



Leadership In Action Internship Report

Abstract

During this internship, I had the privilege of working with the Leadership Learning Design team at the African Leadership University/College in Mauritius. The primary goal of the internship was to assess the effectiveness of their unique educational system. One of the main challenges was understanding their 'learning by doing' approach and evaluating its true impact on developing the next generation of leaders.

1 Introduction

The African Leadership Group is a pan-African organization focused on transforming the continent through education, leadership, and innovation. A key part of this vision is the African Leadership University (ALU) and African Leadership College (ALC), which are renowned for their pioneering, student-centered approach to education. They emphasize "learning by doing" and aim to develop ethical, entrepreneurial leaders equipped to address Africa's most pressing challenges. ALU and ALC focus on practical skills, problem-solving, and leadership development, fostering the next generation of African changemakers. Complementing this is the African Leadership Academy (ALA), a pre-university institution that prepares young African students for future leadership through rigorous academic training and leadership experiences.

The Leadership Learning Design team is important because they create and shape the learning experiences that help students become better leaders. They focus on designing courses and activities where students learn by doing, not just by studying theory. This helps students build real-world skills, think critically, and make good decisions. The team makes sure that the lessons and activities match the goal of the school to develop strong leaders who can make a difference in their communities and the world.

Measuring the effectiveness of the learning model is essential because it shows whether the educational approach is actually helping students achieve their goals. By assessing how well the "learning by doing" method works, the school can understand if students are gaining the skills and knowledge needed to become strong leaders. It also helps identify areas for improvement, ensuring that the learning experience stays relevant and impactful.

2 The internship

2.1 Getting the context

It took me about a week to fully understand the learning model at the African Leadership University/College. The model is quite different from traditional education systems, which rely mostly on lectures. Instead, this approach focuses on active learning, where students gain knowledge through hands-on experiences, projects, and problem-solving. During that first week, I realized how important it is to have a structured learning model, rather than just giving lectures. A well-designed model helps guide students through practical learning, making sure they develop key skills and are actively involved in their own growth, instead of passively receiving information.

2.2 Finding measurable metrics

After getting the context, we had to work on the metrics on which we will base our study. After some research around education and some talks with all the university staff and students. The challenge

was to come up with reliable, meaningful metrics and automatisable ones with the hope to do some machine learning algorithms to make the study more efficient and general

We have come with our 5 E's:

- **Learner Effectiveness:**
This metric just means how the students get the proposed materials and how they interact with these. It can easily be measured through assignments
- **Learner Engagement:**
The engagement can also be captured by the time spent on the learning platform.
- **Learner Enjoyment:**
Enjoyment is quite tricky to capture but since ALU already implemented satisfaction surveys it was a done deal.
- **Learner Excellence:**
Excellence from grades can capture a lot of insights on the learning experience.
- **Learner Embedness:**
Embedness means in this context means the immersion in the real work and the alumni tracking can be in charge of this.

2.3 Is it possible to implement everything ?

Talking to faculty members and professors was really important to see if our ideas could actually be put into practice and if they would be useful. Their feedback helped us understand which metrics were realistic to measure and how we could collect the data. By discussing with them, we could see if the metrics would give us valuable information and fit with the university's goals. Their input made sure the study would be practical, effective, and possible to implement in the university's system.

Given the project's complexity and the limited time we had, we decided to focus primarily on measuring learner effectiveness. We chose this approach because it allowed us to assess how well students were engaging with and benefiting from the learning materials. Additionally, we aimed to identify any students at risk of dropping out, so we could take steps to address their issues and help them stay on track.

2.4 A small prototype

To build our prototype for flagging dropouts, we focused on identifying key indicators that might predict a student's likelihood of leaving the program. We started by recognizing that dropouts are often not caused by the difficulty of the program alone but by factors such as personal issues, lack of resources (like a laptop), financial difficulties, or giving up on the program.

We examined various data points to predict potential dropouts. These included academic attendance, engagement with online courses, and patterns of login activity (e.g., changes from week to week). We also looked at metrics like participation in assignments as a proxy for engagement and considered personal factors such as family status and socio-economic stability.

Our approach involved creating a system that uses these indicators to automatically flag students who might be at risk of dropping out. By analyzing data on academic performance, engagement levels, and other relevant metrics, we could build a prediction model to identify students who need additional support.

2.5 What can they make from it?

After completing my internship, I was excited to learn that the African Leadership University/College plans to create a team dedicated to learner analytics. This new team will continue the work on measuring and enhancing the effectiveness of the educational system, building on the foundation we established. It's great to see that the university is committed to using data and insights to further improve the learning experience for students.

3 Mauritius

Mauritius is a beautiful island nation located in the Indian Ocean, known for its stunning beaches, lush landscapes, and diverse cultural heritage. The island is celebrated for its vibrant mix of cultures, which includes influences from African, Indian, Chinese, and French communities. This rich cultural tapestry is reflected in the country's festivals, cuisine, and daily life.

The people of Mauritius are known for their warmth and hospitality. They are incredibly friendly and welcoming, making visitors feel at home from the moment they arrive. Mauritians are proud of their multicultural society and often engage in various cultural practices that celebrate their diverse backgrounds. This inclusivity and openness create a dynamic and harmonious community.

Mauritius also boasts a strong sense of national identity and pride. Despite being a relatively small island, it has a robust economy and a high standard of living. The people value education and have a strong emphasis on continuous learning and personal development. This focus on growth and improvement is evident in their educational institutions and the innovative projects being developed, such as those at the African Leadership College.

Overall, Mauritius is not only a beautiful and diverse place to visit but also a vibrant community with a deep commitment to progress and unity.

4 Leadership Growth

Working with the Leadership Learning Design team at the African Leadership University/College was a pivotal experience for my leadership development. The project centered around creating and refining metrics to evaluate how well the educational system was performing. This task was complex and required me to engage in deep critical thinking and problem-solving. I had to learn to manage my time effectively while navigating various challenges and making data-driven decisions. This experience sharpened my ability to tackle tough problems and provided practical insights into managing complex projects.

A significant part of my growth came from collaborating closely with faculty members. Regular interactions with them, including seeking their feedback and integrating their suggestions into our work, were invaluable. These discussions helped me improve my communication skills and taught me how to work effectively within a team. I learned how to actively listen to different perspectives, articulate my own ideas clearly, and find common ground to achieve our shared goals. This collaboration emphasized the importance of teamwork and demonstrated how collective efforts can lead to more successful outcomes.

Additionally, the chance to contribute my own ideas and see them put into action was a major learning opportunity. It taught me about resilience and adaptability—key aspects of effective leadership. I learned to persist through difficulties and adjust my strategies when faced with obstacles. This ability to adapt and stay focused on our objectives, despite challenges, was crucial in driving the project forward.

Overall, this experience provided me with a well-rounded set of practical skills. I developed strong abilities in problem-solving, effective communication, teamwork, and flexibility. These skills are essential for leading effectively and will be valuable in any future roles or projects I take on. The experience not only enhanced my leadership capabilities but also gave me a clearer understanding of how to make a meaningful impact in any team or organization.