



3 Signs Your Leadership Roles Are Actually Classroom Jobs

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Have you ever “fired” a student from a leadership role (or wanted to)? You know, the one who’s never doing what he should be doing? That student who’s never where she’s supposed to be? That one who just goofs off? Or maybe you feel like you’re the “job cop,” spending all of your time telling your students what to do or how to do it. If this sounds a little too familiar, your leadership roles might actually be classroom jobs! Read on to discover the three signs of a classroom job . . . and how to fix them.

Does this sound like you?

1. You’re really uncomfortable when students don’t do the task just right.
2. You feel frustrated and tired and . . . wasn’t this supposed to be less work?
3. You think of your classroom as, well, your classroom, not our classroom.

If you see yourself in even one of the three signs above, your leadership roles might actually be classroom jobs. A job is about the task; a role is about the person. A job is assigned; a role is chosen. A job is delegated and regulated; a role is empowered.

Do these three things to transform classroom jobs into leadership roles.

1. Focus on the learning rather than the task.



It's about the **LEARNING,** not the task!

Take a peek inside your students' heads. Are they thinking, "I'm learning how to be a leader" or "I have to get this job done"?

Leadership roles are our sharpest tools for learning leadership. They're all about creating opportunities for students to learn how to lead themselves and discover and practice their skills and talents. We can help our students adopt a growth mindset by not just expecting mistakes, but encouraging them and then turning errors into learning.

How? Create clear expectations for each role with students up front and have them reflect on their progress toward meeting them. Put them in charge of figuring out how to improve—with help, of course—and give them a chance to fail forward. Use this Lotus Diagram to brainstorm for yourself and with your students how to focus on the learning rather than the task.

2. Build relationships rather than rules.

Without relationships you've got nothing . . . except rules. We can help our students feel safe and supported while they learn how to take charge of themselves when we build trusting relationships with them.

How? We make deposits in students' Emotional Bank Accounts. We let them know every day that they have worth and we see their potential—even when they're failing again and again in their leadership roles.



RELATIONSHIPS, ~~NOT RULES.~~

3. Use empowering—rather than enabling—language.

Build a “we” culture and share the ownership of the classroom and everything that goes on inside of it with your students. This is really about releasing control to students. (Does that idea make you cringe?) Think about it—the more you control, the fewer opportunities there are for students to learn how to lead themselves. Leadership roles are all about “practice makes better,” not “practice makes perfect.”

How? Delete the words “my,” “I,” and “you” from classroom vocabulary and replace them with “ours,” “we,” and “us.”

And let go!

The key is to involve the students in every aspect of leadership roles. Resist the desire to “handle it” yourself. This is what practicing leadership is all about—letting go and letting students lead!

Leadership is communicating the worth and potential of people so clearly that they are inspired to see it in themselves. Stephen R. Covey