
UNIT 11 CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Defining Curriculum Leadership
 - 11.3.1 Need for Curriculum Leaders
- 11.4 Tasks of a Curriculum Leader
- 11.5 Role of a Principal as a Curriculum Leader
- 11.6 Role of a Teacher as a Curriculum Leader
- 11.7 Challenges of curriculum Leadership
- 11.8 Let Us Sum up
- 11.9 Unit End Exercises
- 11.10 Answers to Check your Progress
- 11.11 References and Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In this course, till now you might have developed an understanding about curriculum, approaches to curriculum development. You might have also analysed the relationship between teaching and decision-making regarding curriculum and the role of a teacher as a curriculum implementer, developer and critical thinker. In the last two units of this block you have studied how the goals set in the curriculum are implemented in the actual school situations. You also learnt about the complex network between learning situations and construction of formal knowledge. Finally, the previous units also discussed about the role of a teacher as implementer of the curriculum.

In this unit, we will discuss about another aspect of a teacher i.e. as a curriculum leader. In this unit, we will discuss about the meaning and importance of curriculum leadership. This will help you to differentiate your role as curriculum implementer. You will also understand about the role of a principal as a curriculum leader and role of a teacher a curriculum leader. This Unit, will help you to identify the challenges faced by the curriculum leaders, so that you can develop strategies to combat the same.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the meaning and importance of curriculum leadership;
- explain the tasks of curriculum leaders;
- describe the role of a principal as a curriculum leader;
- describe the role of a teacher as curriculum leader;
- analyse the challenges of curriculum leadership.

11.3 DEFINING CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

Earlier in this course, you have come across various definitions of curriculum. The most common understanding relates to *curriculum* as subject matter or a series of written documents like books and syllabi. It is also seen as a set of school experiences, which means it does not only includes “subjects,” and but includes all activities, such as lunch, play, sports, and other non-academic activities.

Other definitions have defined curriculum as a plan tied to goals and related objectives. These definitions suggest a process of choosing from the many possible activities those are preferred and, thus, value-laden.

Curriculum is also to be drawn from outcomes or results. Here, curriculum is seen as targeting specific knowledge, behavior, and attitudes for learners. This is a highly active definition that accepts change in schools as a normal variable in planning.

In the unit 9 of this block, you learnt about the importance of schools as curriculum engagement sites. The principal’s vision gets reflected while the curriculum is being implemented. You are aware about the tasks associated with the curriculum development process and it is the responsibility of a leader for sorting out and prioritizing the demands. This is a continuous process, hence as an effective curriculum leader, principal as a school has to establish new direction, align people and resources, motivate staff, and produce meaningful change for school improvement.

Following questions may come to your mind when you hear the term curriculum leader. Will a curriculum leader stand at the back of your classroom to observe teaching and learning? Will the curriculum leader conduct three-minute walk-through observations? Is the curriculum leader the principal of a school? How many curriculum leaders can one school hold? Let us try and answer these questions through following discussion.

Curriculum leadership is not be determined by an individual’s title or years of experience. According to Wiles (2009) Curriculum leadership is the essential function of school leadership, so it can be carried out by both a principal and by teachers. Thus, a school principal or a teacher is responsible for making sure that the school has a quality curriculum and that it is implemented effectively.

Curricular leadership is discussed by Fidler (1997) as instructional leadership. He believed that the principals of a school has an impact on the professional work of the school, including the teaching and learning which goes on in the classrooms. He presented two points of view from which instructional leadership can be considered: a functional approach and a process approach. The functional approach involves leaders in defining the school mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring learner progress and promoting an instructional climate. The process approach looks at ways this might be accomplished.

Thus, a curriculum leader has to make sure that the curriculum goals are achieved, which is to maximize learner’s learning by providing quality in the content of

learning. Thus, Curriculum leadership focuses on what is learned (the curriculum) and how it is taught (the instruction).

Another goal of curriculum leadership is to develop schools as a learning organization. A school becomes a learning organization when individuals (teacher, learners) expand their capacity to create results they truly desire and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. This form of leadership is viewed in the following finite activities:

- establishing objectives,
- structuring scope and sequence,
- choosing relevant textbooks and resources, and
- selecting appropriate forms of evaluation, and curricular development needs to be explored.

Glatthorn (1997) listed the essential functions of curriculum leadership carried out at the school and classroom levels:

At the School Level	At Classroom Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the school's vision of a quality curriculum • supplement the National's or state's educational goals • develop the school's own vision & Mission • develop a learning-centered schedule • determine the nature and extent of curriculum integration • align the curriculum • monitor and assist in curriculum implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop yearly planning of calendars for operationalizing the curriculum • develop units of study • enrich the curriculum and remediate learning • evaluate the curriculum

The roles and functions show that regardless of whether these are at the school level or classroom level, curriculum leadership involves tasks that guarantee quality education.

Any effective curricular leader will have following characteristics :

- (i) Learner – continually seeking information, evidence and research to support current practices or develop new approaches within the school.
- (ii) Strategic thinker and have a long term vision – the ability to step out of the busyness of school and the role of curriculum leader to assess where the school is at and what long term initiatives will have an impact on improving learner learning.
- (iii) Relational – Has an ability to develop effective relationships with teachers, learners, leadership and other stakeholders to be able to work effectively

and communicate with all groups within the school. This is essential for any strategy to be implemented well in school.

- (iv) Action based – the ability to make decisions and act on them. Having knowledge is important but unless one act on this knowledge than it is pointless. Developing plans and actions that are implemented is crucial to being successful.

11.3.1 Need for Curriculum Leaders

Till now, you might have understood the meaning of curriculum leadership. Let us now discuss about its need in schools.

- (i) Curriculum Leaders provides clarity

As curriculum leader, you must understand the need for teaching the core curriculum. You do not need to be experts, but should know whether learners are taught the knowledge, the understandings and the skills that they are expected to learn in the core curriculum. Also, you must have the knowledge about the need to have importance of technical courses and electives which can help learners to choose a career later in their lives.

- (ii) Curriculum Leaders provides the opportunity to establish goals.

Curriculum leaders have a sense of purpose and a clearly defined mission or direction. In this process, they involve people as much as possible in the change process and promote continuous monitoring and review the proposed programmes and practices. They continuously reflect on their own teaching and assessment practices and encourage others to do the same.

- (iii) Curriculum leaders also uses effective inter individual skills and establish climate that build consensus, empower others and promote open and clear communication patterns. They motivate colleagues to attain goals and encourage discussion, collaboration, shared decision-making and problem solving. They also help in curriculum implementation, by helping teachers to better understand the philosophies and intent of curriculum, by providing assistance in implementing curriculum, and model appropriate behaviours and practices in curriculum delivery.

- (iv) Curriculum Leaders provides the opportunity for continuous improvement

Check Your Progress

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1. What do you mean by curriculum leadership?

.....
.....
.....

- 2. List the characteristics of curriculum leaders.

.....
.....
.....

11.4 TASKS OF A CURRICULUM LEADER

While the role of teacher and that of curriculum leader are complementary, the roles and associated competencies are not the same. Let us understand the differences

Teachers must have comprehensive understanding of their content areas and methods for communicating knowledge to learners. A curriculum leader is a individual who has not only a comprehensive understanding of the pragmatics of curricular design and instructional practice, but also a global understanding of education as a societal enterprise.

On the practical side, perhaps the side that is most frequently recognized by elementary and secondary school educators, curriculum is characterized as what is to be taught, in what order, in what way, and by whom (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Teachers are generally professionally prepared to engage in discussions of curriculum in this frame. Textbook content, their own instructional experiences, and state-level content standards further support teachers' ability to engage in curricular decisions within this conceptual frame. Such ordering of content, planning activities and assessments, or matching content to state standards is better conceptualized as lesson decision-making versus curriculum decision-making.

On the pragmatic end of the spectrum of requirements, curricular leaders must demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between assessment data and instructional design, particularly in light of the current dominance of progress monitoring and "Response to Intervention" paradigms. To meet the diverse needs represented in each classroom, curriculum leadership requires an ability to recognize the need for the best design and implementation techniques of a broad range of instructional variations.

Curriculum leadership requires more than a general understanding of psychology, as curriculum leaders must consider developmental, cognitive, emotional, and communicative factors as they relate to the reception and expression of content learning. Curriculum leaders must be well versed and articulate in classic and contemporary educational research, theory, and practical expectations across all subcategories including learning and instructional methodologies. They must have strong theoretical bases on which to build and they must be able to functionally separate the theoretical from the practical as needed (Hlebowitsch, 1999; Pinar, 1992). Curricular leaders must demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of education as a political and social enterprise. Curricular leaders must understand educational purposes of school, what educational experiences are likely to serve those purposes, and how to effectively organize and evaluate those experiences (Tyler, 1949). They must be ever cognizant of the ideology, bias, political agendas, and hegemonies that influence what is taught, how it is taught, and by whom it is taught in every classroom in America (Apple, 1996, 2000, 2004; Freire, 1970/2004; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). With the locus of control over the curriculum having shifted to that of the State (Fullan, 2001), today's curriculum leaders must have a substantial and current knowledge of state and national educational policy development, implementation. They must also be diligent in ongoing monitoring of debates and changing policies at all levels of influence.

The tasks and functions may further be specified into four major tasks:

- (i) ensuring curriculum quality and applicability
- (ii) integrating and aligning the curriculum
- (iii) implementing the curriculum efficiently
- (iv) regularly evaluating, enriching, and updating the curriculum

We will discuss about how these tasks are being undertaken by the teachers and Principals in the following sections.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. List the major tasks of a curriculum leaders.

.....
.....
.....

4. Explain the role of a principal as a curriculum leader in managing resources.

.....
.....
.....

11.5 ROLE OF A PRINCIPAL AS A CURRICULUM LEADER

Often school principals are not clear about their role as curriculum leaders, they assume that their role is to look into the functioning of the schools. Therefore, the question, why principals must act as curriculum leaders is important. Let us understand those reasons first. Wilson B.I & Firestone (1987) asserted that principals can influence the quality of instruction by working through bureaucratic, inter individual and cultural linkages. According to him:

- (i) **Bureaucratic linkages** are the formal arrangements of the school which includes the rules, plans, supervision and administration which allow the school to operate.
- (ii) **Inter individual linkages** are those which involve one-to-one interactions that directly influence teachers’ classroom practice.
- (iii) **Cultural linkages refer** to the principal’s ability to affect how teachers think about their job and their commitment to it.

The role of the principal as a curriculum leader can be seen here as :

(i) Building and Sustaining a School Vision

A clearly determined vision, regards the priorities of a policy, is relevant and based on realistic long-term goals. It must also include an awareness of the cultural dimensions of the community.

Rutherford (1985) specified that the most effective principals have clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become; visions that focus on learners and their needs. While preparing the school vision and mission, the school curriculum goals and its scope become clear.

When goals and priorities are clear then only a good teacher can set clear, concise, realistic, relevant, short/long-term goals. Setting such goals and priorities adds direction to a teacher's behavior and improves productivity. Thus, helping the schools to steer forward in the larger context of school improvement.

(ii) Tapping the Expertise of Teacher Leaders

Effective leadership sets the direction and influences members of the organization to work together toward meeting organizational goals. Similarly, when Principals act as curriculum leaders, they talk to teachers, provide staff development, and support lifelong learning about teaching and learning (Blase & Blase, 1999). They also create opportunities for teachers to work together and share teaching practices with one another.

Principals who tap into the expertise of teachers throughout the process of transforming their schools and increasing the focus on learning are more successful. They often encourage and use cooperation, team-building and problem-solving in their approach.

As curriculum leaders, they also recognize the importance of integrating activities of curriculum, staff development, and supervision. Teachers are responsible for teaching the curriculum, but administrators have equally important responsibility of supervising curriculum implementation.

Supervision responsibilities include:

- Monitoring the implementation of the school district curriculum in relation to learner needs
- Analyzing the teacher instructional effectiveness in relation to learner learning in the curriculum
- Monitoring learner outcomes that occur as a result of the teacher's instruction
- Analyzing the formal assessment of learner outcomes
- Using assessment information concerning learner outcomes to improve the curriculum and the teaching of that curriculum.
- Based on the subsequent findings from the supervisory process, the administrator and teacher must identify staff development activities and programs that are aimed at improving teacher skills in implementing and evaluating that curriculum.

Effective curriculum leaders recognize that importance of professional development of their teachers as a tool that allows administrators to become better curriculum leaders. When continuous professional development of teachers is done, principals help teachers to take up the role of curriculum leaders. Let us understand this through a case presented below:

Mrs Seema, Principal of Summer fields secondary school, realizes that that the science teachers were not involving Learners in active discovery experiences and the mathematics teachers, while knowledgeable about their subject, were following a didactic approach with relatively few visual aids or concrete examples for Learners. She prepared a report and listed the methodologies that would improve each subject- area. She proposed to provide workshops on new methodologies during the vacation time f the teachers. She also proposed to provide incentive in terms of giving leaves in lieu of the holidays which a teacher used it for her workshop. Teachers happily agreed and joined the workshops, resulting in improvised teaching and good leaning.

(iii) Collaboration in work

Effective curriculum leaders believe in teamwork and cooperative decision making for creating a climate of trust and respect. At the same time, it is ensured that effectiveness is not sacrificed for the goal of efficiency. While working together, they build trust, collective responsibility, and focus on improved learner learning.

During their daily interactions with teachers, principals help create a collective view of professional self-efficacy emphasising how teacher learning and improved classroom practices affect learner learning. Another approach could be that a Principal can help teachers individually and collectively identify the areas of their professional development. This will not only provide teacher autonomy but also will help in professional decision-making, which eventually strengthen teacher learning and classroom practices.

Before a teacher uses new pedagogical skills, they need to know that the principal will be there to provide professional, psychological, and emotional support. This is especially critical when teachers run into problems and/or meet with failure during trial periods. Teams of trained teachers should be allowed to try new strategies, refine their skills and share their knowledge with other teachers.

(iv) Managing Resources

For creation of a good learning environment in schools, a number of resources need to be managed, which include:

- recruiting and hiring teachers who are learners;
- coordinating professional development activities;
- making decisions on resources and school priorities;
- scheduling time, spaces and opportunities for teachers to work and learn together;
- identifying resources and providing information to the staff;
- aligning available incentives with professional development priorities;
- arranging for substitute teachers;
- visiting classrooms;
- developing and implementing teacher evaluation practices that support growth and improvement.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
 b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. List the major tasks of a curriculum leaders.

.....

6. Explain the role of a principal as a curriculum leader in managing resources.

.....

11.6 ROLE OF A TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM LEADERS

Wiggins (1994) believed that teachers should become instructional leaders to “...expand their own knowledge base and ... come to a better understanding of their own conceptualization of teaching” (p. 19). As a curriculum leader, you have to build instructional capacity that aims at increasing student learning and achievement. As a curriculum leader, a teacher must have knowledge of and skills in several curriculum designs and varied teaching strategies. When you enter the class, you have to do extensive prior planning ; which involves organizing content sequentially; stating behavioral objectives; effectively presenting content to learners; determining how learners are progressing in relation to the objectives; and planning classroom activities that provide appropriate practice. These techniques enable teachers to instruct learners better, especially in basic skills.

Your role as a curriculum leader can also include sharing the information on how to develop thoughtful curricula and instruction that incorporates high standards.

Let us now understand, the varied role of a teacher a as a curriculum leader.

(i) Resource Provider

Resourcefulness is the ability to adapt to situations as they develop, making the best use of both the human and material resources at hand. Teachers should not be bound by tradition or other such limiting factors and be willing to search for alternatives, such as using collaborative teaching methods vs. directive teaching methods. Teachers must be creative in finding and using the best avenue for getting the best from students.

Teachers help their colleagues by sharing instructional resources. These might include Web sites, instructional materials, readings, or other resources to use with learners. They might also share such professional resources as articles, books, lesson or unit plans, and assessment tools.

Manisha offers to help mamta, a new staff member to set up her classroom. Manisha gave extra copies and other web resources on the topic life cycles for her learners to use, explained her the various ways through which leaners can be assessed on this topic. She also shared the assignment questions with her.

(ii) Instructional Specialist

An instructional specialist helps you can help other teachers to implement effective teaching strategies. This help might include ideas for planning lessons in teams with other teachers. You can also explore and share instructional methodologies which are appropriate for the school.

When radha a science teachers shared her frustration about learners' poorly written lab reports with her colleagues. Other teacher, Jamal suggested inviting several English teachers to recommend strategies for writing instruction. Radha decided to talk with two English teachers serving as instructional specialists, the science teachers examine a number of lab reports together and identify strengths and weaknesses. The English teachers share strategies they use in their classes to improve learners' writing.

From the perspective of the classroom, you are required to make an analysis of the classroom climate and an assessment of the readiness of your learners for learning and their differentiated needs. You have to adopt such a style of instruction which helps in catering the demands of the learner.

(iii) Curriculum Specialist

Curriculum leaders have an clear understanding about content standards and they also know importance of linking various components of the curriculum . They lead teachers to agree on standards, follow the adopted curriculum, and develop shared assessments.

They also help teachers to implement new ideas, often by demonstrating a lesson, coteaching, or observing and giving feedback. They help them to reflect on their practices, hence give them an opportunity to on practice and grew together.

(iv) Mentor

Serving as a mentor for novice teachers is a common role for teacher leaders. Mentors serve as role models; acclimate new teachers to a new school; and advise new teachers about instruction, curriculum, procedure, practices, and politics. Being a mentor takes a great deal of time and expertise and makes a significant contribution to the development of a new professional.

Manoj is a successful teacher in his classroom, but she has not assumed a leadership role in the school. The principal asks him to mentor him new teammate, a brand-new teacher and a recent immigrant from the other state. Manoj prepares by participating in the training programme on mentoring. His roles as a mentor will not only include helping her teammate negotiate the district, school, and classroom, but will also include acclimating her colleague to the community. Manoj feels proud as he watches his colleague develop into an accomplished teacher.

From the discussion above, it is clear that leadership are in multiple, sometimes overlapping. These roles are sometimes formal with designated responsibilities on other occasions many informal roles are also played by teacher especially when you are interacting with their your peers. Regardless of the roles you assume, as a curriculum leaders you have to shape the culture of your school and improve and learning.

11.7 CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

There many challanges which can be faced by both teachers principals when they take up the responsibility as a curriculum leaders. One has to identify those challanges first, in order overcome them. Let us now discuss about the challanges which can emerge in the following discussion.

- (i) **Multiple & conflicting goals:** Schools has multiple roles to play and often plan a range of strategic goals which they want to pursue and these can be conflicting goals. For example, curriculum goals can compete with other school goals and there is a possibility to lose the focus required to achieve them.
- (ii) **Developing a focus for school improvement** – Since, curriculum leadership has a main focus to increase the efficiency of school. Therefore as a curriculum leader, you have to identify and implement that strategy which helps in school improvement. It is a challenge to identify and ascertain the same.
- (iii) **Lack of Time and resources to implement strategies** – For implementing any plan, there is a requirement of supportive resources, which are often lacking in the schools. To organize such resources is also a challenge. Also, schools and teachers are busy and overloaded with their routine work that for implementing any new strategies becomes a challenge. For example, if any strategy require collaborative work in teachers, then scheduling a time can be problematic and a barrier to successful implementation.
- (iv) **Demands of the role** – (depending on teaching allocation and role description)- curriculum leaders role can be a very busy role with a high administrative component. Curriculum and instructional leadership is easy to be lost as a focus as the high demands of the administrative component are more pressing. The leadership aspect has the potential to make a far bigger difference but is the easiest to overlook.
- (v) **Ongoing professional learning** – the role requires an ongoing commitment to learning and the development of knowledge, skills and understanding of the latest research and its impact for learning. The busy nature of the role can make this difficult to prioritise.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

- b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5) Explain the role of a teacher as a mentor.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6) State any two challenges which can be faced as a curriculum leader.

.....

.....

.....

.....

11.8 LET US SUM UP

Curriculum leadership is critical to the development of quality in the context of the school as it will have influence on the practices of leaders and their success in curriculum reform, implementation and evaluation. It is discussed in the unit that as a curriculum Leaders are not only responsible for solely on maintaining the existing curriculum through their continuous review but also have to provide vision, organization, and motivation to teachers and other staff members for school improvement.

Roles of teachers and principals as curriculum leaders are very important and have been defined in the unit. Principals as a curriculum leaders have to develop clearly defined vision and mission for the schools. For implementing these missions, they have to manage the resources. As teachers, the role is specified as that of a curriculum specialist, mentor to the new teachers, as resource provider to other teachers. The challenges of curriculum leadership has also been discussed in the unit.

11.9 UNIT END EXERCISES

1. Interview your colleagues about the problem faced by them in teaching a particular topic and develop a strategy to solve their problem.
2. Discuss with the Principal of your school about the various professional development programme which can be planned for the staff members. Develop a plan including priority areas of professional development and its implementation.

11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Go through section 11.3 and answer based on your understanding.
2. Following are the characteristics: learner, strategic thinker, Relational, action oriented.
3. Ensuring quality and applicability, integrating and alligning curriculum, implementing curriculum and evaluation of curriculum.
4. Some of the tasks involves, recruiting and hiring teachers, coordinating professional development activities, visiting classrooms etc.
5. As a member an experienced teacher can help invoice teacher to allimatize with the school system, help to find resources for teaching and to promote her to become a better teacher.
6. Multiple and conflicting goals and developing a focus for school improvement.

11.11 REFERENCES

- Cawelti, G. (1982). Training for effective school administrators. *Educational Leadership*, 39(5), 324-329.
- Dimmock (Ed.), *School-based management and school effectiveness* (pp. 201-218). London: Routledge.
- Fidler, B. (1997). School Leadership: Some key ideas. *School Leadership and Management*, 17(1), 23-37.
- Fullan, M. (1995). The School as a Learning Organization: Distant Dreams. *Theory into Practice*, 34(4), 230-235.
- Hargreaves, A. (1992). Cultures of teaching: A focus for change. In A. Hargreaves and M. G. Fullan (Eds.), *Understanding teacher development*. London: Cassell.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. F. (1987). Assessing and developing principal instructional leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 45(1), 54-61.
- Henderson, J. G., & Hawthorne, R. D. (2000). *Transformative curriculum leadership*. New Jersey: Merrill, Prentice Hall. *A Literature Review ...* 141
- Leithwood, K. A. (1992). The principal's role in teacher development. In M. Fulan and A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change* (pp. 86-103). Great Britain: Burgess Science Press.
- Leithwood, K. A. (1992a). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 49(5), 8-12.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990). Adding value to leadership gets extraordinary results. *Educational Leadership*, 47(8), 23-27.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1997). *A nezu vision for staff development*. Virginia: ASCD.
- Stewart, D., & Prebble, T. (1985). *Making it happen: A school development process*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Glatthorn, A.A. (1987). *Curriculum renewal*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Glatthorn, A.A., & Jailall, J.M. (2009). *The principal as curriculum leader: Shaping what is taught and tested* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Wiles, J. (2009). *Leading curriculum development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.