Scholarship, Practice, and Leadership Essay

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According to the University of Phoenix (2014), the Scholar Practitioner Leader (SPL) Model is the backbone of School of Advanced Studies (SAS). This educational model clarifies to SAS scholars how to be life-long learners, be contributors in our workplaces and communities, and how to lead others by positive influence in all areas of life. Winter, Griffiths, and Green (2000) argue that scholars and practitioners have competing interests. Scholars obtain data by performing impartial studies and performing research. Practitioners conversely are more focused on practical application that applies to problems. According to the week one lecture, the SPL model enables doctoral learners to balance these competing interests (University of Phoenix, personal communication, March 3, 2014).

SPL modeling provides a balance between scholar and practice with proper leadership. The ability to take impartial research and apply it in a practical fashion would be an example of the Scholar-Practitioner model (Dull, 2010). The SPL model is a triangle that each leg of the shape relies on another. Taking a leg away from the triangle would because the form to be unstable. For example, if a leader was strict practitioner and had no scholarly background, this individual would be unable to back practice with research. Visualize an individual with many years of experience (practice) placed in management (leader) but was only reliant on a search engine to obtain data to back their practice. Turusheva (2009) argues this behavior is seen with students who lack information literacy. Instead of delving into the subject, he or she will only take whatever is found first and think that is acceptable research. True scholarly research must be qualified by meeting some requirements. The data must be accurate, applicable, and useful. Incomplete or incomprehensible data should be discarded. All assertions by the source should be

backed by others in a position of authority, in their respective field. If the data fails in any of these ways, the writer should avoid using it (p. 127).

The second leg of our SPL triangle would be the practitioner. Consider a subject matter expert who has no leadership qualities or practitioner with no leadership skills. Although this individual would have a high degree of specialization in a given area, they would still need skills to manage resources across domain borders (Lam, 2005, p. 9). The ability to manage resources is critical to organizational leadership according to the SPL Model presented by University of Phoenix (2014).

The third leg of the SPL model is the scholar. The scholar conducts research and analyzes data to create theories and hypothesis. However, a scholarly individual requires access to Information Literacy (IL) materials. Without these, the scholar would have nothing to back up their theories other than direct observation. Russell (2009) argues that a scholar with minimal IL would have to resort to non-peer reviewed sources for information like Internet searches or Google Scholar. This poses a problem in obtaining quality data to back up the scholar's assertions. This reliance on Internet information sources began in grade school according to Badke (2009). Badke asserts that most students have a lack of understanding as to what is considered quality information. This is not the student's fault because the individual does not know any better. New scholars tend to rely on whatever information is easiest to find because this is what they were taught to do early in their scholastic careers according to Turusheva. The writer asserts that obtaining information competence takes years to develop into a finely-tuned skill. This skill over time will help these individuals determine what is quality information, how to apply it, and learn from and reach goals by its appropriate use (p. 127).

I am involved in information literacy on projects that are ongoing and I conduct research for this purpose. As a senior programmer for the Social Security Administration (SSA), I am required to back up all findings with collected data and to conduct interviews with subject matter experts. Any new concepts must be supported by at least three sources to be considered valid. All providers of this information must have previously published their work and must be considered a reputable expert based on academic qualifications with several years of experience in their field of specialty. Once all research has been conducted, the next phase is to apply this research to the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) to develop new solutions to the various issues we encounter at the SSA. I lead a team of four junior developers that work on these written solutions as I direct their moves to achieve our department goals.

The research I conducted on Badke, Russell, and Turusheva inspired me to consider additional perspectives. If I were to have spoken dialog with these three writers, my contribution to the conversation would be the importance of appropriate research techniques. As explained by Walker (1997) the way one conducts research is equally important as the subject being studies. By conducting case studies on existing data, the research can provide important information and potentially anticipate outcomes. In this paper, Walker was describing a case study trying to determine factors why some buildings are constructed more quickly than others. Walker explained there is not one specific research method appropriate for all situations. Therefore, we must examine the research methods of others who have studied the subject at hand to determine the best research fit possible (p. 149-150). This gives me a deeper understanding that determining the proper research model is a process. One must know the process of conducting your research before studying the subject matter more fully.

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