Formative Assessment II

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My meandering leadership journey began with reluctance as I preferred to work in the background. I fully accepted my leadership identity during the course of the first year of this program as a result of the exploration of my personality type, learning style, and the feedback from my peers regarding my leadership (link to *Personal Inventory* and *360 Feedback*). As I continue to learn how to be an intentional leader, I recognize the necessity of honest reflection on my practice in light of new knowledge and skills gained over the past two years of course readings, assignments, and group interactions. In this paper, I offer the results of my reflections as evidence of my growth, strengths, and weaknesses as a researcher, writer, and team member since embarking on the path to educational leadership.

Researcher

I developed an appreciation of evidence-informed practice as a result of my social work education and training. My ability to critically analyze and draw insightful conclusions derives from being a logical thinker (*Executive summary*). This program afforded me the opportunity to produce original research for a local independent school about perception of inclusion among its student body and faculty *(Diversity audit)*. I began exploring the promise of social and emotional learning to address approaches to discipline in my professional context this summer (*The Promise of SEL*). Based on equity-oriented organizational change theories I learned in the fall, I am planning to expand on this initial research to determine how to implement social and emotional learning in a private faith-based school with a homogenous population (*Change reflection*).

In spite of the strengths and growth as a researcher, there are still areas in which I strive to improve. I am still learning to maximize my time in the literature review phase of the research process. I spend too much time searching for the "right" sources. As a result, I rush through formulating practice implications, recommendations, and conclusions (*Teacher Education Towards LGBTQ Equity*). I will address how my inordinate time doing the literature review impacts my writing process below. I am learning that it is perfectly acceptable to leave some research sources undiscovered. In addition, I am still learning to craft a researchable question and apply appropriate statistical formulas to research data (link to Secondary analysis paper, potential research question).

Writer

I have enjoyed writing since I learned how to read. I write confidently in a structured and organized manner. I tend toward conciseness and directness as I believe an economy of words is easier to understand for the reader. I have published an article on single parents' ministry. Most recently, I edited and published a book compilation as part of a ministry project. However, I do not effectively plan for editing and drafting in my academic writing process despite my writing and editing experience. As previously mentioned, I also spend too much time finding sources of data during the literature review phase of research. I underestimate the amount of time required to fully explore my thoughts prior to writing for research assignments. At times, my academic writing contains minor grammatical errors, APA style errors, and nascent ideas that could be further cultivated (*Personal Inventory*, *Kathryn's team*, *Leadership observation paper*).

I would like to be consistent in my ability to produce quality papers (contrast link to Diversity Audit with Ethics final paper). I learned the value of producing multiple drafts this past summer (link to 715 first & final draft). One of my goals for growth during this spring term is to

discover how to build editing into my writing process particularly when I have competing deadlines and demands. Strategies I have already identified toward this goal include a plan for writing assignments that incorporate drafting for feedback from a cohort member, limiting the amount of time spent during the literature review phase, and sharpening my database skills to produce more accurate search results.

Team Member

I developed the habit of focusing solely on achieving group task goals due to negative group experience during my undergraduate career in which a member did not contribute to the work of the group. I had a preference for working alone or working on teams that require minimal collaboration. However, I learned the value of working with creative team members who sparked my creativity working on group presentations (*Daddy's room presentation, Leading Change book review*). My growth as a team member is reflected in learning to use my team connections as a resource rather than simply as a means to accomplish an assignment. My strengths as a team member is based on fulfilling my commitment, providing direction and encouragement, and synthesizing team ideas into the big picture that aligns with the overarching group goals.

There is more room for growth as I learn to be more vocal regarding my perspective without taking over the work of the team. I am practicing consensus-building rather than stepping back when team members are more forceful in their approach to communicating their ideas. I am learning to trust the process of teamwork, using conflict to positively resolve differences of opinion.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, I have discovered the educational leadership journey is more than the attainment of theoretical frameworks, skills in statistical analysis, and intellectual acuity. Emotional intelligence, social awareness, vulnerability, and self-awareness influence the application of knowledge and intellectual analysis. It seems leading systematic change is best undertaken by people who are intimately familiar with what it takes to change from personal experience. In other words, changed people change people. History is replete with stories of leaders whose practice do not reflect their ideals. As I reflect on my growth, strengths and weaknesses, I remember that perfect practice is not required. Reflective practice, however, is essential to becoming the intentional leader I aspire to be.