

## Instructional Leadership for Early Learning Environments

Roselia Ramirez: Hello, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar. I'm Roselia Ramirez from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, and I'm your facilitator for the "Education Leadership Webinar" series. Before we begin our session today, I'd like to go over some information regarding the webinar platform.

For many of you, this is review, but we want to make sure and highlight some of the key features of the platform to help us interact. At the bottom of your screen, you will notice these widgets that appear on this slide. If you have any questions during the webcast, you can submit them through the purple Q&A widget. We will try to answer these questions during the webcast, and please do know that we do capture all of your questions. If you have any technical questions, please be sure to enter them in that purple widget as well.

Now, a copy of today's slide deck, as well as some additional resources, are available in the resource list, which is your green widget. We encourage you to download any resources or links that you may find useful. We have a new widget that we want to introduce during today's session, and it's the yellow idea widget with the light bulb. It is a new option for sharing ideas about the topic that we will be discussing, and although it is available throughout the session, we will tell you when to use it to engage with your peers. You can find additional answers to some of — some common technical issues located in the yellow help widget, which is at the bottom of your screen.

And then lastly, you can also find the closed-captioning widgets in both English and Spanish. Don't forget that each of these widgets are resizable and movable for a customized experience. Simply click on the widget and move it by dragging and dropping and resizing using the arrows at the top corners. And then finally, if you have any trouble, try refreshing your browser by pressing F5 and be sure to log off of your VPN and exit out of any other browsers for your best experience.

So, if you're just joining us, again, welcome to today's webinar, a part of the "Education Leadership Webinar" series. Our topic today is, "Instructional Leadership." I'm super excited to introduce two of my colleagues that will be presenting today. I'd like to welcome Judi Stevenson-Garcia, and Stephenie Hickman. Thank you, both, for being here today. Judi, I'm going to turn it over to you now and have you share what the next hour will look like for us.

Judi Stevenson-Garcia: Sure. Thanks, Roselia, and thanks, everyone, I'm excited to be here today. So, I'm just going to overview for a minute briefly what we're going to be talking about today. So, we are going to focus on some research that is related to instructional leadership for early learning environments, and then for you, we'll identify some competencies of effective instructional leaders in Early Head Start to Head Start settings, and then finally, we'll talk about what those leadership practices mean for supporting effective practices in early learning environments.

So, I'm going to let Stephenie take on the first two parts focusing on instructional leadership. Hi, Stephenie, and then I'll come back in just a little bit after Stephenie's done to talk about supporting effective teaching and learning. So, Stephenie, it's all yours.

Stephenie Hickman: Thanks, Judi. So, hey, everyone. I'm super excited to be here with Judi and Roselia talking to you guys about instructional leadership, and I know who gets really excited about research, but I do. So, let's just dive in. What I wanted to start out by telling you guys is that over this last year, DTL has really considered sharing some emerging research in the early childhood field on instructional leadership. Because we know that instructional leadership is a common frame used in the K–12 sector, but there's been far less information available for us until now, so we are excited to be here.

Last year, we did share a series of webinars on this topic called the "Front Porch Series." So, if you look to the bottom of your screen, and you click on that green resource list widget, you'll see, I believe, it's the second resource available, but if you click there, not right now but after this webinar, it will take you to the ECLKC where you can do a deeper dive and watch those webinars that really gets into the detail of some of the latest research that the Ounce of Prevention Fund has done. So, again, I invite you to go check those out when you have time, but we just want to share a few highlights in this emerging-research section. So, let's go ahead and get started.

So, the Ounce of Prevention Fund has worked with the University of Chicago for several years trying to figure out how to create a system of continuous quality improvement in early childhood programs. Challenging, right? But we know that you're all doing that. So, to have the research that highlights some of these great pieces that we know is already happening is why I'm jazzed to be here. So, through this collaboration between the Ounce and the University of Chicago, the research pointed to the development of the graphic that you see here on your screen, and what they did was, they took that frame from K–12 and revised five essential elements that they know have positive impacts on classroom practices, and they revised those for relevance and fit for early childhood, right, because we know there is a big difference, and what was found was that each essential directly relates to, ta-da, effective leadership.

So, you can see the five essentials: It's effective leaders, collaborative teachers, ambitious instruction, involved families, and supportive learning environments. So, we are going to dissect these just a bit. We're going to drill into them, but I wanted to point out that you guys also have a handout in that green resource widget called the Five Essentials Handout. So, it goes a little bit more in-depth into what we'll be talking about, so if you want to open that and follow along, take notes as I walk through these, I encourage you to do that. Again, it's called the Five Essential Handout in your green resource widget.

So, let's get started: effective leaders. First and foremost, the Ounces defined this as leadership that is strategically focused on children's early achievement and nurtures trust and collective understanding and responsibility for excellence and improvement among staff and parents. So, what does that mean? So, basically what that means is that leaders establish a vision that is: A, child-centered; B, creates a supportive environment; C, fosters ambitious teaching and learning; and D, includes partnering with families. I think we can all agree that those are really important for a vision, right? But it also means that leaders build a culture of excellence and shared

responsibility. That's a little trickier, and it means that everyone in the program has a voice and that teachers are encouraged to build leadership capacity, which is super important, right? We want that buy-in, and building those leadership capacities and ensuring that our education staff have a voice that connects directly to that shared vision is critical. OK, so collaborative teachers, one of my favorites.

The Ounces said that teachers are committed to the center. They build strong relationships with their colleagues, and work together continuously to improve teaching and learning. OK, so in this essential, leaders dedicate time for performance feedback and also will use resources to help build teachers' professional capacities. So, it's not just the leadership capacity, but it's also their own professional capacity, and why say this one is intriguing me is, it just reminds me of a program. I think we have time for a quick story. I knew Judi hot-boxed, so I mean, she's here, but she's not on camera, so I'm going to through this story with you guys because I think it helps bring this to light.

So, I was in a program where this essential was so strong. What the leadership team did was just an incredible testament to building professional and leadership capacities, so, kind of a combination of both — both essentials. so, they were really focused on building strong social and emotional competence for children, and a few of their teachers presented this research-based model, I won't name any names, but that they were interested — the teachers themselves were interested in — and what the leadership team did was, they went out, they found grant money, and they were able to send these two teachers, not only to the training to learn about this model but also the coach training, and so these two teachers brought back their knowledge and became subject-matter experts in their program, and they were given protective time, not only to plan, but to coach as well.

So, the amazing thing here was that their colleagues were all supportive and really valued their input, and it was just incredible, you guys. I just wish everybody could see this. I'm sure you guys have examples of this happening in your programs as well, but it just reminds me that in order for this essential — collaborative teachers — to be strong, leaders have to also focus on and commit to protecting time for routine collaboration because those two teachers, while they went to this training, and they were coaching, they needed time to talk to each other. This was new for them, and even if it wasn't new for them, collaborative environments allow teachers to really respect one another.

Something else I want to mention when we're talking about collaborative teachers is that the research points out that all education staff collaborate, promote not only their own, but their colleagues' professional development. So again, when those teachers went back, people were willing to listen; they wanted to know what they learned, and they were excited for each other, but they were excited for those two teachers to just grow and to learn from them. So, let's move on to supportive learning environments.

So, the Ounces said that child-centered supportive learning environments are learning environments that are both physically and emotionally safe and engaging. Staff hold high expectations for children's social and emotional academic learning, coupled with nurturing individualized supports for children and families. OK, guys. To me, this is the most basic prereq. All adults should and are building supportive relationships with children, the children's families,

and with each other. We have to have that type of environment to positively impact classroom practices. So, we should also see adults in supportive environments attending to both that physical and emotional environment, and the well-being of the children. Also others, right? Each other, leadership, families: everyone.

OK, let's take a look at ambitious instructions. So, the Ounces said that ambitious instructions and interaction is when education staff provide consistently engaging developmentally appropriate and a rigorous curriculum and instruction. OK. Before we dive in here, I just want to unpack a few of these phrases that may be raising some red flags. So, when we hear or see things like ambitious instruction or rigorous curriculum, we might feel a little unsettled because it sounds very academic-focused, but I'm here to say we can let those fears go because ambitious instruction really means developmentally appropriate practices in both preschool and infant and toddler programs, and rigorous curriculum, although, again, sounds pretty heavy academic, it simply means being responsive caregivers and intentionally providing learning experiences that are individualized and also scaffolds learning.

So, I just want to dissect that a little bit before we jump into what it actually looks like in practice. So, I want to point out that in this particular essential, we see a few things: Continuous observation, continuous assessment, and these are to really just help move children along those developmental progressions. So, that's what we're talking about when we say or see rigorous curriculum and instruction and ambitious instruction. Leaders — as leaders, we should be providing a structure for the implementation of these things: the implementation of curriculum, of assessment, and also the use of material, right? There has to be that foundational piece that we as leaders are providing.

All righty.

Last, but not least: strong ties and partnerships among families, schools, and the community. So, the Ounce found that in this essential, this involved families, essential, that all staff developed strong relationships with parents and families, and support meaningful partnerships with those families that support children's learning. Ah, so powerful. I have been saying for years that there is no child without a family and community, and now, here it is. We have research that highlights the importance of this partnership; so exciting. And in this essential, all adults — all adults systematically approach families with the R word: respect. And sometimes, this can mean identifying biases, right?

And as leaders, this can be really challenging because we have to help our education staff do that, but in order to go into these relationships, involve families with this idea of respect, we have to understand those biases, so some pretty powerful work that we know you guys do as ed managers to ensure that there is this partnership and relationship happening. There's also a need for staff to cultivate strong ties with receiving elementary schools, and why would we do this? Well, I think you guys know that and would agree: We do this to support families and children through this really tough time.

That transition can be hard. They love you guys. They are so comfortable with all of the support that's given in Head Start programs, and we want to be the bridge to help them. So, when we have those strong ties with receiving elementary schools, it just can be a really powerful tool to

involve families, promote advocacy. So, the key here is really respect, building relationships that lead to support. So, that is a very quick highlight of the handout that you have and also the webinars that I mentioned earlier from the "Front Porch Series," so that was from the Ounce of Prevention, but we at DTL also wanted to take a look at instructional leadership. So, rather than really focusing on those essentials, what we wanted to do is look more in depth at those practices of instructional leaders. So, that's really going to be our focus for the remainder of our time together.

So, let's go ahead and take a look at what this group, this Research to Practice Consortium found. So, basically, we had a group of researchers come together and identify what these instructional leadership practices look like, and they identified six. We're going to go through those, but as we do that, I invite you guys to think about maybe where your strengths lie as I'm talking through these, or which one of these practices really resonates with you? So, keep that in mind as we go through them.

So, the very first one, effective instructional leaders have an understanding of child development and efficient teaching. Yup. That makes sense, right? As ed managers, as effective instructional leaders, we definitely need to have this understanding. In addition to that, the researchers found that leaders must also understand the importance of engaging parents and families. So, I think I might share another story here in a minute just about that practice in particular, but let's go down to that last bullet. Effective instructional leaders build inclusive cultures of collaborative learning, another really important practice to have. So, since we have time, we're going to hop back to that second bullet, so understanding the importance of engaging parents and families. This is a practice ...

As I was going through these, I thought back to when I was an ed manager, and I did what I asked you guys to do and think about where my strength was, and it definitely was in this practice. So, this was just part of our vision. This was part of what we encouraged our education staff to value as well, and so I had a teacher who was really, really struggling with this mom, and she tried everything to engage her, or she thought she had tried everything, but she was working really hard, and she just felt completely stonewalled.

This mom just was not engaging with her. She really was giving her a whole lot to work with, so she was frustrated, you know? I think we can all empathize with that, and so we had regular supervision. That was very important also, protected time, and so, through supervision, we were really trying to explore ways that she could engage with this mom, and this teacher shared that she heard her talking in Spanish, which was surprising and new because it had never come up — it hadn't come up in the home visit; it hadn't come up in their interactions.

So, she was talking through that, and in the back of my mind, I also knew that this particular teacher was trying to come up with ways that a group of five of her children, or students, could access the books that she was reading in Spanish because she only spoke English, and it was really important to her that, you know, the Spanish-speaking children in her classroom had access. So, of course, as her supervisor, as the instructional leader, I encouraged her to think about a possible engagement opportunity there, and she landed on asking this mom, going out on a limb, because she didn't really feel connected to her.

She went out on a limb and asked this mom if she would be interested in coming in and reading to these five children to make sure that they had access to the book. Wouldn't you know, this opened the door, like, wide-open. The mom's response was amazing. She was so grateful that this teacher asked. She said, "Absolutely." So, let's fast-forward to the end of the year. By the end of the year, this mom was going to the library. She was working with the teacher, knowing what her lesson plan was, knowing what books were in the curriculum. She would go to the library, find the books that she could read to this group of children in Spanish. It was incredible. So, this stuff is really powerful, you guys.

So, I just had to share that. That was a practice that I know I valued, and although it's a very specific example, we could see that spread throughout the program, and I'm sure you guys are, hopefully, thinking of stories as we go through the rest of the practices. So, let's go do that, go through that, excuse me. So, the Research to Practice Consortium also noted that strengthening instructional interactions and curriculum, another one I think we can relate to, I think Judi is going to circle back to this in a little bit. Then engaging in and facilitating professional-learning cycles, as well as support job-embedded professional development for all staff.

So, that could include a whole lot of things. Of course, I'm sure coaching is kind of coming to mind as one of those strategies. So, I wanted to share those six with you guys, and I know I went through them a little quick, so hopefully, you kind of thought about which one resonated with you. I'm going to go ahead and push out a poll. So, we're going to see which of these practices that you think is the most important to the work you do with education staff. So, Judi, while they're answering that poll, I have a question for you.

When you were working in programs, which one did you think was the most important? Although I know it's hard to just pick one because we all want to do all of them all the time, and they're all super important. Which one do you think was the most ...

Judi: The most important?

Stephenie: Yeah!

Judi: That's a really hard question. Why are you asking this hard question? OK, so I guess if I had to choose one, I think the most important support that I provided to my staff was in building — the building and inclusive cultures of collaborative learning. I felt like that was kind of the foundation of all of the work that we did together, and I know that when I was teaching, sometimes, I was just the happiest, and I could just close my door and be ...

I would say this sometimes, if I could just close my door and be in my room with my kids, you know, I'll teach forever. But I think that the places where I really grew as a professional and as a teacher was through the opportunities that I had to learn with and from my colleagues and my co-teachers, and so, I think also, that really helped me maintain my own excitement about learning. It made me curious, you know, about different approaches to teaching, and it also helped me support my children in being excited about learning.

So, I got more excited about learning myself, and then I was able to share that excitement with my kids. So, when I moved into a role where I was supporting teachers, I really wanted to focus on doing that same thing for them and supporting this culture of collaborative learning. We're

all learning together. It's not like a top-down, "I know something, I'm going to give it to you, and then you're going to turn around and give it to someone else." We're going to learn together regularly in a way that supports both the teaching staff and then also the children, and it was definitely a challenge to kind of break some staff out of that kind of day-to-day, "Here's what I'm going to do next. Here's what I need to get done. I need to do my paperwork.

I need to do my assessments. I need to look at my data. I need to plan my curriculum." So, sometimes, we kind of get in that mode where we're like, "What's next? What's next?" and so it was a little bit challenging to pull teachers out and say, "Let's stop and reflect together and think and share and learn and collaborate on this effort that we're undergoing, you know, in supporting your children."

So, anyway, so that was definitely, I think, the most important for me. Obviously, I don't think there's one right answer here, so ...

Judi: Right. I think that's the tricky part, and I hear ... What I'm hearing you say is that collaboration was so important, and I think as a leader, it's important that we learn from everybody, and when everybody has a voice, then it just builds confidence and competence. So, thank you for sharing. So, let's take a look at what everybody else thought. OK, so pretty even split. So, we have the most ... It looks like "understanding child development and effective teaching practices." Agreed.

That is absolutely important because I think it goes back, you know, to what we were just talking about that in order for us to support, we have to understand this and also build their capacity. So, that makes sense. Let's see. Runner-up: "Building inclusive cultures of collaborative learning." So, you have your — your team there, "understanding the importance of engaging parents and families."

So, yeah, I think that the one area that might be newer for people is "engaging in and facilitating professional learning cycles," which makes sense, you know? That ... I think that language is new; and so, when we are thinking about engaging and facilitating professional learning cycles, we could be talking about, like I said, a whole slew of things, but it's really about individualizing for teachers — individualizing professional development for teachers; so, taking their strengths, taking what they're interested in, figuring out how they learn best. There's a little parallel process here, right?

Because we want teachers to do this very same thing with children, but we engage in this continuous experience for them; so, it's not just a one-and-done training, but we're really scaffolding their learning based on what they're interested in. So, thank you all, for taking that, and thanks, Judi, for sharing. Let's go ahead and take a look at this next slide. So, I'm going to give you guys 30 seconds to read each one of these bubbles. So, I'm going to go silent for 30 seconds.

OK, so we wanted to share this image with you. Again, this is out of the work that the Ounce of Prevention has done on reimagining instructional leadership, another handout for you in your green resource widget below, and we wanted to share this because it really highlights the shift to instructional leadership. So, now that you've read each bubble, why don't you guys give us a

thumbs-up if you are noticing or feeling like your view of leadership is shifting. Ooh, so — so people are starting to chime in.

So, we have a couple people who have said, "Yes." More coming in. Great. That's so exciting. Keep giving us the thumbs-up if you're seeing this shift because that is really one of our goals, right? Judi and I are here to share this information with you guys, and so that way, you can take it back, think about it and say, "How does this work for me? How do I fit into this?" Awesome. So, we have, like, over half of you guys who've answered, saying that your view of leadership is shifting. So, thanks so much for doing that.

So, let's go ahead and use that yellow idea widget that Roselia introduced us to earlier in the webinar. So, we've given you a lot of information, right? We've talked about the emerging research, both from the Ounce and from the Research To Practice Consortium. We talked about those essentials and those instructional leadership practices. So, we want to give you guys an opportunity to share ideas with each other, and that's the purpose of this yellow widget. It's on the bottom of your screen; looks like this, has a ...

The little light bulb in a yellow box. So, we want you to share how you define instructional leadership. Again, this is just for you guys. You can take a look at what your colleagues are saying and how they're defining it. Give them a thumbs-up, comment, have your dialogue and, remember, if you have any questions for myself or for Judi, you can put those into the Q&A widget.

So, while you guys are doing that, I'm just thinking that you're probably all ready to see this research, particularly the effective leadership practices, how it might play out in a Head Start or Early Head Start program like yours. So, Judi is going to walk us through how instructional leadership practices support the house framework and effective teaching. So, I'll let you take it from here, Judi.

Judi: Thank you, Stephenie. So, that was a lot in terms of thinking about instructional leadership and what it means in both in your practice, but specifically when we're thinking about Head Start programs, obviously, it's always helpful to start with the house framework because the framework is focused on all of the components of educational programming that support instruction and learning. So, it's possible, and you may have seen this in the practices that Stephenie mentioned.

Many of your instructional leadership practices are supporting these house components. So, we could take the rest of our time talking about each one, each piece of the framework, but I'm just going to give you a little example of how we can apply the practices to supporting pieces of the house framework, and then you can take it from there. We're going to take a closer look at just two of the components. So, let's start here with the foundation because obviously we need to get the foundation right to support the rest of the structure. So, just take a minute and think about, of the practices that Stephenie just mentioned, what are those practices that are really going to support this part of the house framework?

So, we're talking about leadership practices that are supporting those nurturing practices, engaging in effective practices that our staff provide on a daily basis. How as the leader ... What practices are you going to use to make sure that those practices are happening on a regular

basis? Now, if you remember, some of those practices that Stephenie mentioned, and that our research-to-practice consortium described, one of them was building inclusive cultures of collaborative learning, and I mentioned that as one of the ones that I thought was most important in my work with my staff, and a lot of that work would support this part of the framework.

So, this is where, as leaders, you can be really intentional and thoughtful about building your relationships with staff. I think Stephenie mentioned that. So, taking time to visit classrooms and programs, providing group learning, and socializing opportunities to nurture their learning and development. This is a huge piece of what I did with staff, really building that culture, that community of learners and not just kind of that top-down approach.

And this might mean that you walk around the program, visit settings where learning instruction are happening in your program and also thinking about in-service events or professional development where staff are coming together with a focus on building relationships; and depending on your role, this might happen during supervision. However you connect with your staff to build relationships, you want to make sure that you have regular supportive interactions, so interacting regularly with staff and providing them quality feedback.

So, you want to be specific with your feedback and focused, so that staff know what their goals are, and focus related to instruction, these nurturing and effective interactions is really going to be helpful. When you're working with staff who are working with infants and toddlers, sometimes it's important to follow their lead or follow their guidance related to what the practices are in working with infants and toddlers. You want to build trust with those staff and let them know that you trust them in terms of what they're offering their infants and toddlers and the practices that they provide.

If you don't know or have experience with infants and toddlers, you can rely on your staff in the program who do, and they'll help you deliver authentic and meaningful feedback to infant and toddler staff. So, in addition to that, another critical component is making sure that you're being responsive to staff needs for professional development and giving them time for reflection and planning, and I think I saw in the Q&A box someone mentioned that it's really important to make sure that you carve out that time whenever possible for your staff. It's really critical to this foundational piece of the house framework.

When you get to know staff, when you develop relationships with them, you create and you build on these relationships, and this allows you to be responsive to them both as professionals, but also as individuals. And this helps you understand where their interests are in terms of their growth, their professional development, what they're interested in learning, what they want to do in the future, and this can help you to be more responsive to the individuals that you're working with in your program.

And then finally, you want to support an environment where you are available as a partner, right? You're going to be ... To support that culture of collaborative learning, you need to be a collaborative learner, so you're a partner to think about these nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions, and the engaging environments. So, joining in planning meetings, making room for conversations during a time of day when staff can step out of the classroom or out of

the program to have a thought or working in a program or in a classroom to allow staff time out of the classroom to plan.

So, this is a space where you do what makes sense for the staff that you're working with, the programs that you're working with, to really build up this foundation which is so essential to all of children's growth and development. By doing this, you're communicating to your staff that you support finding ways and finding spaces where they can reflect, they can learn together and they can plan for the types of interactions and instructional support that they are going to use to effectively support children's learning.

OK, so that's the foundation. We're thinking of leadership practices and its impact on the house, so maybe you'll see where we're going here. We're going to try another one. Let's look at this on the left side of the framework, about implementing curriculum and teaching practices. So, if you can think back to what Stephenie talked about in terms of the practices, what do you think ...

What kinds of practices are going to support this part of the house framework? You might say all of them, and you might be right, so we'll focus on just a couple of them. So, first, obviously, we need to understand as leaders child development and effective teaching practices, and I noticed in the poll that many of you mentioned that as being the most important, so obviously if we're going to strengthen and improve this aspect of the house framework, we need to understand as leaders what child development is and what those effective teaching practices are that are going to contribute to ongoing child development. And then additionally, we want to strengthen instructional interactions and curriculum implementations. That one's a no-brainer, right?

Interactions, curriculum, implementation: That's going to support this pillar of the house framework, and then also engaging in and facilitating professional learning cycles so that teachers, as they are implementing curriculum and effectively engaging with children, they're constantly growing in their capacity to do that. So, implementing these leadership practices are going to support staff in implementing curriculum with fidelity, which is key. So, as an instructional leader, you'll want to learn about your staff's experience with and their knowledge of curriculum, which is always going to be varied, as well as any questions they have about how to use it.

So, from there, you can decide what professional development outcomes you want to achieve based on their experience with their curriculum, and then you'll also want to think about the types of professional development that are going to help you get to where you want to be in terms of supporting curriculum and curriculum fidelity. So, do you need small group events, some large group training, maybe opportunities for peers to work together? Definitely want to think about your staff who have, maybe, years of experience implementing the curriculum providing some support to newer teachers and newer staff who haven't used the curriculum before, and then obviously practice-based coaching is always going to be a good support option.

It's also important for early educators to use all essential curriculum resources in order to make sure that they are implementing your program's curriculum, so making sure that children and

families are benefiting in ways that the curriculum developers have intended through the design of their curriculum. You want to make sure that your staff have access to all of the curriculum resources. I remember when I was teaching, sometimes it was kind of piecemeal, like, we would share resources or someone would say, "Does anyone know where this box of things went or this, you know, series of books was?"

You want to make sure, if possible, all of your staff have access to all of the curriculum items, like the curriculum guides, which is really important in terms of understanding implementation and fidelity to the system. Those curriculum guides explain the purpose of all of the resources and how they should be used, so no one is going to be making it up. They'll be following the curriculum the way that the designers intended it to be. The curriculum resources that are foundational to the curriculum's approach and its essential daily activities should be available to all staff, so, the things that are guiding their small groups, their routines, their daily schedule, and the learning opportunities they provide.

The staff really need to have access to those in order to be able to implement the curriculum with fidelity. You can also support staff to understand how to be sure their curriculum and teaching practices are culturally and linguistically responsive while also maintaining implementation fidelity; so, there is that room for modifying or adapting your curriculum so that it meets the needs of the individual children that your staff are working with. OK, so that's a lot of theory; some way-up-here, high-in-the-sky theory about practice. We're going to get a little less theoretical and a little bit more focused on specifically supporting effective teaching practices. So, what does this mean in the real world? What do all of these ideas mean in terms of supporting effective teaching practices?

So, as an instructional leader, you need to know obviously what you should be looking for in terms of high-quality instruction when you enter a classroom. So, in other words, you need to know the work of the staff that you're leading, which is important, and many of you mentioned that in the poll. So, are teachers engaged with the children? Are they listening to the children's perspective and responding in a way that builds on their learning? Are teachers following the children's lead?

Do home visitors help parents understand how to support their children's development? These are all questions that you want to be asking in terms of how you're going to support these effective practices. Being an instructional leader means that you know these effective practices that you're supporting and then you can help teachers and home visitors and family child care providers stay focused on using these practices to support children's learning. So, where do we find these practices? Anyone know?

Well, a good place to start is the tools that you are probably already using in your program. So, what immediately comes to mind is our observation tools that we use like the HOVRs, the CLASS, the LCO, the EKERs, the ITERs, so all the environment rating scales, the TEPA, and the TPITOS. They're all examples of tools that measure program quality, teacher and staff quality, home visitor quality, and a lot of the markers within those tools can really help you think about what effective practices are. There's also instructional strategies — lists of instructional strategies and guides such as NAEYC, organizations like ours, DTL, we offer some.

The effective practice guides and the ELOF2GO app will highlight teaching practices that are directly related to the ELOF, so that's another great place to go. And for example, the CSEFEL inventory of practices, and also our in-service suites on the ECLKC, they include tips for teachers and tools for supervisors in every in-service suite. They also often have effective practices, so if you haven't seen those, definitely go look at the 15-minute in-service suites and those tips for supervisors and tips for teachers.

They have lots of places to look for effective practices. And then finally, a great place to look for effective practices is your curriculum materials. So, in a lot of places, a lot of the resources that your curriculum will offer will show or talk to you about the practices that should be in place that are effective to support children's growth and development in all of the ELOF domains. And you might also look at your curriculum for a curriculum checklist, a fidelity checklist and sometimes in use-guides they'll also have ways to measure effective practices.

So, there's a lot of resources out there for you to think about what those effective practices are, and then we have these leadership practices that we mentioned to you that will support those effective practices. So, I'm wondering, Stephenie, if you would ... Oh, there you are. Come back!

Stephenie: I'm here.

Judi: Would you? So, you talked about the theory, and I talked about applying it, you know, to support effective practices. Can you give us an example of maybe how you use some of these, a tool that provided some information about effective practices, and then combine that with leadership practices to kind of, hopefully, ultimately end up with more effective teaching practices in the program where you worked?

Stephenie: Yeah, absolutely. I'm glad that you asked. So, we definitely used a variety of tools, but I want to talk specifically about our use of the class tool, particularly instructional leadership ... I'm sorry. It's on the brain. Instructional leadership is on the brain. Instructional learning formats and concept development domains, because as an education manager, I definitely look at the broader scope of class data, as you guys all do, and that was a huge part of my job, and we were really looking at interactions that demonstrated high competency MPOs, ILF and concept development, and so as you were talking, one example was just coming to mind.

I don't know if it's just because we've moved out of fall and we're moving into winter, but when I think about this at a very practical or focus level like you mentioned, there is something that came up in that transition. And so, in fall, it's pretty common for our teachers to bring in what? Pumpkins, right? Like, we think fall. We think pumpkins, so what we would see are, we would see our teachers really involving children in not just exploring the pumpkin, but telling stories. In that exploration, they were talking about their shape, the size, weight, everything you could imagine.

Texture. I don't know if I said texture already, but they would often have several pumpkins in their classrooms, and they, I'm trying to think back, but they would have on that they used to go along with a book that they were reading that may have looked similar to that one — one for hands-on exploration where, you know, they were feeling the insides. And, you know, of course they always had those children that were like, "No! I can't touch it," and then one for observation.

And that, all of them combined, I think hit both instructional learning format and concept development because of what they were doing with the pumpkins. So, in that observation one for example, teachers would have the children hypothesize what would happen if they kept the pumpkin in the classroom, off of the vine, and what they would do is just check in regularly, right? They would document what the children were saying.

If they would be taking pictures, the children would be taking pictures. They would go back weekly, check in on what was going on and look at their observations, ask children open-ended questions. "What do you think is going to happen next? Why do you think this is happening?" And of course, you know, their ideas shifted and changed along the way, and when they were discovering that those pumpkins were dying — that's what the children would say a lot: "Oh, it's dying!" and the teachers would give them some other vocabulary. So, rotting was a common vocabulary word that was used during that time.

But then they would create a plan for what to do, and they did this at the same time they were reading a book about compost. So, it just highlights what instructional learning formats and content development look like at a very practical level.

Judi: I think that's a great example of pulling those two things together, and what's interesting about your story is that the teachers need to be using practices not only under concept development but also under instructional learning formats, right? So, they ... In order to get to those higher-order thinking skills, it's important to set up a learning environment that's intentional with things that are interesting to children, hands-on, creative, and then also to facilitate children's involvement. Kids who want to touch the stuff, kids who don't want to touch the stuff, and then also actively participating. You know, I don't know if I really want to touch the inside of a pumpkin, but, you know, I might to support that exploration.

Stephenie: Right.

Judi: So, we know that when the learning environment is set up to support active exploration, then teachers have the opportunity to engage in those practices that support our concept development. So, what we're going to do is, we're going to take a minute to kind of look at this in action. We're not looking at pumpkins, but we're going to look at a teacher in a preschool classroom, and while you watch, I want to see if you can identify some of the effective practices that we just mentioned.

So, focused on instructional learning formats and concept development, think about what is the most effective practice that this teacher is going to use to support child engagement. So, keep this question in mind while you watch the video, so let's watch.

[Video begins]

[Video ends]

Judi: [Laughing] OK, I just want to, like, keep watching. I want to go in there and like touch that little crab in there. So, those children were definitely engaged. I appreciated how this teacher changed her tone of voice to help the children regulate. So, what we're going to do is, we're going to give you a quick poll here to ask you what you think the most effective practice the teacher used to support her children's engagement.

So, go ahead and just take a minute. What do you think was the most effective practice? There were several effective practices she was using. So, she asked some opened questions. Was there restating of children's questions and adding information? I've just mentioned she changed her tone of voice for asking children to predict what happens. So, what do you think was the most effective? I see some people have started voting already. I'll wait for a couple of responses to come in. I think it's amazing just how children will respond to something simple like lowering your voice to a whisper.

Stephenie: Mm-hmm.

Judi: Like, all of a sudden they're like, "Wait a second. Something's happening here." It also ... Your tone of voice — I've learned this with my children, my own children, that your tone of voice actually helps children regulate their behavior. It helps them to know what to expect but also kind of how they should be responding to it. I also love how she asked children to make a prediction, and then she validated the prediction by seeing if that worked. I mean, "Is he not coming out because we're not being quiet? Well, let's see." And so, they had, like, a little mini science experiment there.

So, OK, let's see. Oh, about half of you have voted here. I'll give you about 20 more seconds to tell us what you think was the most effective teaching practice here. I'm going to close this in about five seconds. Go ahead and get your vote in. All right. So, thank you for those of you who answered. Let's see what we had. Very mixed. Everyone has their opinion about what's the most effective, and as I said, many of these, all of these practices are effective. "Restating children's questions and adding information:"

That validates and extends their learning, which I think is super important when working with young children, and I agree. Well, you know I agree. "Changing her tone of voice and affect throughout the activity," and then there's open-ended questions. And remember, one thing I noticed here: It's important to ask open-ended questions, but more important is pausing and giving time for children to answer those questions.

So, sometimes we have lots of open-ended questions — open-ended questions, and the children never get to respond, so that's always one good thing to pay attention to. So, I loved watching that video and seeing the practices in action, but now we want to think a little bit about what it means to support teachers as leaders to continue the growth of this teacher.

So, Stephenie, do you want to take that?

Stephenie: Yeah, sure. So, we have another poll for you guys; so, we definitely want to think back to those leadership practices that we were talking about, that I was talking about earlier, and that Judi referenced. So, which of the following instructional leadership practices do you think would be most important to continue to support this teacher? And of course, you can select all that apply. So, is it asking her about follow up and extension to other areas and activities in the classroom, sharing this video at a staff meeting?

That's definitely something that I know I would probably follow up with her, asking her permission to share it just for two purposes, right? For her to be an exemplar for other teachers, but also to get feedback. And of course we would do this in this trusting, collaborative

environment that we talked about earlier. Is it helping the teacher think about hands-on materials related to the activity for the children? I would probably do that, too, and ask her for some extensions, like, what is she planning on doing next?

And then the last one: asking her to lead a short study group with other teachers related to practices that promote instructional learning formats and concept development. So, let us know what you guys think. The answers are coming in. I think we're close. Well, don't have quite half yet, but people are still answering.

So, go ahead and let us know which ones. So, far we have ... I'm not going to tell you which ones, but we have a tie in the most popular answers. Let's see. I think asking her to make some connections, too, would be something that would be really important, connections to other things that they're doing or connections to things that are coming up. So, I will go ahead, and I'm seeing answers slow down.

Oh, some people hopped in there after I said there was a tie. So, let me just go ahead and push these out for you guys. So, it looks like the majority of us believe that "asking her about follow up and extensions to other areas and activities in the classroom," which is something that I mentioned; yeah, definitely important when we think about those instructional learning formats or the instructional learning format dimension.

Also, let's see. "Sharing the video at a staff meeting," that can be really challenging for teachers, right, because it puts them in a place of vulnerability, and also, when you have that really solid trusting, collaborative teacher essential strong, then that becomes way less intimidating for staff. And then we have, "Ask her to lead a short study group with other teachers related to practices."

Great. I love that idea. I think let's build the professional capacity, right? We talked about that earlier. That's super important, and then finally we have helping the teacher think about hands-on materials related to this activity. So, thanks, you guys, for participating in that, and I think at this point we are going to say thank you for having myself and Judi here today. We're going to go ahead and let Roselia talk to you guys about some resources that are available.

Roselia: All right.

Judi: Yeah.

Roselia: Well ...

Judi: Oh ...

Roselia: Oops. Go ahead.

Judi: Sorry, Roselia. No, I just wanted to say thanks to everyone, and I hope that we'll keep talking about instructional leadership. I know you have that MyPeers group to continue thinking about what this means in your programs, and it was great to be here with you today. So, thanks so much for having us, Roselia.

Stephenie: Thank you.

Roselia: No, absolutely. Thank you, guys, very much for joining us today and not only sharing but walking us through those five essential supports influencing classroom practices, and as you mentioned, Judi, we do have the education leaders community on MyPeers. And so, if you are not already a member, we really encourage you to go onto the ECLKC and scroll down to the very bottom, and you'll see the link there for MyPeers to get you started. I'm hoping that today's conversation just really kind of sparked some reflection and got you thinking about those programs that you're supporting, and MyPeers, the community there, is a great place to continue the conversation. So, we hope to see you there, and we'll get some prompting questions and hopefully continue this great conversation.

I also wanted to mention ... We want you to mark your calendars. Coming up in February 2020, we are going to be kicking off ... I'm sorry. I'm thinking about the DLL, which is our next promotion. Mark for calendars for July 15 through the 17th in Columbus, OH. We hope to see you out there. Save the date for the upcoming Office of Head Start Education Manager Institute. Great minds are hard at work putting together this event for you, and Head Start education managers from all across the nation and territories will be coming together for this leadership event.

So, you don't want to miss that. Again, that's going to be July 15 through the 17<sup>th</sup> in Columbus, OH. There will be more information coming on the ECLKC, and then here is what I was talking about in regards to February. So, in February 2020, it's that time of the year again. We're going to be kicking off the Dual Language Learner Celebration Week, and that'll start on Tuesday, Feb. 18, and it'll go through Friday the 21st, so please help us spread the word about this e-learning experience on the iPB. So, if you click on the little picture there, the "join us" on the iPB, it'll take you right to the ECLKC, the iPB, where you can spring into practice. So, again, help us spread the word, and this will be coming in February 2020.

OK, so with that, we've come to the end of our time together today. We'd like to thank you for joining us, and once we end our session, you will get the link for the evaluation. Please complete that evaluation because we do look for your feedback in improving our sessions, so that will be coming, and then you can download your certificate of participation. So, thank you for joining us today, and we hope to see you at our next webinar, and with that, have a great rest of your afternoon.