

LEADER AS EXPERT AND TEACHER

Overview Statement: Possessing expert knowledge helps a leader establish credibility and win respect. Teaching this knowledge to others is the hallmark of an expert.

Connection to the Curriculum: Ties in with a major theme of chapter three in *Learn to Lead*, Module One on Personal Leadership.

Estimated Time: 25-30 Minutes

Resources Required: *Learn to Lead*, Module One; Whiteboard (or chalkboard, butcher paper or easel pad).

Key Terms:

Expert – “Somebody with a great deal of knowledge about, or skill, training, or experience in, a particular field or activity.” Encarta Dictionary

Teacher – “Somebody who teaches, especially as a profession.” Encarta Dictionary

INTRODUCTION

Attention: {Draw the following two columns on the board:

Expert	Teacher

Ask the students to list traits of an expert. Then ask the students for traits of a teacher. Write down the answers.}

Motivation: Today we will discuss the similarities and differences of these two leader roles.

Overview: Possessing expert knowledge helps a leader establish credibility and win respect. Teaching this knowledge to others is the hallmark of an expert. Today we will discuss how the expert and teacher roles are connected so that a cadet may become a better leader.

Your role in this discussion is to be an active participant. You are free to share your views with each other. Please be involved and considerate of one another. My role will be to take notes on what

you say, and I may occasionally ask a question or two. There is no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am simply interested in what you have to say.

MAIN POINT 1: CADETS AS EXPERTS

Good leaders are often experts in a technical knowledge of a field. Being an expert in a particular subject helps a leader to see something that another person may not be able to see.

However, the best pilot might not have the people skills needed to lead pilots. The smartest software engineer might not aspire to the challenge of leadership. Sometimes organizations promote people to positions of leadership based on their technical expertise alone. When that happens, the “Peter principle” is at work. The principle states, “In a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence.”

Question: What is impressive about a person’s expertise?

Question: How does a leader’s role in being an expert apply to cadets? {Write answers on the board.}

Question: How can this idea of the leader being a technical expert go too far?

Not only do leaders need to be experts, they must be able to teach others what they know.

MAIN POINT 2: CADETS AS TEACHERS

A teacher is one who has the gift to pass on knowledge and information to others. Education is not the filling of a pail, according to the poet Yeats, but the lighting of a fire. Good leaders know how to ignite a spark within their people, to bring out their best.

In many ways, good leadership is good teaching. Leaders teach their teams how to act and what to value. As role models, they teach through their example. When the team needs training in how to do a job, the leader acts as teacher. In coaching people and helping them fully realize their potential, the leader teaches.

Effective leaders must be good teachers because they routinely find themselves presenting ideas, arguing for a course of action, or just persuading someone to come around to their way of thinking.

Question: Must a leader be a teacher? Defend your answer.

Question: How does a leader's role in being a teacher apply to cadets? {Write answers on the board.}

Question: How can this idea of a leader being a teacher go too far?

Based on our discussion of the expert and teacher roles leader play, it is clear that if you wish to lead, you need to become a well-rounded person. Leaders are experts and teachers, but they are also motivators, visionaries and communicators – sometimes all at once!

CLOSING

Summary: To be a great leader, a cadet must develop his abilities to teach his subordinates. It is hard for one to judge how effective his abilities to teach are, so seek advice from those around you on how to improve your abilities.

Remotivation: By teaching cadets effectively, you not only win the respect you need, but also help with the success of the unit as a whole in teaching objectives. Continuing your journey in teaching will help you in all sectors of life.

Closure: You can be a great teacher; all you need is the motivation and willpower to learn how.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note to the instructor: Every informal discussion should be followed by one or more hands-on activities that reinforce one or more of the concepts being discussed. These activities should last 25-30 minutes, giving about one hour total block of time for the leadership session at a typical CAP meeting (25-30 minutes for the informal discussion, plus 25-30 minutes for the activities).

Along with any questions found in the activities themselves, you should be sure to ask, "**How does this activity tie in with our discussion?**"

CAP recommends activities from the *Learn to Lead Activity Guide* by Rob Smith (published by the Civil Air Patrol). You are free to substitute another activity, or create your own, as long as you tie in with one or more concepts of the informal discussion.

Main concepts for this lesson: **Becoming an expert; Passing on knowledge; Teaching.**