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Philosophy of Educational Leadership  
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A few years ago, I found myself reading the Harvard Business Review. When I say that, I mean that I *found* myself while reading an article from the magazine entitled *In Praise of the Incomplete Leader*. The article offers a compelling introduction to distributed leadership – the notion that the leader is not the person sitting at the top of the ladder sprinkling down orders about the organization’s day to day tasks. Distributed leadership tasks the leader with honing the formidable skills of everyone around him to the benefit of the organization’s operational and strategic initiatives. The leader recognizes that no matter how skilled he is, his skills are optimized by complementarity. I am confident in my leadership, and I take full responsibility for the health and success of the organizations and groups that I lead. I also work hard to assess the ways in which I am incomplete. Therefore, my style of leadership is to surround myself with diversely talented people and to empower them to contribute their time and expertise to produce an outcome that is impossible with only one sage voice.

I can remember when, relatively new in my post, I stood up as Head of Middle School at St. Andrew’s and announced myself as a distributed leader. People were skeptical, and some interpreted incomplete leadership to be code for lazy, laissez faire, or simply weak leadership. Holding steadfastly to what I knew to be strong leadership, I dug deeply into the four capabilities of distributed leadership: sensemaking, relating, visioning, and inventing. I followed it like a recipe – paying attention to the context and interpretations of what was happening in the division; connecting with people – students and adults alike – to better understand the perspectives they brought to the table; creating a solid, shared sense of who we are as a division, what we do, and why we do it; brainstorming and implementing (with the right people at the table) ways to invest in our opportunities, correct our missteps, and eliminate threats to our mission and goals. Under that model, what stands now is a division that is seeing record enrollment, single digit attrition, tangibly high levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction, strong buy-in from parents, and a clear brand: academic rigor, emotional intelligence, and lots of joy. When I was hired at St. Andrew’s my charge from the Head of School was to give the middle school a distinctive identity and program that would solidify it as a pipeline to our upper school. Looking back on that initial conversation recently, the Head of School and I happily acknowledged the thriving middle school division. As an incomplete leader, I took the middle school, arguably one of the most challenging moments of development, and made it a desired destination for families and educators. And the best part of it is, I enjoyed every bit of it!

Distributed leadership is transformational in the way it develops leaders, employees, and organizations in a reinforcing loop that has each becoming their best selves. In that way, it marries well with my approach to education. As an educator, I am drawn to some of the foundational learning theorists. I feel a sense of purpose in Horace Mann’s call for a compulsory education that could bridge economic and social divides while teaching the principles of good citizenship. I am allied with Dewey and his love of progressive, experiential education that is purposeful to the learner’s real world context and taught as a co-creation of knowledge as opposed to a transactional giving of information. My work in diversity and inclusion makes me ever mindful of Meade’s notion of the generalized other – the normalizing archetypes that society holds us

accountable to which teaches us to suppress our authentic selves. As I encourage my students to find and express the fullness of their identities, I heed Freire's warning that pedagogy can be a replicating tool of oppression when the goal is socialization instead of social justice. Because of that, I recognize that both students and educators are what Vygotsky would call "more knowledgeable others," players in the learning space who can offer experience and expertise that could expand not only what others know but their very capacity to understand as a result of meaningful interaction and reflection. All of these theorists remind me that good leadership, after all, has education of self and others as a central tenet.

The pull towards the Head of School role for me comes from the opportunity it provides to nurture an environment that sets the stage for individual and institutional brilliance to surface, shine, and thrive. Having been a leader in independent schools for nearly 20 years, I feel poised to be a transformational Head of School. As a trained facilitator, I have created a shared vision and ensured collaboration and innovation. As a diversity practitioner, I believe in the power of equity, perspective taking, and conflict resolution. As a seasoned manager, I am experienced in giving and receiving feedback, holding firm to mutual accountability, and being decisive without being directive. As a board member, I am well-versed in fiscal and programmatic sustainability, strategic thinking, and long-range planning. As an educator, schools are my heart. Since I started school in pre-K, I have either been in school or worked in the field of education (and at times, both!). To have the privilege and responsibility of Head of School speaks to me as a fulfilment of my purpose on the planet. In short, school leadership makes me feel complete.