

BACKGROUND

Leadership is one of the most important factors influencing innovation within an organization.¹ For pharmacy educators, curricular innovation is critical in maintaining accreditation and mirroring practice. Yet, the qualities and behaviors of pharmacy leaders who orchestrate curricular reform have yet to be established.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

This case study explores the transformational leadership behaviors of faculty who oversaw innovative curricular reform at one college of pharmacy. The pharmacy curriculum at this college is highly integrated and competency-driven, focused on training ‘practice-ready graduates’. What made the curricular reform in this case unique was that pharmacy faculty led this organizational change.

METHODS

This was qualitative case study research conducted at one college of pharmacy which reformed the first three years of their curriculum. The initial implementation of the updated curriculum was in 2017. The participants in this study were faculty who oversaw the development, implementation, and maintenance of the innovative curriculum over the span of multiple years and were called “curricular leaders”. Data collected included one-on-one interviews using a semi-structured interview approach, investigator self-reflections, and curricular artifacts. Thematic analysis was conducted using a systematic approach to coding and theme generation consistent with qualitative inquiry. Reflexivity using self-reflection was conducted throughout data collection and analysis.² The investigator, who was embedded in the case, embraced a constructivist paradigm.³

Table 1. KEY TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP (TL) FINDINGS

FINDINGS	TL	QUOTATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS
1. Curricular leaders keep the goal(s) in focus for themselves and others	Inspirational motivation	“We were clear about why we were developing the curriculum... here’s the goal, this is why we’re going there, and let’s move there together.”
2. Curricular leaders encourage “the why”	Inspirational motivation & Intellectual stimulation	“You need to get students to X competency through the use of dementia as a topic. We're not giving faculty everything because we want them to ask the questions...Why do students need to know this? And what's the best way to get them there? So, it was trying to inspire the faculty, motivate them to think that way, and to get to that point where they started asking some of those questions.”
3. Curricular leaders encourage others to be all in	Intellectual stimulation	“There is still a long way to go in the process, improvements will have to be made, new ideas will have to be incorporated, bad ideas will need to be abandoned, we will all need to continue to stick together and believe in each other during the process.”
4. Curricular leaders put trust in others	Individualized consideration	“I feel like I brought some initial ideas or big picture things, but then turned it to them so I'm not deciding what they teach. This allows them the space and the time to think through it and talk about it from their expertise for what would make the most sense.”
5. Curricular leaders recognize the importance of communication	Individualized consideration	“With something this complex and unique, the really difficult part is making sure everybody is updated with changes, and that everybody is not duplicating content... I try to be available for people to meet. Try to set up meetings with the people that are in teaching teams together... so being a facilitator.”
6. Curricular leaders take on the burden of organizational tasks to promote productivity for others	Idealized influence	“My biggest thing is organization and consistency, and I feel like that’s what I have spent a lot of time doing. I try to take some of the burden on for some of this stuff. And let faculty be in charge of the teaching.”

RESULTS, cont.

Eight curricular leaders participated in semi-structured interviews. Analysis from interviews (n=8), reflections (n=8), and curricular artifacts indicated six key transformational leadership-associated behaviors and qualities of faculty who lead curricular reform. As indicated in Table 1, each key behavior aligns with at least one of the four domains of transformational leadership.

CONCLUSION

Faculty who led successful and innovative curricular reform in this case study displayed elements of transformational leadership through six key findings. The transformational leadership behaviors displayed by participants encouraged commitment and curiosity, put trust in others, and assumed administrative responsibilities. While participants did not have formal authority over the faculty they led, they were responsible for leading other faculty through the creation, implementation, and maintenance phases of an integrated, competency-driven pharmacy curriculum.

REFERENCES

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