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WORKSHOP INDEX

Teacher Leadership

Objectives:

In this workshop you will gain an understanding of:

- [Building networks of support](#)
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- [Cultural competence](#)
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Teacher Leadership

Leadership skills are an essential part of teaching practice. Teachers must manage classrooms, develop long range plans for their curriculum and manage a budget and set of resources to accomplish that goal. Teachers can also fulfill leadership roles in their schools. Teachers who engage in leadership activities are engaging in professional development for themselves that also impacts the professional growth and experiences of others in the school community. Teachers have opportunities to be grade level and department chairs, instructional coaches, instructional trainers, PLC leaders, participate in building leadership teams, hiring boards, serve on the school council, and lead committees.

Teachers who serve as leaders have the opportunity to discuss and address teacher concerns with other building leaders which has a big impact on the culture and climate of the school. Teachers can be leaders in many different areas and through many different activities. They share a common purpose in that they all act to improve the school community. Even schools with excellent climate and achievement scores rely on teacher leaders to maintain high standards and find opportunities for improvement.

Some core competencies for teacher leaders include:

- Engages in reflective practice
- Serves as a model for others
- Self-awareness
- Engages in the activities and issues of the school community
- Communication
- Leverages technology

Reflective Practice

A well-developed teacher will have a good knowledge of several different effective strategies to use in the classroom. Having a toolbox full of strategies is great, but teachers also need to be able to select the right tool for the job. While many strategies can be effective in a situation, it is often the master teacher who is most successful in choosing the right strategy for a particular lesson for their students. Novice teachers can build skills in selecting the right tool for the job by engaging in reflective practice.

Reflective practice is the process through which a teacher considers and challenges their own practices with an intent to improve. When engaging in reflection, teachers should pay particular attention to issues of equity and bias, intention and action. Intentional reflection on teaching practice adds context to a teacher's existing knowledge and helps develop a higher level of understanding.

In order to be effective in reflecting on practice, a teacher must be willing to view themselves as a professional that is willing to take risks, that is willing to be flexible, and that is willing and capable of growth. Reflective practice requires teachers to question themselves and to be willing to find room for improvement.

Sample questions for reflective practice:

- Did this lesson accomplish what I intended?
- Why a particular student responds that way?
- Was there an opportunity to make this lesson more culturally relevant?
- Why did I respond that way?
- What assumptions did I make about my students when planning this lesson and how did these beliefs influence my instruction?
- Did I make this lesson more difficult on myself than it should have been?

Building Networks

Connecting with the larger school community can be critical for teachers to be highly effective. In order for students to be successful they must have the support from the family and oftentimes they require support from the community as well. Engaging the community as collaborators in improving the educational outcomes of your students provides additional supports for the students and teachers and provides a real-life context for much of the classroom work. When students are able to see that they are important to the community, their success will more easily follow.

Building a network of support may seem overwhelming, but people in your community want to be involved and they want to help.

- Get the word out. Public awareness can be crucial in generating support in your community. Community publications, local newspapers, and the school's social media are great ways to let the community know about the efforts in your classroom. Schools usually have several social media outlets and will be able to reach a far wider group than your classroom social media account.
- Identify a core group. You probably have already identified a couple of parents or colleagues who have been friendly and offered to help somehow. Identify three or four core people and engage them in conversation about the goals for your students.
- Form a purpose. Be specific with your core group about their objectives. It is helpful to develop objectives together. When people have a clear understanding of their mission and vision they are more easily able to identify the things that they have to offer and can bring to the table. If they have participated in developing the mission, vision, or goals, they will have a strong investment in success. Specific goals such as "all the students will participate in our field trip" or "all students will have mentors for the science fair" are reasonable and challenging objectives that will motivate people to meet specific targets. If the goal of your group is too general, such as "create a better educational experience" participants won't have sufficient direction and will either do nothing or pursue things separately.
- Engage the group in the continuous improvement cycle. Apply the cycle to your group's purpose and keep members involved. If your group's purpose is that all students will have mentors to the science fair, share monitoring, host sneak previews, and celebrate accomplishments along the way.