**Case Study**

**An Exploration in Leadership**

Every year, Dr. Cook, a college professor, leads a group of 25 college students to the Middle East on an archaeological dig that usually lasts about 8 weeks. The participants, who come from big and small colleges throughout the country, usually have little prior knowledge or background in what takes place during an excavation. Dr. Cook enjoys leading these expeditions because he likes teaching students about archaeology and because the outcomes of the digs actually advance his own scholarly work. While planning for his annual summer excavation, Dr. Cook told the following story: This summer will be interesting because I have 10 people returning from last year. Last year was quite a dig. During the first couple of weeks everything was very disjointed. Team members seemed unmotivated and tired. In fact, there was one time early on when it seemed as if nearly half the students were either physically ill or mentally exhausted. Students seemed lost and uncertain about the meaning of the entire project. For example, it is our tradition to get up every morning at 4:30 a.m. to depart for the excavation site at 5:00 a.m. However, during the first weeks of the dig, few people were ever ready at 5, even after several reminders. Every year it takes some time for people to learn where they fit with each other and with the purposes of the dig. The students all come from such different backgrounds. Some are from small, private, religious schools, and others are from large state universities. Each comes with a different agenda, different skills, and different work habits. One person may be a good photographer, another a good artist, and another a good surveyor. It is my job to complete the excavation with the resources available to us. At the end of Week 2, I called a meeting to assess how things were going. We talked about a lot of things including personal things, how our work was progressing, and what we needed to change. The students seemed to appreciate the chance to talk at this meeting. Each of them described his or her special circumstances and hopes for the summer. I told the students several stories about past digs; some were humorous, and others highlighted accomplishments. I shared my particular interests in this project and how I thought we as a group could accomplish the work that needed to be done at this important historical site. In particular, I stressed two points: (a) that they shared the responsibility for the success full outcome of the venture, and (b) that they had independent authority to design, schedule, and carry out the details of their respective assignments, with the director and other senior staff available at all times as advisers and resource persons. In regard to the departure time issue, I told the participants that the standard departure time on digs was 5:00 a.m. Well, shortly after our meeting I observed a real shift in the group attitude and atmosphere. People seemed to become more involved in the work, there was less sickness, and there was more camaraderie. All assignments were completed without constant prodding and in a spirit of mutual support. Each morning at 5:00 a.m. everyone was ready to go. I find that each year my groups are different. It’s almost as if each of them has a unique personality. Perhaps that is why I find it so challenging. I try to listen to the students and use their particular strengths. It really is quite amazing how these students can develop in 8 weeks. They really become good at archaeology, and they accomplish a great deal. This coming year will again be different because of the 10 returning “veterans.”

**Questions**

1. How is this an example of transformational leadership?

2. What is the vision Dr. Cook has for the archaeology excavations?