Scholars engaged in leadership capacity development enabled through the provision of opportunities and experiences that occurred in the authentic, real or actual context in which they reside. Consequently the development of leadership transpired through the enactment of leadership.

Project Findings

In reviewing and evaluating the activities and experiences that comprise this domain, the scholars reported that:

The experience of leading, enabled the development of an appreciation of themselves as a leader and the leadership qualities they possessed or developed.

Engaging in authentic tasks enabled scholars to:

- experience and practice how to lead;
- assess how they operate as a leader within a group of leaders;
- engage in leadership practices they wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity or confidence to engage in;
- put into practice leadership knowledge, understandings and skills they had learnt about;
- envision their potential as a leader;
- contemplate leadership concepts and theories;
- appreciate the difficulties and challenges in leading and establish confidence in themselves as leaders; and
- appreciate a broader perspective of leadership in higher education beyond the faculty or department level.

"Involvement in this project has made me see what I can do in this institution and where I am and what I might do." (2008 Scholar)
Underpinning Theories and their Practical Application in the Project

Theories of authentic and situational learning underpin this domain. The best learning takes place when the tasks (or activities) transpire in the context in which the learning will be applied. Authentic learning includes the following characteristics: real-world relevance; defining the tasks and sub-tasks; including complex tasks; exploring the task from different perspectives; opportunities to collaborate and reflect; applicability for integration; application across different subject areas; and assimilated with assessment. (Herrington & Oliver, 2000, p. 25-26).

The faculty-based projects proposed by the scholars provided opportunities for authentic and situational learning; these projects were related to assessment and aligned to faculty and university strategic goals.

Scholars designed and articulated the strategic action plan for their faculty-based project and led the implementation of this plan. This implementation provided scholars with an opportunity to provide and practice leadership within their faculty and institution.

Scholars also had the opportunity to provide and practice leadership outside their institution in their organisation and facilitation of a national roundtable on assessment.

Characteristics of Good Practice Drawn from the Interviews with Scholars

1. The scholar self-nominates for leadership roles and responsibilities and is not delegated or assigned these.
2. Ensure there is effective and regular communication with project stakeholders.
3. Explicitly schedule time on a regular ongoing basis to attend to the implementation of the faculty-based project.
4. Ensure the negotiated expectations and outcomes of the faculty-based project are manageable and achievable.
5. In order to sustain momentum and enthusiasm the scholar needs to ensure that they have a commitment to and belief in the outcomes of the negotiated faculty-based project.
6. Scholars recognised that the more successful faculty-based projects were those that had ‘buy in’, and support from senior leaders in the faculty and institution.
Key Challenges

Collaborating and working with others in the facilitation of the faculty-based project and the organisation of the national roundtable. This was particularly relevant in instances where there were differing opinions and views for progressing these initiatives.

Enabling all scholars the opportunity for leadership in the organisation and facilitation of the national roundtable.

Getting senior faculty and institutional leaders to ‘buy in’ to and support the implementation of the faculty-based project.

Time constraints and the impact this had on scholars being able to engage in the organisation of the national roundtable and facilitation of the faculty-based project.

Some scholars had difficulties in accessing the funding that had been provided by their university to enable them to reduce their workload.

Some of the scholar’s workloads were established prior to their engagement in the project. In some instances this did not allow for reductions in existing commitments and presented a challenge for these scholars to engage in project activities.

“At the university level I think the challenge is how slowly change takes place.” (2007 Scholar)
Future Considerations

Enable a longer period of time for the implementation of the faculty-based projects, possibly 18 months to 2 years.

Conduct the roundtable at a time that ensures scholars have had adequate opportunity to complete a substantial amount of work in their faculty-based project.

Establish mechanisms to enable:
- future progression of the faculty-based projects; and
- facilitation of the improvements in assessment for learning and teaching that are identified.

A more detailed overview of the faculty-based projects and the national roundtables including resources and evaluations are available at: www.uow.edu.au/cedir/DistributiveLeadership

Associated Project Activities

Activity 3: Authentic Action Learning - Faculty-Based Projects


References


Additional information about authentic and situational learning and an annotated bibliography is available from the GREEN Website at: www.uow.edu.au/cedir/DistributiveLeadership