than lead others.

Display AHS.11.TM.D or write on the writing surface and say to the class:

Smith, in the book *The Leader of the Future*, writes, "Top leaders who hope to set the energies and performance of people on fire through rich, promising visions must know when to follow their people's interpretation of those visions in order to truly benefit from the creativity and meaning that any vision-driven enterprise requires."

Review this information using a Picasso Moment.

Objective 2. Identify the characteristics and skills of effective followers.

II. Characteristics and skills of effective followers

Display AHS.11.TM.E or write on the writing surface and say to the class:

Robert Kelley delineates the basic characteristics of effective followership: "What distinguishes an effective follower from an ineffective follower is enthusiastic, intelligent, and self-reliant participation, without star billing, in the pursuit of an organizational goal."



Display AHS.11.TM.F or write on the writing surface and say to the class:



One of the keys to effective followership is the concept of "self-management." This is the ability to determine one's own goals within a larger context, to take control of one's own development, and to decide what role to take at any given time. In a similar vein, Charles Manz and Henry Sims describe their concept of "self-leadership" as being "... an extensive set of strategies focused on the behaviors and thoughts that can be used to exert self-influence. Self-leadership is what people do to lead themselves. In some ways, self-leadership might also be thought of as a form of responsible followership ..."

Apart from a commitment to their own goals and futures, effective followers are committed to something larger than themselves. They show commitment to the organization they work in through the application of self-leadership and the ability to work with others to reach organizational goals.

Being committed is not enough, however. Kelley points out that incompetent commitment is not worth much. Competence and focus, then, are two other qualities of effective followers. These members strive to reach higher levels of competence through continuous learning. They focus on the work of the organization and not on the "soap opera" that can sometimes absorb ineffective followers.

Finally, a follower also needs to exhibit courage. This implies and requires independent and critical thinking skills as well as the ability to feel comfortable challenging others and taking risks, being innovative, and dealing with "wicked problems." In other words, a person choosing a followership role at any given time feels she or he is contributing at an equitable level with the person assuming the leadership role at that time. An effective follower, then, is a person who knows when to choose the followership role over the leadership role; a person who exhibits confidence, courage, competence, and critical thinking skills; and a person who is committed to the larger aim of the organization.



Apart from a commitment to their own goals and futures, effective followers are committed to something larger than themselves. They show commitment to the organization they work in through the application of self-leadership and the ability to work with others to reach organizational goals.

Display AHS.11.TM.G or write on the writing surface and say to the class:



Let's review the characteristics and skills of effective followers:

1. They must possess self-management or self-leadership.
2. They must strive to be competent and focused.
3. They must exhibit courage.

Review this information using a Choral Response Moment.



Objective 3. Create a leader-follower relationship.

III. Leader-follower relationship

Introduce the leader-follower relationship by saying:



As we have pointed out, in our society, we put a great deal of emphasis on the role of a leader. Yet, according to Robert Kelley, author of the *Power of Followership*, leadership has been estimated to contribute about 20 percent to success. The rest comes from other places, primarily from the followers.

Most people are reluctant to say they are followers because it connotes weakness and mindlessness. However, effective followers are empowered. Leaders and followers are not separate entities; instead, they come together to form a dynamic relationship. The team created by this relationship is vital to the success of an organization. Each team member, from the top down, must make a commitment to further the mission and vision of the organization-and must use each other's talents and areas of expertise to do so. Thus, both followers and leaders have a critical role to play to ensure the success of an organization

Display AHS.11.TM.H, and say:



The follower's role is to: Support the leader's decisions. In his article, "How to Be an Exceptional Follower," Dr. Robert Sevier says supporting the leader's decisions means working cooperatively and conscientiously and extending the leader's vision to subordinates by developing trust and support.

Challenge the leader. According to Ira Chaleff, author of *The Courageous Follower*, 70 percent of employees won't speak up even when they feel the leader is making a mistake. A follower must be courageous enough to voice his or her opinion as well as to help transform the situation.

Encourage the leader. In concentrating so hard on leadership, we forget the leader as a human being. Leaders, like followers, need to be encouraged and appreciated. Defend the leader. One must be loyal to the leader and his or her ideas. Chaleff says criticizing a leader behind his or her back is destructive to the organization. Leaders have a responsibility to listen to the ideas of followers. In return, followers have a responsibility to support the resulting decision

Review this information using a Choral Response Moment.

Display AHS.11.TM.I and say:



The leader's role is to: Empower the followers. To empower followers, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Harvard University professor, suggests that organizations give followers important work to do on critical issues and grant followers discretion and autonomy over their tasks. She adds that giving followers recognition for their work will empower the people in an organization.

Encourage exceptional followership. By sharing credit, encouraging dialogue in decision making, and acknowledging employees' value both publicly and privately, a leader can nurture and promote excellent followership.

Review this information using a Choral Response Moment.





Review/Summary

Review the unit by saying to the students:



In a healthy organization, the leader and the follower, individually and collectively, serve a common purpose, and they recognize it. It is a relationship that is vital to the success of every team. Organizations that fail to recognize this dual relationship will not attract the leaders and the followers they need to succeed.

At this time pass out AHS.11.Assess.



Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

Have students outline a plan for becoming better leaders by establishing strong followership characteristics and skills.

Have students shadow a local leader looking at how he or she interacts with followers.

►FFA Activity:

Have students establish ground rules for followers and leaders within the organization.

►SAE Activity:

Have students evaluate their SAE project to see how they could advance their project by listening and becoming a better follower.



Evaluation

AHS.11.Assess



Answers to Assessment:

Section 1

1. possess self-management or self-leadership
2. strive to be competent and focused
3. exhibit courage

Section 2

1. support the leader's decisions
2. challenge the leader
3. encourage the leader
4. defend the leader

Section 3

1. empower the followers
2. encourage exceptional followership

Write an essay on the impact of followership on an organization.



BUILDING FOLLOWERSHIP: THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Effective followers should:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The follower's role is to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The leader's role is to:

- 1.
- 2.

Write an essay on the impact of followership on an organization.



“Leadership is not the purview of a few nor is followership the purview of the many. To lead is to guide the development of the system. To follow is to pursue the common cause....Leading and following are dormant or active depending on the nature of relationships between people or between people and their environment in the context we call organization.”

Jill Janov,
The Inventive Organization



**“If there is anything the nineties
have already taught us, it’s that
most people are both leaders and
followers.”**

Robert Kelley,
The Power of Followership



“Not only is it possible to fulfill leadership functions without creating static leader roles, but also there may be negative organizational consequences to leader-follower distinctions....In fact, lodging leadership functions in leaders may actually undermine the very goals leaders are supposed to achieve.”

Virginia Vanderslice,
*Separating Leadership from
Leaders: An Assessment of the
Effect of Leader and Follower
Roles in Organizations*



“Top leaders who hope to set the energies and performance of people on fire through rich, promising visions must know when to follow their people’s interpretation of those visions in order to truly benefit from the creativity and meaning that any vision-driven enterprise requires.”

Douglas Smith,
The Leader of the Future



BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE FOLLOWER

“What distinguishes an effective follower from an ineffective follower is enthusiastic, intelligent, and self-reliant participation, without star billing, in the pursuit of an organizational goal.”

Robert Kelley, *The Power of Followership*



◆ ***Self-management—is the ability to determine one’s own goals within a larger context, to take control of one’s own development, and to decide what role to take at any given time.***

◆ ***Self-leadership is “... an extensive set of strategies focused on the behaviors and thoughts that can be used to exert self-influence. Self-leadership is what people do to lead themselves. In some ways, self-leadership might also be thought of as a form of responsible followership”***



CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS OF EFFECTIVE FOLLOWERS

They must possess self-management or self-leadership.

They must strive to be competent and focused.

They must exhibit courage.



THE FOLLOWER'S ROLE IS TO:

- ◆ **Support the leader's decisions**
- ◆ **Challenge the leader**
- ◆ **Encourage the leader**
- ◆ **Defend the leader**



THE LEADER'S ROLE IS TO:

- ◆ **Empower the followers**
- ◆ **Encourage exceptional followership**

