**Part 1 –**

Over the course of my second year in the Leadership Program, I have developed an in-depth understanding of leadership theories and skills. Through completing my research and social action project, I have witnessed how leadership theories can be implemented in practice. One of the theories I saw myself implementing in my project was adaptive leadership. According to Northouse, “adaptive leaders prepare and encourage people to deal with change” (Northouse 257). In my project, I hit several bumps in the road, however, having adaptive leadership skills allowed me to keep moving forward and continue to complete the project.

Not only did I notice adaptive leadership within myself and my own project, but I also saw that skill being turned into practice as I worked with my TA. Although I was the person completing the project and the work, my TA was always encouraging and preparing me to deal with changes throughout the process. Additionally, each one of the students in my TA group had different needs, but my TA utilized adaptive leadership to lead each one of us through our research and social action projects. Overall, I truly saw adaptive leadership in practice throughout the entire Leadership Program project.

In addition to adaptive leadership, I also utilized authentic leadership in my project. In order to be a successful authentic leader, the leader must have a positive outlook and foster truthful relationships with others. When completing my project, I had to communicate with many different members of the community. First, in the research portion of the project, I interviewed many scholars and non-profit workers to gain information about my topic. Throughout that process, I had to show authentic leadership skills, in order to gain the trust of the people I was working with and to build positive relationships. Additionally, as I transitioned into my social action project, I once again had to utilize my authentic leadership skills when working with Big Brothers Big Sisters. In order to complete a successful project and start a mentoring program on campus, I had to foster an honest relationship with the program coordinator and organization. Truthfully, I am confident that without authentic leadership, the possibility of starting a BBBS program at AU would not have been a possibility. All in all, leadership skills that I have learned over the past two years were essential to completing a successful project.

**Part 2 –**

Throughout the semester, leaders of all kinds and backgrounds have spoken to our class and given various perspectives on leadership in action. Although every leader taught me something new or challenged my thinking in some way, two of the guest speakers stood out to me in particular. First, I was particularly moved by Michael Aronin. Not only did Michael speak about many important issues facing our country today, but he was an inspiration, highlighting that with the right work ethic, anyone can overcome challenges and find success. It was clear that Michael’s attitude and positive spirit had helped him in every step of his career. It really spoke to me and reassured me that hard work and a positive attitude will lead to happiness in a career. Additionally, Michael spoke on many important issues that are currently seeing a lot of media attention in today’s society. Throughout the conversation, Michael spoke about the dangers of woke culture and how it has taken over many peoples lives. I was so inspired when he said that no matter what you say, there will always be someone who is upset by it. I really enlightened me that I can’t always try to please everyone and at some point, I must be satisfied with my best effort. It is safe to say that Michael was one of the best guest speakers I have ever had in a class.

Although Michael’s conversation about leadership was really inspirational to me, I also really enjoyed listening to Christian Fearer. In today’s current political climate, government employees typically get a very poor reputation and corruption is a serious concern. However, Christian spoke to the fears that many people hold and really debunked the belief that government is corrupt. Although on many levels I did not believe that the government is completely corrupt, there was always a part of me that was concerned. However, Christian really made it clear that there are good people in government, who are truly there for public service. Finally, I think that Christian made a very good point when he said that there are bad people in every profession. Therefore, he truly solidified that a career in public service can be rewarding and relatively free from corruption.

Overall, every speaker that came this semester was inspirational and represented the numerous forms of leadership. Each presented their own case for qualities of successful leaders and gave thoughtful advice for students about to enter the workforce. On the whole, I learned that leadership will be used in every possible career, but it will always serve as an advancement rather than a setback. Finally, each speaker truly highlighted how they use leadership every day in their unique career fields.

Works Cited:

Northouse, Peter Guy. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Learning Matters, 2016.