The Special Education Teacher as Instructional Leader: Building Motivation, Grit and Growth Mindset in the Classroom Team

Cindy Miller, Moth Education Consulting
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Cindy R Miller, MS
Director
Moth Educational Consulting, LLC
CindyMiller@MothConsulting.com
(210) 241-2405
MothConsulting.com
Goals

Access a toolbox of strategies and resources (all links are live in the electronic handout).

Learn strategies for developing growth mindset.

Learn ways build motivation and growth mindset with the instructional team.

Identify characteristics of grit and ways to build adults ability to persevere during difficult situations that arise in the classroom environment.

Access resources to build motivation for adults.

https://www.instagram.com/p/BD0vOPWob0P/
Instructional Leader.

The role of Instructional Leader may come as a surprise to the new Special Education Teacher. Most of us were not trained or prepared for this aspect of our career. These are skills that must be built in order to build an effective classroom program.

**Instructional leadership** involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, developing effective differentiated lesson plans, working with a variety of professional colleagues including general education teachers and related services providers, and training and evaluating paraprofessionals regularly to promote student learning and growth.

Quality of instruction is the top priority and all of these contribute to building an effective program for students with special needs.

Some Teacher Leader Roles

- model teacher
- mentor
- instructional coach
- instructional coach facilitator
- technology coach
- literacy coach
- math coach
- intervention specialist
- PLC leader
- team leader
- PD leader
- curriculum specialist
- curriculum leader
- induction coach
- lead induction coach
- Iowa Core instructional leader in math (science, social studies, reading)
- TLC program coordinator
- behavior specialist
- learning supports facilitator
- PBIS leader
- Building Leadership Team member

http://barkleypd.com/blog/teacher-leadership-and-vulnerability/
1. Resource Provider
Teachers help their colleagues by sharing instructional resources. These might include Web sites, instructional materials, readings, or other resources to use with students. They might also share such professional resources as articles, books, lesson or unit plans, and assessment tools. Tinisha becomes a resource provider when she offers to help Carissa, a new staff member in her second career, set up her classroom. Tinisha gives Carissa extra copies of a number line for her students to use, signs to post on the wall that explain to students how to get help when the teacher is busy, and the grade-level language arts pacing guide.

2. Instructional Specialist
An instructional specialist helps colleagues implement effective teaching strategies. This help might include ideas for differentiating instruction or planning lessons in partnership with fellow teachers. Instructional specialists might study research-based classroom strategies (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001); explore which instructional methodologies are appropriate for the school; and share findings with colleagues.

When his fellow science teachers share their frustration with students' poorly written lab reports, Jamal suggests that they invite several English teachers to recommend strategies for writing instruction. 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 students' writing.

3. Curriculum Specialist
Understanding content standards, how various components of the curriculum link together, and how to use the curriculum in planning instruction and assessment is essential to ensuring consistent curriculum implementation throughout a school. Curriculum specialists lead teachers to agree on standards, follow the adopted curriculum, use common pacing charts, and develop shared assessments. Tracy, the world studies team leader, works with the five language arts and five social studies teachers in her school. Using standards in English and social studies as their guides, the team members agree to increase the consistency in their classroom curriculums and administer common assessments. Tracy suggests that the team develop a common understanding of the standards and agrees to facilitate the development and analysis of common quarterly assessments.

4. Classroom Supporter
Classroom supporters work inside classrooms to help teachers implement new ideas, often by demonstrating a lesson, coteaching, or observing and giving feedback. Blase and Blase (2006) found that consultation with peers enhanced teachers' self-efficacy (teachers' belief in their own abilities and capacity to successfully solve teaching and learning problems) as they reflected on practice and grew together, and it also encouraged a bias for action (improvement through collaboration) on the part of teachers. (p. 22)

Marcia asks Yolanda for classroom support in implementing nonlinguistic representation strategies, such as graphic organizers, manipulatives, and kinesthetic activities (Marzano et al., 2001). Yolanda agrees to plan and teach a lesson with Marcia that integrates several relevant strategies. They ask the principal for two half-days of professional release time, one for learning more about the strategy and planning a lesson together, and the other for coteaching the lesson to Marcia's students and discussing it afterward.
5. **Learning Facilitator**
Facilitating professional learning opportunities among staff members is another role for teacher leaders. When teachers learn with and from one another, they can focus on what most directly improves student learning. Their professional learning becomes more relevant, focused on teachers' classroom work, and aligned to fill gaps in student learning. Such communities of learning can break the norms of isolation present in many schools.

Frank facilitates the school's professional development committee and serves as the committee's language arts representative. Together, teachers plan the year's professional development program using a backmapping model (Killion, 2001). This model begins with identifying student learning needs, teachers' current level of knowledge and skills in the target areas, and types of learning opportunities that different groups of teachers need. The committee can then develop and implement a professional development plan on the basis of their findings.

6. **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.

Ming is a successful teacher in her own 1st grade classroom, but she has not assumed a leadership role in the school. The principal asks her to mentor her new teammate, a brand-new teacher and a recent immigrant from the Philippines. Ming prepares by participating in the district’s three-day training on mentoring. Her role 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. Ming feels proud as she watches her teammate develop into an accomplished teacher.

7. **School Leader**
Being a school leader means serving on a committee, such as a school improvement team; acting as a grade-level or department chair; supporting school initiatives; or representing the school on community or district task forces or committees. A school leader shares the vision of the school, aligns his or her professional goals with those of the school and district, and shares responsibility for the success of the school as a whole.

Joshua, staff sponsor of the student council, offers to help the principal engage students in the school improvement planning process. The school improvement team plans to revise its nearly 10-year-old vision and wants to ensure that students' voices are included in the process. Joshua arranges a daylong meeting for 10 staff members and 10 students who represent various views of the school experience, from nonattenders to grade-level presidents. Joshua works with the school improvement team facilitator to ensure that the activities planned for the meeting are appropriate for students so that students will actively participate.

8. **Data Coach**
Although teachers have access to a great deal of data, they do not often use that data to drive classroom instruction. Teacher leaders can lead conversations that engage their peers in analyzing and using this information to strengthen instruction.

Carol, the 10th grade language arts team leader, facilitates a team of her colleagues as they look at the results of the most recent writing sample, a teacher-designed assessment given to all incoming 10th grade students. Carol guides teachers as they discuss strengths and weaknesses of students' writing performance as a group, as individuals, by classrooms, and in disaggregated clusters by race, gender, and previous school. They then plan instruction on the basis of this data.
9. Catalyst for Change
Teacher leaders can also be catalysts for change, visionaries who are “never content with the status quo but rather always looking for a better way” (Larner, 2004, p. 32). Teachers who take on the catalyst role feel secure in their own work and have a strong commitment to continual improvement. They pose questions to generate analysis of student learning.
In a faculty meeting, Larry expresses a concern that teachers may be treating some students differently from others. Students who come to him for extra assistance have shared their perspectives, and Larry wants teachers to know what students are saying. As his colleagues discuss reasons for low student achievement, Larry challenges them to explore data about the relationship between race and discipline referrals in the school. When teachers begin to point fingers at students, he encourages them to examine how they can change their instructional practices to improve student engagement and achievement.

10. Learner
Among the most important roles teacher leaders assume is that of learner. Learners model continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and use what they learn to help all students achieve.
Manuela, the school’s new bilingual teacher, is a voracious learner. At every team or faculty meeting, she identifies something new that she is trying in her classroom. Her willingness to explore new strategies is infectious. Other teachers, encouraged by her willingness to discuss what works and what doesn’t, begin to talk about their teaching and how it influences student learning. Faculty and team meetings become a forum in which teachers learn from one another. Manuela’s commitment to and willingness to talk about learning break down barriers of isolation that existed among teachers.
What tools can we give our classroom teachers to help them build a positive, high-functioning team?

In addition to organizational supports and communication skills, the traits of **Motivation, Grit, and Growth Mindset** are some of the most powerful traits that determine success.

These are traits that we frequently refer to as positive attitude, stick-to-it-iveness (think John Wayne), and the ability to seek new problem-solving strategies in the face of difficulty or failure.
motivation

noun mo-ti-va-tion \ˌmō-tə-ˈvā-shən\

1a : the act or process of motivating

   Some students need motivation to help them through school.

b : the condition of being motivated

   employees who lack motivation

2: a motivating force, stimulus, or influence : INCENTIVE, DRIVE

   the Old Testament heroes added religious motivation to the waging of war
   —Richard Humble
   The fear of failure was the motivation for his achievements.

17 Tips To Motivate Adult Learners

Motivating Adult Learners to Persist

How to Build Motivation in Adults

25 Ways to Cultivate Intrinsic Motivation

5 Surprising Tips To Increase Your Motivation Immediately
4: firmness of mind or spirit : unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger managed to survive by his grit and guile

8 Tips to Develop Grit and Mental Strength

5 research-backed ways to increase grit

Grit Angela Duckworth: How to Develop Grit

How To Develop Grit: The Hard Thing Rule

Develop Your Determination: 4 Steps to Increase Grit
Growth Mindset

In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don’t necessarily think everyone’s the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.

- Carol Dweck 2012

http://big-change.org/growth-mindset/

Change Your Fixed Mindset to Access Your Hidden Potential

nurturing a growth mindset in adults

Never Too Late: Creating a Climate for Adults to Learn New Skills

6 simple activities for exploring the power of mindsets

5 Ways to Develop a Growth Mindset Using Grit and Resilience
I am delighted that you joined me for this TCASE Learning Lab! I would love to keep in touch and am on both Facebook and LinkedIn. If you have further questions after today, please reach out to me at:

Cindy R. Miller, M.S.

CindyMiller@MothConsulting.com

(210) 241-2405
1009 Gillespie Street
San Antonio, TX 78212

Moth Educational Consulting, LLC
http://www.mothconsulting.com/

Interested in having me consult in your district?
Contact me directly.
I'd love to help!

“To shine your brightest light is to be who you truly are.”
- Roy T Bennett