How Can Leadership Be Taught? Implications for Leadership Educators
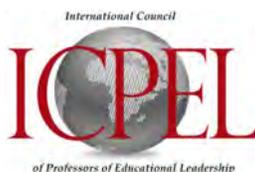
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Whether leadership can be taught is a decades-long debate. The purpose of this descriptive quantitative research study was to better understand how leadership is taught and learned. One-hundred-and-thirty-two K-12, college, or university faculty, staff, or administrators responded to a survey questionnaire on leadership. The majority (74.54%) of participants who were leaders reported that they felt prepared for leadership positions. The majority (86.36%) of participants reported that leadership can be taught, with only 3.79% indicating that leadership is not a teachable skill. Abilities to create positive work environments, communicate to constituent groups, lead change, and supervise personnel were the top-ranked leadership competencies. Dealing with personnel matters; navigating institutional, local, and state politics; and managing complex budgets were listed as the top challenges leaders face. Participants reported that leadership can be learned through formal education, mentorship, and leadership experience. Participants emphasized the importance of human relations and communication skills for leaders.

Keywords: leadership education; mentorship; leadership learning theories; leadership competencies; leadership challenges

Some discuss leadership ability as an innate characteristic (De Neve et al., 2013; McCauley & Velsor, 2004; McMenemy, 2008; Zhihong, Wei, & Xiaoying, 2013). Others contend that leadership can be learned through a combination of professional development, experience, and mentoring (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2003; Buchanan, 2017; Elmuti, 2004; Guthrie & Jones, 2012)**.** This researcher argues that leadership can be taught and that learning and being taught leadership are not completely synonymous. Being "taught" leadership implies that there is a teacher involved in the instruction of an individual or group of individuals while learning leadership may occur with or without an intentional teacher such as through self-directed research or through work, leadership, or other experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Educational leaders and others have described a crisis in leadership because of the demand for effective leaders and the need for preparation and professional development of those entering leadership positions in the coming decades (Appadurai, 2009; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). While leadership is much discussed, few researchers have sought to better understand how leadership is taught and learned, what leaders need to know, what challenges leaders face, and how leadership professional development influences leadership practices. This researcher sought to address these gaps in the literature through survey research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive quantitative study was to better understand K-12, college, and university faculty, staff, and administrators' perceptions of how leadership is taught and learned in order to develop implications for educational leadership educators and programs. The goals of this descriptive quantitative research study were (1) to better understand how leadership is taught and learned, (2) which leadership competencies are most important, (3) what significant challenges leaders face, (4) how leadership education manifests itself in leadership practice, and (5) what leaders need to know and be able to do.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this descriptive quantitative research study: (a) What do K-12, college, university faculty, staff, and administrators perceive as essential abilities and knowledge for educational/organizational leaders? (b) To what extent do participants report that leadership can be taught? (c) What are participants' perceptions of leadership learning and teaching? (d) What major leadership challenges do participants perceive? (e) How does leadership education manifest itself in leadership practices? (f) What professional development types and topics do participants report as needed for effective leadership training?

Significance of the Study

This topic is relevant to many fields such as business and education because of the demand for qualified and effective educational leaders in the coming decades (Elmuti, 2004; Elmuti, Minnis, & Abebe, 2005; McMahone, 2012; Young et al., 2018). The critical goal of better preparing educational leaders is to serve effectively students, faculty, staff, and the public. This study's

findings have implications for educational leadership and leadership programs as well as for aspiring and current leaders. The researcher makes recommendations for leadership educators to enhance leadership professional development based on survey feedback and theoretical conceptualizations of leadership learning.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study's participants were limited to those working as faculty, staff, and administrators in K-12, college, and university organizational settings. The researcher sought a purposeful sample, and results may not be generalizable to all populations. Many administrators participated in this survey, which also influenced this study's findings as administrators may have unique perspectives that may or may not be similar to subordinates' views of leadership and the teaching and learning of leadership. Nevertheless, this study's findings offer applicable insights for leaders, leadership educators, and educational leadership program administrators.

Review of the Literature

Can Leadership Be Taught?

There is sparse scholarly literature on the topic of the effectiveness of teaching leadership (Elmuti et al., 2005; Keating, Rosch, & Burgoon, 2014; Rosenbach, 2003; Rymsha, 2013; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). Some researchers even suggest genetic factors related to leadership skills and roles, unrelated to being "taught" leadership (Arvey, Zhang, & Avolio, 2007). While research in this area is scant, editorializing on this topic is not (Allio, 2005; Daloz Parks, 2005; DeRue, Sitkin, & Podolny, 2011; Frohman & Howard, 2008; Howard, 1992; Ryan, 2016; Vecchio, 2004). Gunn (2000) wrote, "Can leadership be taught? Most people would answer this with a firm 'No!' But they might have a hard time explaining why this negative response seems to come so naturally" (p. 15). Many people, including leadership educators and leaders, have feelings about what good leadership is, how to teach people leadership skills, and how leadership is learned. Doh (2003) reported on interviews he conducted with leadership educators, asking them the question, can leadership be taught? Participants reflected little diversity demographically or in thought. Doh interviewed no women educators, and he may have drawn richer conclusions by consulting women and men actually in leadership positions rather than those whose aim was already to teach leadership. Rymsha (2013) used Kouzes and Posner's (2003) framework for effective leadership, without an analysis or evaluation of the appropriateness of the framework, to structure her analysis of a corporate leadership program. Kouzes and Posner's leadership framework is outlined in their popular leadership text *The Leadership Challenge* and is based on the authors' collection of case studies. Keating et al. (2014) sought to measure leadership capacity in students by using pre- and post-tests for a leadership theory course. Reporting that students learned leadership with significant findings, the researchers grouped students in high-, median-, and low-scoring groups to measure differences in pre- and post-test scores rather than reporting on and analyzing the significance of the differences in the total sample's scores. Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) found that the leadership programs they studied produced significant results with participants reporting "increased self-understanding, ability to set goals, sense of ethics, willingness to take risks, civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, community orientation, and a variety of leadership skills" (p. 62). How

these skills were reflected in these participants' work/lives was not mentioned or studied. Hackman and Wageman (2007) suggested a need for the type of research presented here:

> For all of the research that has been conducted on the topic of leadership, the field remains curiously uninformed. … Yet, there are no generally accepted definitions of what leadership is, no dominant paradigms for studying it, and little agreement about the best strategies for developing it and exercising it. (p. 43)

The present study sought to address these gaps in the literature through its discussions of findings on leadership teaching, learning, knowledge, and abilities.

Theoretical Framework: Leadership Development

The theoretical grounding for this research is underpinned by theories of epistemological development through formal and informal learning experiences. The results from this study and others suggest that leadership comes from innate personality characteristics and developed skills (Connaughton, Lawrence, & Rubin, 2003; Elmuti et al., 2005; Rosenbach, 2003). Zhihong et al. (2013) suggested that some leadership skills and traits may not be teachable: "some tacit dimensions of leadership involve different processes to gain commitment to a strategy and vision, or the ability of empowering employees by building relationships and demonstrating confidence with humility that can never be effectively addressed by formal classroom training" (p. 25). Other researchers suggested that leadership education programs have limitations. According to Elmuti et al. (2005), "The current leadership curriculum focuses more on theoretical and conceptual training … instead of [a] comprehensive and integrated approach" (p. 1022). Elmuti et al. (2005) suggested that leadership development programs need more holistic approaches, focusing on analysis, ethics development, multi-disciplinary methods, global perspectives, interpersonal skills, and practical skills.

While there are limitations to leadership education and training programs and certain leadership traits may be inherent, this researcher argues that, to a large extent, leadership can be taught via formal instruction and leadership development programs. Leaders and aspiring leaders reported that they learned leadership by observing effective leaders and avoiding ineffective leaders' behaviors. Leadership education classrooms give students opportunities to test out leadership theories in discussions of case studies and films and in projects that require leadership students to apply practical and theoretical understandings of leadership (Billsberry, 2009). Aligned with this study's findings, mentorship and real-world experiences play important roles in the development of leadership epistemologies.

Kolb's (2014), Lewin's (1951), Dewey's (1938), Vygotsky's (1978), Guthrie and Jones (2012), and Bandura's (1977) theories align with this study's findings. Kolb (2014) conceptualized learning as a cyclical process, not a series of outcomes. This process is continually grounded in experiences, and there is a dialectic relationship between real-world problems and the resolutions adapted to contend with these problems. According to Kolb (2014):

> Learning is the major process of human adaptation. This concept of learning is considerably broader than that commonly associated with the school classroom. It occurs in all human settings, from schools to the workplace, from the research laboratory to the management board room, in personal relationships and the aisles of the local grocery. (Chapter 2, para. 42)

Learning leadership, as learning many other skills and aptitudes, is a continuous process that happens through formal and informal educative experiences. Lewin (1951) theorized learning as a

cyclical feedback loop of observation and reflection, abstract cognition and theoretical thinking, testing of concepts and theories, and concrete experiences. Dewey (1938) conceptualized learning as a dialectic process of observation, experience, judgement, and action. Guthrie and Jones (2012) developed a theoretical framework for learning leadership by experience and argued "concrete experience is 'learning by encounter,' which can be learning from specific experiences, relating to different people and their experiences, or being sensitive to feelings and people" (p. 54). Participants in this study described experiential and social learning theoretical frameworks in practice. Theoretically and practically, the effective learning of leadership is a holistic and cyclical process, often developed through experiences, reflection, mentorship, and formal leadership education.

Mentorship, in the form of assistance and modeling from a more capable colleague, can help the aspiring leader develop leadership competencies and problem solving abilities through collaboration much as Vygotsky (1978) discussed in the development of human cognition and the learning of a variety of skills. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that people learn to push their own boundaries of thinking and doing with aid from someone more competent or skilled in a particular area. Similarly, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory suggested that people identify with others whom they deem as models and then replicate the behaviors that they have observed in the people with whom they identify. These social learning phenomena resemble participants' descriptions of relationships with mentors and with negative models that they intentionally avoided replicating.

Research Design and Methods

This study used quantitative methods, a descriptive design, and survey data to provide "numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 12). The design's aims were to provide insights on how leadership epistemologies are developed and how experience and formal education contribute to these. "Good descriptive studies provoke the 'why' questions of analytic (cause-and-effect) research" (Eich Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2018, p. 157). The researcher's survey instrument was designed to answer questions about leadership teaching and learning as well as factors influencing leadership development and practice.

Studying Perceptions

Lau (2017) contended that exploratory survey studies such as this one "are used to investigate and understand a particular issue or topic area without predetermined notions of the expected responses. The design is mostly qualitative in nature, seeking input from respondents with open-ended questions focused on why and/or how" (para. 6). Applicable insights were derived by analyzing first-person experiences of being taught and learning leadership; perspectives on leadership from people who serve as leaders in diverse capacities; and perspectives on leadership from those who are not in traditional leadership positions but who observe and interact with leaders.

Sampling

The researcher used purposive (non-random) sampling, which was a non-representative subgroup of a larger population and sampled for the specific purpose of exploring perceptions of leadership and leadership development in education organizational settings. Ary et al. (2019) defined purposive or judgement sampling as non-probability sampling based upon participant criteria such as

expertise, special knowledge, and willingness to participate in research on leadership. The researcher recognizes that typical opinions and attitudes may change over time.

There were 486 e-mail invitations sent to request participation in the online survey, and 132 participants agreed to participate in the survey for a response rate of 27.16%. Because this study's purpose is to gain insights on research questions with the use of individuals' perceptions and reports of first-hand experiences, response rate is less important than when researchers seek to measure effects or make generalizations about larger populations. Cook, Heath, & Thompson (2000) found in their meta-analysis of 68 web surveys a mean response rate of 39.6% for online surveys. Finchman found (2008) response rates of 25% or higher are generally typical and acceptable in survey research. This study's response rate aligns with its purpose to explore a topic and discover applicable insights via survey data.

Participants

One-hundred-thirty-two college, university, and K-12 faculty, staff, and administrators participated in the study. They were selected based on their positions at educational institutions, their interest in leadership topics, and their willingness to participate in research. Eighty-nine (67.42%) were administrators, 25 (18.94%) were faculty members, and 18 (13.64%) were staff. Forty-five (34.09%) were male, and 87 (65.91%) were female. These participants were selected to gain a better understanding of leadership development and attitudes about leadership in educational organizations.

Procedures

The researcher obtained faculty, staff, and administrator email addresses from diverse educational institutions representing the southeastern, northeastern, southwestern, midwestern, and western United States. These participants were invited via email to participate in the study and complete the survey via SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey program. The survey instrument presented a consent document prior to potential participants taking the survey. Clicking on the "agree" box of the consent document demonstrated consent to take the survey.

Quantitative Survey Instrument

Using the study's research questions and literature on leadership competencies, learning, and challenges (American Association for Community Colleges, 2018; Black, 2015; Carpenter-Hubin & Snover, 2013; Harnisch, 2019), the researcher developed an online survey questionnaire to gather perceptions of faculty, staff, and administrators at educational institutions on leadership and leadership development.

The survey consisted of 13 items. Four demographic, two Likert scale, two ranking, and five open-ended questions were included. Open-ended questions were coded and analyzed for frequencies of specific themes. Ranking questions were analyzed based on frequency and ranking of selections and categories added by participants. Likert scale questions were analyzed based on strength of attitude indication on the scale. Participants had the option to skip questions that were not applicable or that they elected not to answer.

Participants were asked about their positions at educational institutions; faculty, staff, and administrators were included. All others were excluded. Participants were asked their age, gender,

and ethnicity. Participants who were leaders responded to questions about their leadership preparation. Participants were asked to indicate whether leadership could be taught, to rank leadership competencies in order of importance, and to indicate the top three significant challenges leaders face. Participants also provided written responses, discussing leadership knowledge, leadership learning, the most significant areas where leaders need to improve, leadership professional development, and, if they had participated in leadership professional development, how that education manifested itself in their leadership work.

Quantitative Data Analyses

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used for the quantitative analysis of this research. Participant survey response data were imported from SurveyMonkey into SPSS files. Descriptive statistics were used for Likert scale and ranking questions about leadership learning, leadership preparedness, leadership competencies, and leadership challenges. Comment data were coded and subsequent themes emerged during the note-taking and coding processes. Responses to the Likert survey items used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree); missing responses or NA response received a score of "0." Ranking questions were scored based on frequency and ranking levels.

Overview of Quantitative Findings

Table 1
Leadership teachability ($N = 132$)

Leadership can be taught$_a$	n	%
Strongly Agree (5)	45	34.09
Agree (4)	69	52.27
Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	13	9.85
Disagree (2)	5	3.7
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0

$_a$ Mean = 4.24; SD = 0.722

Table 2
Leadership Preparedness ($N = 122$)

If a leader, I was prepared for leadership$_a$	N	%
Strongly agree (5)	27	22.13%
Agree (4)	64	52.46%
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	16	13.11%
Disagree (2)	2	1.64%
Strongly disagree (1)	13	10.66%

$_a$ Mean = 3.83; SD = 0.942

Table 3
Top three most significant leadership challenges

Leadership challenges	*n*	%
Dealing with personnel matters	94	71.76%
Navigating institutional, local, or state politics	84	64.12%
Managing complex budgets/managing budget cuts	58	44.27%
State mandates	48	36.64%
Turn-over in leadership positions	31	23.66%
Turn-over in faculty and staff positions	28	21.37%
Performance-based funding	27	20.61%
Other	18	13.74%

Discussion of Quantitative Findings

The majority (74.54%) of participants who were leaders reported being prepared for leadership positions. The majority (86.36%) of participants reported that leadership can be taught, with only 3.79% indicating that leadership is not a teachable skill. Participants reported that leadership can be learned through attending classes and workshops, pursuing degrees, being mentored by seasoned leaders, gaining on-the-job experience, and participating in leadership degree and development programs. Participants reported that some of the most important leadership skills and potential growth areas for leaders were communication and human relations skills. Participants emphasized the importance of experiential learning in leadership development.

Abilities to create positive work environments, communicate to constituent groups, lead change, and manage and supervise personnel were the top-ranked leadership competencies. Dealing with personnel matters; navigating institutional, local, and state politics; and managing complex budgets and budget cuts were listed as the top challenges leaders face. Open-ended responses suggested additional challenges leaders face such as compliance issues, unclear directives/goals, and internal and external relations. Participants suggested that leaders should possess effective interpersonal skills and the abilities to develop clear goals and execute strategic plans.

The percentage (74.54%) of current leader participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they were well prepared for leadership and the positive nature of responses from those who said they had engaged in some leadership education suggest that these participants' leadership education and experiences prepared them well for their leadership positions. This is a positive reflection on many current leadership development and degree programs. Although many leaders felt prepared, 12.3% of participants who were leaders disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were developed for leadership positions, and 13.11% neither agreed nor disagreed that they were well equipped for leadership positions. Those who were not leaders indicated "not applicable" and were not included in these percentages.

These results suggest that there is a need to prepare potential leaders more holistically. Participants discussed leadership development workshops, leadership coursework, on-the-job experiences, and mentoring opportunities that had assisted them on their leadership journeys. These are possible strategies for leadership development and education programs.

Discussion of Findings from Written Comments

The written comments provided addition insights about the teaching and learning of leadership and implications for leadership education pedagogy and curricula.

The Teaching and Learning of Leadership

In comments on leadership learning, there was a prominent theme of experience being the most effective method for learning leadership, especially related to facing challenges and learning from mistakes. A participant commented, "Leaders also learn by doing—making mistakes and learning from them is a powerful experience." The second most mentioned method of learning leadership was through being mentored by a colleague or superior. One comment mentioned: "A mentoring program. You meet with a leader you admire once a week to discuss different case studies and how to handle them." Nearly equivalent in comments for this question were observing others model good and bad behaviors, researching, and learning from formal education. One participant stressed that leadership learning occurred holistically over time: "People can learn leadership, but it takes time—not just a class or seminar. It's best taught over a lifetime of mentorship, taking a lead and making mistakes, learning from others' mistakes, and possibly direct instruction." Participants mentioned networking and working with others as ways to learn leadership. Few indicated that leadership is an innate ability. Prominent in these discussions were themes related to learning theories discussed in the literature review above. Engaging in real-world experience, reflecting, adjusting and adapting, and receiving support from more competent colleagues or supervisors were reported by participants as aiding in leadership development.

Leadership Education Manifestation in Work

Participants frequently reported that leadership education helped them to develop communication skills and human relations skills. Participants also reported leadership education led to improved leadership skills and the initial development of leadership skills. According to participants, leadership education led to greater self-reflection, the ability to see multiple and broader perspectives, and the development of relationships with mentors. One participant mentioned, "These opportunities have helped me to create a more positive environment, collaborate more often, and delegate responsibilities as needed." Another participant mentioned that "[It] improved my understanding of working with different types of people and how to engage them." Communication skills were often cited. A participant remarked, "I am willing to communicate differently or try something new based on a best practice." Human relations skills and teamwork mentioned in responses to this question and others reflect the social nature of leadership work and leadership learning.

Few participants mentioned that leadership education did not help them in their roles as leaders. According to one participant, "The [leadership] classes provided little value as none of the instructors had actually led a complex organization," suggesting the importance of leadership educators having significant leadership experience and using that experience in their teaching.

Areas Where Leaders Need Improvement

Participants reported that leaders needed improvement in people skills, emotional intelligence, supervision, leadership skills, communication, and the creation of positive work environment. Participants reported that leaders needed to be able to adapt to change and deal with difficult management and supervision issues. According to one participant, "Developing the ability to anticipate changes that may occur in the field and adapting plans and leadership skills to meet those changes." Another participant suggested that "cooperation and team building is the only way to handle complex management situations." The researcher noted this emphasis in human relations skills and emotional intelligence instead of technical skills such as managing budgets, fundraising, using technology, and strategic planning. This aligns with other studies suggesting the importance of emotional intelligence in educational leadership (Parrish, 2015; Sanchez-Nunez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015). One participant responded:

> Collaboration amongst departments is lacking. Often in higher ed there are silos
> amongst … areas instead of a cohesiveness. Leaders also do not listen well to their staff.
> They assume they know what is best because they are in the position that they are in instead
> of looking at staff as the vital parts of the engine that make everything work on a daily basis.

Comments also included themes of leaders' needing improvement in the areas of ego and ethics. Participants reported that leaders needed to develop greater senses of empathy and to demonstrate that they value people. This is not to say that participants did not value technical or management skills. One participant commented, "Time management, recognizing effective instruction, and data analysis to inform outcomes and data analysis to inform outcomes." Several mentioned budget and financial management, delegation, time management, and change management.

Professional Development to Help Leaders and Aspiring Leaders

Participants most frequently reported that formal leadership training in the form of degrees and specific leadership development programs helped leaders learn leadership. Specific types of leadership training mentioned were the following: human relations and communication skills professional development; the use of case studies and research; and specialized training in law, budgets, policy, planning, conflict resolution, and time management. Formal educational programs were often suggested. Participants frequently suggested that mentorship and on-the-job training and experience were important in professionally developing leaders. One participant reported, "Opportunities for relationship-based professional development and practice-based coaching would be the most beneficial." Another reported, "Give them hands-on opportunities - SHOW them what works, and then explain WHY. Have them shadow stand-out leaders and see success in action." Participants responded in ways that align with social learning theories and experiential learning theories such as Bandura's (1977) and Guthrie and Jones' (2012). Participants suggest that learning leadership occurs through closely working with others, gaining meaningful experiences related to their work lives, and then having opportunities to apply their learning to their own leadership practices.

What Learners Need to Know and Be Able to Do

Participants detailed many specific aspects of leadership that they deemed important. Participants reported that leaders need to develop the following abilities: construct an organizational vision, be

transparent, follow through, make unpopular decisions when necessary, communicate clear expectations, avoid ego-driven behavior, prioritize, use data, and involve others in decision making when appropriate. Similar to responses to other survey questions, communication and human relations skills were often mentioned. A participant reported, "Effective communication and listening skills are a must. Not only do people need to be able to communicate but they need to be good listeners and followers as well in order to be a good leader." Participants noted that leaders needed to listen, communicate well, collaborate effectively with diverse groups, and develop trusting relationships with constituents. Reflecting and acting upon feedback were also themes. The following were representative comments: "Need to know the importance of being wrong about something and acknowledging it to staff." "They need know how to participate in reflection and reflective supervision." Participants reported that leaders need to be able to engage in significant amounts of self-reflection by recognizing weaknesses, receiving and using feedback, and acknowledging mistakes.

Implications for Future Research and Leadership Development Programs

Every business and organization has leaders. Leadership skills are crucial to organizations' successes and people's livelihoods. Education leaders and others have described a crisis in leadership because of retirements in the coming decade, the demand for effective leaders, and the need for preparation and professional development of those who will enter leadership positions (Young et al., 2018). These findings have implications for leadership educators, for leaders who wish to improve their skills, and for those seeking best practices for teaching and learning leadership. For participants in this study, learning leadership through experience was essential and helped them develop emotional intelligence, communication skills, and cultural intelligence, and experience prepared them for future challenges.

Several key implications include the importance of human relations skill development, ethical development, mentorship, opportunities to learn leadership in on-the-job or realistic contexts, self-reflection, and leadership development programs that provide theoretical and practical frameworks for leadership. Leadership educators may apply these insights to their curricular designs and pedagogical approaches. Buchanan (2017) contended, "the skills and capacities required of professors are different for active learning as they create a container, or psychological holding space, in order for students to learn, resist, challenge assumptions and try on ideas like new clothes" (p. 605). These new or adapted approaches may require both instructors and students to push the boundaries of traditional leadership classrooms. McMahone (2012) suggested that while ethics education is a prominent part of business and management school training, the regularity of leaders' ethical lapses calls into question the effectiveness of such training. McMahone argued for the need for the development of servant leadership rather than reliance on traditional ethics education. Faculty, for example, may create assignments or curricula that require active engagement inside and outside of the classroom environment such as through service learning, real-world projects, opportunities for students to lead groups, and internships. The emphases on experiential education, service learning, and critical reflection facilitate students' holistic development as ethical, competent, servant leaders.

Further research may examine the application of these findings on leadership education curricula and pedagogy. Possibilities for educational leadership programs include the following: implementing mentorship programs, integrating more experiential curricula related to ethics, creating internships to provide real-world experiences such as those related to budgeting or dealing

with political/personnel scenarios, and integrating self-reflection and human relations skills into curricula. Critical to the subsequent development and measurement of metrics for the effectiveness of such pedagogy and curricula is the examination of how leadership education is reflected in leadership students' leadership practices.

While debates may continue about whether leadership can be taught and how leadership is learned, participants in this study largely reported that leadership can be taught, and many described how they were taught and learned leadership. Although some may have certain charismatic or other personality characteristics that aid them in their leadership trajectories, participants frequently reported that leadership education programs assisted them in developing several critical leadership competency areas such as communication and human relations skills.

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