

IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING TEACHER LEADERS

Is there a leader in the house?

BY CARLA THOMAS McCLURE

As professor and vice chair at a medical college, professor John Rogers sought to identify potential leaders among medical school faculty. He had observed that individuals' internal needs and motivations seemed to be related to their potential as teacher leaders, so he reviewed literature from several disciplines to see if research supported his observations. He found that individuals' internal needs for responsibility/growth and achievement consistently distinguish leaders from nonleaders.

How was the literature review conducted?

Rogers examined studies on leadership aspiration and ability in teaching, engineering, medicine, astronomy, business, and the military. He included primarily studies that involved both leaders and nonleaders. To frame his review, he combined the Porter/Maslow and Herzber motivation theories to create a "lens" through which to analyze factors affecting an individual's "drive to engage in leadership responsibilities beyond direct teaching."

According to Porter/Maslow, individuals are internally driven to reach for their highest potential (self-actualization), but must first meet lower-level needs for security, affiliation, self-esteem, and autonomy. Herzber identifies motivating factors (in ascending order) as recognition, responsibility, growth, work itself, advancement, and achievement. He asserts that "maintenance factors," such as salary and working conditions, are not motivators, but "prerequisites to motivation."

Rogers combined the two theories and categorized studies according to the resulting five levels of individual needs: (1) security and work-

ing conditions, (2) affiliation and interpersonal relations, (3) esteem and recognition, (4) autonomy and responsibility/growth, and (5) self-actualization and achievement.

What differentiates leaders from nonleaders?

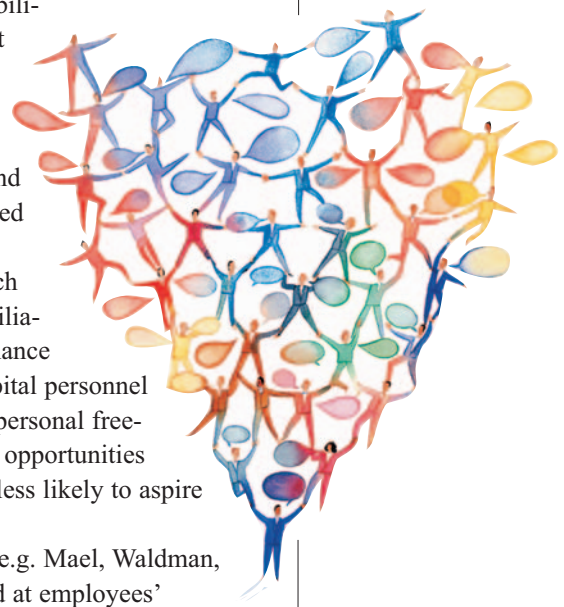
The need for responsibility/growth and achievement consistently distinguished leaders from nonleaders in several studies.

For example, Steers and Braunstein (1976) developed and validated the Manifest Needs Questionnaire (which measures achievement, affiliation, autonomy, and dominance needs) and found that hospital personnel who preferred autonomy (personal freedom and independence) to opportunities for promotion were much less likely to aspire to leadership positions.

Other survey studies (e.g. Mael, Waldman, & Mulqueen, 2001) looked at employees' need for responsibility/growth, characterized by Porter as a need for "control of work situation, influence in the organization, participation in important decisions, authority to utilize organizational resources." This need for responsibility, labeled as the need for dominance on the Manifest Needs Questionnaire, was more frequently found among those who held or aspired to positions in leadership, management, and supervision.

Correlational studies by Stricker (1989) and others support the finding that individuals motivated by a need for achievement are more likely than others to seek and hold leadership positions.

John Rogers reviewed studies to shed light on leadership development in medical school faculty.



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What role does work culture play in nurturing leadership potential?

Rogers hypothesized that poor working conditions might prompt individuals to “withdraw from job involvement” and focus on lower-level needs rather than seek greater responsibility. He found no studies that directly addressed this issue but notes that Orpen (1979) found that “job enrichment that increased autonomy led to significant increases in job satisfaction, job involvement, and internal motivation.”

What messages are relevant to coaches?

Based on his literature review, Rogers suggests the following for those seeking to identify and nurture potential teacher leaders:

- Use self-assessment questionnaires and guided reflection to help individuals explore their capabilities, interests, and aspirations.
- Establish an educational “champions” leadership development program to support the continual identification and recruitment of teacher leaders.
- Seek institutional support for building a culture of continual improvement and providing time for training and sustained action.

Reference

Rogers, J. (2005, November). Aspiring to leadership: Identifying teacher-leaders. *Medical Teacher*, 27(7), 629-633. ◆

Rogers' review has pointers for the school-based coach in nurturing teacher leaders.

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