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Cultivating Servant Leadership Among Supplemental Instruction Leaders: Aligning Practice with Institutional Values at Nelson Mandela University

Sub-theme: Student Engagement, Agency, and Success

Format: paper presentation

This article focuses on the development of leadership capacity among Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders within the context of peer-assisted learning at a comprehensive university in the Eastern Cape urban area. The primary objective of this study is to conceptually explore how servant leadership principles can be integrated into the training and development of SI leaders and to propose a framework that aligns leadership practice with institutional values. Despite being positioned as “leaders,” SI leaders often receive limited formal training in leadership theory and practice. This gap presents a missed opportunity to intentionally cultivate leadership competencies that enhance both student support and leader development. Furthermore, there is a need to align SI practices with institutional values in a more structured and theoretically grounded manner. This study adopts a conceptual and theoretical approach, drawing on Spears’ (2010) servant leadership framework to critically analyse its applicability to the roles and responsibilities of SI leaders. The paper engages in a reflective and contextually grounded analysis of leadership development within the SI programme. The findings may suggest that servant leadership principles are highly compatible with the peer-learning facilitation role of SI leaders. The integration of these principles can enhance SI leaders’ ability to support, empower, and engage their peers, while also fostering their own personal and professional development. A conceptual framework will be proposed to guide the incorporation of servant leadership within SI training programmes. The proposed framework provides a structured approach for embedding servant leadership into SI leader training and development. It offers practical guidance for academic development practitioners and programme coordinators seeking to strengthen leadership capacity and align peer support initiatives with institutional values. This study will contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning by advancing a values-driven approach to leadership development within peer-assisted learning contexts. It shall provide a novel conceptual framework that integrates servant leadership into SI practice, thereby enhancing both leadership development and student support within higher education.

Keywords: Servant leadership; Supplemental Instruction; Peer-assisted learning