



TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Teacher development has emerged over the last decade as a recognised area of study. Teacher development means, in terms of teachers' own understandings of how they go on learning and becoming better at what they are doing. Teacher development is a process, not an event. It involves change over time and is achieved in stages. The stages are related to teachers' experience gained in instructional and management practices over their career. Teachers must understand what it is to be an effective 21st century teacher with the abilities to develop the necessary skills. Effective educational leadership helps to make a difference in improving learning. Leadership is for everyone and as a result everyone is empowered to learn. Teachers are empowered to inquire into their practice to solve learning and teaching problems. As educational leaders, classroom teachers, students and parents will agree, 21st century teaching carries with a complicated mix of challenges and opportunities. Challenges include the issues of teacher turnover, accountability, changing student populations and student expectations, increasing budget pressures, and intense demand to build students' 21st century skills. Thus, the present paper attempts to analyse Teacher development: Towards educational leadership in 21st century.

Keywords: Teacher development, Educational leadership, Teachers.



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Introduction

Development means change and growth. Teacher development is the process of becoming 'the best kind of teacher. The process of teacher development can be seen as one in which personal, professional, and social development is occurring, and one in which development in one aspect cannot proceed unless the other aspects develop also. Teacher development can be seen as having two aspects. One is the input of new theoretical ideas and new teaching suggestions. The second is trying out, evaluation, and practice of these new theoretical and teaching ideas over an extended period of time in a collaborative situation where the teachers are able to receive support and feedback, and where they are able to reflect critically. Both are important if all three aspects of teacher development personal, professional, and social development are to occur. Teacher development can be viewed as teachers learning, rather than as others getting teachers to change. In learning, the teachers were developing their

beliefs and ideas, developing their classroom practice, and attending to their feelings associated with changing.

Educational leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement (Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke, 2004). It is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational aims. Such team leadership work involves three intentional development emphases: individual development, collaboration or team development, and organizational development.

A key tenet of educational leadership is that teacher leaders establish their credibility and derive their authority with colleagues through their instructional competence and expertise (Silva, Gimber and Nolan, 2000). Educational leadership is grounded in classrooms thus teacher leaders lead by example. As such, Educational leadership is based on a foundation of model teaching and learning. Although the development focuses on the actions of educational leadership, it assumes that educational leadership requires the knowledge and skills of effective teaching and learning. The distinction between great teacher leaders and great teachers is their capacity to work effectively with other adults, their influence on others, and their support towards improved educational practice. In every good school, there are teachers whose vision extends beyond their own classrooms even beyond their own teams or departments. Such teachers recognize that students' school experiences depend not only on interaction with individual teachers, but also on the complex systems in place throughout the school and district. This awareness prompts these teachers to want to influence change. They experience professional restlessness what some have called the "leadership desire." Sometimes on their own initiative and sometimes within a more formal structure, these professionals find a variety of ways to exercise educational leadership. A strong educational leader establishes a climate conducive to teaching and learning and fosters community support for the efforts of the teaching staff. In many countries, concern about improving student achievement results has made strong educational leadership a priority (Pont et al., 2008; Branch et al., 2013).

Strong leadership is a necessary condition for school improvement and curriculum development. Many countries and school systems are focusing on leadership and leadership

development. When teachers are actively involved and empowered in the reform of their own schools, curriculum, pedagogy, and classrooms, even those with minimal levels of formal education and training are capable of dramatically changing their teaching behaviour, the classroom environment, and improving the achievement of their students. Strategies must begin at the teacher level and be aimed at helping each teacher facilitate change in the classroom. Just as the success of each school is the key to overall quality improvement in the education system, the success of teacher development within the school must be aimed at the success of each teacher to help children learn.

Why Educational Leadership?

Today more than ever, a number of interconnected factors argue for the necessity of educational leadership for teachers. Teaching is a regular profession. In most professions, as the practitioner gains experience, he or she has the opportunity to exercise greater responsibility and assume more significant challenges. This is not true of teaching. The 20-year experienced teacher's responsibilities are essentially the same as those of the newly qualified novice teachers. In many settings, the only way for a teacher to extend his or her influence is to become an administrator. Many teachers recognize that this is not the right avenue for them. The job of an administrator entails work that does not interest them, but they still have the urge to exercise wider influence in their schools and in the profession. This desire for greater responsibility, if left unfulfilled, can lead to frustration and even distrust.

Teachers' occupation in schools is longer than that of administrators. In many settings, administrators remain in their positions for only three to four years, whereas teachers stay far longer. Teachers often hold the institutional memory, they are the custodians of the school culture. School regions that want to improve make a wise investment when they cultivate and encourage educational leaders, because they are in a position to take the long view and carry out long-range projects. The demands of the modern principalship are practically impossible to meet. Principals today are expected to be visionaries (imparting a sense of purpose in their staff) and competent managers (maintaining the physical plant, submitting budgets on time), as well as instructional leaders (training teachers in the shades of classroom practice). In addition, the principal has become the point person for accountability requirements imposed by states and the central government, and he or she must respond to multiple stakeholders (parents, staff members, the district central office, and the larger community). Under such pressure from a range of sources, many administrators simply cannot devote enough time and

energy to school improvement. Principals have limited expertise. Like all educators, most principals have their own areas of instructional expertise. A principal who was formerly a mathematics teacher may know a lot about research-based instructional practices in math, but not much about instruction in world languages. The school administrator cannot be an expert in everything. Individual teachers, of course, have their own particular areas of knowledge, but a group of teacher leaders can supply the variety of professional knowledge needed for sustained school improvement. Given these factors, school improvement depends more than ever on the active involvement of educational leaders. School administrators can't do it all. So, the development of leadership quality is much more essential for 21st century teachers.

Qualities and Skills of Educational Leaders

Educational leaders serve in two fundamental types of roles: formal and informal. Formal educational leaders fill such roles as department chair, master teacher, or instructional trainer. These persons normally apply for their positions and are chosen through a selection process. Ideally, they also receive training for their new responsibilities. Formal educational leaders play vital roles in most schools. In many cases, these educational leaders manage curriculum projects, facilitate teacher study groups, provide workshops, and order materials. They may also evaluate other teachers, in which case their colleagues are likely to regard them as virtual administrators. Informal educational leaders, in contrast, emerge spontaneously and naturally from the teacher ranks. Instead of being selected, they take the initiative to address a problem or institute a new program. They have no positional authority, their influence stems from the respect they command from their colleagues through their expertise and practice. Whether they are selected for a formal leadership role or spontaneously assume an informal role, effective educational leaders exhibit important skills, values, and dispositions. Educational leaders call others to action and energize them with the aim of improving teaching and learning.

A symbol of leadership, therefore, is the ability to collaborate with others. Educational leaders must enlist colleagues to support their vision, build consensus among diverse groups of educators, and convince others of the importance of what they are proposing and the feasibility of their general plan for improvement. They must be respected for their own instructional skills. They also must understand evidence and information and recognize the need to focus on those aspects of the school's program that will produce important improvements in student learning.

A number of values and dispositions make certain individuals ideally suited for educational leadership. Effective educational leaders are open-minded and respectful of others' views. They display optimism and enthusiasm, confidence and decisiveness. They persevere and do not permit setbacks to derail an important initiative they are pursuing. On the other hand, they are flexible and willing to try a different approach if the first effort runs into obstructions.

Many attributes of good educational leaders are fundamentally the same as the attributes of good teachers: persuasiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility, confidence, and expertise in their fields. Despite these similarities, however, working with colleagues is profoundly different from working with students, and the skills that teachers learn in their preparation programs do not necessarily prepare them to extend their leadership beyond their own classrooms. To assume a leadership role, they may need expertise in curriculum planning, assessment design, data analysis, and the similar. They may also need to develop the abilities to listen actively, facilitate meetings, keep a group discussion on track, decide on a course of action, and monitor progress. These skills are not usually taught in teacher preparation programs.

Conditions that Promote Educational Leadership

The school administrator plays a crucial role in fostering the conditions that facilitate educational leadership, including the following: A safe environment for risk taking. Teachers must be confident that administrators and other teachers will not criticize them for expressing ideas that might seem unusual at first. Not every school is welcoming to the development of educational leaders, particularly informal educational leaders. Some of the most effective approaches to solving difficult issues in schools may not be intuitively obvious but may require that educators think creatively, which can only happen in a safe environment. School administrators should make it clear that teachers are safe to express ideas and take professional risks.

For example, a principal could raise discussion questions at a staff meeting: What would make the professional environment safe in our school? How would it be similar to the climate you create in your own classrooms? Following the establishment of these professional norms, the principal could schedule a brief, but regular, time at staff meetings for “wacko thoughts,” during which any teacher could propose doing something different.

Administrators who encourage educational leaders. Administrators' commitment to cultivating educational leaders plays an essential role in their development. Administrators

must be proactive in helping teachers acquire the skills they need to take advantage of opportunities for leadership (data analysis, meeting facilitation, and so on). Unfortunately, some administrators jealously guard their turf, apparently fearing that ambitious teacher leaders will somehow undermine their own authority. In fact, one of the enduring paradoxes of leadership is that the more an administrator shares power, the more authority he or she gains.

Opportunities to learn leadership skills. As noted earlier, the skills required for educational leadership are not part of the preparation program for most teachers. If educational leaders are to emerge and make their full contribution, they need opportunities to learn the necessary skills of curriculum planning, instructional improvement, assessment design, collaboration, and facilitation. Teachers can learn these skills through school-level professional development, of course, but they may also build these skills through district wide or university-based courses and seminars. Whatever the source, the opportunities must be available and sufficiently convenient for teachers to take advantage of them.

The Need for Educational Leadership

The need for educational leadership is not confined into only school or college level, rather than it demands teacher a versatile leader, who can lead educational process as well as society and nation. Educational leadership is an idea whose time has come. The unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level. Yet many schools are still organized as though all the important decisions are made by administrators and carried out by teachers. In the most successful schools, teachers supported by administrators take initiative to improve school wide policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communication. Leading change within one's own sector or team may require considerable interpersonal skill and sensitivity. The success of such an effort also depends on the educational leader's having established credibility and trust with his or her colleagues. By understanding the phenomenon of educational leadership and helping teachers develop the skills required to act as leaders, we will improve schools and help teachers realize their full potential.

Scope of Educational Leadership

Scope of educational leadership is very vast. It controlled all educational process and make such an environment where all educational programmes run smoothly. Scope of educational leadership can be found at all levels of education, from Primary education to higher education

level in colleges or universities. At the college or university level, educational leaders are employed as department heads, deans, registrar, vice-chancellor etc. In primary education and secondary education, educational leaders work as principals, vice-principals, head teachers, sports head as well as different curricular or co-curricular activities heads in the schools. Educational leaders also work as policy planners, curriculum leaders and heads of different organisation, which is related to educational process. Other educational leaders work with advocacy groups, lobby groups or other non-profit organizations to create or reform policy and educational systems. Professionals working in educational leadership focus on improving educational programming. They hire and manage teachers and staff, prepare budgets, set curriculum standards and set school-wide policies. They might work on team building efforts or restructure the organization to affect necessary change. Many educational leaders are involved with policy development or reform issues dealing with education on local, state or national level.

Conclusion

Teacher development is a continuous process. To be an effective teacher one must possess educational leadership quality. Educational leadership is much more essential quality for 21st century teachers. Through this quality, teachers lead and guide all educational process. Teachers are very important factor for educational development as well as social and national development. They are the mirror of society, they show the path for betterment of society. To impart such an educational leadership quality, teacher education programmes need an urgent reform. During Pre-service teacher education programme, the prime aim of curriculum should be, to develop educational leadership skills among student teachers. For In-service teachers, there should be organised a regular training programme regarding development of educational leadership skills. Educational leaders can make a difference in school and student performance if they are granted the autonomy to make important decisions. To do this effectively, they need to be able to adapt teaching programs to local needs, promote teamwork among teachers, and engage in teacher monitoring, evaluation and professional development. Leadership preparation and training are central and building networks of schools to stimulate and spread innovation and to develop diverse curricula, extended services and professional support can bring important benefits. Educational leadership involves working with and guiding teachers toward improving educational process in school education and higher education institutions.

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