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Educating Educators: A Case Study on Human Centered Management Education

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Introduction

Upon graduation, new doctors of education (EdD), scholar-practitioners typically hold influential positions as university professors, executive managers, and corporate leaders. These fledgling doctors of education springboard into the competitive workforce armed with uniquely designed concepts of leadership and social fairness. No binding commonality of professional oath exists to provide general moral and ethical guidance to influence and nourish societal benefit. Meanwhile, McFarlane and Orgazon (2011) report that economic growth and wealth accumulation remain primary motives to pursue higher academic degrees.

For scholars and lecturers who seek to facilitate student transformation, the task requires time away from academia and a period of genuine reflection to gain new knowledge to support the student in the 21st century. After all, once a graduate enters or returns to the work environment, formal education and theoretical models learned at school may or may not contribute to improve the executive’s practices in ongoing management, leadership, and decision making. So this instance provides an opportunity for reflections on human centered management.

Despite the use of institutional brief exit surveys, the graduates’ self-assessment of transformed habits of mind and points of view are sparsely explored. Thus, this narrative research was conducted at the school of education following doctoral standards to benchmark fellow alumnus self-reported perceptions of principled conduct based on a cross-checking of underlying goals and expectations in the program.
Experiential learning, student engagement, and learner outcomes

Graduate students seek to enhance what they know through introspection, collaboration, coursework, and research. Some universities view these students as co-learners. “When instructors assume diverse roles (e.g., guide, mentor, facilitator, discussant, [and] provocateur), they create experiential learning opportunities where adult learners practice transferable skills” (Browne-Ferrigno and McEldowney Jensen, 2012, p. 410). In view of this, the three research streams that supported this research are (a) experiential learning, (b) student engagement, and (c) learner assessments and outcomes.

Experiential learning

Universities are slowly adopting experiential learning strategies to apply them in traditional learning communities (to enhance student retention) and to facilitate coaching skills (associated with critical thinking), group discovery, and teamwork (Beachboard et al., 2011; Maher, 2004). In its simplest state, experiential learning is a reflective by-product of cognitive and kinesthetic activity.

Experiential learning focuses on andragogical theory. This theory is where the interaction of the situation, the education, and the student learner collaborate in traceable developmental instances.

Based on research from a variety of disciplines, Knowles et al. (2005) published new perspectives on core andragogical (adult learning) principles. These principles are listed below followed by examples relevant to an EdD program structure:

- the learner’s need to know (promotes faculty–student collaborative learning partnerships)
- self-directed learning (taking control of learning goals and purpose, such as completing a paper or a dissertation)
- prior experience of the learner (provides depth in other learning experiences and is a depository for biases that can inhibit or shape new learning)
- readiness to learn (situations tied to one’s need to know and motivation to learn)
- orientation to learning and problem-solving (adult learning style typically relies on prior experience and real-life interactions)
- motivation to learn (serving internal needs for success, choice, value, and pleasure)

In relation to adult learning, in and outside the formal classroom, experiential learning is defined as a context-specific student-centered