

Utilizing *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter - Totter Model* as a Means to Cultivate a Legacy of Transformational Leaders in Schools: A National Focus

Karen Dupre Jacobs
PhD Student in Educational Leadership
Prairie View A & M University
Prairie View, Texas

ABSTRACT

***The Kritsonis Teeter- Totter Model*, developed by Dr. William Allan Kritsonis, is utilized to cultivate a legacy of transformational leaders in schools throughout the United States. In a time when change in schools is inevitable, the model aids school leaders in better defining their individual role in schools and that of their stakeholders in improving schools. As a result, if the model is properly used as a reflective tool for school leaders to initiate change in their organizations, only the can sustainable change occur and cultivate a legacy of transformational leadership in schools for generations to come.**

Introduction

Schools are in a state of crisis and reform methods are not working quickly enough to adjust to societal changes such as demographic changes, high school standards and accountability measures, and/or cultural shifts. Traditional methods are slowly causing the demise of schools as we know them. Public schools are competing with public and private schools where transformational leaders have begun to emerge. These leaders demonstrate that they possess what Micheal Fullan calls “sustainability” and “systems thinking”. How do public schools embrace postmodernism, an ideology developed by Dr. Fenwick English (2003), and develop schools that cultivate a legacy of transformational leadership? *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model* (Kritsonis, p. 276) is a vital construct in solving this dilemma. The model focuses on key skills that transformational leaders must use in harnessing their strengths to become highly- productive, sustainable leaders in public schools.

Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this article is to discuss how *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter-Totter Model* can be used to aide school districts in developing a legacy of transformational leaders. Postmodernistic in design, the model is the basis for developing sustainable transformational leadership in schools nationally. Five key recommendations will be given that will reiterate the key points of the model and demonstrate how the model can be utilized to address the work of public schools in developing a legacy of transformational leaders. In order for schools to initiate its work, these institutions must first grasp what it means to be a transformational leader.

Transformational Leadership, Postmodernism, and Sustainability Defined Building a Model for Success by Developing Transformational Leadership in Schools

According to Northouse (1997), “transformational leaders are recognized as change agents who are good role models, who can create and articulate a clear vision for an organization, who empowers followers to achieve at higher standards, who act in ways that make others want to trust them, and who give meaning to organizational life” (p.157). Transformational leaders mobilize others to solve educational problems through a shared vision and provide the support for stakeholders to become postmodernist and invigorate the school culture with true innovation and change. These energized leaders move their organizations toward opportunities and are more than ready to deal with challenges that may be presented in the change process. As a result, transformational leadership embraces postmodern thinking and aides others in sharing their visions. Educational leaders who fully understand *The Kritsonis Balanced Teeter-Totter Model* will be able to grab hold of transformational leadership and impart lasting change by building leadership legacies in schools.

The Impetus of Postmodernism in Schools

Postmodernist thinking within the secondary, public school system focuses on reforming the current educational system. It is a new paradigm in thinking which emphasizes the idea that no one method or teaching/ administrative style appeals to all students or staff because every stakeholder has unique needs. Staff members and students alike bring different talents and skills to the workplace. All of these abilities must be harnessed together to address the rapid changes occurring in the educational

system today in order to drastically improve student achievement and workplace solidarity.

According to English (2003), postmodernism challenges how school leaders operate their schools. Since school leaders must have a global knowledge base, they must be able to multi-task and always learn new skills, especially team and organizational building skills that empower workers and develops a culture of mutual trust and respect. The postmodern challenge aides leaders by helping the leaders and stakeholders to focus on the possibilities of what their school can become. By using *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model*, school leaders can begin to discover how their content knowledge builds their technical and human skills in running their schools in a postmodern fashion.

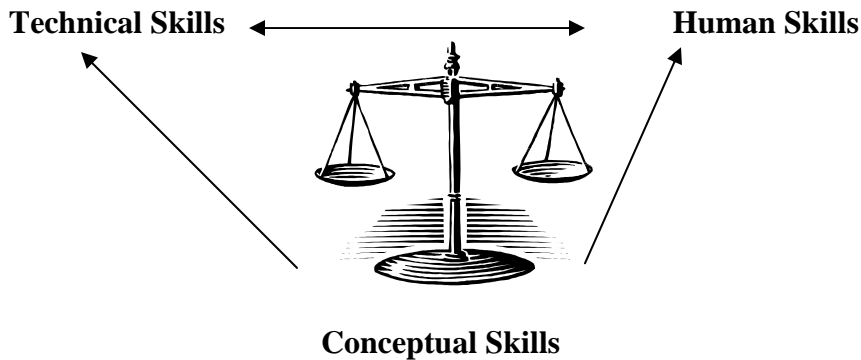
The model takes into account that English (2003) writes of postmodernism, how “effective decisions must take the human factor into account” (pg. 208).

Cultivating Sustainable Leadership with Lasting Impacts

School leaders must desire to make a lasting difference within the schools in which they work and facilitate change for the better. The focus of school leaders should be to leave schools and/ or school districts in a much better situation or standing than the conditions in which they themselves may have started. They have to be what Fullan (2005) calls “system thinkers in action” This means that school leaders must be committed to making lasting change across schools and school systems through what he calls “lateral capacity building” (p. 16). In order to have longevity in schools, school leaders have to flexible and have a moral purpose that includes an energized learning culture. *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model* helps create sustainable transformational leadership in schools with its unique postmodernist approach.

The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model

The Kritsonis Balanced Teeter-Totter Model, initially developed by Dr. William Allan Kritsonis and modified here by Karen Dupre Jacobs, gives further credence on how transformational leaders embrace their conceptual or knowledge skills in order to further enhance their human and technical skills. This construct will foster the development of transformational, postmodern leaders who have sustainable success and a lasting impact in their schools and school systems. *The William Allan Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model* demonstrates how school leaders can draw upon their individual conceptual skills obtained from academia to build or develop both their technical and human skills in a balanced continuum.



*** Art is taken from the Clip Art File on Windows XP. ***

Strong conceptual skills gained from content knowledge from an accredited degree granting institution, an intense focus on current educational research, and professional reading habits and self-development builds a solid foundation.

This factor, in turn, further develops the leaders' capacity to build relationships with stakeholders (human skills) and enhances the technical skills they must utilize to be highly productive on the job.

Recommendations for Using *the William Allan Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model*

Recommendation #1: School leaders must possess a strong conceptual knowledge of what their school vision and mission is to their stakeholders. The school's vision and mission must impart to all stakeholders as goals that all members can succeed at helping to make a reality. By having a solid conceptual basis, school leaders can see how *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* aides in helping leaders focus on how to deconstruct their schools' visions and missions so that their entire staff is actively involved in the process.

Recommendation # 2: School leaders must train staff members in new methodologies to address change through staff development that addresses curricular and non-curricular issues. Change is hard for people, especially stakeholders in schools, to embrace as global decisions are made for the organization to improve. Major school changes that are made by more than one stakeholder are encouraged by postmodernism and yields tremendous results that end with lasting changes for the organization. *The Kritsonis Balanced Teeter- Totter Model* demonstrates how the leaders' conceptual knowledge of the said change can lead to helping leaders in developing their human skills in assisting staff members in times of change and in cultivating their technical skills by guiding and facilitating stakeholders through the change.

Recommendation # 3: School leaders must assist in their staff and future leaders in training on how to evaluate educational research in order to cultivate strategies for practice. By doing this, school leaders are training their teachers and staff members on how to evaluate, deliver, and support content knowledge that is unbiased and not based

upon absolute truths. *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* is utilized to emphasize the interconnectedness of how the leaders' conceptual knowledge, in evaluating content knowledge of different academic subjects, can develop staff members' self- efficacy through their human and technical skills.

Recommendation # 4: All school leaders must encourage and provide training for their staff to become bilingual to be able to compete with the changes in demographics within the next decade. *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* enhances the leaders' ability to communicate to all stakeholders by honing in on their human skills. Sustainable change can only be attained if the lines of communication are kept open to everyone connected to the school. This also aides the leader in making effective decisions for students and their families' individual communication needs. *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* enables the leaders and their organizations to build deeper networks within their local communities.

Recommendation # 5: School leaders must train staff members to work in teams that self- access. By harnessing on their own conceptual knowledge that utilizes both their technical and human skills, leaders are teaching their staff on how to be accountable of their work, provide them with the authority to change the elements of their job that are not working properly for the good of the organization, and makes them responsible for each others' actions. This is how *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model*, used appropriately will help leaders in assisting stakeholders in developing their identities from school culture.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, *The William Allan Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* can be used by school leaders by 1)harnessing a strong conceptual knowledge of what their school vision and mission is to their stakeholders; 2) train staff members new methodologies to address change through staff development that addresses curricular and non-curricular issues; 3) assist in their staff and future leaders in training on how to evaluate educational research in order to cultivate strategies for practice; 4) encourage and provide training for their staff to become bilingual to be able to compete with the changes in demographics within the next decade; and 5) train staff members to work in teams that self- access. The model helps school leaders cultivate an educational environment that welcomes every type of learner- adults providing and managing instructional standards and students who participate in the educational process. *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Model* aides school leaders by helping them to visualize the importance of conceptual, human, and technical skills in the daily operation of schools.

The models enables leaders to help stakeholders to visualize that every person in the organization must be given the opportunity to voice their opinions and put their ideas

into action, especially if the person recognizes any defects, such as conflicts with or between staff members, class size issues, teacher shortages, diversity issues etc. to make the schools' vision and mission a reality. If *The Kritsonis Balance Teeter- Totter Mode*, used as a postmodernistic construct, is implemented in by school leaders in secondary public schools, then educational leaders and stakeholders alike can better define their role and that of other members in the organization in recognizing their interdependence on each other to accomplish their goals and missions. Only then, will sustainable, transformational leadership can be a seen in schools for generations to come.

References

- English, F.W. (2003). *The postmodern challenge to the theory and practice of educational administration*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2005). Resiliency and sustainability. *The School Administrator*, 16-18.
- Kritsonis, W.A. (2002). *William Kritsonis, Ph.D on schooling*. Mansfield, OH: Book Masters, Incorporated.