

Chapter 8

Authentic Leadership Being Shared as a Collective

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions are embracing virtual meetings with practitioners teaming up to tackle a wide range of issues in higher education. Ironically, the case of this multidisciplinary research team has been learning to successfully collaborate for years prior to the pandemic. The initial analysis compared the team's development to competencies described as a combination of data, technological, and human literacies – termed humanics. This chapter moves the discussion to examine shared competency, shared authority, and authentic leadership. Authentic leadership is not a characteristic held by one team member but can be observed across the team. In the closing of this chapter, the researchers will offer insights based on analysis from participating in the psychological safety index and examples of how a team can develop authentic leadership, grow as a collective, along with impacting the emerging field of digital humanities.

INTRODUCTION

Will higher education leadership practices ever be the same again post-pandemic? The chapter *Understanding Leadership within Higher Education: How Community Resilience Strengthens Humanics Across*

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Team Collaborations (2020) was written prior to the pandemic, and shared teamwork experiences from researchers on a multi-year interdisciplinary team of faculty from Brazil, India, and across different regions of the United States. Their disciplines cover analytics, business, communication studies, computer science, humanities and writing comprehension. The shared voices described in that chapter were a rare find prior to 2020. More recently, a new normal has emerged across higher education bringing with it a common place for virtual meetings with practitioners teaming up to tackle a wide range of issues in higher education. Ironically, the case of this multidisciplinary research team has been learning to successfully collaborate for years. What has been the team's major learning within the context of higher education? The initial analysis of our prior work compared the team's development to competencies described as a combination of data, technological, and human literacies – termed humanics. This chapter moves the discussion to examine shared competency, shared authority, and authentic leadership as it arises from a team-based context. Authentic leadership is not a characteristic held by one team member but can be observed in the distributed leadership qualities found across a skilled team of experts organized by the principles of a community of practice. In the closing of this chapter, the researchers will offer insights based on analysis from participating in the psychological safety index (Edmondson, 2018) and examples of how a team can develop and study authentic leadership, grow as a collective, along with impacting the emerging field of digital humanities.

AUTONOMOUS GLOBAL VIRTUAL LEARNING

As higher education strategizes learning modalities and teaching assignments within broader remote learning opportunities, there are new dynamics to be considered. The research team discussed in this chapter are composed of both non-tenure track and tenure track educators. Traditionally, the tenure-track professional is often idealized as a knowledge worker privileged with intellectual freedom in their research. At times there can be friction in the traditional model, where administrators might seek funding and manage the ecosystem's research strategy. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has grown in various forms, expanding resource networks, connecting fellow researchers, and opening big data opportunities. While academics can indeed tap into these “digital communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1999; Horan & Wells, 2005) in an autonomous fashion—they are doing so largely independently of their home institution's vision. How do academic leaders in higher education effectively apply their resources for decision making in a way that balances the demands of administration with disciplinary needs and wants? Moreover, how do they maintain and improve upon their own digital network of research? Especially within specific fields, such as the digital humanities (DH), where they may be studying digital community networks themselves?

Many institutions are now encouraging creative models of shared leadership with teams tackling complex problems in order to keep up with increased administrative demands while still progressing in their field of study (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). With regards to the authoring research team, we identify as an interdisciplinary team of faculty within higher education institutions across the globe: Brazil, India, and the United States. The team initially formed two by two from different networking opportunities at academic conferences. Two original members of the team recognized shared interests, aptitudes, and curiosities, and they proceeded to invite an additional member bringing specific expertise and varying perspectives. The partnership grew from two to six over four years as the dynamics of the research became more complex. Interestingly, each member of this team is collaborating voluntarily unfunded by their

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