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## Enhancement of effective teacher leadership

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### Abstract

Effective or purposeful leadership is generally accepted as being a central component in securing and sustaining school improvement. The evidence from the school improvement literature consistently highlights that Teacher leadership exercise an indirect influence on schools' capacity to improve and upon the achievement of students, a preliminary glance

at the vast leadership literature however reveals that it is largely premised upon individual endeavor rather than collective action and a singular view of leadership. The collaboration and collegiality fostered through teacher leadership has been shown to lead to an enhanced capacity for change and improvement.

**Keywords:** Teacher leadership, Effective leader

### 1. Introduction

The current educational context is one of rapid and unrelenting change. The pressures on schools to improve and to raise standards of achievement are unlikely to recede in the next few years. The collaboration and collegiality fostered through teacher leadership has been shown to lead to an enhanced capacity for change and improvement. Effective or purposeful leadership is generally accepted as being a central component in securing and sustaining school improvement. The evidence from the school improvement literature consistently highlights that effective leader's exercise an indirect influence on schools' capacity to improve and upon the achievement of students, a preliminary glance at the vast leadership literature however reveals that it is largely premised upon individual endeavor rather than collective action and a singular view of leadership.

### Meaning of teacher leadership

Teacher leadership is primarily concerned with developing high quality learning and teaching in schools. It has at its core a focus upon improving learning and is a mode of leadership premised upon the principles of professional collaboration, development and growth. Teacher leadership is not a formal role, responsibility or set of tasks, it is more a form of agency where teachers are empowered to lead development work that impacts directly upon the quality of teaching and learning. Teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, they identify with and contribute to a community of teachers and influence others towards improved educational practice.

### Definition of leadership

"The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilization."

**-Michael Fullan**

### Definition of teacher leadership

"The process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement."

**-Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke**

### Need for teacher leadership

The collaboration and collegiality fostered through teacher leadership has been shown to lead to an enhanced capacity for change and improvement at the school and classroom level. A variety of studies have found clear evidence of the positive effect of teacher leadership on teachers' self-efficacy and levels of morale (Little, 1995). Research also shows that teachers who work together in a meaningful and purposeful way are more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work (Beane 1998; Barth 1999).

Research has consistently underlined the contribution of strong collegial relationships to school improvement and change. Collaboration is at the heart of teacher leadership, as it is premised upon change that is undertaken collectively. For teacher leadership to be most effective it has to encompass mutual trust, support and enquiry. Evidence suggests that it is difficult for teachers to create and sustain the conditions for improved pupil learning if those conditions do not exist for their own learning (Silns and Mulford, 2002). Where teacher share good practice and learn together the possibility of securing better quality teaching is increased.

### **Types of teacher leadership**

1. Laissez-Faire
2. Automatic
3. Participative
4. Transactional
5. Transformational

### **Role of teacher leader**

Teacher leaders assume a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve. Because teachers can lead in a variety of ways, many teachers can serve as leaders among their peers.

#### **1. Resource Provider**

Teachers help their colleagues by sharing instructional resources. These might include Web sites, instructional materials, readings, or other resources to use with students. They might also share such professional resources as articles, books, lesson or unit plans, and assessment tools.

#### **2. Instructional Specialist**

An instructional specialist helps colleagues implement effective teaching strategies. This help might include ideas for differentiating instruction or planning lessons in partnership with fellow teachers. Instructional specialists might study research-based classroom strategies, explore which instructional methodologies are appropriate for the school; and share findings with colleagues.

#### **3. Curriculum Specialist**

Understanding content standards, how various components of the curriculum link together, and how to use the curriculum in planning instruction and assessment is essential to ensuring consistent curriculum implementation throughout a school. Curriculum specialists lead teachers to agree on standards, follow the adopted curriculum, use common pacing charts, and develop shared assessments.

#### **4. Classroom Supporter**

Classroom supporters work inside classrooms to help teachers implement new ideas, often by demonstrating a lesson, co-teaching, or observing and giving feedback. Blase and Blase (2006) found that consultation with peers enhanced teachers' self-efficacy (teachers' belief in their own abilities and capacity to successfully solve teaching and learning problems) as they reflected on practice and grew together, and it also encouraged a bias for action (improvement through collaboration) on the part of teachers.

#### **5. Learning Facilitator**

Facilitating professional learning opportunities among staff

members is another role for teacher leaders. When teachers learn with and from one another, they can focus on what most directly improves student learning. Their professional learning becomes more relevant, focused on teachers' classroom work, and aligned to fill gaps in student learning. Such communities of learning can break the norms of isolation present in many schools.

#### **6. Mentor**

Serving as a mentor for novice teachers is a common role for teacher leaders. Mentors serve as role models; acclimate new teachers to a new school; and advise new teachers about instruction, curriculum, procedure, practices, and politics. Being a mentor takes a great deal of time and expertise and makes a significant contribution to the development of a new professional.

#### **7. School Leader**

Being a school leader means serving on a committee, such as a school improvement team; acting as a grade-level or department chair; supporting school initiatives; or representing the school on community or district task forces or committees. A school leader shares the vision of the school, aligns his or her professional goals with those of the school and district, and shares responsibility for the success of the school as a whole.

#### **8. Data Coach**

Although teachers have access to a great deal of data, they do not often use that data to drive classroom instruction. Teacher leaders can lead conversations that engage their peers in analyzing and using this information to strengthen instruction.

#### **9. Catalyst for Change**

Teacher leaders can also be catalysts for change, visionaries who are "never content with the status quo but rather always looking for a better way" (Larner, 2004, p. 32). Teachers who take on the catalyst role feel secure in their own work and have a strong commitment to continual improvement. They pose questions to generate analysis of student learning.

#### **10. Learner**

Among the most important roles teacher leaders assume is that of learner. Learners model continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and use what they learn to help all students' achievement.

### **How to be an effective teacher leader**

#### **1. Be a student**

Become a student our self and study the concept of teacher leadership. There are dozens of articles and books on the topic to guide us on our journey. Taking the time to study the many resources available on effective leadership can help us deepen our knowledge and broaden our skills.

#### **2. Learn more about leadership style**

Understanding our current leadership style is essential. First we must try to discover our strengths and weaknesses. Ones we come to know areas which need some work then we can try to know about the ways of our leadership abilities.

#### **3. Encourage Creativity**

Intellectual stimulation is one of the hallmarks of

transformational leadership. Followers need to be encouraged to express their creativity. Effective leaders should offer new challenges with ample support to achieve these goals. One way to foster creativity is to offer challenges to group members, making sure that the goals are within the grasp of their abilities. The purpose of this type of exercise is to get people to stretch their limits, but to not become discouraged by barriers to success.

#### 4. Serve as a Role Model

Idealized influence is another of the four key components of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders exemplify the behaviors and characteristics that they encourage in their followers. They walk the walk and talk the talk. As a result, group members admire these leaders and work to emulate these behaviors. If you want to become a better leader, work on modeling the qualities that you would like to see in your team members.

#### 5. Be Passionate

Great leaders are not just focused on getting group members to finish tasks; they have a genuine passion and enthusiasm for the projects they work on. We start by thinking of different ways that we can express our zeal. Let people know that we care about their progress. When one person shares something with the rest of the group, we must be sure to tell them how much we appreciate such contributions.

#### 6. Listen and Communicate Effectively

Another important characteristic of teacher leadership involves a focus on providing one-on-one communication with group members. Good leaders should express sincere care and concern for the members of their group both verbally and nonverbally. By keeping the lines of communication open, these leaders can ensure that group members feel able to make contributions and receive recognition for their achievements.

#### 7. Have a Positive Attitude

Teacher leaders must have an upbeat, optimistic attitude that serves as a source of inspiration for followers. If leaders seem discouraged or apathetic, members of the group are likely to also become uninspired. Even when things look bleak and the followers start to feel disheartened, so leaders must try to stay positive.

#### 8. Encourage People to Make Contributions

Leaders who encourage involvement from group members are often referred to as democratic or participative leaders. While they retain the final say over all decisions, they encourage team members to take an active role in coming up with ideas and plans. Research has shown that using a democratic leadership style leads to greater commitment, more creative problem-solving and improved productivity.

#### 9. Motivate Followers

Teacher leader must provide inspirational motivation to encourage their followers to get into action. Of course, being inspirational isn't always easy. To inspire make them feel genuinely passionate about ideas or goals, help followers feel included in the process and offering recognition, praise and rewards for people's accomplishments.

#### 10. Offer Rewards and Recognition

A good leader knows that offering effective recognition and rewards is one of the best ways to help followers feel appreciated and happy. It may also come as no surprise that happy people tend to perform better at work. According to researchers Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer, leaders can help group members feel happier by offering help, removing barriers to success and rewarding strong efforts.

#### 11. Keep Trying New Things

Who says leadership is a one-way relationship? As we work towards honing our leadership skills, we must not forget to look to our followers for feedback and inspiration. Pay attention to the things that have been effective in the past and always be on the lookout for new ways to inspire, motivate and reward group members.

#### Challenges of being a teacher leader

**1. Rejection:** One of the most common costs of leadership is the experience of rejection. If you are willing to accept the call to leadership, at times, you may be rejected and misunderstood.

**2. Criticism:** No leader is exempt! The very nature of effective leadership involves taking a position on issues, making decisions, and determining direction. These will always result in some form of reaction from one's environment.

**3. Loneliness:** Leadership, at times, is lonely because you must be out front, ahead of the followers. Also, because the leader is the one with the guiding vision and purpose, he/she sees the end from the beginning and must live both the process and destination, all at the same time.

**4. Pressure & Perplexity:** Leaders must face the challenge of the responsibilities and demands that come with leadership. These involve the need to make critical decisions, often under constraints and external pressure.

**5. Mental and Physical Fatigue:** Leadership places heavy demands on the individual who fills the position. There is no way to become an effective leader and not be affected by its stress, physical demands, and mental toll.

**6. Price paid by those closest to you:** You must be aware of the tremendous cost which will be borne by those closest to you (for example, family members). Because leadership demands the giving of oneself to others, your life becomes the property of those whom you serve.

#### Conclusion

If we are willing to work harder, longer, and more intensely and beyond the call of duty, we will become an effective leader. It's been said that every teacher is a leader, and for good reason. After all, it takes leadership skills to organize lesson plans, inspire students, keep them on-task and maintain an environment of order and respect. So the above mentioned keys will help a teacher to be an effective teacher leader.

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