

Developing Library Leadership Competencies through Experiential Learning: The Use of Instructional Scaffolding in Asynchronous Environments

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ABSTRACT

Since the goal of many graduate library and information science (LIS) programs is to educate students as 21st century library leaders, leadership education is one of the core areas LIS curricula have focused on. Despite an abundance of approaches to cultivating leadership skills in traditional educational settings, achieving this goal becomes considerably more problematic in asynchronous online environments. This study explores the effectiveness of instructional scaffolding as a pedagogical tool implemented across five sections of a master's level Management in Information Organizations course. The content of this asynchronous course revolves around the foundational competencies and skillsets put forth by the Library Leadership & Management Association (LLAMA). The course's scenario-based common assignment facilitates mastery of several key LLAMA leadership competencies: change management, adaptive leadership practiced through evidence-based decision making, emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, critical thinking, advocacy, and professional ethics. This research highlights the benefits of a multi-modal pedagogical approach, including instructor-led facilitation, eLearning scenarios, and experiential learning, to complement the scenario of the common assignment and thus bridge the gap between theory and practice of teaching various leadership concepts. The author also delineates ways to integrate discussion circles, field experience, and cohort peer support as scaffolding mechanisms to enhance students' intrinsic motivation and engagement with the material, factors commonly recognized as challenges in asynchronous learning. Based on the results of qualitative thematic analysis of student assignments, recommendations are made for better aligning extant LIS curricula with established learning outcomes pertaining to leadership education and training in library and information professions.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Curriculum; Online learning; Pedagogy.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Library management; leadership competencies; LIS education; instructional scaffolding.

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