

Enlightened leadership for teachers and counsellors

Thomas James Vanderbeck on an ordered approach to leading

Our mission is to proactively teach, counsel, and empower our students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary for them to discover and realise their optimal personal, academic, creative, and career potentials

Thomas James Vanderbeck

In every situation in which a teacher or counsellor wishes to lead a student through an insightful and empowering learning experience, that teacher or counsellor (TC) must carefully observe that young person's engagement with each learning assignment. A child or adolescent's behaviors can then be assessed within one of four combinations of competence and commitment, called *Development Levels*. An attentive TC will observe and then diagnose a student's currently demonstrated learning performance, or level of development, and then respond with the most proactive of six leadership styles.

Children and adolescents are generally unaware of their learning behaviors and demonstrated development levels at any time, and so cannot be expected to be accountable for determining which leadership style(s) they need from their teachers and counsellors.

This is especially so, as youngsters continually address new learning challenges, and experience most of their time at the first three of four learning levels.

So, the teachers and counsellors are accountable. It is up to the TCs to diagnose their students' ever changing developmental needs and to respond with the most proactive leadership style(s). This means that a TC must not rely on using one fixed or consistent leadership style; but rather, be flexible in providing the most appropriate one of the six. TCs will often need to use all of these six leadership styles, addressing a variety of situations and students' developmental needs, in the course of just one hour!

If a team of teachers and counsellors are involved in educating, guiding, and advising adolescents, it is essential and imperative that these TCs are consistent in their use of enlightened leadership to ensure that children and adolescent students' learning needs are dependably met with the most proactive leadership responses.

When education and counselling team members are not congruent in their approach to education leadership, and some employ only one leadership style in all situations, while others employ inappropriate leadership responses, the effect on children and adolescents is to inhibit, retard, or arrest their personal development, learning, self confidence, and academic achievement.

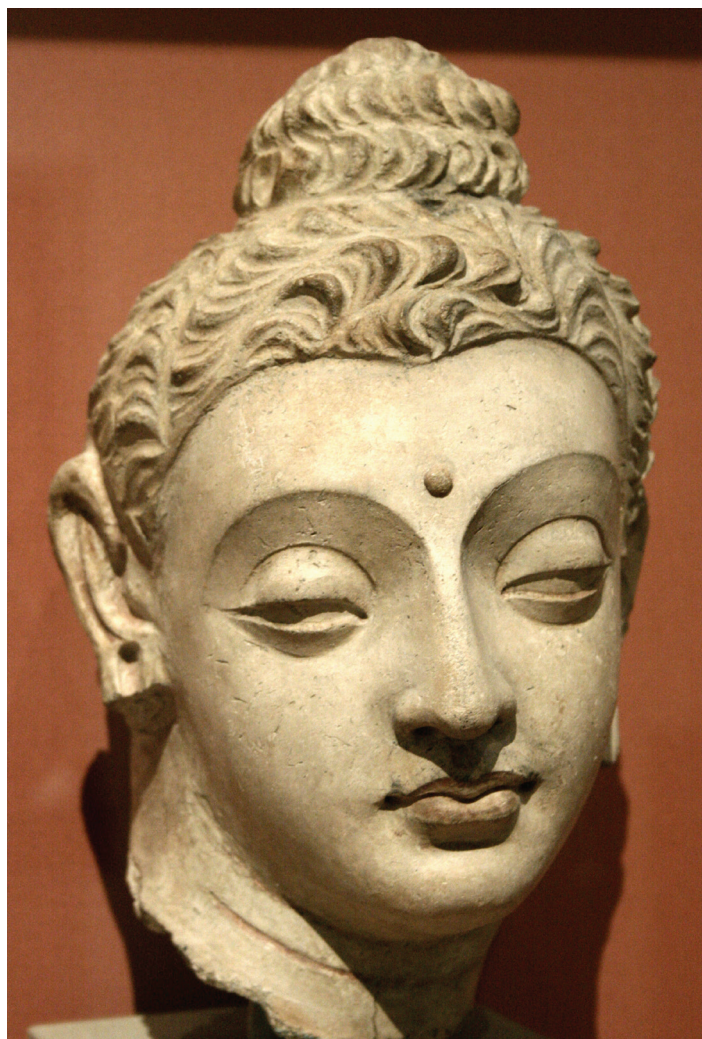
Four development levels and four matching leadership styles

D1 (Development Level 1) A child or adolescent student demonstrates low competence and high commitment – the behaviors of an “enthusiastic beginner”.

“This is new and very interesting, and I’m eager to begin learning and growing!”

S1 (Leadership Style 1) – The TC provides high direction and low support; and shows and tells the learner how, where, and when to perform new skills.

A1 (Accountability Factor 1) The TC is entirely accountable for assessment, assignment, orientation, training, goal setting, decision-making, problem solving, evaluations of performance, and any necessary documentation.



D2A child or adolescent student demonstrates some competence and low commitment. During this “disenchanted learner” stage of development, a young person will experience predictable confusion and frustration. Many of us adults are familiar with having experienced D2 as a “sophomore slump” in college, during our first day at boot camp, a week into our first real job, or after several months of romance, marriage, and/or raising a first child.

“This is more difficult and challenging than I anticipated. I feel frustrated. Help!”

S2 The TC continues to provide structure, direction, and training. However, the temporarily diminished commitment of the D2 now requires that we respond with consistent encouragement and high support.

A2 The teachers and counsellors are still solely accountable, (as in A1).

D3A child or adolescent student demonstrates moderate competence and variable commitment. This “rising star” is close to mastering this learning assignment.

"I'm fairly confident now; but still unsure about planning and problem-solving.

S3 The TC now provides low direction and high support. The TC collaborates with the **young person**, initially taking a strong lead, then **becoming a partner**, and eventually **handing off** the assignment to the **student**.

A3 The TC slowly transfers the burden of accountability to the student.

D4 A child or adolescent demonstrates consistent high competence and high commitment in working alone as an independent achiever.

"I know exactly what I need to do now, and how to go about it. I'll let you know when I require any assistance, coaching, guidance, or counselling."

S4 The TC provides low direction and low support. The TC's primary role now is to facilitate and provide for the youngster's sustained independent achievement.

A4 The child or adolescent student is now accountable for partnering for performance with the TC in order to maximise his or her own learning, academic performance, and subject mastery.

Tom Vanderbeck's RESISTANCE MODEL

R Resistance occurs when a child or adolescent cannot or will not address an educational challenge or ably perform a complex learning assignment, and so, demonstrates no competence and no commitment (or even "anti" commitment).

When children and adolescent students do not receive adequate S1 while at D1, they will quickly advance to D2. If not then provided with a structured and supportive S2, these students will not move on to D3.

Now, the misled young person has been set up to fail, only to fall from the developmental curve, and consequently land in the realm of Resistance.

Thomas Vanderbeck

Prof Thomas Vanderbeck has presented over 100 original courses in business and education leadership at the University of California, San Diego State University, University of North Carolina, and California State University.

He has coordinated a community counselling and training agency, leading a staff of seven education and mental health professionals to conduct programs that served more than 20,000 students, 500 teachers, and hundreds of helping professionals and social workers.

Prof Vanderbeck created the Personal Empowerment Project, a comprehensive youth development program that provided crisis intervention and rescue, professionally guided peer counseling, life skills and self-leadership training, rescues from domestic abuse, molest, and neglect; and substance abuse prevention, interruption, and recovery services for 2000 adolescents in three middle and five high schools, and for 200 teenage felons in a maximum security prison.

He is the author of *Playing (the game of life) With A Full Deck – An Enlightened Self Leadership Primer*.



Four Resistance Factors and two Leader Responses

The First Three R-Factors

R1 Safety

Willful ignorance of risk, threat, and safety concerns, or clear and present dangers. Teen alcohol and drug use, DUI behind the wheel or as passenger, and risk taking.

R2 Leadership

Non-responsiveness to leadership, teaching, coaching, and/or counselling. Lies of commission and omission. Abdication of personal accountability.

R3 Congruency

Unwillingness to follow classroom customs or school rules. Abusing trust. Being covertly dishonest. Behaving in manipulative ways.

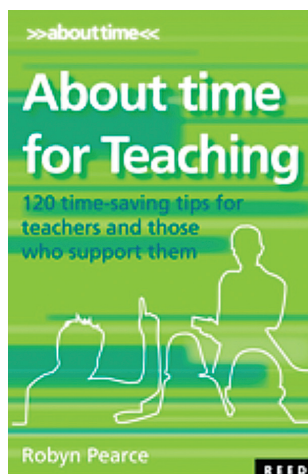
"I'll do things my way and in my own time, thank you. You're not the boss of me!"

MA Mandate Accountability

This is the proactive leadership response to R1, R2, and R3. Teachers and counsellors imposing MA are accountable for their students' compliance with safety policies and emergency procedures, responsiveness to guidance, teaching, coaching and counselling; and following the rules established by the school, counselling centre, and case-relevant social service organisations.

If a student demonstrates any behaviors that suggest that he or she is at risk, or may somehow put others at risk, regarding R1, R2, or R3 – the TC must observe, inquire, document, and then initiate an assertive and detailed conversation with that student. The TC must clearly communicate positive demands and expectations – as well as specifically defining negative logical consequences for failure to comply. Afterwards,

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that student's performance must be scrutinised closely and regularly, and also in ways that are unpredictable and random. Follow-up conversations and continuing MA are required.

MA is a very deliberate, proactive, and corrective leadership intervention that imposes control, consistent structure, high direction, low support, and close monitoring. This is extraordinarily necessary and appropriate when an at-risk child or adolescent simultaneously demonstrates any two R-Factors or the triple threat of R1, R2, and R3!

The Fourth R-Factor

Often TCs will find that children and adolescent students are simply not ready to address some learning challenges or perform complex education assignments. It is essential that TCs not expect children or adolescents to perform learning assignments for which they have clearly demonstrated an inability and/or unwillingness. TCs must be realistic and pragmatic, and temporarily unassign students from educational challenges for which they have clearly demonstrated resistance. On occasion, a child or adolescent will not have been properly assessed as ready for a certain learning challenge, and TCs may be wise to unassign that youngster.

R4 Unable, Befuddled, and/or Untrained

Clearly demonstrating little or no competence and/or commitment, or showing an obvious

inability to perform a learning assignment (not covered in R1, R2, and R3).

"I had high hopes at first, but now I'm completely lost; and I really don't care anymore."

TU Temporary Unassignment

This is the proactive leadership response to R4. It provides a corrective and remedial leadership intervention that provides clear direction and consistent moderate support. It allows time for proactive assessment, analysis, problem solving, and redirection to establish a fresh beginner's learning experience.

The TC must find out how the student's developmental needs were not accurately assessed and met; and then plan how to re-engage that teenager on the developmental path, most likely at D1 (orientation and training) but possibly at D2. In this circumstance, more structured and intensive S1 and S2 than usual will be required.

Accountability for Resistance

When a child or adolescent demonstrates resistance, showing little or no competence and commitment, that young person is certainly accountable for his or her own behavior.

However, teachers and counsellors are primarily accountable for having generated resistance, because that TC has failed to diagnose the developmental need(s) of the student, and to respond with the best proactive leadership style(s).

If the appropriate and necessary leadership styles are not provided in sequence, the result will be to inhibit, retard, or arrest children's and adolescents' personal development, learning, and academic achievement.

Naturally, the preventive remedy for resistance is consistent use of enlightened leadership to address each student's learning assignments, assess his or her developmental needs, and then provide proactive and timely structure, direction, and support.

Initially, this will require deliberate testing, interviews, and performance evaluations. That process must be followed with orientation, training, coaching, partnering for leadership, and on-going guidance and counselling.

Of course, this dynamic educational model for accelerating learning is most effective when children and adolescent students are trained in enlightened leadership so that they can initiate discussions about their personal needs and learning challenges, as well as developing proactive skills for self-leadership and for mentoring their peers.

Ken Blanchard, author of Situational Leadership II, originated the four development levels and matching leadership styles (used in this article with permission). Tom Vanderbeck created Enlightened Leadership, the Resistance Model, and the Matrix Assessment, Analysis, and Applications System.

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