Leading and Managing Instructional Innovation in Education Organizations & Systems: Leadership in 3-D

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The Distributed Leadership Studies
http://www.distributedleadership.org

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Overview

- Getting beyond an ‘implementation mindset’ to engage in diagnosis and design
- Anchoring diagnosis and design work in instruction is essential
- The entailments of using a distributed framework for diagnosis and design
- Using a distributed framework for system and organizational infrastructure design and redesign
Task One: What is Leadership?

- Read the two definitions of leadership
- With the person next to you, identify one similarity and one difference between the two definitions
Leadership

• [Leadership refers] to the interaction among members of a group that initiates and maintains improved expectations and the competence of the whole group to solve problems or attain goals

• [Leadership refers] to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieve certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks
Management

• Management is about maintenance; maintaining current organizational arrangements and ways of doing work (Burns, 1978; Cuban, 1988)
“We have one hunter and one gatherer... Everyone else is a consultant”
Diagnosis and Design

- **Diagnosis** = identifying the nature or cause of something

- **Design** = shaping the organization and system infrastructure to match certain purposes
Anchoring the work in instruction
Anchoring Leadership

Students’ Opportunities To Learn

Teaching

What gets taught? How is it taught?

Leading and Managing
Instruction: Human Improvement Work

• Uncertain or contested ends and means

• Mutual dependency between practitioner and client

• Unpredictability of practitioner-client interactions
The Circumstances of Human Development Work

• Multiple stakeholders with diverse & sometimes conflicting demands

• Involuntary clients

• Accept everyone who enters

• Practitioners are members of professions
“...is like dancing that wonderful tango, blindfolded, yet serving lunch, breakfast and dinner on skates to 500 people,” [each of whom has] ordered something different” [and each of whom] “brings...their own set of dynamics, personalities, that you have to be acutely aware of in order to serve them.”
Teaching as a Social Practice

Teacher

Context

Materials

Teaching Practice

Students

Context
Instructional Interactions about Language Arts
Instructional Interactions about Mathematics
Instructional Interactions about Science
A System & School View: Instructional Interactions by School Subject

English Language Arts

Mathematics
School and School Systems: Science
Task Two

- Watch the brief video clip
- How many times does the white team touch the ball?
A Distributed Perspective on Leadership and Management: The Elements
A Distributed Perspective

- A diagnostic framework that draws attention to particular dimensions of leadership & management work
- A design framework for guiding leadership and management improvement efforts
Task Three

• What does ‘distributed leadership’ mean to you?

• Write a short definition that captures your understanding

• Share your definition with the person next to you
The Principal-Plus Aspect

• The principal works with others when performing leadership and management tasks

• Other formally designated leaders take responsibility for leading and managing

• Individuals with no formal leadership designations have a hand in leading and managing instruction
An Alternative to the ‘Heroics of Leadership’ Genre

Initially I tried to do it all. I was trying to do it all and that was impossible. You cannot be all things to all people… I don’t know everything about everything.”

Dr. Johnson
The Principal’s Workday: The Significance of Others

### Administrative Activities
- Leading Alone: 35%
- Not Leading: 22%
- Leading with Others: 43%

### Curriculum and Instruction Activities
- Leading Alone: 30%
- Not Leading: 25%
- Leading with Others: 45%
Co-Performance: Between School Variance

Figure 2(b). Frequency Distribution of Percentage of Principals' Activities Co-lead with Someone Else (N=23).

- 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 81-90
- 91-100
A Distributed Perspective: The Practice Aspect

Leaders
Administrators, Specialists, Teachers, Parents, Students

Leadership Practice is in the interaction

Situations
Tools, Routines, Structures, Rules

Followers
Teachers, Administrators, Specialists, Students, Parents
Task Four: Examining Leadership in Practice
Task Four

- Watch the scene, keeping in mind the distributed perspective. Take notes about who is leading and in what capacity. Where is the leadership practice?

- While noting what happens in the scene, keep in mind the characters below:

  Jim Lovell
  Gene Kranz
  EECom (Cy)
Putting Distributed Perspective into Practice

- Focusing on practice, the practice of leading and managing
- Practice is fundamentally about interactions, not just actions
- Looking at the formal organizational and system infrastructure and informal in tandem
Concluding on a Cautionary Note
Dispelling Some Myths

• Principal somehow less relevant

• Everyone is a leader

• The more leaders, the better
The Ultimate Responsibility Challenge

“the buck stops at your desk. … everything stops at my desk so I’m ultimately accountable for everything in this building. … Everything is your responsibility.”

“I’m responsible for the whole building of students and I’m ultimately—for most purposes—the end all, be all accountability person. Everything falls on me … no matter what …. One thing that really was smacking me in the gut Sunday night was the responsibility part. It’s like the ultimate responsibility …”

“Captain of a ship … things sometimes are smooth sailing and then in a moment, the winds can turn, and you’re not sure you’re gonna stay afloat … I’m the last one out.”
The Challenge of Distributing Leadership

“that tendency to ... micromanage, I just felt like I had to keep that in check. ... that was never my style before, but I think just because I would kinda get overwhelmed with the idea of the responsibility that I felt like I had to have my hand in, you know, all the different things going on. So I just had to challenge myself to let go gender differences ...”

Kathy

“it was hard to release that, because I like to be in [involved], and some of it is trusting that it will get done, but with this [person] I know it will get done effectively and right. It's also just wanting to be a part of the process whole heartedly, but I can't whole heartedly be a part of everything”

Kara
“If it’s a bilingual, I’ll send them to Evelyn. If it’s a testing question … I’ll send them to Helen. … And not to pass the buck, but they already know cause I gave them a sheet on who’s responsible, but sometimes they just want me to hear.”
More At:

• http://www.distributedleadership.org
• http://distributedleadership.org/DLS/Presentations.html