**Multidisciplinary collaborations and immersion programs as the driver for paradigm shifts in teacher intercultural competence and sport science informed decision-making in college athletics**

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Issue Brief

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**Emerging Issue: Sparking paradigm shifts to generate change within immersion programs and collaborative decision-making between stakeholders in an athletic department**

Leaders, whether in academia, business, civil society, or government, often face the responsibility of promoting change within an organization that requires a dynamic, multi-faceted, and relational approach to be successful. In academia, leaders are regularly called to make changes within their schools, curriculum, programs, structures, and approaches to learning. Typically, such change uses a “combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches” combined with “collaboration, teamwork, and strong communication to advance shared interests” (Loughran & Brubaker, 2015, p. 257). Further, to advance change, whether structural, behavioral, cognitive, or existential, leaders grapple with a diverse group of stakeholders holding varying levels of influence and engagement. Academic institutional leaders, for example, contend with faculty, staff, students, parents, school boards, community members, local and state governments, civic organizations, national organizations, and so forth, each of whom may differ in support of the leader and the desired paradigm shift. If the leader’s objective is to help students or school officials see and understand a situation differently, what are ways academic leaders use multidisciplinary interventions to generate paradigm shifts so that change can occur? This study explores two possibilities of ways leaders can spark and generate a paradigm shift to advance objectives.

One approach is to focus not on the group or the change itself, but rather on the leader’s capacity and ownership of embodying and modeling the attitudes and behaviors necessary to allow the change to be accepted and internalized. The challenge of stimulating a change in paradigm, a different way of thinking or epistemology, may not be effectively addressed through the traditional change management method noted above, but rather through an “inside-out approach” that can “more clearly discern the inner world/landscape/contours of the educational leader” (Loughran & Brubaker, 2015, p. 257). In other words, to stimulate action toward a new paradigm or perspective within a group or organization may best begin with developing self-awareness and shift in perspective within the leader. The intervention, therefore, begins with the leader’s own capacity and acceptance of embodying the shift in thinking or perspective.

An academic context in which to illuminate how this intervention occurs is during faculty-led immersion programs. Often, but not always, a purpose of such immersion programs is to develop the intercultural competency of students (Niehaus & Wegener, 2018). Immersion programs offer a unique forum to shift paradigms, ways of thinking, perceptions of normal, and sense-making that can have significant effect on students’ competency and capacity to engage effectively with other cultures. Bennet (1993), Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006) and Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) note that immersion programs can move participants to a new way of being and knowing – that is, a transformed ontology that facilitates the recognition and value of other epistemologies, and subsequently accepting, adapting, and integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes of intercultural and global competencies. Not well examined is how the instructor creates the necessary “safe space” to facilitate the development of intercultural competency and this paradigm shift. For example, Whatley, Landon, Tarrant and Rubin (2021) examine the program design of faculty-led immersion programs to develop global perspectives, and similarly Hubbard and Rexeisen (2020) cite the program’s organizational quality, but these researchers do not address the role of the instructor in the learning process. Niehaus and Wegener (2019) cite that “faculty members’ own intercultural competence” predicts their “approaches to teaching abroad” (p. 115), but do not discuss how faculty develop their intercultural competency except by the generality of previous interaction with other cultures.

Using faculty-led programs as a framework, how can the instructor be supported in developing deeper his/her self-awareness, humility, curiosity, empathy, and presence to experience the transformation and subsequently learn how to evoke this self-awareness and character traits in others, i.e. students, to stimulate their transformation? Arguably, an instructor cannot teach self-awareness and these traits if s/he has not experienced the process of developing self-awareness and the potentially possible transformation; teachers cannot teach what they don’t know (Sadruddin & Wahab, 2013; Santoro, 2014; Schneider, 2003). As such, instructors cannot provide facilitated or guided processes of self-reflection on different frames of reference if they have not experienced this process (Anderson, Lorenz, & White, 2016). What might be an intervention to evoke this self-awareness? This study suggests the integration of executive coaching, an intentional process of engagement described by Grant, Green and Rynsaardt (2010) as a transformation when self-awareness is raised, insights are shared, and purposeful enactment of new behaviors ensures; executive coaching is when a coach keeps the coachee “focused on the goals, helping to monitor and evaluate progress over time as well providing an intellectual foil for brainstorming and self-reflection” (Grant, Green & Rynsaardt, 2010, p. 154). Such coaching offers a multidisciplinary approach to facilitate the adoption of the character traits necessary to allow for intercultural competency to germinate and grow.

*The following databases were used to find relevant articles for the issue brief:*

Databases Searched: Sage Journals; ProQuest Central; Taylor and Francis Group; Taylor & Francis Online; IngentaConnect; Nursing & Allied Health Database; Web of Science; SciTech Premium Collection; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Education Database; Academic Search Complete; PubMed; MEDLINE - Academic; Career & Technical Education Database; Environmental Science Database; Education Research Complete; DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals; Publicly Available Content Database; Research Library; ERIC; Social Sciences Citation Index; eBooks on EBSCOhost; ABI/INFORM Collection; Science Citation Index Expanded; SpringerLink Contemporary; Springer Online Journals Complete; Academic Search Complete; Taylor & Francis Current Content Access

*The following journals were searched:*

Studying Teacher Education; International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education; Journal of Geography in Higher Education; Journal of Studies in International Education; Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research; Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad; and Innovative Higher Education; Educational Administrative Quarterly; Social Sciences; Prospects; Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism; New Directions for Student Leadership; Journal of Education Policy & Leadership; Consulting Psychology Journal; The Counseling Psychologist; European Journal of Psychology and Education; Studies in Philosophy and Education; Studying Teacher Education; International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health; School Psychology Review, Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education; Language and Intercultural Communication; Sustainability; ReCALL, Public Administrative Review; Educational Studies; Information Systems Frontiers; Journal of Allied Health

*What are the theories that inform the field?*

Theories Informing the Field: Transformational Leadership, Self-leadership; Social Systems Game Theory (Burns et al., 2018, p. 1), Irving Goffman’s interactionist approach (IGT), classical theory, Research Impact

*What are the camps within the field?*

Social Systems Game Theory and the Interactionist Approach are opposite of Classical Theory; Reform Syndrome - as one country was making reforms to the education system, other countries with similarities would make the same reforms); Critical Leadership Development

Camps within the Field

Examining the process in which intercultural competency is developed during immersion programs often leads to discussion of structural and design components of the program, such as housing, length of program, content, service learning and experiential opportunities, internships, and others (Hubbard & Rexeisen, 2010).

*What are two to three researchable questions concerning this issue?*

How could practicing and receiving executive coaching serve instructors of immersion programs to evoke self-awareness and stimulate behavioral changes that can be role modeled and used among students?

How can the adoption of an intervention model or immersion program provide senior leadership in an athletic department the personal and professional educational and leadership resources to approach the judgment and decision-making in their positions from a collaborative and TEAM cognition perspective?

What aspects of an immersion program (i.e., duration, delivery, frequency, style, cost, demand level, field of study, intensity) are necessary to be included in the program to lead to significant and sustainable behavioral changes in the stakeholder(s) resulting in a paradigm shift?

What educational delivery system do adult learners best respond to when learning new and complex frameworks that are applicable to their professional development?

How do adults learn new paradigms?

What are the obstacles to generating a shift?

In both examples, a holistic view is necessary, including questions such as: what will be the results of this paradigm shift? What are the obstacles to achieving this shift? How will communication be used and potentially modified to facilitate this shift? How do adults learn new paradigms?

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