

Research Behind the Leadership Method

An exploratory study for developing a teaching methodology, Renée's research focused on mentoring student leadership in the classroom as a means of increasing student achievement and success.

This study explored how participation in programs that mentor leadership contributes to student success. Research focused on interconnecting mentoring and student success, learning standards and student success, and leadership and student success.

If mentoring student leaders by teachers improves student success through achievement, educational leaders may view professional development on mentoring student leadership as worthwhile. A theoretical mentoring framework (Rhodes, 2002) was modified for the methodology, cross-referencing leading leadership components and developing a working model of mentoring student leadership.

The primary research question was, "How is leadership ability influenced by receiving formal mentoring in leadership?" A multiple case study offered a view of two programs that mentor leadership at a high school in the northwest; a high school music program and an after-school service club. The population for the study was a suburban high school in the northwest, drawing from curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs that have a structured method of mentoring students. Three assessments on leadership skills, practices and mentoring programs were embedded into the study. A cross case analysis investigated commonalities and replication logic utilizing this information for the purpose of improving student success in high schools (Yin, 2014). Aggregating the two leadership mentoring programs offered an in-depth look at each program. A view across the two programs revealed similarities and differences, targeting patterns in specific skills, practices, and behaviors.

While there are plenty of studies on student leadership as well as mentoring, a lack of previous research on an intersection of mentoring and student leadership provided a gap in the literature that has the potential to contribute to improved student success. Practical implication in a study of students impacts the current educational campaign for development of Common Core portraits and 21st century skills. Five common leadership attributes surfaced in the document/syllabus study, interviews and observations of student leaders and adult mentors of the music class and service club. These prevalent characteristics integrated the features of 21st century skills, identity leadership behaviors, and transformational leadership practices. As the research evolved into a music methodology, the next step is critical evaluation of student success through student leadership.