

Case studies for instructional leadership

Case Study 1.

Learning Walks

The following narrative is by a supervisor around the importance of learning walks.

The learning walk is very important for the teacher leaders and supervisors, because through that we get to know what is actually happening in the classrooms. We can observe the learning process and see if the children's understanding is up to the required standard.

In today's learning walk, we saw that there were some concepts that the children were not able to understand, so the teacher was trying over and over to make them understand. Today, for the first time, they were reading this chapter which the teacher was clarifying for them. I discussed what had happened with the teachers after the class. Through these walks and discussions, we get to know what is happening in the schools.

The children are our main focus here. Normally, I see the classroom from the outside. One can tell from the outside too, what the teacher is doing. But I also go inside the classroom. I joined this school in July and have been doing the learning walk since then. I go into the classrooms, and I interact with the teachers later. First, I see how the teaching and learning process is going. I don't share my comments with the teacher at the time. I do it later. So, that is what I do. I always do a learning walk.

If the children have any problem, we pay attention to them as well. During the walk, we get to know if any child is ill, or has any other issues. Generally, in the rural areas, the children's problems are different, so we have to handle them individually. During the learning walk we see the factors that affect the children. We can pay attention to the teaching and learning process at the same time.

The learning walk is very important for the school supervisor. It is very helpful to know what is happening at the school. We get to know whatever the teacher has planned, is getting executed in the proper way or not, through the learning walk. Through this, we get to oversee the teaching and learning process, or monitor the students' attendance. We can also get the sense of the atmosphere by monitoring the whole school. We not only monitor the teaching and learning process, but we also monitor the administrative aspects and the cleanliness of the school. All the factors that we plan that are related to school activities are covered in it. Learning walks are very important.

Case Study 2.

Ensuring routines

The following narrative shows the difficulty in setting up a routine for teachers in the school. It is narrated by the school principal.

There were some difficulties as no one wants to work hard. But I keep everyone's energy levels very high. I never just stay in my office while I am at school. If ever a class is silent, I ask what

the classroom is. I try to deal with the teachers problems. I work to handle them personally. They tell me and we discuss and find a solution together.

The main thing is that when a teacher doesn't go to class, then other teachers will follow suite, and this disturbs the routine. I want discipline in the institution. If everyone sticks to the timetable, there will be no problem and teachers will attend their classes on time. During my rounds, I ask them to concentrate on teaching. I persuade them to not to do other school related work. The teacher is to teach in class. If the teacher is busy with other work, the students get bored, and they stop attending classes.

I tell the teachers that they should go into the class smiling. I try to improve the relationship between the teachers and the students. The teachers are also very cordial towards each other. We entertain them and celebrate teachers day and children's day and celebrate all the other occasions together. Teachers and students enjoy and participate together in activities such as singing or skit. The students like it and don't get bored. They don't feel they are being forced to do anything.

When we sit together, I don't let them feel that I am the principal. I guide them, I give them suggestions about how to do things quickly and correctly. I also welcome their suggestions. Sometimes I receive good suggestions from the teachers. We work together, and don't allow stress to occur amongst staff.

My first task was to ensure that all the teachers arrived in their respective classes according to their timetable. There is a fixed monthly syllabus. They should complete the syllabus on a monthly basis, and they should take tests. In those tests, the number of girls scoring A grade should increase. It is our goal to increase the number of girls achieving A grade and to provide extra classes, to girls with grade D or E. We call them remedial classes. With these classes, we help students improve their grade.

I use diagrams and charts from the books of higher classes like BSc and I have had these charts made. I try to create a nice environment in the class. The children like to sit in the class that is fully decorated. It wasn't the case earlier. So, I asked the students to decorate their classes. They made charts related to the subject matter. And they illustrated the subject matter using these charts and post it. And this way they look at the chart repeatedly and they become imprinted in their minds at the same time, the class looks better. The students also get a feeling that they can improve something and then they come up with better diagrams and put these up in their classrooms.

The relationship between the principal and the teacher should be cordial. The school be first and foremost disciplined. There should be general ideas, not necessarily written on paper, but there should be a fully developed plan about what to do at what times. For example, if principals are in charge of issuing scholarship [s or distributing uniforms or bicycles, they should operate such schemes according to a given plan. The school mustn't be organized so that if any important task comes up, all the teachers are involved in it and the children are left unattended, otherwise, this will eventually affect school attendance.

Case Study 3

Demonstrate what you know

The school principal at a senior secondary school talks about the importance of having students show what they have learnt in the paragraphs below.

Previously the teachers used to mostly teach through the lecture method. When the lecture teaching method was introduced, we started dividing the children into groups, where they sit together, and they give presentations. I also promote this method to encourage the children to explain things on the board. They form their own groups and present on the board.

My aim was to give every child an opportunity to present their view. The children should not be shy or sit too quietly. We don't want the lecture method in the classrooms. Instead, we prefer children to give presentations. Whatever they have understood of the subject matter, they should explain it on the board and give a presentation of the subject matter.

We ask the teachers if they have finished the syllabus and whether the children are learning. I also go amongst the children and ask them to confirm if they have understood what the teachers are saying. I am trying to find out what is really happening from both sides. I ask them to check if the teacher has explained properly and whether the children need further explanation. Even if the teacher should have explained further, I never reprimand.

Case Study 4.

Individual meetings to provide support

A district supervisor at a Primary school, led an initiative to improve learning for the lowest performing 1st and 2nd graders. His goal was for these students to achieve at least 60% in reading and writing in their exams. He developed a team of reading and writing language teachers, half of whom were new first year teachers. To develop the content knowledge of the teachers and their skills at classroom management with these students, the supervisor did 2 things. First, he led weekly data and problem solving meetings, and second, he conducted biweekly observations and feedback.

By defining a clear goal (students achieving more than 60%) and giving his support to his teachers' needs (to build their content and classroom management knowledge) the supervisor was able to establish lasting structures at his school. By the end of the year, the 80% students had met the goal of scoring more than 60% in the exams.

Case Study 5.

Breakfast Clubs

In one secondary school, there was limited dialogue among teachers and mostly individual classroom practice with little cooperation amongst them. The principal established breakfast meetings where he would get tea and sandwiches for all teachers and invite them for breakfast. Initially, no teachers took interest in these breakfast clubs. However, as time passed, a few teachers started using the forum to exchange ideas about improving instruction.

Over time this opportunity for dialogue contributed to breaking down the school's individualized structure, and allowing peer communication and information sharing.

References:

1. Investigating School Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective Author(s): James P. Spillane, Richard Halverson and John B. Diamond Source: Educational Researcher, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Apr., 2001), pp. 23-28
2. Building Bridges: Connecting Teacher Leadership and Student Success. Leading Educators (2015)
3. [TESS video: Knowing your school \(3.45 mins\)](#)
4. [TESS video: Leading Teachers \(5.31 mins\)](#)
5. [TESS Video: Demonstrating learning \(1.57 mins\)](#)