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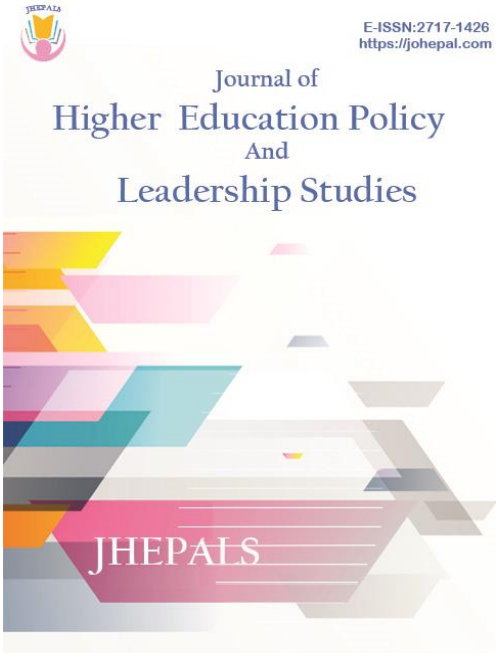

Leadership Education: Teaching Resilience for Future Success

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Abstract

Offering leadership learning opportunities for students is a goal of higher education, in which skills, such as resilience can be taught. One way of offering such learning is through academic programs. This qualitative study explored whether capacity for resilience was learned from a leadership studies program. Institutional and undergraduate certificate in leadership studies alumni (n=23) were interviewed to understand if and how they articulated learned capacity for resilience in personal and professional environments as a result of completing the program. Students highlighted that the Leadership Certificate provided them with skills to overcome personal challenges and the positive role of personal reflection in their successes.

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Introduction

Statements asserting student leadership is attendant to college-going are anchored in beliefs that higher education can and does influence students' leadership development. According to Chunoo and Osteen (2016), "the purpose, mission, and context of higher education directly align with the calling, environment, and resources necessary to provide leadership education" (p. 9). Focusing on the whole person in both academic and co-curricular spaces is critical to fulfilling this purpose (Guthrie et al., 2021). As educators, we are continually challenged by how to best teach, create learning opportunities, and provide the best platform for future success. Our goal should be for students to leave our institutions with knowledge, skills, and resilience to be successful in their post-college lives. The purpose of this study was to explore how alumni of a curricular-based leadership program articulated learned capacity for resilience as a result of completing an 18-credit leadership certificate.

Leadership Learning in Higher Education

Leadership learning puts the learner at the center of leadership education. Collegiate leadership programs, both co-curricular and academic in nature, are influential in fostering and supporting leadership development by recognizing it as more than a tangential outcome of a college education or merely a brief exercise in building skills (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2020; Komives et al., 2011). Rather, leadership learning is engaged by educators by enhancing leadership development.

Leadership Learning Defined

Defining leadership as a learned concept has created a need for clarification in terms. Guthrie and Jenkins (2018) describe leadership learning as an integrated and multi-faceted phenomenon where students are influenced by different experiences in varying contexts, including both co-curricular and curricular. More specifically, they define leadership learning as "changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and values resulting from educational experiences, both co-curricular and curricular in nature, associated with the activity of leadership" (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018, p. 57). The leadership learning framework (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018) is an accessible model for all educators to use both conceptually and in practice to intentionally develop programs that put the learner at the heart of education. The six aspects of leadership learning include knowledge, development, training, observation, engagement, and metacognition (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018).

Leadership knowledge is foundational for all learning and adjoins the four aspects of leadership learning development, training, observation, and engagement, which all contribute to metacognition. Knowledge acquisition occurs from the moment new leadership language is used and continues in various forms. Leadership development focuses on intrapersonal aspects, specifically where development of identity, capacity, and efficacy occurs. Leadership training centers on the skill- and competency-based behavioral aspects of learning. Leadership observation refers to the cultural and social aspects of leadership learning. The interactional, relational, experiential, and interpersonal aspects of leadership learning is collectively referred to as leadership engagement; an area where the learner is an active participant. The five aspects of knowledge, development, training, observation, and engagement culminate in leadership metacognition. Metacognition is at

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the heart of the leadership learning model because through honest reflection and critical thinking around learning experiences, students make meaning to adapt and apply what was learned.

Leadership learning is greatly influenced by a foundational grounding in leadership theory and application. For decades, researchers have explored the concept of leadership, producing a variety of theoretical approaches. Some researchers conceptualize leadership as a trait (Stogdill, 1948) or as behaviors (Yammarino, 2000). Others have viewed leadership from a relationship standpoint (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) or from a situational perspective (Hersey et al., 1979). Two theories that feature prominently in current leadership education and development thinking are adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) and emotionally intelligent leadership (EIL) theory (Shankman et al., 2015). Both theories greatly supported our research study.

Adaptive Leadership

Presenting the concepts of adaptive leadership to a pedagogical model of case-in-point teaching, Heifetz (1994) conceived leadership as a solution to adaptive challenges faced in our everyday realities. Leaders must creatively face adaptive challenges with an understanding that they are difficult, complex, and not easily solved. Adaptive leadership examines the very nature of how the leader perceives and confronts the challenge and is flexible about navigating to a positive outcome (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

The adaptive practice of leadership requires an openness to risk taking, challenging the status quo, and provoking change. This approach encourages leaders to simultaneously consider two situational perspectives. First "on the balcony" refers to engaging reflective thought about what is happening in the situation with the leader removed, as an observer (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 1). Second, the leader is encouraged to request feedback and openly engage in the situation "in the practice field" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 1). Clearly identifying technical (and therefore more easily solvable) from adaptive (inherently more complex, unclear) challenges is a crucial step in implementing change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). These practices of adaptive change require a leader to have a strong level of emotional intelligence.

Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Emotionally intelligent leadership integrates interactions of context, self, and others within twenty-one constructs (Allen et al., 2012; Miao et al., 2021; Shankman et al., 2015). The context encompasses "being aware of the environment in which leaders and follower work", the self involves "being aware of yourself in terms of your abilities and emotions", and the others includes "being aware of your relationship with others and the role they play in the leadership process" (Allen et al., 2012, p. 185). Each of these capacities influences a leader's ability to positively implement change through individual and interpersonal relationships. The theory is further elaborated into the twenty-one concepts connected to each area of consciousness. These concepts cover a wide array of growth opportunities for developing college students (Miao et al., 2021). For this study, we consider emotional self-perception, authenticity, and flexibility under the construct of consciousness of self and facilitating change under consciousness of others.

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Emotional Self-Perception

Strong emotional self-perception entails having a firm, realistic grasp of understanding your own emotions and their effects on others in the moment. Leaders grow in this capacity by seeking honest feedback from others who are trustworthy in their world and implementing critical reflection on their responses and actions in an emotional context.

Authenticity

Authenticity is based on a foundation of commitment and trustworthiness. Aligning values, words, and actions make individuals authentic leaders. Persons present an honest, value-centric ethic to their interactions in order to build relationships and follow through with goals.

Flexibility

Seeking, accepting, and utilizing feedback are vital elements to a flexible person. This concept also entails integrating an adaptable attitude while maintaining core values. The need for versatility and openness is balanced by the structure of authentic self-awareness.

Facilitating Change

Leadership requires an openness to change and a willingness to be a facilitator of needed change. This idea is centered on purposeful, thoughtful change but also acknowledges that a person must be open to risk in order to enact change. Each of these capacities connects to elements necessary for a leader to exhibit resilience through their emotional intelligence. To further explore these associations, we must examine the nature of resilience in the leadership process.

Resilience in Leadership Learning

Leadership learning, through leadership education, theory, and development, can be a contributing factor in establishing and exploring the concept of resilience. Adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) and emotionally intelligent leadership (Shankman et al., 2015) theories provide framework for understanding a need for resilience in the process of living leadership. Resilience's multiple definitions in the literature depend on its relationship to outcomes, its perception as a cause or influence, or the level or exposure of risk as a factor to the development of resilience (Kaplan, 2002). Siebert (2005) defined resilience as the ability to: cope with disruptive change; sustain energy under pressure; bounce back from setbacks; overcome adversities; change old ways for new when needed; and complete these tasks without implementing dysfunctional or harmful mechanisms for coping. Richardson (2002) identified three waves of research in resiliency and resilience in psychological literature. First, researchers implemented phenomenological inquiry that highlighted qualities of study participants who successfully attained success in the face of difficulty. This body of literature designates traits which emerged connected to the narratives of the people who were perceived to positively overcome challenge and therefore exhibit resilient behavior (Grotberg, 2003; Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Richardson, 2002). Research then moved to defining resiliency as a process for "coping with stressors, adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of

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protective factors" (Richardson, 2002, p. 308). Finally, Richardson (2002) introduced and advocated the postmodern perspective of resilience as a motivational force for the intentional utilization of strength for the individual or group. This final wave gave rise to the current distinction of the term resilience and resilience theory over the more broadly explored concept of resiliency in the literature (Richardson, 2002). This third description, identifying and recognizing the motivational force of resilience as a learned leadership capacity, will be the foundational definition for this study.

Change

Resilience is an action and or reaction to change (Siebert, 2005). How a person copes with change, navigates change, and processes change all indicate the level of resilience. Highly resilient people are flexible, adapt to new circumstances quickly, and thrive on constant change (Siebert, 2005). Since comfort with change and adaptability are considered an important quality in future success for leaders (Bandura, 1998; Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), resilience is a needed trait to manage and adapt to change for leadership accomplishment.

Self-Awareness

Resilience is also directly affected by how self-aware a person is in how they manage change. Emotional consciousness of self is another key construct focused on in leadership education curriculum in a multitude of models and theories (Allen et al., 2012; Shankman et al., 2015). The outcome of increasing self-awareness through personal reflection reinforces the need for students to learn strategies for self-reflection in order to develop their consciousness of self (Komives et al., 2006; Shankman et al., 2015), a significant factor also noted in the resilience literature (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002; Christman & McClellan, 2008; 2012; Grotberg, 2003; Howard & Irving, 2014; Masten, 2001; Siebert, 2005). "Resiliency among leadership has a relationship with the development of self-awareness and identity" (Howard & Irving, 2014, p. 468). As leaders grow in their emotional intelligence, grasping more deeply their own authentic sense of self in relationship to others, they can also intensify their capacity for resilience (Allen et al., 2012; Howard & Irving, 2014; Shankman et al., 2015). "Those who are more self-aware and have developed their own identity demonstrate higher levels of resiliency" (Howard & Irving, 2014, p. 472). Leadership development provides a framework for this connection of self-awareness, identity development, and resilience to occur.

Reflective Practice

Implementing a reflective practice is an important factor in developing the ability to critique and progress on an internal level (Volpe White et al., 2020). "A leader's deepest obligation is to engage continually in a reflective process of making sense of his or her leadership and to trust its influence on others…" (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002, para. 33). This reflective practice connects to the growth of resilience in the leader as they consider positive and negative reactions to situations and move forward from these experiences with a thoughtful, considered understanding of how to manage differently for the future (Siebert, 2005). Implementing an intentional, habitual reflective practice allows for growth in a

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leader's depth of understanding about themselves (self-awareness) and in relationship to others (consciousness of others) (Shankman et al., 2015).

Locus of Control

People who are highly resilient generally have a perception of a more internal locus of control, or the belief that they can make decisions which impact outcomes in their life; this is in contrast to people with less resilient ability and a more external locus of control, or the perspective that others control what will happen to them (Siebert, 2005). Resilient people expect to bounce back when they are faced with challenges and have the confidence that they will do so (Siebert, 2005). This connects with the critical tenants of adaptive leadership, creating a connection between how the leader perceives the challenges they face and their success in overcoming them (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Study Context: Leadership Certificate

College engagement in leadership activities can have a positive impact on a range of student outcomes (Astin & Astin, 2000; Cress et al., 2001). The Leadership Certificate in this study is an 18-credit, interdisciplinary, and experiential academic program which prepares students for leading in multiple contexts. It uses a theory-to-practice model, experiential-, and service-learning projects to frame leadership learning within the context of social change. Students engage in learning inside and outside the classroom, which is sourced in community building, education, and reflection (Guthrie & Bovio, 2014). The student population enrolled in the certificate is diverse (in regard to gender, age, background, major of study, year in school, etc.). The interdisciplinary nature of the certificate allows for many different majors to interact in each course.

Four major learning outcomes guide the certificate curriculum: gaining knowledge of leadership theory; increasing self-awareness through personal reflection; increasing leadership skill development; and developing the ability to apply theory to practice in multiple contexts. Established learning outcomes allow for the development of students' leadership capacity while encouraging personal responsibility, understanding how to overcome personal challenges, and demonstrate resilience. By participating in the program, students gain knowledge and skills that impact their leadership individually, in partnerships, in groups, and in their communities.

Five core courses focus on leadership knowledge, skills, and values. Leadership Theory and Practice focuses on providing a strong foundation of general leadership theory and the individual in the leadership process. Leadership in Groups and Communities focuses on applied leadership principles in a service-learning context. Change and transition theories are explored in Leadership and Change and how one participates and leads change efforts. Once a theoretical foundation is established, Leadership Experience provides an opportunity for theory to be observed and practically applied. The capstone course, Leadership and Complexity, synthesizes all material learned in the aforementioned core. The sixth required course is the student's choice but is intended to supports students' overall leadership learning.

Critical aspects of leadership learning are reflection and making meaning from experiences (Guthrie & Bertrand Jones, 2012; Volpe White et al., 2019; Volpe White et al,

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2020). Structured reflection is provided throughout each course using various methods including discussions, reflective essays, journaling, and presentations. The incorporation of reflection throughout the certificate allows program participants to synthesize and make meaning of their leadership knowledge and experiences. This is evident in all certificate courses; students are asked to reflect, often through weekly reading critiques which ask students to specifically apply their course readings to their own lives.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative methodology to leverage the strengths of semi-structured personal interviews. The researchers made this choice to allow new information to emerge as provided by our participants, more deeply understand the perspectives of our sample members, and incorporate ideas as they occurred within and between interviews (Merriam, 2009).

Participants were recruited from enrollment records of the Leadership Certificate. Only individuals who had completed all requirements to receive the certificate, had earned their intended undergraduate degrees, and were either working or in graduate school for at least two years were included in the recruitment efforts. Fifty-three potential participants were initially contacted and the attrition of potential participants were due to incorrect contact information or unresponsiveness. The final sample of 23 members included 18 women and 5 men. All participants graduated from college and entered various professions. Participants disproportionately held careers in higher education or were enrolled in higher education graduate programs at the time of participation.

Participants were interviewed by the certificate coordinator, one of three doctoral students, or a research team member, who has served as a certificate course instructor. The interview protocol was informed by foundational certificate leadership theories, including four questions related to transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), five questions drawn from the adaptive leadership model (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), and eight questions focused on the learning outcomes of the certificate (see Appendix A). Interviews lasted between 20 and 113 minutes. All interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, or via distance technologies.

Once interviews were audio recorded, they were transcribed by a contracted service. Interview transcripts were provided to both interviewers and interviewees for member-checking purposes. Member-checked transcripts were imported into a qualitative analysis software program, and coded using open, axial, and selective coding procedures in accordance with the suggestions offered by Miles et al. (2014) and in conjunction with a constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). From our analysis, two themes emerged of how leadership certificate alumni articulated their learned capacity for resilience in personal and professional environments as a result of completing a leadership certificate.

Findings

Our investigation regarding how undergraduate leadership learning manifested in the post-college lives of certificate alumni yielded two major themes connected to EIL, adaptive leadership, and resilience: individuals' ability to overcome personal challenges and the impact of reflection in their personal and occupational success. In their reports, participants

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revealed how they were able to overcome challenging conditions or circumstances by leveraging content knowledge and cognitive processes gained or refined through their leadership certificate experiences. Furthermore, respondents described the material substance as well as the mechanisms through which they engaged in personal reflection, which also informed their abilities to be emotionally intelligent, adaptive, and resilient in their post-college leading. The accounts of the alumni we interviewed accentuated the connection between self-awareness and reflection; two essential elements for both EIL and resilience. Moreover, the role that both seemed to play in our former students' post-college lives underscored the need for EIL in leadership education to build resilience in future leaders. Finally, the ways in which participants described navigating personal change and change connected to the adaptive leadership model made clear for us that understanding of personal and social identities, as learning outcomes of the leadership certificate, fundamentally shape certificate alumni's after-college success.

Overcoming Personal Challenges

Many of our respondents made references to personal challenges, as well as provided specific examples of how they overcome challenging conditions or circumstances. Jaime, a male student who graduated in 2012, was both a first-year graduate student in a higher education master's program that focused on policy. At the time of our interview, Jaime's career goals were still being formed, but he identified leadership, service, social justice, spirituality, and study abroad as potential interest areas. Jaime described how he overcame personal challenges in his last year of undergrad as well as the transition into a graduate program:

> "Last year and my teaching year…whenever I was a fish out of water …[was]… the most difficult it's ever been but also the most that I've made myself thrive. It was remembering my identity and owning all parts of that. A lot of people, whenever they are faced with adversity and a lot of times things aren't going well instead of looking at the situation, they want to change parts of themselves. That was never going to be an option for me."

In this admittedly short account, Jaime gave us two specific instances (as well as a general sense) of times when self-awareness related to identity and an internal locus on control played a meaningful role in his own resilience. When pressed for more detail, Jaime continued,

> "Whenever I had parents who…thought that my teaching was...too difficult…because I was challenging my students, or administrators who just were not considering [the] holistic needs of my students, I made sure that I remembered…that's why I was there…I kept reminding myself…" you are the person who is going to do this. All of your talents are meant to be used in this way…This is what you should be doing."

In Jaime's elaboration, there is evidence of his own self-awareness related to the role he wanted to play in the lives of his students, awareness of what his students needed to be successful after their time together in the classroom, and a healthy dose of reflection on both of those elements in his teaching practice; all of which are supported by resilience

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literature as beneficial factors. We also asked what role leadership learning experiences played in Jaime's ability to be resilient, develop awareness of self and others, as well as reflect on his teaching practice. In response, he intimated:

> "…my more progressive nature and my ability to take everything that I learned at Florida State, all of this leadership ideology, all of the social justice education, combined with my teaching methodology actually made the perfect recipe for what I think high school students should be learning…"

The flexibility of thinking and integration of diverse sets of knowledge Jaime expressed in this account spoke to the volume of emotionally intelligent leadership he was able to express as an in-training teacher, which seems to have, at least in part, come from his leadership learning experiences. His ability to express this flexibility in a way that was authentic to himself and that could be received by his students, also speaks to how adaptive leadership has informed his teaching practice.

Fortunately, the certificate alumni we talked to also employed a variety of strategies to overcome these challenges. Another student, Tanya, a female 2013 graduate, who was enrolled as a second-year master's student in a higher education expressed career interests in the areas of leadership development, leadership education, and new family programs / orientation, discussed some of these strategies. Tanya made mention of a strategy that seemed to echo the resiliency concepts of internal locus of control and reflective practice:

> "…I think it comes back to an internal trust that I developed over time, to know that you can…take everyone else's opinions…into account, but you're …the expert on [your] life and what you need. Sometimes it takes those other people to articulate it the best way, but I have to rely on myself to really make those decisions …"

Her account, while honoring the influence of others, still appears to have an anchor to her internal sense of self. Elia, another alumna, who graduated in 2010, was working for a federal agency in Washington, D.C. when she was interviewed. After college, Elia studied international development in the United Kingdom, had worked for a D.C.-based non-profit agency, and had volunteered for the Peace Corp in Africa. She also recounted her strategy for overcoming a specific personal challenge, and much like Tanya, provided a response with self-awareness and resiliency at the center:

> "I'm not exactly in the career path I want to be in right now, but I feel like trying to stay true to what really matters has been helpful in trying to think about …what defines me and how do I stay true to that. That really helps me get through difficult and challenging times. …I think I reflect on that a lot because it's easy…to get lost or …distracted or … complacent with something that gets you by from day to day."

The type of emotional self-perception that Elia hinted at by these remarks also reinforced the belief that emotionally intelligent leadership may also play a part in confronting challenges in her life, a key factor in resilience. Elia spoke at greater length about her struggle with authenticity of late:

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> "Personally, I would say what helps me thrive is just remembering what is really important to me.... what do I value, and keeping that at the center …because it's easy to get distracted by challenges, easy to want to give up. But …what I kept coming back to, especially personally in the last …nine months since I've been home, is really trying to stay true to who I am, and true to the values that define my life and what kind of impact I want to have. I think that's really helped me stay true to the course, the kind of life that I want to live. Just remembering… my values."

From these accounts, it seems clear that Jaime, Tanya, and Elia have each faced personal and professional challenges, and have differentially used components of emotionally intelligent leadership, adaptive leadership, and resilience to overcome those challenges. In addition, each of these respondents gave us confidence through their accounts that their abilities to express emotional self-perception, authenticity, flexibility, adaptability, an internal locus of control, and reflective practice came from their undergraduate leadership learning through the certificate.

Personal Reflection

Personal reflection, a core component of both emotionally intelligent leadership and resilience, continually resurfaced in our participants' accounts of their leadership learning. Although each of our highlighted respondents reflected in different ways and on different things, they all related their ability to engage in reflective activities to their undergraduate leadership learning experiences. While Jaime detailed for us the content of his personal reflections, he intimated that he:

> "…latched on to this idea that I'm in charge of my fate. I'm in charge of my destiny. I'm here for a reason. [And] If I'm here for a reason, every single thing must matter. [Using those ideas] …I've been able to make some sort of meaning from every transition that I've had. I'm in a position right now that I believe …was all part of the life path, …part of the destiny…. I had to work at that school to learn this…. I have to do that program to learn this. Right now, I feel like I'm experiencing an accumulation of all of the lessons that I've learned wrapped into the work that I love so much…I don't think I'd be able to do this part of my life as well if I hadn't…had those experiences …[and]… sat down to make… meaning of them."

When asked specifically how the certificate has contributed to this process of self-reflection, Jaime unequivocally drew an explicit connection:

> "I developed the ability to reflect and make meaning at Florida State so well that I almost began to overkill it at some point in that I can reflect on anything. Any time I taught a lesson, any program I did, we knew…[reflection]…was the backbone. I was being trained to make meaning out of most of the experiences, if not all of the experiences in my life."

Jaime had clearly taken away a life skill from his undergraduate leadership learning experiences that proved useful after college, especially with regard to emotional-self-

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perception and reflective practice that ultimately drove his ability to be resilient and enact adaptive and emotionally intelligent leadership. However, Jaime was not the only member of our sample to describe how undergraduate leadership learning informed their capacity for resilience, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. Speaking a bit about her own self-awareness and reflective practice in post-college life, Tanya shared:

> "[After]… I left the certificate program…. And… post-graduating from Florida State…I thought a lot about the intersection of womanhood and my identity as a woman with body size, and that has been really fascinating for me as a leader, and the masculinization of body size and thinking about …my personality intersecting with my identity as a larger woman and what that means and how people might perceive that."

Since leadership education is an on-going, life-long process, we were glad to hear that Tanya had taken an active stance in her personal reflection to wrestle with issues of body image, identity, and personality as a part of her leader identity development. She also provided some information regarding how her abilities in self-perception and reflection developed during her undergraduate years:

> "I think in undergrad… [I focused] …more [on] personality dynamics and the way I was showing up with the space I was taking up…vocally or with my energy. I think by the time I left the certificate, I was thinking more about …who I am in this space and that my reality is different than someone else's who I am interacting with."

The progression Tanya described in many ways sounded like a transition from a self-oriented point of view to an other-centered point of view; exactly the type of thinking that the fundamentals of adaptive leadership are based upon. It seems clear from her account that leadership learning in the undergraduate certificate had a dramatic impact on her development as an adaptive leader.

Finally, Elia remarked, "…reflection's always been a key takeaway that I took from the Leadership Certificate, as well as my other involvement in programs at the Center", explicitly detailing the value of her participation in leadership learning. We asked her for more information about her personal reflections, and what specifically from her experience with the certificate seemed to help after college and she described what she should write about in her journal:

> "… some of those key takeaways from…Leadership on the Line, recognizing that it's best to work with diverse kinds of people and the change that you want to make in your community, the projects that you're working on are more meaningful when you work with people who have different backgrounds and different approaches. I remember that was one of my key takeaways from that book, recognizing that conflict can be good, and conflicting opinions or diverse opinions are what pushes you to become a better leader and what pushes you to make more meaningful change because you have to work for it."

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After seeing how prominently the work of Heifetz and Linsky (2002) was in Elia's leadership development left little doubt that the certificate's focus on adaptive leadership can show up significantly in the post-college lives of our alumni.

Discussion and Implications

Learning, through leadership education, theory, and development contributes to students' exploration of resilience. While some students may have an understanding of resilience prior to participating in a leadership studies program, for most students this could be their first exposure to intentionally discussing concepts related to resilience. Leadership educators can support emerging resilience through leadership learning by introducing foundational leadership models and theories that teach concepts of resilience, consider social identities in programs, and provide various forms of personal reflection.

Foundational Leadership Models and Theories

The robust strategies alumni reported using to overcome personal challenges were rooted in the cross-strategies of EIL, adaptive leadership, and theories of resilience. Through these reports, we can consider overcoming personal challenges as a way of adapting to change that is informed by one's ability to be emotionally intelligent and using that intelligence in resilient ways. Developing capacity to overcome personal challenges through the strategies of EIL, adaptive, and resilience theories informs our work as leadership educators. This can be incorporated by using EIL and adaptive theory models in course curriculum, program development, and in creating assignments and activities which encourage students to engage in authentic reflection and conversation about current personal challenges. It would be fitting for academic and co-curricular leadership programs to consider how these leadership learning principles can be incorporated into curriculum and programming in order to further enhance the leadership learning in order to increase capacity for resilience for students during their undergraduate years and beyond.

Consideration of Social Identities

By developing deep and nuanced understandings of social identities and establishing an internal locus of control, the alumni we interviewed were able to make authentic decisions and enact flexible strategies that ultimately helped them reach their personal goals. Each of these strategies connects to the leadership learning principles focused in the theories of EIL, adaptive leadership, and resilience. Leadership educators may think about each capacity in their course learning or program objectives, including emphasizing knowledge and understanding of social identities and engagement in conversation around a students' perception of their locus of control. The comprehension of social identities as integral to the success in leadership can be focused on through course assignments and activities such as using a social identity rubric, wheel, or mosaic (AAUW Diversity and Inclusion Tool Kit, n.d.) to have students consider their social identities within the constructs of power and privilege.

This content should be considered from the individual, group, and organizational/societal levels. Using Harro's (2000) cycles of socialization and liberation with specific examples of current events, such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement, can help students to understand and discuss the complexities of social identities and how they relate to their abilities to be emotionally intelligent, adaptive, and resilient. Additionally, having

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students reflect upon their own perception of their ability to make change can impact their understanding of having an internal locus of control. This can include encouraging goal setting in the classroom or co-curricular organization and subsequent support to encourage students to reach their personal goals, in order to actively experience their own internal ability to make change in their lives. The alumni in the study recognized how to be their authentic selves in challenging situations because they had self-awareness of their emotions and identities. Leadership educators can facilitate the development of understanding and enacting authentic decision making in their students through the class assignments or out-of-classroom activities that engage honest discussion and real action which students can learn from and implement in the future.

Various Forms of Personal Reflection

Leadership educators need to also incorporate various forms of personal reflection to allow student to reevaluate personal motivations and intentions with respect to their emotional self-perceptions, connecting that authenticity to future ways of being. As Volpe White and Guthrie (2015) suggest, students' ability to engage in reflective practice created opportunities for continual improvement in both their private and professional lives. Reflection directly links to resilience in identifying how authentic self-awareness can allow a person to overcome and grow from challenge. This can be taught through EIL in being self-aware; and adaptive leadership, in the ability to be both in the moment and step out of the moment to attain perspective. The inclusion of various reflection methods can support leadership courses in examining myriad ways to teach students to incorporate reflection into a habit for their daily lives. Intentional integration of time and space to engage and practice reflection supports leadership learning in programs and for students beyond their undergraduate years. Reflection activities can include journaling or blogging assignments, in-class writing time, activities to teach meditative practice, or the inclusion of a labyrinth activity. However, reflection is integrated, it is vital for leadership programs to create this important space, to engender meaning making by teaching and enacting reflective practice.

Conclusion

The adaptive problems of the 21st century require leaders who are willing and able to develop and implement creative and effective solutions. In many cases, institutions of higher education purport to be crafting exactly these kinds of leaders on their campuses, but if and how they are performing such a feat remains the topic of much debate. The present study contributes meaningfully to this dialogue by illustrating how alumni of one particular Leadership Certificate program demonstrate resilience obtained through their leadership learning experiences. By overcoming personal challenges and reflecting carefully on their own development, their expressions of leadership are profoundly informed by in- and out-of-classroom leadership education, culminating in exactly the type of adaptive thinking, emotional intelligence, and resilience needed to enact positive, sustainable change, both in their private social words, and the world writ large. By providing students with an understanding of, and language for, resilience through foundational leadership theories and models they are better equipped for increased capacity for resilience in their personal, professional, and academic lives. Leadership educators can support exploring resilience

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through leadership learning by introducing foundational leadership models and theories that teach concepts of resilience, consider social identities in programs, and provide various forms of personal reflection. We hope that these findings inspire leadership educators to ask critical questions of their own students and alumni, re-examine their curriculum for opportunities to identify and support the growth of resilience in students, and bravely work toward furthering leadership learning for their students, programs, and campuses.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Phase One: Certificate Learning Outcomes:

1. How do you interact with people different from yourself?
2. How would you say your personal identities shape your perceptions of the surrounding environment?
3. What do you do to create environments that are welcoming of diverse cultural perspectives?
4. What power structures do you believe affect your school / work / personal life?
5. What partnerships are vital to your success in work, school, or your personal life? How have you built these partnerships and what do you do to maintain them?
6. How are you involved in making change in your environment?
7. What do you identify as the most pressing needs of your community?
8. In what ways do you use personal reflection to understand your current educational or occupational experience?

Phase Two: Adaptive Leadership

"Adaptive leadership is specifically about change that enables the capacity to thrive" (Heifetz et al..2009, p. 14)

9. What helps you thrive under challenging circumstances at work / in school / personally?
10. How do you distinguish what is essential in your work/school life from what is expendable?
11. What helps you decide when you are in a position to take a risk? What does this look like when you have succeeded? What has happened when you've failed?
12. What do you use to counteract patterns of negativity, in either yourself or others?
13. Where does your motivation come from to "stay in the game" even when circumstances are not in your favor?

Phase Three: Transformational Leadership

According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation." (Burns, 1975).

14. How do you approach tending to the needs of others in work / school environments?
15. What do you do to foster creativity and innovation in those around you?
16. How do you encourage a strong sense of purpose in yourself and others?
17. What role does a consistent vision, mission, and a set of values play in your leadership practice?

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