Chapter 87

Student Perceptions of Learning Digital Literacy Online in a Leadership Program

Hua Bai

Northeastern Illinois University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a study that examined student perceptions of taking a digital literacy class online and its effects on the development of leadership skills in relation to the use of technology. It was found that, in general, the participants tended to be satisfied with this online class. Their perceptions of different types of interactions were discussed. The participants tended to perceive that this class was effective in developing their knowledge and skills in using technology to enact leadership practice. The results have implications in online teaching and learning, group projects and technology learning in leadership development.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges that educational leaders face in the 21st century include "Globalization and cultural blend", "Ever changing technologies", "Education as a public good or commodities", "Any way maximize the profit", and "Learning at the age of chaos" (Luqman, Farhan, Shahzad, & shaheen, 2012, pp.197-198). These challenges urge the educators, scholars and practitioners to consider how to better prepare educational leaders to meet the needs in this century (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014). The quality of leadership preparation that the candidates received could influence their subsequent leadership practice and leadership outcome (Orr, 2011; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). In university-based leadership programs, it is important for leadership educators to examine the teaching practice to improve course design and delivery.

Leadership education is defined as "a series of training interventions designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals interested in engaging in leadership" (Allen & Roberts, 2011, p. 67). Since one of the challenges that educational leaders face is the rapid development of technology, it

is necessary for leadership programs to help the candidates to develop the knowledge and skills in using technology to effectively practice leadership.

This chapter reports a study that examined students' perceptions of learning in an online digital literacy class in a leadership program. This class is intended to foster digital literacy among students as it applies to educational leadership practice. Overall, the students tended to be satisfied with learning online in the class and perceive that this class was effective in developing their knowledge and skills in using technology to enact leadership practice. In the following sections, the background information in current literature, research purpose, methods, results and discussions, implications and recommendations are presented.

BACKGROUND

Technology and Leadership

Digital literacy is considered important skills in this age. This calls for new competencies of leaders and requires that they lead in the 21ˢᵗ century through fluent use of technology. Like other types of intelligence, such as intelligence quotient and emotional intelligence, digital intelligence is what great leaders need to possess in this new age. Being digitally intelligent means that one understands the reason to use technology, knows different types of technology, makes appropriate selections, effectively uses the technology and has good judgment about the use (Heath, Martin, & Shahisaman, 2017). Using digital literacy concept and social change model, Ahlquist (2014) proposed a digital leadership framework by listing 10 competencies that a digital leader should demonstrate. One competency is "Integration of Digital Technologies into Leadership Presence" (p. 59).

Some research articles discussed the use of digital technologies by leaders. Social media tools such as blogs, wikis, Twitter and Facebook were reported to be used by leaders (Schrum & Levin, 2016). Sauers and Richardson (2015) found that K-12 school leaders used Twitter to create their own communities of practice in education. The topics of their tweets included the use of educational technology, communication with the local community, leadership and sharing resources and conferences information. Being able to use social media for information dissemination and communication is important for the leaders in the 21ˢᵗ century. It was reported that leaders used Twitter to build deeper connections with the followers, share opinions and act as role models (Ingerson & Bruce, 2013). McLeod (2015) suggested school administrators use a targeted discussion protocol, the Technology-Rich Unit Design and Classroom Observation Template, to foster robust conversations about meaningful use of technology. To develop creative and innovative leadership capacity in an organization, simulations, social media, e-mentoring techniques and using technologies to provide multisource feedback were recommended to help leaders to develop requisite knowledge and skills (Antes & Schuelke, 2011).

Technology Use in Leadership Education

When discussing the impact of technology on leadership development, Hoffman and Vorhies (2017) proposed the concept of leadership 2.0 to echo the shift from web 1.0 to web 2.0. They argued that in this digital age, "educators and students, as well as leaders and followers, must engage in read-write efforts to create organizations and communities of action that are inclusive and integrative of physical

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/student-perceptions-of-learning-digital-literacy-online-in-a-leadership-program/312806

Related Content

Virtual Reality Considerations for Curriculum Development and Online Instruction
Andrew C. Lawlor, Cassandra Smith, Patricia Steele, Elizabeth Anne Johnstonand Sonja M. Lamppa (2021). *Curriculum Development and Online Instruction for the 21st Century (pp. 20-37).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/virtual-reality-considerations-for-curriculum-development-and-online-instruction/284681

A Proposed Performance-Based System for Teacher Interactive Electronic Continuous Professional Development (TIE-CPD)
Rafiza Abdul Razak, Farrah Dina Yusop, Aizal Yusrina Idrisand Siti Hajar Halili (2016). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (pp. 35-45).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-proposed-performance-based-system-for-teacher-interactive-electronic-continuous-professional-development-tie-cpd/168546

Web-Based Instruction Revolutionizes Environmental Systems Analysis
Gilbert Ahamer (2016). *Revolutionizing Education through Web-Based Instruction (pp. 162-185).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-based-instruction-revolutionizes-environmental-systems-analysis/146939

Using iREAD in Understanding Online Reading Strategies Applied by Science and Technology Students
Ruhil Amal Azmuddin, Nor Fariza Mohd Norand Afendi Hamat (2018). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (pp. 18-32).*
www.irma-international.org/article/using-iread-in-understanding-online-reading-strategies-applied-by-science-and-technology-students/205549

Program Execution and Visualization on the Web
C. Pareja-Floresand J. A. Velazquez-Iturbide (2003). *Web-Based Education: Learning from Experience (pp. 236-259).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/program-execution-visualization-web/31305