Front Porch Series

Instructional Leadership Part 2: Digging Deeper on the "What & How of Instructional Leadership"

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NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

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Instructional Leadership Series

o Part 1: Organizational Conditions Necessary for Effective Practice
o **Part 2: Deep dive on the what and how of Effective Instructional Leadership**
o Part 3: Exploring Ambitious Instruction and Teacher Collaboration

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Webinar Features

Slide Deck | Question & Answers | Group Chat | Closed Captioning (English & Spanish)

Help | Media Player | Resource List | Webinar Tips (English & Spanish)

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Session Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Key instructional leadership competencies to improve teaching and learning

- How job embedded professional learning supports effective teaching and learning

- Leadership strategies to support data-driven collaborative decision making

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## Key Instructional Leadership Competencies

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Key Competencies for Instructional Leadership

- Standard 1. Visionary Leadership*
- Standard 2. Improving Teaching and Learning*
- Standard 3. Ambitious Instruction*
- Standard 4. Family Engagement*
- Standard 5. Supportive Learning Environment*
- Standard 6. Effective Management
- Standard 7. Ethical Leadership*

*Part of the Lead Learn Excel Curriculum

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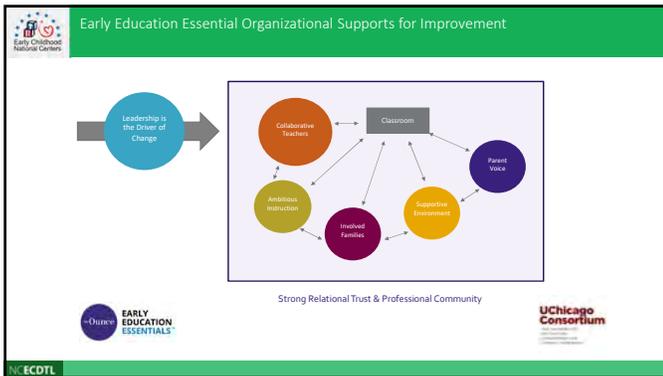
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Effective Instructional Leaders Defined

- Strategically focused on children's healthy development and early achievement, and they engage families in children's learning and support teachers to be effective in their daily work.
- Cultivate shared understanding and commitment to a purpose-driven vision for the program that is grounded in child developmental science and developmentally-effective teaching and learning practices.
- Hire staff determined to continuously improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children and families.

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Effective Instructional Leaders Defined

- In daily interactions, they build and maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships and build strong professional community focused on improving children's learning.
- Galvanize all resources, staff activity, and program operations towards a vision for excellence and sustained improvement.
- Practice shared leadership and cultivate a cadre of leaders among teachers, families, and the community.
- Support professional advancement for faculty and staff.
- Manage resources for sustained program improvement.

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Activity 1: Discussion

What do **you** think is the role of the instructional leader in an early childhood program?

Think about the multiple demands of a leader, and the essential needs that education staff have to plan, teach, and assess children and engage families in this process.

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Background

Empirical and theoretical evidence points to strong organizational conditions and leadership as critical elements of high-quality early childhood care and education.

➢ Instructional and facilitative leadership is associated with improving school performance and student achievement (Bryk, et al, 2010; Elmore, 2004; Dunlop, 2008; Rodd, 2012)

➢ Coherent instructional guidance and teacher collaboration are associated with enabling sustained practice improvement (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Fullan, 2000)

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Supports for job-embedded learning matter!

- We know from K-12 research that leaders can drive quality improvement and improved student outcomes.
  They do so by setting up the structures and cultural expectations that support positive organizational climate and enable ongoing reflections on practice (e.g., Sebastian, Allensworth, & Huang, 2016).

- Although we have less evidence, the same seems to be true in ECE programs.
  Teachers in ECE programs that provided support for mentoring/coaching were more likely to work with a mentor. AND, they had higher quality classrooms one year later than those in programs that did not support mentoring (Connors, 2019).

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Lead Learn Excel

Instructional Leadership

Job-Embedded Professional Learning

Excellent Classroom Instruction

A professional learning program builds the capacity of early learning organizations and leaders to:

➢ **Grow effective instructional leaders,** driving continuous improvement in collaboration with their teachers (Bryk, et al, 2010; Elmore, 2004; Dunlop, 2008; Rodd, 2012).

➢ **Facilitate job-embedded professional learning** routines as the vehicle for improvement (Croft et al., 2010; Waldron & McCleskey, 2010; Fullan, 2000), including:
  - ✓ Data Dialogues
  - ✓ Team Lesson Planning
  - ✓ Peer Learning Groups

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Implementing Instructional Leadership in ECE is Difficult

- Instructional leaders reported engaging in key instructional leadership practices about 1-2 times per month, on average.
  - ➢ This is only about half as often as we hypothesized is best practice.
  - ➢ School-based leaders reported engaging more frequently than program-based or program-based leaders

- By the end of Lead Learn Excel, less than 10% reached full integration of all 3 core routines; most were in initial stages of implementation.

- But still, leaders value these practices and intend to make time for them.
  - ➢ 70% of leaders who engaged in Lead Learn Excel intended to continue all three core routines.

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Job Embedded Professional Learning Supports

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The Instructional Leader is the Driver of Improvement

Effective Leadership

Driver of improvement

Job-Embedded Professional Learning
Vehicle for improvement

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Focus on Instructional Leadership

Excellent early learning depends on excellent instructional leadership

LEAD LEARN EXCEL

Relational Trust and Professional Community

Child Outcomes:
Enhanced engagement, learning and development progress, and readiness for kindergarten

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Job-Embedded Professional Learning

Job-Embedded Professional Learning

- **Grounded** in the complex work of teaching and learning
- **Occurs** in the workplace
- **Focused on:**
  - Children's learning needs; issues of practice
  - Learning and improvement goals of the program

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Leadership Strategies to Support Data-Driven Collaborative Decision Making

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Standard 1. Visionary Leadership

An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of all young children by:

- Developing and articulating a vision of ambitious, developmentally-appropriate early education that is realized by the entire school/center community.

- Collecting and analyzing data pertinent to equitable outcomes and ensuring continuous improvement cycles including attention to equity.

- Demonstrating effective facilitation skills during job-embedded professional learning and cycles of improvement and using protocols to build trust among staff, to promote active and equitable participation, to ensure focused and productive dialogue and to foster inquiry, the construction of knowledge and problem solving.

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Transforming Professional Learning

Ineffective—Traditional Professional Development
• Goals/expectations set by others
• Teachers implement in isolation
• Offsite training/workshops
• Monitoring teacher implementation for compliance

Effective—Job-Embedded Professional Learning
• Teachers **co-construct** improvement goals
• **Shared** responsibility and professional collaboration
• Routine **protected time** onsite to discuss and reflect about instructional practice
• Observation, coaching and reflection toward **improved practice**

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Activity #2   Video

What actions should instructional leaders be able to take?

Using collaborative routines to discuss common challenges and
examine rapid steps towards improvement to examine effective solutions

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Video Viewing Protocol

- Connections: What connections did I hear leaders and staff making about the small changes towards improvement?

- Facilitation: What skills did the facilitator use to promote inquiry and construction of knowledge?

- Questions: What implications might this have in my own work?

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Facilitation using a protocol to examine the improvement.

Plan Do Study **Act**

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Standard 2. Improving Teaching and Learning

An educational leader provides consistent and coherent instructional guidance by:

- Building a strong professional learning community that collaborates to continuously improve teaching, family engagement and learning for all young children.

- Uses multiple contexts for job-embedded professional learning that build staff knowledge, skills and dispositions, including observation and performance feedback, peer learning and collaboration, coaching and mentoring, reflective supervision and appraisal of performance.

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Data-Driven Decision Making and Practice

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Activity 3: Data Dialogue

What do you think is the role of the instructional leader in facilitating collaboration through data dialogues?

Think about the multiple demands of a leader, and the essential needs that teaching teams have to discuss and think about their data.

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Data Dialogue Video Viewing Protocol

- **Connections**: What connections did I hear teachers making collaboratively?

- **Use of the protocol**: How did the use of the protocol promote inquiry and self-reflection towards classroom improvement?

- **Questions**: What implications might this have in my own work?

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Data Dialogue using CLASS Data Video

Program- and Job-Embedded Professional Development Routines

An Illustration of a CLASS Data Dialogue Routine

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Make Change Happen. Teachers Require:

Supportive Professional Learning System

- **Protected time**
- **Opportunities to Reflect**
- **Analyze**
- **Modify**
- **Try again**

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Thinking Forward

- Connect this information to what you already know and are already doing.

- Building learning groups to examine how to begin building instructional leadership at multiple levels within your system: organizational and building level support for teachers.

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Save the Dates: Instructional Leadership Series

September 5, 2019
Part 3: Exploring the Essentials of Ambitious Instruction and Teacher Collaboration
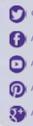
Thank you!
For more information, please contact us at ecdtl@ecetta.info or call (toll-free) 1-844-261-3752

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