Transnational Education: Developing Leadership Capability

Module B – Component 3 narrative:

Adam is a dedicated student-centred teacher and unit coordinator of a medium sized second year unit in a large Australian university. The unit is taught in 3 locations and his team consists of 8 tutors including one branch campus coordinator, Kyoko, who also teaches the unit online to students in the third country. Adam has taught this unit for 10 years and is supportive, organised and particularly keen that his students develop an international perspective in their subject. For more than 6 years now, he has been organising a biannual expedition to China for his second year project unit (for the Australian students). Though the students must self fund, most participate as they have heard stories about the positive experiences of past students. The students also complete their major assessment for the unit on this trip and those who do not go, complete an equivalent assessment in Australia. Consequently, Adam has not included any unit learning outcomes for the assessment around capabilities in internationalisation and intercultural competence. Adam believes that internationalisation has many dimensions and that having students from various parts of the globe is an asset to the learning process and thus he alludes to it whenever he can. Again, though nothing is written into the unit outline, he invites his students to share examples from their own country of origin to complement the examples from the Australian environment whenever he can.

Kyoko is also a committed teacher who prefers a didactic form of teaching. This is the method that was used when she studied for her degrees and she thinks it is not only best suited to her subject matter, it also ensures that she covers the curriculum. However, she has noted that since she has been teaching students from another country online, she has been receiving more negative feedback and she has been pondering what could be different with these students. When discussing this with Adam, he suggests that Kyoko considers how the students’ cultural background and their preferred learning style might impact on how they are experiencing the learning environment. He suggests that she could try to get her online students to interact with the other students in the unit and share their cultural backgrounds. Kyoko, however, thinks that as she teaches material which is essential to the course, the students need to simply work hard and adapt to the university learning environment. She is uncomfortable working with her students in the online environment after an experience earlier in the year when she tried to moderate some interactions between her students that she thought were offensive. She has also noted that the online students – just like her face-to-face students – had little interest in communicating with each other online unless they were already friends.

The following year, Adam edits one of the assessments to make it explicitly inclusive of the global community – even naming the two countries where the other campuses are located. He also organises for the students in all 3 locations
to create a Wiki together as part of one of the assessments. When Kyoko expresses her unease about this assignment, he appoints an Australian based lecturer, Helen, to moderate the website together with Kyoko.

**Discussion:**

* What leadership behaviour/s could Adam and Kyoko use to ensure both they, and their students, have a more successful learning experience in the future?

* What can Adam do in the unit to acknowledge the graduate capability associated with international perspectives?

* Using the ICVF leadership framework, identify leadership behaviours exhibited by Adam and Kyoko.

* What responsibilities do unit coordinators on Australian campuses have to make sure that their students (in all locations) experience an internationalised curriculum?