

Book Review

Educational Leadership - Personal Growth for Professional Development

Author: Harry Tomlinson

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The book “Educational leadership - Personal growth for professional development” authored by Harry Tomlinson is an exquisite reflection of the academic competence and professional excellence of the author. It is known to us that the area of leadership has been adapted for education at the first level, and presentation of the reflection, coherence and consistence at the second level. Though it is clear that Professor Harry Tomlinson is a visiting professor at Leeds Metropolitan University, UK; but he leads the readers to the personal and professional development. His focus remains on self-understanding and self-management. In continuation with the same, the author manages to talk about emotional intelligence in the realm of individual and personal learning and modeling excellence. Leadership contributes diligently in the process of career management and the subjects related to career management have been taken up by the author in an allied manner.

Twenty topics have been taken by the author in a very methodical manner in this book. He starts from self-management and personal development taking into consideration Hopson and Scally’s assumptions. He argues that each individual is unique, worth of respect, responsible for behavior and action, feelings and emotions. He explains that a learner passes through the process of making mistakes during the learning process. It is this awareness which makes us responsible and empowers us to grow personally.

In support of his view point, he shifts the focus to self-understanding, personality and psychometric instruments. He presents multiple

psychometric instruments. He provides details of the three instruments with his idiosyncratic interpretation. Accordingly, he believes that psychometric instruments can inform self-understanding as a basis of personal and professional development.

The author did not ignore the existing sustenance and importance of emotional intelligence. He emphasizes emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, integrate, understand, manage and reflect his/her feelings. He links emotional intelligence with the career management plans. He also highlights change management. Consistently, he points out the fact that there are four career stones associated with emotional intelligence. These include: emotional literature, emotional fitness, emotional depth, and emotional alchemy. He discusses emotional intelligence in the context of emotional and educational leadership.

He presented fine thematic stories for understanding the paradigms of leadership. This is a bird's eye view of personal as well as social competence. As a novel gesture, he embarked on emotional capital and spiritual intelligence as the unique dimensions of leaderships.

He favors the need and information of 360 degree feedback as a unique process of gaining varied perspective feedback from the participants of the professional development process. Three hundred and sixty degree feedback appraisal and success of the tool is based on skills and competencies. He tells the readers that it is a systematic collection and feedback of performance data. He takes measurement as a feedback privilege and accordingly emphasizes the team leaders and their roles in the process.

Tomlinson's deliberating upon educational leadership in the area of emotional intelligence passes on to 360 degree feedback. He takes this concept in a broader sense than 360 degree appraisal and intends to use it for the organizational performance rather than its cascade trickledown effect. 360 degree feedback, according to him, comes from the systematic collection of performance data about an individual or a group, generated from different stakeholders. He is of the opinion that 360 degree feedback should be based on integrity because perceptions are taken as reality. The quality and quantity of information contributes towards the 360 degree feedback as an open management exercise. It is considered as a rigorous activity for which the author proposes that the evaluator should know his own performance level. Questionnaire model for the collection of feedback is a sophisticated process where the author

proposes to find out the paid interest for the future application of 360 degree feedback. 360 degree feedback is a developmental process that provides opportunities for strategic planning, developing internal and less structured forms of feedback, performance management systems, short term business priorities, and role models who are willing to receive feedback from subordinates.

The author emphasizes accelerated learning as a technique for positive and in-depth learning. He has jotted down the manager's tool for accelerated learning under the caption "MESSAGE," where in M stands for mindset, E for entrance, S for sequence, S for store, A for action and G for go again. Actually the author has developed a model based on these elements. He emphasizes the links between accelerated leaning, the brain and competencies for successful learning.

Communications skills are significantly important to exercise leadership. Tomlinson's chapter on neurolinguistic programming and professional development emphasizes how to improve communication skills. He explains neurolinguistic programming (NLP) with respect to personal mastery and mental models and consistently emphasizes neurology, linguistic, and programming. In doing so, he presents nine presuppositions and seven pragmatic models related to NLP.

Tomlinson, in chapter seven, talks about creativity, intuition, and innovation in schools. He addresses various important questions in this chapter, such as, how a creative culture can be developed? What signifies innovative schools and what make certain actions creative?

The next chapter elaborates author's thoughts about stress and time management. He develops a chain of arguments on how to concur, manage and prevent stress. In the next chapter, "Career Development and Development as a Professional," Tomlinson argues that the changing context helps in managing careers and psychological development in the modern era.. He emphasizes teaching as a profession, teachers as professionals and argued to adopt a strategic planning approach for the strategic development of teachers. It seems as if the writer himself is a career strategist.

Chapter 10 emphasizes training, coaching, and mentoring as important elements of the new training processes in the changing contexts. He mentioned commandments of coaching along with its characteristics and types. In this realm, he remains more a sociologist in

his approach.

The author emphasizes interpersonal skills, decision making and team learning in the next chapter. He begins his argument by emphasizing team working and then highlights the importance of based rewards. Later, he stresses the role of decision making under the influence of power, authority, and influence.

In Chapter 12, Tomlinson discusses leadership development within the educational context. He identifies important dimensions of effective leadership. These include: mission, responsibility, focus, ideation or concepts, school awareness, communication, credibility, achiever, activator, command, relaters, empathy, individual perception, developer, stimulator, discipline and finally the arranger. He also discusses the reasons for flawed leadership.

The author identifies performance management as a strategic approach to develop successful organizations. He emphasizes performance culture, goal setting, target setting and objective setting as important ingredients of effective performance. He elaborates the discussion with several examples from the business world.

The next chapter deals with the author's notions of ethics, values, vision, mission, and gender which appear compelling in terms of the universality of the processes. He equally emphasized the female leadership, its advantages and disadvantages. He then shifted his focus to culture, change and organizational health in continuation of his ideas, wherein he talks about developing and changing the culture as well as the metaphorical images of the organization. Tomlinson addresses strategy, its paradigms, approaches and guidelines for strategic planning in the next chapter. This chapter is exhaustive in terms of its various parameters.

The next chapter deals with the reflections on quality models, wherein Tomlinson discusses ISOs, total quality management, and quality gurus like Deming, Crosby, Malcom, Peters and Waterman. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on benchmarking, and quality and marketing.

The author elaborates on the concepts of learning organization and knowledge management in continuation of his ideas presented in the book. He discusses the creation of a learning organization, knowledge

management, communities of practice and the role of tacit knowledge.

The author introduces a novel concept, Business Process Re-engineering (BRE) in the next chapter. He discusses the topic in detail and highlights its relevance to schools.

The book concludes with a chapter on work and life and how to strike a balance between the two. The author explains the theme with respect to the expectations from the employees, long hour culture, teaching as a meaningful work, performance, and working in teams.

The author has included a comprehensive subject index at the end of the book that can be used by the readers for tracing the needed content.

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