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TITLE Leadership Development of Community College Students: Does Participation in the Phi Theta Kappa Leadership Development Studies Course Have an Effect on the Development of Leadership Behaviors?

RESEARCHER Beverly Wilcox
College of Human Resources and Education
West Virginia University
Doctoral Dissertation: December 2004

OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to assess whether participation in the Phi Kappa Leadership Development Studies course designed for community college students has an effect on the leadership behaviors of students.

METHODOLOGY

Pre- and post-data was collected from four community colleges in the tri-state area (Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia) that offered the Phi Theta Kappa Leadership (academic honor society for community college students) Development course. Two of the community colleges were classified as rural and the other two as urban. Ninety-two respondents completed the Student Leadership Practices Inventory. The typical respondent was female (67%), 18-22 years of age (50%), Caucasian (94%), and from a rural community college (88%). The pre- and post-testing took place between the first and final class sessions over a semester and every respondent participated in both administrations.

KEY FINDINGS

The post-test means for all five leadership practices were significantly higher than the pre-test means for the total population, with Inspiring showing the highest gains, followed by Challenging, Enabling, Encouraging, and Modeling. Community college students who participated in the leadership development course demonstrated "impressive learning gains" (p. 44).

When comparing men to women on the pre-test a significant difference was found for Enabling (females > males) and this continued through the post-test assessment. For the other four leadership practices no significant differences between men and women were found in either the pre- or post-test administrations. Both females and males, analyzed separately, showed significant positive gains from the pre- and post-test administrations on all five leadership practices. The greatest gains for men and women were in the area of Enabling.

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Statistically significant gains were found on 19 of the 20 comparisons of leadership practices by age groups (18 to 22, 23 to 29, 30 to 39, and 40 or over).

The only significant difference on the pre-test between rural and urban students was on Enabling; with rural students' scores higher than urban students. On the post-test comparisons, however, rural students showed greater gains than urban students on Enabling, Encouraging, Inspiring and Challenging. Within the group of rural students, the results of the pre- and post-test comparisons demonstrated significant differences (gains) in each of the five leadership practices. Within the group of urban students no significant gains were found between the pre- and post-test administrations.

"The specific gains in learning may suggest an increase in the general transformational leadership skills of community college students who participated in the Phi Theta Kappa Leadership Development Studies course and thus substantiate the efficacy of the course" (p. 62-63). "Further, the research from this study reinforces the implementation of leadership courses that combine academic rigor, experiential learning exercises, self-reflection, and opportunities for team participation in service learning projects" (p. 68).