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Keywords

Practical leadership, Online education programs, Distance education, EdTech, Higher Education

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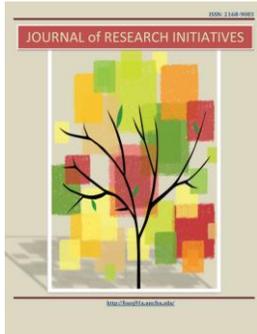
Practical Leadership in Implementing Online Education Programs

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Abstract

The growing presence of online education can become a challenge for educational leaders and institutions to lead, manage, and explore in higher education. Online education can be complex when considering the social presence (Keast, 2022; Quayson, 2022), course development (Martin et al., 2019; Orlando, 2019), and economic outcomes (Burnett & Conley, 2013; Rubin, 2013; Seaman et al., 2019). However, unraveling the fundamentals of practical leadership can help educational leaders to facilitate, maintain, and implement online education programs. The study found published research studies that helped us to extricate the fundamentals of practical leadership in implementing online education programs in the following ways: the process of implementing online education programs, facilitation of the use of the Internet as the delivery method, and curriculum and instructional design. The study findings indicate that educational leaders should invest in high-speed Internet service and learning technologies, provide professional development trainings for students and faculty members, supply faculty members with certificate of completion after training, focus on technology challenges, and ensure that faculty members are recognized as course content curators.

Keywords:

Practical leadership, Online education programs, Distance education, EdTech, Higher Education

Introduction

Problem Statement

There is little known on how institutions use leadership practices to implement online education programs. The literature reviews cited in this study indicated that when institutions transition to online education, leadership is significant and practical in the implementation phase. This study unmasked the challenges of the transition phase and offered practice-based solutions by focusing on practical leadership in the process of implementing online education programs, facilitation of the use of the Internet as the delivery method, and curriculum and instructional design.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe how educational leaders can use practical leadership to implement online education programs.

Background

To implement online education programs, educational leaders should place a strong emphasis on practical leadership with clarity of focus in student learning, the development of curriculum, and the delivery of online teaching (Levine, 2011). Naylor and Nyanjom (2020) believed that educators can significantly impact online education. Likewise, Keast (2020) suggested educational leaders should ensure that they have the technology management to implement online education programs. Similarly, Young (2013) suggested the successes and failures of online education and distance education programs are in the delivery method of curriculum and instruction to students and the faculty teaching the course. Subsequently, Keast (2022) recommended educational leaders should focus on course redesign when considering implementing online education programs. The findings from Marasi et al. (2020) posited that faculty and student engagement should be prioritized when implementing online education.

The study of Spezzo and Rudchenko (2022) suggested educational leadership should consider faculty members to create useful instructional activities and coursework to provide students with knowledge in online education. The findings from Spezzo and Rudchenko align with Simpson (2009) recommendation that the future of online education will be decided by curriculum

and instruction and the delivery method of courses and programs. Further, Bates and Sangra (2011) and Naylor and Nyanjom (2020) contended managing technology, using technology for teaching, and learning in online education as the priority focus in leadership on college campuses. In advising educational leaders, Griffith and Faulconer (2022) proposed including videos in online courses to influence the learning experience. Supporting the idea of videos, Grant and Oerlemans (2021) advised using videos in online courses to enlighten student learning experience. Focusing on integrating communication technologies, Bates and Sangra (2011) advised educational leaders to focus on the practicalities of integrating communication technologies to facilitate online education programs. Innovative learning technologies can make online education attractive and productive for students and faculty members (R. A., 2014).

To implement online education programs, Quayson (2022, 2017) revealed focusing on: (a) the structure of courses and programs with teaching and learning outcomes, (b) administrative planning with management, (c) convenience with time management, (d) communication and interaction with interesting discussions, and (e) technological support and social networking with delivery method. Likewise, Dunlap et al. (2016) explained that educational leaders should focus on purposeful design of presence and experience in online courses. Educational leaders should make it a priority to effectively train technology managers, coordinators, and administrators to ensure that they support faculty members and students on productivity, planning, coordination, and cooperation of online teaching and learning in online education programs (Bates & Sangra, 2011; Levine, 2011; Simpson, 2009). On the training of staff, Altinpulluk et al. (2020) explained that educational leaders should train staff to understand the influence of segmented educational videos to help students achieve cognitive load, satisfaction, and engagement. In addition, Choe et al. (2019) described that educational leaders and faculty members can use lecture videos to gauge student satisfaction and learning outcomes in asynchronous online courses.

Marasi et al. (2020) asserted that educational leaders look at faculty satisfaction with online education as part of best practice. Educational leaders should know that having knowledge of online education best practices, tactics, and strategies are likely to increase student attraction, search engine rankings, and faculty members' interest to teach online (Tennant, 2014). As for online education meeting student expectations, Burgess et al. (2018) encouraged educational

leaders to make online education about meeting student expectations. When institutional leaders are aware of the latest trend in technology, they become influencers and gatekeepers of implementing online education and developing online courses with the focus on using technology to engage students in teaching and learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2007; Thomas & Stritto, 2021). Orlando (2019) and Simonson et al. (2011) considered that managing online course design well can help educational leaders to understand and acknowledge mistakes when they become present in online education.

Research Question

How does practical leadership help educational leaders to implement online education programs?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review section begins with an overview of what constitutes effective leadership practices in implementing online education. Followed by the overview, the three major processes of practical leadership in implementing online education programs are highlighted and evaluated: the process of implementing online education programs, facilitation of the use of the internet as the delivery method, and curriculum and instructional design.

An Overview of Effective Leadership Practices in Implementing Online Education

To ensure faculty members are trained effectively to teach online, educational leaders should focus on safeguarding the quality of online programs (Gaytan, 2013). On the other hand, Pickering and Swinnerton (2019) posited that technology can support educational leadership in achieving greater learning outcomes, engagement, and implementing quality online programs. To improve online education, Attardi et al. (2018) reiterated the need for educational leaders to use learning technologies to improve online interactions for students. To practice effective educational leadership, educational leaders need to consider accelerated online courses and programs, and look into the quality of courses that students can take to complete online programs by adopting to shorter academic terms (Shaw et al., 2013; Trekles & Sims, 2013). Educational leaders should explore the hybrid or dual mode option for students and faculty members in online education programs as well as look into practical ways to successfully transition from traditional teaching and learning to

online teaching and learning (Kuboni, 2013). Educational leaders with practical knowledge of how to approach the delivery of online teaching and learning succeed in retention of faculty and students (Vadell, 2013). In online education, one of the objectives for educational leadership is to have students gain educational access and mobility in online education programs (Gaytan, 2013). Particularly, Elliot et al. (2020) mentioned access and resources in online education should support students to build autonomous learning skills. In ensuring access, educational leaders should allow faculty members to choose courses to teach, especially when it comes to professional development in online education (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020). Meanwhile, Keast (2022) advised educational leaders to help faculty members to use content knowledge as a resource to support students in online education.

It is important for educational leaders to develop an institutional continuity plan for teaching and learning in online education (Bates, 2013). Practical leadership allows faculty members to use a problem-solving model of training by learning the complexities that exist in the online education environment (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). Pappas et al. (2018) uncovered the fundamentals of how educational leaders can help faculty members to learn to teach special needs students such as deaf adult students in online education. Furthermore, Parton (2016) advised educational leaders to use video captions for online courses to meet the learning needs of deaf students. Educational leaders should consider blended learning and teaching options for diverse groups of students in online education (Garrison & Vaughan, 2007). It is advisable for educational leaders to help faculty members to plan and implement learning materials to accommodate diverse groups of students in the online classroom (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). Likewise, Warne et al. (2019) advised educational leaders to use online education to advocate for students' interests in career fields like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Educational leaders can utilize online education to improve academic outcomes (Arroyo, 2014). The findings from Orcutt and Dringus (2017) recommended prioritizing presence to engage and influence students' intellectual curiosity in structured online learning environments. Practical leadership is concerned with quality online education programs by focusing on teaching and learning as well as evaluating academic outcomes to nurture students' growth (Ozdemir & Loose, 2014). Moreover, Schoenfeld-Tacher and Dorman (2021) urged educational leaders to look at the

structures of synchronous and asynchronous formats when deciding to implement online education programs. Voeller (2011) insisted that accelerated distance learning and online education is the new way for students to earn quality college credentials. In addition, Keast (2022) and Schoenfeld-Tacher and Dorman (2021) persuaded educational leaders to look into the effects of delivery methods in online education. It is important for educational leaders to setup committees within departments and academic units to provide scalable review of online education programs and the delivery of online courses and teaching (Ozdemir & Loose, 2014). There should be academic committees within departments and units to support faculty development in online education programs (Quayson, 2022, 2017).

The Process of Implementing Online Education Programs

When implementing online education programs, educational leaders should focus on developing technological ecosystems that would house the tools needed to facilitate teaching and learning to students and faculty members, especially investing in an innovative learning management system (Lesht & Windes, 2011; Windes & Lesht, 2014). Bohan and Perrotta (2020) explained that faculty mindset should focus on educational technologies in online education. Seckman (2018) believed the idea of using interactive video communication (two-way or multidimensional forms of communication) to provide feedback on teaching, social, and cognitive presence. Valenti et al. (2019) encouraged faculty members to value the integration of videos in the online classroom to yield practical outcomes for students. The learning management platforms should be used to power online education to students as well as accommodate the structures of courses and programs including accessible features of learning technologies (Quayson, 2022, 2017). Equally, Schoenfeld-Tacher and Dorman (2021) advised that knowing which technology to approach for synchronous and asynchronous learning formats would be game changing in online education programs. Educational leaders should be able to buy learning technologies and learning management systems that have the option for students and faculty members to engage in online threaded discussions on weekly tasks, assignments, and projects (Seaman et al., 2019). Interactive discussions in the online classroom can enhance student and faculty engagement as well as improve collaboration (Quayson, 2022; Young et al., 2017). As encouraged by McKinney et al. (2019), educational leaders should look at data concerning student dropout behaviors in online

courses and online education, especially in learning management systems. McGahan et al. (2015) mentioned educational leaders should implement online education by using the technology instrument of choice, building experiential courses, and evaluating each choice based on strengths and weaknesses.

The criterion for educational leaders to implement online education programs is to survey the campus and nearby communities to solicit interests, opinions, questions, and concerns (Ekstrand, 2013). After surveying and soliciting ideas and thoughts, educational leaders should host information sessions periodically through in-person, virtual, or hybrid method to clarify institutional decisions to implement online education programs (Ekstrand, 2013). The information sessions and literature mailed to prospective students and current students' homes should emphasized on informing about the social, economic, and academic outcomes of professional growth in enrolling in online education programs (Burnett & Conley, 2013). When done correctly, effectively, and decisively, the campus and community perspectives can be utilized to solidify the demand for online education programs (Burnett & Conley, 2013). Also, Keast (2022) proposed the idea of using feedforward to implement online education courses. Comparably, Elliot et al. (2020) encouraged educational leaders to focus on skills learning when deciding to implement online education. Additionally, Elliot et al. (2020) posited that implementing online education does not mean the absence of skills learning and development. Subsequently, educational leaders should pair novice faculty with experienced ones to train and support when deciding to implement online education programs (Baker & Manning, 2020). In support of pairing faculty members, Jaschik and Lederman (2019) described that faculty members rely on each other to navigate online education. However, Bedford and Miller (2013) believed that not all faculty members are equally trained to grasp online education. Educational leaders should ensure that faculty members are well-trained to understand online education including looking out for policies that do not exclude diverse groups of students (Gergen & Roblyer, 2013).

Educational leaders should promote the benefits of online education to adults to earn credentials of value (Hagan, 2013). The study of Holsombach-Ebner (2013) proposed that educational leaders should focus on quality assurance, theoretical foundations, production process, resources team, infrastructure, purpose, and culture when promoting online education to adult

learners. Educational leaders should ensure that online education programs become a positive contributing outcome to adult learners, students, and faculty members educational experiences in higher education (Anthony & Keating, 2013). When promoting online education to adult leaders and students, it is essential for educational leaders to include the use of verbal immediacy behaviors in online courses as well as the online classroom environment (Furlich, 2013). For instance, Pontes and Pontes (2013) described the relationship between students' choice of study and preference for online education programs and concluded that students' choice of study is related to enrollment in online education courses and satisfaction with teaching and learning in online education.

Hodges et al. (2020) stimulated the conversation for educational leaders to know the difference between emergency remote teaching and online teaching. In fact, Mattson (2020) contended that even during educational emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic specialized institutions like veterinary colleges decided to go online for teaching and learning. Nevertheless, Rubin (2013) disclosed that educational leaders should implement online education programs that meet the needs of stakeholders, constituencies, and potential employers before emergencies. Educational leaders should have a budget outlook for online education programs and employ reasonable ways to cut down on costs without affecting faculty salary or workload during emergencies. A budget can be useful during educational emergencies (Hill, 2021). On budgeting, educational leaders should invest in operation management to give account of programs to federal, state, local, and regulatory agencies for funding and accreditation purposes (Ozdemir & McDaniel, 2013). The study of Brzezinska and Cromarty (2022) provided useful advice for educational leaders to consider during educational emergencies.

Lederman (2020) informed educational leaders to look at how teaching can change even in remote learning. Educational leaders should make online education programs compatible and competitive by using advanced learning technologies to engage students and faculty members in remote learning (Hachey et al., 2013). On the contrary, Son et al. (2020) urged educational leaders to consider students' mental health concerns in remote learning. Equally important, Copeland et al. (2021) suggested educational leaders take students' mental health and wellness seriously amid the COVID-19 pandemic and future educational emergencies in remote learning. It is significant for educational leaders to hire faculty members and staff who are solely dedicated and responsible

for the delivery of remote learning (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020; Hollman, 2013).

Singleton et al. (2013) discussed that educational leaders should pay close attention to demographic shifts, societal changes, and advanced communication technologies because they are considered significant influential data. Meanwhile, Valenti et al. (2019) proposed to educational leaders to survey students and faculty members on using videos in the online classroom as significant data to improve online education. Besides, Cutri and Mena (2020) and Everson (2009) suggested there are tools that exist in online teaching which are not always accessible to faculty members or students to use as data to improve the online learning experience. In addition, Valenti et al. (2019) promoted the thought that students should have multiple opportunities to engage with course materials to improve data sharing in the online environments.

Facilitation of the use of the Internet as the delivery method

The study of Quayson (2018) explained that the Internet should be able to facilitate institutions to transition to online education. Educational leaders should ensure smooth facilitation of the use of the Internet by creating access to high-speed Internet service that can deliver online education programs including helping faculty members with research and teaching (Hopewell, 2012). Again, Quayson (2022) emphasized that Internet connectivity is important in the delivery method process of online education. Educational leaders should identify characteristics for administrators and faculty members to use to offer and improve online courses by using the Internet to collect data such as student motivation, student demographic, preference information, and student comfort with the technology (Mann & Henneberry, 2012). Also, Truell (2018) recommended educational leaders to use the Internet to create interactive video courses that help with student discourse and improve quality discussion in online education. In consideration, Truell (2018) explained that faculty members should contemplate creating video trailers of online courses by using the Internet as technological support to deliver the content.

Further, Quayson (2022) identified technological support and social networking with delivery method as essential to online education. Instructional delivery methods and technological support with advanced learning technologies should be among the tools that educational leaders suggest to faculty to use to deliver exclusively online education programs as well as transition traditional brick and mortar programs to the online medium (Nworie, 2012). Conversely, Trenholm

et al (2019) reiterated the need for educational leaders to use the Internet as a technology tool to investigate learners' cognitive engagement with recorded lecture videos. The World Wide Web is a powerful technological tool for educational leaders to use to deliver online education programs (Jones & Meyer, 2012). Educational leaders should consider the use of the Internet to benefit non-traditional students as much as traditional students (Eskey & Schulte, 2012). Educational leaders can use the Internet as a technological tool to assess whether students and faculty satisfaction are met in online education (Valenti et al., 2019). Educational leaders should use the Internet to ensure quality assessment of online programs including issues with curriculum and instruction, instructional delivery methods, quality of learning materials, activities, assignments, and online discussions (Tucker, 2012).

By comparison, Young et al. (2017) and Quayson (2018) highlighted the differences between the Internet and World Wide Web; the Internet is a global networking infrastructure of networks connecting millions of computers, and the World Wide Web is a web of data, services, and connections where a user retrieves specific information using the Internet.

In advising, McKinney et al. (2019) suggested to educational leaders to think of ways to use the Internet to avert course dropout and offer remedial programs to assist students who are enrolled part-time and have an academic grade point average of less than 2.0, are academically underprepared, aged 20-24, males, African American, and who hold GED diploma. The Internet is a bigger part of technology and can be used as an advantage in teaching and learning in online education (Eskey & Schulte, 2012). Moreover, McKinney et al. (2019) explained that course withdrawal or dropout behaviors is prevalent among community college students and the Internet can be used to unmask the challenges of students. Students and faculty members should view the Internet as a strategic advantage and educational leaders should use the Internet to facilitate professional development opportunities for students and faculty members (Revels & Ciampa, 2012).

The Internet can be facilitated as a significant social interaction in online education programs (Keast, 2022). Likewise, Boston et al. (2012) reiterated that the Internet should be used to uncover social interaction including institutional assessment of online teaching and online programs through student enrollment, academic achievement, predicting continued enrollment,

and student retention. For the same reason, Trenholm et al. (2019) implored educational leaders to use the Internet to record live lecture videos to operationalize and advance online education programs. Educational leaders should ensure that the social virtual features of online education programs are accessible to the public on the Internet and World Wide Web including information about accreditation, faculty members, student to faculty ratio, depth of group projects, student achievements, student social group interaction, institution recognition, real life scenarios, student experience, social impact, and student learning preference (Bailey & Flegle, 2012). Social and cognitive presence are important in online teaching and learning (Keast, 2020).

Educational leaders should not forget about special student groups when considering the technological features of the Internet as delivery methods of online education programs such as special education students, military units, prison population, Native Americans on remote reservations, and technologically isolated populations of the world (Bates, 2012). Educational leaders should take advantage of the Internet to coordinate meetings with instructional teams and stakeholders (McLane et al., 2022). When using the Internet as a delivery method, think of quality in terms of validity, reliability, and fairness of online programs and outcomes (Shaffer, 2012). The Internet can help educational leaders to collaborate with centralized teams to address any inter-rater reliability issues (McLane et al., 2022).

In recommendation, Young et al. (2017) believed that the Internet as technology can be used to train faculty members how to use the features of the World Wide Web. Educational leaders should use the Internet to facilitate the development of workshops for faculty members to deliver instruction to online learners that reflect on the mission statement and core values of online education programs (Terantino & Agbehonou, 2012). Correspondingly, McLane et al. (2022) suggested educational leaders should focus on using the Internet to improve the leadership function of change management in online education. Educational leaders can facilitate the use of the Internet to understand the barriers of teaching and learning in online programs (Gilmore and Nguyen, 2021). The challenges of using the Internet to deliver online education programs are technology, instruction, recruitment, and retention (Bailey & Flegle, 2012; Bates, 2012; Ginn & Hammond, 2012; Shaffer, 2012; Terantino & Agbehonou, 2012). Additionally, Seaman et al. (2019) advised educational leaders to use the features of the Internet to look at patterns in student

enrollments in online programs. Educational leaders can use the Internet to create surveys to track enrollment progress (Quayson, 2022). However, using the features of the Internet, Seaman et al. (2019) tracked distance education that enrollment increased for the fourteenth straight year and that student enrollment grew by 5.6 percent from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 to reach 6,359,121 who are taking at least one distance course, representing 31.6 percent of all students. Although Seaman et al. (2019) explained that the total distance enrollments are composed of 14.9 percent of students (3,003,080) taking exclusively distance courses, and 16.7 percent (3,356,041) who are taking a combination of distance and non-distance courses.

Educational leaders should give faculty members access to the Internet to navigate the online course (Quayson, 2022, 2017). The features of the Internet in online education are embracing a community of practice, educational technology, online coursework, reaction to teaching and learning, perceived strengths of programs, faculty collaboration, and perceived challenges of programs, online-community building, making connection to practice, and high quality of online instruction (Kumar & Dawson, 2012). Undeniably, Mays and Ross (2022) strongly recommended educational leaders to help faculty members to use the Internet to develop a sense of community in synchronous and asynchronous online courses. When used effectively, the Internet can help educational leaders to navigate and influence organizational management (Lee et al., 2012).

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Seaman et al. (2019) instructed educational leaders to take a careful look into coursework and course design. Educational leaders should look at course design as an iterative process with feedforward cycle such as course reviews, peer observations, course grades, and self-reflection (Keast, 2022). Educational leaders should include the perspectives of students, faculty members, and administrators when assessing the pedagogical purpose, theory, and reflective practice of curriculum and instructional design of online education programs including looking at connectivity of access to online learning for students (Boston & Ice, 2011). The aim of curriculum and instructional design in online education is to transform and probe transformational teaching and learning (Burns, 2011). Indeed, Seaman et al. (2019) defined an online education course as a course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively online. Curricular design in online

education should place a strong emphasis on teaching and learning, performance, program transition, program translation, and students and faculty satisfaction (Dunlap & May, 2011). Educational leaders should focus on ongoing evaluation and revision of online course design including learning outcomes, procedures, and best practices that lead to engaged learning materials of online course life cycle (Martin et al., p. 35, 2019).

Tamir and Taylor (2019) articulated that educational leaders should understand and meet nontraditional students' needs with curricular design. Curriculum and instructional design should support the fundamental elements of online facilitation, academic community culture, accessibility, and faculty instructional concerns to overcome the barriers of online education programs (Owusu-Ansah et al., 2011). Whereas Hirsch (2017) explained that educational leaders can focus on six characteristics for effectiveness which are: regenerate, expand, particular, authentic, impact, and refine. On the other hand, educational leaders need to look at academic climate and know how to manage instructional design to support practical improvements for faculty and student participation in online education programs (Huang et al., 2011). Curriculum and instructional design should include lifelong learning and interactions (Masalela, 2011). Likewise, Yu et al. (2020) suggested curriculum design should place emphasis on interaction, emotional engagement, and learning persistence in online education. Educational leaders should ensure curricular design includes a checklist of websites links, videos, assignments, and due dates (Keast, 2022). Educational leaders should identify the challenges of course design, preparedness of curricular design, student demographics, and meaningful discussions to improve online curriculum and instructional design (Boston et al., 2011). Quality assurance and accountability are practical indicators to review curriculum and instructional design of online education programs (Shelton, 2011). However, Yu et al. (2020) advised educational leaders to explore the relationship between perspectives and interactions in curricular design.

Meanwhile, Quayson (2022) challenged educational leaders to investigate accountability, feedback, and obstacles of curricular design to help faculty members manage the online course. Curriculum and instructional design should be strategic, planned, have continuity during educational emergencies, and be student driven in online education (Meyer & Wilson, 2011; Meyer & Jones, 2011). In addition, Rapchak (2018) found collaborative learning to be informative

in curriculum and instructional design in online education. Educational leaders should ensure that there are educational values, quality perceptions, and subjective reasoning included in curriculum and instructional design (McFarlane, 2011). Tamir and Taylor (2019) highlighted that a curriculum without an understanding of perceptions and learning is problematic for nontraditional students as well as online students. Perceived attributes such as innovators, relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, early adopters, susceptibility, absorbability, and observables are tools to promote effective curriculum and instructional design practices in online education (Keesee & Shepard, 2011). Although Bigatel and Edel-Malizia (2018) suggested educational leaders adopt indicators of engaged online learning to evaluate online courses and programs.

Educational leaders should consider including administrative leadership knowledge to fundamentally design, develop, implement, access, promote, foster quality, and criticisms of online curriculum and instructional design (McFarlane, 2011). The study of Mays and Ross (2022) found that flexibility of online learning and student satisfaction can serve as indicators of success in online education curricular. Still, Graham and Thomas (2011) claimed that educational leaders should provide certificate of completion to faculty members who participate in curriculum and instructional design sessions. Educational leaders should ensure that faculty members are recognized as course curators because they produce content that helps students to understand (Orlando, 2019). In fact, Cengage (2021) described that faculty members become optimistic to take part in online education during educational emergencies. For the same reason, Owusu-Ansah et al. (2011) explained that it is significant for educational leaders to base decisions on the structures of programs and activities when designing curriculum and instruction in online education. In designing online curriculum, students should be invited to serve as content reviewers (Keast, 2022).

Designing an effective curriculum and instruction in online education can help with practical solutions to close the achievement gap among minoritized students (Boston et al., 2011). Faculty members perspectives and expert subject knowledge about course design should be acknowledged (Valenti et al., 2019). Quality evaluation of courses should not be undermined in online education curricular design (Shelton, 2011). Administrative planning with effective management can be instrumental in evaluating online course curricular design (Quayson, 2022).

Educational leaders should consider designing online certification programs to meet the demands of working adults who need additional credentials to advance in careers (Graham & Thomas, 2011). Obviously, Mays and Ross (2022) supported the idea of educational leaders including synchronous options in asynchronous online course design for students who are inexperienced with online education.

Faculty members should be given the permission to customize online course design that is coordinated with the faculty teaching style (Smaldino & Yamagata-Lynch, 2015). Educational leaders should encourage faculty members to include new learning technologies in online course curricular design (Wallace & Young, 2010). Emphatically, Yu et al. (2020) echoed the importance of learning technologies that allow student-instructor relationship and interaction in online curricular design. Designing an innovative curriculum can attract and retain students and faculty members in online education (Heyman, 2010). In fact, Seaman et al. (2019) tracked online learners from undergraduate and graduate levels and revealed that retention increased steadily each year from 2012 to 2016. Evidently, Street (2010) contended that behavior, course outcomes, environmental outcomes, and personal outcomes can influence curriculum and instructional design in online education. Unquestionably, Quayson (2022) underlined that curricular design in private and public institutions slightly differ in depth and structure in online education programs. On the other hand, Seaman et al. (2019) emphasized that public institutions enrolled two-thirds of all distance learners. Educational leaders should think thoroughly about making online education curriculum and instructional design a focus on skill development for students and faculty members (Roman et al., 2010). Still, educational leaders should think creatively about finding learning opportunities for students and faculty members in online education curricular design (Adams, Becker et al., 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This study compiles research from internal (academic journals, books) and external sources (websites, libraries, government agencies). The academic journals were from open-accessed journals and varied from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. There were no human subject participants involved; therefore, the authors did not need Institutional Review Board approval. First, the authors found and defined the research topic and question. Second, the authors

created a list of existing research publication sources. Third, the authors collected existing published studies based on topical relevance. Fourth, the authors organized and examined the published research results. Fifth, the authors had no control over published research methodological design, results, or research ownership/sponsorship. The authors selected these published studies to conceptualize this qualitative study based on depth of research, topical relevance, and research results. The study had one guiding research question: How does practical leadership help educational leaders to implement online education programs? Thus, the primary focus for this study was to describe how educational leaders can use practical leadership to implement online education programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the literature reviews, the authors found relevant information that can help answer the research question guiding this study: *How does practical leadership help educational leaders to implement online education programs?*

Based on the review of literature, the authors gathered the following information for educational leaders to utilize practical leadership to implement online education programs:

a) Implement quality shorter academic terms and accelerated program options

b) Important to have leadership oversight of online education programs

c) Setup academic committees on online education programs in departments

d) Focus on faculty training that produces practicality and quality

e) Develop continuity strategy plan for teaching and learning

f) Focus on problem-solving methodology in online education programs

g) Adopt blended or hybrid method of teaching and learning options

h) Develop learning materials for diverse groups of students in the online classroom

i) Use video captions to meet the learning needs of deaf students

j) Include videos in online education lectures

k) Use interactive video communication for feedback on teaching, social, and cognitive presence

l) Think of ways to help students with mental health and wellbeing

Based on the review of literature for *the process of implementing online education programs*, the authors gathered the following information for educational leaders to utilize practical leadership to implement online education programs:

a) Focus on developing technology ecosystem

b) Invest in innovative learning management system with accessible features

c) Survey to interests, opinions, questions, and concerns

d) Host information sessions for in-person, virtual, hybrid audience

e) Budget online education programs to improve effectiveness

f) Focus on influential data about students to improve student learning

g) Send online program information to students and adults via email and address

h) Focus on synchronous and asynchronous learning formats

i) Look at data on student course dropout behaviors

Based on the review of literature for *facilitation of the use of the Internet as the delivery method*, the authors gathered the following information for educational leaders to utilize practical leadership to implement online education programs:

a) Invest in high-speed Internet access/services and focus on connectivity access

b) Find program characteristics for administrators and faculty members

c) Focus on instructional delivery methods and access for students and faculty

d) Invest in learning technologies and investigate new innovations in learning technologies

e) Focus on accessibility of online education programs to students and adults

f) Focus on professional development for faculty members and students

g) Develop workshops and training sessions periodically

h) Focus on institutional assessment and accreditation of programs

i) Focus on special student group populations such as special needs, prison, military units

j) Focus on the challenges of technology

k) Create video trailers of online courses to familiarize students with course content

Based on the review of literature for *curriculum and instructional design*, the authors gathered the following information for educational leaders to utilize practical leadership to implement online education programs:

a) Focus on the purpose, theory, and reflective practices

b) Focus on transformational learning, lifelong learning, and interaction

c) Supply certificate of completion for faculty members

d) Recognize faculty as course content curators

e) Focus on ongoing performance, evaluation, quality assurance, and accountability

f) Allow faculty to customize online courses that is coordinated with teaching styles

g) Focus on student and faculty satisfaction including concerns

h) Focus on skill development and career content

i) Focus on educational emergencies

j) Focus on practical solutions to close achievement gap for minoritized students

CONCLUSION

Implementing online education programs can be a complex endeavor for educational leaders in higher education. However, it is important for educational leaders to think of best practices that culminate with professional experience when deciding to implement online education programs. Educational leaders should ensure that they utilize practical leadership to guide faculty members and students in the online course. Practical leadership can help educational leaders track retention of students and faculty members in online education. Professional development sessions are important for faculty members and students to thrive in online education. Educational leaders should evaluate teaching and learning gaps in online education programs. Educational leaders should pay close attention to student and faculty satisfaction in online education programs.

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