Building Bridges to Leadership:

An Action Research Case Study of Professional Development in Academic Advising

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the development and implementation of a contextually relevant leadership development program aimed at fostering the growth of academic advisors at Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC), particularly those with aspirations for leadership roles within the advising domain. Recognizing the important role of academic advising in student success and the often-overlooked need for professional development among advisors, this study introduces an innovative approach to cultivating leader identities and enhancing the leadership skills of academic advisors with an authentic leadership lens.

Utilizing an action research case study methodology, this dissertation details the creation, execution, and evaluation of a two-phase innovation. The first phase involves the collaborative development of a mentoring workbook by senior advisors (SAs), designed to guide less experienced academic advisors in a structured mentoring relationship focused on the core values of the office. The second phase operationalizes this workbook in mentoring relationships, offering SAs the opportunity to practice and refine their leadership skills.

Theoretical underpinnings from authentic leadership and leader identity theories serve as the foundation for the innovation, emphasizing the significance of authentic leadership behaviors and the process of leader identity development within the specific organizational context of MLFTC. This study contributes to the understanding of how deliberate, contextually informed interventions can support the professional growth of academic advisors and the cultivation of leader identities and highlights the potential for

such innovations to enhance not only individual careers but also the broader academic advising profession.

Through qualitative and quantitative data analysis, findings demonstrate that the innovation positively influenced the SAs' development of leader identity and authentic leadership traits. This research underscores the importance of providing academic advisors with opportunities for leadership development, advocating for a more holistic approach to supporting the professional growth of student service professionals. Future implications for the field of academic advising, leadership development, and higher education administration are discussed, offering insights into the application of such innovations in similar contexts.

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CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Students entering higher education expect a wide range of support services from their institutions, designed to enhance their academic experience and engagement. Central to these institutional support mechanisms is the domain of student affairs, where academic advising plays a pivotal role. Academic advisors provide essential guidance for students' academic progression, assisting them in formulating their educational trajectories.

Student services encompasses the holistic support of students, and the research explores the intricacies of how students navigate their collegiate experiences. However, the professionals providing academic advisement, who directly influence students' experiences, receive less consideration. There is a pressing need to delve into the professional experiences of advising personnel to better understand their experience providing student support. Acknowledgement and scrutiny of how academic advisors are supported in their personal and professional growth and development are lacking. While considerable efforts focus on new ways to support students' needs, the development of advisors, especially in leadership, also requires attention.

This dissertation explores a deliberate, contextually relevant, sustained approach to support the growth and development of academic advisors as leaders, specifically those aspiring to leadership or supervisory roles. To explore these areas, I developed and implemented an innovation using ideas from leader identity theory and authentic leadership to support advisors through a multi-month series of activities aimed at cultivating their leader identity.

In this chapter, I situate the reader within the context where the innovation was implemented and researched, starting with the historical framework of the academic advising profession. I then outline the specific local context of the study. As the researcher, I detail my role, which is pivotal in understanding the perspectives and methodologies applied. Finally, I will offer an overview of the innovation itself and provide the research questions that guided my exploration of the innovation.

Academic Advising as Profession

To grasp the essence of academic advising as practiced by my study's participants, I undertake a detailed examination of the profession. The term "academic advising" itself carries various interpretations, which necessitates that I define academic advising for this dissertation. According to Kuhn (2008) academic advising occurs in "situations in which an institutional representative gives insight or direction to a college student about an academic, social, or personal matter. The nature of this direction might be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach" (p. 3). I adopt Kuhn's (2008) definition of academic advising for the purposes of my research.

Furthermore, Kuhn (2008) describes various models of academic advising that exist within the higher education ecosystem. For instance, the "faculty-only model" mentioned by Kuhn (2008) allocates advising roles exclusively to faculty members, without a dedicated advising office at the institution. Conversely, Kuhn (2008) outlines the "self-contained model," where staff in a centralized unit advise all students. Additionally, there are hybrid models. In these, advising responsibilities may transition from advising staff to faculty at a certain point in a student's career, or advising may be a collaborative effort, with faculty and staff sharing responsibilities equally.

History of Academic Advising

Since the late 1800s, roles dedicated exclusively to supporting university students outside the classroom have emerged, coinciding with significant changes in higher education. These changes included increased enrollment and the extension of university study opportunities to women and minorities, albeit in separate institutions from those educating men (McClellan & Stringer, 2016). These roles were designed to help students navigate an expanding array of course options, ensure the coordination of focused and coherent study programs, and address needs beyond the classroom (McClellan & Stringer, 2016; White, 2015).

As academic advising evolved into a common support service in higher education institutions, advisors began to reflect on their practices and develop guidelines for structuring their work. This reflection and development process led to the emergence of themes that have shaped the profession. Today, academic advising roles at most universities include promoting student satisfaction, wellness, persistence, retention, degree progression, and graduation (White, 2015).

Standards within Academic Advising

As academic advising matured into a distinct professional field, post-secondary institution representatives came together to establish professional organizations to enhance and standardize their practice. These organizations, notably the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), have been instrumental in shaping academic advising through standards and benchmarks. I will delve into the contributions of each organization in more detail.

CAS has set standards for various aspects of post-secondary education, leveraging the expertise of its member institutions and other professionals. Its standards articulate clear expectations for academic advising programs, covering essential components such as program definition, service requirements, contribution to student development and success, staffing, and leadership structure (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2023). Key standards include advocating for student success and persistence, monitoring individual academic programs, utilizing theory and evidence in program development, and fostering staff well-being (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2023).

While CAS addresses over fifty functional areas within higher education, NACADA zeroes in on academic advising. It has established pillars—caring, commitment, empowerment, inclusivity, integrity, professionalism, and respect—to guide the profession (NACADA Core Values of Academic Advising, n.d.).

The Experience of Academic Advisors

The role of academic advisors is indeed complex and multifaceted, requiring a broad range of skills. This role demands deep emotional engagement with students and the ability to balance between advocating for what is best for each student and adhering to institutional policies, graduation requirements, and administrative procedures. Consequently, the profession experiences a high rate of attrition among new student services professionals, an umbrella which includes academic advisors.

Marshall and colleagues (2016) surveyed 153 individuals about their experiences in student affairs. The majority of respondents (85%) classified their positions as either new professional (27.5%) or middle manager (57.4%). The study revealed that over 40% of new student affairs professionals leave the profession within the first five years,

primarily due to stress and burnout. Similarly, Mullen et al. (2018) reported that "higher levels of job stress and burnout were positively associated with turnover intention and negatively associated with job satisfaction" among student affairs professionals (p. 12). Such high turnover rates negatively impact organizations. Hancock et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis on employee turnover rates and its effects on organizational performance across a variety of industries, finding a negative correlation between any type of turnover and performance metrics such as quality of work and customer/client satisfaction.

Entry into the academic advising profession typically requires a high level of education, with most entry-level positions demanding at least a master's degree (Troxel et al., 2021). Despite these qualifications, the compensation may not align with the required education level. According to Higher Ed Jobs (2021), the CUPA-HR median salary for an academic advisor was $46,673 for the 2019-2020 year, suggesting that the relatively low salary for well-educated professionals contributes to the high attrition rates.

Academic advisors are expected to demonstrate a significant depth and breadth of skills to effectively support students. Yet, there has been limited exploration of resources beyond the technicalities of class schedules and academic policy that could support academic advisors and their professional development. Furthermore, lingering questions about the recognition of academic advising as a true and established profession persist (Habley, 2009; McGill, 2019; Shaffer et al., 2010).

Is Academic Advising a Profession?

Despite the existence of well-established professional organizations and national standards to govern advising practice, a debate persists regarding the status of academic

advising as a true profession. Habley (2009) observed that, despite progress towards professionalization, critical components remain absent, including standardized academic curricula dedicated to teaching advising, graduate programs for advisor training, and robust research demonstrating the impact of advising. Shaffer et al. (2010) supported Habley's (2009) concerns, underscoring the need for specialized training in research methods through master's level education to meet the profession's assessment and research demands.

The inconsistent recognition of advising's role in higher education further complicates its professional status. Troxel et al. (2021) observed that while some institutions recognize and support advising's contribution to student success, others view it as a transactional task focused on tasks like degree audit reviews and course scheduling. This disparity leads to varied expectations of academic advisors. Nevertheless, Troxel et al. (2021) argue that advising should be considered a profession, citing an expanding body of literature, the introduction of new graduate programs, and the formation of professional associations both in the United States and internationally as evidence.

McGill et al. (2020) labeled advising as an "emerging profession" and suggested a novel approach to its development. Instead of creating formal academic programs for teaching advising, they recommend fostering a professional identity among academic advisors, aligning more closely with the practical context of the advising role. Considering that many advisors enter the field without prior experience in advising, cultivating a professional identity could be crucial for newcomers to build sustainable advising careers. Troxel et al. (2021) shared this perspective, highlighting the importance

of establishing career ladders for academic advisors. Such structures promote continuous development, offer pathways for advancement, differentiate roles, and provide salary growth opportunities, demonstrating institutional recognition of the complex cognitive and developmental skills required for expert advising.

Academic Advising at Arizona State University

Arizona State University (ASU) is a large public research institution in the southwest United States with more than 110,000 undergraduate and 30,000 graduate students (Arizona State University, n.d.). The university has developed and standardized processes to guide advising for undergraduate students, including guidelines on how and when to engage with them to meet university expectations. However, the university does not mandate similar expectations for supporting graduate students, allowing academic units considerable flexibility in how they serve this population.

This variability reflects Troxel et al.'s (2021) observation that the view and support of advising differ across institutions, with the role of academic advising varying throughout the university. Nevertheless, some consistencies exist in ASU's advising practices. All departments employ specific models that include hiring individuals as academic advisors. Moreover, the university encourages the connection and collaboration of academic advisors through campus-based organizations like the Council of Academic Advisors.

While there is widespread acknowledgment of advising as a crucial aspect of student support, the primary focus has been on undergraduate students. The university has established many shared practices and expected outcomes for undergraduate

advising. Processes such as schedule planning are formalized and managed at the university level.

In contrast, these shared practices and expected outcomes are less apparent in academic advising for graduate students at ASU. There is a diversity in support modalities for graduate advising, with a noticeable lack of formalization across academic units and colleges. It is not unusual for staff members to be simultaneously responsible for both student and faculty needs, advising on policy and program progression while managing administrative tasks like course scheduling and unit budgeting. Furthermore, some units task advisors with supporting both graduate and undergraduate students, without specific guidelines on managing graduate student advising workloads.

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College Graduate Academic Advising

In the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC), the Graduate Services Office (GSO) takes pride in offering exceptional advising service to graduate students. College leadership regards advising as a crucial and distinct form of student support, employing specialized professionals to support learners. Within this unit, advisors are dedicated to providing academic support exclusively to graduate students, focusing on efficient and effective degree progression, interpreting policies, connecting students with resources, and proactively addressing student needs to ensure smooth progression through their programs.

Graduate students at MLFTC need more than simple guidance on course selection; they often balance full-time employment with their studies and navigate multiple time demands. Enrolling in several graduate-level courses each semester, these students also manage work and family responsibilities. GSO advisors are instrumental in

helping students manage these academic and personal commitments, playing a pivotal role in their academic success, retention in the program, and timely completion of their degrees.

Until 2019, the Graduate Services Office (GSO) employed a traditional model of academic advising, assigning each student an individual advisor responsible for all advising tasks. These tasks encompassed welcoming and onboarding new students, monitoring degree progression, assisting with course registration, navigating university policies, and supporting students through academic or personal challenges. In this model, advisors were each responsible for as many as 650 students. The office experienced rapid increases in new student enrollment outpacing the ability to hire and onboard new advisors quickly enough, leading to increasingly large caseloads as the graduate student population grew.

Team-Based Academic Advising

In late 2019, leadership in the GSO envisioned a shift from individually assigned advisor caseloads to a model based on small teams supporting a shared student population. After a successful pilot and two years of deliberate effort, by 2021, all advisors had transitioned to this collaborative system. In this framework, the graduate advising staff work together, managing a shared caseload of students.

This team-based approach fosters collective accountability for our student population and bolsters opportunities for advisors to develop effective support strategies collaboratively. Advisors have embraced the opportunity to connect with colleagues, addressing student challenges and pioneering new methods for student engagement beyond course scheduling and degree audits. Consequently, this shift has cultivated a

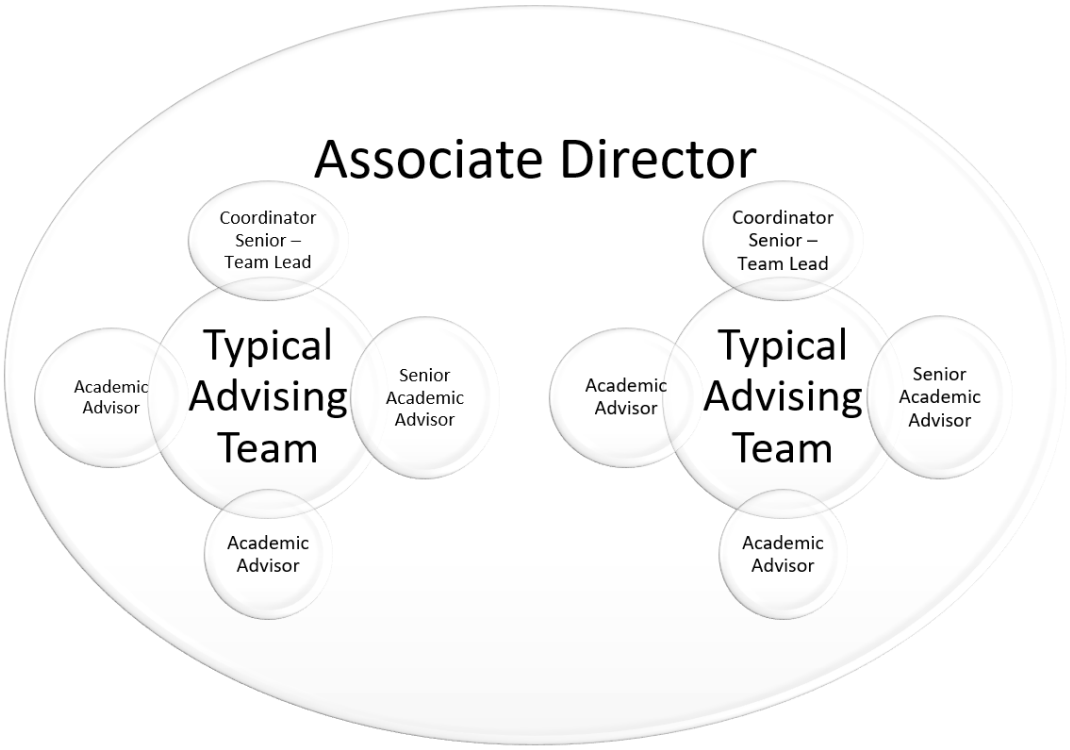
more purposeful, reflective, and cooperative advising environment, significantly enhancing professional development opportunities for our staff. Additionally, this model has accommodated the expansion of our graduate student body, which now encompasses nearly 5,000 learners, 90% of whom complete their coursework online. The reorganization has also introduced necessary role differentiation, allowing the office to manage the advising system's growing scale and complexity more effectively within the GSO.

Advising Team Structure

The GSO advising system is structured with levels of leadership roles. The system includes a director, supported by two associate directors and an assistant director. The associate directors are responsible for overseeing two coordinator seniors or team leads each, who lead the advising teams. An assistant director manages a team dedicated to doctoral students (Ph.D. and Ed.D.) within the MLFTC. Figure 1 illustrates the typical structure of an advising team, which can vary depending on the needs of different graduate degree programs and student populations.

Figure 1

Typical Structure of Advising Teams



This organizational framework is complex and often different from the more straightforward structures encountered by many individuals applying for advisor roles within our team. As a result, attracting suitable candidates with the necessary depth of experience to navigate our large advising office's complexities through traditional interviews has been challenging. Most applicants have experience with smaller, less diverse student populations and limited leadership roles. This situation has highlighted the need for targeted development of our staff, focusing on gradually increasing their

scope of responsibility to build the leadership capabilities required for our diverse and extensive advising environment.

Senior Advisors within the Advising System

The Senior Advisor (SA) role facilitates career progression for academic advisors seeking to develop their leadership skills, without necessarily involving staff supervision. SAs undertake additional responsibilities within the team, addressing higher-level or more complex advising needs of students. Furthermore, SAs mentor newly hired advising staff, easing their integration into the team-based advising system and office culture.

Promotion to the SA role requires interested candidates from within our department to undergo a rigorous selection process. Candidates submit applications to ASU human resources, including a cover letter and resume, and participate in formal interviews. A hiring team, comprised of leaders and peers, selected four individuals to serve as the initial cohort of SAs.

The role represents a valuable advancement opportunity for advisors aiming for leadership positions, especially those without prior supervisory experience. Considering the substantial advising caseloads and the intricacies of graduate-level advising, the SA role is designed to cultivate a pool of capable leaders to sustain future team expansion and meet the staffing requirements of the GSO.

Moreover, the SA role contributes to the ongoing professionalization of academic advising in our context by offering defined and structured advancement pathways within the advising system. Troxel et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of such advancement pathways in fostering a professional identity among academic advisors. However, a significant gap exists in the support and development opportunities available for SAs. No

specific practices have been established to guide SAs in mentoring newly hired staff, nor is there targeted support to facilitate their own growth and leadership development.

The Role of the Researcher

As the Director of the MLFTC's GSO, I oversee a diverse team of thirty staff members, including two associate directors and one assistant director who report directly to me. Our team spans across two ASU campuses and encompasses a range of roles, from student workers and entry-level positions to academic advisors and leadership roles. Since joining MLFTC's GSO and ASU in July of 2017 as an academic advisor, both the structure of our office and my role within it have seen substantial changes. Initially, I managed an individual caseload of approximately 600 graduate students, focusing on supporting their progression towards graduation. As the student body grew, I embraced opportunities to expand my responsibilities and serve in early iterations of our leadership structure, including positions as a Coordinator Senior, Assistant Director, and Associate Director. I significantly contributed to developing the first iteration of the advising team model, helping to conceptualize role differentiation within our office and actively participating in defining our vision, mission, and core values.

Before my tenure at ASU, my roles in various higher education institutions, including directing admission and student service functions, and my time as a director of admission for a large, for-profit, post-secondary educational institution, have profoundly shaped my approach to leadership. In the for-profit role, I led a team of over 30, and confronted challenges related to the lack of structured advancement opportunities and role differentiation, which led to high staff turnover despite competitive compensation and robust training programs. The frustration expressed by staff resigning due to limited

growth opportunities highlighted the importance of providing clear, attainable, and meaningful advancement paths and the necessity of an organizational commitment to staff development.

In my current role as Director, I am committed to creating a supportive environment that prioritizes growth, learning, and strong relationships across the university. Drawing on my previous experiences, I aimed to ensure that our department does not face the same issues related to staff growth and development. It is my goal to foster an organizational culture where both students and staff feel supported, valued, and motivated to achieve their full potential.

Overview of the Innovation

Two of my central objectives as Director have been fostering staff growth and advancing the professionalization of the GSO. Establishing a leadership development pipeline is crucial in this large, complex office to ensure that leadership talent, deeply rooted in the context of our work, is available for continuity as the office expands or as new leadership needs emerge due to attrition.

This innovation was implemented in phases. In Phase 1, which lasted from late spring to early fall 2023, I concentrated on developing the SAs. This period involved collaborative efforts among SAs to discuss mentoring strategies and to create a guide for their mentorship activities. They also participated in exercises designed to enhance their mentoring capabilities, covering topics such as leadership without formal authority and effective communication. This phase culminated in the creation of a mentoring workbook that embodies GSO's core values.

During Phase 2, in the fall of 2023, SAs engaged in formal mentoring relationships with newer advisors, utilizing the workbook developed in Phase 1. This workbook provided mentees with concrete examples of the GSO's principles in action, particularly in student support contexts. For the SAs, serving as mentors was a chance to develop leadership skills and relationships without the need for formal supervisory responsibilities. Further details on this innovation and its full implementation timeline are presented in Chapter 3 of the dissertation.

Research Questions

This study investigated the effects of a uniquely tailored innovation meant to foster leader identity among individuals aspiring to leadership positions. It drew on authentic leadership theory, which not only reflects the mission, vision, and values of our organization but also aligns with my epistemological beliefs. A key aspect of this research focused on identifying how traits of authentic leadership manifest within our organizational culture.

Additionally, leader identity theory served as another essential theoretical underpinning for this study. Establishing a well-defined leader identity is crucial for exhibiting effective leadership skills. Through this study, I explored how SAs cultivate their leader identity within our organizational setting, with the goal of enhancing leadership development practices.

I used the following research questions to guide my study and evaluate the innovation’s impact:

a) How does the innovation support the development of senior advisors’ leader identity?

b) What authentic leadership traits do senior advisors embody throughout the innovation?

Conclusion

In this chapter, I laid the groundwork for understanding the pivotal role of academic advising within higher education through the lens of the GSO in the MLFTC at ASU. Highlighting the evolution, challenges, and standards of academic advising, I introduced an innovative approach aimed at developing leadership identities among academic advisors, anchored in authentic leadership and leader identity theories. This sets a clear context for exploring how such innovations can enhance the professional development and effectiveness of academic advisors.

Chapter 2 includes a thorough review of the literature and an examination of leader identity theory and authentic leadership theoretical foundations for the innovation.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE PROJECT

The previous chapter delved into the realm of academic advising, examining it from a broad perspective as well as within the specific context of this innovation, and introduced the research questions guiding this study. In this chapter, I review the theoretical foundations informing the innovation.

Leadership Defined

The innovation centers on leadership and leadership development. As such, it is crucial to briefly explore the concept of leadership. The notion of leadership and the criteria for "good" leadership have evolved over time. Early 20th century views on leadership focused on control, power, and domination (Northhouse, 2019). However, as the study of leadership progressed, the definition expanded to encompass influence and the understanding of leadership as a process not tied to inherent traits within the leader (Northhouse, 2019). This shift in definition implied that leadership skills are developable rather than innate, and sparked inquiries into how to build leadership skills. Although no single framework for leadership development universally prevails, leadership development is viewed as a process of cultivating traits within an individual.

Leader Identity Theory

Identity development in general is the ongoing journey through which individuals form a sense of self and a coherent understanding of their place in the world (Guenther et al., 2020). One's overall identity or self-concept (the phrases are often used interchangeably in the literature) is multi-faceted and dynamic (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Jones and McEwen (2000) proposed one of the earliest models of identity. They posited

that identity can be multidimensional and is not necessarily hierarchical. Meaning, identity can have a number of facets that are all equally expressed by the person. The authors further asserted that an individual's identity consists of a core, in which personal attributes are central to the individual, such as race or gender. It is these core facets of identity that tend to be fixed in nature and are less impacted by the individual's life experiences (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Components beyond the core are less fixed and influenced by life experiences.

Jones and McEwen (2000) recognized the significant role of context in identity formation, with social interactions and reflections contributing to the evolving self-concept. This dynamic interplay between core components, experiences, and contexts shapes individuals' self-perception within their broader world, form the basis of identity from social experiences and facilitating personal growth (Balakrishnan, 2020; Jones & McEwen, 2000). Wenger (1998) further emphasized that identity is a key element of the learning process, developed through participation in communities. He argues that identity is integral to learning, as it reflects how individuals see themselves and are seen by others within their social engagements. This perspective highlights the influence of community contexts on individuals' trajectories of personal growth and development, suggesting that learning and identity formation are deeply interconnected social processes.

Leader identity refers to the "subcomponent of one's identity that relates to being a leader or how one thinks of oneself as a leader" (Day & Harrison, 2007, p. 365). Conceptualizing leadership, in this study, as a "process that is not a trait or characteristics that resides in the leader" (Northhouse, 2019) underscores the necessity of examining how individuals cultivate their unique leadership processes and the elements required to

fully develop these processes and incorporate them into their identity.

Lord and Hall (2005) presented a theory of leader identity formation, and framed it as a dynamic, developmental process that evolves over time. This model emphasizes the significance of behaviors, leadership skills, personal experiences, and acquired knowledge in shaping the development of a leader's identity (Lord & Hall 2005). The construction of a leader identity is more than skill acquisition; it entails a transformative process in how individuals perceive, interpret, and utilize information in leadership contexts, thus building a more holistic sense of self as a leader. Central to their theory is the notion that continuous engagement and the pursuit of skill enhancement are crucial for the dynamic evolution of leader identity. This perspective underscores the ongoing nature of becoming a leader and highlights the interplay between individual growth and the broader social and contextual influences on leadership identity formation. The components of their model that advocate for persistent engagement and the refinement of leadership competencies warrant closer examination to understand their impact on the leader identity construction process.

Leader Identity Construction Over Time

Lord and Hall (2005) emphasized that developing a leader identity necessitates active and intentional engagement with the leadership process over an extended period, potentially spanning months or even years. Leader identity construction is a process that unfolds gradually, and exposure to a variety of increasingly complex situations builds depth and resilience. Practicing complex leadership activities across diverse scenarios provides the necessary experience to incorporate leadership into one’s broader identity. Continuous practice fosters deeper integration of this identity and gradually shifts the

individual's focus from themselves to those they lead (Lord & Hall, 2005).

The significance of prolonged engagement in leader identity formation has been further explored by other scholars such as Day and Harrison (2007), who supported Lord and Hall's (2005) views on the critical role of sustained engagement in developing a leader identity. They conceptualized this process as cumulative and spiral-like, where the evolving leader identity not only motivates further engagement but also encourages the pursuit of additional leadership opportunities. This cycle of engagement enhances leadership experience and allows the leader identity to grow through a positive feedback loop that encourages increased practice and reflection. Day and Harrison (2007) argued that this positive feedback cycle is instrumental in strengthening leadership competencies and enables leaders to perform more effectively. This development process, they suggest, is not marked by a singular experience but evolves through a series of experiences that together contribute to shaping a robust leader identity (Day & Harrison, 2007)

Skill Building in the Construction of Leader Identity

Lord & Hall (2005) highlighted several key skill development areas, which they referred to as domains. These include task, emotional, social, meta-monitoring, and value orientation. To track progress within each domain, they introduced a rating system to measure development levels, ranging from novice, through intermediate, to expert stages. Table 1 below presents the domains along with the progression of growth within each.

Table 1

Leadership Skill Domains and Expression Change

Skills Domain	Expression Change as Growth Occurs
Task	From generic problem solving to deep understanding of task and a wider skill set
Emotional	From expression of appropriate emotions to supporting the direction of subordinate emotional regulation and understanding the connection between cognition and emotion
Social	From a social influence approach to values-based leadership
Meta-monitoring	From a focus on one's own emotion and motivation to a deeper understanding of the relationship between emotions and motivation
Value orientation	From operating within a specific value structure without concern for context to understanding the cultural lens of values and how they connect to individual identities and self-regulation

Adapted from Lord & Hall, 2005

Task skill development involves gaining technical proficiency, often specific to the workplace, job role, or work group (Lord & Hall, 2005). Initially, an individual developing a leader identity might only possess basic decision-making or problem-solving skills; at this stage, integrating more complex processes might be challenging. As individuals progress in their leadership journey, they become adept at handling more sophisticated tasks that yield results over a longer period. Team building is one example of a task skill that enhances through the development of leader identity. The ability to build and maintain a team is indicative of a leader's growth from managing simple to more complex interpersonal and organizational processes.

The development within the emotional skill domain primarily focuses on the recognition and appropriate expression of one's own emotions, in alignment with the

situational demands faced by the leader (Lord & Hall, 2005). This process requires leaders to shift their focus from their own emotional responses to the emotional reactions of their followers. Demonstrating a fully formed leader identity involves orienting attention away from individual needs towards the collective needs of those affected by their leadership (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Lord & Hall, 2005).

Building from this, Thwaite (2022) emphasizes the significance of integrating core values with leadership identity and highlighted the necessity for leaders to prioritize their core values and personal identities in their leadership roles. It is crucial for leaders to align their core values and personal identities within their roles; core values shape how leaders perceive their role, interact with team members, advocate for and support others, and respond to challenges and opportunities. Leaders are encouraged to ensure their core values, personal missions, and the institution's objectives are in strong alignment, underscoring the importance of this congruence for effective leadership (Thwaite, 2022).

Lord and Hall (2005) emphasize the importance of social skills development for leaders, including the capacity for self-monitoring emotions. This ability enables leaders to understand the influence of their emotions on their work and focus more on team development and managing emotional expressions in both social and professional settings. Furthermore, Lord and Hall (2005) identify meta-monitoring and values orientation as critical domains in the development of leader identity. Meta-monitoring allows leaders to adjust to different situations based on feedback and learning, ensuring their behavior aligns with moral principles. Values orientation involves integrating personal values into leadership roles to guide ethical decision-making, ensuring consistent behavior, and fostering a positive organizational culture. This integration is

key to forging an honest and genuine leadership identity. A leader's commitment to values orientation is instrumental in shaping a moral and principled leadership identity (Lord & Hall, 2005).

Evaluating Lord and Hall's (2005) theory, Kragt and Day (2020) found a strong connection between a fully formed leader identity and specific leadership skills. Their study with 80 Australian leaders showed that a well-developed leader identity enhances scrutiny of work practices, appreciation for diversity, and follower commitment. They argue for longitudinal research to understand the development of dynamic skills and deeper meaning-making structures in leadership development, noting, "What is needed is long-term, longitudinal research on more distal outcomes such as changes in dynamic skills and abstractions as well as deep-level meaning-making structures and process" (Kragt & Day, 2020, p. 11).

Hammond et al. (2016) expanded Lord and Hall's (2005) work by delineating four dimensions of leader identity development—strength, integration, inclusiveness, and meaning. They proposed a framework to assess the development of leader identity across these dimensions as low, medium, or high.

Starting with the low level of development, individuals exhibit weak strength, not perceiving themselves as leaders. Their leader identity is fragmented, acknowledged only within their work environment. Inclusiveness at this stage is individualistic, centering on leadership through personal competencies and skills. Leadership meaning is equated with dominance, characterized by a focus on assertive control.

Moving to a medium level of development, there is a moderate acknowledgment of oneself as a leader, indicating emerging strength in their leader identity. Integration

occurs across select domains, such as work and community, though it may not extend to perceiving oneself as a leader in the home. Leadership becomes relational in its inclusiveness, shaped significantly by key personal relationships. The associated meaning of leadership shifts towards interpersonal influence, reflecting leadership through goal accomplishment.

At the high development level, individuals exhibit strong self-perception as leaders. Integration is comprehensive and leader identity is woven into all facets of an individual's life. Inclusiveness expands to a collective scope and focuses on leadership that uplifts the group. The meaning of leadership has evolved to embrace shared leadership and collaborative efforts.

This progression from low to high development in Hammond et al.'s (2016) framework outlines a journey from an emerging, self-centered leader identity to a fully integrated, collective, and collaborative leadership approach, emphasizing the growth and expansion of leader identity across personal and professional domains.

London and Sherman (2021) emphasized the importance of practicing leadership behaviors across various conditions and organizational contexts for the development of a leader identity. They observed, "The extent to which new leaders are reinforced for consistent patterns of behavior begins to establish their styles of leadership (possibly different styles for different situations) and shape their identity as a leader" (p. 323). Practicing leadership behaviors allows individuals to connect with their leadership abilities and recognize their own development more clearly (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Additionally, practice reinforces the notion that leadership skills are developed through active engagement rather than being an innate talent. (Miscenko et al., 2017).

Clapp-Smith et al. (2019) applied Hammond et al.'s (2016) framework to students in an MBA program to foster leader identity. The students built their identity through narrative construction and leadership storytelling. The process strongly emphasized reflection to support leader identity development. The authors contend that the reflection process is important in leader identity development, as it supports individuals in taking "a future-oriented perspective to achieve an aspirational leader identity" (Clapp-Smith et al., 2019, p.28).

Thwaite (2022) highlighted the process of identity formation within the realm of higher education leadership and emphasized the necessity for deliberate support and the critical role of institutional context and core values in shaping a leader's identity. The research, a grounded theory study involving seven leaders at public universities, revealed identity formation to be a multifaceted, dynamic endeavor. Thwaite (2022) pointed out that the institution's mission and core values act as pivotal elements in guiding identity development, underscoring their foundational influence.

Integrating this understanding, Thwaite (2022) suggested, "Being intentional about the creation of identity spaces for meaning making can help leaders be more present, self-observant, and connected to the needs of others around them" (p. 68). This statement encapsulates the study's conclusion that creating spaces dedicated to reflective practice and identity exploration enables leaders to foster a deeper connection with their personal values, thereby enhancing their leadership capacity. Furthermore, Thwaite (2022) delineated the necessity for leaders to not only advocate on behalf of others but also to maintain a personal commitment to their core values. This involves embracing

vulnerability, which Thwaite (2022) argues, is essential for developing the competencies required of a skilled leader.

Leadership Development

Leader identity focuses on the individual, while leadership pertains to how leadership skills are applied within a specific context. Thus, it is important to explore how individuals cultivate their identity within a system. Day and Harrison (2007) introduced a theory of how the work of identity development can be applied to the area of leadership development. They argued that navigating the complexities of modern organizations requires a multi-tiered approach to leadership development.

Day and Harrsion (2007) describe three levels of a leader's identity: individual, relational, and collective. There is a progression from an individual perspective, where leadership is understood through one's personal traits and attributes. It then advances to a relational stage, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal connections and influence. It culminates in a collective viewpoint, which regards leadership as a communal and cooperative effort within organizations. These identity tiers are vital for the development and application of leadership across various situations and phases of a leader's career. Table 2 presents a summary of Day and Harrison's (2007) framework, detailing each tier, its characteristics, and its significance for leadership.

Table 2

Levels of Leadership Identity, Description, and Leadership Implication

Level of Identity	Description	Leadership Implication
Individual	Focuses on personal attributes that define one's leadership, like perseverance	Leadership is viewed as an expression of personally possessed qualities or traits.
Relational	Based on relationships and significant exchanges with followers or peers	Leadership occurs through engaging followers in a process of influence, negotiating, and relationship building.
Collective	Defines the self in terms of belonging to groups or organizations, emphasizing leadership within a collective context	Leadership is seen as a shared property of the social system, involving collaboration and collective action for organizational or group success.

The growth Day and Harrison (2007) outline demonstrates a shift from focusing on the individual's self-concept to the cultivation of a collective leadership identity that emphasizes collaborative, systemic thinking. This development approach emphasizes the importance of addressing both the personal and collective dimensions of leadership identity to meet the evolving challenges and responsibilities leaders face as they advance in their careers (Day and Harrison, 2007).

It is crucial to understand the individual's growth through the integration of leadership into their personal identity. However, leadership extends beyond the individual; it involves engaging with others and practicing leadership skills. Thus, the surrounding context and the structure of the team or organization must be considered. Day and Harrison (2007) advocate for a multilevel approach, using leader identity as a "developmental lever to help promote and accelerate both leader and leadership

development" (Day & Harison, 2007, p. 369). They argue, for example, that for the development of relational identity, practice in fostering positive relationships is needed. Additionally, they highlight the significance of collaborative efforts, encouraging individuals to align their personal identity with that of the organization.

Developing a leader identity goes beyond single instances of leadership engagement. It involves a continuous, quality journey of development, rather than isolated, disjointed training sessions. For leadership development to be effective, it must provide support, feedback, structured reflection, and a broad spectrum of contextually relevant experiences (Day & Liu, 2018). Essentially, leadership development is an ongoing process that spans an adult's entire life (Day et al., 2009).

Authentic Leadership

The exploration of leadership within the framework of positive psychology and positive organizational behavior has led to significant insights into how leadership practices can promote positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. Positive psychology provides a foundation for examining leadership beyond traditional metrics of success. Similarly, positive organizational behavior focuses on the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can bring improvement in the workplace. Authentic leadership emerges as a natural extension of these disciplines, emphasizing the role of positive psychological capacities and a nurturing organizational climate in fostering leadership that is both genuine and effective. By situating authentic leadership within the context of positive psychology and positive organizational behavior, this section details authentic leadership and its theoretical development.

Positive Psychology

The quest to understand leadership and define “good” leaders has evolved alongside new psychological perspectives. Positive psychology, which began to be investigated in earnest in the late 1990’s, emerged as a unique way of thinking about people. This approach emphasizes individuals' strengths, resilience, and virtues. Azar (2011) highlights this shift in focus, marking it as a significant departure from traditional psychological approaches of dysfunction and pathology.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) outlined the concept in an issue of the *American Psychologist*, urging the psychology profession to think differently about the human experience and calling for deeper research into human strengths, instead of exploring means to correct psychological pathologies. The authors argued for a shift away from mental illness as a focus of the profession and movement towards enhancing understanding of how to use personal strength to build resilience (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

As a discipline and perspective, positive psychology pivots from the negative aspects of mental illness to the positive attributes that enable individuals to flourish (Kern & Wehmeyer, 2012). The discipline explores ways to bolster resilience and build upon innate strengths, with some research examining its application in enhancing workplace environments. Positive organizational scholarship, as Cameron et al. (2003) discussed, applies positive psychology principles to foster strength-based cultures in organizational settings.

Building on the work of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Cameron (2021) led research that integrated positive frameworks into organizational studies. Positive

Organizational Scholarship (POS) centers around four core principles: adopting a strengths-based and opportunity-oriented perspective of organizations; emphasizing exceptional positive outcomes; utilizing positivity to foster resourcefulness that benefits individuals and organizations alike; and exploring organizational virtues that showcase people's finest qualities. This investigation of POS elements set the foundation for pinpointing organizational behaviors that resonate with these principles, benefiting leaders, employees, and the organization as a whole by fostering a positive and productive workplace culture.

Positive Organizational Behavior

Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) embodies the practical application of positive psychology principles within the workplace, aiming to build upon organizational and individual strengths (Cameron et al., 2003). Luthans and Youssef (2007) describe POB as a field dedicated to identifying, measuring, and enhancing human resource strengths and psychological capacities to improve workplace performance. This constructive collaboration between what is “right” with organizations and what is “right” with people considers how to best support people in the workplace. POB emphasizes cultivating positive emotions like happiness, confidence, emotional intelligence, and optimism (Yammarino et al., 2008).

As scholars delve deeper into the beneficial aspects of individuals and organizations, they have increasingly focused on the role of organizational leadership. Luthans (2002), a pioneer in POB, expressed frustration over the theoretical gaps in literature aimed at practicing managers and the prevalent focus on psychological deficiencies. He criticized that organizational performance research was focused

negatively on the "deficiencies, problems and dysfunctions of managers and employees rather than their strengths and psychological capacities for development and performance improvement" (Luthans, 2002, p. 698).

Authentic Leadership Definition and Application

This pursuit of enhanced performance and leadership outcomes gave rise to the theory of authentic leadership. Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) definition is noted as the most well-recognized, and describes authentic leadership in this way:

> A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive and psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development (p. 94).

These attributes underscore the positive psychology foundation, emphasizing that such traits are developable rather than innate.

Luthans and Avolio (2003) initially introduced the theory of authentic leadership. Later, researchers, including Walumbwa et al. (2008), further elaborated on this framework, providing clearer definitions for each of its four components. Table 3 offers definitions for the authentic leadership components based on Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) detailed explanation.

Table 3

Authentic Leadership Components and Definitions

Component	Definition
Self-awareness	The leader's understanding of their own values, beliefs, and strengths, as well as their limitations. It involves a deep sense of how one makes meaning of the world and the impact of this meaning-making process on oneself and others over time.
Relational transparency	Presenting one's true self to others. This involves openly sharing information and expressing true thoughts and feelings, while also minimizing displays of inappropriate emotions. It fosters trust in leadership through genuine disclosures.
Internalized moral perspective	Guided by internal moral standards and values rather than external pressures, leading to self-regulated behavior that is consistent with these internalized values.
Balanced processing	An objective analysis of all relevant data before deciding. Leaders demonstrate balanced processing by soliciting views that challenge their own deeply held positions, ensuring a well-rounded and informed decision-making process.

Avolio et al. (2004) delved into the impact of authentic leadership on followers, discovering that authentic leaders significantly enhance followers' engagement within the organization and improve overall performance. Building on this foundation, Avolio and Gardner (2005) were instrumental in further developing the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, designed to evaluate the expression of authentic leadership traits. This sequence of research highlights the positive effects of authentic leadership on organizational dynamics and establishes a tool for assessing such leadership qualities.

Baron and Parent (2015) explored the effects of a leadership training program

aimed at fostering authentic leadership in mid-level managers. Their research highlighted a crucial exploratory phase where participants evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, and emotions to comprehend their impact on others. This phase precedes integration, where participants link personal growth with positive self-recognition, culminating in improved workplace satisfaction, decreased stress, and a boost in pride, outcomes the authors describe as "states of well-being" (Barron & Parent, 2015, p. 44). The study provides insight into the authentic leadership experience, emphasizing increased self-awareness, relational transparency through honest feedback and emotional expression, balanced information processing by reconsidering personal views and appreciating external feedback, and an internalized moral perspective that ensures alignment between personal values and decision-making.

The cultivation of authentic leadership traits signifies a transformative journey, reshaping individuals' self-perception and leadership philosophy. One's identity, which incorporates experiences with the beliefs individuals hold, allows people to build an understanding of how they see themselves and the world around them. Wenger (1998) outlined identity as a crucial component of learning, stating it is "a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (p. 5).

Mentoring

Mentoring actively facilitates professional development in the workplace by guiding individuals through various stages of their career growth (Gravells & Wallace, 2007). It supports mentees by providing career functions, including advice, coaching and feedback, and psychosocial functions, such as modeling behaviors to emulate and

offering affirmation and validation (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Serving as a powerful tool for fostering development, especially in leadership, mentoring proves to be particularly impactful within the field of education (Hastings & Sunderman, 2020).

Research on mentoring has predominantly concentrated on the advantages for the mentee, who is the individual receiving guidance or training. Being a mentee has demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved workplace attitudes, increased career satisfaction, and enhanced performance (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Furthermore, engaging in mentorship has been shown to benefit workplace relationships beyond the mentor-mentee dynamic (Eby & Robertson, 2020).

The mentors themselves also experience significant benefits, including improved job performance, career success, and personal satisfaction (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Ehrich et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis within educational contexts and found that mentors often report developing their interpersonal skills and practicing reflection throughout the mentorship. However, the authors note potential downsides for mentors, such as the time commitment required and possible frustrations with their mentee.

Complementary Utilization of Theoretical Perspectives

In the workplace, the concepts of authentic leadership, leader identity, and mentoring work together to support leadership development. This complementary relationship, especially between mentoring and leader identity, as well as mentoring and authentic leadership, positively impacts the growth of leaders. Below, I explore two specific studies to illustrate these effects.

Mentoring and Leader Identity

Mentoring and leader identity interact beneficially. In their longitudinal study, Ayoobzadeh and Boies (2020) paired more senior Ph.D. students as mentors with more junior students as mentees. This quantitative analysis involved 46 mentor-mentee pairs and revealed that mentoring, supplemented by other activities, enhances leadership capabilities. By employing leader identity measures from Hiller (2005) and leader self-efficacy assessments by Quigley (2013), the study demonstrated that mentors experienced growth in both leader identity and self-efficacy.

Mentoring and Authentic Leadership

Shapira-Lishchinsky and Levy-Gazenfrantz (2016) investigated the relationship between mentoring and emotional intelligence among 62 teachers in Israel across various grade levels and years of experience. Through semi-structured interviews, this study aimed to understand mentors' impacts on teachers' careers and emotional intelligence development. The research process included follow-ups based on initial responses, confirmatory data analysis, member checking, and cross-data analysis comparison.

The findings indicated that mentees recognized their mentors' significant impact on workplace performance. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Levy-Gazenfrantz (2016) concluded that both formal and informal mentoring, characterized by authentic leadership qualities (self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized moral perspective), fosters the development of mentees' emotional intelligence, including traits like self-confidence, empathy, social skills, motivation, and self-regulation.

Previous Cycles of Action Research

Action research unfolds in a cyclical process, alternating between reflection and action, followed by further reflection (Mertler, 2020). This iterative approach often leads to the evolution of the research focus from its original intention to a new direction (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In this project, I experienced such a shift in focus after the initial phase of investigation revealed an unexpected aspect of staff experience, thereby redirecting my research.

Cycle 0: Reconnaissance

Initiating action research typically involves gathering facts about the research subject (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In the fall of 2021, I embarked on this fact-finding mission, focusing on academic advisors in the Graduate Services Office (GSO). Initially, I aimed to explore the concept of psychological capital, which includes positive psychological resources that contribute to job performance and satisfaction (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). However, this focus changed when I encountered an insightful discovery.

One participant, a newcomer to academic advising and our office, shared during a conversation in the reconnaissance process about her struggle with feeling comfortable in our workplace. She appreciated the core values introduced upon starting her role, noting such context-specific principles were absent in her previous positions at ASU. She expressed gratitude for the autonomy our workplace grants for decision-making and work facilitation. Yet, she also observed that this level of autonomy significantly differed from her past experiences, leading to a longer-than-expected adjustment period. Her hesitation to make decisions stemmed from a fear of making mistakes and its potential impact on

her role. She suggested that enhancing the onboarding process with a focus on cultural acclimation, beyond just tasks and processes, could benefit new staff members.

Her feedback proved to be significant. Following her insights, I conducted informal follow-ups with several other new employees, all of whom reported similar experiences. These conversations confirmed the importance of providing contextually relevant experiences to help new staff members acclimate to our office culture. This research cycle informed the direction of subsequent research cycles.

Cycle 1: Leadership Conversations

This cycle aligned with the promotion of senior advisor (SAs) to their new roles. I recognized the long-term goal of leveraging SAs' experience to support the onboarding of new staff through mentoring. However, I was concerned that these SAs lacked sufficient exposure to the leadership team's thought processes and decision-making strategies within our context. Before assigning them as mentors, I aimed to deepen their understanding of the context and the leaders' decision-making intentions within this office.

In the late fall of 2022, I initiated work to offer this insight. I compiled a collection of readings and podcasts on four key leadership topics relevant to our context, titling this collection "Leadership Conversations." Formal leaders and SAs comprised the participant group. Each conversation began with participants having completed preparatory reading and reflection on the topic, followed by an hour-long guided discussion involving both leaders and SAs. I supplied participants with questions related to the pre-work to kickstart the conversation.

These Leadership Conversations allowed SAs to gain insights directly from leaders about how they interpret and apply the discussed concepts in our collective work and decision-making processes. Participating in these dialogues, SAs could share their views, contributing to a growing confidence in articulating their leadership thoughts. The Leadership Conversations intended to meet five learning objectives:

- Develop awareness about how the work of the GSO is grounded in the broader landscape of ASU, which has situated itself as a key member of the fifth wave of large-scale public research universities.
- Understand how the work of the GSO is connected to and aligned with broader, aspirational goals of the university.
- Investigate ways in which leadership-level decisions made in the GSO align with the core values of the Office of Academic and Career Success within MLFTC and the values of the institution.
- Develop an intentional approach to decision making that allows for integration of multiple perspectives as well as considers GSO's and ASU's values.
- Anticipate ways in which non-leadership staff may need to be supported as new innovation is continuously implemented in our environment.

The timeline for this phase of the intervention was from November 2022 through February 2023. The topic and timeline for the sessions is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Leadership Conversations Topics and Timelines

Module	Topic	Timeframe
1	Embracing education's 5th wave	November 2022
2	Principled innovation	November 2022
3	Inclusion	December 2022
4	Change management and leadership theory	January 2023
5	What's next?	February 2023

I collected qualitative data during this phase, which included recordings of the one-hour Zoom meetings, entries from an electronic notebook where participants noted their thoughts relevant to the conversations or their development, and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, I gathered quantitative data through a survey that used both post-intervention questions and retrospective, pre-intervention questions.

My data analysis, centered on the experiences of the SAs, uncovered several noteworthy findings. The SAs identified connections between our office's efforts and ASU's overarching goals. They specifically noted how ASU's charter commitment to inclusivity aligns with our office's dedication to flexibility and support for students' experiences. Furthermore, the SAs resonated with the university's forward-thinking approach and its implications for future educational planning. Our continuous evolution of service models and the broader university perspective serve as a guide, enriching our office's focus on the future.

In the fourth module, the SAs valued learning about various leadership models and strategies. Discovering that leadership skills can be acquired was particularly empowering. The traditional notion of a "born leader" had previously made leadership seem out of reach for some. However, discussions on how leaders in our context blend

personal strengths with learned skills demystified leadership, making it appear more attainable.

Moreover, understanding how other leaders applied theoretical concepts to overcome challenges or guide their work significantly deepened the SAs' comprehension of our operational context. Leaders' efforts to align with a broader vision and their intentional connections were made transparent through these dialogues, offering the SAs a clearer insight into leader's thought processes. This transparency clarified decision-making aspects and the considerations leaders take into account, rendering leadership more approachable. Empowered by this newfound clarity, the SAs felt more confident in their ability to integrate a broader perspective and leadership principles into their roles to advance initiatives.

Implications

I applied the theoretical frameworks and insights from prior action research cycles to affirm that leadership evolves through social construction. This perspective underscores the importance of human interactions and relationship-building as foundational elements in developing leadership skills. With this understanding, I designed an innovation to bridge the leadership development gap in my office, emphasizing the transformative power of social interactions in shaping leadership identities.

Central to this initiative was the application of authentic leadership principles and the construct of leader identity as frameworks guiding the deliberate innovation aimed at leadership development. By adopting a supportive, strengths-based approach and recognizing the learnability of leadership skills, the innovation sought to enhance the

leadership capacities of the SAs. This approach not only leveraged the theoretical insights on the dynamic nature of leadership development but also underscored the value of fostering an environment that nurtures authentic leadership behaviors and a strong sense of leader identity.

Drawing on Lord and Hall's (2005) emphasis on skill development and the significance of self-awareness and emotional regulation, the innovation provided a structured framework for the SAs' experiences. This framework facilitated meaningful interactions and self-reflection, fostering the growth of leadership skills and identity through sustained engagement and deliberate practice. The importance of scrutinizing values and ethics, as highlighted by Lord and Hall (2005), informed the content and direction of innovation to ensure alignment with the specific context and values of our workplace.

Furthermore, by utilizing authentic leadership as a lens to identify and cultivate the leadership behaviors most conducive to our organizational culture, I established a foundation for SAs to build their leader identities. The components of authentic leadership served as guiding principles for this innovation and reinforced the connection between theoretical constructs and their practical application in leadership development.

This integrated approach to leadership development, grounded in theoretical insights and tailored to the unique context of our organization, aimed to cultivate a group of leaders equipped with the skills, values, and identities necessary for effective leadership. Through this innovation, I intended to enhance organizational effectiveness, foster a positive workplace culture, and ensure our organization's sustainable success in a complex and changing business environment.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive exploration of the theoretical frameworks and research underpinning the innovation on leadership and leadership development. By integrating theories of leader identity, authentic leadership, and mentorshi, the chapter outlined a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership development. This theoretical backdrop is instrumental in guiding the innovation's approach to fostering leadership capabilities, underlining the necessity of supportive environments for nurturing effective leaders. By emphasizing authentic leadership, mentorship, and the cultivation of leadership identities, the innovation aims to bridge practice gaps and to foster a culture of growth, resilience, and inclusivity. This holistic approach to leadership and mentorship underscores the pivotal role of intentional, strengths-based intervention in enhancing leadership capacities, ultimately contributing to a more empowered and adaptive organizational environment. This intention forms the foundation for the components of the innovation, which is detailed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

ACTIONS AND METHODS

In the preceding chapters, I offered an overview of the larger and local contexts. I also delineated the necessity for the innovation and outlined the research questions explored in the study. Through a thorough review of the literature, I examined the theoretical foundations of the innovation, and examined their application in other research settings. In this chapter, I delve into the details about the action research, case study methodology utilized for the research. I also provide more information about the setting and participants, along with outlining my role as the researcher. I provide an overview of the innovation and I articulate the research methods for data collection and analysis in studying its implementation. Concluding this chapter, I engage in a discussion of the ethical considerations pertinent to this research.

Research Methodology

In the design of a study, researchers choose theories and methodologies influenced by their ontological and epistemological perspectives. These perspectives shape their understanding of the phenomena being studied and inform their beliefs about the creation and interpretation of knowledge (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019). Several core beliefs served as a foundational framework for my approach to innovation. First, I embrace the notion that our experiences are socially constructed, emphasizing the significance of context in shaping our perceptions. This perspective aligns itself with an interpretivist epistemological view (Mills et al., 2010). Furthermore, I firmly believe that individuals achieve remarkable accomplishments when supported by a community that believes in them and fosters a positive, growth-oriented environment. Additionally, I hold

the belief that people inherently seek growth, connection, and positivity within their workplace. As a leader, I recognize it is my responsibility to nurture these connections and cultivate an environment that fosters continuous development.

My workplace beliefs are directly reflected in the innovation and the research on its implementation. As a leader, nurturing the professional growth of individuals in our office who aspire to leadership roles is one of my primary responsibilities. My objective was to create conducive conditions for their development. Additionally, I endeavored to understand the experiences of the SAs and created detailed descriptions of those experiences not only to enhance my understanding but also to provide clarity and insight for anyone reading the research. Furthermore, I aim to utilize the knowledge gained from this project to continue to enhance how this workplace context supports the development of senior advisors (SAs) and all staff interested in professional growth.

To accomplish these objectives, this study employs a case study informed action research approach (Mertler, 2020, Yin, 2018). As a researcher, my primary goal was to establish and study specific and intentional practices that support the development of leadership qualities among the staff. A case study approach provided the methodological perspective necessary to include the relevant contextual details crucial for understanding the innovation and the research (Yin, 2018).

Action Research

Action research is a cyclical, iterative process that focuses on identifying and improving real-world problems within a specific context (Mertler, 2020). Action researchers use theoretical frameworks to design an intervention or innovation for their identified problem or challenge. When action researchers design, implement, and

research an innovation, their goal is not necessarily to produce findings that can replicated with the same results across multiple contexts. The goal of action research is to improve a challenge or close a gap in practice in a way that is informed by theory, benefiting the specific context. Theory offers a framework not only for evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention but also for guiding the ongoing improvement and development of practices.

Despite the contextual focus of action research, I believe the innovation I have designed and the findings from the study hold potential for transferability to other contexts. The insights gleaned can offer valuable guidance for similar practices in other institutions of higher education, as well as any large organizational structure seeking to promote and facilitate career ladder progression among staff. Additionally, professionals in the field of leader identity development may view this research to be particularly pertinent and beneficial.

Case Study Design

The intended outcomes align well with a case study approach. Yin (2018) offers a twofold definition of case study. The first criterion is that it "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context" (p. 15). The study spanned an eight-month timeframe. The investigation was a multi-phase study of leader identity development for a group of SAs within my workplace; this meets Yin's (2018) criterion of depth.

The second component of Yin's (2018) definition is that "the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context may not be clearly identified" (p. 15). This component also aligns well. The workplace context in which the research occurred had

characteristics that were important to the study. One of the main tenets of leader identity is its contextual dependence in development. Identity development is a complex process in which it is impossible to separate the process from the context of the workplace (Lord & Hall, 2005). There were certainly interactions and workplace occurrences important to the SA's development that happened for them during this timeframe but are not a part of this research. Case study is an appropriate methodology for this work, particularly because it is useful when the researcher can exert only limited control over the events in the study (Yin, 2018).

For the SAs participating in the innovation, other regular workplace activities and duties as a senior member of their team happened simultaneously. These activities were not a part of the planned innovation, nor were they a source of data as I considered the findings. However, this normal course activity that was a part of their workday may also have influenced how leader identity was constructed. The lack of clear definition between the study phenomena and the overall workplace context further made the case study approach an appropriate and effective method of understanding the data.

My Role as the Researcher

Action research requires that the researcher play a role as an active participant in the research study (Cresswell & Gutterman, 2019, Mertler, 2020). In my role, I designed and implemented the innovation, and in doing so, guided the SAs through the process of creating the workbook for the mentoring experience, which was Phase 1. This was accomplished by outlining an overall vision for a mentoring experience and providing initial questions for the group to consider as they evaluated options for the workbook.

I provided further support by facilitating the meetings for Phase 1and collected the information gathered by each participant and organized it into the final mentoring workbook. Additionally, I used the mentoring workbook to create a facilitator's guide for the SAs, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

During phase 2 of the innovation, the focus shifted to the relationship between SAs and their mentees. Acting as a leader, I facilitated a one-hour introductory mentoring session via Zoom. In this session, I provided mentees with an overview of the preparation process undertaken by SAs for the mentoring experience and guided them through an overview of the participant workbook, emphasizing the learning objectives. After the initial session, I supported the SAs by answering questions. I also completed outreach to the SAs to confirm adherence to the agreed upon timeline.

In addition to supporting the activities leading up to the mentoring experience, I also collected the data for the study. I recorded researcher notes about the progression of the sessions to create the mentoring workbook, I conducted semi-structured interviews, and I distributed the surveys to the participants. Furthermore, I conducted data analysis on the items collected as a part of the research process.

Setting

I conducted this study during the summer and fall of 2023 within the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU) in the Graduate Services Office (GSO). Serving approximately 5,000 graduate students requires a robust staffing structure to support not only students but many staff. The organizational structure created during the 2022 academic year supports new student service professionals through entry-level positions into advising. The structure also supports career-ladder

progression for academic advisors interested in growing their skills and taking on leadership roles in the office; one position for growth is the role of senior academic advisor (SA). The role requires at least one year of advising experience and includes advising duties supporting more nuanced and complex student advising situations, as well as mentoring newer members of the advising team in matters related to MLFTC GSO context and culture. Individuals interested in the role applied and participated in a formal interview process. In 2022, four advisors were promoted to the role of SA.

Participants

The research participants are SAs from GSO. The nature of action research also necessitates my inclusion as a participant. Next, I share details about the participants and the relationships among them.

All four SAs are female. One has three years of academic advising experience within our context, while the other three have more than four years of advising experience. Two of the participants hold a bachelor's degree, the other two hold an advanced degree, one with a master's degree and one with a Ph.D. The ages of the SAs range from early 30s to early 40s, with an average age of 37.

The nature of action research requires acknowledging my inclusion as a participant in the research. I hold a bachelor's degree in business finance and economics and a master's degree in counseling. Prior to joining ASU, I served in leadership roles including director of admission and assistant vice president of enrollment at other institutions. I joined the GSO office in 2017 as an academic advisor and was promoted to assistant director in 2019 and then director in early 2023. I have firsthand experience

providing academic advising within our workplace context. I also participated in the development of the job description that included the SA's mentoring requirement.

I had worked closely with all the SAs prior to the innovation project. I had built relationships with them individually. As a group, the SAs had worked together for a significant period of time. The relationship between each of the SAs was supportive in nature, and they developed a group identity as "inaugural" SAs in our office. Each SA had a strong sense of identity to the SA role. Due to the comfort and familiarity each group member had with each other and with me, there was no need for a relationship building component to our work. The group had positive, pre-existing, and well-established relationships.

Although not direct participants in this study, we paired each SA with a less-experienced advisor from our office. This mentorship setup enabled the more senior team members, the SAs, to both practice their leadership skills and support the development of newer academic advisors.

Detailed Description of the Innovation

The two-phase innovation was created to provide SAs with opportunities to construct their leader identity and develop leadership skills through an authentic leadership lens. The construction of a leader identity requires the integration of leadership knowledge and skills into one's identity so that they become deeply connected to the individual's sense of self (Lord & Hall, 2005). Leadership development is contextually driven and multilevel in nature, requiring the integration a leader identity in relation to others in the workplace, often through the work of shared tasks, with a deep understanding of the identity of the organization itself (Day & Harrison, 2009).

I designed the innovation to be embedded into the workplace responsibilities of the SAs and not as a separate leadership development experience so that leadership skills were a viewed as a natural part of the work routine and not treated as an isolated training event. By incorporating leadership development activities into their everyday work, SAs could internalize leadership behaviors and values, fostering the development of a leader identity that is deeply connected to their individual sense of self. This approach intended to overcome any perception that leadership development was disconnected from daily responsibilities. Below I outline a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework for the innovation as well as detail each phase.

Intervention Conceptual Framework

Reflecting on Chapter 2, I identified authentic leadership as the main theoretical framework guiding the innovation; it is depicted by the rectangle that encompasses Figure 2. By framing the graphic with authentic leadership, I aim to demonstrate the application of the principles of authentic leadership framework throughout the innovation and leverage it to bolster the construction of the SA's leader identity. The blue rectangles highlight the actions involving the SAs, segmented into the two phases. In creating the mentoring workbook, I actively engaged SAs in a project tailored to foster their leader identity within our context. The design of the mentoring partnership provided SAs the chance to exercise their leader identity in ways that resonate with our environment, offering them a platform to practice articulating their leader identity in our domain. The tan circle signifies the outcome of Phases 1 and 2, aiming to nurture a more developed, albeit emerging, leader identity for the SAs.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework of the Intervention

I structured the innovation into two phases. In Phase 1, the SAs collaboratively developed a mentoring workbook for use in the subsequent phase, where they would mentor. Phase 1 spanned from the end of May to early September 2023. In Phase 2, running from late September to early December 2023, SAs took on mentoring roles, guiding conversations with less experienced advisors using the workbook they had created, thereby facilitating the mentoring process.

Phase 1: Creating the Mentoring Workbook

The four SAs involved in creating the mentoring workbook collaborated with me in four meetings to finalize the workbook. Before our initial meeting, I tasked the SAs with preparatory work that included reading about authentic leadership and mentoring relationship phases, facilitated by a document I prepared. This document, which guides the workbook's construction and includes preparatory readings and reflective questions, is available in Appendix A.

The first meeting occurred in late May of 2023 and lasted two hours. I guided a discussion on designing a contextually relevant mentoring experience and establishing learning objectives for the mentees. Following this discussion, the SAs defined the

structure and tone of the mentoring experience. They agreed to base the experience on the office's existing core values, dedicating one independent session to each of the five core values. They also organized the sessions' topics, deciding the optimal sequence for discussing each core value. The SAs also decided one session should be a group session involving all mentors and mentees, focusing on the core value of "People Over Process." They planned this session to occur midway through the mentoring experience to foster trust before introducing a group dynamic.

Between the second and third meetings of Phase 1, the SAs sourced articles, videos, podcasts, or LinkedIn Learning short courses that corresponded with each core value. Each SA was responsible for one core value, and I contributed resources for an additional core value to ensure equitable workload distribution. We compiled these resources in a shared Google workbook to track progress and facilitate peer visibility.

A pre-existing companion document to the core values is service expectations. Service expectations translate the core values into specific behaviors that demonstrate adherence to the core values. The SAs regularly consulted the service expectations to ensure the selected materials and session focuses aligned with the desired behaviors for each core value.

In our third Phase 1 meeting, the SAs finalized their contributions to the mentoring workbook. They requested I conduct an introductory session for both SAs and mentees at the beginning of Phase 2 to clearly outline the experience's intentions for all participants simultaneously. The fourth and final meeting, which was not planned when the innovation was initially conceived, finalized, the timeline for the innovation and addressed any questions remaining before moving into Phase 2.

Throughout Phase 1, my responsibilities included coordinating meeting schedules, documenting decisions in shared Google documents, sourcing resources for one core value, and evolving the identified items into a detailed session-by-session outline. I also developed a facilitator's guide to aid the SAs in session planning prior to meeting with their mentees.

The finalized mentoring workbook consisted of an introductory session, five core value sessions, and a wrap-up session, culminating in a seven-session mentoring experience. Table 5 below details the focus and core value explanation of each session.

Table 5

Session Focus and Core Value Explanation

Session	Focus or Topic	Core Value Explanation
1	Introduction	N/A
2	Authenticity	We show up as real, vulnerable, transparent human beings who speak from the heart, value others' contributions, and invest in each other's growth. We speak thoughtfully, encourage and respect diversity of opinion, and listen carefully with an open mind.
3	Team Culture	We foster an encouraging and supportive team culture where inclusion and respect are a defining part of our team identity. We ensure that each of our actions are in the best interests of our students, our team, and our college.
4	People over Process	We are human centered problem solvers. We empower students and staff to think critically and remove barriers to achieve goals.
5	Accountability	We take ownership for the quality of our individual work and take pride in what we deliver as a team; our focus is on a successful outcome for all. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for outcomes related to student and staff success.
6	Creativity	We strive for excellence and are unconstrained by the way things have always been done. We are passionate about learning and seek to continuously improve and innovate the student experience.
7	Wrap Up	N/A

Phase 2: The Mentoring Relationship

Phase 2 launched the formal mentoring experience between the SA and their mentee. I carefully and intentionally matched each SA with a mentee, ensuring that individuals who regularly interacted in their daily work were not paired together. I also considered personality and work style preferences to make appropriate matches between SAs and mentees, as well as confirmed the intended pairs with other leaders in the office.

The mentoring sessions were guided by the framework developed in Phase 1. I provided a flexible timeline for the participants, outlining only the general timeframe for the meetings. The SAs and their mentees then coordinated their schedules to arrange specific meeting times during the specified weeks within their workday. The schedule for these mentoring sessions is detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Mentoring Session Schedule

Module	Timeline
Introduction	Wednesday, September 13 - 10:30-11:30
Authenticity	Week of September 25
Team Culture	Week of October 9
Accountability	Week of October 23
People over Process	Week of November 6
Creativity	Week of November 27
Wrap Up	Week of December 4

The mentoring sessions between SAs and mentees were confidential, with the approach to the planned material left to the SA's discretion. I allocated time during the workday for these meetings and any necessary preparation; all activities related to the mentoring relationship were confined to office hours. To support this phase, I facilitated the scheduling of a venue for the collaborative session through departmental channels and secured funding to offer lunch during the group session. Beyond the initial introduction, I did not partake in the SA and mentee meetings.

Research Methods

I utilized methods and tools appropriate for a case study action research design to gather and analyze data, aiming to understand the leader identity and leadership development as well as the growth of authentic leadership skills of the SAs. I analyzed the SAs as a unit using a single case study design approach (Yin, 2018). The small number of participants and the depth of their engagement with this study led me to choose a single case study approach, which allowed for the protection of the SAs' identities when reporting findings.

Data Collection

The SAs met with me individually and I provided details about the innovation and extended the offer to participate in this dissertation research study. The SAs were given the opportunity to participate in the innovation outlined below, even if they chose to not participate in the research. Following the informational meeting, I sent the SAs, via email, a formal consent to participate in the study. There are four SAs in our office, and all four agreed to participate in the innovation and the research.

After the end of Phase 1 of the innovation, I checked with all participants about participation in Phase 2. It is important to note that partway through Phase 1, an SA was promoted into a supervisory role in the office. Because the intention of the mentoring relationship was to be between two individuals in our context that do not have formal supervision responsibility, the newly promoted SA did not serve as a mentor. Therefore, three SA/mentee pairings participated in Phase 2. The three remaining SAs agreed to continue their participation in the innovation and the research.

The data I collected for this study included diverse data types of both a qualitative and a quantitative nature. I aimed to create a comprehensive understanding of the SA's experiences and offset the limitations inherent in each data type by utilizing multiple data sources (Ivankova, 2015). The collective examination of the SA's experiences helped me understand how the activities supported their development. I endeavored to collect a rich and detailed description of the SAs' experiences in the innovation and be able to triangulate with multiple data sources to provide a more full and complete understanding of leader identity construction in this context.

Artifact Collection: When used in research, an artifact is an object or document that provides insight into the context, behaviors, or practices relevant to the study. The collection and examination of artifacts intends to allow for a more holistic view of the phenomena being studied (Schratz & Walker, 1995). Artifacts collected include a Google Sheet pre-work document where SAs brainstormed about ideas for the mentoring experience, gaps that mentoring could fill for new staff, ways to address the gaps identified and who would be best suited to lead such an activity. I collected pictures of the white board notes from the Phase 1 meetings. I also collected the Google Sheet where

the SAs included links to the sourced resources for the creation of the Phase 1 mentee workbook. Interoffice emails and messages from and with the group throughout this process were also collected for review. SAs were provided the opportunity to utilize an electronic journal embedded in the facilitator's guide in Phase 2; however, the SAs did not utilize this resource to document their work, and the journal was not collected.

Interviews: I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with the SAs. Interviews took place at the end of Phases 1 and 2. Each SA participated in an interview; four were conducted after Phase 1 and three after Phase 2. The fourth participant was promoted and did not participate in the mentoring phase of the innovation or research. The interviews lasted approximately one hour in duration and were conducted via Zoom. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to allow for analysis. The questions that served as the foundation for the semi-structured interviews are found in Appendix C. Interviews were selected as an important source of data for this project, as they are a knowledge-producing activity (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015) and allowed for deeper exploration of the SA's experiences and a richer understanding of their perception of those experiences at multiple stages of the project (Ivankova, 2015).

Researcher Journal: Utilizing a researcher journal in qualitative research offers invaluable insights into the reflective process, enabling documentation of evolving understanding, emotional responses, and methodological decisions throughout the study (Ortlipp, 2008). Throughout the process, I utilized a physical notebook to record thoughts about the process and observations about the participants. As this innovation's implementation spanned 29 weeks, the journal served to note important information and keep track of details that may have otherwise been lost to time in the process.

Surveys: A survey was conducted to SAs using Google Forms. The survey was administered at the end of the mentoring workbook creation phase, and after the mentoring phase. My intention with utilizing survey data was not to create statistical significance, it was to understand if what I was hearing from the SAs in their interviews and seeing in their actions in meetings matched participants self-reports of the innovation experiences.

The first portion of the Google Form consisted of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), a sixteen-item survey that measures four constructs specific to authentic leadership: transparency, ethical perspective, balanced processing, and self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2007). Permission to use the instrument obtained from www.MindGarden.com can be viewed in Appendix D. The ALQ utilizes a 5-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 2=once in a while, 3=sometimes, 4=fairly often, and 5=frequently. The instrument has been demonstrated to have an acceptable level of internal reliability (α=.70) with scores on the individual measures scoring from 0.76 to 0.92 (Walumbwa, 2008).

The second portion of the Google Form was adapted from items from Hannum and Martineau (2008) focused on evaluation of the impact of leadership development. The items were categorized broadly as reflections on current leadership behaviors and reflections on changes because of participation in leadership development activities.

Data Analysis

My qualitative analysis followed Peel's (2020) six-stage framework for applied educational research. This framework, emphasizing the study of cognitive processes, behaviors, motivations, and personalities in varied learning contexts, provided a

structured pathway from identifying the issue to reporting findings, aligning seamlessly with my objective to better understand the context-specific phenomenon through the lens of participant's perspectives and skills.

By documenting each research stage, from data collection to analysis, I maintained the transparency imperative to the case study research process. I navigated Peel's stages in a mostly linear fashion to engage deeply with the data and refine iteratively my understanding of the phenomenon. My engagement with the data was dynamic, involving real-time analysis and adjustments based on ongoing interpretations, particularly during Phase 1.

As I moved to coding and thematic analysis, the process stayed grounded in the principles of emergent coding and the constant comparison of data, allowing for the development of codes and subsequent categorization into themes reflective of leader identity skills and authentic leadership expressions. The thematic analysis was informed by revisiting the relevant literature, aiding in the conceptualization of themes that were both distinct and overlapping across the two phases of the project. This analytical approach, culminating in a narrative representation of the findings and themes, aimed to provide a transparent, comprehensive account of the process, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of the insights gleaned from the study.

The quantitative findings comprised data collected via a Google Form questionnaire administered at two pivotal points: after the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2. I used this approach to complement the rich qualitative data with quantitative measures. After the second data collection point, I transferred the Likert-scale responses into SPSS

(IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 29.0) for detailed analysis, while the open-ended responses were integrated into the qualitative dataset for a holistic evaluation.

After conducting reliability analysis for each construct and calculating mean scores, I conducted paired-sample t-tests to examine shifts in perceptions between Phases 1 and 2. The process was mirrored for the remaining survey items, grouping the constructs assessing confidence, decision-making, influence, and self-awareness, following a similar analytical trajectory. This quantitative analysis, while not aiming for statistical significance, enriched the study's explanatory power by offering a quantifiable measure of the innovation's impact on participants' perceptions of leadership qualities.

Ethical Considerations

Mertler (2020) highlights that action researchers should focus on protecting the rights of research participants and ensuring that the results reported are accurate. Yin (2018) adds an additional ethical consideration specific to case study research, cautioning that researchers should not employ a case study approach to merely support a research result that the researcher expected to find. Yin (2018) also cautions that when applying case study methodology, researchers need to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants rigorously.

To protect the rights of the participants, I obtained Institutional Board Approval from ASU prior to implementing each phase of the innovation (see Appendix E and F). Participants were given the option to participate in the innovation, but not the research component of the project. Additionally, I took extra caution to not include personally identifiable information in the findings. Given the small sample size, it was crucial when discussing results that no attribute, finding, or quote would be traced back to a specific

participant in the study. It is also important to note that all research activities in which participants engaged took place during their regular workday. Additionally, no compensation was provided to the research participants.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the criteria for judging rigor do not include validity and reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1989) identified four areas for qualitative researchers to address to support the trustworthiness of their study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These will be reviewed in order as to how the study addressed each of the four components.

The requirement for credibility necessitates that the researcher's study be believable and the findings "congruent with reality" (Ivankova, 2015, p. 265). To support the credibility of the findings, multiple sources of evidence were utilized, or triangulated. These include interviews, researcher observations, artifacts, and surveys. Transferability refers to the ability of the findings to be applicable in other settings (Ivankova, 2015). To promote transferability to other research settings, I endeavored to present, with a high degree of transparency, the details of the study's context. Dependability, or the ability of the study to be repeated and obtain similar results, was fostered through transparency. I provided significant details about the innovation through items included in the appendix to allow easier replication. Finally, confirmability was addressed through member checking (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019). I provided a copy of the results to the participants and asked for their feedback about the accuracy of the findings presented.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed description of the multi-phase intervention, designed to explore the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The action research project, which was investigated in a case-study approach, supported sufficient exploration of the innovation as an important influence on the participants leader identity development through an authentic leadership lens. The triangulated data, collected using a variety of tools, built understanding of how the SA's leader identity changed through this process, and how serving as a mentor supported the identity development. In the next chapter, a detailed presentation of the case description will precede the exploration of the data analysis techniques and findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the previous chapters, I outlined a multi-phase action research study, informed by case study design that examined the creation and implementation of a mentoring innovation aimed at fostering leadership and leader identity development among SAs through the lens of authentic leadership. In this chapter, I explore the findings derived from the research of the innovation. Following the presentation of the case description, I transition to data analysis and findings. First, I describe the qualitative analysis techniques I applied and the themes that emerged. Then, I explain the quantitative analysis procedures and their outcomes.

Case Description

Given that this action research was shaped by case study methods, I am including additional contextually relevant details appropriate for this method. As with most case study action research, findings from this study are not intended to be widely generalizable (Yin, 2018). However, I have incorporated contextually relevant observations to enhance the understanding of the dynamics and processes of the case and to aid readers in making informed considerations about the applicability of the research and findings to other contexts (Mills et al., 2010; Yin, 2018). The case description aims to immerse readers in the participants' experiences, outline my varied roles throughout the project, and contextualize the decision-making processes during the innovation.

When I initially conceived of the innovation, I intended for the SAs to develop leadership skills and their leader identity through the mentoring experience, Phase 2.

However, as detailed below, the innovation underwent a pivot, and Phase 1, the creation of the mentoring workbook, became more intensive than I originally anticipated.

In this study, I fulfilled multiple roles, serving as a participant, a facilitator, an observer, a researcher, and an interpreter of these experiences. This multifaceted involvement allowed me to provide detailed accounts of both the case and the findings. My aim in doing so is to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the findings within the context and from my unique perspective.

Case description: Phase 1

When envisioning the project, I expected the creation of the mentoring workbook to constitute a small component of the overall innovation. My initial plan involved conducting two or three short meetings focused primarily on preparing the SAs to act as mentors. I intended to develop the mentoring workbook mostly by myself, following a high-level, conceptual collaboration with the SAs. However, I underestimated the SAs' desire to deeply engage in creating the workbook. As a result, what I originally thought would take a few weeks for Phase 1 stretched into several months. This significant shift in the timeline dramatically affected the entire innovation project, transforming the SAs into key collaborators who played a pivotal role in shaping the mentoring workbook.

Workbook Creation: Working Meeting 1

I scheduled the first working meeting with the SAs to collaboratively construct a mentoring workbook, opting for an in-person meeting. I believed that meeting face-to-face would foster a different level of interaction compared to our usual virtual gatherings. Despite our office transitioning to a limited in-office presence in 2020 and our initial

hesitation to mandate in-person meetings, feedback from staff members desiring more face-to-face interactions influenced my decision regarding the meeting's format.

Before the first meeting, I prepared the SAs by sending out an agenda and preparatory materials. These materials included two readings: one on authentic leadership and another on the phases of a mentoring relationship. I selected these resources to foster an understanding of how mentoring relationships typically progress and to introduce the SAs to the principles of authentic leadership. My intention was to seamlessly integrate authentic leadership concepts into our discussions and thought processes without explicitly conducting formal training on these principles.

I clearly communicated the objectives for our initial meeting: a) to establish a consensus on the structure and purpose of the mentoring relationship, and b) to create a rough draft for the mentoring experience. This approach aimed to lay a solid foundation for the mentoring workbook and ensure that all participants were aligned in its direction.

To facilitate a deeper engagement and critical thinking during Phase 1, I employed a strategy of posing questions for the SAs to ponder throughout the workbook creation process. Drawing from the literature, I recognized the importance of problem-solving behavior in developing leader identity, as discussed by Lord & Hall (2005). Therefore, I crafted questions designed to enhance the SAs' ability to consider various dimensions of the mentoring workbook. For the first meeting, these questions specifically aimed to encourage the SAs to contemplate the basic details about the program's structure, ensuring a comprehensive approach to designing the mentoring workbook.

1. How long should the relationship between the SA and a mentee last?

2. How much time should an SA and the mentee expect to spend preparing for a mentoring session?
3. Should mentoring sessions be conducted as a one-on-one experience, group, or a combination of both?
4. What topics are most important for SAs and mentees to focus on?

The first meeting spanned two hours, during which I served as both a researcher and facilitator. I helped the SAs stay focused on the discussion, helped in locating existing resources upon request, and summarized key decisions to ensure mutual understanding within the group.

The SAs initiated the discussion by identifying topics crucial for mentees, particularly focusing on challenges new staff face and how mentoring could aid in overcoming these challenges. The group used a Google Sheet to list gaps in the new employee experience, propose solutions, and determine the best individuals to address these gaps.

They highlighted three main areas in their brainstorming tool: understanding ASU's role in the higher education sector, mentoring knowledge, and team capabilities utilization. They also explored strategies for bridging these gaps and identifying potential support contributors. Below is Figure 3, displaying the brainstorming document for mentoring workbook creation.

Figure 3

Brainstorming: Mentoring Workbook Creation

Mentoring Curriculum Creation Brainstorming

Gap to close for new employees	Potential ways to close the gap	Who is best suited to support this work and why?
Lack of understanding of the broader positionality of ASU within the higher education landscape.	Readings about ASU with follow-up discussion	Advisor seniors who can relate ASU's positionality with activities our office engages in that support ASU's position within our context.
Lack of knowledge for new advisors about the structure and function of a mentoring relationship	Conversation about mentoring	??
A need to understanding oneself and how to leverage strengths and weaknesses in their team.	Strengths finder or Personality exploration (Myers-Briggs). Reading articles, online resources and follow up discussions	Advisor seniors can facilitate conversations with additional resources
Understanding the department's core values	Readings and discussions on each value. Include reflections and application in the context of work	Advisor seniors can facilitate conversations with additional resources; Meeting with other members of leadership and opportunities to debrief with advisor seniors

During the meeting, one SA suggested, upon recognizing the need for new staff to grasp core values, that these values could underpin the mentoring framework. This idea, given that core values are foundational to our staff's approach to students and colleagues, was met with enthusiasm by the other SAs. They quickly accessed the core values document on their laptops for collective review.

Core values, universally recognized within our department, dictate the way staff support students and interact amongst themselves. Following the suggestion to delve deeper into core values as a mentoring focus, the SAs agreed to center the mentoring on these pre-established values and corresponding expectations.

Our office champions five core values: creativity, team culture, people over process, accountability, and authenticity, each defined within our specific context and accompanied by expected behaviors. For instance, the core value of team culture encompasses the elements presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Example of Core Value, Definition, and Service Expectations

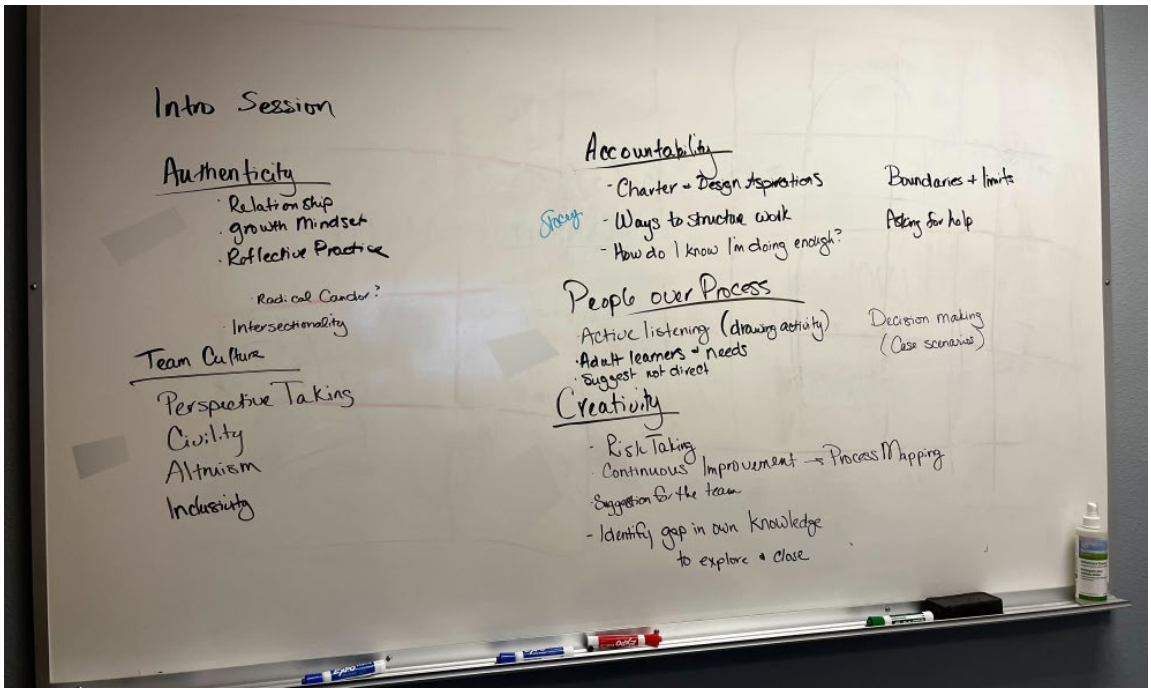
Core Value	Definition	Service Expectations
Team Culture	We foster an encouraging and supportive team culture where inclusion and respect are a defining part of our team identity. We ensure that each of our actions are in the best interest of our students, our team, and our college.	Engages in flexible thinking and appreciation of multiple perspectives, understanding how each individual contributes to form a complex whole. Participates actively and cooperatively in meetings. Develops strong working relationships with students, faculty, staff, and external partners. Collaborates with internal and external partners to solve student issues and participate in projects/initiatives. Demonstrates inclusive practices such as ensuring appropriate meeting membership, disseminating information/knowledge to the rest of the team, and welcomes the ideas/perspectives of others.

The SAs discussed topics, themes, and ideas relevant to each core value, using the definitions and expectations as their guide. To assist in this discussion and to visually organize their ideas, I mapped out the concepts on a whiteboard. The SAs identified numerous topics for each core value and deliberated on the order in which to present them, considering the need for additional context for concepts like creativity, which they decided to address later in the mentoring process. They determined the final sequence should be authenticity, accountability, team culture, people over process, and creativity. These topics then formed the basis of each mentoring session. For example, the session

on team culture covered perspective-taking, civility, altruism, and inclusivity. A photo capturing the whiteboard with these decisions is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4

Whiteboard Image: Phase 1, Meeting 1



Initially, I anticipated a straightforward development path for the workbook, planning to draft it myself and then seek feedback from the SAs. However, the reality diverged from my original plan. The SAs' enthusiasm led them to volunteer for specific core values, distributing four of the five topics among themselves. The first volunteer expressed a strong connection to the core value of creativity and aimed to integrate this challenging topic into a session. The volunteer focusing on "people over process" brought forward ideas to further explore this topic. Faced with choosing their topics, the two

remaining SAs identified accountability as the most challenging. They decided amongst themselves who would tackle authenticity and who would take on team culture, leaving the topic of accountability unassigned. Consequently, I stepped in to cover accountability. This shift towards a collaborative method marked a departure from my initial plan, resulting in a more participatory and distributed effort than anticipated.

Moreover, the SAs decided to adopt a format for the workbook that mirrored the engaging and interactive approach we used in the Leadership Conversations, as detailed in Chapter 2. They emphasized the necessity of offering multiple resources for each core value, allowing mentees the freedom to select resources that resonated with their individual learning preferences and needs. This decision highlighted their commitment to provide a rich, diversified learning environment, ensuring that mentees had ample choice in tailoring their development journey.

The SA who volunteered to compile resources for the people over process topic proposed a collaborative session with all SAs and mentees participating. She reasoned that since people are at the heart of this core value, coming together enables group learning and could potentially lead to a richer discussion. The SAs unanimously supported the idea of a collaborative session, offering to contribute to presenting the material compiled by the SA overseeing this core value.

At the conclusion of the first meeting, the SAs committed to gather and curate relevant resources, such as internet articles, podcasts, and LinkedIn Learning modules, aligned with their topic. They decided to compile these resources into a shared Google Sheet, with a separate tab for each core value. This approach not only enabled individual

work on assembling core value resources but also allowed the SAs to monitor each other's contributions.

Workbook Creation: Working Meeting 2

We held subsequent meetings via Zoom, each lasting an hour, to minimize disruptions to the SA's work routine. In the second meeting, the SAs presented the resources they had gathered for each of their topics. Then, the group discussed the connection they made between the resources and the assigned topic. Through this conversation, there was elimination of some resources and acknowledgement that additional options were needed for some topics.

Like the first meeting, I supplied guiding questions to encourage reflection on aspects of the mentoring experience the SAs might not have yet considered. These questions were designed to stimulate SA's consideration of active listening, the strategic use of open-ended questions, confidentiality within mentoring relationships, and the ability to address mentees' psychological needs while mentoring. During this meeting, the SAs engaged in discussions that led to the formulation of four learning objectives for the mentoring experience, aiming to:

- Deepen their understanding of the core values of the Office of Academic and Career Success (OACiS) and explore how the core values are expressed as a part of the culture of the Graduate Services Office.
- Intentionally engage in self-reflection and explore how the core values could be applied to future scenarios.
- Expand their professional network by building a relationship with a senior advisor.

- Explore experiences with the core values, in this workplace and in past work experiences.

Originally, I planned to finalize the mentoring workbook by the end of the second meeting. However, the SAs raised concerns that they had not yet compiled a comprehensive set of resources for their topics and requested more time for research and compilation. After setting the learning objectives, they also felt the need to reassess their previously identified resources. Acknowledging their concerns, we collectively decided to extend the timeline, recognizing that without it, they would struggle to complete the mentoring workbook amidst their regular duties. Consequently, we agreed to postpone the next meeting for about a month to accommodate the SAs' needs.

Workbook Creation: Working Meeting 3

In the third meeting, while the SAs presented the resources they had gathered for each core value, there were subtle changes in each topic. Table 8 below illustrates the transition from the group's initial to the final topic ideas. Confident they had thoroughly exhausted their topics, the SAs felt prepared for the next step in the process.

Table 8

Core Value Topics: Initial versus Final

Core Value	Initial Topic Ideas	Final Topics for Mentoring Workbook
Authenticity	Growth mindset, reflective practice, radical candor, intersectionality, and relationships	Growth mindset, reflective practice, radical candor, vulnerability, and authenticity
Team culture	Perspective taking, civility, altruism, and inclusivity	Perspective taking, civility, altruism, and inclusivity
Accountability	ASU charter and design aspirations, ways work is structured in teams, understanding an individual contribution to a team, boundaries, and limits, and asking for help	ASU outcomes, performance character, accountability, and asking for help
People over process	Active listening, suggesting and not directing, needs of adult learners, and case-based decision making	Agency in the workplace, listening, supporting adult learners
Creativity	Risk taking, continuous improvement, process mapping	Psychological safety at work, speaking up at work, creating solutions

The SAs discussed how to structure the first session with a mentee, highlighting concerns about initiating the experience with the topic of authenticity without first providing context on the mentoring experience's purpose and structure. They unanimously recognized the need for an introductory session to kick off the mentoring experience and asked me to lead it. The discussion then moved to converting the Google sheet, filled with their ideas and resources, into a mentee-friendly format. Their goal was to incorporate learning objectives and organize the resources in a document for the mentees, though they were uncertain about how to structure this document.

This resulted in a pivot point for the innovation. After I made the decision to encourage SA participation in the curation of resources, I had planned the SAs would participate throughout the creation of the resource for the mentees. However, after evaluating the extended timeline for the project and understanding the lack of clarity the SAs had about next steps, I assumed responsibility for formatting the SAs work into a mentoring workbook.

I collated the resources utilized by the group as they conceptualized each topic, including the core values, definitions, and expectations. Then, I used the Google workbook created by the SAs to organize resources aligning with each core value to develop a session-by-session workbook. In addition to adding the SA's resources to each session, I also wrote questions for mentee self-reflection. Furthermore, I built on the participate workbook to create a companion facilitator's guide, mirroring the participant guide in content, while allowing space for the SA to plan open-ended questions to start the mentoring conversation and make notes about important points they wanted to make sure to address.

In crafting facilitator's guide, I integrated elements intended to foster SA's focus on demonstrating authentic leadership skills. The facilitator's guide included a link to a resource about practicing authentic leadership as well the definitions of the components: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. I also included the department's leadership commitment, which outlines leadership behaviors within our context. Finally, I included a link outlining the benefits and strategies for crafting open-ended questions. I designed the facilitator's guide in this way to equip the SAs with additional tools and resources to support them as mentors.

Workbook Finalization: Meeting 4

The SAs and I convened for one final meeting to review the participant workbook and facilitator's guide and confirm the SA/mentee pairings. Early in the process, it was decided that SA's should not mentor staff who are part of their daily work team due to concerns about creating an uncomfortable dynamic. I made the final decisions on pairings, considering team position and personalities of both the SA and the mentee, as I possessed insight into both. Subsequently, I sought feedback on the pairings from assistant and associate directors to gather their insights on the planned assignments.

Also, in this meeting, the fourth SA concluded her involvement in the experience. She received a promotion to a role in which she led staff during the development of the mentoring workbook. The SA/mentee relationship was structured such that mentors would not be in leadership roles or in a position to evaluate their mentees' work performance.

The three remaining SAs expressed concerns about their readiness for mentoring, despite months of preparation. Acknowledging the anticipation that had been building, I understood the urgency of moving forward with implementation. Additional pre-work seemed unlikely to ease their worries about being prepared; instead, engaging in the process and directly experiencing the extent of their preparation would prove more advantageous. Therefore, I arranged for the introductory session to take place the following week.

Case Description: Phase 2

The second phase of the innovation centered on the mentoring relationship between the SAs and their mentees. As previously requested, I conducted the one-hour

introductory mentoring session on Zoom, providing mentees with insights into the SAs' preparation process for the mentoring experience. I walked the mentees through the participant workbook, highlighting the learning objectives. Halfway through, after about 30 minutes of group instruction and discussion, I opened breakout rooms for individual meetings between SAs and their mentees.

I established the overall schedule for the mentoring sessions, detailed in Table 9 below. From the second to the seventh session, the SAs followed an alternating week pattern. The SAs and mentees spent one week preparing for the next session and met in the subsequent week. The SAs were in charge of arranging meeting times to ensure sessions took place as planned. They also decided on the meeting format, choosing between in-person, Zoom, or a blend of both.

Table 9

Timeline for SA/Mentee Sessions

Module	Timing
Introductory Module	Wednesday, September 13 - 10:30-11:30
Authenticity	Week of September 25
Team Culture	Week of October 9
Accountability	Week of October 23
People over Process	Week of November 6
Creativity	Week of November 27
Wrap Up	Week of December 4

Except for the "People over Process" session, all meetings were private conversations between the SA and the mentee. This session lasted 90 minutes, conducted in-person, and involved all SAs and mentees. The SAs prepared a slide deck to steer the session, with each SA presenting a different topic. They independently managed the session's flow, ensuring the event's timeline was adhered to for covering all planned material.

To support communication throughout the mentoring experience, I set up a dedicated instant message channel on Slack. This channel became a hub for sharing feedback on relationship progress. Following the authenticity session, I solicited feedback from the SAs. Two participants, typically more extroverted and open to giving feedback, responded positively. The third SA, who usually avoids group communication, did not provide feedback on Slack, aligning with expectations. The channel was also essential for arranging logistical details for the collaborative session, like room bookings, lunch orders, and ensuring all necessary supplies were ready.

After the introductory session, I stayed available to support the SAs, but I did not attend any SA/mentee meetings. I recognized that my presence could make the SAs feel judged on their mentoring approach, possibly affecting their confidence due to the emphasis on authenticity. My goal was to strike a balance between being available for support and limiting my intervention. I engaged with the SAs in informal conversations, inquiring about their mentoring experience during casual encounters in the hallway. Each time, the SAs shared that they were enjoying the experience and were satisfied with the mentoring relationship.

I was involved in an important decision during this phase. In the midst of Phase 2, another SA advanced to a leadership role. I met with the newly promoted participant, and we discussed the benefits and drawbacks of her continuing as a mentor. She felt strongly that the relationship was beneficial to both the mentee and herself and she did not want to end it prematurely. She and I concluded that the benefits of continuing the relationship far outweighed the concerns over the power differential in the relationship and she remained a mentor through the conclusion of Phase 2.

To aid the SAs, I provided a facilitator's guide that complemented the participant workbook and included additional sections for reflection and planning discussions. However, the SAs found this tool unhelpful, and it did not yield any data for the study.

Qualitative Analysis

Analyzing qualitative research demands a systematic approach to interpret the data collected via qualitative methods (Bhattacharya, 2017). My qualitative data sources included semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts. To navigate my analysis and report on my findings, I adopted Peel's (2020) six-stage guide tailored for applied educational research.

Peel's (2020) framework is specifically designed for case study research in educational settings. The framework includes several stages: identifying the issue, collecting data, engaging with the data, thematically analyzing the data, interpreting the analysis, and reporting the findings (Peel, 2020). This framework acknowledges the "complexities involved in studying the cognitive processes, behaviors, motivations, and personalities of learners in various contexts" (Peel, 2020, p. 1). Peel's framework aligned

well with my research objectives as it supports explaining context-specific phenomenon through the perspectives and skills of the individuals involved (Yin, 2018).

Qualitative analysis is inherently iterative, with the process sometimes viewed as subjective (Bhattacharya, 2017). However, transparency acts as a key mechanism to mitigate concerns over subjectivity by documenting each step of the research process, from data collection to analysis (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). I provide transparency by documenting each stage of the research process, including data collection and analysis procedures.

In the next section, I detail my analysis process following Peel's framework. It is important to recognize that, although the stages are outlined linearly, my approach was nonlinear (Bhattacharya, 2017; Ivankova, 2015). I frequently moved back and forth between stages, continually reflecting on the data and refining my interpretation. This nonlinear, reflective approach was intended to deepen my understanding of the studied phenomenon and enrich the analysis (Peel, 2020; Yin, 2018).

Collect the Data

Peel (2020) prioritizes data collection as the foundational stage, underscoring the necessity of multiple evidence sources to deepen insights into the phenomena, participants, and their experiences. Peel advocates for a diverse evidence base in case studies, including context, participant characteristics, and additional data forms like interviews and observations. To strengthen this study's qualitative aspect, I gathered data from varied sources both during the innovation process and upon its completion. Throughout Phase 1, I kept a detailed, handwritten journal to chronicle activities, observations, and reflections on participant engagement. I also compiled artifacts such as

working documents, contributions from a shared Slack channel, and slides from collaborative sessions across both innovation phases.

After Phase 1 and 2, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant, each lasting around an hour, and distributed a survey featuring both Likert scale items and open-ended questions. These open-ended questions invited SAs to reflect on their participation's influence on their self-awareness, confidence, and decision-making abilities. Data collection spanned from May 2023 to January 2024. I initiated data engagement before completing the collection, dictated by the project's tight schedule, thus blending the collection phase with subsequent stages of the research process.

Engage with the Data

Transitioning to Peel's second stage, I immersed myself in the data. Peel emphasizes actions in this stage such as transcribing interviews or converting handwritten notes to text. The outcome from this stage is greater familiarity with and better organization of the data (Peel 2020).

My process did not progress exactly as Peel outlined. In action research, the researcher's role is dynamic and multifaceted, encompassing not only data collection and analysis but also active involvement in the change process under study (Mertler, 2020). As a researcher-facilitator during Phase 1, the workbook creation phase, some analysis occurred in real-time. Real-time data interpretation is essential in action research, enabling continuous monitoring of progress, adjustment, and informed decision-making throughout the research cycle.

As described in the case description above, Phase 1 of the project progressed differently than I anticipated at the conceptualization of the project. Through real-time

data interpretation and collaboration with the participants, I was able to address specific challenges as they arose and make necessary adjustments. For example, a real-time adjustment was extending the duration of Phase 1. Originally slated for two working sessions two weeks apart, I observed important growth occurring through participants' engagement in workbook creation, prompting the extension.

Where my work did align with Peel's steps was once I had collected the remaining data. Zoom interviews formed a substantial data segment, which were transcribed through software support. The interview transcripts generated from Zoom were compared with the video recording of the interview to correct any text that was attributed incorrectly or did not accurately receive transcription. While this was a means to confirm accuracy, I also used the comparison process to immerse myself in the data. This stage was completed in December for the semi-structured interviews after Phase 1 and in January for Phase 2. I also reviewed my researcher notebook and read through the mentoring workbook creation documents. This prepared the data for analysis.

I uploaded the verified transcripts to NVivo (NVivo release 14.23.2 (46)) to facilitate data management. Additionally, I analyzed short-answer responses from the survey administered after Phases 1 and 2, preparing the data for the next analysis stage: coding.

Code the Extracts from the Data

Codes serve as the foundational elements for uncovering patterns and significance within the data (Peel, 2020). Peel states this stage supports the researcher in identifying segments of data that are meaningful. Additionally, generating codes can be either an inductive or deductive process, or a combination of these coding practices (Peel, 2020).

In this phase, I employed codes or labels to extract meaning from the raw data (Bhattacharya, 2017; Ivankova, 2015; Peel, 2020). I did not start with a list of pre-determined words or phrases when coding. Instead, the codes emerged organically through my comprehensive review of the data. I found the use of gerund coding useful, as it allowed me to focus on actions or processes the SAs engaged with as they participated in the project. Gerund coding involves transforming verbs into nouns by adding the suffix '-ing' (Charmaz, 2014).

I coded the data from Phase 1 and 2 separately, treating the data from each phase independently. Initial coding of Phase 1 yielded 54 distinct codes. Through ongoing scrutiny of the data and codes, I condensed the code list to 21 distinct categories representative of Phase 1. For example, initial codes of seeing the big picture, stretching, and learning, and getting to know staff were condensed into connecting to leadership skills. Additional examples of condensed codes include demonstration of self-reflection and support for the mentee.

A similar approach was adopted for Phase 2 data. As I was treating the data independently, I did not utilize the code list generated in Phase 1 for Phase 2; I started from scratch with a new code list. From 42 initial codes, I condensed the code list to 23. For example, the codes of establishing a safe space, collaborating with mentee, and supporting the mentee were collapsed into a new code of encouraging the mentee. Additional examples of codes derived from phase two included actions reflecting on leadership and increasing confidence.

Generate the Code Categories from the Codes

Peel's (2020) next step is to condense the larger number of codes by categorical aggregation. While reviewing codes lists from each phase, I also revisited the literature guiding the study (see Chapter 2). Reviewing the literature helped see more advanced leader identity skills in the codes as well as expressions of authentic leadership. This supported my ability to generate code categories, or groupings of similar data that were organized together (Peel, 2020). I completed this process by using a pad and paper to make notes about what I was understanding from the data. For example, I saw self-reflection consistent throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2. Self-reflection connected to Lord and Hall's (2005) skill domain of meta-monitoring, as well authentic leadership quality of self-awareness (Walumbwa et al., 2008). My notes from this stage of analysis included categories such as collaboration on a large task, conscious self-reflection, including others, and decision making.

Conceptualize Themes from Categorized Codes

Peel's fifth step is to search for data patterns by linking components that are related. (Peel, 2020). Data themes are derived from careful review of the data to identify recurring patterns across the data categories (Bhattacharya, 2017; Peel 2020). I considered each phase of the project and the aligning themes separately. After theme identification from each phase, I merged the themes from the two phases and considered them concurrently.

Contextualize and Represent the Findings

This stage of Peel's (2020) process required me to make meaning of the findings and weave together a narrative that includes data extracts that inform the qualitative

findings. In this stage, I wrote the detailed case description to help me gain additional insight and start to draw conclusions about the findings. This was also an iterative process. From working and reworking drafts of the findings, I was able to identify a clearer meaning and present a more cohesive picture of the outcomes. Through this process, theme names evolved. For example, the first theme involving the creation of the mentoring workbook in Phase 1 evolved from "empowerment through significance" in an early draft to "an ambitious pursuit" in the final iteration. Writing and rewriting allowed me to clarify my thinking and home in on the significant aspects of the findings.

Qualitative Findings

My analysis of the data using Peel's six stage process resulted in themes. I detail the themes, along with a short description of the theme in table 10 below.

Table 10

Qualitative Themes and Descriptions

Theme	Short Description
Ambitious Pursuit	Creating the mentoring workbook and serving as a mentor were challenging, novel tasks for the SAs. Participation felt significant; all phases of the project were new and unfamiliar. Successful completion of both phases instilled confidence in the participants about their ability to accomplish difficult things.
Prioritizing the Mentee	The SAs shifted their perspective by prioritizing the experience of their mentee, as they had never had accountability for the experience of a colleague. They took responsibility for managing their own intentions to create a meaningful experience for the mentees.
Collaboration	SA's worked together in both phases, gaining insight into effective collaboration and refining their collaborative practices by co-leading the experience and through mentoring.
Leadership Behaviors	The SAs gained an understanding of the significance of actively listening and cultivated a heightened sense of confidence in their leadership abilities.
Evolving Leadership Perspectives	SA's reassessed their perspectives on leadership, particularly in navigating ambiguity and decision-making. They shifted their understanding about what constitutes a 'good' leader.

Theme 1: An Ambitious Pursuit

During the first Phase 1 meeting, I explored the SAs previous experiences with mentoring. Only one SA had participated in a mentoring relationship previously, as a mentee, with none having served as a mentor. The lack of mentoring experience led the SAs to question their qualifications for developing a mentoring workbook, a task significantly different from their usual advisor roles. Reflecting on the start of the project,

one SA described the task of creating the workbook as “a little overwhelming at first,” while another highlighted the magnitude of the project noting, “it’s kind of a big ask to create a whole mentoring curriculum and implement it.”

Upon completing the mentoring workbook, the SAs expressed profound satisfaction with their achievement, viewing it as a significant milestone. One SA shared, "I was really excited to see it all come together, and glad I was able to be a part of it," highlighting the collective effort and individual contribution. Another expressed a sense of pride: "I'm very proud of what we accomplished in such a short time." Reflecting on the project's outcome, an SA remarked, "It's an impressive thing to create."

The SAs were proud of their creation but recognized that the true test of their work would come from implementing it with their mentees. The decision to prioritize authenticity as a core value from the outset was deliberate, aiming to establish a foundation of trust and openness. One SA anticipated the impact of this approach: "I'm excited to build that relationship, and also see her thoughts and views on the core values we chose, especially for the first module." This emphasis on authenticity was intended to encourage both mentors and mentees to engage genuinely, facilitating a safe space for authentic self-expression. One SA made connections to authenticity and how they envisioned themselves as a mentor:

> We want to learn about authenticity and bringing ourselves to the playing field, but also recognizing that that's what we want to practice in this curriculum. We want our employees to feel comfortable that they can bring themselves, and maybe this is a way for them to be able to open up, you know to some degree in terms of their comfort level and be authentic themselves.

At the conclusion of Phase 2, each SA reflected on the gravity of the project and how it impacted them. One SA reflected on the feelings she created in the relationship with mentee, stating “It was great to create a sense of authenticity and vulnerability.” She further recognized the different skill required for this type of relationship, following up by saying, “Cultivating that type of support for an individual – that’s outside of my normal purview.” Another SA reflected on their growing confidence and readiness to tackle new things and support staff. “I feel a little bit more secure in my ability to take on things or support staff.”

The third SA found the mentoring experience valuable, and noted her personal growth, and a deeper understanding of her leadership strengths:

> My gosh, it was truthfully… I can't even describe - a phenomenal experience, to have gone through the process. Last time we spoke I told you I was initially nervous about the whole thing, the formal mentorship…But of course, as we got into it, [we had] lots of common ground, lots of space to explore and learn from each other. It was really, truthfully a great experience.

She continued reflecting on the totality of the Phase 1 and 2 experience:

> I gained a lot through the process. And it did affirm - I know that was the intention of this whole project - where are we in our leadership process, and whatever strength are and recognizing those strengths throughout. So yeah, it was truthfully, a really meaningful experience.

Overall, she described the experience as valuable and meaningful.

The SAs overcame initial doubts in Phase 1 stemming from a lack of mentoring experience, which not only cultivated a deep sense of pride and satisfaction in their

achievements but also equipped them with increased confidence and a more innovative mindset to tackle future challenges. In Phase 2, the SAs expanded their roles beyond traditional advising, enriching the mentor-mentee dynamic. Creating the mentoring workbook and engaging in mentoring activities served as invaluable opportunities for building new skills and gaining confidence to apply them. The ambitious pursuit also served as a contextually meaningful backdrop upon which the SAs built skills of empathy and collaboration.

Theme 2: Prioritizing the Mentee

The SAs dedicated themselves to developing a mentoring workbook aimed at enriching the mentoring experience, with a special focus on the mentee's perspective. Traditionally, their role emphasized student welfare, making the shift to prioritizing a peer's experience a novel, yet related, challenge. The creation process began with empathy, as SAs drew on their memories of being newcomers, fostering a reflective mindset. Thinking about inclusivity and support, one SA stated the project caused her to "reflect a little bit on what it was like to join as a new adviser." Another considered the shared feeling of joining a new workplace, reflecting, "we all know what it is like to be a new person."

This empathy laid the groundwork for the SAs' intent in the mentoring relationship. The SAs thought about their responsibility to the mentee. They were committed to maintaining a focus on the mentee, supporting their exploration and understanding of the core values, and set that as their intention, as one SA described:

> What I hope to be able to do is to obviously allow for a mentee to be able to identify what's important to them in the information that we are looking at

together. And then asking more questions, getting curious, and then offering ideas. It's not my show.

Another positioned their role as helper in the relationship, saying, “I hope to be able to offer a mentoring relationship where I can just help, just facilitate a conversation that helps develop somebody's own ideas and goals for themselves in their environment and their work.” The mentoring relationship was not viewed as giving information to the mentee. The SA’s viewed the relationship as a supportive one where they were guiding the thinking of their mentee, but not being directive of the mentee.

Aiming to create a sense of community, one SA articulated her goal for the mentee was to have a "better sense of community.” She continued that she wanted to provide a sense of what our community “tangibly looks like through this mentorship experience,” referencing the desire to support the mentor’s integration into the office broadly. She also wanted to support the mentee’s “ability or thought processes when she is doing her day to day or working on individual projects.”

In phase 2, the commitment to prioritize the mentee's needs became a practical reality. SAs focused on preparing for mentoring sessions with the mentee's interests in mind, a task one SA described as essential for active participation. Highlighting the importance of being equipped to engage with the mentee effectively, one SA remarked, "If I wasn't prepared to talk about the different articles or videos or podcasts that were provided in that particular module, then I wouldn't be able to participate actively in a conversation." This thoughtful preparation was seen as a means to not only enhance the mentee's experience but to foster mutual growth. She continued, "I knew I wanted to

show up in that way so that we could both be edified in how we were talking about the different core values."

One SA emphasized the objective of elevating the mentoring experience beyond a routine task, striving for it to be a meaningful and engaging interaction for the mentee. She articulated this intention by emphasizing the focus on "the mentees experience and making it a good experience for them and not just something they have to do." She envisioned her role more as a facilitator, “guiding” and “really engaging” with the mentee, rather than dictating the process.

Another SA articulated the shift in perspective necessary for effective mentoring, stressing the need to "be open enough to not be in charge of the discussion, but to just be available to support the growth and development" of the mentee. This approach marks a departure from the traditionally authoritative roles of SAs, who are more familiar with guiding conversations and setting outcomes when they support students. The SAs recognized that, within this dynamic, expertise is distributed; everyone has something to learn and to teach.

This understanding led to a mentoring environment that supported collaborative exploration and development. An SA recounted adjusting her expectations in response to a mentee's experiences, acknowledging the need to be "present for what she and I needed at the time." She reflected on instances where external factors hindered the mentee's ability to engage with the material as planned. Rather than rigidly adhering to the original agenda, she emphasized adaptability: "Let’s alter and work through it the best we can." This flexibility in responding to the mentee's needs and circumstances underscores a

commitment to prioritizing the mentee's learning experience and well-being, illustrating a focus on nurturing a supportive, responsive mentoring relationship.

The SA's primary goal in developing the mentoring workbook was to empower mentees and facilitate their personal and professional growth. This objective led the SAs to think about their roles and goals within the mentoring dynamic. They sought to cultivate a supportive community atmosphere. In doing so, the SAs placed a strong emphasis on addressing the needs of the mentees and approached the mentor-mentee relationship as a partnership of equals. This approach underscored the importance of mutual respect and shared learning and aimed to create an inclusive and supportive space for everyone involved.

Theme 3: Collaboration

Each phase of the innovation demanded collaboration but spotlighted different facets of the collaborative process. In Phase 1, the SAs navigated a collaborative environment without a clearly defined leader. Through shared leadership, they had to value others' ideas and understand the essence of independence within teamwork. Phase 2 extended these learnings into their mentoring relationships, prompting SAs to reflect on their regular collaborative practices at work and recognizing the broader benefits of a collaborative environment.

Structured within a team-based model, the SAs were no strangers to collaboration. Nevertheless, this project used a different type of collaborative dynamic, as one SA pointed out: "A lot of the collaboration is sort of here and there. Usually around student scenarios rather than a shared concrete task." The work on this project contrasted with

their usual real-time, decision-focused collaborations, which are more task-oriented and offer clear-cut solutions.

While I was participating in the activities, I was intentionally not facilitating the collaborative exchanges. This required the SAs to navigate a collaborative process and co-lead the project creation with their peers. The workbook creation process employed a combination of independent work to curate the resources for each mentoring session as well as collaborative meetings to discuss their independent work. Collaborating in this way was new for the SA's and one SA reflected on the value of this approach:

> The ability and opportunities to think independently and to share in a group setting was very helpful. I think it gave everyone the chance to think about ideas and plans. Individual study and planning prepared people to have things to share in group meetings. The meetings didn't need to always have big movements towards completion. There was time to reevaluate and discuss changes to decisions.

This blend of solo work and group interactions facilitated thoughtful deliberation and decision-making, often progressing at a slow pace to ensure all were comfortable with the direction. This SAs praised this dynamic for enhancing idea exchange and refining collective thought. One SA noted the personal benefits of collaboration: "because I can get stuck in my own way of thinking a lot of times. It's so helpful to be able to talk with other people about their thoughts. It opens my ability to understand people's perspectives." Another SA shared this thought:

> I think through conversations in building the curriculum as a team, [the process] allowed some opportunity for myself and each of the others to highlight our

> strengths. And, within a safe space of peers, to share ideas with one another, and celebrate those [ideas].

And further reflecting on the influence on her personal practice, the SA continued that the collaborative nature of the process "provided an opportunity in real time to present those ideas and adjust based on that collaborative feedback." This sentiment demonstrates reflection on how for this SA collaborative feedback refined their individual practice.

The essence of collaboration was further encapsulated by an SA who appreciated the diversity of thought, they noted:

> I feel like there's just so much strength when we're able to bring our differing opinions together. Because I'm gonna come up with some idea. But I'm gonna be missing out on something. It's never gonna be perfect. And I find value in being able to come into a space and say, here's my idea. Because I'm not gonna think about everything, they're most likely going to be some gaps and having a different eye and a different perspective to help me get there.

Similarly, another SA highlighted the developmental benefits of collaboration:

> Collaborating with others on the development of a program provided a great opportunity to listen and share ideas. My confidence grew as I worked with others and saw the mutual respect shared between the participants. Everyone communicated respectfully and showed appreciation for the work that had been done by each person.

The SA's development was supported by the appreciative and collaborative environment.

Post-workbook creation, the SAs applied their collaborative skills in a different collaborative relationship to create the group session with mentees. They emphasized

diverse perspectives in both planning and delivery, as well as actively worked to create a positive collaborative tone for the session. The first group activity was establishing norms at the outset of group session, which one SA described as aiming to "provide a framework within which participants can develop trust and take risks associated with sharing their perspectives and making themselves open to the views of others.".

The SAs opened the group session with an activity to establish ground rules, underscoring the SAs emphasis on creating a positive dynamic for the collaborative relationship. The activities intention, as shared on the slides guiding the session, was to provide “a framework within which participants can develop trust and take risks associated with sharing their perspectives and making themselves open to the views of others.” The speaker notes for the activity included the notions of listening with care, acknowledging, and reflecting on the impact of words and actions, and promoting a dignified, civil, and supportive climate. The SAs took care to lay the foundation for productive collaboration. One SA reflected on the impact of these norms:

> Establishing those norms even, I think, at the beginning of the session, was helpful. For us as a group to understand we're coming from this as a place where we're all wanting to learn from each other. […]. Okay, we all agree upon those things. If any one of us deviate from this we feel okay to call each other in and just bring us back to where that is. I think, even starting the conversation for our time together that way helps people feel comfortable like, oh, okay, we're taking this seriously. This is a space where we're gonna be respectful, right? We're all coming from different experiences but we're all coming from a space of curiosity

and wanting to learn and better understand each other, and what that looks like for us all.

The SAs applied their prior experience with a positive, collaborative experience to the shared session and developed a mutual understanding and agreement with the members about how to interact with each other for the benefit of the experience.

Beyond the group session with the mentees, application of the collaborative principles extended to considerations about how to ensure inclusivity in team interactions, with one SA reflecting:

> That's something I've been thinking about a lot lately. How to cultivate an openness, to be able to share your ideas in a group setting, and also take into account other people's dispositions and personalities to allow for them to still feel heard. And being able to share what they have questions about or what they think should be done in certain situations.

From initial collaboration on a significant task in Phase 1 to facilitating a group mentoring session in Phase 2, the SAs deepened their commitment to collective learning, demonstrating the power of collaboration to foster mutual respect and a supportive learning environment. Creating the mentoring workbook and serving as a mentor supported the SAs in exploring and refining their collaborative practices, ultimately reinforcing the value of teamwork, empathy, and open dialogue in achieving shared objectives and supporting each other's growth.

Theme 4: Leadership Behaviors

The previous themes highlighted the SAs' journey in building collaboration and empathy skills. This theme shifts focus to the emergence of behaviors essential for

effective leadership because of these skills. The SAs not only gained a deep understanding of the importance of active listening but also experienced a significant boost in confidence during their interactions.

Active Listening

Mentorship transformed how SAs connected with colleagues, emphasizing a new form of engagement highlighted in the "Prioritizing the Mentee" theme. A critical component was maintaining focus on the mentee, achieved through genuine comprehension and the intentional effort of active listening. One SA described their approach:

> …trying to hear people out, understanding their perspective, and trying to get at if there is subtext within what they're saying…So trying to assess am I hearing you correctly? And use that reflective listening to make sure I'm fully understanding that person.

This SA went beyond mere acknowledgment, ensuring their mentee felt thoroughly heard by paraphrasing their words, signaling deep understanding and care.

The value of active listening extended beyond mentoring to interactions with colleagues, reinforcing team cohesion: "I've been able to strengthen and become aware of making sure that everybody feels heard, and that people have ample opportunity to be able to express and articulate their ideas." Another SA linked their listening skills directly to their leadership, stating, "My strengths are the ability to listen and reflect on what I am seeing."

Embracing silence also emerged as a critical aspect of active listening. An SA shared her realization of its importance in mentoring, stating, "I think there is a little bit

of learning that about myself in this […] in the mentee mentor type of relationship, because it's just not like a group. It's a one-on-one situation, and so the silence is truly silence." She learned to view silence not as a gap but as a reflective space for the mentee.

Confidence

The SAs reassessed their self-perception as the mentoring experience culminated, particularly in terms of confidence. This self-assurance spanned handling complex challenges to decision-making in uncertain scenarios. One SA highlighted how the responsibility of creating the mentoring workbook was a source of confidence in her capabilities:

> I feel like being entrusted with responsibility and asked to participate engenders a sense of purpose, and I would say it also can support the development and the growth of the department and the people in it. And so I would say, having that trust and opportunity really created opportunities to grow more confident and having actual physical experiences in the development of a program helped create a sense of direction and purpose.

This responsibility validated her skills, enhancing her confidence.

Beyond the mentoring context, SAs noted a broader impact on their confidence. One SA noted this shift, stating, "I feel a little bit more secure in my ability to take on certain things or support staff." This shift was not just about self-assurance but also about readiness to embrace new challenges. Reflecting on leadership and collaboration, another SA observed they were "…becoming more comfortable at leading things, and asking opinions, especially when planning the next module." This participative approach to

leadership marked a significant growth in confidence, shifting from directive to collaborative leadership.

This increased confidence extended to their broader work environment, enriching support for colleagues and reinforcing their leadership role, even in the absence of formal authority:

> So I think there definitely has been an increase in my confidence and view of myself as a leader, even if I'm not formally supervising anyone. I feel confident when my team members will come to me with a question about an obscure scenario, or something of that extent, or just something to work through and that I can at least get them in a direction or support them through that process.

The SA's journey through the mentorship experience was a transformative process, building skills necessary for effective leadership. By fostering active listening, the SAs not only cultivated a deeper connection with their mentees but also reinforced the methods of collaboration within their teams. The SA's commitment to understanding and valuing others' perspectives fostered an environment of mutual respect and openness. Coupled with the significant growth in confidence, the SAs emerged from the experience equipped with an enhanced sense of self-assurance and leadership capability.

Theme 5: Evolving Leadership Perspectives

In the beginning of Phase 1, SAs openly questioned their understanding and qualifications for leading a mentoring workbook project, expecting clear guidance from me. They anticipated that I would provide a specific direction for this phase. I was transparent with the SAs that I did not know what form the mentoring workbook would take. However, I expressed confidence in their ability to create something of significant

value for the mentees, driven by their eagerness to ensure a positive experience, even without a precise vision.

Learning about the absence of a detailed roadmap initially surprised and pressured the SAs to "get it right" even though they were unsure what "right" entailed. Introducing the project as our mentoring experience's first iteration, I highlighted the importance of evolving our thinking and comfortably navigating uncertainty. I assured them that perfection was not our objective, aiming to normalize the iterative process of refining our ideas amidst uncertainties. This concept felt novel to the participants, who were accustomed to participating in more distinctly outlined projects. One participant described feeling as though they were navigating “a messy space.”

The work of creating the mentoring workbook introduced a new decision-making approach for the SAs, positioning them as the co-leaders responsible for collaboratively shaping the final product. Success required the SAs to confront and leverage the project's inherent uncertainty as a creative opportunity. The SAs learned to view the project's ambiguity not as a paralyzing obstacle but as an opportunity for innovation. Reflecting on this, one SA highlighted the empowering realization that leaders can unite their teams around a challenge without having all the answers:

> Our leaders can identify a problem without the answer. Leaders identify something, and then what they do is they just rally everybody around. And they know I can't do this. I could probably figure something out. But to find the best results, we need everybody's input. And that was really useful for me to reflect upon.

Engagement in the experience prompted the SAs to reconsider leadership and decision-making processes, especially the importance of inclusivity and the impact of decisions at all levels. One SA reflected on considering diverse opinions before finalizing a course of action as a challenge she had not considered before; this shifted her thinking. "I think the biggest one is thinking about decision making. How decisions we make at whatever leadership level then affects all involved. And, to the best of our ability, how do we make voices feel included?" Even with the careful consideration of others, the SA acknowledged that the final course of action may have unintended consequences. "Trying to meet the needs of team members as a whole, I think that is endlessly tricky. And you're not always gonna get it right. There is not a perfect formula for these things. We learn as we go. But I think throughout this process that that's one of the biggest takeaways or just perspective shifts." The SA recognized the necessity of granting oneself grace when outcomes deviate from expectations.

The experience also challenged conventional views of leadership among the SAs. One SA acknowledged the diversity and fluidity of leadership styles, rejecting the notion of a one-size-fits-all approach, sharing that:

> The great thing about leadership and the challenging thing about leadership is there's not one way to do it right. If there was one way to do it, then there could be maybe, A to Point B. And you have steps, and you get there. But it's just a little bit more messier. And then there's beauty in that.

She realized that emulating others' success does not guarantee similar results for oneself, affirming the value of personal authenticity and the potential for growth in leadership. She continued:

> And maybe I try on the hat […] and, I want to show up like this, and it just doesn't work. But that's okay. That doesn't mean that I'm not a leader, even though I had like a boss or supervisor or a manager that had those skills. If it doesn't work for me, that doesn't mean that I'm not a leader. It just means […] I can lead in a different way. And maybe there's some other skills that I can do to develop it if I feel like it's an important thing. It just feels really empowering, and it doesn't feel stuck. There's space and room to grow.

She closed her thoughts with a clear expression of the individuality needed for quality and authentic leadership, stating, "My leadership doesn't have to look the same as someone else's leadership."

Initially, the SAs struggled with their undefined roles and the lack of explicit guidance in developing a mentoring workbook. Adopting an iterative mindset, however, alleviated the pressure for immediate perfection and encouraged a more open approach to ambiguity and innovation. This process not only redefined their understanding of leadership but also empowered them to embrace their unique styles and grow authentically.

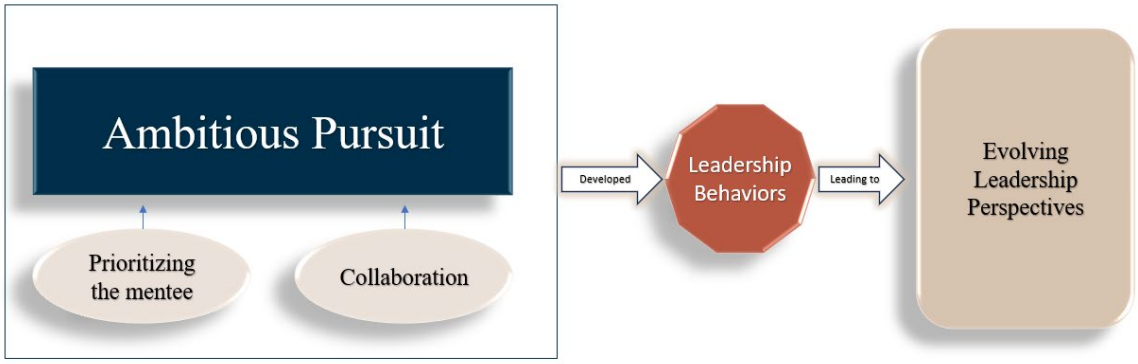
Themes Conclusion

The themes are intricately connected, and I represent the connections in Figure 5. The ambitious nature of the pursuit required SAs to expand their considerations about prioritizing the experience of the mentee and ways to effectively collaborate. Using the leadership skills in this way on a large project developed leadership behaviors around active listening and confidence. The use of these skills, coupled with the development of

the behaviors of active listening and confidence resulted in a more evolved perspective on leadership.

Figure 5

Theme Connections



Quantitative Analysis and Results

The data I collected about this innovation was primarily qualitative data. However, I did collect quantitative data via Google form questionnaire at the end of Phases 1 and 2 to complement the qualitative data. The questionnaire consisted of 27 Likert scale items and four short-answer questions. After I collected the second set of data, I transferred the Likert scale responses to SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 29.0) for analysis. The short-answer responses were evaluated as a part of the qualitative data set.

Four SAs responded to the survey following Phase 1. Due to a participant's promotion to a leadership role before starting the mentoring phase, only three participated in the second survey. I chose to include the fourth participant's data in the Phase 1

quantitative analysis, given its inclusion in the qualitative evaluation. My aim in gathering quantitative data was to deepen my understanding of the participants' experiences, not necessarily to achieve statistical significance. Thus, I found it reasonable to retain the data from the fourth participant for comprehensive analysis.

The survey began with the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), containing sixteen items across four constructs: transparency, ethical standards, balanced processing, and self-awareness, all measured on a 5-point Likert scale. I conducted a reliability analysis for each construct, calculated mean scores, and performed paired-sample t-tests to examine relationships between responses from Phases 1 and 2.

After transferring data to SPSS, I calculated the reliability of the ALQ constructs, created new data points for the mean scores of each construct at both phases, and generated descriptive statistics. Paired-sample t-tests from these new data points helped explore the relationship between the two phases. The ALQ constructs were treated separately from the additional Likert scale items due to their origin from a recognized instrument.

Utilizing the new data points calculated from the results of the ALQ survey, means and standard deviations of each construct were compared. These constructs were: (a) transparency, (b) ethical standards, (c) balanced processing, and (d) self-awareness. A sample of the items is presented in Chapter 2, which aligns with the permission obtained to utilize the instrument; full details of the instrument are not permitted to be printed, consistent with the copyright protection of the instrument. For each construct, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated using SPSS to evaluate the reliability of each construct. The reliability of the constructs was .89, .94, .00, and .82, respectively. The balanced

processing construct did not meet the minimum reliability coefficient of greater than .70 and was excluded from further analysis. The other constructs met the minimum and were given further consideration.

In table 11 the descriptive statistics for the ALQ constructs that met the reliability expectation are outlined. For all reported constructs, the mean from the second evaluation is higher than the mean from the first evaluation, meaning the participants rated themselves more highly on each construct after the mentoring experience. The mean for all constructs is quite high at both points of evaluation, considering the instrument utilized a 5-point Likert response scale.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics of ALQ Constructs

ALQ Construct	Phase 1 Mean	Phase 2 Mean	Phase 1 SD	Phase 1 SD
Transparency	4.20	4.73	.65	.16
Ethical Standards	4.62	4.83	.60	.29
Self-Awareness	4.37	4.83	.52	.14

**Phase 1 n=4; Phase 2 n=3.*

The remaining eleven items were grouped into four constructs: (a) self-awareness, (b) confidence, (c) decision-making and (d) influence. Then, new data points were created from calculated means, and paired-sample t-test analysis completed. For each construct, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS to evaluate the reliability of each construct. The reliability of the constructs was .84, -.38, .80 and .53, respectively. The confidence and influence constructs did not meet the .70 minimum reliability coefficient

and were therefore excluded from further data analysis. The self-awareness and decision-making constructs did meet the reliability requirement. The table below (table 12) indicates the means of each construct and does show an increase in each mean calculation for the second completion of the survey. In addition to the higher overall mean, there is less deviation among participants in their responses.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Additional Constructs

Construct	Phase 1 Mean	Phase 2 Mean	Phase 1 SD	Phase 2 SD
Self-Awareness	3.89	4.83	.63	.29
Decision-Making	4.38	4.5	.75	.50

**Phase 1 n=4; Phase 2 n=3.*

Multiple paired sample t-tests were also performed. Due to the low sample size, I hypothesized that that the low sample size would not show statistically significant differences. None of the results were significant, which confirmed my hypothesis.

Conclusion

After reviewing the qualitative data from the different phases of the innovation process, five significant themes emerged: ambitious pursuit, prioritizing the mentee, collaboration, leadership behaviors, and evolving leadership perspectives. Additionally, the quantitative data showed growth across several constructs, including transparency, ethical standards, self-awareness, and decision-making. In Chapter 5, I will address the research questions guiding this study, discuss findings in relation to these questions, and explore connections to the theoretical frameworks that informed the study. I will also

consider potential alternative interpretations of the findings, reflect on lessons learned, discuss implications for my continued practice, and suggest areas for further research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The objective of this action research case study dissertation was to explore how workplace activities can support emerging leaders in the development of a more fully formed leader identity utilizing a foundation of authentic leadership. Chapter 4 provided an in-depth review of the qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, analysis, and findings.

In the discussion, I weave together the qualitative and quantitative findings to address the research question introduced at the start of the innovation. It is important to note that qualitative data takes precedence in this study, providing essential context, insights, and narratives that quantitative metrics alone cannot convey. I selectively incorporate quantitative data to provide a layered understanding that extends beyond the capabilities of each method when used in isolation, strengthening the research by adding validation, enabling triangulation, and enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Ivankova, 2015, Morse, 2015). By intentionally integrating qualitative depth and quantitative breadth, the discussion about this action research case study endeavors to present a thorough and integrated understanding of the results.

In addition to discussing the results, I also connect the findings to the existing literature on leader identity development and expression of authentic leadership traits (refer to Chapter 2). I consider rival explanations for the results obtained and outline the lessons learned from the project. Finally, I discuss implications for my practice and potential directions for future research.

Question 1: Leader Identity Development

In this study, I explored question 1: *How does the innovation support the development of a senior advisor's leader identity?* My findings indicate a significant evolution in the SA's leader identities.

The *ambitious pursuit* theme revealed that creating the mentoring workbook and establishing mentoring relationships actively supported the SAs' leader identity development as they navigated ambiguous challenges. The experience offered contextually relevant motivations for engaging in stretch assignments which required navigating new, novel, or complex challenges. This is consistent with Ehrich et al.'s (2001) findings about the benefits of an assignment that is attainable but is perceived to be a stretch of ability. The growth was also visible in the quantitative data on decision-making, an integral component of the ambitious pursuit. This practical experience contributed to the leadership development spiral noted by Day and Harrison (2007), where a positive experience leading others leads to the integration of leadership skills, further developing an individual's capacity for leadership, and driving them to seek out new experiences. This also aligns with the literature on leader identity theory as discussed by Lord and Hall (2005) regarding development in the task domain, where growth occurs in solving more complex problems that draw on a wider bank of skills.

Consistent with Lord and Hall (2005) and Day and Harrison (2007), the SAs demonstrated an evolution in their understanding of leadership skills. The *collaboration* theme illustrates a notable growth in SA's understanding of the skill required to successfully move collective work forward. The SAs collaborated to co-lead the workbook's development, thereby gaining insights into consensus building. The

additional insight around bringing diverse people and opinions together to move shared work forward translated into changes in how the SAs utilized collaboration in their daily interactions within their teams. This aligns with Day & Harrison's (2007) assertion that advanced or collective leadership views are inclusive and recognize the interconnectedness among individuals and teams.

Additionally, skill development in the *prioritizing the mentee* theme was characterized by SA's growing emphasis on supporting the mentee's experience throughout both phases of the innovation. The SAs concentrated on facilitating mentee growth, ensuring they did not overshadow the mentees' experiences. This aligns with Lord and Hall's (2005) characterization of growth in the social skill domain, where expertise is measured by the capacity to develop others.

The *leadership behaviors* theme centered on how the SAs developed active listening and confidence. The quantitative data further demonstrated growth in the area of self-awareness. Lord and Hall (2005) would characterize the level of skill SAs demonstrated in this area as intermediate or mid-level. There is a deep capacity at an intermediate level for empathy and understanding of others, which the SAs demonstrated. To be considered an expert in this domain, participants would demonstrate the ability to not only manage their own emotions, but to support the management of other's emotions simultaneously.

The *evolving leadership perspective* theme presented as the SA's reconsideration and reorientation around what constitutes good leadership. There is an understanding and recognition of the task of supporting others through ambiguity; however, this project did not provide participants with an opportunity to practice the skills of supporting others

through this type of task. The quantitative data also demonstrated an increase in understanding about decision making and transparency. However, recognition is different from the deployment of a skill. This is an area in which participants will need additional experience beyond this innovation to deploy this skill in real-time to fully integrate this task knowledge into their identity (Day & Harrison, 2007).

Question 2: Authentic Leadership Traits

The second research question I posed was, *What authentic leadership traits do senior advisors embody throughout the innovation?* Authentic leadership, according to Walumbwa et al. (2008), consists of a pattern of behavior by leaders that draws upon and promotes positive psychological capacities and ethical climate. The model encourages increased self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency among leaders in their interactions with followers. How I saw the SA's embody these traits will be explored in more detail next.

Authentic leadership theory emphasizes a strong self-awareness, including recognizing one's strengths and limitations (Gardner & Carlson, 2015). Throughout the experience, SAs demonstrated substantial self-reflective practices, identifying and naming the emotions elicited by their involvement. They articulated the impact of their personal behaviors and emotions on their mentees and colleagues within their teams. Quantitative data further supports the growth observed in this construct of authentic leadership. The SAs also linked their strengths and weaknesses to their roles, offering candid self-evaluations of their capabilities, in alignment with the growth framework proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2008).

Expressing authentic leadership requires the ability to demonstrate a balanced processing of information (Gardner & Carlson, 2015). Evidence of this trait emerged within the *collaboration* theme, as SAs showed openness to feedback during the innovation process and a readiness to integrate new perspectives into their decision-making. Their primary focus was on decisions that benefitted their mentees, steering clear of motivations centered on personal ego enhancement through mentoring.

The theme of *prioritizing the mentee* demonstrated relational transparency in the mentoring relationship. SAs initiated mentoring dialogues with deliberate transparency and openness to nurture the mentee's growth and development. They engaged in these exchanges with sincerity to establish trust with their mentee, displaying vulnerability and humility to foster this trust. Quantitative findings further corroborate the development in this domain of authentic leadership, resonating with Gardner and Carlson's (2015) discussion on relational transparency, where leaders are encouraged to be open and to disclose appropriate thoughts and feelings while maintaining a dignified persona to elicit professional respect.

An internalized moral perspective is the final facet of authentic leadership and requires leaders to be directed by moral or ethical standards (Gardner and Carlson, 2015). In all their interactions, there is evidence the SAs adhered to the core values inherent in this context, with ethical standards firmly integrated within these core values. Quantitative data also evidenced growth in this respect. Assessing the expression of these values, especially under pressure or temptation to act contrary to these principles, is an area lacking in this project (Gardner & Carlson, 2015; Walumbwa et al., 2008). SAs were not placed in positions with this project where they were faced with a direct confrontation

to their values. Therefore, an evaluation of the depth of integration with this component of authentic leadership is not possible.

Despite the challenges evaluating all aspects of an internalized moral perspective, deep self-reflection and care for others, hallmarks of authentic leadership were evident in all phases of the project. The expression of authentic leadership traits is associated with high levels of psychological well-being in leaders, as well as strong workplace engagement, and commitment to the organization broadly (Gardner & Carlson, 2015; Gardner et al., 2011). These traits were found to be present in the participants.

Rival Interpretations

Yin (2018) emphasizes the importance of considering viable alternative explanations for the study's findings in a case study. I will explore two such explanations. First, I consider that the outcomes may have been a result of the natural evolution of professional expertise, rather than being attributable to this innovation. The second possible explanation I consider is the Hawthorne effect.

SAs growth may have been the same as other advisors within our workplace, suggesting that such changes could have occurred regardless of their involvement in the innovation. Despite the innovation's contribution to the SAs' workplace experiences, it represented only a part of their developmental context. Given that these SAs did not all belong to the same team, interacted with various staff groups, and reported to different leaders, certain workplace dynamics may have fueled their personal development. Nevertheless, I have ruled out this explanation. The consistency in how participants articulated their experiences and identified growth in key areas of their leadership

identity, alongside their grasp of authentic leadership principles, reinforces my conclusion that the innovation was a driving force behind this change.

The second rival explanation is the Hawthorne effect, which Cook (1962) describes as the modification of outcomes in educational research by participants' knowledge of receiving special treatment under experimental conditions. Participants did engage in an activity that others in the office did not. Yet, action research inherently aims to involve participants in something unique and special. The SA's participation was designed not to artificially sway a particular variable but to enhance an internal practice for everyone's benefit. Stringer and Aragon (2021) advocate for action research for its capacity to foster sustainable practice improvements that bolster the lives and well-being of all involved. My goal as a researcher was to empower and trust participants, and I hope that this intention positively influenced outcomes.

Lessons Learned Through Implementation

I learned several lessons through implementing this innovation. The timeline for completing the mentoring workbook extended far beyond my initial plan. What I had envisioned completing in three meetings over a month in April 2023 ultimately spanned more than three months. I had to adjust to and get comfortable with the extended timeline. Creating the mentoring workbook was more in-depth and intentional than I had anticipated before I initiated the project, which resulted in substantial value for the participants deeply engaging with core values, workplace concepts, and each other.

The adjustment to the timeline was significant. I intended to hold the final mentoring session at the end of September of 2023, but it did not take place until December. This deviation served as a crucial reminder of the often unpredictable nature

of this type of work. The project's richness and the outcomes it yielded far outweighed the challenges posed by the altered timeline.

Initially, I had envisioned a directive role in Phase 1. However, the first Phase 1 meeting had an unexpected depth and made it clear that allowing participants to lead this phase would be immensely beneficial. By stepping back and empowering the participants, I nurtured a sense of trust and empowerment among the SAs, which was crucial for their development.

Additionally, while I anticipated some changes in the workplace over the project's duration, the extent was surprising. During Phase 1, an SA was promoted to a leadership role, making them ineligible to serve as a mentor as planned. This required the change in Phase 2 participation and one less SA/mentee pairing. Furthermore, my role underwent significant changes in April 2023. While I appreciate the expanded responsibilities of my new role, balancing these duties with the project's demands was challenging. I had not anticipated taking on additional responsibilities while managing this project. Although the project aimed to develop leadership skills among emerging leaders in my office, the unforeseen change provided me with a valuable leadership lesson, highlighting the necessity of being prepared to handle various challenges.

Implications for My Practice

The positive outcomes that the SAs achieved through their participation in the innovation vastly surpassed my initial projections for this project. Their involvement in crafting the mentoring workbook and their subsequent roles as mentors brought forth tangible benefits. Integrating leadership development into activities relevant to the workplace context proved invaluable.

This success prompts a question: With the workbook now complete, how can I ensure that newly hired SAs receive a similarly impactful experience? Is it necessary to develop a new mentoring workbook from scratch for each incoming group of SAs? Alternatively, could we modify aspects of the workbook creation process to enable new SAs to deeply engage with the core values and concepts, thus preparing them to effectively mentor less experienced staff? Initially, this project aimed to produce a guide that would facilitate an easy and consistent replication of the mentoring process. Yet, the discovery of the creation process's significance has transformed my approach to integrating new SAs as mentors. While I have not detailed this process completely, the value of collaboration is clear to me.

The first step will involve engaging in discussions, providing support, and offering guidance from the SAs who developed the mentoring workbook and led the pilot. Their experiences and insights into what impacted them will prove invaluable as we contemplate the long-term implementation. This includes strategizing on how to welcome new SAs and establish practices that nurture their development before they take on mentoring roles.

Directions for Future Research

This research concentrated exclusively on the SAs' experiences and the transformations they underwent through their participation. It did not examine the mentees' experiences or the potential changes stemming from their involvement. However, SAs provided feedback during interviews, suggesting they believed the mentees perceived the relationship positively, supporting their growth and integration into the departmental culture.

Future research should give priority to the mentees. It is crucial to understand the impact of participating as a mentee on their acclimation as new staff members. Questions to explore are multiple in number. Do mentees feel as positively about their participation as the SAs? Are they developing a stronger connection to the core values? Do they perceive this process as changing their interactions with colleagues? And, importantly, has their involvement altered their approach to supporting students? This area offers extensive opportunities for further investigation.

Closing Thoughts

As university professional staff continue their efforts to professionalize academic advising, it becomes essential to focus on developing strong leadership capacity and fostering a pool of individuals prepared for future leadership opportunities. Investing in professionals who aspire to leadership roles not only establishes a pipeline for future leaders but also brings immediate, tangible benefits. Emerging leaders, when involved in mentoring, deeply engage with workplace values, and feel empowered by the trust invested in them to positively influence new staff. This collaborative method of developing and implementing a workplace mentoring program has the potential to benefit sectors beyond higher education.

As a researcher, I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to embark on this journey. Collaborating with exceptionally talented and committed SAs on this project has been incredibly fulfilling. Supporting their professional development has provided me with valuable insights into my own practices. The commitment of these SAs has introduced an innovative approach to professionalism and growth in our context, poised to positively affect numerous staff members.

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APPENDIX A

PHASE 1 AGENDA FOR WORKBOOK CREATION MEETINGS

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College
Arizona State University

Graduate Office of Student Services

Mentoring Curriculum Creation

Overview

We will engage in a series of conversations intended to co-create a contextually relevant mentoring curriculum to support the continued onboarding of new advising staff in our office. The curriculum will be finalized during three sessions.

Session 1: Preparation

To prepare for our first session, please read the following:

- Authentic Leadership: https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/authentic-leadership
- Phases of the mentoring relationship: https://steemit.com/steemiteducation/@fun2learn/4phasesofmentoringrelationshipbykathykram-gtye7z9t4u

Questions to consider prior to session 1:

- Have you been involved in a mentoring experience before? What did you learn through the experience that may help the group as they prepare the curriculum?
- What thoughts come to mind when thinking about investing in your own development as a leader?

Session 1 Activity: Curriculum Building

Session duration: 2 hours

Goals:

Build consensus about the structure and function of the mentoring relationship.
Create a rough outline for the mentoring experience.

Questions to consider as we work to achieve the goals:

- What overall outcomes are important to achieve through a mentoring relationship for both the mentor and mentee?
- How long should the mentoring relationship last?
- How much time should it take for the mentee to prepare for each mentoring session?
- How should the experiences occur? Should they all occur 1:1? Should some experiences be 1:1 and some in a group setting?
- What topics are most important for a new staff member to graduate OSS to explore during this type of relationship?
  Topics to consider:
    - ASU's positionality as an institution of higher education
    - OSS Mission, Vision and Core Values
    - Navigating team dynamics
    - Matrixed leadership in our context
- How should the mentee record or track their progression through the relationship? Can this mechanism support their ability to reflect on their own growth and development?

Session 2: Preparation

To prepare for this session, please review the following link on workplace psychological needs (this link can be read or listened to):

https://blog.proactioninternational.com/en/how-self-determination-theory-enhance-employee-motivation

Based on the progress made in session one, additional literature to explore will be identified by the group prior to session two.

Questions to consider prior to session 2:

- What behaviors are important for your mentee to experience while you are mentoring them?
- In what ways do you want to be present while participating in a mentoring relationship?

Session 2 Activity: Curriculum Completion

Session duration: 1 hour
Goals:

Complete a curriculum for the mentoring experience.
Finalize implementation timeline.
Make recommendations for mentor/mentee pairings.

Questions to consider as we work to achieve the goals:

- Is there preparation needed for mentees prior to participation? If so, what might that look like or what activities might that include?
- What are the expectations around confidentiality in the mentoring relationship? How should that expectation be communicated to mentees?
- Successful mentoring relies heavily on open-ended questions and active listening. How confident do the mentors feel in their abilities in those areas? Is additional support needed prior to launching the mentoring program in these areas?
- Does the program created support basic psychological needs for mentees of autonomy, competence, and belonging? How does it accomplish this?

Session 3: Preparation

Based on the progress made in session two, additional literature to explore will be identified by the group prior to session three.

Session 3 Activity: Curriculum Finalization and Mentoring Preparation

Session duration: 1 hour

Goals:

Review and finalize a curriculum for the mentoring experience.
Finalize implementation timeline with suggested dates for activities to occur.
Bolster confidence for mentors in the ability to guide curriculum activities.

Questions to consider as we work to achieve the goals.

- What activities in the curriculum are you most comfortable with? What activities cause you concern? What can we do to build confidence for each activity?
- In what ways can this group support each other during the mentoring experience?
- In what ways can mentors document their experiences so we can compare outcomes and make adjustments to the curriculum for future iterations?
- In what ways should the mentors be supported throughout this process? Is additional training needed prior to serving as a mentor?
- Does the curriculum successfully address all phases of the mentoring relationship (see link in session one preparation materials)?

APPENDIX B

MENTORING WORKBOOK

Graduate Office of Student Services

Core Values Conversations

Overview

The Office of Academic and Career Services (OACiS) core values serve as the guiding principles for how we structure our work, engage with each other, and support our students. Now that you have built familiarity with your new role and the job duties, you will be paired with a senior member of our team to explore in more depth how we manifest the core values in our everyday work.

Learning objectives

- To deepen understanding of the core values of OACiS and explore how they are expressed as a part of the culture of the Graduate Office of Student Services.
- To intentionally engage in self-reflection and explore how the core values could be applied to scenarios that may arise in the future.
- To facilitate expansion of the advisor's professional network by building a relationship with a senior advisor.
- To explore experiences with the core values, in this workplace and in past work experiences.

Timeline

Introductory Module	Wednesday, September 13th - 10:30-11:30
Authenticity	Week of September 25
Team Culture	Week of October 9
Accountability	Week of October 23
People over Process	Week of November 6

Creativity	Week of November 27
Wrap Up	Week of December 4

Module 1 - Introduction

Introducing the core values conversation and your guide

The Office of Academic and Career Success (OACiS) utilizes a vision, mission, and core values to guide our interactions with students and with colleagues. They are central to our work. They also provide a framework that supports our practices. Understanding the vision, mission, and core values will support a deeper understanding of our work and the direction and purpose of our continued innovation and evolution.

OACiS Vision
The Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College Office of Academic and Career Success aspires to achieve an exemplary level of innovative and student-centered programs, services, and infrastructure, in support of a growing and diverse population.

OACiS Mission Statement:

The Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College Office of Academic and Career Success is committed to the holistic success of our diverse student body by providing programs and services that empower students to actualize their goals, while preparing them to make positive differences in their own lives and in the communities in which they serve.

OACiS Core Values:

We Value Authenticity: We show up as real, vulnerable, transparent human beings who speak from the heart, value others' contributions, and invest in each other's growth. We speak thoughtfully, encourage and respect diversity of opinion, and listen carefully with an open mind.

We Value Team Culture: We foster an encouraging and supportive team culture where inclusion and respect are a defining part of our team identity. We ensure that each of our actions are in the best interests of our students, our team, and our college.

We Value People over Process: We are human centered problem solvers. We empower students and staff to think critically and remove barriers to achieve goals.

We Value Accountability: We take ownership for the quality of our individual work and take pride in what we deliver as a team; our focus is on a successful outcome for all. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for outcomes related to student and staff success.

We Value Creativity: We strive for excellence and are unconstrained by the way things have always been done. We are passionate about learning and seek to continuously improve and innovate the student experience.

Over the next several weeks, participants in the program will explore, with a more senior partner, the different dimensions of the core values and how they are connected to our work. A variety of resources have been curated to support the exploration of the different aspects of each of the values.

Leadership within our office is aware that you are participating in this experience and encourages you to take time in your workday to explore the resources included in each module, think critically about your practice, and consider your growth as a member of our student support team. We endeavor to build systems and processes that support our students and staff in a holistic manner, and participation in these types of activities, those that provide time and space for self-reflection, are a crucial component of how we continue to evolve.

Our leadership team also believes that connection with colleagues makes our office strong. We are pleased that you have the chance to collaborate closely with a more senior member of our team. The intention is for you to build a strong connection with an individual outside of your immediate team who can also be a resource for you as you build your career within OACiS.

This google document is a place for you to record reflections, questions, wonderings, and ideas that are generated as a part of this process. Please use the space at the end of each module to record your thoughts. We see the self-reflective opportunity that is supported by participating in this way a key component of individual growth and development.

Finally, we are excited to participate with you and explore! The modules were created as a part of a collaborative effort between senior advisors and leadership. We are certain you will find this a valuable extension of your OACiS experience!

Module 2 - Authenticity

We show up as real, vulnerable, transparent human beings who speak from the heart, value others' contributions, and invest in each other's growth. We speak thoughtfully, encourage respectful diversity of opinion, and listen carefully with an open mind.

Module preparation - Resources to explore prior to this session:

Please decide with your mentor which 2-4 resources (or more!) you will both review prior to this session. The shared review of resources serves as the foundation for this, and future, module conversations.

Growth mindset

- The power of believing you can improve by Carol Dweck
- The joy of being wrong - Freethink

Radical Candor

- What is Radical Candor? By Kim Scott

Reflective practice

- What is reflective practice? (education perspective)
- What is reflective practice? (business perspective)
- Understanding reflective practice

Vulnerability

- The Power of Vulnerability

Authenticity

- Authenticity: The courage to be yourself, or a glorified fixed mindset?
- LinkedIn Learning Title: Uncovering your authentic self at work by Kenji Yoshino
- Linkedin Learning Title: Authentic listening by Todd Dewett
- LinkedIn Learning Title: Emotional intelligence and authenticity by Todd Dewett

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What does authenticity look like?

- Utilizing empathy, reflective questioning, and an asset-based approach to understand the many different voices and lived experiences of our students and colleagues.
- Championing equitable and inclusive involvement and contribution to the learning process.
- Using a growth mindset to make meaning of experiences through reflection on one's thoughts and actions, and how they affect the growth, development, and identity of the individual, team and community.
- Demonstrating flexibility, welcoming and adjusting quickly to change at all times.

- Communicating clearly, professionally, and respectfully. Voicing concerns in a productive, solutions-oriented manner.
- Exercising courtesy, tact, and professionalism in dealings with students and all members of the university community.
- Seeking to understand, and assuming positive intent in dealings with students, colleagues, and university community.

Questions for self-reflection:

What are the strengths and opportunities you identify for yourself when considering authenticity in the workplace?

What past experiences may be shaping your perception about the value of authenticity in the workplace?

In what ways do you see authenticity expressed by your teammates, other peers, and leaders in the workplace?

What work would you still like to do in the area of authenticity in our workplace? Are there additional concepts you would like to explore?

Module 3 - Team Culture

We foster an encouraging and supportive team culture where inclusion and respect are a defining part of our team identity. We ensure that each of our actions are in the best interest of our students, our team, and our college.

Module preparation - Resources to explore prior to this session:

Please decide with your mentor which 2-4 resources you will both review prior to this session. The shared review of resources serves as the foundation for this module.

Perspective taking

- Taking multiple perspectives
- Perspective taking: A brain hack that can help you make better decisions
- Perspective taking for inclusion
- The tale of two robes
- LinkedIn Learning title: Creating a culture of collaboration - Lisa Bodel

Civility

- Should you be civil to a racist? Yes, but you should still call them out.
- 3 ways to practice civility - Steven Petrow
- LinkedIn Learning title: Teaching civility in the workplace - Catherine Mattice

Altruism

- Altruism: Ethos Defined
- LinkedIn Learning title: Upward Spiral of Compassion - Kelly McGonigal and Sounds True

Inclusivity

- On Diversity: Access Ain't Inclusion
- Inclusion over Diversity
- Stop Obsessing over Diversity, It's Time to Focus on Inclusion
- LinkedIn Learning video: What is Inclusion?– Arianna Huffington and Verna Myers

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What does team culture look like?

- Engaging in flexible thinking and appreciation of multiple perspectives, understanding how each individual contributes to form a complex whole.
- Participating actively and cooperatively in meetings and developing strong working relationships with students, faculty, staff, and external partners.
- Collaborating with internal and external partners to solve student issues and participate in projects/initiatives.
- Demonstrating inclusive practices such as ensuring appropriate meeting membership, disseminating information/knowledge to the rest of the team, and welcoming the ideas/perspectives of others.

Questions for self-reflection:

What are the strengths and opportunities you identify for yourself when considering team culture in the workplace?

What past experiences may shape your perception about the value of team culture in the workplace?

In what ways do you see team culture expressed by your teammates, other peers, and leaders in the workplace?

What work would you still like to do in the area of team culture in our workplace? Are there additional concepts you would like to explore?

Module 4 - Accountability

We take ownership for the quality of our individual work and take pride in what we deliver as a team; our focus is on a successful outcome for all. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for outcomes related to our student and staff success.

Module preparation - Resources to explore prior to this session:

Please decide with your mentor which 2-4 resources you will both review prior to this session. The shared review of resources serves as the foundation of this module.

ASU Outcomes

- New American University: Toward 2028 and beyond

Performance character

- Principled Innovation: Intellectual character

Accountability

- LinkedIn Learning Course: Holding yourself accountable by Dorie Clark
- LinkedIn Learning Course: Leading yourself by Elizabeth Lotardo and Lisa Earle McLeod

Asking for help

- How to get the help you need

What does accountability look like?

- Adhering to university standards of ethics and compliance, which includes but is not limited to all communication and interactions with students, parents, and staff/faculty in the context of FERPA, the mission of Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, and the charter and design aspirations of Arizona State University.
- Using a values-based reflective process to engage in ethical decision-making.
- Practicing responsible attendance behaviors to include punctuality and productive use of work time according to university work policies. Demonstrating productivity through contributions to team workflow in alignment with assigned responsibility rotations (e.g., producing approximately one third of the team's output in a three-advisor team, etc.)
- Providing consistent, dependable, and reliable service as individuals, and as members of their assigned teams(s).

- Documenting appropriate and detailed notes; consistently reporting student interactions in a transparent, systems-based manner in alignment with role expectations.
- Consistently responding to inbound inquiries from students, staff, or faculty within expected timeframes. Being prompt and prepared for advising appointments, meetings, or team events.
- Demonstrating strong team membership by delivering service in accordance with advising responsibility distribution as assigned (receiving phone calls, answering cases, conducting outreach, administrative tasks, etc.).
- Communicating if work tasks will be delayed and asking for assistance when needed.

Questions for self-reflection:

What are the strengths and opportunities you identify for yourself when considering accountability in the workplace?

What past experiences may be shaping your perception about the value of accountability in the workplace?

In what ways do you see accountability expressed by your teammates, other peers, and leaders in the workplace?

What work would you still like to do in the area of accountability in our workplace? Are there additional concepts you would like to explore?

Module 5 - People over Process

We are human centered problem solvers. We empower students and staff to think critically and remove barriers to achieve goals.

Module preparation - Resources to explore prior to this session:

Please decide with your mentor which 2-4 resources you will both review prior to the next session.

Agency in the workplace

- Jobs and Agency

Listening

- Active Listening Techniques
- LinkedIn Learning Course: Effective Listening

Supporting Adult Learners

- Making Room for Adult Learners

This session will provide an opportunity to explore how the office embodies People over Process in a group setting. We will explore this concept together with interactive exercises and group discussion.

What does people over process look like?

- Guiding the decision-making process through observation and reflective questioning that is human-centered and helps identify and address possible outcomes. Engaging in decision-making that increases the chance for desired results and minimizes risk of harm to individuals, teams, and the broader learning community.
- Demonstrating skills that allow a positive student experience, which includes listening, flexibility, patience, objectivity, receptivity, responsiveness, facilitation of student decision-making processes, and evaluation of educational choices and goals.
- Advocating for student needs, responding to student questions/concerns by facilitating or connecting students to college/university resources that support student success.
- Demonstrating critical thinking and assessment of current practices and identifying new or improved ways to support student success.
- Identifying and developing solutions to challenges or issues that serve the student context and ensure alignment of practice with our core values.

Questions for self-reflection:

In what ways have you experienced OACiS staff practicing People over Process?

How can we advocate and support student needs while still respecting our student's ability to choose their own path forward?

What additional resources at ASU do you feel additional knowledge about would support your ability to better express People over Process for your students and your teammates?

Module 6 - Creativity

We strive for excellence and are unconstrained by the way things have always been done. We are passionate about learning and seek to continuously improve and innovate the student experience.

Module preparation - Resources to explore prior to this session:

Please decide with your mentor which 2-4 resources you will both review prior to the next session. The shared review of resources serves as the foundation for this module.

Psychological Safety and Risk Taking

- What is Psychological Safety?

Speaking up at work

- Work Life with Adam Grant - Is it safe to speak up at work?

Creating solutions

- Define a problem of practice
- Problem solving in the workplace
- LinkedIn Learning Course: Creativity at work: A short course from Seth Godin

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What does creativity look like?

- Working collaboratively and intentionally within the team and with ASU colleagues to define and understand problems, and generate purposeful, creative ideas to achieve desired outcomes.
- Actively seeking, acquiring and promptly applying new knowledge and skills to support student success. Considering new or unconventional solutions to challenges in the student and/or staff experience.
- Continuously considering current practice and recommending/implementing changes to improve the student and/or staff experience.

Questions for self-reflection:

How does creativity exist in our workplace setting?

What expressions of creativity have you witnessed in our workplace?

Are there spaces to create or modify that would strengthen our goal to be creative?

Module 7

Closing the mentoring relationship

The final session is an opportunity for you and your mentor to plan for and reflect on the conversations you have had and collaborate on how you would like to manage your relationship moving forward.

Before the final session:

Review the notes you took as a part of each session.

- What do you notice as you review your writings?
- Are you noticing anything that sparks feeling(s) for you, such as joy, admiration, excitement, confusion, surprise, relief, or awe?
- Are there topics that you would like to explore in more depth?

Consider how you would like to move the relationship with your mentor forward. There is no right way to do this, and every pairing has different needs at the end. Some ways to consider include:

- You and your mentor are satisfied with what was gained from the experience and plan on returning to a more typical colleague relationship.
- You and your mentor agree that there is value in connecting occasionally, perhaps coordinating a couple of check-ins a semester.
- You and your mentor would like to continue to connect more regularly, at least in the near-term.

If during the creativity conversation you and your mentor discussed an idea that you have for improving your team's practice and you would like to brainstorm how to present it, this final session can be used to collaborate in this way. Feeling empowered to find areas for potential improvement and taking initiative to voice ways to improve practice are crucial to our continued evolution as a department. If you are comfortable, we encourage you to use this final session with your mentor to plan how to present your idea.

Presenting an idea to your team may not feel natural or appropriate to you at this point in your time with OACiS. That is ok! It is also perfectly acceptable to use this time to reflect together on the experience.

- How has this experience supported your development as a student services professional?
- In what ways have you noticed your practices and interactions within the office have changed?

This experience is only the starting point for growth and development. We encourage you to continue to find ways to be involved, such as working groups or other initiatives. OACiS is invested in your growth, and we are eager to support your continued development.

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PHASE 1 AND 2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Phase 1

1. Tell me about your overall impression of the process of building the mentoring curriculum?
2. What have been the most significant changes you have noticed in yourself as a result of participating in the process of building the mentoring curriculum?
3. What are your thoughts as you consider how the curriculum might be implemented in our office?
4. What part of the curriculum building process did you enjoy the most? The least? Find the most impactful?
5. What did you discover about yourself as a leader while participating in the process of building the mentoring curriculum?
6. If we were to use this type of process to build a curriculum for other activities within the office, what suggestion would you have for enhancing the process?
7. Can you think of a specific scenario where your plan of action was influenced by your participation in the process of building the mentoring curriculum?
8. What do you identify as your greatest strengths as a leader? What are areas in which you would still like to develop?
9. Was the time commitment for the pre-session work reasonable? Were you able to plan the time to complete the work into your workday?

Phase 2

1. Tell me about your overall impression of serving as a mentor for a less-senior staff member?
2. What have been the most significant changes you have noticed in yourself as a result of functioning as a mentor?
3. What part of the mentoring relationship did you enjoy the most? The least? Find the most impactful?
4. What did you discover about yourself as a leader while participating in the process of serving as a mentor?
5. In what ways did you feel well-prepared to serve as a mentor? In what areas do you wish you had more information before serving as a mentor?
6. If we were to utilize the mentoring curriculum again in our office, what suggestion would you have for enhancing the process?
7. Can you think of a specific scenario where your plan of action was influenced by your positionality as a mentor?
8. What do you identify as your greatest strengths as a leader? What are areas in which you would still like to develop?
9. Was the time commitment for the pre-session work reasonable? Were you able to plan the time to complete the work into your workday?
10. What are your thoughts as you consider how the curriculum might be implemented in our office?

APPENDIX D

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (ALQ) RESEARCH PERMISSION

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire

The four sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below. Sample Items:

As a leader I….

say exactly what I mean

demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with actions solicit views that challenge my deeply held positions seek feedback to improve interactions with others

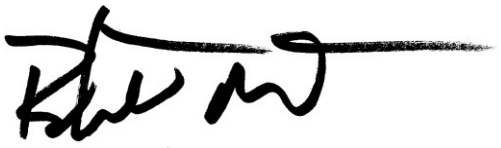
My leader….

says exactly what he or she means

demonstrates beliefs that are consistent actions

solicits views that challenge his or her deeply held positions seeks feedback to improve interactions with others

Sincerely,



Robert Most

Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.
com

APPENDIX E

PHASE 1 IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Peter Rillero

Division of Teacher Preparation - West Campus
602/543-6316
PETER.RILLERO@asu.edu

Dear Peter Rillero:

On 5/5/2023 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Understanding leader identity development through the process of creating of a mentoring curriculum.
Investigator:	Peter Rillero
IRB ID:	STUDY00017954
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Mentoring Curriculum Creation - Participant Guide.pdf, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Till Consent Curriculum Construction 4.30.2023.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Till IRB Social Behavioral Protocol 4.30.2023.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Till Recruitment Methods Curriculum Construction 4.30.2023.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Till Semi-Structured Interview Curriculum Building 4.30.2023.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Till Survey Curriculum Construction 4.30.2023.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk) on 5/5/2023.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Stacey Till Anderson
Stacey Till Anderson

APPENDIX F

PHASE 2 IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPTION

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Peter Rillero

Division of Teacher Preparation - West Campus
602/543-6316
PETER.RILLERO@asu.edu

Dear Peter Rillero:

On 9/7/2023 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Understanding leader identity development through the process of functioning as a mentor
Investigator:	Peter Rillero
IRB ID:	STUDY00018567
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Facilitator's Guide_ Core Values Conversations.pdf, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • IRB Social Behavioral Protocol Mentoring 9.7.2023.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Mentoring Curriculum - Core Values Conversations.pdf, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Till Consent Mentoring 9.7.2023.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Till Recruitment Methods Mentoring 9.4.2023.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Till Semi-Structured Interview Mentoring 9.4.2023.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Till Survey Mentoring 9.4.2023.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk) on 9/7/2023.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Stacey Till
Anderson Stacey
Till Anderson

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