Exploring Leadership Educator Identity through Life Stories

Preconference Workshop
Wednesday, 24 October
09:00 - 16:00 | Palm Beach County Convention Center – 2D

Overview

This session embodies authentic leadership development by creating space for self-reflection through the exploration, construction, and sharing of our own stories. Through guided reflection, journaling, discussion, and experiential activities, participants will explore their values, strengths, motivations, and vision for their role as leadership educators.

Through reflective activities related to authentic leadership development and leadership educator identity, participants will:

1. Increase awareness of self as leadership educator
2. Increase sense of professional purpose and passion
3. Increase connection to leadership educator community of practice

The day will entail several activities that are developmentally sequenced to take participants through an intentional reflective experience based on their leadership educator professional identities. Sequencing will be based on both levels of vulnerability and trust (going from more surface to deeper) as well as using a past, present, and future orientation (Priest & Seemiller, 2017), in which participants engage in identity reflection moving through time.

Session Outline

1. Overview of Leadership Educator Identity
Participants will learn about a model for leadership educator professional identity development (Seemiller & Priest, 2015), including elements that comprise professional identity. Learning outcomes for the session will also be reviewed along with the development of community standards.

2. Establishing and Situating Professional Identity
These activities are designed to help participants identify who they are and what they bring to the leadership education profession. It is a way to both begin reflection as well as create a community and shared learning space that encourages transparency, authenticity, and vulnerability.

3. Exploring Past Experiences
Sikes, Meason, and Woods identify critical incidents as “key events in an individual’s life... around which pivotal decisions revolve. They provoke the individual into selecting particular kinds of actions which lead in particular direction” (1985, p. 58). Kozminsky (2011) further notes that critical incidents can
result in challenge or change to one’s professional identity, which Avolio and Luthens (2006) indicate is important for authentic leadership development.

Participants will chronicle critical incidents these thorough a lifeline exercise noting both positive and critical incidents that informed their perspectives and practices as a leadership educator today.

*Lunch Break*

**4. Interpreting Present Beliefs**

Exploring professional identity can serve as a valuable lens through which to analyze one’s beliefs and practices about teaching (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) as beliefs can often be reflections of how one sees themselves as a professional (Walkington, 2005) and ultimately can affect their behaviors (Benzies & Allen, 2000).

Participants will identify and synthesize their values, strengths, assets, and competencies as they relate to being a leadership educator. Using these elements, participants will construct their own leadership educator philosophy to guide them in the work they do.

**5. Shaping Future Practices**

Based on the work of Brene Brown, vulnerability is “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure” (2015, 33). She notes that “to put our art, our writing, our photography, our ideas out into the world with no assurance of acceptance or appreciation—that’s also vulnerability” (Brown, 2015, 34). Vulnerability, while scary, serves as the foundation of our best selves. “Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity” (Brown, 2015, 33). Thus, being able to imagine a future, one that is free of personal judgments and that harnesses a sense of vulnerability can help inform a big and bold vision of one’s professional future.

Participants will write their own professional vision statement as a leadership educator. They are encouraged to consider areas of vulnerability as they craft their big, bold, vision for their professional future.

**6. Closure**

Participants will be asked to share insight from the day and provide evaluative feedback on the session.

**References**


