

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN THE ERA OF TECHNOLOGY

Nazeer Rabah,
doctorate student, ULIM

Аннотация

Для того чтобы подготовить школьных лидеров быть пионерами происходит внедрение технологий в школах, лидерские образовательные программы несут ответственность за подготовку и поддержку использования технологий в школах, сегодня и в будущем.

Abstract

In order to prepare school leaders to serve as technology chiefs in their schools, educational leadership programs have the responsibility of preparing and supporting present and future ranks to fully utilize technology in schools.

Onguko, Abdalla and Weber [5] stated: "With the current trends in use of technology in education, it is imperative for the preparation programs to incorporate aspects of the use of technology in educational leadership. The use of new information communications technology such as social networking software that incorporates both synchronous and asynchronous communication in the preparation programs, would be ideal. This would provide the principals an opportunity to use the technology while achieving the twin objectives of principal preparation and acquisition of more skills and knowledge about the utilization of technology for later use in their schools."

Schrum and colleagues [6] argued that the faculty of institutions of higher learning will need to serve as models for technologically enhanced instruction in the classroom. Before this can occur, some institutions of higher learning may need to remove barriers to the integration and use of technology in the college classroom. According to Brzycki and Dudt [1], these barriers were preparation and planning time; lack of support; and lack of access to technology.

The research of Bass and Leithwood shifted focus of instructional leadership to a greater emphasis on organization and followership. Their transformational leadership studies initiated a framework which included the leader's ability to increase the organization's capacity to innovate by elevating the follower's interest and motivation to a higher level. In addition, Leithwood [2] found that principal effects are achieved through fostering group goals, modeling desired behavior for others, providing intellectual stimulation, and individualized support. In this context, principals were better at supporting staff, providing recognition, awareness of school problems, seeking new ideas and focusing on follower's personal development. In addition, Leithwood's ideology is that "transformational leadership may well be a productive antidote to the stifling effects of excessive organizational constraint".

Transformational leadership assesses the leader's values, and how the leader interacts with the organizational members in a way that conveys his or her values to each of the members which engages and transforms them to accept these values as their own. The leader conveys these values to the organizational members through the use of several behaviors designed to attract the members to the leader's goal. These behavior attributes include charisma, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Transformational leadership is associated with motivating associates to do more than they originally thought possible. The original expectation for performance is linked to an initial level of confidence or efficacy in the associates' perceived ability and motivation. Thus,

associates' perceptions of self efficacy or confidence, as well as their developmental potential, are enhanced through the transformational leadership process. The process of transforming associates does not merely empower them or delegate to them the responsibility for fulfilling a goal; rather, it develops their capability to determine their own course of action, if they lack that ability. Eventually, the followers will be in a position to assume some of the leader's responsibilities. In essence, the associates become leaders, and leaders become exemplary associates.

Brzycki and Dudt [1] surveyed three universities, and from the results identified five barriers that higher education faculty face when attempting to include technology into lessons. The most predominant barrier identified in their research, was lack of time. The majority of the participants reported not having enough time to plan and prepare with technological resources. One of the participants stated that the amount of time needed to incorporate technology was becoming an "imposition on their academic freedom, their personal time, and their teaching competency". Sahin and Thompson [3] noted in their study "workload and time required for computer use were a concern among the participants".

Brzycki and Dudt [1] also found that lack of support was a significant barrier to the use of technology in college classrooms. Similarly, Sahin and Thompson [3] noted in a study of 157 college faculty members that support was a frequently cited barrier. The researchers identified, using survey methods, that both instructional and technical support were linked with the use of technology in teaching. Fitzallen [2] noted that educator confidence fluctuates with the quality and amount of support provided. Support is a product of culture, and people are the most important resource in providing support. If the culture is not receptive to or supportive of the integration of technological tools, educators may face difficulty in adapting technological tools for their teaching. Goldstein and colleagues [3] argued that support can also involve incentives such as opportunities for promotion and leadership. These incentives, as well as peer pressure and collegial support, can influence teacher usage and success with technology.

Lack of access to technology can discourage potential users. A robust infrastructure must be in place to support technological needs. Maintaining a technology infrastructure requires leadership, a shared vision, and budgeting to meet educational needs. Higher education institutions are the largest and the most frequently used means of preparing school leaders and should serve as technology pathfinders for driving systematic improvement in schools.

Technology Standards

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is composed of more than 100,000 leaders and advocates for the advancement of learning through technology. ISTE [4] provides a framework called the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) that serves as a guidepost for school leaders and educational leadership faculty to follow. These standards provide educational leadership faculty a "roadmap" for modeling best technology practices.

According to the NETS, there are five guiding principles, which should be modeled. First, school leaders need to inspire others through a shared vision that uses all technological resources in meeting student needs. A shared vision should align the short and long-range goals of the school for the integration and use of technology across the curriculum. Principals should serve as visionary leaders by empowering stakeholders to establish and achieve goals. College educators can serve as models for administrators by supporting technologically enhanced student-centered activities in college classrooms. Empowered administrative students may derive a sense of ownership and confidence, which may carry over to their workplace[4].

Second, school leaders should strive to create a culture that supports technology use, experimentation, and collaboration among peers. Teacher beliefs can affect the acceptance of technology into the classroom. Assumptions and bad experiences can severely hamper the integration of technology. Educational Leadership classes should serve as technologically enhanced test grounds for collaborative learning and research. School leaders returning to their workplaces can infuse newly acquired concepts into their school's culture, which may improve the teaching faculty's beliefs and attitudes towards technology.

Third, school leaders should also serve as effective technology leaders by providing time and resources that encourage professional development, networking, and learning communities. Professional development, such as is offered in educational leadership preparation programs, provides school leaders with growth in understanding technological tools and trends. Also, teacher professional development and networking allow the teacher to move beyond their own classroom to witness best practices, receive timely support to problems in the classroom, and to problem-solve with colleagues. It is the school leader's responsibility to lead this technology learning by committing time away from the classroom for professional development and by providing resources that may improve learning strategies. Educational Leadership faculty will also need professional development resources in order to model up-to-date technology usage in their instruction.

Fourth, school leaders should facilitate the integration and use of technology by managing resources effectively as student needs change. Managing technological resources requires direct observation of use and analyzing and sharing of data with stakeholders in order to improve instruction and allocation of resources. The systematic improvement of technological resources will require that principals maintain the technological infrastructure in order to stay current with student need and technological trends. Part of the maintenance of the infrastructure may revolve around locating local resources and establishing partnerships within the community. In order to serve as models for administrative students, Educational Leadership faculty will need to establish and maintain partnerships with outside networks to be used in locating technological resources. They will also need ongoing professional development so that they too remain up-to-date with regard to technological trends and changing student needs.

Finally, school leaders need to model the safe and ethical use of technology at school and abroad. They will need to serve as advocates for establishing policies that encourage and support student-centered instruction and the empowerment of all stakeholders in the educational process. Students will need to be provided guidance as they venture into the digital realm. By providing ethical instruction, students can become discerning travelers and hopefully avoid some of the pitfalls on the information highway. Educational Leadership faculty will need to model ethical use of technology in their college classrooms and guide educational leadership students toward the safe and ethical use of all available educational technology.

References

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