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Snapshots from participants in formal leadership development programmes

CILIP Leadership Programme

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Since starting the new CILIP Leadership Programme in July 2015, I have had the opportunity to reflect on different styles of leadership through reading the literature, participating in workshops and seeking out practical examples.

The concept of situational leadership was developed by Hershey and Blanchard (1969) but is still considered a valuable approach today. It involves analysing a situation and adopting the most appropriate leadership style. Flexible and adaptive leadership is useful, and although most people have a preferred leadership style, it is good to have a range of skills to employ. I believe in offering leadership in the context in which you work. A good thing to do first is to develop yourself, through study, networking, mentoring, CPD, leading projects, etc. Covey (1991, p. 169) argues in his *Principle-centered leadership*: 'Our leadership style can be "situational", but before we're able to make a change, we may require new mentors or models.'

It is possible, to a certain extent, to lead yourself in your area of work, although to be a true leader you need an essential ingredient: followers. There are different ways of leading and you don't necessarily have to be a manager to lead others. I work in a university library and provide services, workshops and resources for students and staff. I have also had the great experience of being a mentor for the past three years on the City University London Postgraduate Professional Mentoring scheme. I have worked with some of our Library & Information Science students on this programme by adopting a coaching style of leadership called the GROW coaching model (Whitmore, 2009). GROW stands for the four elements of this model:

- **g**oal
- **r**eality
- **o**ptions (or obstacles)
- **w**ill (or way forward)

I recently attended a CILIP Leadership workshop based on Jigsaw@work, which is a tool to help develop self-awareness and an understanding of the personal styles of others. We explored the coaching style of leadership, which is a supportive and a less directive leadership style. The role of a coach is to ask questions and act as a sounding board for the person being coached, to enable them to set goals and make their own choices and decisions. I've learned from doing the Leadership programme that it is better to be flexible and to adopt different styles depending on the situation. What works well in one context may not suit another perfectly and it is best where possible to use varied approaches and adapt your leadership style to suit the people you are leading or coaching.

Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1969). Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources. New Jersey. Prentice Hall

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