Culturally Sustaining Leadership: A Chamoru Example

Presentation Description

Leadership grounded in one's culture can be very personally satisfying and professionally effective. The speaker will share her story of developing an authentic leadership praxis that privileges her indigenous heritage (Chamoru) within the context of a western institution.

Topics

- Culturally Sustaining Leadership
- Authentic Leadership Development from a Chamoru Perspective
- Pā'ā Taotoa tano' (Chamoru Ways) as the Foundation of a Leadership Practice
- Core Cultural Values Applied to Leadership
- A Sense of Place and Belonging
- Temporal Intelligence and Time Mastery

Culturally Sustaining Leadership

Django Paris advocates the ideal of culturally sustaining pedagogy in education:

The term culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence.

Mobilizing my Chamoru identity in an effective leadership practice has enabled me to realize Paris' ideal of culturally sustaining pedagogy in leadership, respecting both my native culture and that of my organization.

Maui College Staff Retreat

PRESENTER

Mary Therese Perez Hattori, Ed.D.
Outreach Director
Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
1890 East-West Road
Moore 215
Honolulu, HI 96822
maryh@hawaii.edu
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~maryh

I irensia na 'lā 'la 'i
espiritu-ta.
Our heritage gives life to our spirit.
Authentic Leadership
- The root construct underlying all positive forms of leadership and its development.
- Know yourself and your own cultural heritage. Achieve a heightened level of self-awareness (knowledge, values, strengths, abilities, experience, your existence in the organization, identity, emotions, motivations, goals, etc.).
- Express yourself in ways that are consistent with your true self.
- Lead from the perspective of your own personal point of view.
- Authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers; well-being is an outcome of authenticity.

Source: Avolio and Gardner

Leadership Practices Based on Indigenous Ways of Being, Examples from Guam (Chamoru Culture)

Pā'ā Taotao tano'
- Literally means “the ways of the people of the land.”
- Recognizes the connectedness of all things natural and ethereal, all things past, present and future.

Importance of Place
- Our islands and ocean are sources of our identity and knowledge, are places for meaning-making.
- Nature provides rich metaphors for life, e.g., resilience, change, permanence amidst change.
- Chamoru poet, Cecilia Perez writes, “I Mañamoru (the Chamoru People) have many histories in these ancestral homelands we know as the Marianas. The land, seas and heavens have a memory of their own that is revealed though the Chamoru mind and senses” (p. x).

Kostumbren Chamoru
- A system of social protocols and expected behaviors.
- The central focus is respect.
- Based on chenchule’ and inafa’maolek.

Chenchule’
- A system of reciprocity that ensures the well-being of all.
- An expression of inafa’maolek.

Inafa’maolek
- Literally means “to make good” and promotes harmonic interdependence within the community.
- A spirit of cooperation and compassion.

Inimi’di
- A sense of belonging, a collective, communal identity.
- Like many Indigenous Peoples, the Chamoru are oriented toward a communal and collective identity which imbues all beings with a sense of recognition and belonging.
- Inimi’di means there is no need to earn a place in your family or community. Each person is a valued member of society just by virtue of being born.
Temporal Intelligence Definition & Tips

Definition

- an awareness of time and an understanding that time is a socially constructed phenomenon, experienced differently by different people
- As a leader one must recognize the importance of understanding how different cultures perceive and experience time.

Re-conceptualize time – Assume an Oceanic View

- Be aware of patterns and rhythm.
- Set the rhythm that works for you.
- Appreciate the temporal orientations of others.
- Practice time travel - perceive possible futures in the present, using the lens of the past.
- Be a wayfinder.
- Practice polychronicity, integrating both the native circular temporal perspective with the western linear view of time, blending visions of the future with experiences of the past to construct meaning in the present.

Take time to BE

- Pause, Reflect, Connect with others
- Practice silence

Questions To Ponder About Your Own Leadership Practice

About Yourself/Your Culture

- What does my native culture value?
- What do I believe about reality, how it is constructed, how I make meaning?
- What do I believe about knowledge - its sources, how it is transmitted, acquired, and expressed?

About Your Institution

- What is the culture of your institution?
- What does your institution value?
- What are the norms of behavior and common practices of your institution?
- How might the institutional culture support your native culture? How might you influence this in positive ways?

About Your Leadership Practice

- What cultural values influence or define your own professional practice?
- What culture-based ways of being and knowing influence your work?
- How does your worldview influence your understanding of and behaviors related to time?
- In what ways can your own culture influence the culture of your institution?
- How can you mobilize your native culture as a leader? How can you model this for others?


