

Who Teaches Leadership? A Comparative Analysis of Faculty and Student Affairs Leadership Educators and Implications for Leadership Learning

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Abstract

This study combines multiple national datasets on leadership educator demographics, education, positions, and experiences, in order to answer the question: Who teaches leadership? Comparing leadership educators across both curricular and co-curricular contexts allows a snapshot of the diverse perspectives of leadership educators and informs a set of critical questions and challenges for the field. Questions about the preparation and socialization of leadership educators, the development of pathways for faculty from traditionally underserved backgrounds, and the multiple roles and identities of leadership educators merit further investigation.

Introduction

The International Leadership Association (ILA) Directory of Leadership Program lists more than 1,500 leadership programs, yet little is known about the educators who teach in these programs. Literature about leadership educators has been limited to descriptions of preferred pedagogies, approaches, and background/training, or embedded within larger inquiries into programmatic best practices (e.g., Allen & Hartman, 2009; Eich, 2008; Ganz & Lin, 2012; Jenkins, 2012; Owen, 2012). According to Snook, Khurana, and Nohoria (2012) “leadership education is currently populated by a loosely coupled collection of wildly diverse, well-intentioned, but poorly organized gaggle of scholars and practitioners” (p. xiv). Affirmatively, those who teach leadership hail from a variety of disciplines and bring with them a mixed bag of personal, professional, and educational experiences.

One issue in studying leadership educators has been the lack of a clear definition of what is meant by “leadership education,” leading to a confounding of curricular, co-curricular, and

community-based leadership development experiences. The National Leadership Education Research Agenda (NLERA) defines leadership education as “the pedagogical practice of facilitating leadership learning in an effort to build human capacity and is informed by leadership theory and research... it values and is inclusive of both curricular and co-curricular educational contexts” (Andenoro et al., 2013, p. 3). Leadership educators are, “individuals in higher education instructional and/or programmatic roles who teach leadership in credit or non-credit based programs” (Seemiller & Priest, 2015, p. 133). Correspondingly, the data presented here is inclusive of leadership educators who operate in multiple contexts within the confines of higher education institutions.

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Literature Review

The topic of leadership has been studied in numerous ways depending on disciplinary perspectives (Riggio, 2011a, p. 4). Suitably, there are a wide number and range of textbooks on leadership, authored by scholars from multiple disciplines (Riggio, 2011b, p. 11). While the vast majority of authors of textbooks used in courses on leadership hail from management/business (Riggio, 2011b, p. 11), other leadership textbook authors include scholars with doctoral degrees in Higher Education, College Student Services, or Educational Administration and Supervision (e.g., Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013), and one of the most popular ancillary texts -- a book of readings on leadership -- is edited by a historian (Wren, 1995). Correspondingly, the backgrounds of those who teach leadership are similarly diverse.

There are emerging pictures of those who are engaged in the work of leadership education. A recent study on the instructional strategy use of 303 leadership educators who had taught an academic credit-bearing face-to-face undergraduate leadership studies course in the United States between 2008-2010, described leadership educators as follows:

The majority of participants were white (83.8%) and female (54.8%). Also, 58.4% had doctorates, 38.6% had master’s degrees, and 60.2% reported having more than five years of teaching experience. Perhaps surprisingly, only 7.9% of the participants had terminal degrees in leadership or leadership studies. Instead, degrees in organizational studies (13.9%); higher education (12.9%); college student affairs, development, or personnel (12.2%); and miscellaneous education-related degrees (11.6%) were more prominent. Participants’ primary activity at their institutions was teaching (46.2%), student affairs (23.4%), or administration (19.5%). In addition, 95% of participants taught at a 4-year public or private university or college. ... and 74.3% reported taking graduate coursework in leadership. (Jenkins, 2013a, p. 52)

These demographics invite numerous questions about the level of consistency and preparedness of leadership educators. Snook et al., (2012) purport that:

Many of today's most popular leadership courses are delivered by external consultants, senior lecturers, and adjunct faculty, all largely marginalized members of the academy who were either denied tenure or had broken ranks with their 'more academic colleagues' in order to teach leadership. More still are being taught by former practitioners who attained iconic status as successful leaders and now want to share their wisdom, secure their legacies, or cash in on their success. (p. xiv - xv)

Leadership educators may also include a wide range of practitioners, including community educators, peer leaders, coaches and consultants, student affairs professionals, and leadership training officers ("About ALE," n.d.). Correspondingly, leadership education activities both transcend professional contexts from the military (Thomas & Gentzler, 2013) to healthcare education (Hess, 2013) and higher education (Jenkins, 2013b) as well as disciplinary contexts from the social sciences (Perruci, 2013) to STEM (Kotnour, Koekstra, Reilly, Knight, & Selter, 2013) and agricultural education (Velez, Moore, Bruce, & Stephens, 2013) to curricular and co-curricular partnerships (Buschlen & Guthrie, 2013; Jenkins & Harvey, 2013;). The vast array of disciplinary backgrounds may or may not have adequately prepared individuals with direct content and pedagogical knowledge essential to leadership education and development (Owen, 2012). The plurality of types of educators invites questions about professional identity.

Professional Identity. Professional identities are closely tied to the preparatory and professional development activities that acculturate individuals to a particular profession. According to a systematic review of the higher education literature on professional identity development by Trede, Macklin, and Bridges (2011), these activities include, "learning professional roles, understanding workplace cultures, commencing the professional socialization process and educating towards citizenship" (p. 1). Trede et al., define professional identity as a, "self-image which permits feelings of personal adequacy and satisfaction in the performance of the expected role" (2011, p. 10). Moreover, adequacy and satisfaction are gained as the individual develops values and behavior patterns consistent with society's expectations of members of that profession. Professional identity occurs when a member of a profession develops the attitudes, beliefs, and standards which support the practitioner role, the development of an identity as a member of the profession, and a clear understanding of the responsibilities of being a professional in said field (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2011). This invites questions as to what exactly is a leadership educator identity.

Leadership Educator Identity. Though explorations of student leadership identity are numerous, the identity development of leadership educators has only very recently been explored in the literature (e.g., Seemiller & Priest, 2015). Mabey (2013) suggests that a critical approach "requires those who are conducting leadership development to consider how their own leadership identities are being constituted and maintained, and to apply these criticisms to themselves as facilitators" (p. 14). Likewise, Andenoro et al. (2013) propose that, "prior to working with students around issues of social identity, educators must commit deeply to their own ongoing development" (p. 20). Likewise, if we teach leadership by practicing it, that is, accepting

responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty (Ganz & Lin, 2012, p. 357-358), then we must acknowledge that leadership educators hold in tension dual roles of teacher and leader (Jenkins & Sowcik, 2014; Seemiller & Priest, 2015). This begs the question of what developmental structures exist in order to prepare leadership educators for this work.

Standards and Credentialing. The literature is scant of any consensus on the credentialing of those who teach leadership. And, with the exception of Jenkins's (2012, 2013, 2014, & in press) snapshots of leadership educators embedded within research on teaching and learning leadership, little scholarship exists providing any direction on preparatory activities. In fact, limited attention has been directed toward the requisite skills of those designing and delivering leadership education programs (Andenoro et al., 2013), though professional standards documents enumerate preferred qualifications of leadership educators.

As any profession evolves and develops, attempts at standardization emerge. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) developed *Standards for Student Leadership Programs* (SLPs) which attempt to codify the core concepts of leadership education and make claims about the necessity of leadership educator preparedness (2009). Part four of the SLPs necessitates that staff or faculty involved in leadership programs should possess a myriad of backgrounds and experiences. These are outlined in Figure 1.

Leadership educators should have:

- knowledge of the history and current trends in leadership theories, models, and philosophies;
- an understanding of the contextual nature of leadership;
- knowledge of organizational development, group dynamics, strategies for change, and principles of community;
- knowledge of how social identities and dimensions of diversity influence leadership;
- the ability to work with diverse range of students;
- the ability to create, implement and evaluate student learning as a result of leadership programs;
- the ability to effectively organize learning opportunities that are consistent with students' stages of development;
- the ability to use reflection in helping students understand leadership concepts;
- the ability to develop and assess student learning outcomes.

Figure 1. "Standards for Student Leadership Programs" (SLPs) Suggested Competencies for Leadership Educators

What is more surprising is the number of foundational documents for leadership education that fail to address the issue of leadership educator preparedness. For example, the ILA's *Guiding Questions: Guidelines for Leadership Education Programs* (2009) consist of five sections of questions that are thought to be essential for curriculum development, instructional effectiveness, and quality enhancement through assessment. These five sections are: (a) Context;

(b) Conceptual Framework; (c) Content; (d) Teaching and Learning; and (e) Outcomes and Assessment (ILA, 2009). Yet, none of these sections address the issue of leadership educator credentialing or preparedness. Additionally, the NLERA (Andenoro et al., 2013) proposes priorities to guide future scholarship related to the development of future leaders, but offers only scant consideration about the role of the leadership educator stating:

Education associated with multicultural competence, critical approaches to research and theory building, and understanding the influences of social identity must begin with leadership educators (Munin & Dugan, 2011)... Prior to working with students around issues of social identity, educators must commit deeply to their own ongoing development. (p. 20).

Thus, there are signposts that indicate that leadership educator identity, preparedness, and professional orientation makes a difference to student learning, but more data is needed if an accurate picture of who teaches leadership is to emerge.

Method

The purpose of this study is to combine multiple national datasets on leadership educators demographics, education, positions, and experiences in order to answer the question ‘who teaches leadership?’. Comparing leadership educator demographics across both curricular and co-curricular contexts allows a snapshot of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of leadership educators, and informs a set of critical challenges for the field.

Survey A: A National Survey of Leadership Educator Instructional & Assessment Strategy Use. Survey A consists of a web-based questionnaire through an international study that targeted thousands of leadership studies instructors through three primary sources from March 31, 2013, through May 3, 2013 (see Jenkins, 2014). The first source was the organizational memberships or databases of the following professional associations/organizations or their respective member interest groups: (a) the ILA; (b) the Association of Leadership Educators (ALE); (c) NASPA (Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education) Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC); and (d) the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP). The second source was the attendee list of the 2012 Leadership Educators Institute (LEI), an innovative bi-annual conference-like forum geared specifically towards new to mid-level student affairs professionals and leadership educators who coordinate, shape, and evaluate leadership courses and programs, create co-curricular leadership development opportunities and experiment with new technologies for doing so. The third source was a random sample of instructors drawn from the ILA Directory of Leadership Programs, a searchable directory of leadership programs available to all ILA members.

While the first and second sources were more so “shotgun approaches,” they were also more likely to include ideal participants. While the ILA member database, ILA Directory of Leadership Programs, and LEI Attendee list provided access to members or attendees respectively, the researcher did not have access to the individual e-mails for the NASPA SLPKC, ALE, and NCLP groups. And, while the latter did send out invitation e-mails to participate in this study’s survey to their respective listservs, return rates are not available due to the undisclosed

number of recipients. Nonetheless, the return rates for the ILA member directory (12.57%), ILA Directory of Leadership programs (11.25%), and LEI (25.08%) were promising. Overall, these data collection procedures provided the researcher with the best possible sources to generalize the population.

However, in order to provide an ideal population for comparison with the MSL-IS, data for participants outside the U.S. as well as those who reported teaching graduate courses was removed from the findings presented here. The questionnaire was modeled after the approach used by Jenkins (2012 & 2013) to collect data identifying the most frequently used instructional strategies for teaching face-to-face leadership studies courses to undergraduates. In this study, the survey instrument was used to collect demographic information to profile the participants and identify the most frequently used instructional and assessment strategies for teaching leadership courses. (For further information about pedagogy, please see: Jenkins, 2012, 2013, 2014, and in press.)

Survey B: The Multi-institutional Study of Leadership - Institutional Survey (MSL-IS). The Multi-institutional Study of Leadership - Institutional Survey (MSL-IS) is a companion research study to the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) that assesses college student leadership development at institutions of higher education (Owen, 2012). The MSL-IS draws on theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives related to the design and delivery of leadership education programs (Komives et al., 2011; Owen, 2012; Roberts & Ullom, 1990; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). The study employs a purposeful sample of institutions with survey data collected from personnel (i.e., a single, full-time employee responsible for leadership education at each designated campus). Data attempt to capture structural elements of leadership education programs (e.g., staffing, funding, curriculum, learning outcomes, educational background) and to examine how leadership programs are structured, coordinated, and designed, as well as how this varies by institutional type. All institutions that enrolled as participants in the 2009 MSL study were also asked to complete the MSL-IS companion survey. There were 108 institutional participants in the 2009 MSL, and of those, 104 completed the MSL-IS yielding a response rate of 96.2%. Of the 104 completed surveys, 95 were from four-year institutions and comprise the data set for Survey B in this study.

Limitations

This research has several limitations. In addition to the diverse sample sizes and response rates, the study makes use of two datasets where samples were limited to leadership educators who work only in undergraduate contexts, not including two-year institutions such as community colleges and professional schools. Additionally, the two samples--surveys A and B--have the potential for overlap since both studies targeted similarly situated leadership educators. Moreover, individuals potentially profiled twice would be included in the data presented here at two stages in their careers, i.e., 2009 and 2013. Finally, all included data is self-report in nature.

Findings & Implications

This study compares national datasets examining leadership educator demographics, education, preparedness, and time in the field across both curricular and co-curricular contexts. It

provides a snapshot of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of leadership educators though should not be taken as a complete representation of the field of leadership education. Comparisons of leadership educators from predominantly academic affairs backgrounds (Survey A) with those from predominantly student affairs backgrounds (Survey B) reveal differences informed by context and inform a set of critical challenges for the field.

As shown in Table 1, there are gender differences across type of role function. For example, there are more male instructional faculty in Survey A (45.5%, $n = 161$), as compared to Survey B (34.6%, $n = 36$). And, there are more female co-curricular leadership educators in Survey B (65.4%, $n = 68$), as compared to Survey A (45.5%, $n = 161$). These gender differences may be indicative of a chilly climate for women in particular disciplinary or institutional settings (O'Brien et al., 2015; Lester, 2008), especially as it relates to tenure-track positions in leadership. These data could also result from the potentially-gendered counseling-basis that serves as the foundation for many student affairs preparation programs.

Though limitations in Survey B do not allow for comparing information on race/ethnicity across sampled populations, a closer look at data from Survey A in Table 1 surfaces that leadership educators overwhelmingly identify as White (85%, $n = 301$). This is likely a residual effect of traditional exclusionary approaches to leadership. Perhaps the field of leadership education has not gone far enough to challenge hegemonic views of leadership or create multiple diverse pathways for equity and inclusion of educators from diverse backgrounds.

Table 1
Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age of Participants in Surveys A & B

Characteristic	Survey A (<i>N</i> = 354)		Survey B (<i>N</i> = 95)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Female	187	52.8	62	65.3
Male	161	45.5	33	34.7
I prefer not to answer	5	1.4	0	0
Other (please specify)	1	.3	0	0
Not included in 2009 MSL				
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black	23	6.5	N/A	N/A
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	.3	N/A	N/A
Asian or Pacific Islander	4	1.1	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latino	10	2.8	N/A	N/A
White/Caucasian	301	85.0	N/A	N/A
I prefer not to answer	7	2.0	N/A	N/A
Other (please specify)	8	2.3	N/A	N/A
Not included in 2009 MSL				
Age				
18 to 24	3	.8	N/A	N/A
25 to 34	76	21.5	N/A	N/A
35 to 44	81	22.9	N/A	N/A
45 to 54	81	22.9	N/A	N/A
55 to 64	82	23.2	N/A	N/A
65 to 74	26	7.3	N/A	N/A
I prefer not to answer	5	1.4	N/A	N/A

As presented in Table 2, the broader survey of leadership educators (Survey A) revealed that a little more than half (55.6%, *n* = 197) of all respondents had post-baccalaureate coursework in education, while this degree profile was more prevalent in the survey of co-curricular leadership educators (86.3%, *n* = 82). Leadership educators are expected to be skilled at the design of engaged pedagogy, integrative learning experiences, and intentional learning communities, yet many have no formal training or preparation for such experiences

Similarly, only 66.4% of Survey A participants (*n* = 235) had any post-baccalaureate coursework on leadership training and development, and only 47.4% of the Survey B co-curricular leadership educators (*n* = 45) had significant coursework on leadership. Meanwhile, the field of leadership scholarship is growing exponentially. There is strong indication that either a large percentage of leadership educators are not informed about the historical and emerging scholarly foundations of the field or leadership educators are left to their own devices to self-educate about the leadership canon. If effective leadership education includes a commitment to evidenced-based practice, then more complex understandings of the levers of leadership learning

(high impact practices including service-learning, mentoring, socio-cultural conversations, etc.) are necessary (Owen, 2015).

Table 2

Post-baccalaureate Coursework of Participants in Surveys A & B

Survey Question	Survey A (N = 354)		Survey B (N = 95)	
	n	%	n	%
Did any of your post-baccalaureate studies include significant coursework on leadership theory or development?				
Yes	235	66.4	45	47.4
No	119	33.6	50	52.6
Did any of your post-baccalaureate studies focus on the study of higher education, student development, or related field?				
Yes	197	55.6	82	86.3
No	157	44.4	13	13.7

While a predominance of respondents in Survey A had earned a doctoral degree (61.3%, $n = 217$), their co-curricular peers overwhelmingly have master's degrees as the highest level of degree attainment (73.7%, $n = 70$). This reveals the differential preparation and credentialing required of leadership educators across departmental and student life settings. Though there is not comparable data from Survey B, Survey A reflects the extensive diversity of educational backgrounds of curricular leadership educators. These wide varieties of disciplines likely communicate diverse values, scholarship, applications, and pedagogies related to leadership.

Table 3
Terminal Degree and Degree Area of Participants in Surveys A & B

Characteristic	Survey A (<i>N</i> = 354)		Survey B (<i>N</i> = 95)	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Terminal Degree				
Doctorate	217	61.3	24	25.3
Master's (M.A., M.S., M.F.A., M.B.A., etc.)	129	36.4	70	73.7
Bachelor's (B.A., B.S., etc.)	5	1.4	N/A	N/A
Other (please specify)	3	.8	1	1.0
	(<i>n</i> = 350)		Not included in 2009 MSL	
Degree Area				
Leadership	34	9.7	N/A	N/A
College Student Affairs, Development, or Personnel	34	9.7	N/A	N/A
Higher Education	33	9.4	N/A	N/A
Ed Leadership/Admin	27	7.7	N/A	N/A
Management/MBA	24	6.9	N/A	N/A
Education	21	6.0	N/A	N/A
Agriculture	20	5.7	N/A	N/A
Humanities	20	5.7		
Org Leadership	16	4.6	N/A	N/A
Communication	16	4.6	N/A	N/A
Behavioral Sciences	15	4.3	N/A	N/A
Public Admin and Policy	12	3.4	N/A	N/A
STEM	11	3.1	N/A	N/A
Psychology	10	2.9	N/A	N/A
I/O Psych	9	2.6	N/A	N/A
Business (non-management)	9	2.6	N/A	N/A
Organizational Behavior	6	1.7	N/A	N/A
Organizational Studies	6	1.7	N/A	N/A

As presented in Table 4, more respondents from both Survey A (60.7%, *n* = 235) and Survey B (52.9%, *n* = 55) hold positions at public universities. This may speak to the origins of leadership studies in departments of agriculture, business, and other professional schools more common at public land grant institutions. It is heartening to see that almost 46.3% (*n* = 164) of respondents to Survey A identify as full time faculty while only 7.9% (*n* = 28) list their primary affiliation as adjunct or part-time faculty, belling the national trend towards increased outsourcing of teaching.

The remaining 21.8% (*n* = 77) identify as staff, and a surprising number (15.3 %, *n* = 54) describe their roles as a combination of faculty and staff. Only 3.2% of respondents to Survey B identify as faculty, despite the fact that many teach in credit-bearing leadership programs. The majority of individuals working from co-curricular perspectives identify as administrators or staff members (82.1%, *n* = 78). Yet, similar to Survey A, 12.6% (*n* = 12) identify as having dual

professional identities as both faculty and staff. There is much to explore further here about the tensions of dual reporting lines, multiplicity of functions, etc.

Table 4

Institution Type, Principal Activity, and Staff/Faculty Position of Participants in Surveys A & B

Characteristic	Population A (N = 387)*		Population B (N = 104)	
	N	%	n	%
Institution Type				
4-year Public University	235	60.7	55	52.9
4-year Private University	152	39.3	49	47.1
Principal Activity				
Full-time faculty	164	46.3	3	3.2
Full-time staff/admin	77	21.8	78	82.1
Combination faculty/staff	54	15.3	12	12.6
Part-time faculty or adjunct	28	7.9	0	0
My full time professional career is outside academia	11	3.1	N/A	N/A
Graduate Student	11	3.1	N/A	N/A
Other (please specify)	6	1.7	1	1.1
Part-time staff/admin	3	.8	1	1.1
Faculty Position				
Adjunct	8	3.3	N/A	N/A
Instructor/Lecturer	62	25.3	0	
Assistant Professor	46	18.8	0	
Associate Professor	49	20.0	2	40.0
Full Professor	48	19.6	1	20.0
Department Chair	15	6.1	1	20.0
Academic Dean	2	0.8	0	0
Other	15	6.1	1	20.0
Staff/Admin Position				
Graduate Assistant	3	1.8	0	0
Coordinator	28	17.1	5	6.2
Assistant Director	18	11.0	13	16.2
Associate Director	17	10.4	8	10.0
Director	71	43.3	34	42.5
Assistant or Associate Vice-President/Dean	8	4.9	16	20.0
Vice-President/Dean	6	3.7	3	3.8
Other	13	7.9	1	1.3

Note: 33 participants from Survey A did not respond to the questions represented in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Correspondingly, Table 4 includes $N = 387$ participants for Survey A. Table 4 includes full sample information.

Across the two surveys, leadership education emerges as a field of youthful practitioners, especially among co-curricular leadership educators (Table 5). Survey A data reveal that 36.8% of respondents ($n = 130$) have been in the field for three or fewer years, 26.9% ($n = 95$) have been in the field for four to six years, and 35.9% ($n = 127$) have identified as leadership educators for seven years or longer. Survey B data tell a similar story with 56.8% ($n = 54$) of respondents indicating less than three years of experience, 20% ($n = 19$) having four to six years of experience, and 23.1% ($n = 22$) having more than seven years in their current positions as leadership educators.

Table 5

Years at Current Position and Years in Higher Education of Participants in Surveys A & B

Characteristic	Population A ($N = 354$)		Population B ($N = 95$)	
	n	%	n	%
Years at current position				
1-3 years	95	26.9	19	20.0
4-6 years	76	21.5	8	8.4
7-10 years	130	36.8	54	56.8
more than 10 years	51	14.4	14	14.7
Years working in higher education				
1-5 years	49	14.0	16	16.8
6-10 years	92	26.3	25	26.3
11-20 years	109	31.1	38	40.0
more than 20 years	100	28.6	16	16.8

Critical Questions for the Field. Each of these findings gives rise to important questions for the field of leadership education and reveals potent areas for future research. For example:

There is a need for further study on potentially gender-based issues of confidence and capacity in leadership education. Does the leadership educator data follow that of undergraduate student leadership data where women score higher on leadership capacities, yet lower on their efficacy for leadership (see Dugan, Kodama, & Correia, 2013)? Are there gendered pathways that must be navigated as part of the journey to become a leadership educator?

What barriers (personal, organizational, structural) exist for traditionally underserved populations in assuming a leadership educator identity? How can universities expect to diversify the audiences for leadership education when the educators themselves are so demographically monolithic? Educators must work to identify and address how their own intersecting multiple identities, learning styles and developmental experiences shape student learning (Owen, 2015).

How are leadership educators socialized to the field of leadership studies, especially if they lack relevant coursework in leadership theory and evidence-based practice? How can we expect them to create engaging, inclusive learning communities without a formal foundation in pedagogical development and assessment of learning? What types of personal and professional

development around leadership are offered? Can virtual learning, regional, and campus-based experiences serve as an effective proxy for formal leadership education? Can intentional learning communities foster professional growth?

What does it mean to say that the field of leadership studies is multi- or trans-disciplinary in nature when pluralities of educators have degrees from traditional disciplinary departments. Can one teach in integrative and interdisciplinary ways if one was educated in a more parochial environment? What are systemic barriers to establishing trans-disciplinary leadership education graduate programs?

In what ways does the positionality of the leadership educator, especially within an organization context, shape their approach to the work? Do student affairs leadership educators work differently than full time faculty (NASPA & ACPA, 2004)? Leadership educators, especially those in educational settings are often “distracted by other responsibilities and isolated from others from whom they could learn about learning” (ACPA & NASPA, 1997). Does the nature of the credit-bearing experience shape how students learn? How do educators with dual reporting lines navigating role conflict and expectations? How can leadership associations support educators regardless of their position in the academy?

Finally, what is really known about the impact of diverse leadership educators, backgrounds, and approaches on student learning and development? This study has attempted to provide a cursory view of who teaches leadership in the hopes of surfacing critical questions about the preparation and socialization of leadership educators. There is great need to develop pathways for faculty from traditionally underserved backgrounds, to examine the multiple roles and identities of leadership educators, to remove systemic barriers to establish trans-disciplinary spaces in leadership education, to cross curricular and co-curricular boundaries, and to invite further research and inquiry into the nature of what it means to be a leadership educator.

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