

Teachers as transformational leaders

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Abstract

This article investigates the concept of leadership in the context of classrooms. It focuses on the evolving role of teachers as transformational leaders. Leadership is mainly a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Likewise, in the context of classrooms, the main goal is learning, and teachers are responsible for guiding students toward this common goal. Thus, leadership is a key aspect of the teaching process. Moreover, in an era where technology and information are prevalent, the traditional view of teachers as mere knowledge transmitters is being challenged. High school and university students in particular have access to digital resources and artificial intelligence and as a consequence are increasingly self-reliant in acquiring information. As a result, teachers find themselves assuming roles similar to mentors, coaches, and leaders. As leaders, teachers are responsible for guiding students toward personal growth and development. This transformative aspect of teaching resonates with the principles of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration. By contextualizing these principles within the dynamics of a classroom, this article suggests how teachers can employ transformational leadership to foster student growth and development.

Keywords: leadership, transformational leadership, learning, effective teaching

1. Introduction

Teaching has parted ways with the old “show-and-tell” practices. Teaching does not mean lecturing information to students sitting in rows at desks, attentively listening

and recording what they hear. The essence of teaching instead lies in offering students a learning experience that is rich, fulfilling, and unique. Such a learning experience is not limited to the classroom but extends into the home, the community, and around the world. Moreover, knowledge is not limited to books; it can be found everywhere in bits and bytes (Lanier, 1997).

Lanier made these remarks more than two decades and a half ago. Technology was not as developed as it is today. However, Lanier's remarks are more relevant today than ever before. Today, knowledge has become easily accessible, learning has become faster, easier, more dynamic, and more personalized. Learning in the past was confined to the classroom, but thanks to information and communication technology, it can take place everywhere. These transformations have made learners more self-reliant in their learning. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots like ChatGPT, Claude, and Google Gemini can offer learning opportunities that traditional learning methods cannot offer. If used properly, AI can be a very helpful learning partner for everyone. For instance, AI chatbots can be used to look for specific information, seek clarification on complex topics, or engage in interactive conversations to enhance their understanding. Learning, thanks to AI, has the potential to be more personalized and dynamic. In light of these transformations, the role of teachers should be redefined.

In this regard, Goble (1977) states that a changing world necessitates a changing education style. Learners, on their journeys to adult responsibilities, need skills very different from those their parents needed. Goble's statements hold greater relevance in the present context given the accelerated pace of change compared to five decades ago. The ongoing technological advances and economic changes that the world has been witnessing have made teachers' responsibilities more complicated. Today's teachers are supposed to prepare students for the evolving economic landscapes. They are also required to utilize and adapt to new pedagogical techniques and technologies. In addition, they must adjust their teaching practices to meet the increasingly diverse needs of learners. Teaching has been reshaped as a result of these changes (Martin et al., 2015). In light of these changes, teachers' roles have become less about disseminating information and more about motivating students to engage in self-learning.

2. Teachers as Leaders

In a classroom with sometimes more than 40 learners, teachers are responsible for organizing the students, getting their attention, motivating them to be more engaged,

and evaluating their progress. These activities are typically associated with effective leadership (Nadelson et al., 2020). Teacher leadership is not a new concept as teachers have long been considered leaders in classrooms, enjoying considerable autonomy in making instructional decisions (Lai & Cheung, 2015). However, such a conception of leadership is linked to leading classroom activities, which is different from how leadership is conceptualized in leadership literature. Moreover, pre-service training does not often focus on the role of teachers as leaders, and the literature on teacher leadership does not include much empirical evidence regarding leadership activities and perceptions of teachers as classroom leaders. (Nadelson et al., 2020).

There has been a growing interest in research related to teacher leadership since the 1980s (Lai & Cheung, 2015). However, this body of research on teacher leadership tends to focus more on teachers as leaders outside of the classroom setting, with colleagues, administrators, and community members. (Nadelson et al., 2020). For example, York-Barr and Duke (2004) define teacher leadership as “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (pp. 287-288). Smulyan (2016) advocates for teacher-leader preparation as a holistic process instead of as a set of prescribed behaviors; however, the focus is on preparing teachers for leadership opportunities outside of the classroom. Johnson and Donaldson (2007) also describe the primary role of teachers outside the classroom where they can influence decision-making processes within the school, collaborate with colleagues, share their expertise to enhance teaching practices, and reduce teacher isolation teacher. Katzenmeyer and Moller, (2001) similarly state that teacher leaders “lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice” (p. 5). Along the same lines, Murphy (2007) has describes teacher leadership as operating at the school level and not within the classroom. He describes the diverse roles a teacher leader can play, including mentor teacher, master teacher, program coordinator, or instructional team leader, which are all roles that are not very relevant inside the classroom. Similarly, Levenson (2014) embraces a broader perspective of teacher leadership, encompassing not only instructional leadership and organizational improvement at the school level but also extending beyond the school where teachers can actively engage in policy-making. Schrum and Levin (2016) argue that teacher leaders are primarily instructional leaders in their classrooms. However, they also believe that teacher leaders ought to

share their expertise and experience with other teachers, lead professional learning opportunities, act as role models for pre-service teachers, and as mentors for novice teachers (p. 3).

Such conceptualizations of teacher leadership exclude teacher leadership within the classroom while focusing almost entirely on teachers working with colleagues or assuming leadership roles beyond the classroom (Nadelson et al., 2020).

Despite the considerable leadership skills that teaching requires, leadership and teaching are treated as two separate domains (Nadelson et al., 2020). Schlechty (1997) claims that teachers should be considered leaders since teaching differs from service delivery professions such as law and medicine which are supposed to offer a service that others cannot provide for themselves. Teaching, in contrast, is a leadership profession. Schlechty (1997) further argues that teachers are more comparable to an executive in a corporation than a physician in a hospital or a lawyer in a courtroom. Therefore, what teachers do should be understood in terms of theories of leadership, rather than existing theories of teaching and learning. Nadelson et al. (2020) argue that teachers rarely see themselves to be in a leadership role. They advocate for the recognition of teachers as leaders, as such recognition empowers teachers to effectively address the societal and organizational challenges related to learning and student development.

Certainly, teachers do not offer a service to students. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' behavior and bringing about desirable changes across all aspects of their development (Sherpa & Bachhar, 2018). They also influence, motivate, and inspire students to reach better learning states, which is an aspect very relevant to leadership. Leaders influence the behavior of the people around them using different ways including persuasion, consultation, collaboration, and inspirational appeals (Yukl, 2008). Treslan (2006) maintains teacher leadership does exist at schools and it significantly impacts school effectiveness; however,

minimal attention is given to the significant leadership contribution of teachers fulfilling their professional responsibilities as administrators of the learning process ... However, the classroom, with its many social interactions, can be an ideal setting for teachers to hone their leadership skills and transform traditional teacher-student relationships. (p. 58)

Thus, teaching should be regarded as a leadership profession, and teachers should view themselves and should be viewed as classroom leaders.

3. Leadership Defined

Northouse (2016) notes that leadership has been conceptualized in various ways; however, several components can be identified as central to the phenomenon of leadership: leadership is a process, it involves influence, it occurs in groups, and it involves common goals. Similarly, House et al. (2004) note that “the core of almost [most] definitions concerns influence—that is, how leaders influence others to help accomplish group or organizational objectives” (p. 15). Yukl (2008) also observes that “most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 3). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) similarly note that “at the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: providing direction and exercising influence. Leaders mobilize and work with others to achieve shared goals” (p. 2).

Northouse (2016) offers the following definition based on these components: “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). Leadership as a process implies that it is not an inherent trait or characteristic possessed by the leader but rather a transactional exchange between the leader and the followers. Viewed as a process also implies that a leader not only affects followers but is also affected by followers, underlining that leadership is not a linear, unidirectional event but instead an interactive event. Described in this manner, leadership becomes accessible to all and not restricted to the formally appointed leader in a group. Leadership involves influence as it pertains to the leader’s ability to affect followers. Influence according to Northouse is a fundamental requirement for leadership, and without it, there is no leadership. Leadership occurs in groups which means that a group is required for leadership to occur. Leadership implies influencing a group of people who have a common objective. Groups can be small teams, communities, or entire organizations.

Leadership involves prioritizing common goals, implying that leaders and followers have a mutual objective. Leaders focus their efforts on supporting and directing individuals who are trying to accomplish a common goal. Northouse contends that emphasizing common goals as a central component gives leadership an ethical dimension as it highlights the need for leaders to collaborate with followers to achieve selected goals. Mutual goals reduce the possibility that leaders might act in coercive or unethical manners toward their followers.

4. Transformational Leadership

Traditional leadership approaches have emphasized the leaders' ability to motivate followers through the control of rewards and situational understanding (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). However, starting in the late 1970s, the traditional view of leadership as transactions between leaders and followers was challenged by the transformational approach, which provided a new framework for understanding and explaining leadership (Johnson & Hackman, 2018). Transformational leadership suggests that leadership extends beyond mere transactions between leaders and followers, and proposes that the role of leadership is to transform or change situations and circumstances through personal example and the establishment of a compelling vision (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). The transformational approach has been a subject of intensive research since the early 1980s. Today, it holds a central place in leadership research (Northouse, 2016). Thus, the core of transformational leadership is the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership describes the majority of leadership models which emphasize the exchanges between leaders and followers. For instance, a manager demonstrates transactional leadership when offering promotions to employees who exceed their goals. Similarly, a teacher in the classroom is being transactional when giving students a grade for completing assignments. The exchange aspect of transactional leadership is prevalent and apparent at many levels in all types of organizations (Northouse, 2016).

Transformational leadership originated in the work of political sociologist James MacGregor Burns in his 1978 book *Leadership*. For Burns, leadership means "inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers" (p. 19). Burns (1978) believes that leaders and managers are different kinds of people. Leaders, for Burns, are people who transform whereas managers are people who transact. Thus, leaders aim to change the organizational culture in which they operate while managers simply work within the existing culture (Petersen, 2022). It is worth noting that Burns used the term "transforming" to describe his model of leadership, and it was Bernard Bass (1985) who adopted the term "transformational leadership" instead of "transforming leadership".

Burns describes the leader-follower interaction that could occur as either transactional or transforming leadership. Transactional leadership refers to a relationship based on the exchange of something of value, which can be political, economic, or emotional.

Transforming leadership in contrast raises the motivation, morality, and ethical aspirations of both the leader and followers (Antonakis & Day, 2018). Transforming leadership emphasizes transcendent and far-reaching goals and ideals, and according to Burns (1978), such leadership has a deeper impact on followers and collectives in comparison to transactional leadership, which emphasizes self-interest and is consequently limited in both scope and impact. Transforming leaders make their followers aware of what is important, particularly concerning moral and ethical implications. Such leaders also encourage followers to prioritize the greater good over personal interests (Johnson & Hackman, 2018).

Transactional and transformational leaders, for Burns, differ in terms of the human needs they aim to satisfy in their followers. While transactional leaders motivate followers by addressing their basic human needs, transformational leaders go beyond those basic needs to fulfill followers' higher-level needs (Johnson & Hackman, 2018). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides the best framework for understanding this distinction. Abraham Maslow (1954) organized human needs into a hierarchy with five levels: physiological, safety, belonging and love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The most basic human needs are physiological including food, water, shelter, and sleep. Once these physiological needs are met, focus shifts to the second level of the hierarchy, safety needs, which entails seeking environments that are familiar, stable, and secure. The third level involves social belonging and love needs, which reflect people's desire for connection with others, whether through group membership, organizational affiliation, friendships, or intimate relationships. The fourth level consists of self-esteem needs which become essential after the initial three levels have been sufficiently met. Self-esteem needs generally describe the desire to feel good about oneself. Such needs include internal feelings of being competent, respected, and self-worthy as well as external feedback and recognition that support self-esteem. After all other needs are met, focus shifts to self-actualization needs. Self-actualization sits at the top of Maslow's Hierarchy above the other four "lower" needs. Self-actualization needs describe people's need to fulfill their potential in life and be the best person one can possibly become. (Johnson & Hackman, 2018). For Maslow (1954), self-actualization needs refer to "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming ... The clear emergence of these needs usually rests upon prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs" (p. 92).

Much like Maslow's hierarchy, lower-level transactional leadership is the foundation for higher-level transformational leadership. Johnson and Hackman (2018) explain that:

The transactional leader is most concerned with the satisfaction of physiological, safety, and belonging needs. To meet needs, a transactional leader exchanges rewards or privileges for desirable outcomes-much the way a Marine drill sergeant would trade a weekend pass for a clean barracks. Transformational leaders also attempt to satisfy the basic needs of followers, but they go beyond mere exchange by engaging the total person in an attempt to satisfy the higher-level needs of self-esteem and self-actualization. Transformational leadership is empowering and inspirational; it elevates leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality. (p. 107)

As indicated before, Burns' conceptualization of transformational leadership involves raising the level of morality in others (1978). Thus, not all leaders who are transforming are considered transformational. Certain charismatic leaders such as Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin use their abilities to inspire and lead followers toward destructive, selfish, and even evil objectives. These leaders are described by Bass and Riggio (2006) as pseudotransformational. Such leaders demonstrate various aspects of authentic transformational leadership (e.g., charisma); however, their motives are often self-centered, exploitative, and self-aggrandizing.

Burns' ideas (1978) had a significant impact on various transformational leadership theories, including those by Bennis and Nanus (1986) and Kouzes and Posner (1987). However, the most influential is Bass's (1985) theory. For Bass, transformational and transactional leadership result in different outcomes. Transformational leadership instills trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect in followers, motivating them to accomplish beyond their original goals. A leader transforms and motivates followers by (a) raising their awareness about the importance of task outcomes, (b) encouraging them to act in the best interests of the organization or team rather than their own self-interest, and (c) targeting their higher-order needs. On the contrary, transactional leadership entails an exchange process resulting in follower compliance with leader requests, yet such an exchange is unlikely to cultivate enthusiasm or commitment to task objectives. These two types of leadership, according to Bass, are different but not mutually exclusive processes. Transformational leadership raises the motivation and performance of followers more than transactional leadership; however, effective leaders employ a combination of both types (Yukl, 2008).

During the 1980s and 1990s, Bass and Avolio developed a model of leadership which they called the Full Range of Leadership model. It presumably covers a spectrum of all possible leadership behaviors ranging from transformational, to transactional to laissez-faire leadership (Lindberg, 2021). The model incorporates three broad categories of leadership behavior: transformational factors, transactional, and laissez-faire (Yukl, 2008).

The first leadership category, transformational behavior, includes four types of behavior: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is also called charisma, and it describes leaders who act as strong role models. These leaders exemplify high moral and ethical standards and can always be trusted to do what is right. Followers identify with and wish to emulate such leaders. Inspirational motivation describes leaders who communicate high expectations to followers, motivating them to actively contribute to the organization's shared vision (Northouse, 2016). Intellectual stimulation refers to the leader's ability to encourage their followers to be innovative and creative by considering alternative viewpoints, redefining issues, and addressing old situations in innovative ways. Individualized Consideration characterizes leaders who create a supportive climate in which they carefully attend to the individual needs of their followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994a).

The second leadership category in the Full Range Leadership model is transactional leadership which involves three types of leadership behaviors: contingent reward, active management-by-exception, and passive management-by-exception. Contingent reward behavior implies an exchange process in which leaders exchange specific rewards for followers' efforts. Management-by-exception takes two forms: active and passive. Active management-by-exception involves closely observing and monitoring followers for mistakes or any violations of rules and then taking corrective action. Passive management-by-exception on the other hand describes leaders intervening and taking corrective measures when problems arise or as a response to unacceptable performance standards (Northouse, 2016).

Laissez-faire leadership is the third leadership category in Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership model. It represents the absence of effective leadership, and it reflects a passive indifference towards both tasks and followers such as ignoring problems and disregarding the needs of followers (Yukl, 2008).

5. Teachers as transformational leaders

Similar to Northouse's definition offered above, Stogdill (1950) defines leadership as "the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement" (p. 4). Implied in this definition is that "leadership is a relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest" (Treslan, 2006, p. 58). This description of leadership applies to the classroom environment where the relationship between the teacher and the students is based on shared learning goals.

Treslan (2006) further argues that "classroom interactions may well provide a propitious setting in which to search for evidence of a new level of teacher leadership - namely, transformational leadership" (p. 58). Effective teachers should be perceived as transformational leaders. The dimensions of transformational leadership that Bass and Avolio (1994) outline in their model of transformational leadership can be clearly observed in classrooms that exhibit effective teaching. These dimensions, as discussed earlier, are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The following discussion will explore how each of these dimensions applies in the context of classrooms.

Idealized Influence

As described above, Idealized influence refers to leaders who act as strong role models. These leaders are examples of high moral and ethical standards. They can always be trusted to do what is right, and people identify with and wish to emulate them. Similarly, effective teachers act as strong role models for their students.

Teachers do not only teach knowledge and skills but also act as role models for their students. Teachers hold a special position to model behavior, attitudes, and values. As students observe their teacher, they internalize the teacher's behaviors which become norms and standards. (Qalmi, 2023). The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that people learn and adopt behaviors by observing others through a process called observational learning. This process usually involves modeling after individuals who are similar, high-status, knowledgeable, or nurturing figures (McLeod, 2024). Teachers are often perceived by their students as high-status and knowledgeable figures and thus serve as powerful role models in shaping their students' behaviors and attitudes.

In a recent study by Löper and Hellmich (2024) demonstrates how teachers teach by example. This study indicates that students' attitudes toward peers with learning

difficulties are more positive when they perceive their teachers interacting positively with these students. Similarly, Hughes et al. (1999) found that students who see their teachers as role models demonstrate higher self-esteem and better social skills.

Teachers as transformational leaders demonstrate idealized influence, and they act as strong role models for their students. In this regard, Manju and Phil (2018) state that “Teachers are perhaps, the best examples of guiders and leaders in a community. As such, teachers demonstrate to the society how a dynamic leader should behave and act” (p. 1528).

Inspirational Motivation

As indicated earlier, inspirational motivation describes the leader’s ability to articulate an appealing vision that motivates and inspires others to go beyond expectations. Leaders who use inspirational motivation set high standards and expectations for their followers (Towler, 2019). In the classroom, communicating high expectations to students is essential. Studies indicate that students in classrooms where teachers have lower expectations learn less than their peers in higher-expectations classrooms (Fisher & Frey, 2022). For instance, Rubie-Davies et al. (2015) found that communicating high expectations led to significant improvements in student mathematic achievement.

Expectations communicate to students what the teacher believes they can and cannot achieve. Expectations often come in the form of actions rather than words. Teachers, for instance, do not assign students tasks that they believe students cannot successfully complete (Ferlazzo, 2022). Such expectations, however, can hinder learning and limit what students believe can achieve. The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy is particularly relevant regarding the impact of expectations.

Simply defined, a self-fulfilling prophecy is a false belief that leads to its own fulfillment. It is misrepresentation of reality that provokes behaviors that, consecutively, make an individual act as if the idea was a reality until, eventually, these behaviors lead to a reality where the prophecy comes true (Schaedig, 2022). Self-fulfilling prophecies demonstrate how one’s thoughts and beliefs can lead to outcomes that he or she expected or feared even if these expectations and fears are subconscious. Others’ thoughts and beliefs might also affect our behaviors. Rosenthal and Jacobson, in this vein, argue that a person’s expectations of another’s behavior might manifest as a self-fulfilling prophecy. For instance, when teachers expect that certain students would show greater intellectual development, those students often fulfill those expectations (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

There are two types of self-fulfilling prophecies: Self-imposed prophecies and other-imposed prophecies. The first type occurs when one's expectations influence his or her own actions. Other-imposed prophecies, which are central to our discussion, occur when others' expectations influence one's behavior. As an example of the first type, a student might believe he or she could fail an exam because of past failures. Believing he or she could fail the exam would lead to the student getting extremely nervous; as a result, the student would not prepare well for the exam and would not be as motivated as another student who was confident that he or she would pass the exam (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

Teachers who embody inspirational motivation create high-expectation classrooms that are caring and nonthreatening. Such teachers focus on knowing each student individually and building a positive relationship with them. High-expectation teachers are also emotionally responsive and communicate with their students using respectful and caring language. Moreover, they set goals with students, check their progress, and encourage students to be more autonomous and to make decisions. Teachers who convey high expectations create an environment for learners to assess their own learning instead of being dependent on the teacher to assess their progress (Fisher & Frey, 2022).

Intellectual Stimulation

As stated above, Intellectual stimulation involves motivating followers to be innovative and creative by considering alternative viewpoints, redefining problems, and addressing old issues in new ways. Teachers who stimulate their students intellectually encourage critical and creative thinking. Critical thinking refers to

the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. (Scriven & Paul, 1987)

Creative thinking, on the other hand, is the ability to generate different types of ideas, approach ideas in uncommon ways, and make unconventional links to outline new

possibilities that can lead to innovative solutions and fresh perspectives (Ramalingam et al., 2020). Critical thinking and creative thinking are two distinct cognitive processes but they complement each other in solving problems, making decisions, and intellectual exploration. The ability to critically think involves analyzing, evaluating, and logical reasoning. Creative thinking, in contrast, includes thinking outside the box, generating new ideas, and considering other possibilities. It stresses the importance of originality, imagination, and novelty (Aryasomayajula, 2022).

Hess (2023) states “If we expect students to be curious, creative, critical thinkers, we first need to create classroom cultures where thinking is the norm. [However,] this does not happen in classrooms where the primary focus is getting students to comply with the work we’ve assigned and get correct answers to problems with known answers” (paras. 1-2). Thus, a teacher who intellectually stimulates students promotes an atmosphere that encourages critical and creative thinking. Such an atmosphere allows students to explore new ideas, think outside the box, and express themselves freely.

Individualized Consideration

As highlighted above, leaders demonstrating Individualized Consideration create a supportive atmosphere in which they attend to their followers’ individual needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994a). In the classroom, teachers demonstrating individualized consideration recognize and address students’ individual needs and strengths. This requires that teachers know their students so that they can provide personalized (i.e., individualized) support.

This dimension of transformational leadership is similar to educational concepts such as personalized learning and individualized instruction. These concepts advocate for tailoring education to meet the different needs of students. In a classroom, there is not a “one size fits all” approach to education. Teachers need to guide each student on an individualized journey. What is taught, when, where, and how it is taught should be tailored to meet each student’s unique strengths, skills, needs, and interests. Students are different, so they will learn at different paces, but their learning plans still keep them on track (Morin, 2019). Similarly, individualized instruction aims to fit the unique educational needs and skills of learners by adapting the pace of information delivery the methods of content presentation, and the distribution of materials (Pappas, 2014).

6. Conclusion

Because of the technological development that the world has witnessed, the nature of learning and teaching has changed. Teachers are no longer the source of information. They are better viewed as facilitators who guide the learning process. This new role requires a redefinition of teaching. What teachers do in their classrooms involves aspects that are involved in leadership. Leadership implies “a relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest” (Treslan, 2006, p. 58). The relationship between the teacher and the students is based on shared learning goals. Therefore, teaching should be considered a leadership profession.

The aim of this paper in particular was to demonstrate how effective teachers are transformational leaders. Effective teaching reflects transformational leadership dimensions. Teachers, as role models, demonstrate high moral standards and inspire students through positive interactions and high expectations, fostering self-esteem and social skills. They create environments that encourage critical and creative thinking while addressing individual student needs through personalized instruction. Thus, teachers exemplify transformational leadership by influencing students’ attitudes, behaviors, and academic outcomes through their conduct and teaching strategies.

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