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**61653-80: Trends and Issues in Curriculum and Instruction**
**Module 4 Discussion: Functions of a Curriculum Leader**
**November 11, 2021**

As I began this my coursework in this program at the end of 2020, I had no plan on being an Instructional Coach. I enjoy working directly with students and families in a homeroom teaching setting, and I believe I'd lose that dynamic and those relationships in a coaching role. On the other hand, I have volunteered countless hours of time advocating for teachers at the building and leadership levels through district committee work and work through the local and state branches of my teacher's union. It is through this work that I continue to guide the district in developing and revising the framework for professional development rules, along with creating and updating the framework for our district's instructional coaching program. Basically, even with a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction, I want to continue to serve as a classroom teacher. Yet, I would like to use the learnings I gain from this program to not only enhance my own instructional practices, but to enhance the roles I have I have assumed in building and district leadership.

***Opening my eyes to a new vision in leadership***

The learnings I have gained from the C & I program this past year have opened my eyes futher consider how I can help students learn by being a conduit that assists fellow colleagues with their learnings and practices in the classroom.  While I still prefer homeroom teaching, and making meaningful conections with its participants,  I now would consider instructional coaching, if I could work with a principal or administrators who share a similar set of values and priorities in coaching.

***Functions and priorities in educational leadership***

The Iowa chapter of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has compiled a list of eight "Functions of Our Work as Curriculum Leads" (Iowa ASCD, 2016).  Even though I believe that the eight functions listed by the Iowa ASCD serve well as functions for Instructional Coach, the three I will prioritize in this discussion are:

**Function 5 - Relationship Building**

* *Curriculum leads ensure meaningful, two-way communication among all stakeholders for increased student learning.*

I have long been advocating that building genuine, meaningful, and supportive relationships are integral to make any human connection work.  This is especially the case with an instructional coach. The coach needs to convey in both words and actions to other teachers, as well as students and parents, that their key role is to work with them and the administrator to help students move themselves, and their school, forward.

**Function 3 - Processes**

* *Curriculum leads establish and monitor common practices and procedures to assure alignment and achievement of initiatives and plans with district and building goals.*

Establishing and monitoring common practices, where they are new initiaives or established practices, and ensuring that they follow district building goals is a job unique to the coach, and prinicipal. Classroom teachers have enough on their plates.  As those teachers work with students, parents, and other colleagues, the coach can make sure that what happens in a building is what that building or its district is either supported or requested in their comprehensive plan.

**Function 2 - Leaders of Data Analysis**

* *Curriculum leads assure all educators' ability to use data to inform, implement, monitor, and evaluate results-based decisions.*

It is also of great importance that instructional coaches can speak the language of "data", and can translate it to teachers, parents, students, and perhaps, an administrator. It is important that there is an understanding of data-driven goals that a building, district, or state or federal department of education has. It is important to be able to assess, sort, and interpret a myriad of numbers and statistics that are handed to a principal and coach when assessment results come in. From there, it is equally important that information can be translated to teachers in staff meetings and PLC session so new learnings can take place, and new or revised instruction can be planned.

***Instructional Coaching: Doing the work to resolve issues and make trends work***

Three of the "Functions of Our Work" (Iowa ASCD, p. 1) that I'm giving and honorable, yet necessary, mention, are those of "performance" (p. 3), "operations" (p. 4), and "change" (p. 4). The common factor between all three of functions is that these functions highlight how a trend in curriculum or instruction is taking place in a classroom, building or district is to be implemented and assessed. It is doing the work to make trends work.  For example, I am interested in implementing a form or personalized, project-based, student-centered, and differentiated instruction known as the "Genius Hour". If I were to address my desire to try this to a coach, I would hope s/he would have some familiarity with it, or could ask me what I know about it as we'd learn together.  I would also hope that I could be asked how that type of instruction would fit with the building or district plan. I would have mentioned that I learned about Genius Hour as I was doing research on 21st Century Learning, which - along with student-centered learning - is covered in both the district and building plans. From there, I would hope that the coach could assist me with setting a timeline, goals, a self-evaluation process or checklist, and set aside some time later for feedback and reflection. These processes of planning and evaluation can happen with personal or building goals. Whether or not the coach or the teacher(s) is (are) driving the instruction, the key role of the instructional coach is to be at the side of the shareholder during the entire journey!

**REFERENCES**

Iowa ASCD. (2016, June 21). *Curriculum Leads - The Functions of Our Work*. Iowa ASCD. (1-4). http://iowaascd.org/index.php/members1/especially-you/central-office-functions-our-work/